



AMERICAN POLITICS

# COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION STUDY BIBLE



COMPILED BY RYAN P. DENNEHY



AMERICAN POLITICS

# COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION STUDY BIBLE

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Dear Reader,

This document contains comprehensive study notes organized by classes, subject areas, and sources to assist in preparation for Ph.D. *American Politics* comprehensive examinations. Each section includes detailed briefing memos summarizing key aspects such as theory, methods, findings, and significant quotations or definitions. I do not always present articles in chronological order, but rather through thematic linkages. This guide should not be used in place of reading the literature, but rather as a supplement. There is a master `bib` file associated with all of the included sources available at:

<https://github.com/ryanpdennehy/AmericanPoliticsCompExamStudyBible.git>

These materials reflect my experience at the *University of South Carolina* in the mid-2020s and may not be tailored to your needs precisely. Most of the guide is predominantly behavioral in its focus.

I do not include every pertinent book, chapter, or article in this guide. However, I do provide information on most relevant pieces. Be warned; your utility may vary. I begin the guide with an outline that loosely follows the syllabus of the *American Politics Pro. Sem.* I took in the fall of 2024. You will note that some issue areas of this initial chapter have entire chapters devoted to them later in the guide (e.g., public opinion and Congress). These brief overview sections include some of the most pertinent and foundational texts. I do not repeat sources in future chapters so be sure to refer to both the chapter 1 contents as well as subsequent chapter contents when exploring the literature of a topic. Following this initial chapter, I provide two chapters exploring political behavior through the lens of party politics and political psychology. Chapter 2 and 3 largely follow the syllabi of classes I took in 2023 and predominantly offer foundational texts. I present these texts in chronological order as that is how we discussed them in those courses. Chapter 4 provides an incredibly cursory introduction to political communication. Some of these texts assume a comparative framework. Special thanks to Dr. Kathleen Searles for offering the initial basis for the text selection for this chapter. Finally, chapters 5 and 6 offer supplementary texts on specific areas of interest in the field.

Please note; I sourced some of the “key quotations” through the aid of various large language models (largely GPT 4o and NotebookLM). That said, I have found some of them to be inaccurate, though similar to the contents on the page referenced. I checked as many as I could in a timely manner, but you should check the original source to verify before pulling quotes directly from this guide. Information presented in other sections of each memo has been verified to be accurate as it reflects my own writing.

Diligence is the mother of good luck. Godspeed.

Ryan P. Dennehy



no  
I live in **America**

Figure 1: Vibes

# Contents

<b>1 American Politics Overview</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Introduction . . . . .	8
1.2 Public Opinion and Political Attitudes . . . . .	8
1.3 Voting Behavior . . . . .	26
1.4 Political Participation . . . . .	37
1.5 Partisanship and Polarization . . . . .	50
1.6 Campaigns and Elections . . . . .	61
1.7 Interest Groups . . . . .	70
1.8 Political Parties . . . . .	84
1.9 Representation . . . . .	94
1.10 Race and Gender . . . . .	104
1.11 Congress . . . . .	116
1.12 The Courts . . . . .	130
1.13 The Executive . . . . .	144
1.14 Policy and Federalism . . . . .	152
<b>2 Public Opinion and Political Attitudes</b>	<b>167</b>
2.1 Introduction . . . . .	172
2.2 Psychological Perspectives on Decision Making . . . . .	173
2.3 Political Belief Systems . . . . .	181
2.4 Political Information and Misinformation . . . . .	189
2.5 Heuristics and Decision Making . . . . .	199
2.6 Citizen Competence and Information Processing . . . . .	208
2.7 Affect and Decision Making . . . . .	217
2.8 Values, Value Conflict, and Attitudinal Ambivalence . . . . .	223
2.9 Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Politics . . . . .	232
2.10 Social Influence and Decision Making . . . . .	247
2.11 Political Geography . . . . .	257
2.12 The Media . . . . .	267
2.13 Political Communication . . . . .	275
2.14 Political Trust . . . . .	282
2.15 Macro Politics . . . . .	289
<b>3 Political Parties</b>	<b>303</b>
3.1 Introduction . . . . .	307
3.2 Foundations of American Political Parties . . . . .	308
3.3 Spatial Models of Parties and Voting . . . . .	309
3.4 Parties as Organizations . . . . .	317
3.5 Party Activism and Party Polarization . . . . .	325
3.6 Partisan Identification . . . . .	336
3.7 Macro-Level Partisanship . . . . .	353
3.8 Partisan Realignment . . . . .	362
3.9 Political Parties, Psychology, and Information Processing . . . . .	375
3.10 Parties and Representation . . . . .	382
3.11 Parties in Legislatures . . . . .	395
3.12 Parties and Policymaking . . . . .	414
<b>4 Political Communication</b>	<b>425</b>
4.1 Introduction . . . . .	429
4.2 Foundations of Political Communication . . . . .	429
4.3 Shifting Foundations of Political Communication . . . . .	444
4.4 Understanding the Market . . . . .	452
4.5 News Media as an Institution . . . . .	458

4.6 Production of News . . . . .	466
4.7 Understanding News Contents . . . . .	473
4.8 Understanding How Technology Structures Communication and Politics . . . . .	481
4.9 Attention and Information . . . . .	495
4.10 Understanding Media Effects . . . . .	506
4.11 The Role of Communication in Democracy . . . . .	528
4.12 Governing With the News . . . . .	540
<b>5 Congress</b>	<b>549</b>
5.1 Introduction . . . . .	551
5.2 Ideology and Spatial Models . . . . .	552
5.3 Party Influence in Congress . . . . .	555
5.4 Veto Politics . . . . .	557
5.5 Legislative Agendas . . . . .	564
5.6 Rulemaking, Rulebreaking, and Innovation . . . . .	569
5.7 Representation in Congress . . . . .	575
5.8 Nominations and Confirmations . . . . .	583
5.9 The Separation of Powers . . . . .	590
5.10 Miscellaneous Topics in Congress . . . . .	597
<b>6 Women in Politics</b>	<b>609</b>
6.1 Introduction . . . . .	612
6.2 Foundations of Women in Politics . . . . .	613
6.3 Candidate Emergence and the Decision to Run for Office . . . . .	619
6.4 Political Recruitment and Party Politics . . . . .	624
6.5 Women Candidates and Voter Responses . . . . .	631
6.6 Attitudes and Opinions . . . . .	643
6.7 Female Politicians in Elected Office . . . . .	648
6.8 Policy Representation . . . . .	654
6.9 Gender Egalitarianism and Symbolic Representation . . . . .	659
6.10 Women and Law and the Courts . . . . .	664
6.11 Women in Executive Politics . . . . .	670
6.12 Gender and Participation . . . . .	676
6.13 Intersectionality . . . . .	683
<b>Index of Keywords</b>	<b>691</b>

## 1 American Politics Overview

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1.1	Introduction . . . . .	8
1.2	Public Opinion and Political Attitudes . . . . .	8
1.2.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	8
1.2.2	Belief Systems and Political Decision Making . . . . .	10
1.2.3	Public Opinion . . . . .	10
1.2.4	The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics . . . . .	11
1.2.5	An Extension and Test of Converse's "Black-and-White" Model of Response Stability . . . . .	12
1.2.6	The American Voter . . . . .	13
1.2.7	The American Voter Revisited . . . . .	14
1.2.8	The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion . . . . .	15
1.2.9	A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences . . . . .	15
1.2.10	What Americans Know about Politics and Why it Matters . . . . .	16
1.2.11	On Voter Competence . . . . .	17
1.2.12	Partisan Perceptual Bias and the Information Environment . . . . .	18
1.2.13	Learning and Opinion Change, Not Priming: Reconsidering the Priming Hypothesis . . . . .	18
1.2.14	Making Sense of Issues Through Media Frames: Understanding the Kosovo Crisis . . . . .	19
1.2.15	The New Videomalaise: Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust . . . . .	20
1.2.16	Social Groups as the Source of Political Belief Systems: Fresh Evidence on an Old Theory . . . . .	21
1.2.17	Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance . . . . .	22
1.2.18	Elite Influence on Public Opinion in an Informed Electorate . . . . .	22
1.2.19	Dynamic Public Opinion: Communication Effects over Time . . . . .	23
1.2.20	The Rationalizing Voter . . . . .	24
1.2.21	Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted? . . . . .	25
1.2.22	Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making . . . . .	25
1.3	Voting Behavior . . . . .	26
1.3.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	26
1.3.2	An Economic Theory of Democracy . . . . .	27
1.3.3	Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections . . . . .	27
1.3.4	Follow the Leader? How Voters Respond to Politicians' Policies and Performance . . . . .	28
1.3.5	Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government (Chs. 1-3 & 8) . . . . .	29
1.3.6	Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections . . . . .	31
1.3.7	Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment . . . . .	32
1.3.8	Is Voting Contagious? Evidence from Two Field Experiments . . . . .	33
1.3.9	Comment: What Have You Done for Me Lately? Toward An Investment Theory of Voting . . . . .	34
1.3.10	Sociotropic Politics: The American Case . . . . .	35
1.3.11	The Primacy of Race in the Geography of Income-Based Voting: New Evidence from Public Voting Records . . . . .	36

1.4	Political Participation . . . . .	37
1.4.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	37
1.4.2	Mobilization, Participation, and American Democracy . . . . .	37
1.4.3	Mobilization, Participation, and American Democracy: A Retrospective and Postscript . . . . .	39
1.4.4	Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality . . . . .	39
1.4.5	Citizen Activity: Who Participates? What Do They Say? . . . . .	40
1.4.6	Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics . . . . .	41
1.4.7	The Social Citizen: Peer Networks and Political Behavior . . . . .	42
1.4.8	Electoral Choice, Ideological Conflict, and Political Participation . . . . .	43
1.4.9	What the Demolition of Public Housing Teaches Us about the Impact of Racial Threat on Political Behavior . . . . .	44
1.4.10	How Large and Long-lasting Are the Persuasive Effects of Televised Campaign Ads? Results from a Randomized Field Experiment . . . . .	45
1.4.11	When Does Negativity Demobilize? Tracing the Conditional Effect of Negative Campaigning on Voter Turnout . . . . .	45
1.4.12	How Do Campaigns Matter? . . . . .	46
1.4.13	Political Consequences of the Carceral State . . . . .	47
1.4.14	Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation . . . . .	48
1.4.15	Putting Inequality in Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective . . . . .	48
1.4.16	Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital . . . . .	49
1.5	Partisanship and Polarization . . . . .	50
1.5.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	50
1.5.2	Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters . . . . .	51
1.5.3	Post-Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections . . . . .	51
1.5.4	The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy . . . . .	52
1.5.5	The Ambivalent Partisan: How Critical Loyalty Promotes Democracy . . . . .	53
1.5.6	How Elite Partisan Polarization Affects Public Opinion Formation . . . . .	54
1.5.7	Changing Minds or Changing Channels? Partisan News in an Age of Choice . . . . .	55
1.5.8	Competing Motives in the Partisan Mind: How Loyalty and Responsiveness Shape Party Identification and Democracy . . . . .	55
1.5.9	Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity . . . . .	56
1.5.10	Fear and Loathing across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization . . . . .	57
1.5.11	Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity . . . . .	58
1.5.12	The Parties in Our Heads: Misperceptions about Party Composition and Their Consequences . . . . .	59
1.5.13	Identity as Dependent Variable: How Americans Shift Their Identities to Align with Their Politics . . . . .	59
1.5.14	Social Desirability and Affective Polarization . . . . .	60
1.6	Campaigns and Elections . . . . .	61
1.6.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	61
1.6.2	The Puzzle of Midterm Loss . . . . .	62
1.6.3	Why Are American Presidential Election Campaign Polls so Variable When Votes Are so Predictable? . . . . .	62
1.6.4	Electoral Realignments . . . . .	63
1.6.5	Entering the Arena? Gender and the Decision to Run for Office . . . . .	64
1.6.6	The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform . . . . .	65
1.6.7	The Positive Case for Negative Campaigning . . . . .	65
1.6.8	What Happens When Extremists Win Primaries? . . . . .	66
1.6.9	Party Versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System . . . . .	67

1.6.10 Campaigning for Hearts and Minds: How Emotional Appeals in Political Ads Work . . . . .	68
1.6.11 The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Campaign and the Challenge to American Democracy	69
<b>1.7 Interest Groups . . . . .</b>	<b>70</b>
1.7.1 Subject Area Summary . . . . .	70
1.7.2 The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion . . . . .	71
1.7.3 The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups . . . . .	72
1.7.4 The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America . . . . .	73
1.7.5 After the "Master Theory": Downs, Schattschneider, and the Rebirth of Policy-Focused Analysis . . . . .	74
1.7.6 The Population Ecology of Organizations . . . . .	74
1.7.7 The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America . . . . .	75
1.7.8 The Population Ecology of Gucci Gulch, or the Natural Regulation of Interest Group Numbers in the American States . . . . .	76
1.7.9 The Multiple Ambiguities of Counteractive Lobbying . . . . .	77
1.7.10 Outside Lobbying: Public Opinion and Interest Group Strategies . . . . .	78
1.7.11 Organized Interests and the Decision of Whom to Lobby in Congress . . . . .	79
1.7.12 Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy . . . . .	80
1.7.13 Informational Lobbying and Legislative Voting . . . . .	80
1.7.14 Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement . . . . .	81
1.7.15 Do Interest Groups Represent the Disadvantaged? Advocacy at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender . . . . .	82
1.7.16 Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens . . . . .	83
1.7.17 Diversity and Minority Interest Group Advocacy in Congress . . . . .	84
<b>1.8 Political Parties . . . . .</b>	<b>84</b>
1.8.1 Subject Area Summary . . . . .	84
1.8.2 Proposals for Party Responsibility . . . . .	86
1.8.3 Southern Politics in State and Nation . . . . .	86
1.8.4 Assessing Party Organizational Strength . . . . .	87
1.8.5 An Informational Rationale for Political Parties . . . . .	88
1.8.6 The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform . . . . .	89
1.8.7 Why Parties? A Second Look . . . . .	90
1.8.8 A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands, and Nominations in American Politics . . . . .	91
1.8.9 Political Parties, Motivated Reasoning, and Public Opinion . . . . .	92
1.8.10 The Fates of Challengers in U.S. House Elections . . . . .	92
1.8.11 The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism . . . . .	93
<b>1.9 Representation . . . . .</b>	<b>94</b>
1.9.1 Subject Area Summary . . . . .	94
1.9.2 Dynamic Representation . . . . .	95
1.9.3 Representation and Public Policy: The Consequences of Senate Apportionment for the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds . . . . .	96
1.9.4 Dyadic Representation Reappraised . . . . .	97
1.9.5 Sizing Up the Senate: The Unequal Consequences of Equal Representation . . . . .	97
1.9.6 Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness	98
1.9.7 Lipstick and Logarithms: Gender, Institutional Context, and Representative Bureaucracy .	99
1.9.8 Rethinking Representation . . . . .	100
1.9.9 Manufactured Responsiveness: The Impact of State Electoral Laws on Unified Party Control of the Presidency and House of Representatives, 1840–1940 . . . . .	101
1.9.10 Incumbency, Redistricting, and the Decline of Competition in U.S. House Elections . . . . .	102

1.9.11 It's Nothing Personal: The Decline of the Incumbency Advantage in US House Elections . . . . .	103
<b>1.10 Race and Gender . . . . .</b>	<b>104</b>
1.10.1 Subject Area Summary . . . . .	104
1.10.2 Racial Hegemony: Group Conflict, Prejudice, and the Paradox of American Racial Attitudes	105
1.10.3 Symbolic Racism . . . . .	105
1.10.4 Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics . . . . .	106
1.10.5 Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent "Yes" . . . . .	107
1.10.6 Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy . . . . .	108
1.10.7 The Difference Women Make: The Policy Impact of Women in Congress . . . . .	109
1.10.8 The Jackie (and Jill) Robinson Effect: Why Do Congresswomen Outperform Congressmen? . . . . .	109
1.10.9 Bringing the Person Back In: Boundaries, Perceptions, and the Measurement of Racial Context . . . . .	110
1.10.10 Xenophobic Rhetoric and Its Political Effects on Immigrants and Their Co-Ethnics . . . . .	111
1.10.11 Post-Racial or Most-Racial? Race and Politics in the Obama Era . . . . .	112
1.10.12 Gender, race, and political ambition: how intersectionality and frames influence interest in political office . . . . .	113
1.10.13 White Identity Politics . . . . .	114
1.10.14 Reconciling Sexism and Women's Support for Republican Candidates . . . . .	115
<b>1.11 Congress . . . . .</b>	<b>116</b>
1.11.1 Subject Area Summary . . . . .	116
1.11.2 Congress: The Electoral Connection . . . . .	116
1.11.3 U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration . . . . .	117
1.11.4 Information and Legislative Organization . . . . .	118
1.11.5 Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions . . . . .	119
1.11.6 Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking . . . . .	119
1.11.7 Participation in Congress . . . . .	120
1.11.8 Issue Politics in Congress . . . . .	121
1.11.9 Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives .	122
1.11.10 Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy . . . . .	122
1.11.11 Ideology and Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting . . . . .	123
1.11.12 Party Power or Preferences? Quasi-Experimental Evidence from American State Legislatures	124
1.11.13 Using Roll Call Estimates to Test Models of Politics . . . . .	125
1.11.14 Reflections on the Practice of Theorizing: Conditional Party Government in the Twenty-First Century . . . . .	126
1.11.15 Legislating in the Dark: Information and Power in the House of Representatives . . . . .	126
1.11.16 Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign . . . . .	127
1.11.17 Cardinals or Clerics? Congressional Committees and the Distribution of Pork . . . . .	128
1.11.18 Making Washington Work: Legislative Entrepreneurship and the Personal Vote from the Gilded Age to the Great Depression . . . . .	129
1.11.19 Legislative Effectiveness in the American States . . . . .	129
<b>1.12 The Courts . . . . .</b>	<b>130</b>
1.12.1 Subject Area Summary . . . . .	130
1.12.2 Decision-making in a Democracy: The Supreme Court as a National Policy-Maker . . . . .	131
1.12.3 The Road Taken: Robert A. Dahl's Decision-making in a Democracy: The Supreme Court as a National Policy-Maker . . . . .	132
1.12.4 What's Law Got to Do with It? Judicial Behavioralists Test the "Legal Model" of Judicial Decision Making . . . . .	133
1.12.5 The Supreme Court and The Attitudinal Model Revisited . . . . .	134
1.12.6 American Adversarialism: Reviewing Robert A. Kagan's Adversarial Legalism: The American Way of Law . . . . .	135

1.12.7 "Interpose Your Friendly Hand": Political Supports for the Exercise of Judicial Review by the United States Supreme Court . . . . .	136
1.12.8 The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change? . . . . .	137
1.12.9 Untangling the Causal Effects of Sex on Judging . . . . .	138
1.12.10 Reconsidering Judicial Preferences . . . . .	139
1.12.11 Judicial Selection and Death Penalty Decisions . . . . .	140
1.12.12 Legal Constraint in the US Courts of Appeals . . . . .	141
1.12.13 Constitutions Unentrenched: Toward an Alternative Theory of Constitutional Design . . . . .	142
1.12.14 How the Trump Administration's Quota Policy Transformed Immigration Judging . . . . .	142
1.12.15 Losing Legitimacy: The Challenges of the Dobbs Ruling to Conventional Legitimacy Theory	143
1.13 The Executive . . . . .	144
1.13.1 Subject Area Summary . . . . .	144
1.13.2 Street-Level Bureaucracy: The Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services . . . . .	145
1.13.3 Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan . . . . .	146
1.13.4 The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to George Bush . . . . .	147
1.13.5 Has Cable Ended the Golden Age of Presidential Television? . . . . .	147
1.13.6 Who Leads Whom? Presidents, Policy, and the Public . . . . .	148
1.13.7 The Politics of Presidential Appointments: Political Control and Bureaucratic Performance	149
1.13.8 Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Reevaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis . . . . .	150
1.13.9 Presidential Unilateral Power . . . . .	151
1.14 Policy and Federalism . . . . .	152
1.14.1 Subject Area Summary . . . . .	152
1.14.2 Laboratories of Democratic Backsliding . . . . .	152
1.14.3 Laboratories Against Democracy: How National Parties Transformed State Politics . . . . .	153
1.14.4 Bringing the State Back In to Civic Engagement: Policy Feedback Effects of the G.I. Bill for World War II Veterans . . . . .	154
1.14.5 A Public Transformed? Welfare Reform as Policy Feedback . . . . .	155
1.14.6 Policy Impact and Voter Mobilization: Evidence from Farmers' Trade War Experiences . . . . .	155
1.14.7 Fragmented Democracy . . . . .	156
1.14.8 Why Doesn't the United States Have a European-Style Welfare State? . . . . .	157
1.14.9 Hiding in Plain Sight: American Politics and the Carceral State . . . . .	158
1.14.10 Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy . . . . .	159
1.14.11 How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Political Activism and the American Welfare State . . . . .	160
1.14.12 The Divided States of America: Why Federalism Doesn't Work . . . . .	161
1.14.13 Reforms at Risk: What Happens After Major Policy Changes Are Enacted . . . . .	162

## 1.1 Introduction

The study of American politics encompasses an expansive range of theoretical and empirical inquiries, spanning from the formation of public attitudes to the institutional structures that shape policy outcomes. This chapter introduces key debates, methodological approaches, and thematic linkages that define the study of political behavior, representation, institutions, and policymaking in the United States. While much of the political science literature seeks to explain discrete phenomena—such as voting behavior, partisan polarization, or legislative effectiveness—this chapter foregrounds the interconnections among these domains, illustrating how political dynamics at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels interact in shaping American governance.

One of the foundational areas of inquiry in this chapter is public opinion and political attitudes. Early research in this area sought to uncover the psychological and sociological determinants of political preferences, with scholars debating the extent to which political attitudes are shaped by early socialization versus more proximate environmental influences. As the field evolved, it incorporated insights from cognitive psychology and communication studies, yielding a more nuanced understanding of how individuals process information and form political judgments. A central concern of this literature is the degree to which public opinion is stable, coherent, and responsive to elite framing, a question with significant implications for democratic responsiveness.

Closely related to public opinion is the study of political behavior, particularly voting and participation. A core debate within this literature concerns the rationality of voter decision-making. While classical democratic theory assumes that voters make informed choices based on policy preferences, empirical research has repeatedly demonstrated the prevalence of heuristics, retrospective evaluations, and social identity in shaping electoral outcomes. This research stream interrogates the conditions under which citizens engage with the political process, addressing disparities in political participation across demographic groups and the factors that drive mobilization and turnout.

Beyond individual behavior, this chapter explores the role of political parties as organizing structures that mediate mass preferences and institutional power. Theories of party competition, ideological sorting, and coalition-building underscore the strategic nature of party behavior in both electoral and legislative arenas. At the same time, scholarship on interest groups and lobbying reveals how non-electoral actors influence policymaking through agenda-setting, resource mobilization, and strategic engagement with institutions. These themes illustrate the complex relationship between formal political structures and the broader network of actors that shape policy outcomes.

Representation and institutional design are also central concerns of this chapter. Theories of representation have evolved to encompass not only electoral responsiveness but also symbolic, dyadic, and surrogate forms of representation that extend beyond traditional voter-politician relationships. Scholarship on congressional organization, executive power, and judicial decision-making further highlights the institutional mechanisms that mediate policy implementation and governance. Within this literature, the strategic behavior of political elites emerges as a key explanatory factor, with research demonstrating how institutional incentives shape policymaking processes.

Finally, the chapter addresses the broader implications of policy and federalism for American politics. The structure of the U.S. federal system generates variation in policy implementation across states, fostering a landscape in which policy experimentation, diffusion, and feedback effects are central dynamics. Research in this area examines how policies shape political behavior, influence governance structures, and contribute to broader patterns of inequality. By integrating insights from policy feedback theory and institutional analysis, this section underscores the reciprocal relationship between policy design and political outcomes.

Taken together, the themes in this chapter reflect the multidimensional nature of American politics. Rather than isolating individual political phenomena, this chapter emphasizes their interconnectedness, demonstrating how voter attitudes, party competition, institutional structures, and policy dynamics collectively shape governance in the United States. By highlighting these linkages, this chapter provides a comprehensive foundation for understanding the broader currents that define the field of American political science.

## 1.2 Public Opinion and Political Attitudes

### 1.2.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Early research on political socialization focused heavily on personality studies. Researchers like Adorno, Eysenck, and Laswell investigated the psychological roots of political attitudes. Later, the emphasis shifted to ideological and childhood socialization studies, exploring how early life experiences shape political views.
- **The Role of Timing and Environment in Shaping Political Attitudes:** Researchers debated whether political attitudes are primarily shaped in early childhood or by more recent events. *The American Voter*, a seminal work by Campbell et al., argued for the primacy of early events. Subsequent researchers, however, challenged this view, suggesting that more recent conditions can significantly alter previously held preferences. This debate revolved around the relative influence of early versus late environmental forces on the development of political attitudes.

- **The Emergence of New Research Areas in Public Opinion Studies:** In recent decades, the public opinion literature has expanded to examine the effects of factors such as media frames and perceptions of current events. The field has witnessed a decline in studies focused on personality, with McCloskey's work on the conservative personality being a notable exception. The emphasis on understanding how citizens make sense of political information has been a relatively recent development. *Framing* has emerged as a key concept, examining how the presentation of information can influence individual understanding and, ultimately, political judgments.
- **A Shift Toward Understanding and Cognitive Processes:** Lippmann raised early questions about how the public understands politics, but lacked the empirical and theoretical tools to address them adequately. Contemporary research, drawing on communication studies and cognitive psychology, has allowed for a more rigorous examination of these questions. The focus has shifted from simply measuring opinions to understanding the cognitive processes that underlie how people make sense of political issues.
- **Integrating Communication and Cognition in Public Opinion Research:** The modern public opinion literature recognizes the need to integrate insights from both communication studies (how elites frame issues and disseminate information through the media) and cognitive psychology (how individuals process and store information, and form judgments). This integration aims to build a comprehensive theory of political understanding, recognizing that both communication frames and cognitive processes play crucial roles in shaping public opinion.
- **The Influence of Party Cues and Policy Information:** There's an ongoing debate about the relative influence of party cues and policy information on public opinion. Some argue that people rely heavily on party cues as cognitive shortcuts, neglecting policy details even when presented with them. However, research suggests that party cues do not necessarily reduce the processing of policy information when individuals have it available. The question of whether party cues discourage people from seeking out policy information in the first place requires further research.
- **The Role of Social Groups in Shaping Political Attitudes:** Social group memberships are a significant source of political beliefs and can contribute to stable and constrained political attitudes. This perspective challenges the idea that party affiliation is the primary organizing principle of political belief systems. Individuals often possess knowledge about the social group alignments associated with specific policies. This group position knowledge can lead to more stable and consistent political attitudes over time, even in the absence of strong ideological beliefs.
- **The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics:** Converse's work in the 1960s significantly shaped the understanding of belief systems in the mass public. He found that a large portion of the public lacked a deep understanding of ideological concepts like the liberal-conservative continuum. Converse observed a lack of constraint or consistent relationships among different belief elements in the minds of most individuals. He argued that the public's political demands tend to be fragmented, narrow, and focused on specific issues rather than overarching ideological frameworks.
- **Challenging Traditional Assumptions About Opinion Stability:** Zaller and Feldman (1992) challenged the traditional assumption that individuals possess stable, preformed attitudes that are simply revealed in surveys. They argue that most people have a mix of partially consistent and often conflicting considerations on issues. Survey responses, in their view, reflect the considerations that are most accessible or "top of mind" at the moment of answering, not a single, true attitude.
- **The Role of Elite Discourse and Political Awareness:** Zaller's work suggests that elite-driven communications (especially through the media) play a key role in shaping public opinion. However, he emphasizes the importance of political awareness, arguing that individuals with higher levels of awareness are more likely to be exposed to and internalize elite messages. This suggests that the impact of elite discourse is mediated by individual differences in attention to politics and political values.
- **The Concept of Ambivalence in Public Opinion:** The Zaller and Feldman model acknowledges that individuals can hold conflicting views on issues, leading to a state of ambivalence. Survey responses can be unstable over time because different considerations become salient or accessible depending on the context and the flow of information. This understanding of ambivalence helps explain why seemingly minor changes in question wording or framing can produce significant shifts in survey results.
- **The Influence of Media Frames on Political Judgments:** Research has shown that media frames can have a significant impact on how individuals understand and form opinions about political events. Framing works by highlighting specific values, facts, or considerations, making them more salient and influencing the weight they carry in shaping attitudes. Experiments have demonstrated that even subtle differences in framing can lead to measurable changes in opinions.
- **The Debate Over Media Malaise and Public Negativity:** Scholars have debated whether televised political discourse, particularly its focus on conflict and negativity, contributes to public cynicism and distrust in government. While early theories suggested that television was uniquely responsible for this media malaise, more recent views acknowledge that the negativity may have spread to other media as well. The role of media in shaping public negativity towards institutions like Congress remains a topic of research.
- **The Importance of Studying Political Understanding:** The evolution of the public opinion literature reflects a growing appreciation for the complexity of how individuals understand politics. Researchers increasingly recognize that understanding is a process, shaped by both the information environment and individual cognitive processes. Studying political understanding is crucial because it precedes and shapes opinions, influencing individuals' views on what actions governments should take.
- **The Rational Public: Challenges and Contradictions:** Despite evidence of limitations in individual political knowl-

edge and reasoning, research also suggests that aggregate public opinion can be surprisingly stable and rational. This apparent paradox is often attributed to the idea that random errors in individual opinions cancel out at the aggregate level, leading to more consistent collective choices. However, biases in media reporting and individual information processing can introduce nonrandom errors, potentially undermining the rationality of aggregate opinion.

- **The Role of Heuristics in Political Decision Making:** The concept of heuristics has been central to understanding how individuals make decisions in complex political environments. Heuristics are cognitive shortcuts or rules of thumb that simplify decision making, particularly when information is limited or time is constrained. While heuristics can lead to efficient choices, they can also result in biases and suboptimal decisions. Research has explored the individual and contextual factors that influence heuristic use, and the impact of heuristics on the quality of political decision making.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** The study of public opinion remains a vibrant and evolving field with ongoing debates about the nature of belief systems, the influence of media, and the rationality of public judgments. Future research directions include a deeper examination of how individuals understand complex political issues, the interaction between emotion and cognition in shaping political attitudes, and the impact of new media technologies on public opinion. The literature faces a challenge of reconciling seemingly contradictory findings about the capabilities and limitations of citizens in a democratic society. Despite progress, there is still no single, universally accepted story about how public opinion works, highlighting the need for continued investigation and theoretical development.

### 1.2.2 Belief Systems and Political Decision Making

Kuklinski, J. H., & Peyton, B. (2007, August). Belief Systems and Political Decision Making. In R. J. Dalton & H.-D. Klingemann (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior* (pp. 45–64). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199270125.003.0003>

1. **Citation key:** kuklinski\_belief\_2007
2. **Author(s):** James H. Kuklinski and Buddy Peyton
3. **Year:** 2007
4. **Publication:** The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** belief systems, political decision-making, citizen attitudes, public opinion, political ideology
6. **Summary:** This chapter explores the structure and influence of belief systems in political decision-making. Kuklinski and Peyton review the evolution of understanding political belief systems, beginning with Philip Converse's work on mass public ideology, which suggested most people lack consistent ideological beliefs. They present three subsequent perspectives on public opinion: the "downbeat," which questions the reliability of even well-informed citizens; the "really downbeat," suggesting that most political attitudes are unstable; and the "upbeat," which argues that more citizens may hold coherent, rational political beliefs than Converse initially suggested.
7. **Theory:** The authors discuss how belief systems—complex interconnections of ideas and opinions—affect how citizens process political information and form attitudes. Converse's original theory posited that only a small fraction of the population holds coherent ideological beliefs. The downbeat revision critiques this elite segment's ideological rigidity, the really downbeat view suggests political beliefs are context-dependent, while the upbeat revision highlights how citizens may possess meaningful beliefs under certain conditions, shaped by their context and available information.
8. **Methods:** The authors mainly review existing literature and theories rather than conducting new empirical research. They explore Converse's foundational work, which used data from the *American National Election Studies* (ANES), to highlight ideological instability in the general public. They also analyze contributions from Zaller, Delli Carpini, Keeter, and others who used various methodologies, including surveys and experiments, to test beliefs' stability and ideological coherence over time.
9. **Hypotheses:** This article does not present formal hypotheses but synthesizes previous research into contrasting viewpoints on citizen ideology. It examines Converse's thesis and three perspectives, allowing for interpretations of varying degrees of ideological coherence in the public.
10. **Main findings:** The authors conclude that no single perspective fully explains public opinion, noting contradictions in the literature. While Converse's view dominated for decades, recent work suggests that citizens may be more ideologically coherent than once thought, though context greatly influences this coherence.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Most people don't understand the contours of politics and most don't hold true political attitudes" (p. 61).
  - "The fundamental shortcomings of the human thought process, especially when exacerbated by the nature of competitive politics, preclude the kind of democracy that normative theories prescribe" (p. 52).
  - "Converse's original 12 percent estimate of those who understand left-right ideology...between 58 percent...of ANES respondents answer the closed-ended ideology questions without understanding ideology itself" (p. 57).

### 1.2.3 Public Opinion

Lippmann, W. (1961). *Public Opinion*. The Macmillan Company

1. **Citation key:** lippmann\_public\_1961
2. **Author(s):** Walter Lippmann
3. **Year:** 1961
4. **Publication:** Public Opinion (Macmillan)

5. **Keywords:** pseudo-environment, stereotype, public opinion, propaganda, democracy, social constructionism
  6. **Summary:** In *Public Opinion*, Walter Lippmann provides a foundational analysis of how public perception, shaped by cognitive limitations and media influence, affects democratic society. He argues that individuals form mental models, or "pseudo-environments," which are subjective interpretations of reality based on limited information. These pseudo-environments simplify complex realities but often lead to distorted perceptions influenced by media stereotypes and propaganda. Lippmann's critique highlights the potential challenges to democratic governance when citizens rely on these subjective models, rather than objective truths, to form opinions and make political decisions.
  7. **Theory:** Lippmann introduces the concept of the pseudo-environment, a mental construct that individuals use to interpret the world in manageable terms. He argues that because people cannot directly experience the complexity of the external world, they rely on simplified stereotypes to navigate reality. This tendency, while adaptive, makes the public susceptible to manipulation by media and elites who can shape these pseudo-environments through selective information. Lippmann contends that this reliance on constructed perceptions fundamentally challenges the functioning of democracy, as public opinion is based not on direct knowledge but on mediated representations.
  8. **Methods:** Lippmann's approach is largely theoretical, drawing from psychology, philosophy, and sociology to support his arguments. He uses an analytical framework to explain how cognitive limitations and media influence shape public perceptions, and he discusses the role of stereotypes in simplifying complex issues for the general public. Although he does not conduct empirical research, Lippmann's insights are supported by detailed observations and references to contemporary literature in these fields.
  9. **Hypotheses:** While Lippmann does not propose formal hypotheses, his theoretical framework suggests the following:
    - Individuals create a pseudo-environment due to cognitive limitations, which affects their understanding of reality.
    - Stereotypes, as cognitive shortcuts, help simplify information but also contribute to misperceptions and biases.
    - Media plays a central role in shaping the pseudo-environment by selectively presenting information, which can manipulate public opinion.
- These propositions underpin Lippmann's critique of public opinion as inherently limited and prone to distortion in democratic societies.
10. **Main findings:** Lippmann concludes that democracy is inherently challenged by the reliance on mediated and often distorted perceptions of reality. He argues that individuals depend on the media to form their opinions, which makes public opinion vulnerable to manipulation through selective storytelling and propaganda. To counter these limitations, Lippmann advocates for a "specialized class" of experts to interpret complex issues for the public, facilitating more informed decision-making in democratic societies.
  11. **Key definitions:**
    - *Pseudo-environment*: A subjective and often biased mental image of the world, constructed by individuals to interpret complex information and shaped heavily by media narratives.
    - *Stereotype*: A cognitive shortcut used by individuals to categorize and simplify information, often resulting in fixed and oversimplified images or ideas that may distort reality.
    - *Manufacture of Consent*: The process by which elites shape public opinion through control of information, suggesting that public consensus is not naturally occurring but is strategically constructed.
    - *Public Opinion*: The collective opinion of a society, influenced by the pseudo-environment and media representations, which may not reflect objective reality but rather a constructed interpretation of events.
    - *The "bewildered herd"*: A term describing the general public, seen as uninformed and easily manipulated, highlighting Lippmann's skepticism about the capability of average citizens to form rational, independent opinions in a complex society.

#### 1.2.4 The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics

Converse, P. E. (1964). The nature of belief systems in mass publics (1964). *Critical Review*, 18(1-3), 1-74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08913810608443650>

1. **Citation key:** converse\_nature\_1964
2. **Author(s):** Philip E. Converse
3. **Year:** 1964 (republished 2006)
4. **Publication:** Critical Review, reprinted from *Ideology and Its Discontents* (1964)
5. **Keywords:** belief systems, mass publics, political ideology, public opinion, political sophistication
6. **Summary:** Broadly, democratic theory assumes that voters in the "mass public" hold clear ideological values which allow them to make voting decisions based on the positions candidates purport to hold. Such theories assume voters distinguish between candidates' positions based on a liberal-conservative ideological spectrum. Thus, when the electorate chooses politicians that vary from one end of the spectrum to the other, we assume the electorate is becoming more conservative or more liberal.

This foundational work examines the structure of belief systems within mass publics, arguing that only a minority of the general public holds ideologically consistent political beliefs. Converse introduces the concept of "constraint," referring to the degree of interdependence among beliefs, and classifies citizens into five levels of political sophistication. He investigates the implications of these findings for democratic representation and the formation of public opinion.

7. **Theory:** Converse theorizes that belief systems are structured in hierarchical "strata," where elites exhibit high ideo-

logical consistency due to their access to information and frequent engagement with political issues. In contrast, the masses display low levels of constraint in their beliefs, often lacking stable or coherent ideological perspectives. This stratification challenges the idea that the general public can form consistent, informed political judgments.

8. **Methods:** Converse uses survey data, particularly from the *American National Election Studies* (ANES), to assess patterns of ideological constraint among different segments of the population. He categorizes respondents based on their levels of conceptualization, evaluating how well they can connect specific beliefs to overarching ideological themes.
9. **Hypotheses:** Converse hypothesizes that political sophistication and ideological consistency decrease significantly from elites to the general public. His analysis confirms this hypothesis, showing that only a small fraction of the population operates with high ideological constraint.
10. **Main findings:** Converse finds that the majority of citizens do not have stable belief systems that resemble ideological frameworks seen among political elites. Most people's attitudes are context-dependent and lack interconnection, suggesting that ideological thinking is largely absent among the general public, with implications for democratic theory and policy responsiveness. Specifically:

- **Ideologues:** The respondents in the survey relied on "a relatively abstract and far-reaching conceptual dimension as a yardstick against which political objects and their shifting political significance over time were evaluated" (p. 14).
- **Near-Ideologues:** These respondents mentioned the liberal-conservative dimension peripherally, but did not appear to place much emphasis on it, or used it in a way that led researchers to question their understanding of the issues.
- **Group Interest:** This group did not demonstrate an understanding of the ideological spectrum, but made choices based on which groups they saw the parties representing (e.g., Democrats supporting racial minorities, Republicans supporting business interests). These respondents tended to lack understanding of the issues that did not clearly benefit the identified groups.
- **Nature of the Times:** The respondents exhibited no understanding of the ideological differences between parties, but made their decisions on the "nature of the times." Thus, they did not like Republicans because of the Depressions, or they did not like Democrats because of the Korean War.
- **No Issue Content:** This group included respondents whose evaluation of the political scene had "no shred of policy significance whatever" (p. 16). Among these respondents were individuals who identified a party affiliation, but had no idea what the party stood for, as well as individuals who based their decisions on personal qualities of candidates.
- **Elite Influence:** The mass public does not seem to share beliefs in any predictable way with elites. Voting patterns at the lower end of the scale are following patterns of ideologues and near ideologues who have a firm grasp of the issues. In essence, elites have little influence on mass ideology.
- **Response Instability:** In addition, Converse's interviews with the same respondents over a two-year period often show little correlation with each other. In these cases, only 13 of 20 respondents managed to locate themselves on the same side of a given controversy in successive interviews. Converse's interpretation is that this change seemed almost exclusively random instead of as a response to changing beliefs.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "It is our primary thesis that, as one moves from elite sources of belief systems downwards on such an information scale, several important things occur. First, the contextual grasp of 'standard' political belief systems fades out very rapidly, almost before one has passed beyond the 10 percent of the American population that in the 1950s had completed standard college training" (p. 10).
- "Our data argue that, where any single dimension is concerned, very substantial portions of the public simply do not belong on the dimension at all. They should be set aside as not forming any part of that particular issue public" (p. 52).
- "Such a description is not particularly economical, and the investigator is confronted by the fact that, in coping with a poorly constrained system, he must choose between parsimony and explanatory power. This dilemma confronts him only in the degree that he insists upon dealing with the issue or ideological base of mass politics" (p. 54).

#### 1.2.5 An Extension and Test of Converse's "Black-and-White" Model of Response Stability

Hill, J. L. (2001). An Extension and Test of Converse's "Black-and-White" Model of Response Stability. *American Political Science Review*, 95(2), 397–413. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055401002209>

1. **Citation key:** hill\_extension\_2001
2. **Author(s):** Jennifer L. Hill and Hanspeter Kriesi
3. **Year:** 2001
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** public opinion, black-and-white model, response stability, belief systems, nonattitudes
6. **Summary:** Hill and Kriesi revisit and extend Philip Converse's influential "black-and-white" model, which categorizes respondents into opinion holders and those with nonattitudes who give unstable responses. This study tests Converse's model using a Swiss dataset on support for pollution reduction policies and introduces a third category: durable changers who form or change their opinion over time in a systematic manner. The authors find that many of

- those Converse deemed “nonattitudinal” might be best understood through Zaller’s concept of ambivalence, where responses reflect a meaningful but context-dependent view rather than mere randomness.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on Converse’s original model by suggesting that response instability may not solely indicate nonattitudes but could reflect ambivalence or rational opinion changes in response to new information. They argue that individuals fall into three groups: stable opinion holders, vacillating changers (reflecting ambivalence), and durable changers, who change their opinions based on new experiences or information. This tripartite model allows for a more nuanced understanding of public opinion stability and change over time.
  8. **Methods:** Hill and Kriesi employ a mixture model approach to classify respondents into the three groups based on their response patterns across four waves of a Swiss survey on air pollution policies. The study examines attitudes toward six policies, each varying in public familiarity and degree of behavioral constraint. The mixture model, which estimates group membership probabilistically, enables the authors to test hypotheses about response stability and group sizes while allowing for random or ambivalent response behavior among certain respondents. Data were collected over two years with questions including support for speed limits, CO2 taxes, and car-free zones.
  9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that Converse’s nonattitudes thesis may overstate randomness in public opinion. They expect to find three groups: opinion holders with stable beliefs, durable changers who form new opinions, and vacillating changers exhibiting ambivalence rather than pure randomness. Findings confirm this hypothesis, with data supporting the existence of the three distinct groups rather than Converse’s binary classification.
  10. **Main findings:** The analysis reveals that roughly 40–60% of respondents exhibit stable attitudes, while others vacillate in their responses or durably change their opinions over time. Contrary to Converse’s original model, the findings suggest that the unstable group’s responses are not purely random but reflect ambivalence or weakly held opinions. The study also casts doubt on the measurement-error model, which attributes response instability to survey instrument limitations, as the tripartite model better captures response variability in practice.
  11. **Key quotations:**
    - “Our results imply that the response behavior of this group may be best interpreted in terms of Zaller’s notion of ambivalence” (p. 398).
    - “The findings are least supportive of the measurement-error interpretation... If that interpretation were correct, we would have found just one group of respondents” (p. 408).
    - “The three-group model better accounts for response stability and the influence of public debate, challenging Converse’s binary black-and-white framework” (p. 404).

#### 1.2.6 The American Voter

Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., Miller, W. E., & Stokes, D. E. (1980, September). *The American Voter*. University of Chicago Press. Retrieved November 5, 2024, from <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/A/bo24047989.html>

1. **Citation key:** campbell\_american\_1980
2. **Author(s):** Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes
3. **Year:** 1960
4. **Publication:** The American Voter (University of Chicago Press)
5. **Keywords:** party identification, voting behavior, public opinion, political psychology, ideology
6. **Summary:** *The American Voter* introduces the “funnel model” of political behavior, arguing that party identification (party ID) is the primary determinant of voting behavior. Party ID, acquired early in life, shapes attitudes on key issues and candidate evaluations, which subsequently influence voting decisions. The authors suggest that while voters may lack consistent ideological views, they form a psychological attachment to a political party, filtering political information through a “perceptual screen” that aligns with their partisan orientation.
7. **Theory:** Campbell et al. propose that political attitudes develop through a funnel of causality: early socialization leads to a stable party ID, which then shapes attitudes toward political candidates, policies, and issues. They argue that party ID acts as an “enduring psychological attachment” that affects the interpretation of political events. This perspective challenges the rational-choice and issue-based models of voting behavior by emphasizing psychological attachment over policy-based evaluation.
8. **Methods:** The authors use longitudinal data from the 1948, 1952, and 1956 presidential elections, collected through surveys that were the precursor to the American National Election Studies (ANES). The data include respondents’ self-identified party ID, views on candidates, and issue positions, enabling the authors to track consistency and stability in partisan attitudes over time.
9. **Main findings:** *The American Voter* demonstrates that party ID is highly stable and resistant to change, influencing attitudes across several dimensions: candidate traits, party performance, and group interests. Their findings suggest that only a small portion of voters (12%) exhibit consistent ideological positions, with most voters lacking detailed knowledge of party stances on issues. Voters’ attitudes tend to align more with personal and group benefit perceptions rather than with abstract ideological principles.
10. **Key definitions:**
  - *Party Identification (Party ID):* A stable psychological attachment to a political party, usually inherited from parents and socialized early in life, which influences individuals’ perception of political events, issues, and candidates.
  - *Funnel Model of Political Behavior:* A model describing how political attitudes develop, beginning with the acquisition of party ID, which shapes political attitudes and, ultimately, voting behavior through a “funnel” process.

- *Perceptual Screen*: The cognitive filter through which individuals interpret political information favorably or unfavorably based on their party ID, often resulting in selective perception.
- *Non-Ideological Voting*: The tendency of most voters to lack consistent ideological frameworks when making political decisions, leading to decisions that are less about abstract principles and more about personal or group benefits.

### 1.2.7 The American Voter Revisited

Lewis-Beck, M. S., Norpoth, H., Jacoby, W. G., & Weisberg, H. F. (2008, May). *The American Voter Revisited* (1st ed.). University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.92266>

- 1. Citation key:** lewis-beck\_american\_2008
- 2. Author(s):** Michael S. Lewis-Beck, William G. Jacoby, Helmut Norpoth, and Herbert F. Weisberg
- 3. Year:** 2008
- 4. Publication:** University of Michigan Press
- 5. Keywords:** voter behavior, political polarization, party identification, voting decision, political psychology
- 6. Summary:** *The American Voter Revisited* revisits and updates the framework of the original 1960 classic, *The American Voter*, in light of contemporary presidential elections, specifically the contentious elections of 2000 and 2004. Through extensive analysis using the same social-psychological approach, this study finds that despite increased political polarization and changes in the media landscape, the factors driving voter decisions—particularly party identification, candidate evaluation, and social group reference—remain consistent over time. The book affirms the enduring relevance of the original “funnel of causality” model while acknowledging incremental shifts in voter ideological sophistication.
- 7. Theory:** The authors retain the original social-psychological framework, emphasizing that long-standing psychological predispositions, primarily party identification, mediate individual voting choices. This model suggests that political attitudes toward candidates, issues, and parties are informed by stable orientations rather than short-term events. The “funnel of causality” symbolizes this process, where enduring psychological and social influences narrow down to individual voting decisions. This framework highlights continuity in voter behavior, suggesting that modern voters, like those in the 1950s, often rely on minimal information, structured by long-term partisan attachments, to make electoral choices.
- 8. Methods:** This study employs data from the *National Election Studies* (NES) focused on the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, replicating the analytical approach of *The American Voter* with updates to statistical techniques, such as using logistic regression. The authors apply the “funnel of causality” model to assess how enduring predispositions, such as party identification and issue preferences, shape voting decisions. The book also includes commentary and controversy sections, which discuss advances and critiques of the original model and its application to recent elections.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - Voters’ decisions are primarily driven by stable, long-term psychological predispositions, with party identification being a significant influence.
  - Modern political polarization intensifies the role of party identification in shaping candidate evaluations and voting behavior.
  - Voters’ political preferences are minimally affected by short-term campaign events, as their political orientations are deeply rooted.
  - While voters may have limited information, their vote choices align with basic social and psychological factors, ensuring rationality within a limited scope.
- 10. Main findings:** The study concludes that, despite rising political polarization and advancements in media technology, American voter behavior has remained fundamentally consistent since the 1950s. Party identification continues to be a critical determinant of voting behavior, with voters relying on familiar psychological cues to evaluate candidates and parties. Though there are signs of increased ideological coherence, particularly with polarization enhancing the consistency of liberal or conservative views across issues, the book ultimately underscores the stability of the social-psychological model. The authors find that modern voters still exhibit low levels of political information, confirming the notion of “satisficing,” where voters use minimal information to make decisions aligned with their predispositions.
- 11. Key definitions:**
  - *Funnel of Causality*: A model illustrating the narrowing influence of social, psychological, and political factors on individual voting decisions, suggesting that long-term orientations play a dominant role in shaping political behavior.
  - *Party Identification*: A long-standing psychological attachment to a political party, which serves as a primary influence on voting behavior and evaluations of political issues and candidates.
  - *Candidate Evaluation*: The assessment of political candidates based on personal qualities, issue stances, and party affiliation, filtered through voters’ pre-existing predispositions.
  - *Issue Voting*: Voting based on specific policy preferences, although limited by voters’ tendency to align issues with their established party identification and broader ideological orientations.
  - *Satisficing*: A decision-making process where voters use minimal information, relying on familiar cues and predispositions to make satisfactory political choices without exhaustive analysis.

### 1.2.8 The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion

Zaller, J. R. (1992, August). *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/10.1017/CBO9780511818691>

1. **Citation key:** zaller\_nature\_1992
2. **Author(s):** John R. Zaller
3. **Year:** 1992
4. **Publication:** The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion (Cambridge University Press)
5. **Keywords:** public opinion, elite influence, political awareness, attitude change, RAS model
6. **Summary:** Zaller argues that elite-driven communications significantly impact public opinion, mediated by political awareness, which determines the consistency and salience of considerations. Rejecting the notion of a single "true" voter preference, Zaller presents the Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model, where stated opinions are influenced by recently salient considerations. Individuals hold conflicting views on issues, and the "winning" view at any time reflects what considerations are most accessible.
7. **Theory:** Zaller's RAS model posits that individuals' political opinions result from an ongoing process of receiving, accepting, and sampling elite-driven considerations. Political awareness determines how much information individuals receive and accept based on consistency with prior beliefs. For Zaller, people reach into a "bucket" of considerations when forming an opinion, retrieving those near the top, which are more accessible. Political predispositions shape acceptance or rejection of received information, leading to differences in attitude consistency.
8. **Methods:** Zaller uses *American National Election Studies* (NES) survey data to empirically test his RAS model, examining public opinion dynamics on diverse subjects, including domestic and foreign policy, governmental trust, racial equality, and the Vietnam War. He assesses the relationship between individuals' political awareness, predispositions, and elite discourse on these topics.
9. **Hypotheses:** Zaller hypothesizes that political awareness and elite discourse intensity drive variation in public opinion. Findings confirm that political awareness shapes exposure to and acceptance of elite messages, resulting in ideologically consistent opinions primarily among the most politically aware individuals.
10. **Main findings:** Zaller finds that the more politically aware a person is, the more selective they are in internalizing elite messages consistent with their values. Less aware individuals, however, tend to accept more information indiscriminately. Attitude change is incremental, occurring as changes in elite discourse shift the balance of accessible considerations. He outlines several axioms to illustrate his model:
  - **Reception Axiom:** The greater the person's level of cognitive engagement with an issue, the more likely he or she is to be exposed to and comprehend political messages concerning that issue.
  - **Resistance Axiom:** People tend to resist arguments that are inconsistent with their political predispositions, but they do so only to the extent that they possess the contextual information necessary to perceive a relationship between the message and their predispositions.
  - **Accessibility Axiom:** The more recently a person recalls a consideration, the less time it takes to retrieve that consideration or related considerations from memory for use.
  - **Response Axiom:** Individuals answer survey questions by averaging across the considerations that are immediately salient or accessible to them.
11. **Key Definitions:**
  - **Consideration:** Any reason that might induce an individual to decide a political issue one way or another.
  - **Political awareness:** An individual's reception and comprehension of communications from the political environment. According to Zaller, political awareness is best measured by simple tests of neutral factual information since factual information is critical for intellectual engagement with politics.
  - **Political predispositions:** Stable, individual-level traits that regulate the acceptance or non-acceptance of the political communication the person receives. Predispositions are the critical intervening variable between the communications people encounter in the mass media, on the one side, and their statements of political preference, on the other (since they determine the 'accept' part of the RAS model).
  - **Values:** General and enduring standards that hold a more central position than attitudes in individuals' belief systems.

### 1.2.9 A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences

Zaller, J., & Feldman, S. (1992). A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences. *American Journal of Political Science*, 36(3), 579. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111583>

1. **Citation key:** zaller\_simple\_1992
2. **Author(s):** John Zaller and Stanley Feldman
3. **Year:** 1992
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** survey response, public opinion, attitude stability, ambivalence, accessibility
6. **Summary:** Zaller and Feldman critique the traditional assumption that survey responses reflect stable pre-formed attitudes. Instead, they argue that responses are often constructed on the spot, drawing on considerations that happen to be salient at the time. This model, which they call the "Simple Theory of the Survey Response," attributes response

instability and sensitivity to question framing to the fluctuating accessibility of considerations in memory.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose three axioms to explain survey responses:

- **Ambivalence Axiom:** Individuals generally hold conflicting considerations on issues, meaning responses vary depending on which considerations are top of mind.
- **Response Axiom:** People answer survey questions by averaging across accessible considerations, constructing responses in the moment.
- **Accessibility Axiom:** Recently thought-about considerations are more likely to be sampled, making responses susceptible to recent events or question framing.

This model suggests that public opinion is a fluid set of accessible considerations rather than a fixed collection of coherent attitudes.

**8. Methods:** Zaller and Feldman analyze data from the 1987 *National Election Studies* (NES) Pilot Study, employing both open-ended and closed-ended questions on topics like government services and aid to minorities. Their approach allows them to observe how variations in question format and order affect the accessibility of considerations and the consistency of responses. They compare responses made immediately after open-ended reflections with those based solely on closed-ended prompts.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that response instability arises from the reliance on accessible considerations rather than stable attitudes. They further predict that framing and question order will alter responses by influencing which considerations are accessible, a hypothesis confirmed by their data on the influence of question design on responses.

**10. Main findings:** The study reveals that survey responses are highly context-dependent, shaped by which considerations are accessible at the time. They find substantial correlation between the direction of open-ended thoughts and subsequent closed-ended responses, underscoring that responses often reflect the thoughts at the forefront rather than stable opinions.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The model abandons the conventional but implausible notion that most people possess opinions at the level of specificity of typical survey items-and instead assumes that most people are internally conflicted over most political issues-and that most respond to survey questions on the basis of whatever ideas are at the top of their heads at the moment of answering" (p. 579).
- "Most citizens...do not possess preformed attitudes at the level of specificity demanded in surveys. Rather, they carry around in their heads a mix of only partially consistent ideas and considerations" (p. 579).
- "Individuals answer survey questions by averaging across the considerations that happen to be salient at the moment of response, where saliency is determined by the accessibility axioms" (p. 586).

### 1.2.10 What Americans Know about Politics and Why it Matters

Carpini, M. X. D., & Keeter, S. (1996, January). *What Americans Know about Politics and why it Matters*. Yale University Press

**1. Citation key:** carpini\_what\_1996

**2. Author(s):** Michael X. Delli Carpini and Scott Keeter

**3. Year:** 1996

**4. Publication:** *What Americans Know about Politics and Why it Matters* (Yale University Press)

**5. Keywords:** political knowledge, civic participation, democratic engagement, inequality, public opinion

**6. Summary:** This book is a comprehensive examination of the American public's political knowledge and the implications of such knowledge for democratic engagement. Michael X. Delli Carpini and Scott Keeter assess the state of political awareness in the United States, revealing that significant disparities exist in levels of political knowledge, which are strongly correlated with socioeconomic status, race, and gender. They argue that political knowledge affects civic participation and democratic responsiveness, with better-informed citizens more likely to participate in political activities and to support democratic norms.

**7. Theory:** Delli Carpini and Keeter propose that political knowledge is essential for effective democratic citizenship. They argue that informed citizens are better equipped to make choices aligned with their interests, advocate for those interests, and hold political leaders accountable. The authors examine the relationship between political knowledge and variables like participation, tolerance, and attitude stability, suggesting that greater knowledge enhances democratic engagement and reduces political inequality. They also critique the prevailing optimism in democratic theory that low knowledge can be offset by cognitive shortcuts, asserting that a well-informed public is vital for democracy's health.

**8. Methods:** Drawing from over fifty years of survey data, including sources such as the *National Election Studies* and Roper Center data archives, Delli Carpini and Keeter use a wide array of knowledge questions to measure Americans' political awareness. They also conduct original surveys and comparative analyses, employing multivariate regression models to explore the predictors and effects of political knowledge. Their empirical work focuses on identifying patterns and disparities in knowledge across demographic groups.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Higher levels of political knowledge are positively associated with increased political participation.
- Political knowledge enhances citizens' ability to form stable and consistent political attitudes.
- Socioeconomic factors like education, income, and age significantly predict political knowledge levels.

- Racial and gender gaps in political knowledge contribute to unequal representation in democratic processes.

These hypotheses are supported by findings indicating that informed citizens participate more actively, demonstrate higher political tolerance, and show greater consistency between their interests and attitudes.

**10. Main findings:** The book concludes that political knowledge in the U.S. is unevenly distributed, favoring affluent, educated, and white citizens. This unequal distribution limits political participation among underrepresented groups, hindering a truly representative democracy. Delli Carpini and Keeter emphasize the need for systemic changes to improve access to political information, proposing reforms in education, media, and public policy to foster a more informed and engaged citizenry. Their analysis suggests that without such changes, disparities in political knowledge will continue to exacerbate inequalities in democratic participation and influence.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Political Knowledge:* The range of factual information about politics that citizens retain, including understanding political institutions, processes, and major political actors and issues.
- *Civic Engagement:* Active participation in political processes, including voting, attending meetings, and engaging in community organizations, often enhanced by political knowledge.
- *Democratic Responsiveness:* The extent to which government actions reflect the will and interests of its citizens, typically strengthened by an informed electorate capable of holding officials accountable.
- *Heuristics in Voting:* Cognitive shortcuts that allow individuals to make voting decisions based on limited information, which Delli Carpini and Keeter argue is not a substitute for political knowledge.

### 1.2.11 On Voter Competence

Goren, P. (2012, September). *On Voter Competence*. Oxford University Press

1. **Citation key:** goren\_voter\_2012

2. **Author(s):** Paul Goren

3. **Year:** 2012

4. **Publication:** On Voter Competence (Oxford University Press)

5. **Keywords:** voter competence, policy principles, political ideology, heuristic voting, electoral behavior

6. **Summary:** Paul Goren's *On Voter Competence* challenges traditional views that regard American voters as insufficiently informed to participate meaningfully in democratic decision-making. Contrary to the idea that voters lack the cognitive sophistication necessary for policy-based voting, Goren argues that voters, regardless of their level of political sophistication, rely on three central policy principles—limited government, traditional morality, and military strength—as heuristics in their decision-making process. He claims these principles guide electoral choices across levels of voter knowledge, suggesting that policy voting is more prevalent than previously assumed.

7. **Theory:** Goren proposes that policy principles act as accessible heuristics that bridge the gap between complex political ideologies and the practical political choices voters make. These principles are based on fundamental values and provide a simplified framework for voters to align their political beliefs with candidate choices. Goren argues that policy principles are more tangible than abstract ideological identifications and more stable than specific issue preferences, thus serving as reliable guides for voter behavior.

8. **Methods:** Goren tests his theory by analyzing data from the *American National Election Study* (ANES) spanning 1988–2008, along with original survey data to explore the origins and effects of policy principles. Using confirmatory factor analysis and logistic regression, he evaluates the extent to which these principles influence presidential vote choices independently of partisan or ideological labels, focusing on whether this effect holds across varying levels of political sophistication.

9. **Hypotheses:** Goren's hypotheses focus on the role of policy principles in voter competence and decision-making:

- Voters across the political sophistication spectrum use policy principles in electoral decision-making.
- Policy principles, rather than specific ideological labels, serve as primary heuristics in determining voter choices.
- Limited government, traditional morality, and military strength operate as distinct cleavages, organizing voter preferences across levels of political awareness.

The hypotheses are confirmed, with results showing that policy principles play a significant role in vote choice, offering a robust framework for voter competence beyond partisan or ideological constraints.

**10. Main findings:** Goren finds that the majority of voters, including those with lower political sophistication, use policy principles to guide their vote choices. These principles provide a stable foundation for voter behavior and offer a middle ground between ideological abstraction and issue-specific preferences. The study suggests that voter competence, measured by adherence to policy principles, is more widespread than previously acknowledged. Goren's findings imply that American voters are more engaged in policy-oriented voting than prior studies suggest, challenging assumptions that low-information voters are unable to vote in line with coherent principles.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Policy Principles:* Fundamental policy preferences that represent core values, such as limited government, traditional morality, and military strength. Goren posits these principles as distinct from specific issue positions or ideological identities.
- *Limited Government:* A policy principle reflecting a preference for minimal government intervention in economic and social issues, often gauged by attitudes towards welfare and social programs.
- *Traditional Morality:* A policy principle centered on conservative social values, particularly regarding family struc-

ture and social norms, which serves as a lens through which voters evaluate candidates.

- **Heuristic Voting:** The use of cognitive shortcuts, such as policy principles, that enable voters to make informed decisions without extensive knowledge of specific issues or candidates, enhancing perceived voter competence.

### 1.2.12 Partisan Perceptual Bias and the Information Environment

Jerit, J., & Barabas, J. (2012). Partisan Perceptual Bias and the Information Environment [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 74(3), 672–684. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381612000187>

1. **Citation key:** jerit\_partisan\_2012
2. **Author(s):** Jennifer Jerit and Jason Barabas
3. **Year:** 2012
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** perceptual bias, partisan bias, information environment, media coverage, selective learning
6. **Summary:** Jerit and Barabas examine how partisan perceptual bias—the tendency of individuals to view facts in line with their political affiliations—interacts with the information environment. Their study uses survey data and experimental methods to assess whether media coverage impacts the extent of partisan bias. The authors find that partisanship influences which facts people remember, with higher levels of media coverage intensifying this bias, leading partisans to selectively learn information that aligns with their views.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that individuals are motivated to process information in ways that align with their partisan views, a phenomenon amplified by increased media coverage. Building on motivated reasoning theories, they suggest that perceptual bias arises from the selective acceptance of information congruent with one's partisan views, especially on issues that reinforce party stances.
8. **Methods:** The study combines observational survey data with media content analysis, and it includes an experiment where participants are exposed to partisan-relevant information. Survey responses gauge individuals' knowledge on various political topics, while media coverage levels are analyzed to determine the effect of information availability on selective learning.

In greater detail: Jerit and Barabas employ a two-part research design, integrating both observational and experimental methods to investigate how partisan bias interacts with the media environment:

- **Study 1 – Observational Analysis:** The first study uses observational survey data to measure how partisanship and media coverage interact to shape political knowledge. The authors analyze data from the *National Annenberg Election Survey* (NAES), which captures respondents' knowledge on fact-based political issues. This dataset includes information on respondents' partisan affiliation, their knowledge on partisan-aligned and non-aligned facts, and varying levels of media exposure. Additionally, a content analysis of news coverage on relevant issues quantifies the extent of media coverage. By linking respondents' knowledge to the level of media coverage, the authors assess whether greater exposure reinforces partisan bias, finding that high media coverage strengthens selective learning.
  - **Study 2 – Experimental Design:** In the second study, Jerit and Barabas conduct an experiment to test the causal effects of partisan bias on political knowledge. Participants are randomly assigned to read news articles containing either partisan-consistent or inconsistent information, simulating a real-world media environment. After exposure, respondents answer questions testing their recall and knowledge about the information presented. The experimental results support the observational findings: respondents retain information that aligns with their partisan beliefs, demonstrating selective learning. Additionally, respondents' knowledge is greater for partisan-consistent facts than for facts favoring the opposing party, especially when the information is high in salience.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that partisans will have higher knowledge of facts that cast their party in a positive light and less knowledge of facts that cast it negatively (H1). They further hypothesize that increased media coverage amplifies this pattern of perceptual bias (H2). Their results confirm both hypotheses.
  10. **Main findings:** Jerit and Barabas find that partisan perceptual bias is stronger on issues with high media coverage. For example, Democrats and Republicans are more knowledgeable about information favorable to their party and less likely to retain information that challenges it. This bias persists even with extensive media coverage, suggesting that partisanship and media interact to reinforce selective learning patterns.
  11. **Key quotations:**
    - "People perceive the world in a manner consistent with their political views. The result is a selective pattern of learning in which partisans have higher levels of knowledge for facts that confirm their world view and lower levels of knowledge for facts that challenge them" (p. 673).
    - "The information environment interacts with individual-level motivation in a powerful way... increasing the level of media coverage heightens partisan perceptual bias" (p. 682).
    - "When individual-level motivation is absent, greater amounts of news coverage generally translate into higher levels of political knowledge. However, when a topic has implications for one of the two parties, increasing the level of media coverage intensifies perceptual bias" (p. 683).

### 1.2.13 Learning and Opinion Change, Not Priming: Reconsidering the Priming Hypothesis

Lenz, G. S. (2009). Learning and Opinion Change, Not Priming: Reconsidering the Priming Hypothesis. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(4), 821–837. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2009.00403.x>

1. **Citation key:** lenz\_learning\_2009
  2. **Author(s):** Gabriel S. Lenz
  3. **Year:** 2009
  4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
  5. **Keywords:** priming, opinion change, learning, media effects, campaigns
  6. **Summary:** Lenz challenges the well-known priming hypothesis, which argues that media and campaign messages can alter the criteria voters use to evaluate political candidates by making certain issues more salient. Through an analysis of panel data across four campaign contexts, Lenz finds little evidence for priming effects. Instead, he proposes that the appearance of priming is largely a product of two processes: (1) exposure to campaign messages informs individuals about the candidates' positions, and (2) individuals subsequently adopt their preferred candidate's stance on those issues as their own, reflecting a learning rather than priming effect.
  7. **Theory:** Lenz questions the traditional priming hypothesis by suggesting that increased media attention does not necessarily alter the weight individuals place on certain issues but rather enhances their knowledge of party or candidate positions. According to Lenz, this informed learning leads individuals to align their opinions with their preferred party's stance, creating the appearance of priming. His approach aligns with theories of partisan learning, where political information processing results in alignment with existing preferences rather than a change in evaluative criteria.
  8. **Methods:** Lenz conducts four case studies using panel data from various elections to distinguish between learning and priming effects. For each case, he assesses whether increased attention to specific issues leads to actual shifts in the criteria voters use for candidate evaluation or whether it results in increased knowledge of candidate positions and alignment with those positions. The cases include:
    - **1997 British Election (European Integration):** Using panel data, Lenz measures changes in the salience of European integration and voter alignment with party positions on this issue.
    - **2000 U.S. Presidential Election (Social Security):** He tracks shifts in voter knowledge of candidates' Social Security positions and subsequent opinion change after debate exposure.
    - **1976 U.S. Presidential Election (Public Works Jobs):** Lenz examines the public's familiarity with candidates' public employment policies and measures whether increased salience correlates with opinion shifts.
    - **1980 U.S. Presidential Election (Defense Spending):** The analysis focuses on whether defense spending prominence affects candidate support, particularly through voter learning about Reagan's and Carter's positions.
- By comparing those who knew candidate positions pre-campaign with those who learned them during the campaign, Lenz evaluates the likelihood of learning effects versus priming across these cases.
9. **Hypotheses:** Lenz hypothesizes that the observed priming effects in prior studies can be explained by learning, where campaign attention increases public knowledge of party or candidate positions rather than altering the weight of issues in evaluations. His findings confirm this hypothesis across cases, revealing learning-induced opinion shifts rather than priming.
  10. **Main findings:** Lenz finds that priming effects are largely explained by learning effects. When campaigns focus on an issue, voters who gain new knowledge about candidates' positions tend to align their views with their preferred candidate, rather than reevaluating the criteria for candidate selection based on the issue's salience. His findings indicate that campaign messaging plays a more informative than manipulative role, as individuals use this information to solidify support based on party alignment.
  11. **Key quotations:**
    - "I reanalyze four cases of alleged priming, using panel data to test priming effects against these alternatives. Across these four cases, I find little evidence of priming effects" (p. 821).
    - "The substantial increase in news media coverage and campaign advertising apparently failed to prime attitudes about European integration. Instead, the issue-weight increases researchers usually attribute to priming appear to arise entirely because the exposure informed the public about the parties' positions" (p. 825).
    - "Learning the parties' or candidates' positions appears to drive this tendency and that it generates the appearance of priming effects" (p. 823).

#### 1.2.14 Making Sense of Issues Through Media Frames: Understanding the Kosovo Crisis

Berinsky, A. J., & Kinder, D. R. (2006). Making Sense of Issues Through Media Frames: Understanding the Kosovo Crisis [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 68(3), 640–656. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00451.x>

1. **Citation key:** berinsky\_making\_2006
2. **Author(s):** Adam J. Berinsky and Donald R. Kinder
3. **Year:** 2006
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** media frames, framing effects, Kosovo crisis, political understanding, cognitive psychology
6. **Summary:** Berinsky and Kinder investigate how media frames influence public understanding of complex political events, focusing on the 1999 Kosovo crisis. They argue that framing news as coherent stories allows individuals to better comprehend and organize information, thus shaping political judgments. Through two experiments, they demonstrate that the way information is framed—whether emphasizing humanitarian concerns or risks to America—affects what people remember, how they structure that information, and, to a limited extent, their opinions on government

- intervention.
- 7. Theory:** Drawing from cognitive psychology and communication studies, the authors propose that frames act as “central organizing ideas” that provide structure to complex sequences of events, making them easier to understand. Inspired by Pennington and Hastie’s jury decision-making models and Kintsch’s text comprehension theories, they argue that effective frames resemble good stories that clarify causality and chronology, aiding comprehension by aligning new information with familiar narratives.
- 8. Methods:** The authors conduct two experiments to examine how framing affects understanding of the Kosovo crisis:
- **Experiment 1:** Participants ( $n = 141$ ) from Ann Arbor, Michigan, were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: a control with neutral framing, a “humanitarian crisis” frame, and a “risk to America” frame. In the treatment conditions, news articles were organized either to support U.S. intervention by emphasizing humanitarian aspects or to oppose intervention by highlighting risks. Following exposure, participants completed a recall task to test memory and understanding of the content and a categorization task to see how they structured concepts related to the crisis.
  - **Experiment 2:** Conducted in New Jersey with a similar design, this follow-up experiment ( $n = 163$ ) introduced questions about U.S. policy to probe the link between framed understanding and political opinions. Like Experiment 1, it involved recall tasks but added opinion-based questions on U.S. foreign policy.
- 9. Hypotheses:** Berinsky and Kinder hypothesize that framing information as coherent stories will enhance comprehension and recall, with participants recalling information that aligns with their frame (H1). They also hypothesize that frames will influence opinions regarding U.S. intervention in Kosovo (H2). The results support H1, with frames significantly affecting recall and memory structure, but show limited support for H2, with minor opinion differences across conditions.
- 10. Main findings:** The authors find that media frames shape not only recall but also how individuals organize information about political events. Humanitarian and risk frames led participants to recall facts that supported either intervention or caution, respectively. While framing improved understanding, its impact on opinions about U.S. involvement was limited, suggesting that understanding may not directly translate to policy preferences.
- 11. Key quotations:**
- “We argue that seemingly subtle differences in the presentation of identical information in the news media can affect the organization and recall of information and ultimately influence political judgments” (p. 641).
  - “Frames that organize developments in chronological order and contain information about the causes and effects of relevant events should increase understanding” (p. 646).
  - “Organizing the news to emphasize narrative progression affects what people remember, how they structure what they remember, and, under some circumstances, what opinions they express on the actions that government should take” (p. 645).

### 1.2.15 The New Videomalaise: Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust

Mutz, D. C., & Reeves, B. (2005). The New Videomalaise: Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust. *American Political Science Review*, 99(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055405051452>

1. **Citation key:** mutz\_new\_2005
2. **Author(s):** Diana C. Mutz and Byron Reeves
3. **Year:** 2005
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** political trust, incivility, media effects, videomalaise, televised conflict
6. **Summary:** Mutz and Reeves explore the impact of televised incivility in political discourse on public trust in political institutions. Through a series of laboratory experiments, they demonstrate that incivility in televised political discussions negatively affects viewers’ trust in government. Their research suggests that the visual and confrontational style of televised debates, often violating social norms of civility, creates a more negative perception of politics, particularly when viewers observe politicians engaging in uncivil behavior. This phenomenon, termed “videomalaise,” indicates that while uncivil exchanges may attract viewership, they ultimately harm political trust.
7. **Theory:** Drawing from theories on social norms and face-to-face communication, Mutz and Reeves hypothesize that televised incivility disrupts the normative expectations of politeness in public discourse, leading viewers to view politicians and political institutions as untrustworthy. They argue that television’s close-up perspective and dramatization of political conflict create an experience akin to real-life interpersonal exchanges, intensifying emotional reactions. Consequently, uncivil televised interactions elicit a visceral negative response from viewers, eroding their trust in political figures and institutions. Normatively, this should reduce trust in government.
8. **Methods:** The authors conduct three experiments to test the effects of televised incivility on political trust:
  - **Experiment 1:** Participants ( $n = 67$ ) watched a 20-minute simulated political debate where actors played candidates debating political issues. In one condition, candidates behaved civilly; in the other, they acted uncivilly by interrupting, raising their voices, and displaying disrespectful nonverbal cues. Trust in politicians and political institutions was measured post-exposure.
  - **Experiment 2:** A larger sample ( $n = 155$ ) included a third group that watched a non-political video as a control. The experiment tested whether political trust was influenced by watching uncivil debates versus civil debates or no debate at all. The findings indicated that only uncivil presentations lowered trust compared to the control.

- **Experiment 3:** Using a smaller sample ( $n = 16$ ), this experiment measured participants' physiological responses (skin conductance) to civil and uncivil versions of political debates. The data revealed significantly heightened arousal during uncivil interactions, supporting the theory that incivility elicits strong emotional responses akin to real-life interactions.
- 9. **Hypotheses:** Mutz and Reeves hypothesize that exposure to televised incivility in political debates will reduce viewers' trust in politicians and political institutions. Their experiments confirm this hypothesis, demonstrating that incivility induces lower trust levels compared to civil interactions or a non-political control.
- 10. **Main findings:** The study concludes that televised incivility decreases political trust, with effects being most pronounced among individuals who avoid interpersonal conflict in everyday life. Televised uncivil interactions prompt stronger negative reactions, likely due to the violation of social norms that are typically upheld in face-to-face communication.
- 11. **Key quotations:**
  - “When political actors violate interpersonal social norms on television, viewers react as they would if they were witnessing the same interaction in real life” (p. 6).
  - “The civility of discourse in the experimental manipulation did not have any influence on evaluations of conflict in either case” (p. 7).
  - “Viewers found the uncivil version of this public affairs talk show more entertaining, indicating that it was more interesting, more exciting, and so forth” (p. 10).

#### 1.2.16 Social Groups as the Source of Political Belief Systems: Fresh Evidence on an Old Theory

Elder, E. M., & O'Brian, N. A. (2022). Social Groups as the Source of Political Belief Systems: Fresh Evidence on an Old Theory. *American Political Science Review*, 116(4), 1407–1424. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422000326>

1. **Citation key:** elder\_social\_2022
2. **Author(s):** Elizabeth Mitchell Elder and Neil A. O'Brian
3. **Year:** 2022
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** social groups, belief systems, political attitudes, ideological constraint, stability of opinion
6. **Summary:** Elder and O'Brian investigate how nonpartisan social groups shape the belief systems of Americans, providing stability and ideological constraint. They argue that knowledge about social group positions on policies often rivals or even surpasses the public's awareness of political party stances. Their study shows that when individuals know the positions of social groups on certain issues, this knowledge promotes more stable and ideologically constrained attitudes over time.
7. **Theory:** Drawing from Converse's (1964) theory on belief systems, the authors posit that attitudes towards nonpartisan social groups create stability and coherence in public opinion, a concept Converse hinted at but did not empirically test. Elder and O'Brian argue that this social group-focused structure plays a significant role in shaping belief systems, especially when individuals recognize the group-related implications of policy positions, allowing them to organize their beliefs along ideological lines.
8. **Methods:** The authors use data from multiple sources, including the *American National Election Studies* (ANES) from the 1970s, 1990s, and recent surveys in 2021, to assess public knowledge of social group positions on policy issues and examine its impact on belief system stability:
  - They analyze responses from ANES surveys where participants indicate their perceptions of social and partisan group positions on various policies, focusing on racial and economic policy attitudes.
  - To measure attitude stability and ideological constraint, they calculate the standard deviation of participants' responses across survey waves and assess correlations between attitudes on different issues associated with the same group.
  - The study includes tests of alternative explanations for attitude stability, such as general political knowledge and party knowledge, finding that social group knowledge has a unique and independent effect.
9. **Hypotheses:** Elder and O'Brian hypothesize that knowledge of social group positions will increase stability and constraint in political attitudes over time. This hypothesis is supported, as they show that people with knowledge of where social groups stand on issues display significantly more stable and ideologically constrained beliefs than those without this knowledge.
10. **Main findings:** The findings indicate that awareness of social group positions fosters ideological coherence and stability in public opinion, sometimes even more effectively than party knowledge. This social group knowledge has historically provided a consistent basis for belief organization, though in recent years, party identification has become increasingly dominant as a source of ideological constraint.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Social group attitudes can serve as a consistent basis for the evaluation of issues, creating stability and ideological coherence in belief systems” (p. 1409).
  - “For many important policies, knowledge of social group positions is more widespread than knowledge of party positions” (p. 1410).
  - “Americans' attitudes toward policies linked to the same group are correlated due to their common source; negative (positive) attitudes toward a group foster negative (positive) attitudes toward an array of policies associated

with that group" (p. 1414).

### 1.2.17 Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance

Nelson, T. E., Clawson, R. A., & Oxley, Z. M. (1997). Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and Its Effect on Tolerance. *American Political Science Review*, 91(3), 567–583. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2952075>

1. **Citation key:** nelson\_media\_1997
2. **Author(s):** Thomas E. Nelson, Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley
3. **Year:** 1997
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** media framing, civil liberties, tolerance, Ku Klux Klan, public opinion
6. **Summary:** Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley examine how media framing influences public tolerance toward the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). They argue that framing a KKK rally either as a free speech issue or a public order issue affects public tolerance for the KKK. Their findings indicate that participants exposed to the free speech frame show higher tolerance for the KKK than those exposed to the public order frame, demonstrating how media framing can shift public opinion by emphasizing different values in civil liberties conflicts.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on the concept of media framing, suggesting that media frames influence opinion by highlighting specific aspects of an issue. They differentiate framing effects from agenda-setting and priming, arguing that framing shapes opinions not just by making certain considerations more accessible, but by assigning relative importance to those considerations. In this case, free speech and public order are competing values, and the emphasis on one over the other alters public responses to civil liberties conflicts.
8. **Methods:** The study involves two experiments to test framing effects on tolerance:
  - **Experiment 1:** A laboratory experiment with 222 undergraduate participants who watched a news segment on a KKK rally, framed as either a free speech or public order issue. Participants then rated their tolerance for KKK public rallies and speeches. The study measured cognitive accessibility of frame-related concepts through a reaction-time task and the perceived importance of values through an importance-rating task.
  - **Experiment 2:** In a second experiment with 71 participants, the authors used a simulated electronic news service to display the KKK rally news story, similarly framed as a free speech or public order issue. This experiment included an additional ranking task to assess the perceived importance of free speech versus public order, providing further evidence that framing effects are mediated by value importance rather than accessibility.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that participants exposed to the free speech frame will express greater tolerance for the KKK than those exposed to the public order frame. They also predict that the framing effects are mediated by the perceived importance of values, rather than the cognitive accessibility of frame-related concepts. Both hypotheses are confirmed in their experiments.
10. **Main findings:** The study concludes that media framing influences public tolerance by altering the perceived importance of competing values, with free speech frames increasing tolerance and public order frames decreasing it. The authors find that the framing effects occur through changes in value importance, not cognitive accessibility, underscoring the role of media in shaping opinion by assigning value weight.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Framing is the process by which a communication source, such as a news organization, defines and constructs a political issue or public controversy" (p. 567).
  - "Frames affect opinions simply by making certain considerations seem more important than others; these considerations, in turn, carry greater weight for the final attitude" (p. 570).
  - "Participants who saw a story framing the KKK rally as a free speech issue expressed greater tolerance for the Klan than did those who saw a story depicting it as a potentially explosive clash between two angry groups" (p. 574).

### 1.2.18 Elite Influence on Public Opinion in an Informed Electorate

Bullock, J. G. (2011). Elite Influence on Public Opinion in an Informed Electorate. *American Political Science Review*, 105(3), 496–515. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055411000165>

1. **Citation key:** bullock\_elite\_2011
2. **Author(s):** John G. Bullock
3. **Year:** 2011
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** elite influence, public opinion, party cues, policy information, political behavior
6. **Summary:** Bullock explores how exposure to policy information and elite cues influences public opinion, focusing on whether party cues dominate citizens' opinions even when substantial policy details are provided. Through two experiments, Bullock finds that while party cues do affect attitudes, they do not overshadow the effects of policy information, particularly when individuals are well-informed. The findings suggest that, contrary to common concerns, party cues do not reduce people's attention to policy content and may even enhance it in certain contexts.
7. **Theory:** Bullock addresses the idea that citizens often rely heavily on party cues rather than evaluating policy information independently, which some theorists argue limits effective self-governance. Building on dual-process theories, Bullock hypothesizes that while party cues influence attitudes, substantial policy information can have a stronger

effect, particularly among individuals who are motivated to engage in deeper cognitive processing.

**8. Methods:** Bullock conducts two experiments with the following designs:

- **Experiment 1:** Involving 2,473 partisan subjects, this experiment used a detailed article about health care legislation framed in three different ways: without party cues, with Democratic support, and with Democratic opposition. Subjects were also exposed to policy descriptions that varied between liberal and conservative, and the effects on attitudes were measured.
- **Experiment 2:** This experiment, with 3,713 participants, replicated Experiment 1 with added conditions for policy extremity, allowing Bullock to assess how substantial versus minor policy changes affected the role of party cues. This experiment also included measures for depth of processing, such as reading time and open-ended thought responses.

**9. Hypotheses:** Bullock hypothesizes that party cues influence public opinion but do not entirely dominate policy information effects. The experiments confirm this hypothesis, showing that substantial policy descriptions can shape opinions as much as or more than party cues, especially among those with high political engagement.

**10. Main findings:** The experiments reveal that both party cues and policy information impact opinions, but policy information often has a stronger effect. Furthermore, Bullock finds no evidence that party cues reduce attention to policy details; instead, cues may increase interest in policy among those exposed to both types of information. The findings challenge the notion that elite influence through party cues automatically dominates citizens' evaluations.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "People rarely possess even a modicum of information about policies; but when they do, their attitudes seem to be affected at least as much by that information as by cues from party elites" (p. 496).
- "The results suggest that position-taking by party elites affects even those who are exposed to a wealth of policy information. But—contrary to some previous claims—the effects of such position-taking are generally smaller than the effects of policy information" (p. 500).
- "If cues reduce attention to policy, subjects who received cues should answer these questions less well than subjects who did not. But in this experiment, cues had no obvious effect on recall" (p. 506).

### 1.2.19 Dynamic Public Opinion: Communication Effects over Time

Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2010). Dynamic Public Opinion: Communication Effects over Time. *American Political Science Review*, 104(4), 663–680. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055410000493>

**1. Citation key:** chong\_dynamic\_2010

**2. Author(s):** Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman

**3. Year:** 2010

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** dynamic public opinion, communication effects, framing, attitude strength, political campaigns

**6. Summary:** Chong and Druckman examine how exposure to political messages over time influences public opinion. They focus on the role of competing frames in shaping attitudes during prolonged political campaigns. The authors argue that, unlike immediate effects observed in traditional studies, the timing of messages—whether they are received simultaneously or sequentially—has a significant impact on opinion stability and change. Through two experiments, they demonstrate that individuals often give more weight to recent messages, though those who engage in deliberative processing may exhibit stable attitudes and resist shifting opinions.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose a conceptual framework that emphasizes the temporal dynamics of opinion formation. They differentiate between immediate message effects and enduring influence, hypothesizing that while simultaneous messages may cancel each other out, sequentially presented messages are likely to produce a "recency effect," with more recent messages carrying greater influence. However, this is moderated by individual differences in processing, where those with a high need for evaluation (NE) or online processing tendencies develop stronger, more stable attitudes resistant to later influences.

**8. Methods:** Chong and Druckman conducted two experiments to examine opinion dynamics:

- **Experiment 1 (Patriot Act):** 1,302 participants were exposed to pro- and anti-Patriot Act frames over two sessions, spaced 10 days apart. The frames emphasized either terrorism (pro) or civil liberties (con), with participants randomly assigned to memory-based (MB), online (OL), or no processing manipulation. The study measured opinion on the Patriot Act after each exposure to test for durability and decay of initial framing effects.
- **Experiment 2 (Urban Growth):** Conducted with 749 participants over a 3-week interval, this study addressed urban growth policy using strong and weak pro- and con-frames, allowing the authors to assess how the strength and timing of frames affected opinion. Participants' need-to-evaluate scores were also measured to examine the role of individual differences in attitude persistence.

**9. Hypotheses:** Chong and Druckman hypothesize that framing effects will decay over time unless individuals engage in deliberate or online processing. They also expect recency effects when messages are received sequentially, with the last message having the most impact, except for those with higher NE scores, who should maintain stable opinions over time.

**10. Main findings:** Results indicate that initial framing effects fade quickly among MB processors but persist among OL processors. Sequential exposure to frames often leads to recency effects, with opinions aligning with the last frame received. However, OL processors and individuals with high NE scores exhibit greater resistance to opinion change,

showing a primacy effect where the first frame encountered holds lasting influence.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "The timing of exposure to an argument is relevant to its overall effect on opinion formation" (p. 663).
- "Communication effects are often ephemeral, with initial opinion shifts decaying as time passes and new messages are received" (p. 667).
- "Individuals who engage in online processing hold stable attitudes because they maintain a summary judgment, while memory-based processors exhibit greater opinion variability over time" (p. 670).

#### 1.2.20 The Rationalizing Voter

Lodge, M., & Taber, C. S. (2013). *The Rationalizing Voter*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139032490>

1. **Citation key:** lodge\_rationalizing\_2013

2. **Author(s):** Milton Lodge and Charles S. Taber

3. **Year:** 2013

4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press

5. **Keywords:** political psychology, dual-process theory, affective reasoning, automaticity, motivated reasoning

6. **Summary:** In *The Rationalizing Voter*, Lodge and Taber present a dual-process model of political decision-making that integrates automatic, unconscious reactions with deliberate, rational thought processes. They argue that political attitudes and behaviors are heavily influenced by "hot cognition"—immediate emotional reactions to political stimuli that subsequently shape conscious reasoning. Using laboratory experiments, they demonstrate how emotions tied to political symbols, partisanship, and ideologies drive political judgments, often leading to motivated reasoning where individuals seek to affirm pre-existing beliefs rather than evaluate information objectively.

7. **Theory:** The authors propose the "John Q. Public" (JQP) model, which argues that political judgments are largely shaped by automatic, affect-laden responses that precede and influence rational deliberation. They assert that citizens are highly susceptible to subtle environmental cues that trigger emotional responses and affect their reasoning. According to this model, conscious reasoning frequently serves to rationalize these initial automatic reactions rather than challenge them. This dual-process theory suggests that political reasoning is more emotionally driven than previously thought, with significant implications for understanding bias and partisanship in the electorate.

8. **Methods:** Lodge and Taber employ experimental methods to test five central hypotheses: hot cognition, automaticity, affect transfer, affect contagion, and motivated reasoning. Participants were exposed to affective stimuli related to political concepts and assessed through reaction-time measures and affective priming tasks, allowing the authors to observe how emotions influence both implicit and explicit political attitudes. Their laboratory experiments control for various biases, enabling the authors to isolate the effects of automatic processes on political judgments.

9. **Hypotheses:**

- **Hot Cognition Hypothesis:** Political concepts in memory are linked to affective responses, influencing judgments instantly upon activation.
- **Automaticity Hypothesis:** Political judgments are often formed through unconscious processes triggered automatically by environmental cues.
- **Affect Transfer Hypothesis:** Initial emotional responses to political stimuli influence subsequent evaluations of related political objects.
- **Affect Contagion Hypothesis:** Emotions associated with one political concept can transfer to other related concepts, reinforcing attitudes through affective networks.
- **Motivated Reasoning Hypothesis:** Individuals engage in biased processing to protect their pre-existing beliefs, selectively endorsing supportive information and dismissing opposing views.

Their results confirm these hypotheses, showing that automatic affective responses and motivated reasoning are central to political decision-making, with participants displaying faster, stronger responses to politically congruent stimuli.

10. **Main findings:** The book concludes that unconscious, affective processes play a primary role in shaping political judgments. Even among knowledgeable voters, pre-existing biases and emotional responses lead to confirmation biases, reinforcing political polarization. Lodge and Taber argue that political messaging that taps into automatic affective responses has a powerful influence on public opinion, often without conscious awareness from the audience. This underscores the role of emotional priming in voter behavior and suggests that automatic processes can undermine objective political reasoning.

### 11. Key definitions:

- **Hot Cognition:** The automatic association of emotions with political concepts, which influences judgments instantly and unconsciously.
- **Automaticity:** A cognitive process where thoughts and actions are influenced without conscious awareness, often triggered by environmental cues.
- **Motivated Reasoning:** A biased cognitive process where individuals seek information that aligns with their beliefs, dismissing contradictory evidence and reinforcing initial attitudes.
- **Affect Transfer:** The influence of an initial emotional response to one political stimulus on subsequent evaluations of related concepts, leading to consistent political attitudes.

- *Affect Contagion*: The process by which emotions related to one concept spread to associated concepts, reinforcing attitudes and bias within interconnected affective networks.

### 1.2.21 Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?

Alford, J. R., Funk, C. L., & Hibbing, J. R. (2005). Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted? *American Political Science Review*, 99(2), 153–167. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055405051579>

1. **Citation key:** alford\_are\_2005
2. **Author(s):** John R. Alford, Carolyn L. Funk, and John R. Hibbing
3. **Year:** 2005
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** genetics, political orientations, behavioral genetics, twin studies, political attitudes
6. **Summary:** Alford, Funk, and Hibbing investigate whether political orientations are influenced by genetic factors. Using twin studies from the United States and Australia, they compare the attitudes of monozygotic (identical) and dizygotic (fraternal) twins to estimate the role of heredity versus shared and unique environmental factors in shaping political beliefs. They find that genetic inheritance significantly contributes to political attitudes, though it plays a smaller role in party identification, indicating that political attitudes may have a heritable component that traditional environmental explanations alone cannot account for.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that, contrary to common beliefs in political science, political orientations are shaped by a combination of genetic predispositions and environmental factors. They posit that while shared family environment has some impact, genetics plays a substantial role in shaping individual differences in political beliefs. This approach challenges the assumption that all political attitudes arise from socialization and environmental experiences alone.
8. **Methods:** The study uses a twin design, comparing the correlations of political attitudes between monozygotic (MZ) and dizygotic (DZ) twins. Data from over 10,000 twin pairs in the United States (Virginia 30K dataset) and a large sample from Australia were analyzed. The authors applied polychoric correlation techniques to measure the similarities between twin pairs, enabling them to partition attitude variance into heritable, shared environmental, and unique environmental components. This methodology allowed them to estimate heritability levels for various political attitudes, such as conservatism and tolerance, and compare these across different sociopolitical contexts.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that political attitudes show significant heritability and that genetic effects contribute to political ideology but are less influential in determining specific party affiliations. Their hypothesis is confirmed, with results indicating substantial genetic influences on ideological tendencies, though party identification is predominantly shaped by shared environmental factors like family influence.
10. **Main findings:** Alford, Funk, and Hibbing's findings indicate that political attitudes are partly heritable, with heritability estimates around 32% for general political orientations like conservatism. Shared environmental effects, such as parental influence, account for approximately 16% of attitude variation, while unique environmental factors explain the remaining variance. The heritability of specific party identification, however, is lower, suggesting that while genetic predispositions influence general political attitudes, specific party preferences are more heavily shaped by social context.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Our results indicate that political attitudes and ideologies are substantially heritable but that genetic influence on party identification is minimal" (p. 153).
  - "The universal left-right elements of belief systems around the world and over the decades is difficult for behavioralists to explain. But if there is a genetic component to political ideologies...the commonality of ideology becomes easier to understand" (p. 153).
  - "Political science debates concerning the source of political attitudes and behaviors have been over timing, over whether attitudes and behaviors are primarily shaped early in life or by more proximate occurrences...Conspicuously absent is consideration of the possibility that certain attitudes and behaviors may be at least partially attributable to genetic factors" (p. 154).

### 1.2.22 Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making

Lau, R. R., & Redlawsk, D. P. (2001). Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(4), 951. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2669334>

1. **Citation key:** lau\_advantages\_2001
2. **Author(s):** Richard R. Lau and David P. Redlawsk
3. **Year:** 2001
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** cognitive heuristics, decision making, political psychology, voting behavior, information processing
6. **Summary:** Lau and Redlawsk explore how cognitive heuristics impact voters' decision-making in complex political settings. They evaluate five heuristics—party identification, ideology, endorsements, poll standings, and candidate appearance—using a dynamic process-tracing methodology within a simulated election context. Their study assesses how reliance on these heuristics affects decision accuracy across voters with varying levels of political sophistication.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that cognitive heuristics provide mental shortcuts, simplifying complex political information processing, especially for voters with lower political sophistication. However, they suggest that while heuris-

tics can enhance decision-making for more knowledgeable voters, they may mislead less sophisticated voters. This creates a nuanced view where heuristics offer cognitive efficiency but can introduce biases that impact decision quality.

**8. Methods:** Lau and Redlawsk employ a “dynamic process-tracing methodology,” wherein participants engage with a simulated presidential campaign that presents information in a limited, scrollable format to mimic real-world decision-making constraints. They track how participants use heuristics, observing differences between voters with high and low political sophistication and measuring the “correctness” of votes based on heuristic reliance.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Most voters will use heuristics.
- Heuristic reliance increases in complex decision environments.
- Heuristics generally improve decision quality for politically knowledgeable voters but decrease it for novices.

These hypotheses are confirmed, showing that heuristic use influences decision accuracy differently based on voter sophistication levels.

**10. Main findings:** The study reveals that heuristic use significantly affects voting accuracy. For politically sophisticated voters, heuristics tend to enhance decision-making, raising their likelihood of voting correctly. However, for less sophisticated voters, heavy reliance on heuristics decreases decision accuracy, suggesting that heuristics are not uniformly beneficial. This finding warns against assuming heuristics universally aid low-information voters.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Heavy reliance on political heuristics actually made decision making less accurate among those low in political sophistication. Only relative experts appear to be generally helped in their decision making by using heuristics” (p. 967).
- “Cognitive heuristics are a great aid to the decision making of relatively sophisticated voters, increasing the probability of their making a correct decision by 20 percent... unsophisticated voters... [see] their probability of making a correct vote decrease by almost 21 percent when they rely heavily upon cognitive heuristics” (p. 964).
- “As Bartels (1996) warns... heuristics can sometimes introduce serious bias, along with cognitive efficiency, into decision making” (p. 965).

### 1.3 Voting Behavior

#### 1.3.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of voting behavior has undergone significant shifts over time, moving from an early emphasis on group theory to an individualistic focus and then back to a more nuanced understanding of group influence. In the 1950s and 1960s, political scientists recognized the influence of groups on voter behavior, acknowledging that individuals largely conceptualized politics in terms of group affiliations rather than ideology. The concept of “pluralism” emerged, suggesting that while inequalities existed between groups, the resulting equilibrium of group pressures, managed by political leadership, could be considered democratic. As with chapter 1.1, a key study during this era was “The American Voter,” which reinforced the importance of group membership, particularly party identification, as a primary factor influencing vote choice.
- **Shift to Individualism and the Folk Theory of Democracy** However, group theory lost prominence in the subsequent decades. It was replaced by a resurgence of the “folk theory of democracy,” which emphasizes the agency of individual voters in understanding and responding to political issues. The spatial model of voting developed by Downs, rooted in economic theory, provided a compelling explanation for political moderation in mid-20th century America, suggesting that candidates and parties converged towards the center (median) of voter opinion. This spatial model assumes that voters are well-informed about candidate positions and vote based on policy preferences. This shift in focus led to an increase in research on individual voter attitudes and decision-making processes. For example, survey research methods proliferated, employing issue scales to measure voter and candidate positions on policy dimensions.
- **Challenges to the Folk Theory:** Findings began to contradict the assumptions of the folk theory. Studies consistently demonstrated that most citizens were poorly informed about political affairs and lacked coherent policy preferences. Despite attempts to explain away these findings or find evidence of greater voter sophistication, the evidence for widespread political ignorance remained robust. This lack of knowledge challenged the notion of informed issue voting as a primary driver of electoral outcomes.
- **Reintroducing Group Influence and Social Identity:** In response to these challenges, scholars have begun to reintroduce the influence of social groups and identities in understanding voting behavior. The group theory of democracy posits that citizens’ political loyalties and behavior are heavily influenced by their social identities and group attachments, rather than individualistic policy preferences. Research has shown that group identities, such as race, religion, and gender, significantly shape how people perceive and respond to political issues, even overriding economic self-interest. Studies have also shown that social pressure plays a role in voting behavior. For example, individuals are more likely to vote when they know their voting record will be revealed to their neighbors. Social networks and the geographic clustering of similar individuals can also contribute to shared voting patterns.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** The voting behavior literature today acknowledges the shortcomings of both the simplistic folk theory and the exclusive focus on individual decision-making. There is a growing recognition that a comprehensive understanding of voting behavior must account for both individual-level factors and the powerful influence of social groups and identities. Overall, the literature suggests that the folk theory’s vision of informed

and rational issue voters fails to adequately describe real-world voting behavior. While retrospective voting, based on evaluations of past performance, might offer some degree of accountability, the influence of group loyalties and social identities appears to play a far more significant role in shaping electoral choices and, consequently, policy outcomes. *As a note, this section and the section concerning participation heavily overlap.*

### 1.3.2 An Economic Theory of Democracy

Downs, A. (1957). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. Harper

1. **Citation key:** downs\_economic\_1957
2. **Author(s):** Anthony Downs
3. **Year:** 1957
4. **Publication:** An Economic Theory of Democracy (Harper and Row)
5. **Keywords:** rational choice theory, voting behavior, turnout, party differential, information costs
6. **Summary:** In *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, Downs applies economic principles to the study of democratic processes, particularly voter decision-making and turnout. He argues that voters are rational actors who evaluate party choices based on expected utility, comparing the benefits of voting against the associated costs. His conclusion—that rational voters should rarely turn out—has influenced subsequent studies on voting behavior and rational choice theory. Downs also explores strategic voting in multiparty systems and suggests that voters use information shortcuts to make decisions under uncertainty.
7. **Theory:** Downs introduces a rational calculus for voting, where voters make choices based on a “party differential,” or the perceived difference in utility between competing parties. This model suggests that voters engage in retrospective voting by evaluating past government performance and expected future benefits. In the face of imperfect information, voters rely on key indicators and information shortcuts. Downs concludes that turnout is generally irrational for the individual due to the low probability that a single vote will alter the outcome, but he posits that some individuals may vote to support democratic ideals.
8. **Methods:** The book employs a theoretical approach, drawing on economic principles to model voter behavior. Through hypothetical scenarios, Downs demonstrates how rational actors would theoretically behave in electoral settings. The logic of the model is based on the concept of utility maximization under conditions of uncertainty.
9. **Main findings:** Downs finds that rational voters are unlikely to vote, given the minimal impact of an individual vote on the outcome relative to the costs of voting. He suggests that, in practice, voters may turn out to support the democratic process, although this motivation itself is insufficient to fully explain high turnout rates. He also explores strategic voting in multiparty systems, where voters may vote for less preferred parties to prevent a highly disliked party from winning.
10. **Key definitions:**
  - *Party Differential:* The perceived difference in expected utility between two competing parties, based on their anticipated policies and performance. Voters use this differential to decide which party to support.
  - *Retrospective Voting:* A voting behavior in which individuals assess the past performance of the incumbent party and compare it to what they believe an opposition party would have delivered under similar conditions.
  - *Information Shortcuts:* Simplified cues or indicators that voters rely on to make political decisions without possessing complete information, reducing the costs of gathering and processing information.
  - *Strategic Voting:* A behavior where voters may cast a vote for a party other than their first choice to influence the electoral outcome, often to prevent a particularly disliked party from winning.
  - *Voting Paradox (Turnout Paradox):* The idea that rational voters should not vote because the probability of their vote determining the outcome is extremely low, thus making the costs of voting outweigh the benefits. This is later added to by William H. Riker and Peter Ordeshook (1968) in “A Theory of the Calculus of Voting.”  
 $V = pB - C + D$  where:
    - V = the proxy for the probability that the voter will turn out.
    - p = probability of vote “mattering.”
    - B = “utility” benefit of voting—differential benefit of one candidate winning over the other.
    - C = costs of voting (time/effort spent).
    - D = citizen duty, goodwill feeling, psychological and civic benefit of voting (this term is not included in Downs’s original model).

### 1.3.3 Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections

Lupia, A. (1994). Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections. *American Political Science Review*, 88(1), 63–76. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2944882>

1. **Citation key:** lupia\_shortcuts\_1994
2. **Author(s):** Arthur Lupia
3. **Year:** 1994
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** voting behavior, information shortcuts, voter knowledge, decision-making, political psychology
6. **Summary:** Lupia examines how information shortcuts influence voting behavior, especially for voters with limited

political knowledge, by analyzing the 1988 California insurance reform elections. He argues that uninformed voters can make decisions resembling those of well-informed voters if they use cues or shortcuts, such as knowing the stance of a credible source. This study challenges the notion that voters must have encyclopedic knowledge to make rational choices and highlights the role of shortcuts in reducing the cognitive demands of decision-making in elections.

7. **Theory:** Lupia's theory revolves around the idea that political decision-making does not always require extensive knowledge. Instead, voters rely on heuristics or shortcuts—simplified cues that guide decision-making in complex scenarios. By following cues from trusted sources, such as endorsements from industry stakeholders, less-informed voters can reach conclusions similar to those with greater knowledge. This theory aligns with the rational choice perspective, suggesting that shortcuts help voters compensate for limited information.
8. **Methods:** Lupia's analysis focuses on survey data from the California insurance reform propositions, where voters faced multiple ballot initiatives with competing endorsements and complex information. By examining how well-informed and poorly-informed voters used industry positions as cues, Lupia assesses whether knowing the insurance industry's stance allowed low-information voters to make decisions consistent with their interests and the behaviors of informed voters.
9. **Hypotheses:** Lupia hypothesizes that low-information voters can make similar choices to well-informed voters by relying on accessible shortcuts, specifically by identifying the insurance industry's position on ballot propositions. His results support this hypothesis, showing that cues enabled uninformed voters to emulate the voting patterns of those with encyclopedic knowledge.
10. **Main findings:** Lupia finds that information shortcuts, such as recognizing the insurance industry's position on a proposition, allow less-informed voters to vote in ways that align with their interests and parallel the choices of well-informed voters. However, he notes that shortcuts are not universally effective, as some complex issues may still require more detailed understanding to make informed choices.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "I find that access to a particular class of widely available information shortcuts allowed badly informed voters to emulate the behavior of relatively well informed voters" (p. 63).
- "If relatively well informed voters are most likely to cast the votes that are consistent with their own interests, then knowledge of the insurance industry's position allowed voters who might otherwise be classified as ignorant to act as they would have if they had taken the time and effort necessary to acquire encyclopedic information" (p. 63).
- "The availability of certain types of information cues allows voters to use their limited resources efficiently while influencing electoral outcomes in ways that they would have if they had taken the time and effort necessary to acquire encyclopedic information" (p. 72).

#### 1.3.4 Follow the Leader? How Voters Respond to Politicians' Policies and Performance

Lenz, G. S. (2012, October). *Follow the Leader?: How Voters Respond to Politicians' Policies and Performance*. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** lenz\_follow\_2012
2. **Author(s):** Gabriel S. Lenz
3. **Year:** 2012
4. **Publication:** Follow the Leader? (University of Chicago Press)
5. **Keywords:** voter behavior, policy adoption, performance assessment, electoral accountability, political representation
6. **Summary:** This book explores the extent to which voters genuinely evaluate candidates based on their policy positions and performance. Lenz examines whether voters' policy preferences lead them to select politicians who align with their views or whether voters instead adjust their policy preferences to match those of the candidates they support. Using panel data from multiple countries, Lenz argues that while voters assess politicians based on performance indicators, they often adopt the policy stances of their chosen politicians rather than selecting politicians based on pre-existing policy agreements. This tendency to "follow the leader" challenges traditional assumptions of democratic accountability, as it indicates that policy alignment may emerge from support for a candidate rather than inform that support.
7. **Theory:** Lenz proposes that voters tend to adopt the policy views of their preferred candidates instead of choosing candidates who align with their existing views. This theory, tested across multiple cases, highlights a key difference between performance and policy evaluation: voters appear to actively judge politicians on performance metrics (like economic success or crisis management), while policy preferences often adjust post hoc to align with their chosen candidate's positions. This behavior suggests that while elections function as referenda on incumbents' effectiveness, they may lack the policy-driven accountability central to theories of representative democracy.
8. **Methods:** Lenz employs a unique "three-wave test" using panel data, allowing him to track changes in voter attitudes across three key time points. This method isolates shifts in policy preference and candidate evaluation, addressing causality concerns that arise when attitudes and choices are observed simultaneously. This longitudinal approach enables Lenz to evaluate whether changes in voters' policy preferences precede or follow their political support, providing stronger evidence on the direction of influence.
9. **Hypotheses:** Lenz hypothesizes that:
  - Voters' policy preferences will align with their candidate choices more due to post hoc adjustment than pre-

election agreement.

- Voters are more consistent in judging politicians based on performance rather than policy issues.

These hypotheses are confirmed, demonstrating that voters often adapt their policy views to align with those of preferred candidates, indicating “following” behavior rather than policy-led selection.

**10. Main findings:** The book finds that voters are generally more adept at evaluating politicians’ performance than aligning on policy issues. Policy preferences are shown to frequently shift to match those of favored candidates, suggesting that democratic accountability is limited by voters’ tendency to conform their views post-selection rather than choosing candidates based on prior policy agreement. While this mechanism supports holding politicians accountable for competence, it limits the impact of voter-led policy direction in democratic elections.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Policy Adoption*: The process by which voters align their policy views to match those of their selected candidate or political party, rather than choosing based on pre-existing policy preferences.
- *Three-Wave Test*: A longitudinal method employed by Lenz to observe voter preference shifts across three distinct time points, helping to clarify whether policy preferences or candidate support emerge first.
- *Performance Voting*: Voting behavior that is primarily influenced by assessments of a candidate’s effectiveness and achievements in office, such as economic management, rather than by specific policy positions.
- *Electoral Accountability*: The concept that voters hold politicians responsible for their actions in office by rewarding or punishing them in subsequent elections. Lenz suggests that while performance accountability is common, policy-driven accountability is weaker.
- *Priming Effect*: An effect observed when increased media or political attention on certain issues heightens their importance in voters’ assessments, often leading to a greater focus on performance over policy alignment.

### 1.3.5 Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government (Chs. 1-3 & 8)

Achen, C. H., & Bartels, L. M. (2016a, December). Democratic Ideals and Realities. *Democracy for Realists* (pp. 1–20). Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400882731-004>

Achen, C. H., & Bartels, L. M. (2016b, December). The Elusive Mandate: Elections and the Mirage of Popular Control. *Democracy for Realists* (pp. 21–51). Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400882731-004>

Achen, C. H., & Bartels, L. M. (2016c, December). Tumbling Down into a Democratic Republic: "Pure Democracy" and the Pitfalls of Popular Control. *Democracy for Realists* (pp. 52–89). Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400882731-004>

Achen, C. H., & Bartels, L. M. (2016d, December). The Very Basis of Reasons: Groups, Social Identities, and Political Psychology. *Democracy for Realists* (pp. 213–231). Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400882731-010>

1. **Citation key:** achen\_democratic\_2016, achen\_elusive\_2016, achen\_tumbling\_2016, achen\_very\_2016
2. **Author(s):** Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels
3. **Year:** 2016
4. **Publication:** Democracy For Realists (Princeton University Press)
5. **Keywords:** democracy, electoral mandate, popular control, folk theory of democracy, social identity, retrospective voting
6. **Summary:**
  - (a) **Chapter 1: Democratic Ideals and Realities** - Achen and Bartels begin with a critique of what they term the “folk theory” of democracy. This popular conception posits that democratic governance derives legitimacy from the choices of an informed electorate, representing the will of the people. Rooted in notions of individual autonomy and popular sovereignty, this folk theory implies that elections reflect the informed preferences of the majority. However, Achen and Bartels argue that this view is not only simplistic but also deeply flawed. They suggest that rather than informed policy preferences, voters often base decisions on entrenched social identities and economic conditions. This discrepancy between idealized democratic principles and actual political behavior is the central theme of the book.
  - (b) **Chapter 2: The Elusive Mandate** - The authors dive into the concept of an electoral mandate, or the notion that elections convey a clear mandate from the electorate on policy issues. This chapter questions whether elections truly capture the will of the people, arguing that voter behavior is often inconsistent and susceptible to misinformation and external pressures. Achen and Bartels highlight how popular mandates are often illusory, as elections rarely translate into substantive popular control over policy.
  - (c) **Chapter 3: Tumbling Down into a Democratic Republic** - This chapter provides historical context for the skepticism surrounding pure democracy, a concept the Founders sought to temper through representative institutions. The authors argue that recent attempts to increase direct popular control have often led to unintended consequences, citing examples like fluoridation and immunization policy, where populist measures compromised public welfare. They illustrate how the populist push for increased direct democracy can result in self-defeating choices due to voter confusion and manipulation.
  - (d) **Chapter 8: The Very Basis of Reasons** - This chapter shifts focus to a psychological model of political behav-

ior, grounded in social identities rather than rational policy preferences. Here, Achen and Bartels explore how group identity and cultural affiliations shape individual political behavior, often sidelining rational deliberation. This approach emphasizes the role of identity-based voting, challenging the notion that individual voters base decisions on coherent policy analysis or ideological commitment.

7. **Theory:** Across the chapters, Achen and Bartels critique democratic theory's assumptions about the relationship between voters and government policy. In Chapter 1, they address the limits of the folk theory of democracy, arguing that popular sovereignty and electoral accountability are largely myths when juxtaposed with the realities of political behavior. They critique both the populist ideal, which assumes that voters directly influence policy, and the retrospective voting model, which posits that voters hold leaders accountable based on past performance. Instead, the authors propose a more realistic view of democracy that considers the influence of entrenched social identities over policy-based decision-making. In Chapter 2, Achen and Bartels tackle the myth of the electoral mandate, challenging the notion that elections represent a clear choice by the populace on policy matters. They suggest that the idea of a mandate is misleading, as voting patterns reflect shallow loyalties and transient issues more than substantive policy directives. Chapter 3 further critiques the notion of direct democracy, reflecting the Founders' wariness of unchecked popular control. Achen and Bartels argue that direct democracy often undermines effective governance, as evidenced in historical cases like public opposition to fluoridation and resistance to immunization mandates. The authors illustrate how populist reforms, intended to increase voter influence, can inadvertently harm public policy by amplifying misinformation. Finally, in Chapter 8, the authors build on this critique by introducing a group-based psychological model of political behavior. Rather than seeing voters as autonomous individuals making rational choices, Achen and Bartels propose that social identities deeply shape political decisions. Drawing from classic theories of group psychology, they contend that people are "cultural animals" whose affiliations largely dictate their political behavior. This view stands in stark opposition to the rational, individualist assumptions of liberal democratic thought, suggesting that identity politics has a more potent effect on democracy than does rational deliberation.
8. **Methods:** Each chapter employs a combination of theoretical critique and empirical evidence. In Chapter 1, Achen and Bartels lay out their framework by reviewing literature from political science, particularly in public opinion and political psychology. They ground their critique in the growing body of research that questions the rationality of voter behavior, such as findings from the American National Election Studies. Chapter 2 examines historical and contemporary instances where the concept of an electoral mandate has been invoked. By scrutinizing examples from past elections, they reveal the gap between democratic ideals and real voter behavior, highlighting how public opinion often fails to convey a coherent policy direction. In Chapter 3, the authors use historical case studies to explore the consequences of direct democracy in America. Through specific policy examples, they demonstrate how populist reforms, driven by a naive faith in popular sovereignty, can lead to suboptimal public outcomes. Cases like fluoridation referendums and vaccination debates serve to underscore the pitfalls of increased voter influence in complex policy decisions. Chapter 8 takes a different methodological approach by grounding its arguments in social psychology and group theory. The authors reference classic social theorists and incorporate insights from political psychology to argue that political behavior is more about identity than rational preference. The analysis leans heavily on historical perspectives, including references to Madison, Marx, and early sociologists who viewed group affiliations as central to understanding political life.
9. **Hypotheses:** Although the book is primarily a critique, implicit hypotheses can be inferred from the authors' arguments:
  - Elections do not reveal the public's policy preferences in a meaningful way (Chapter 1).
  - The concept of an electoral mandate is more rhetorical than substantive, as elections rarely convey a coherent popular will (Chapter 2).
  - Increased direct democracy can lead to negative outcomes due to misinformation and the influence of interest groups (Chapter 3).
  - Voters are more likely to make decisions based on social identities than on rational policy preferences (Chapter 8).
 While not empirically tested in each chapter, these hypotheses frame the authors' critique and provide a foundation for understanding their stance on democratic theory.
10. **Main findings:** Across the chapters, Achen and Bartels provide a comprehensive critique of conventional democratic theory. They argue that democracy does not function as a vehicle for popular control, as voters rarely make informed, policy-based decisions. Instead, they posit that political behavior is driven by social identity, retrospective judgments, and simple loyalties rather than rational choice. In Chapter 1, they challenge the populist model by suggesting that democracy's idealized mechanisms are unworkable in practice. Chapter 2 reinforces this by highlighting how the notion of an electoral mandate is largely an illusion. Chapter 3 offers historical examples of how direct democracy has led to adverse outcomes, demonstrating the risks of unfiltered popular influence. Finally, Chapter 8 synthesizes these arguments within a group-psychological framework, emphasizing that democratic theory must account for the profound role of social identity in shaping political choices.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The democratic idealists of practically all schools of thought have managed to remain remarkably oblivious to the obvious facts" (p. 1).
  - "Election outcomes turn out to be largely random events from the viewpoint of contemporary democratic theory" (p. 2).

- “We expect elections to reveal the ‘will’ or the preferences of a majority on a set of issues. This is one thing elections rarely do, except in an almost trivial fashion” (p. 21).
- “Voters who rejected fluoridation saved themselves a few pennies in taxes per year in return for many unpleasant visits to the dentist and substantial dental bills” (p. 54). I include this one because it’s proof that academics can be funny too.
- “Human beings are cultural animals, and they spend their years absorbing in great detail the various subcultures in which they participate” (p. 216).

### 1.3.6 Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections

Ansolabehere, S., Snyder, J. M., & Stewart, C. (2001). Candidate Positioning in U.S. House Elections [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(1), 136–159. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2669364>

- 1. Citation key:** ansolabehere\_candidate\_2001
- 2. Author(s):** Stephen Ansolabehere, James M. Snyder, Jr., Charles Stewart III
- 3. Year:** 2001
- 4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
- 5. Keywords:** candidate positioning, House of Representatives, ideological divergence, national parties, electoral responsiveness, spatial theory of elections)
- 6. Summary:** This study examines the ideological positioning of candidates in U.S. House elections from 1874 to 1996. Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart analyze how House candidates align with national party ideologies rather than moderating to reflect district-specific preferences. The authors find that although district competition exerts some influence on candidate positioning, national party ideology remains the dominant force in shaping candidate positions. Their analysis reveals that while responsiveness to district preferences increased mid-century, this effect declined in the latter half of the 20th century. Overall, the study demonstrates the limited scope of voter “choice” in House elections, as candidates rarely converge to district-level ideological preferences.
- 7. Theory:** Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart ground their analysis in the spatial theory of elections, as introduced by Downs (1957), which suggests that candidates should converge toward the median voter’s preferences within a first-past-the-post system. The study tests whether U.S. House candidates behave according to this model by moderating their positions to match district ideology. They contrast the theoretical expectation of convergence with the observed trend of persistent ideological divergence, arguing that national party pressures override local ideological demands. By examining both historical and contemporary data, the authors provide a nuanced critique of the notion that district-level preferences guide candidate behavior. They propose that although district competition exerts pressure, the candidates’ alignment with national party positions limits responsiveness to local ideological variance.
- 8. Methods:** This study uses a historical dataset spanning from 1874 to 1996 to examine candidate positioning in U.S. House elections. To assess the ideological stances of candidates, Ansolabehere et al. utilize a dataset that includes roll-call voting records, complemented by the *National Political Awareness Test* (NPAT) survey responses from the 1996 election. The analysis focuses on races in which both major party candidates had a voting record, allowing the authors to estimate each candidate’s position along an ideological dimension. They apply principal components analysis to the NPAT responses to derive ideological scales and track positioning over time. By analyzing historical patterns, they assess long-term trends in candidate divergence and district-level responsiveness, specifically looking at factors like incumbency, candidate quality, and electoral competition.
- 9. Hypotheses and Findings:**
  - **Ideological Convergence Hypothesis:** According to spatial theory, candidates should converge ideologically toward the district’s median voter to capture the maximum number of votes. This hypothesis was refuted. The study found that candidates do not consistently converge to the median voter’s position, instead aligning closely with national party ideologies.
  - **National Dominance Hypothesis:** Candidates will align more closely with their national party ideology, exhibiting limited moderation in response to local district preferences. This hypothesis was confirmed. The authors found that national party ideology was a stronger determinant of candidate positioning than district-specific preferences.
  - **Responsiveness Hypothesis:** Candidates’ responsiveness to district preferences will vary, peaking in competitive or marginal districts where electoral pressures are highest. This hypothesis was partially confirmed. Responsiveness to district preferences was more prominent mid-century but diminished over time, with national party alignment remaining dominant even in competitive districts.
  - **Moderation Benefit Hypothesis:** Candidates who moderate their positions to better match district preferences should receive a measurable electoral advantage. This hypothesis was partially confirmed. While moderate candidates gained some electoral advantage, the effect was inconsistent and less significant than the influence of national party alignment.
- The confirmed hypotheses reveal a consistent trend of ideological divergence and underscore the limits of district-specific responsiveness in candidate positioning.
- 10. Main findings:** Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart’s analysis confirms a persistent trend of ideological divergence among House candidates, with candidates generally aligning closely with national party ideology rather than converging to district preferences. Their findings reveal that ideological responsiveness to district preferences was highest

from the 1940s to the 1970s, reflecting a period when candidates adapted more to local demands. However, this responsiveness diminished in subsequent decades, with candidates increasingly adhering to national party lines even in competitive districts. The study also demonstrates that while moderate candidates tend to gain some electoral benefit, this effect is limited and inconsistent across elections. The authors conclude that despite pressures from district-level competition, national party influence remains the primary determinant of candidate positioning, suggesting that U.S. House elections provide less ideological “choice” than spatial theory might predict.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “We argue that this view overstates the differences between elections held in America and in the rest of the democratic world. Even in the U.S., when candidates... balance the broad policy views of the local district and the national party, the national party dominates” (p. 137).
- “Candidates diverge at the district level, just as parties diverge nationally... the amount of ideological ‘choice’ that voters get as a result of such positioning is minor compared to the weight of the national parties’ ideologies” (p. 136).
- “We have uncovered an enduring pattern of candidate divergence in the United States. The choices voters face locally mainly reflect national positions of the parties” (p. 152).

#### 1.3.7 Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment

Gerber, A. S., Green, D. P. [Donald P.], & Larimer, C. W. (2008). Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment. *American Political Science Review*, 102(1), 33–48. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305540808009X>

1. **Citation key:** gerber\_social\_2008
2. **Author(s):** Alan S. Gerber, Donald P. Green, Christopher W. Larimer
3. **Year:** 2008
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** voter turnout, social pressure, civic duty, field experiment, political participation, norm compliance
6. **Summary:** This study investigates the impact of social pressure on voter turnout through a large-scale field experiment conducted during the 2006 Michigan primary election. Gerber, Green, and Larimer design an experiment to examine how different degrees of social pressure, applied through mailed letters, influence voting behavior. Their findings indicate that social pressure significantly increases turnout, with the most substantial effects observed when households received mailings indicating that their voting records would be shared with neighbors. The study suggests that social norms and concerns about public reputation can serve as powerful motivators for political participation.
7. **Theory:** The authors base their study on theories of social norms and rational choice models of voting behavior. Traditional models often fail to explain why people vote, as the probability of a single vote being decisive is nearly zero. Gerber et al. extend the calculus of voting by adding social pressure as an external motivator, arguing that individuals may vote due to the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of norm compliance. These benefits include internal satisfaction from fulfilling civic duties and external rewards from avoiding social disapproval. By distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic incentives, the authors suggest that social surveillance and potential reputation costs can overcome the low instrumental value of an individual vote.
8. **Methods:** The experiment was conducted in Michigan with a sample of over 180,000 households, divided into control and treatment groups. Four treatment groups received different mailings:
  - **Civic Duty Treatment:** This letter reminded voters of their civic duty to vote.
  - **Hawthorne Treatment:** Informed voters they were part of a study, which would review their voting records after the election.
  - **Self-Treatment:** Displayed the voting history of individuals within the household, increasing social pressure within the home.
  - **Neighbors Treatment:** Listed both the household’s and neighbors’ voting records, suggesting that voting behavior would be shared among neighbors.

The authors measured the impact of these treatments on voter turnout, using public records post-election to determine if recipients participated in the primary. Turnout rates were compared across groups to identify the effectiveness of each treatment in motivating voter behavior.

### 9. Hypotheses:

- **Social Norm Compliance Hypothesis:** Individuals are more likely to vote when reminded of civic duty and observed by others. This hypothesis is confirmed. The study found that all treatments increased turnout, with more substantial effects in treatments involving social observation.
- **Hawthorne Effect Hypothesis:** Informing voters they are being observed (Hawthorne effect) will lead to higher turnout. This hypothesis is partially confirmed. The Hawthorne treatment group showed higher turnout than the control but lower than the Self and Neighbors treatments, suggesting observation alone has moderate effects.
- **Intrahousehold Pressure Hypothesis:** Displaying household members’ voting records will increase turnout within the household. This hypothesis is confirmed. The Self-Treatment mailing, which included the household’s voting record, produced a 4.9 percentage point increase over the control.
- **Neighborhood Pressure Hypothesis:** Sharing voting records with neighbors creates the strongest incentive to vote, as individuals wish to avoid social judgment. This hypothesis is strongly confirmed. The Neighbors treatment yielded the highest turnout increase (8.1 percentage points over the control), indicating that social pressure

from neighbors is a powerful motivator.

These findings underscore the role of social surveillance in motivating turnout, with the strongest effects observed when individuals felt their voting behavior would be visible to their immediate social network.

**10. Main findings:** The study provides robust evidence that social pressure, especially when voting records are made visible to neighbors, significantly increases voter turnout. This effect surpasses other common mobilization methods, such as phone calls and direct mail, highlighting the power of social norms and reputation concerns in shaping political behavior. The authors suggest that concerns about social judgment effectively compel individuals to vote, especially when they perceive their nonparticipation might be publicly known. The findings imply that low-cost interventions leveraging social pressure could be highly effective for increasing turnout, offering a practical tool for campaigns and civic groups.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Even more dramatic is the effect of showing households both their own voting records and the voting records of their neighbors... exposing a person’s voting record to his or her neighbors turns out to be an order of magnitude more effective than conventional pieces of partisan or nonpartisan direct mail” (p. 34).
- “The influence of a single piece of direct mail turns out to be formidable when (and only when) social pressure is exerted” (p. 38).
- “The remarkable effectiveness of the social pressure appeals contrasts with the relatively modest effects observed in previous studies of the effectiveness of direct mail voter mobilization campaigns” (p. 41).

### 1.3.8 Is Voting Contagious? Evidence from Two Field Experiments

Nickerson, D. W. (2008). Is Voting Contagious? Evidence from Two Field Experiments. *American Political Science Review*, 102(1), 49–57. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S00030554080039>

1. **Citation key:** nickerson\_is\_2008

2. **Author(s):** David W. Nickerson

3. **Year:** 2008

4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review

5. **Keywords:** voter turnout, social contagion, peer influence, field experiment, GOTV (Get Out The Vote)

6. **Summary:** This article investigates the phenomenon of voter contagion, examining whether voting behavior spreads within households. Nickerson uses two field experiments conducted during the 2002 Congressional primaries in Denver and Minneapolis to measure if and how a GOTV (Get Out the Vote) canvassing message delivered to one member of a two-person household influences the turnout of the other household member. Results indicate that voting behavior is indeed contagious, with the voting propensity of the untreated household member significantly increasing due to the initial canvassing contact. The study’s findings provide empirical support for social contagion theories, showing that voting behavior can spread through close social networks.

7. **Theory:** Nickerson draws on theories of social contagion, positing that interpersonal influence within social networks, especially households, can affect individual political behaviors such as voter turnout. Unlike traditional atomistic models that treat voters as isolated decision-makers, social contagion theory suggests that individuals are embedded in social networks where behaviors and attitudes are influenced by peers. Nickerson hypothesizes that contact with GOTV messaging directed at one household member will increase the likelihood of the other member voting, with this effect arising from social pressure and the normative influence of observing others’ political participation. The study emphasizes the role of interpersonal dynamics, arguing that the physical proximity and frequent interactions within households make them particularly conducive to the spread of participatory behaviors.

8. **Methods:** Nickerson conducted two placebo-controlled field experiments targeting households with two registered voters during the 2002 Congressional primaries. In each household, canvassers delivered either a GOTV message or a neutral recycling message (placebo) to the first person who answered the door. Households were then divided into three groups:

- **GOTV Treatment Group:** Received a canvassing message encouraging voter turnout.
- **Recycling Placebo Group:** Received a canvassing message promoting recycling, to account for any generic mobilization effect.
- **Control Group:** Received no contact.

By comparing turnout rates among both the treated and untreated household members across these groups, Nickerson isolated the contagion effect—measuring the extent to which voting behavior spread from the contacted individual to their household partner. Voter turnout was assessed using public voting records, and the analysis controlled for various demographic and household factors.

9. **Hypotheses:** Nickerson’s primary hypothesis was that GOTV messages delivered to one household member would increase the likelihood of the other household member voting due to behavioral contagion. This hypothesis was confirmed. Results showed that untreated household members in the GOTV group had significantly higher turnout rates than those in the placebo and control groups, suggesting a strong contagion effect. Specifically:

- The direct effect of GOTV treatment on contacted individuals was significant, with an 8-10% increase in turnout.
- The contagion effect on untreated household members was substantial, with a 5-6% increase in turnout attributable to behavioral influence from the treated individual.
- Approximately 60% of the direct treatment effect was passed on to the untreated partner, supporting the view

that voting behavior is highly contagious within close social networks like households.

These findings suggest that GOTV efforts can have spillover effects beyond the initial target, amplifying their impact through social networks.

10. **Main findings:** Nickerson's study provides robust evidence that voting behavior is contagious within households, with untreated household members demonstrating increased turnout due to their partner's exposure to GOTV messaging. This contagion effect accounted for 60% of the initial mobilization effect observed in the treated partner, underscoring the significance of interpersonal influence in political behavior. The study contributes to the understanding of how political participation diffuses through social networks, suggesting that GOTV efforts targeting one individual may inadvertently mobilize additional voters within their social circle. These findings have practical implications for campaign strategies, as they highlight the value of targeting individuals within tight-knit social groups to achieve broader mobilization.

11. **Key quotations:**

- "The entire act of voting appears to be assisted by interactions with friends, neighbors, and family members" (p. 50).
- "Both experiments find that 60% of the propensity to vote is passed onto the other member of the household. This finding suggests a mechanism by which civic participation norms are adopted and couples grow more similar over time" (p. 48).
- "The magnitude of the contagion effect is remarkable when compared to other well studied predictors of voting such as education, income, and age" (p. 54).
- "Political scientists study people embedded within families, neighborhoods, and social networks rather than hermits living on desert islands" (p. 55).

### 1.3.9 Comment: What Have You Done for Me Lately? Toward An Investment Theory of Voting

Popkin, S., Gorman, J. W., Phillips, C., & Smith, J. A. (1976). Comment: What Have You Done for Me Lately? Toward An Investment Theory of Voting [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 70(3), 779–805. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055400174246>

1. **Citation key:** popkin\_comment\_1976

2. **Author(s):** Samuel Popkin, John W. Gorman, Charles Phillips, and Jeffrey A. Smith

3. **Year:** 1976

4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review

5. **Keywords:** voter behavior, investment theory of voting, rational choice, electoral decision-making, information costs

6. **Summary:** Popkin et al. critique the traditional models of voter behavior that focus primarily on partisan loyalty and affective attachment, proposing instead an investment-based approach to understanding voting behavior. In their view, voters act as "investors," making electoral choices based on a calculated assessment of benefits, particularly in terms of collective goods under conditions of uncertainty and costly information. This investment theory highlights the role of information costs and the strategic use of shortcuts, such as party identification, which voters rely on due to the high costs associated with acquiring detailed knowledge of candidates and policies. The authors argue that this model provides a more accurate framework for explaining long-term trends in American electoral behavior compared to the classic models rooted in affective attachment to parties.

7. **Theory:** The authors argue that voters operate under the constraints of costly and limited information, using "informational shortcuts" like party labels to economize on the effort required to make informed decisions. Building on Anthony Downs's rational choice framework, Popkin et al. posit that voters weigh the benefits of electoral outcomes as investments in collective goods, with expectations of personal and group benefits. Unlike models based on psychological attachment to political parties, the investment theory emphasizes voters' rational assessments of which parties or candidates align with their instrumental interests. By reconceptualizing voting as a strategic investment decision, the authors contend that the model better accounts for both the patterns of voter behavior observed in historical elections and the influence of social and economic contexts on partisan support.

8. **Methods:** The authors develop their theory through a critique of existing literature, especially the Survey Research Center's model of partisan loyalty, which has historically portrayed voting as a primarily affective behavior. Using historical data from the 1972 election as a case study, they contrast the traditional six-factor model with their investment-based approach. The authors utilize regression analyses to examine the weight of factors such as candidate evaluations, party management, and issue stances in predicting voter choice. By applying alternative criteria, such as the economic costs of gathering information and the net impact of factors on election outcomes, Popkin et al. aim to provide an empirical basis for their theory.

9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that voters are more influenced by the costs and benefits of gathering information than by long-term affective attachments to parties. This hypothesis was confirmed. Key findings include:

- Voters' reliance on party identification and other heuristics is rooted in the high cost of acquiring detailed political knowledge, not simply affective loyalty.
- Issue-based voting is more likely to occur when voters face immediate personal stakes, which align with the investment model's assumptions.
- Historical analyses reveal that traditional models overstate the role of partisan loyalty and underestimate the extent to which voters' choices are influenced by rational assessments of candidates and issues.

These results indicate that voters' behavior can be better understood as an investment in collective goods, subject to the limitations imposed by the costs of information and uncertainty.

- 10. Main findings:** Popkin et al. conclude that voting behavior is not adequately explained by affective loyalty to parties but instead involves rational calculations based on potential benefits and costs. Their analysis shows that voters treat party labels as practical tools for reducing information costs rather than as indicators of psychological loyalty. They find that high information costs and the collective nature of electoral outcomes push voters toward simplified decision-making methods, such as relying on party identification and generalized ideological labels. This approach contrasts with previous findings of the SRC model, which emphasized the psychological attachment to parties as the primary motivator of voting behavior. The authors argue that future research should consider voting as a calculated investment rather than a reflection of affective identification.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The accumulation of information always involves the expenditure of resources by individuals. These costs are directly affected by the quality of the information available; the problem of assessing the credibility of information; the difficulty of distinguishing between campaign rhetoric and actual position statements; the question of interpretation of vague positions; the difficulty of assigning responsibility for collective outputs; and simple gaps in the available information" (p. 787).
- "An investor-voter model which incorporates the understanding that information is costly leads to expectations about the voter which differ from those of the SRC, or citizen-voter, model" (p. 788).
- "The most useful way to conceptualize party for this purpose is as a coalition of voters coordinating their efforts to pursue a set of collective goods. While the coalition may exhibit a great deal of stability over time, the basis of the attachment of each individual to the party is instrumental, which is to say that affective attachment depends on rewards received" (p. 790).

### 1.3.10 Sociotropic Politics: The American Case

Kinder, D. R., & Kiewiet, D. R. (1981). Sociotropic Politics: The American Case. *British Journal of Political Science*, 11(2), 129–161. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123400002544>

1. **Citation key:** kinder\_sociotropic\_1981
2. **Author(s):** Donald R. Kinder and D. Roderick Kiewiet
3. **Year:** 1981
4. **Publication:** British Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** sociotropic voting, pocketbook voting, economic conditions, political behavior, retrospective voting
6. **Summary:** This article contrasts two models of economic voting: the "pocketbook" model, where voters base decisions on personal financial experiences, and the "sociotropic" model, where voters respond to national economic conditions. Kinder and Kiewiet challenge the dominance of pocketbook voting assumptions, arguing that sociotropic concerns—how voters perceive the overall economic health of the nation—are a stronger determinant of voting behavior in both congressional and presidential elections. Using data from the CPS National Election Studies, they find that voters are more influenced by general economic assessments rather than personal financial situations, suggesting that individual voting decisions are often shaped by perceptions of the broader economy's health rather than by individual economic experiences.
7. **Theory:** Kinder and Kiewiet explore sociotropic and pocketbook voting theories to understand voter decision-making within an economic context. While pocketbook voting assumes voters prioritize their personal economic well-being, sociotropic voting suggests that voters base their electoral choices on broader national economic indicators. The authors argue that sociotropic evaluations—judgments about national economic conditions, including trends in inflation and unemployment—more strongly influence electoral choices. They suggest that voters are motivated by a perceived responsibility to elect leaders who will manage the economy effectively for the nation, rather than primarily for their own financial gain. This theory posits that sociotropic voting is less demanding informationally, as voters rely on general impressions of the national economy instead of detailed analyses of personal financial outcomes.
8. **Methods:** The authors employ a quantitative analysis using CPS data from 1972, 1974, and 1976 to test the relationship between personal and national economic evaluations and voting behavior. They assess voter responses to both "personal problem" and "national problem" questions to differentiate between pocketbook and sociotropic concerns. They then use regression analyses to examine how these economic evaluations influenced congressional and presidential voting preferences across different election cycles, including controls for party identification and demographic variables to isolate the effects of economic judgments.
9. **Hypotheses:** Kinder and Kiewiet hypothesize that sociotropic economic judgments will be stronger predictors of voting behavior than personal economic grievances. This hypothesis was confirmed. Findings include:
  - Sociotropic judgments—such as views on government economic management and national business conditions—were significantly related to voting behavior, while personal financial dissatisfaction had minimal influence.
  - Voters concerned with national issues like inflation or unemployment were more likely to vote for candidates they believed would address these issues effectively, irrespective of personal financial experience.
  - Regression analyses showed that sociotropic evaluations accounted for a larger share of voting variance in congressional and presidential elections than pocketbook grievances, supporting the view that national economic

- perceptions, rather than personal economic concerns, drive electoral choices.
- 10. Main findings:** The study concludes that sociotropic economic evaluations dominate in shaping American voting behavior, challenging the assumption that voters are primarily motivated by self-interest in economic voting. Kinder and Kiewiet find that voters' evaluations of national economic performance, particularly on issues like inflation and unemployment, have a strong and consistent impact on voting preferences. Their findings suggest that pocketbook considerations play a minor role, as personal economic grievances are largely irrelevant to voting outcomes. This distinction has broader implications for understanding the role of economic conditions in democratic accountability, emphasizing voters' reliance on national economic judgments over personal financial circumstances.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "American elections depend substantially on the vitality of the national economy. Prosperity benefits candidates for the House of Representatives from the incumbent party... whereas economic downturns enhance the electoral fortunes of opposition candidates" (p. 129).
- "That the pocketbook assumption is popular does not make it true. An alternative to it is what we shall call sociotropic prediction. In reaching political preferences, the prototypic sociotropic voter is influenced most of all by the nation's economic condition" (p. 132).
- "Pocketbook voting reflects the circumstances and predicaments of personal economic life; sociotropic voting reflects the circumstances and predicaments of national economic life" (p. 133).
- "Personal economic grievances, measured in a variety of ways, carried little political punch in these contests - more of a tap, really, than the clout typically assigned to pocketbook interests by social science theories" (p. 141).
- "Congressional voting is, however, responsive to sociotropic concerns. By themselves, the set of variables representing respondents' sociotropic economic judgements predicted a sizeable share of the variance in voting" (p. 142).

### 1.3.11 The Primacy of Race in the Geography of Income-Based Voting: New Evidence from Public Voting Records

Hersh, E. D., & Nall, C. (2016). The Primacy of Race in the Geography of Income-Based Voting: New Evidence from Public Voting Records [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12179>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(2), 289–303. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12179>

1. **Citation key:** `hersh_primacy_2016`
2. **Author(s):** Eitan D. Hersh, Clayton Nall
3. **Year:** 2016
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** race, income-based voting, political geography, racial context, economic context, voting behavior
6. **Summary:** This study investigates the role of racial and economic contexts in the geographic patterns of income-based voting across U.S. regions. Using an extensive dataset that includes 73 million voter registration records and 185,000 precinct returns, Hersh and Nall analyze how local racial diversity and history of racialized poverty affect the relationship between income and partisanship. They find that racial context, rather than economic factors, predominantly shapes the income-party relationship in various locales. In areas with significant minority populations, income strongly predicts voting behavior, with affluent whites tending to vote Republican, while poor minorities support Democrats. Conversely, in racially homogeneous areas, income is less predictive of party affiliation.
7. **Theory:** Hersh and Nall position their analysis within two main theories explaining geographic variation in income-based voting: economic context and racial context. The economic context theory suggests that in wealthier regions, nonmaterialist issues take precedence, weakening the income-partisanship link, while racial context posits that local racial composition intensifies income-based voting patterns. The authors argue that the racial composition of an area—not just its economic standing—shapes partisan alignment, particularly where racial diversity intersects with economic disparity. They suggest that racialized poverty creates environments where income-based voting aligns closely with race, influencing how affluent white voters and poorer minority voters respond to party messages on redistribution and social policies.
8. **Methods:** The authors leverage a comprehensive dataset of geocoded voter registration and precinct-level election returns, enabling analysis at fine-grained geographic levels, such as block groups and state house districts. They examine the income-party relationship across four levels of racial diversity within districts and compare these results in racially homogeneous versus racially diverse areas. By analyzing patterns in southern and non-southern regions, the authors assess how racial and economic contexts interact to shape voting behavior. Analytical methods include direct enumeration and hierarchical modeling, which allow for the investigation of voting patterns within localized racial and economic contexts.
9. **Hypotheses:** Hersh and Nall hypothesize that racial context, rather than economic context, will better explain geographic variation in income-based voting. This hypothesis was confirmed. Key findings indicate that:
  - In racially diverse areas, affluent white voters are more likely to vote Republican, while poor minorities overwhelmingly support Democrats, strengthening the income-party link.
  - In homogeneous white areas, income is a weaker predictor of partisanship, suggesting that economic factors alone do not drive geographic differences in voting patterns.
  - Southern regions with a history of racialized poverty, such as the Black Belt, exhibit stronger income-based voting correlations than more racially homogeneous parts of the North and Midwest.

The study thus affirms that racial diversity, especially in areas with historical racial tension, intensifies the partisan divide along income lines.

- 10. Main findings:** Hersh and Nall demonstrate that racial context significantly shapes income-based voting across U.S. regions. Their results show that in racially diverse areas—particularly in the South—there is a pronounced divide, with affluent whites voting Republican and poor minorities supporting Democrats. In contrast, homogeneous white areas reveal weaker income-party alignment. The authors conclude that geographic differences in voting cannot be fully explained by economic context alone and that racial composition is integral to understanding income-based voting. Their findings highlight how historical and social factors tied to racial diversity sustain political divides, suggesting that policy preferences and party alignment in the U.S. are deeply intertwined with race.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “The political geography of income-based voting is inextricably tied to racial context, and only marginally explained by economic context” (p. 280).
- “The relationship between district income and partisanship is strong in states with larger proportions of African Americans, including both northern states like New Jersey and southern states like Louisiana, and weaker elsewhere” (p. 294).
- “Income-based voting is stronger in southern Black districts than elsewhere in the country, underscoring the primacy of racial context in structuring partisan cleavages across income levels” (p. 299).

## 1.4 Political Participation

### 1.4.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The political participation literature has evolved alongside political science itself. It has shifted from focusing on who votes, to why they vote. The sources show that this evolution also brought a greater understanding of how political actors can influence the decision to vote. Early work on political participation, like that of Tocqueville's in *Democracy in America*, concentrated on describing participation and outlining factors associated with who participates. Early works also established socioeconomic status as a key predictor of political participation, and established concerns about the representativeness of the electorate that would continue to be central to the literature going forward.
- **Mobilization and the Decline in Turnout:** The concept of mobilization provided a theoretical framework to explain trends in participation. This line of inquiry addressed declining turnout rates, arguing that they could be explained by declining mobilization efforts. The most influential work to come out of this school of thought is Rosenstone and Hansen's *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. Rosenstone and Hansen argue that politicians target their mobilization efforts strategically to maximize their return on investment, leading them to focus their efforts on those already likely to participate. These mobilization studies often rely on field experiments, which ostensibly allow researchers to make more precise causal claims than observational studies.
- **Social Capital:** Another prominent theoretical framework is that of social capital, most closely associated with Robert Putnam's “Bowling Alone.” Social capital refers to the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively. This theory argues that declining social capital, marked by a decline in group membership and social interaction, negatively affects voter turnout.
- **New Ways to Participate and Expanding the Definition of Participation:** Beyond these major theories, the literature has expanded to encompass a wider range of activities beyond voter turnout. Works like Verba et al.'s *Citizen Activity: Who Participates? What Do They Say?* illustrate how focusing solely on voter turnout can be misleading because citizens participate in politics in many ways besides voting. Verba et al. argue that political activities differ in terms of the resources they require and the information they convey, and that these differences have important consequences for the representativeness of the participatory input.
- **The Role of Information, Timing, and Context:** The literature has also investigated how information shapes participation, focusing on both the content and timing of information. The timing of when individuals encounter information, such as negative advertising, is particularly relevant to understanding the relationship between political information and turnout. Krupnikov's “When Does Negativity Demobilize? Tracing the Conditional Effect of Negative Campaigning on Voter Turnout” argues that the timing of exposure to negativity shapes its effects on turnout. Specifically, negativity is demobilizing only when it is encountered after a voter selects their preferred candidate, but before they cast their vote.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** These inquiries have given rise to several persistent debates in the field:
  - *Pocketbook vs. Sociotropic Voting:* This debate asks whether citizens make decisions based on their own economic circumstances, or on the overall state of the economy.
  - *Rational Choice vs. Psychological Models:* Are voters rational actors who weigh costs and benefits, or do they rely on heuristics and emotional cues?
  - *The Effects of Campaign Spending:* Does campaign spending actually influence elections?
  - *The Impact of Negative Campaigning:* Does negative campaigning mobilize or demobilize the electorate?

### 1.4.2 Mobilization, Participation, and American Democracy

Rosenstone, S. J., & Hansen, J. M. (1993). *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. Macmillan Publishing Company

1. Citation key: rosenstone\_mobilization\_1993

2. **Author(s):** Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen
3. **Year:** 1993
4. **Publication:** Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America (Macmillan)
5. **Keywords:** political participation, voter mobilization, turnout decline, social networks, electoral engagement, strategic mobilization
6. **Summary:** This book addresses two critical questions about American electoral behavior: why people choose to participate in elections and why voter turnout has declined from the 1960s to the 1980s. Rosenstone and Hansen argue that while individual-level factors like income, education, and age impact the costs and benefits of voting, they do not fully explain turnout trends. The authors emphasize the importance of mobilization, contending that participation is also driven by strategic efforts from politicians who target specific groups to mobilize. The book also explains that declines in mobilization—due to shifts toward candidate-centered campaigns and less emphasis on local party networks—are the primary cause of turnout decreases over time.
7. **Theory:** Rosenstone and Hansen propose that voter turnout results from both personal cost-benefit calculations and mobilization efforts. Personal-level factors such as income, education, and age influence an individual's likelihood of voting by affecting the perceived costs and benefits. However, the authors assert that these factors alone do not account for variations in participation over time. Instead, mobilization is a critical component: politicians selectively engage with certain groups, strategically targeting individuals in social networks like churches, workplaces, and neighborhoods. The authors argue that mobilization efforts declined as political campaigns shifted focus from party organizations to individual candidates, weakening local political networks and making participation less common.
8. **Methods:** Rosenstone and Hansen's analysis is based on an extensive dataset from the *National Election Studies* (NES), covering multiple election cycles. The authors examine patterns in voter turnout across various demographic groups and assess the impact of factors such as education, income, and social connections on voting behavior. They use statistical models to explore how individual and group-level factors interact with mobilization efforts to shape participation rates, highlighting the changing nature of campaign strategies and their influence on turnout.
9. **Hypotheses:** Rosenstone and Hansen hypothesize that turnout is affected both by individual characteristics and by the presence or absence of mobilization efforts from political actors. This hypothesis was confirmed, with findings that:
  - Personal factors like income, education, and age increase the likelihood of voting by reducing participation costs, while factors such as strong partisanship and candidate evaluations enhance perceived benefits.
  - Mobilization efforts by political actors play a crucial role in driving turnout, with targeted mobilization efforts explaining much of the variation in participation rates.
  - The decline in mobilization efforts between the 1960s and 1980s contributed significantly to the overall decrease in voter turnout, as candidate-centered campaigns diminished local party efforts to engage voters.These findings underscore the dual importance of personal costs and benefits and mobilization in understanding voter turnout.
10. **Main findings:** The book concludes that declines in voter turnout from the 1960s to the 1980s are primarily due to decreased mobilization efforts rather than individual characteristics alone. Specifically, Rosenstone and Hansen estimate that reduced mobilization accounts for 54% of the turnout decline. Other factors contributing to this decline include the extension of the voting age to 18, weakened social involvement, declining political efficacy, and weakened party attachment. The authors argue that these trends reflect broader shifts in American politics, where the decline of local party organizations and increased focus on individual candidates led to more impersonal campaign strategies, reducing citizen engagement. They highlight the implications of this decline for American democracy, noting that participation has become more skewed toward affluent and well-educated citizens.
11. **Key definitions / quotation:**
  - **Mobilization:** Efforts by political actors, such as parties and candidates, to encourage specific individuals or groups to participate in the electoral process. Mobilization can be selective, targeting those likely to respond or those with social influence.
  - **Turnout Decline:** A decrease in the percentage of eligible citizens who participate in elections over time, observed in this study between the 1960s and 1980s. This decline is attributed to factors such as reduced mobilization, changes in social networks, and shifts toward candidate-centered campaigns.
  - **Candidate-Centered Campaigns:** A type of campaign strategy focusing on individual candidates rather than on political parties. This shift often reduces the role of local party organizations in mobilizing voters and fosters more impersonal interactions with the electorate.
  - **Social Networks:** Informal relationships among individuals, such as those formed through workplaces, religious groups, or community organizations, which can be used by political actors as channels for mobilization. Social networks play a key role in the spread of political information and in reducing the costs associated with voting.
  - **Rational Nonparticipation:** The decision not to vote based on a cost-benefit analysis, where the perceived costs of voting (time, effort, information gathering) outweigh the benefits, particularly in light of the low probability that a single vote will influence an election outcome.
  - **Political Efficacy:** The belief that one's participation can influence political processes and outcomes. Declining political efficacy is associated with lower voter turnout, as individuals who feel powerless are less likely to engage in the electoral process.

- “Mobilization, in all its forms, causes people to take part in electoral politics. Citizens who are contacted by political parties, exposed to intensely fought electoral campaigns, or inspired by the actions of social movements are more likely to vote, to persuade, to campaign, and to give.” (p. 209-210)

#### 1.4.3 Mobilization, Participation, and American Democracy: A Retrospective and Postscript

Green, D. P. [Donald P], & Schwam-Baird, M. (2016). Mobilization, participation, and American democracy: A retrospective and postscript. *Party Politics*, 22(2), 158–164. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068815605678>

- Citation key:** green\_mobilization\_2016
- Author(s):** Donald P. Green and Michael Schwam-Baird
- Year:** 2016
- Publication:** Party Politics
- Keywords:** political mobilization, voter turnout, campaign strategy, social networks, field experiments, microtargeting
- Summary:** This retrospective article reflects on the influential work by Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) on mobilization and political participation, examining how subsequent research has reinforced and extended its key claims. Green and Schwam-Baird highlight that strategic mobilization efforts by campaigns and interactions within social networks remain central to understanding voter turnout. This article revisits the role of campaign activity in driving turnout, as well as the advancements in microtargeting techniques that allow campaigns to tailor messages to specific voter segments. Through this discussion, the authors underscore the enduring relevance of Rosenstone and Hansen's arguments in the context of modern field experiments and political mobilization.
- Theory:** Green and Schwam-Baird discuss Rosenstone and Hansen's two central claims: that mobilization by campaigns and social interactions significantly affect voter turnout, and that political actors engage in strategic targeting to maximize electoral impact. They argue that mobilization works by lowering the informational and social costs of participation, providing voters with reminders and a sense of civic duty. The authors note that technological advancements, particularly in data analytics, have transformed this strategic calculus, enabling more precise mobilization efforts. Campaigns today use voter databases to identify and target voters likely to respond to mobilization, demonstrating a continuation of the strategic principles outlined in Rosenstone and Hansen's original work.
- Methods:** Green and Schwam-Baird examine the methodological evolution in mobilization studies since 1993, noting the shift from observational studies to experimental methods. They emphasize the “credibility revolution” in social science, which prioritized randomized experiments to establish causality. This shift allows researchers to more accurately measure the impact of specific campaign tactics, such as direct mail, phone calls, and door-to-door canvassing. The authors discuss the limitations of self-reported survey data, which can overstate mobilization effects, and highlight how modern experiments have provided more reliable insights.
- Hypotheses and Findings:** Green and Schwam-Baird reaffirm Rosenstone and Hansen's hypothesis that mobilization efforts increase voter turnout. This hypothesis was confirmed in numerous studies, with findings that:
  - Campaigns mobilize voters through targeted outreach, including direct contact methods such as phone calls and canvassing, which reduce the social and informational costs of voting.
  - The effectiveness of mobilization varies by the type of contact and the personal characteristics of voters, with high-touch methods like personal canvassing showing stronger effects than low-touch methods like robocalls.
  - Social networks play a vital role in extending the reach of mobilization, as individuals influenced by campaigns can, in turn, encourage others within their networks to vote.
- Main findings:** The retrospective analysis concludes that Rosenstone and Hansen's theory of mobilization remains a powerful explanation for variations in voter turnout. Green and Schwam-Baird highlight that modern campaign strategies have become increasingly sophisticated, with data-driven approaches allowing campaigns to target specific voter segments through “microtargeting.” This strategy enables campaigns to engage voters based on predicted responsiveness, creating a more personalized mobilization approach. The authors note that while Rosenstone and Hansen emphasized the broad benefits of mobilization, more recent research suggests that campaigns often prioritize high-propensity voters, potentially increasing participation disparities along socioeconomic lines.
- Key quotations:**
  - “Campaign tactics often do mobilize voters, a conclusion that squares nicely with *Mobilization's* core argument.” (p. 160)
  - “Prior to the advent of experimentation, survey evidence suggested that mobilization matters, but a great deal of uncertainty surrounded this conclusion, reflecting the inherent methodological uncertainty associated with non-experimental inference” (p. 161)
  - “As states move from non-battleground to battleground in successive presidential elections, they experience a profound increase in turnout.” (p. 163)

#### 1.4.4 Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality

Verba, S., & Nie, N. H. (1987, January). *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. University of Chicago Press. Retrieved November 6, 2024, from <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/P/bo3637096.html>

- Citation key:** verba\_participation\_1987

2. **Author(s):** Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie
3. **Year:** 1987
4. **Publication:** Participation in America (University of Chicago Press)
5. **Keywords:** political participation, socioeconomic status, civic engagement, representation, racial consciousness
6. **Summary:** In this foundational study, Verba and Nie examine the dynamics of political participation in American democracy, analyzing who participates, how they participate, and the implications of their participation on political representation. Using a national survey and interviews with local leaders, they investigate the links between socioeconomic status (SES) and various forms of political participation, revealing stark inequalities in access to political power. The authors categorize political activities into four main types—voting, campaign participation, communal activity, and particularized contacting—and argue that these forms of engagement are unevenly distributed across demographic groups, which contributes to a skewed policy responsiveness favoring higher SES groups. Through this analysis, Verba and Nie highlight the challenges of achieving social equality in American democracy, especially given how participation patterns influence policy outcomes and representation.
7. **Theory:** The study introduces a framework for understanding political participation based on individual resources, motivation, and civic skills. The authors argue that people participate politically when they possess resources (such as time, money, and knowledge), are motivated by issues or ideological preferences, and have acquired civic skills through social networks or organizational affiliations. They posit that SES influences participation both directly, through access to resources, and indirectly, by shaping political attitudes and civic identities. Verba and Nie explore the concept of “representation distortion,” where the policy interests of more active, affluent citizens are more likely to be reflected in government action, while disadvantaged groups face barriers to influencing the political agenda.
8. **Methods:** Verba and Nie’s research employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. They draw on survey data from a national sample of American adults, analyzing patterns of participation across demographic variables such as income, education, race, and community size. They further supplement this survey with in-depth interviews conducted with leaders across 64 communities, allowing for a more nuanced exploration of how local context and individual motivations intersect with broader socioeconomic forces. This mixed-methods approach provides insights into both individual-level determinants of participation and structural factors affecting political engagement.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that socioeconomic status is a primary predictor of political participation, with higher SES individuals more likely to engage in all forms of political activity. They also propose that:
  - Individuals with stronger affiliations in voluntary associations or political parties are more likely to participate.
  - Socioeconomic factors operate differently across types of participation, with SES exerting the most influence on activities that require higher resources, such as campaign work.
  - Group consciousness, especially within racial minority communities, can mitigate SES disparities in participation rates, particularly in activities involving collective goals.
10. **Main findings:** Verba and Nie confirm that socioeconomic status is a significant determinant of political participation, with income, education, and occupational status strongly predicting engagement in voting, campaigns, and communal activities. They find that SES is less predictive of particularized contacting, which often involves addressing personal grievances directly with officials. The study also reveals that racial group consciousness can increase participation among Black Americans, helping to close the gap with White Americans on certain forms of collective engagement. Additionally, the authors find that political participation in smaller communities tends to be higher than in urban areas, likely due to increased civic engagement and stronger local networks.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Representation Distortion:* A phenomenon where political decisions and policies reflect the interests of socioeconomically advantaged groups who participate more actively in politics, leading to a bias in government responsiveness favoring these groups over lower SES individuals.
  - *Political Participation:* Defined narrowly by Verba and Nie as actions aimed at influencing governmental decisions or personnel, such as voting, campaigning, contacting officials, and engaging in community activities related to political objectives. This definition excludes expressive acts, such as protests or parades, that do not directly seek to impact government decisions.
  - *Group Consciousness:* The extent to which individuals, particularly within racial and ethnic minority communities, recognize shared experiences and grievances as a group. This consciousness fosters political solidarity, motivating higher participation rates in activities that promote collective goals, even among individuals with lower SES.

#### 1.4.5 Citizen Activity: Who Participates? What Do They Say?

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., Brady, H., & Nie, N. H. (1993). Citizen Activity: Who Participates? What Do They Say? *American Political Science Review*, 87(2), 303–318. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2939042>

1. **Citation key:** verba\_citizen\_1993
2. **Author(s):** Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry Brady, Norman H. Nie
3. **Year:** 1993
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** political participation, socioeconomic status, representativeness, policy influence, political activism
6. **Summary:** This study investigates the patterns of political participation in the United States, particularly focusing on

the representativeness of citizen activists compared to the general population. Using survey data designed to oversample political activists, Verba, Schlozman, Brady, and Nie examine whether activists are representative in terms of demographics, socioeconomic attributes, and policy concerns. Their findings indicate that while activists are broadly representative in terms of policy preferences, significant disparities exist in the demographics and economic circumstances of participants compared to non-participants. Activists tend to be more affluent and receive fewer government benefits, raising concerns about the unequal representation of low-income individuals and recipients of means-tested benefits.

**7. Theory:** The authors base their theoretical framework on the premise that participatory inequality in a democracy can skew public policy in favor of more active, affluent citizens. While the vote is an equalizer, other forms of participation like campaigning or contacting public officials can amplify the voices of those with more resources. The theory suggests that participatory acts are channels through which citizens communicate their needs, but when participation is unrepresentative, it leads to a misalignment between public policy and the needs of less represented groups.

**8. Methods:** The authors use a large-scale survey conducted in two stages, including a telephone survey of over 15,000 Americans, followed by in-depth interviews with 2,517 respondents. This design allowed for an oversampling of minorities and political activists, enabling a comparative analysis of the characteristics, policy attitudes, and participatory acts of these groups. The survey measured various forms of political participation beyond voting, including campaign contributions, contacts with officials, and attendance at public meetings, as well as respondent demographics and socioeconomic characteristics.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Political activists differ demographically from the general public. (Confirmed)
- Activists and non-activists hold similar policy preferences. (Confirmed)
- Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics are significant predictors of participation across different activities. (Confirmed)

**10. Main findings:** The study confirms that political activists are not demographically representative of the general public. While activists and non-activists do not differ significantly in their policy preferences, there are substantial disparities in socioeconomic status and reliance on government programs. Specifically, activists tend to have higher incomes and less reliance on means-tested benefits. Furthermore, wealthier citizens engage more frequently in forms of participation that allow them to exert greater influence, such as making campaign contributions, thus creating an advantage in terms of political influence.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Although activists are representative of the public at large in terms of their attitudes, they differ substantially in their demographic attributes, economic needs, and the government benefits they receive” (p. 303).
- “When a group...is active, it becomes visible to an elected representative and is incorporated into his or her salient constituency” (p. 304).
- “In terms of a set of issues of particular salience to those who are economically disadvantaged...the disadvantaged speak with a distinctive voice” (p. 314).

#### 1.4.6 Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., & Brady, H. E. (1995, September). *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Harvard University Press

**1. Citation key:** verba\_voice\_1995

**2. Author(s):** Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady

**3. Year:** 1995

**4. Publication:** Voice and Equality (Harvard University Press)

**5. Keywords:** political participation, civic voluntarism, social inequality, representation distortion, civic skills

**6. Summary:** This comprehensive study investigates the patterns, causes, and implications of political participation in the United States, focusing on how civic engagement and voluntarism shape representation. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady examine a broad array of political activities—voting, campaign work, contributions, and more informal community engagements—and how these vary by social class and resources. Their findings suggest that while American citizens remain active in various forms of political and civic engagement, significant disparities in participation persist. These disparities lead to “representation distortion,” whereby the interests of the affluent are overrepresented relative to those of disadvantaged groups, thus impacting the distribution of government resources and political influence.

**7. Theory:** The authors develop the “Civic Voluntarism Model” to explain why individuals participate in politics. This model posits that political engagement depends on three main factors: resources, engagement, and recruitment networks. Resources such as time, money, and civic skills enable individuals to participate, while psychological engagement (political interest and efficacy) motivates involvement. Additionally, social networks and organizational affiliations serve as avenues for political recruitment, allowing individuals to connect with civic and political activities. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady argue that disparities in resources, engagement, and access to recruitment networks contribute to unequal participation rates, leading to imbalances in political influence across socioeconomic groups.

**8. Methods:** Based on a survey of over 15,000 Americans, followed by in-depth interviews with a representative subset, the study employs both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the relationship between social resources and political behavior. The authors analyze different types of political activity, exploring how resources, civic skills, and

social networks influence participation across demographic and socioeconomic groups. Through statistical modeling, they assess the degree of “representation distortion” and examine the structural factors that shape access to political engagement.

9. **Hypotheses:** Verba, Schlozman, and Brady hypothesize that variations in political participation are primarily driven by differences in individuals’ civic skills, resources, and recruitment opportunities. This hypothesis was confirmed, with findings that:

- Disparities in resources (time, money, and civic skills) lead to unequal levels of participation, with wealthier and more educated individuals participating at higher rates.
- Political engagement is significantly enhanced by recruitment through social networks, particularly in community, religious, and professional settings.
- This unequal distribution of civic resources results in “representation distortion,” where the policy preferences of economically disadvantaged groups are underrepresented relative to those of affluent participants.

10. **Main findings:** The study concludes that political and civic participation in the United States is marked by substantial inequalities. Wealthier, more educated individuals are far more likely to participate in high-resource forms of engagement (like campaign donations and advocacy) than are disadvantaged groups. This disparity exacerbates inequalities in political representation, as affluent citizens’ preferences are more likely to shape policy decisions than those of less advantaged groups. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady highlight the need for strategies to increase inclusivity in political participation, suggesting that empowering disadvantaged citizens through civic skill development and network expansion could help mitigate representation distortions.

#### 11. Key definitions:

- **Civic Voluntarism Model:** A framework explaining political participation as dependent on resources (time, money, and civic skills), psychological engagement, and access to recruitment networks, each influencing an individual’s capacity and motivation to engage in civic activities.
- **Representation Distortion:** A phenomenon where the interests of socioeconomically advantaged groups are overrepresented in the political process due to their higher rates of participation, resulting in a bias in policy outcomes that favors these groups over disadvantaged populations.
- **Civic Skills:** Abilities, such as organizational, speaking, and cognitive skills, that enable individuals to participate effectively in political activities; these skills are often developed in nonpolitical settings, such as workplaces, religious organizations, and community groups.
- **Resource Model of Participation:** The notion that citizens want to participate in government, but may not have the resources (e.g., time, skills, money) to do so. The access to different resources means citizens manifest participation differently.

#### 1.4.7 The Social Citizen: Peer Networks and Political Behavior

Sinclair, B. (2012, December). *The Social Citizen: Peer Networks and Political Behavior*. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** sinclair\_social\_2012
2. **Author(s):** Betsy Sinclair
3. **Year:** 2012
4. **Publication:** The Social Citizen (University of Chicago Press)
5. **Keywords:** social influence, political behavior, peer networks, social pressure, voting behavior, party identification
6. **Summary:** In *The Social Citizen*, Betsy Sinclair explores the influence of peer networks on political decision-making, arguing that social connections can significantly impact various political behaviors, from voting and party affiliation to campaign donations. Contrary to traditional views that frame social relationships as passive sources of information, Sinclair demonstrates that these networks actively shape political behavior through social influence and norms. Using diverse data from experiments and surveys across multiple settings, she reveals how social pressure and connections influence political participation and identification, underscoring the importance of viewing citizens as social actors whose political decisions are deeply intertwined with those of their peers.
7. **Theory:** Sinclair theorizes that social influence operates through networks by instilling social norms that shape individuals’ political choices, not merely by transmitting information. She argues that social connections have a dual impact: close contacts exert strong influences on political decisions by reinforcing norms, while more distant connections facilitate exposure to a range of political perspectives. This theory suggests that political behavior is heavily context-dependent, shaped by the immediate social environment and the visibility of one’s political choices within that environment.
8. **Methods:** Sinclair employs various methodologies, including field experiments on voter turnout, network analysis of campaign donations, and survey data on party identification and candidate choice. This multi-method approach enables her to assess the impact of both immediate and broader social networks on political behavior, providing robust evidence of the role social pressures play in shaping political participation.
9. **Hypotheses:** Sinclair’s hypotheses focus on the role of social networks in shaping political actions:
  - Social pressure from peers can increase voter turnout, particularly when political engagement is framed as a social norm within one’s community.
  - Individuals are more likely to adopt political stances and support candidates that align with the predominant views in their social networks.

These hypotheses were confirmed, demonstrating that political behavior is influenced by social context, with social norms and peer pressures prompting conformity in political decision-making.

**10. Main findings:** Sinclair's findings underscore that social networks exert measurable influence on political actions. Voter turnout experiments showed that social pressure from close community members boosts turnout more effectively than outreach from distant or external contacts. Similarly, network analyses of campaign donations revealed that social connectedness positively affects donation behavior. Finally, survey data confirmed that party identification and candidate choice are shaped by the political orientations of one's close contacts. These results suggest that social connections are integral to understanding political participation, as they create environments that either reinforce or challenge individual political behaviors.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Social Pressure*: The influence exerted by peers to encourage conformity to group norms, particularly effective in increasing behaviors that are publicly visible, such as voting or donating.
- *Network Analysis*: A research method used to map and measure relationships among individuals within a social network, identifying how these connections influence behaviors like campaign donations.
- *Political Behavior*: Actions or choices in the political domain influenced by social networks, including voting, party affiliation, and campaign support.
- *Peer Influence*: The tendency of individuals to adopt attitudes and behaviors consistent with those of their social circle, affecting political choices based on perceived group norms.
- *Social Norms*: Expectations within a social network that guide acceptable behavior, shaping political engagement by reinforcing certain behaviors as "normative" or socially acceptable.

#### 1.4.8 Electoral Choice, Ideological Conflict, and Political Participation

Rogowski, J. C. (2014). Electoral Choice, Ideological Conflict, and Political Participation. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(2), 479–494. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12059>

1. **Citation key:** rogowski\_electoral\_2014

2. **Author(s):** Jon Rogowski

3. **Year:** 2014

4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review

5. **Keywords:** voter turnout, ideological conflict, political participation, electoral choice, polarization

6. **Summary:** This article examines how ideological conflict between candidates in U.S. House and Senate races affects voter turnout. Rogowski explores whether increased ideological divergence between candidates mobilizes or demobilizes voters. By employing data on candidates' policy platforms, Rogowski finds that, contrary to responsible party theory, increased ideological conflict actually reduces voter turnout. This effect is notably strong among individuals with lower levels of political sophistication, suggesting that ideological conflict may discourage participation for certain segments of the electorate.

7. **Theory:** Rogowski builds on responsible party theory, which posits that voters are more likely to participate when political choices are clear and distinct. However, he proposes that high levels of ideological conflict may alienate voters, particularly those with limited political knowledge, challenging the notion that polarization inherently mobilizes voters. Rogowski suggests that ideological conflict could deter voters who find it difficult to connect complex policy distinctions with their own interests, particularly those with lower political sophistication.

8. **Methods:** Rogowski uses data on the policy positions of candidates in U.S. House and Senate elections, examining how ideological differences between candidates correlate with voter turnout. He analyzes turnout trends by political sophistication level, using measures such as education and political knowledge to categorize voters. His statistical approach includes regression analyses to estimate the effect of ideological conflict on turnout and to explore variations across demographic and political subgroups.

9. **Hypotheses:** Rogowski hypothesizes that ideological conflict between candidates will influence voter turnout in the following ways:

- **Mobilization Hypothesis:** Greater ideological divergence between candidates will mobilize citizens to vote, as it highlights the stakes of election outcomes. This hypothesis was rejected, with findings indicating that higher levels of ideological conflict actually reduce voter turnout.
- **Demobilization Hypothesis:** Ideological divergence will particularly demobilize citizens with lower levels of political sophistication, who may find it harder to connect abstract policy disagreements with concrete implications. This hypothesis was confirmed, as data show that individuals with lower education and political knowledge are more likely to abstain from voting in ideologically polarized races.

10. **Main findings:** Rogowski's analysis reveals that increased ideological conflict leads to lower voter turnout, especially among voters with lower political sophistication. Contrary to responsible party theory, which suggests that polarization should mobilize the electorate, Rogowski's findings suggest a demobilizing effect of ideological conflict. Specifically, citizens with lower political sophistication appear more likely to abstain from voting when candidates' policy positions diverge sharply. This result highlights how ideological conflict can create barriers to participation for some voters, challenging the assumption that clear ideological choices always increase turnout.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The results indicate that rather than stimulate political participation, increasing policy differences between can-

didates significantly reduce voter turnout. Citizens in districts in which the candidates adopted clearly distinct sets of policy positions were about 5 percentage points less likely to vote than citizens in districts where the candidates' policy differences were not as substantial" (p. 480).

- "Challenging a key component of arguments made by responsible party theorists... this article provides strong and persistent evidence that ideological conflict in elections has a demobilizing effect on voter turnout" (p. 491).
- "The relevant chasm between voters and nonvoters appears to be defined on the basis of political sophistication. The asymmetric effects of candidate divergence across citizens with varying levels of political sophistication are broadly consistent with the predictions generated from formal models that relate information and abstention" (p. 492).

#### 1.4.9 What the Demolition of Public Housing Teaches Us about the Impact of Racial Threat on Political Behavior

Enos, R. D. (2016). What the Demolition of Public Housing Teaches Us about the Impact of Racial Threat on Political Behavior. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(1), 123–142. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12156>

1. **Citation key:** enos\_what\_2016

2. **Author(s):** Ryan D. Enos

3. **Year:** 2016

4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

5. **Keywords:** racial threat, political behavior, public housing, demographic change, voting behavior, racial context

6. **Summary:** This article examines the impact of racial threat on political behavior by analyzing a unique event: the demolition of public housing in Chicago, which displaced over 25,000 African American residents. Enos leverages this demographic shift as an exogenous change to test how the removal of African American neighbors affected white voters' political behavior. He finds that white voter turnout near the demolished projects declined significantly, with a decrease of over 10 percentage points in some areas. Enos argues that these results highlight the role of racial context in driving political behaviors, consistent with psychological theories of racial threat, which suggest that proximity to an outgroup can increase political engagement among the in-group.

7. **Theory:** Enos builds on theories of racial threat, which propose that the presence of an outgroup (in this case, African American residents) in proximity to an in-group (white residents) increases political participation as a defensive response. This theory suggests that racial attitudes and political behavior are sensitive to local demographic changes, even in a short time frame. By demonstrating that turnout dropped after the removal of African American residents, Enos contends that racial threat manifests as a context-dependent phenomenon, shaped by outgroup proximity and size rather than selection into neighborhoods.

8. **Methods:** Enos uses a quasi-experimental difference-in-differences design, comparing white voter turnout before and after the demolition of the projects. He relies on geocoded individual voter data to measure proximity to the demolished sites and combines this with demographic data and local census information. Additionally, Enos performs robustness checks by comparing behavior near demolished and intact public housing projects, including matched control groups of white and African American voters.

9. **Hypotheses:** Enos hypothesizes that the removal of African American neighbors would reduce racial threat among nearby white voters, leading to a decline in turnout and conservative voting. The findings confirm these hypotheses:

- Turnout among white voters living closest to the demolished projects decreased significantly after the demolition, indicating reduced racial threat.
- The effect varied with proximity and size, with greater declines in turnout among whites living closer to larger demolished projects.
- White voters showed a reduced tendency to vote for conservative candidates following the demolition, contrasting with the behavior of white voters near intact public housing projects.

10. **Main findings:** Enos concludes that white voters' political behavior, specifically voter turnout and conservative voting, is highly sensitive to changes in the racial composition of their immediate environment. The removal of African American neighbors resulted in both decreased turnout and a decline in conservative voting among whites. This evidence supports the theory of racial threat as a contextual phenomenon and suggests that racialized political behaviors can be triggered by demographic shifts even over short periods.

11. **Key quotations:**

- "Racialized political behaviors are highly context dependent, meaning that white voters respond significantly to changes in the African American population over a period of just 4 years, suggesting that racial threat... is not driven by the selection of individuals into contexts but rather by the dynamic interaction between groups in a shared space" (p. 124).
- "I argue that these results demonstrate that racialized political behaviors are highly context dependent and that white voters respond significantly to changes in the African American population over a period of just 4 years, suggesting that racial threat... is not driven by the selection of individuals into contexts" (p. 124).
- "The findings demonstrate that racial threat, unlike the stability of some intergroup attitudes, is highly context-specific. The substantial change in behavior suggests that racial threat does not arise because of the selection of populations into specific contexts, but rather in direct reaction to living near the outgroup" (p. 127).

#### 1.4.10 How Large and Long-lasting Are the Persuasive Effects of Televised Campaign Ads? Results from a Randomized Field Experiment

Gerber, A. S., Gimpel, J. G., Green, D. P., & Shaw, D. R. (2011). How Large and Long-lasting Are the Persuasive Effects of Televised Campaign Ads? Results from a Randomized Field Experiment. *American Political Science Review*, 105(1), 135–150. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305541000047X>

1. Citation key: gerber\_how\_2011
2. Author(s): Alan S. Gerber, James G. Gimpel, Donald P. Green, Daron R. Shaw
3. Year: 2011
4. Publication: American Political Science Review
5. Keywords: campaign ads, voter persuasion, advertising effects, field experiment, voter preferences, opinion change
6. Summary: This article examines the effects of televised campaign advertising on voter preferences through a large-scale randomized field experiment. Conducted during the 2006 Texas gubernatorial race, the study involved \$2 million worth of television and radio advertisements for the incumbent candidate. The authors investigate both the magnitude and duration of these ads' persuasive effects, revealing that while the advertisements initially produce strong shifts in voter preferences, the effects decay rapidly. Gerber et al. suggest that the quick decline in the ads' influence aligns with priming models of opinion formation, where exposure temporarily heightens the salience of certain considerations, rather than lasting shifts predicted by on-line processing models.
7. Theory: Gerber et al. draw on models of opinion formation to hypothesize that campaign advertising primarily exerts a priming effect, momentarily altering the considerations that are salient to voters. This theory implies that while ads can cause an immediate boost in voter support for a candidate, the effect dissipates as other considerations become more prominent over time. This rapid decay contrasts with on-line processing models, where new information integrates into a lasting opinion framework. The authors argue that understanding campaign ads' fleeting influence is essential for interpreting the strategic timing and intensity of advertising in competitive elections.
8. Methods: Using a randomized field experiment across multiple Texas media markets, Gerber et al. assigned varying amounts and timing of television ad exposure to different regions. They then tracked changes in voter preferences via daily telephone surveys of registered voters, providing both immediate and follow-up measurements. The experimental design allowed the authors to isolate the causal impact of campaign ads while accounting for decay over time.
9. Hypotheses: The authors hypothesize that television ads will have a substantial initial impact on voter preferences but that these effects will decline rapidly, confirming the hypotheses:
  - Television ads produced significant but short-lived shifts in support for the incumbent candidate.
  - Voter preference changes dissipated within one to two weeks of exposure, indicating a priming rather than a lasting on-line processing effect.
10. Main findings: The study concludes that while television campaign ads are effective in producing large initial shifts in voter support, these effects are transient. Within one to two weeks, voter preferences return nearly to baseline levels, underscoring the importance of ad timing in campaign strategy. The findings support priming models, highlighting how campaign ads can temporarily influence which considerations voters prioritize.
11. Key quotations:
  - "Results indicate that televised ads have strong but short-lived effects on voting preferences. The ephemeral nature of these effects is more consistent with psychological models of priming than with models of on-line processing" (p. 135).
  - "The arresting finding of sizable effects and rapid decay has important implications for our understanding of campaign strategy and the effect of campaign spending on election outcomes" (p. 135).
  - "The pattern of results we observe suggests priming rather than on-line processing.<sup>20</sup> The precise way in which priming occurs is subject to alternative but complementary explanations. One possibility is that the ads made people more likely to place certain considerations in working memory. Another is that the ads increased the weight that people accorded these considerations when evaluating the candidates" (p. 148).

#### 1.4.11 When Does Negativity Demobilize? Tracing the Conditional Effect of Negative Campaigning on Voter Turnout

Krupnikov, Y. (2011). When Does Negativity Demobilize? Tracing the Conditional Effect of Negative Campaigning on Voter Turnout [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00522.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(4), 797–813. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00522.x>

1. Citation key: krupnikov\_when\_2011
2. Author(s): Yanna Krupnikov
3. Year: 2011
4. Publication: American Journal of Political Science
5. Keywords: negative campaigning, voter turnout, demobilization, decision-making, political psychology
6. Summary: This article explores the conditions under which negative campaign advertisements reduce voter turnout. Krupnikov argues that the conflicting findings in existing literature—showing that negative campaigning can demobilize, mobilize, or have no effect on turnout—stem from a lack of attention to timing. Using decision-making theory, Krupnikov hypothesizes that negative ads are most demobilizing when voters are exposed to them after they have selected a preferred candidate but before they act on this decision by voting. Two empirical tests—one on the 2004

- presidential election and another covering multiple elections from 1976 to 2000—support this hypothesis, demonstrating that the timing of negativity is crucial in determining its impact on turnout.
7. **Theory:** Krupnikov's theory is grounded in the psychology of decision-making, positing that individuals are more likely to be demobilized by negative information about their selected candidate if this information is encountered after they have decided but before they have acted on their decision. This timing, Krupnikov argues, disrupts the decision-to-action process by creating doubt about the chosen candidate's superiority, thereby reducing the motivation to vote.
  8. **Methods:** Krupnikov tests her hypothesis using data from the 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) and advertising data from the Wisconsin Advertising Project. She conducts a second test with data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) and Geer's dataset on presidential campaign ads for elections between 1976 and 2000. Logistic regression models and controls for media exposure and campaign interest are used to analyze the demobilizing effect of late-stage negative ads on voter turnout.
  9. **Hypotheses:** Krupnikov hypothesizes that negative campaign ads will be demobilizing when:
    - Voters have already selected a preferred candidate.
    - The negative ads target the voter's selected candidate and are aired late in the campaign cycle.
 The results confirm these hypotheses, with findings that negativity about the selected candidate late in the campaign significantly decreases voter turnout.
  10. **Main findings:** The study finds that negative ads are most effective in reducing turnout under specific conditions: when voters encounter them after they have chosen a candidate but before voting. This effect is unique to negative ads about the chosen candidate aired late in the campaign. Overall negativity or negativity about the opposing candidate has no significant impact on turnout.
  11. **Key quotations:**
    - "The relationship between negativity and turnout will depend on when in the campaign a person is exposed to negative ads... this research argues and shows that negativity will only be demobilizing when an individual is exposed to it after an individual selects which candidate he prefers, but before he has the chance to act on this selection with a vote" (p. 797).
    - "'Negativity can place that perception of superiority in doubt... once an individual no longer believes that the candidate he selected is any different or better than the candidate he dislikes, he has no reason to turn out and vote'" (p. 798).
    - "'The results show that to find a consistent demobilizing relationship between negativity and turnout, it is important to understand when to look... negativity about the selected candidate late in the campaign is the only significantly demobilizing form of negativity'" (p. 803).

#### 1.4.12 How Do Campaigns Matter?

Jacobson, G. C. (2015a). How Do Campaigns Matter? [Publisher: Annual Reviews]. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 18(Volume 18, 2015), 31–47. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-072012-113556>

1. **Citation key:** jacobson\_how\_2015-1
2. **Author(s):** Gary C. Jacobson
3. **Year:** 2015
4. **Publication:** Annual Review of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** campaign effects, elections, voter behavior, campaign spending, political mobilization
6. **Summary:** This review examines whether and how campaigns influence electoral outcomes. Jacobson evaluates various lines of research on campaign effects, from presidential election advertising to mobilization strategies for down-ballot races. He concludes that while campaigns are context-dependent, they do impact voter decisions and turnout, especially under certain conditions where voter information and engagement are limited. Jacobson also addresses the limitations of earlier "minimal effects" arguments, asserting that campaigns serve to reinforce the influence of fundamental conditions like the economy, often acting to "enlighten" voters about these key issues.
7. **Theory:** Jacobson posits that campaigns are essential for making voters aware of "fundamentals," such as economic conditions and partisan alignments. He argues that campaigns do not typically change deeply rooted political identities but can shift the weight voters place on certain considerations, depending on contextual factors like timing and candidate positioning. In his view, campaigns enlighten rather than transform, framing issues and candidates to align voter behavior with prevailing conditions.
8. **Methods:** Jacobson's review synthesizes findings from diverse research methodologies, including observational studies, field experiments, meta-analyses, and large-scale survey data from sources like the National Annenberg Election Survey and the Wisconsin Advertising Project. He highlights studies with both aggregate and individual-level data, examining short-term and lasting effects of campaign events.
9. **Hypotheses:** Jacobson examines the hypothesis that campaigns have significant effects under certain conditions, including:
  - Campaigns are most effective when fundamentals favor one candidate, as campaigns then focus on highlighting these advantages.
  - Timing and saturation of advertising affect the durability of campaign effects, with late-campaign efforts being most impactful on undecided voters.

These hypotheses align with findings showing campaign influence is conditional and varies significantly across contexts.

- 10. Main findings:** Jacobson concludes that campaigns influence electoral outcomes by reinforcing voter alignment with existing conditions, particularly when one candidate benefits from favorable fundamentals. While campaigns do not generally overcome structural factors, they enhance voter knowledge of issues and candidates, often polarizing voters along partisan lines. Presidential campaigns especially function to “prime” voters on economic and partisan considerations, whereas down-ballot campaigns depend more on the intensity of spending to raise candidate visibility.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “The question is not whether campaigns matter, but where, when, for what, and for whom they matter.” (p. 31)
- “Campaigns do matter; they clarify voters’ choices and provide voters with the context for understanding the issues and candidates, but they seldom change core loyalties or established voting habits.” (p. 36)
- “In the research I have been able to cover, several things stand out...although both experimental and observational studies remain informative and essential, carefully designed field experiments offer the best prospect for nailing down basic causal relationships.” (p. 43)

#### 1.4.13 Political Consequences of the Carceral State

Weaver, V. M., & Lerman, A. E. (2010). Political Consequences of the Carceral State. *American Political Science Review*, 104(4), 817–833. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055410000456>

1. **Citation key:** weaver\_political\_2010
2. **Author(s):** Vesla M. Weaver and Amy E. Lerman
3. **Year:** 2010
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** carceral state, political participation, civic engagement, racial disparities, criminal justice system
6. **Summary:** This article examines how contact with the criminal justice system shapes citizens’ political attitudes and behavior. Weaver and Lerman argue that punitive interactions with the state engender a distinct civic identity, one marked by skepticism toward government and diminished political participation. Using data from the Fragile Families and Add Health studies, they show that individuals with criminal justice involvement exhibit significantly lower levels of political engagement, trust in government, and civic involvement compared to those without such contact. The findings suggest that punitive encounters serve as a “civic penalty,” disproportionately affecting communities of color and posing serious implications for democratic inclusion.
7. **Theory:** Weaver and Lerman advance a theory of “custodial citizenship,” arguing that punitive interactions with the state act as a form of civic education that teaches individuals to view the government with distrust and discourages political participation. Unlike policies that provide social benefits, the criminal justice system delivers a punitive form of state interaction that signals exclusion from full democratic membership. This process, they argue, leads to a criminal justice-centered view of government, particularly for those frequently targeted by law enforcement, resulting in a reduced sense of political efficacy and attachment to civic norms.
8. **Methods:** The authors employ a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of two datasets—the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health—with matched samples to estimate the causal impact of criminal justice contact on political attitudes and behaviors. The study uses multivariate models to control for socioeconomic and demographic factors, isolating the effect of criminal justice involvement on civic and political outcomes.
9. **Hypotheses:** Weaver and Lerman hypothesize that criminal justice contact will:
  - Decrease levels of political participation and civic engagement.
  - Erode trust in government and civic norms.
  - Intensify these effects with increased degrees of criminal justice contact.

Their analysis supports these hypotheses, highlighting the profound and lasting civic impact of punitive state interactions.

- 10. Main findings:** The study finds that criminal justice contact leads to substantial declines in political participation, involvement in civic organizations, and trust in government institutions. Weaver and Lerman demonstrate that this “civic penalty” persists even after controlling for factors typically associated with low political engagement, such as socioeconomic status and education. Their findings suggest that the carceral state functions as a mechanism of civic exclusion, systematically alienating individuals from the democratic process.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “The analyses that follow demonstrate a powerful effect of criminal justice contact on a range of political behavior and attitudes. In fact, our findings challenge a centerpiece of political participation orthodoxy—that individual resources such as time, knowledge, and money are the strongest predictors of participation” (p. 817).
- “Custodial contact occurs via ‘one way transactions’... where citizens are passive subjects acted on by authorities... and where they are ‘objectified and dependent rather than equal participants’” (p. 819).
- “These policies and practices send consistent messages to custodial populations that they are not worthy of equal citizenship; they serve to create an enduring demarcation between the law-abiding citizen and those branded as deviants” (p. 819).
- “If we take seriously the results presented here, they suggest that those with contact at every level of criminal

supervision withdraw from political life—they are less likely to participate in civic groups, they are less likely to express their political voice in elections, and they are less trusting of government” (p. 830).

#### 1.4.14 Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation

Brady, H. E., Verba, S., & Schlozman, K. L. (1995). Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation. *American Political Science Review*, 89(2), 271–294. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2082425>

1. **Citation key:** brady\_beyond\_1995
2. **Author(s):** Henry E. Brady, Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman
3. **Year:** 1995
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** political participation, resource model, civic skills, socioeconomic status, political engagement
6. **Summary:** This article introduces a resource model to explain political participation, proposing that beyond socioeconomic status (SES), three key resources—time, money, and civic skills—determine individuals’ capacity to engage politically. The authors argue that these resources are not equally distributed across social groups, with SES affecting access to them. Civic skills, which are fostered through nonpolitical institutions like workplaces, organizations, and religious settings, are particularly critical for understanding why certain people participate more in political activities than others. The model provides a framework for exploring the multifaceted pathways through which resources enable political engagement.
7. **Theory:** The authors posit that political participation is facilitated by resources such as time, money, and civic skills, with civic skills acquired through nonpolitical settings being particularly essential. They challenge the traditional SES model by showing that while SES affects resources, it is the specific types of resources, rather than SES alone, that directly impact political activity. Their theory integrates perspectives from stratification theory and rational choice, emphasizing that constraints on resources shape choices about political involvement.
8. **Methods:** Using data from the Citizen Participation Study, Brady, Verba, and Schlozman apply a two-stage survey design, combining data from telephone interviews with follow-up in-person interviews, to assess the role of resources in predicting various types of political activities. They employ two-stage least squares (2SLS) regression to model the effects of time, money, and civic skills on a comprehensive measure of political activity, with further analyses on specific participatory acts.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Different political activities require different resource configurations.
  - Civic skills, money, and time each uniquely contribute to specific forms of political participation, such as voting, donating money, or participating in community activities.
  - SES influences participation indirectly through its impact on resources rather than directly affecting political engagement.

These hypotheses are confirmed, demonstrating that civic skills, acquired through nonpolitical social settings, play a significant role in enabling political engagement, independent of SES.

10. **Main findings:** The resource model shows that time, money, and civic skills are significant predictors of political participation. While SES influences the availability of resources, civic skills developed in nonpolitical institutions, like workplaces and religious organizations, strongly influence participation. The study reveals that participation is multidimensional, with each political activity type demanding specific resource combinations.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Adding resources to the other two explanations permits us to move beyond the ‘SES model,’ that is, beyond explanations of political activity based on one or more of the components of socioeconomic status: education, income, and occupation” (p. 271).
- “Civic skills—those communications and organizational capacities that are so essential to political activity—constitute a third resource for participation... Adult civic skills relevant for politics can be acquired and honed in the nonpolitical institutions of adult life—the workplace, voluntary associations, and churches” (p. 273).
- “The resource model shows that resources explain political participation and that different resources are related to different activities... By showing how resources differentially available on the basis of SES affect various modes of political activity, we explain not only why some individuals are more active and others less but also why certain kinds of people engage in particular kinds of political activity” (p. 275).

#### 1.4.15 Putting Inequality in Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective

Walsh, K. C. (2012). Putting Inequality in Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective. *American Political Science Review*, 106(3), 517–532. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055412000305>

1. **Citation key:** walsh\_putting\_2012
2. **Author(s):** Katherine Cramer Walsh
3. **Year:** 2012
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** rural consciousness, group consciousness, political identity, socioeconomic inequality, political behavior

6. **Summary:** This article examines how rural residents develop a class- and place-based consciousness that significantly shapes their political attitudes, especially in their preferences for limited government. Walsh introduces the concept of "rural consciousness" as an identity rooted in perceived economic and social marginalization, primarily stemming from urban-based political elites' disregard for rural areas. Through ethnographic research conducted in Wisconsin, Walsh shows how this consciousness intertwines notions of inequality, power, and rural identity, leading rural residents to adopt positions that may contradict their material interests but align with their perceived relative deprivation.
7. **Theory:** Walsh argues that rural consciousness operates as a group-based perspective shaped by social identity, perceptions of distributive injustice, and alienation from political elites. Unlike traditional frameworks that separate interests and values, her theory suggests that economic self-interest and identity are deeply intertwined. This consciousness is characterized by a view that rural residents work harder and receive fewer benefits than urban populations, fueling skepticism toward government intervention that is perceived as serving urban, rather than rural, communities.
8. **Methods:** Walsh uses ethnographic methods, including participant observations in 37 groups across 27 Wisconsin communities, to explore how rural residents discuss politics and express their identities. By observing recurring conversations within these groups, she captures a nuanced understanding of rural consciousness and its impact on political perceptions, particularly views on government, resource distribution, and social justice.
9. **Hypotheses:** Walsh posits that rural consciousness leads individuals to favor limited government due to:
  - Perceived neglect and disdain from urban elites.
  - A belief in unique rural values centered on hard work, self-sufficiency, and community.
  - A sense of economic and social inequality vis-à-vis urban areas.
 These hypotheses are confirmed by the study, illustrating that rural consciousness drives support for positions that align with this identity-based understanding of politics.
10. **Main findings:** Walsh concludes that rural consciousness shapes political behavior by fostering a distinct worldview among rural residents, centered on perceived deprivation relative to urban populations. This consciousness frames political and economic issues as rural-urban conflicts, where government intervention is viewed as disproportionately benefiting urban areas. Consequently, rural residents often support policies favoring limited government, even if this stance runs counter to their economic self-interest.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The rural consciousness revealed here shows people attributing rural deprivation to the decision making of (urban) political elites, who disregard and disrespect rural residents and rural lifestyles. Thus these rural residents favor limited government, even though such a stance might seem contradictory to their economic self-interests" (p. 517).
  - "Rural consciousness encompasses orientations toward government. In particular, it encompasses political trust because it contains judgments about the past performance of the government and an expectation that future actions will not be in line with rural interests" (p. 518).
  - "Rural consciousness also encompasses the concept of political alienation, which includes lack of support for the system as well as a sense of political isolation from others... The rural consciousness uncovered here includes a perception that the rules of the game do not apply equally to people from all places" (p. 518).

#### 1.4.16 Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital

Putnam, R. D. (1995). *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital* [Publisher: Johns Hopkins University Press]. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1), 65–78. Retrieved September 10, 2024, from <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/1/article/16643>

1. **Citation key:** putnam\_bowling\_1995
2. **Author(s):** Robert D. Putnam
3. **Year:** 1995
4. **Publication:** Journal of Democracy
5. **Keywords:** social capital, civic engagement, American democracy, social trust, community participation
6. **Summary:** In this seminal article, Putnam discusses the decline of social capital in the United States, arguing that Americans are increasingly disengaged from communal activities, which undermines democratic institutions and civic life. He defines social capital as the networks, norms, and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Putnam suggests that civic engagement, measured by indicators such as voter turnout, club membership, and volunteerism, has significantly declined over recent decades. He attributes this erosion to several factors, including changing demographics, urbanization, and especially the rise of television as a dominant form of entertainment. Putnam argues that this loss of social capital weakens social trust, reduces political efficacy, and diminishes the effectiveness of representative government.
7. **Theory:** Putnam's theory centers on the concept of social capital, positing that civic engagement and social networks are foundational to a functioning democracy. He draws from Tocqueville's observations on American civic life to argue that democratic stability depends on robust social bonds and community participation. Social capital fosters norms of reciprocity and mutual trust, which enhance cooperation in political and economic spheres. Without these, collective action becomes challenging, and individuals retreat into privatized forms of socialization, eroding democratic cohesion.
8. **Methods:** Putnam utilizes a wide array of quantitative data, including longitudinal surveys and historical records, to trace trends in civic engagement. He analyzes indicators such as voting rates, club memberships, and participation

in local organizations, contrasting the high levels of engagement in the mid-20th century with more recent declines. Additionally, he examines shifts in organizational structures, noting the decline of traditional, in-person groups like bowling leagues in favor of “tertiary associations” with limited interpersonal contact.

**9. Hypotheses:** Putnam hypothesizes that:

- Civic engagement has declined due to technological, economic, and demographic changes.
- Social capital is essential for political efficacy, trust, and the performance of democratic institutions.
- A decline in social capital leads to reduced political engagement, lower community involvement, and weakened social trust.

The findings confirm these hypotheses, illustrating that social capital and democratic health are deeply interconnected.

**10. Main findings:** Putnam concludes that the decline of social capital in the United States has significant implications for democracy. Reduced civic engagement weakens social trust and political participation, with fewer people participating in local government, social clubs, and volunteer organizations. He emphasizes that this trend can have long-term consequences, as social capital acts as a vital resource for democratic resilience and collective action.

**11. Key quotations:<sup>1</sup>**

- “By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital—tools and training that enhance individual productivity—‘social capital’ refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.”
- “There is striking evidence... that the vibrancy of American civil society has notably declined over the past several decades.”
- “For a variety of reasons, life is easier in a community blessed with a substantial stock of social capital. In the first place, networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust.”

## 1.5 Partisanship and Polarization

### 1.5.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Research in political science has evolved to examine the relationship between social identity, partisanship, media environments, and public opinion. Early foundational theories focused on pluralism and collective action, while contemporary work integrates insights from social identity theory and communication studies to understand polarization, partisanship, and media effects on political attitudes and behavior.
- **The Role of Social Identity in Partisanship:** Social identity theory underscores the centrality of group affiliations in shaping partisan behavior. Scholars argue that partisan identity functions as a primary social identity, similar to religious or ethnic affiliations, fostering strong in-group loyalty and out-group animosity. This identity-based framework challenges models focused solely on rational choice or issue-based alignment, highlighting the emotional and psychological dimensions of political behavior.
- **Polarization and Affective Dynamics:** Recent studies document the growing prevalence of affective polarization, where partisans exhibit strong emotional attachment to their in-group and animosity toward the out-group. This phenomenon is driven by social sorting—the alignment of various social identities along partisan lines—which intensifies intergroup hostility. Affective polarization has implications for democratic governance, as it undermines compromise and increases partisan bias in political evaluations.
- **The Media Environment and Political Inequality:** Scholars highlight the transformation of the media environment, from low-choice broadcast settings to high-choice cable and internet platforms. This shift has widened gaps in political knowledge and engagement, as individuals self-select content aligned with their preferences. The rise of partisan media further exacerbates polarization by reinforcing ideological echo chambers, while the availability of entertainment options allows politically disengaged individuals to avoid news entirely.
- **Partisan Misperceptions and Stereotyping:** Americans frequently misperceive the demographic composition of political parties, overestimating the prevalence of stereotypical groups. These misperceptions fuel affective polarization and distort perceptions of ideological extremity. Correcting these misperceptions can reduce partisan animus, though deeply ingrained biases and media narratives often sustain these distortions.
- **Ambivalence and Accountability in Partisanship:** Research on partisan ambivalence reveals that individuals experiencing conflicting evaluations of their preferred party are more likely to engage in critical and deliberate information processing. Ambivalence promotes democratic accountability by reducing reliance on partisan cues and encouraging responsiveness to party performance and policy disagreements. However, univalent partisanship, characterized by unwavering loyalty, remains dominant in shaping voter behavior.
- **The Intersection of Emotion and Political Action:** Emotions play a critical role in mobilizing political behavior, particularly in the context of expressive partisanship. Strong partisan identity elicits intense emotional responses, such as anger or enthusiasm, in reaction to electoral outcomes or perceived threats. These emotions drive campaign involvement and reinforce partisan loyalty, often at the expense of deliberative engagement with policy issues.
- **Challenges to Democratic Norms:** The intensification of partisan identity and affective polarization poses challenges to democratic norms of compromise and mutual respect. The prioritization of group loyalty over governance risks turning political parties into tools of division. Scholars emphasize the need for interventions, such as reducing partisan misperceptions and fostering cross-group interactions, to mitigate polarization’s effects on democratic institutions.

<sup>1</sup>Page numbers are not listed. This article was sourced from a webpage.

- **Ongoing Debates and Research Directions:** Political science continues to explore the dynamic interplay between identity, media, and behavior in shaping public opinion. Future research aims to examine how new media technologies, such as social media algorithms, influence polarization and political engagement. Additionally, there is a need to reconcile conflicting findings on the effects of partisan media and the resilience of democratic norms in highly polarized societies.

### 1.5.2 Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters

Green, D. P. [Donald P.], Palmquist, B., & Schickler, E. (2002, January). *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters* [Google-Books-ID: oEKt5253ljEC]. Yale University Press

1. **Citation key:** green\_partisan\_2002
2. **Author(s):** Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler
3. **Year:** 2002
4. **Publication:** Yale University Press
5. **Keywords:** partisanship, social identity, political behavior, party attachment, electoral politics
6. **Summary:** Green, Palmquist, and Schickler argue that partisanship is a deeply rooted social identity akin to religious or ethnic affiliations. Drawing on decades of data, they assert that partisanship is stable at both individual and aggregate levels, shaped by psychological self-categorization processes. They challenge rational choice and cognitive heuristics approaches, emphasizing the role of group affiliations in forming and maintaining party identification. The authors also explore the implications of partisanship for electoral behavior, party competition, and political stability in both the United States and other democracies.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that partisanship functions as a form of social identity, driven by group affiliations rather than evaluations of party performance or policy. According to their model, individuals identify with a political party through a three-step process: (1) recognizing their own group memberships, (2) associating these groups with specific parties, and (3) aligning with the party that most closely reflects their primary group identity. This identity is reinforced by the stability of group-party associations over time, making partisanship highly resistant to short-term influences such as campaign effects or economic conditions. They further argue that partisan attachments are maintained through emotional engagement and a sense of belonging, akin to the loyalty exhibited by sports fans.
8. **Methods:** The book integrates data from longitudinal panel studies, aggregate-level analyses, and cross-national comparisons. The authors use the *American National Election Studies* (NES), Gallup polls, and CBS/*New York Times* surveys to assess the stability of partisanship across time. Their analysis also includes a case study of partisan realignment in the American South, illustrating how shifts in group-party associations can lead to long-term changes in aggregate partisanship. Comparative data from Britain, Germany, Canada, and Italy are used to highlight similarities and differences in partisan dynamics across contexts.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that partisanship is a stable social identity that changes only under significant shifts in the social composition of parties. This hypothesis is confirmed, as the evidence shows that:
  - Partisan identity is highly stable over time, even in the face of major political or economic events.
  - Changes in individual or aggregate partisanship occur primarily through cohort replacement or long-term realignments tied to evolving group-party associations.
  - The emotional and social dimensions of partisanship significantly influence voting behavior, often overriding policy or performance considerations.
10. **Main findings:** The book demonstrates that partisanship is remarkably stable at both individual and aggregate levels. Key findings include:
  - Partisanship is rooted in social identity rather than rational evaluations, challenging traditional models of voter behavior.
  - Electoral outcomes are influenced by the group-based loyalty of partisans, who exhibit strong emotional engagement akin to team sports fans.
  - Changes in partisan alignment occur only when there are significant shifts in the social imagery associated with parties, as illustrated by the Southern realignment in the U.S.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Partisanship:* A durable social identity shaped by group affiliations and emotional attachment to a political party.
  - *Group-party association:* The perception of a party as representative of specific social groups, which forms the basis for individual partisan identification.
  - *Partisan stability:* The resilience of partisan identification over time, even amidst changing political and economic contexts.

### 1.5.3 Post-Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections

Prior, M. (2007, April). *Post-Broadcast Democracy: How Media Choice Increases Inequality in Political Involvement and Polarizes Elections* [Google-Books-ID: o37mHuY7OWkC]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** prior\_post-broadcast\_2007
2. **Author(s):** Markus Prior
3. **Year:** 2007

4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press
5. **Keywords:** media environment, political knowledge, inequality, polarization, voter behavior
6. **Summary:** Markus Prior investigates how the shift from a low-choice media environment, dominated by a few broadcast television networks, to a high-choice environment, characterized by cable television and the Internet, has increased inequalities in political knowledge and voter participation while exacerbating partisan polarization. His Conditional Political Learning (CPL) model emphasizes the interaction between individual preferences, abilities, and the media environment in shaping political learning and engagement.
7. **Theory:** Prior's Conditional Political Learning model posits that political learning and participation depend on three factors: opportunity, motivation, and ability. In the broadcast television era, limited viewing options exposed audiences to political news incidentally, thus reducing gaps in political knowledge and turnout among citizens with varying levels of education and interest. However, the high-choice media environment allows individuals to self-select content based on their preferences. This leads entertainment-seekers to avoid political content entirely, while politically motivated individuals consume more news than ever before. The model challenges assumptions about the democratizing effects of increased media choice by showing how it widens inequalities in political engagement.
8. **Methods:** Prior employs an innovative multi-method approach that includes experimental studies, survey analyses, and aggregate data spanning several decades. He integrates data from the *American National Election Studies* (ANES), Nielsen Media Research, and custom surveys fielded through the Knowledge Networks panel. The experiments examine how individuals navigate media choices and their implications for political knowledge, turnout, and partisan behavior.
9. **Hypotheses:** Prior hypothesizes that:
  - Political knowledge and participation are higher in a low-choice media environment where incidental exposure to news is unavoidable.
  - The high-choice media environment increases knowledge and participation gaps between politically motivated individuals and those who prefer entertainment.
  - Partisan polarization is exacerbated as entertainment-seekers disengage from politics, leaving elections to highly motivated, partisan voters.
 These hypotheses are supported by empirical evidence demonstrating that increased media choice results in greater disparities in political knowledge and turnout, alongside rising polarization.
10. **Main findings:** Prior's analysis reveals that the high-choice media environment has significant implications for democracy:
  - Incidental exposure to news in the broadcast era served as an equalizer, reducing gaps in political knowledge and turnout.
  - The rise of cable television and the Internet has widened these gaps, as entertainment-seekers avoid political content and politically engaged individuals consume more news.
  - Partisan polarization has increased, driven by the disengagement of less motivated, less partisan voters, leaving elections dominated by ideologically polarized participants.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Conditional Political Learning (CPL)*: A model describing how individuals' political learning depends on their preferences, abilities, and the structure of the media environment.
  - *High-choice media environment*: A media landscape characterized by abundant options, allowing individuals to select content that aligns with their preferences, often at the expense of incidental news exposure.
  - *Switchers*: Individuals who consume political content in a low-choice environment but shift to entertainment in a high-choice media setting.

#### 1.5.4 The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy

Abramowitz, A. (2010, January). *The Disappearing Center: Engaged Citizens, Polarization, and American Democracy* [Google-Books-ID: LVHF3roJPU0C]. Yale University Press

1. **Citation key:** abramowitz\_disappearing\_2010
2. **Author(s):** Alan I. Abramowitz
3. **Year:** 2010
4. **Publication:** Yale University Press
5. **Keywords:** polarization, engaged public, political representation, partisanship, ideological sorting
6. **Summary:** In this book, Abramowitz challenges the narrative that polarization is a dysfunction of American democracy. Instead, he argues that elite polarization reflects polarization within the politically engaged public. Drawing on extensive survey data, he examines the role of the "engaged public" in driving partisan divisions and considers the implications for democratic representation and governance.
7. **Theory:** Abramowitz posits that polarization in American politics stems from the ideological sorting of an engaged public—individuals who are politically active and informed. Contrary to the belief that the electorate is largely moderate, Abramowitz shows that the most politically engaged citizens are deeply divided along partisan lines. This engaged public drives the behavior of political elites, reinforcing polarization at the institutional level. He highlights a cyclical relationship: polarization among the public fosters elite polarization, which in turn further engages and polarizes the public.

**8. Methods:** Abramowitz uses longitudinal data from the *American National Election Studies* (ANES) and the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) to analyze trends in political interest, partisanship, and ideological sorting. He examines changes in voter behavior, partisan identification, and electoral outcomes over several decades, employing statistical models to link these trends to broader demographic and social shifts.

**9. Hypotheses:** Abramowitz hypothesizes that:

- Political polarization is concentrated among the most engaged segment of the electorate.
- Ideological sorting has strengthened the alignment between partisan and ideological identities, particularly since the 1970s.
- Changes in demographic patterns, such as the realignment of white conservatives in the South and increased engagement among younger, educated voters, have contributed to the observed polarization.

These hypotheses are supported by data showing increasing ideological consistency among engaged voters and a decline in moderate positions among active partisans.

**10. Main findings:** Abramowitz demonstrates that political polarization in the U.S. is primarily driven by the engaged public—individuals who are highly informed, politically active, and ideologically consistent. This group constitutes a significant portion of the electorate and exerts considerable influence on political representation. Contrary to claims that polarization reflects a disconnection between elites and the public, Abramowitz argues that elite polarization mirrors the ideological divides of engaged voters. He highlights the implications of this trend for governance, noting that the increased polarization of both voters and elites has reduced the space for bipartisan compromise, while reinforcing the representativeness of political institutions for their respective partisan bases.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Engaged public:* Citizens who are highly informed, politically active, and ideologically consistent, often shaping the dynamics of partisan politics.
- *Ideological sorting:* The alignment of partisan and ideological identities, resulting in greater coherence within political parties and clearer distinctions between them.
- *Partisan polarization:* The widening ideological divide between the major political parties, reflected in both elite behavior and the attitudes of the engaged public.

#### 1.5.5 The Ambivalent Partisan: How Critical Loyalty Promotes Democracy

Lavine, H. G., Johnston, C. D., & Steenbergen, M. R. (2012, December). *The Ambivalent Partisan: How Critical Loyalty Promotes Democracy* [Google-Books-ID: aV9WJif4xFsC]. OUP USA

**1. Citation key:** lavine\_ambivalent\_2012

**2. Author(s):** Howard G. Lavine, Christopher D. Johnston, and Marco R. Steenbergen

**3. Year:** 2012

**4. Publication:** Oxford University Press

**5. Keywords:** partisanship, ambivalence, political behavior, democratic accountability, voter decision-making

**6. Summary:** Lavine, Johnston, and Steenbergen examine how partisan ambivalence—defined as conflicting evaluations of political parties—can promote democratic accountability. They argue that ambivalent partisans critically evaluate party performance and policies, leading to more informed and independent decision-making. Their research draws on panel studies, experiments, and surveys to explore the cognitive and behavioral implications of ambivalence in contrast to univalent partisanship, which they associate with greater partisan bias and less accountability.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose that partisan ambivalence arises when individuals experience dissonance between long-term party identification and short-term evaluations of party performance or policies. This ambivalence challenges the heuristic value of party cues, compelling individuals to engage in more deliberate and effortful information processing. Drawing on theories of cognitive dissonance, belief perseverance, and satisficing, they conceptualize ambivalence as a democratic virtue, enabling voters to hold parties accountable and adapt their preferences in response to new information. Univalent partisans, by contrast, rely heavily on party cues and exhibit less critical engagement with political information.

**8. Methods:** The book employs a mixed-methods approach, including experiments, longitudinal panel surveys, and cross-sectional data analysis. The authors introduce new measures of partisan ambivalence through the *American National Election Studies* (ANES), assessing individuals' conflicting evaluations of their preferred and opposing parties. They also analyze the relationship between ambivalence and key outcomes, such as responsiveness to campaigns, policy preferences, and changes in party identification. Specific panel studies include data from the 1956/1958/1960 and 1992/1994/1996 ANES, as well as original experiments designed to test the behavioral consequences of ambivalence.

**9. Hypotheses:** Lavine and colleagues hypothesize that:

- Ambivalent partisans are less influenced by party cues compared to univalent partisans.
- They exhibit lower levels of partisan bias in perceptions of economic conditions and other politically salient topics.
- Ambivalence increases responsiveness to campaigns and information, resulting in more adaptive decision-making.
- Ambivalent partisans are more likely to adjust their party identification in response to disagreements with party positions.

These hypotheses are supported by empirical findings, which demonstrate that ambivalent partisans engage more

critically with political information while maintaining similar levels of political participation as their univalent counterparts.

- 10. Main findings:** The authors find that partisan ambivalence fosters more informed and accountable voting behavior. Ambivalent partisans critically evaluate party platforms and policy statements, reducing the influence of partisan biases in their perceptions of economic conditions and political issues. They are more open to persuasion during campaigns and more likely to update their party identification in response to significant disagreements. This contrasts with univalent partisans, who exhibit greater loyalty to party cues and lower responsiveness to new information. Despite their cognitive conflict, ambivalent partisans participate in politics at comparable rates to univalent partisans, highlighting their potential as ideal democratic citizens.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Partisan ambivalence*: A psychological state in which individuals experience conflicting evaluations of their preferred political party, leading to critical engagement with political information.
- *Univalent partisanship*: A cognitive orientation characterized by consistent evaluations of one's preferred party, resulting in reliance on party cues and reduced political accountability.
- *Democratic accountability*: The process by which voters evaluate and hold political parties accountable for their performance and policy positions, facilitated by critical engagement with political information.

#### 1.5.6 How Elite Partisan Polarization Affects Public Opinion Formation

Druckman, J. N., Peterson, E., & Slothuus, R. (2013). How Elite Partisan Polarization Affects Public Opinion Formation. *American Political Science Review*, 107(1), 57–79. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055412000500>

**1. Citation key:** druckman\_how\_2013

**2. Author(s):** James N. Druckman, Erik Peterson, and Rune Slothuus

**3. Year:** 2013

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** polarization, public opinion, partisan cues, framing effects, elite competition

**6. Summary:** Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus investigate how elite partisan polarization influences public opinion formation. They examine the interplay between partisan cues and substantive arguments in shaping individual opinions, emphasizing the role of motivated reasoning in polarized contexts. Through two survey experiments, the authors find that elite polarization intensifies the influence of partisan endorsements on opinions while diminishing the role of substantive arguments.

**7. Theory:** The authors argue that elite polarization amplifies partisan motivated reasoning, a cognitive process where individuals prioritize information aligned with their partisan identity. In polarized environments, citizens rely more heavily on partisan endorsements than on substantive arguments, regardless of their strength. This reliance arises because polarization heightens group identity and partisan loyalty, overshadowing critical engagement with issue content. The authors extend theories of framing and party cues to explain how partisan identities anchor opinion formation in polarized settings, reducing the weight of balanced or strong counter-arguments.

**8. Methods:** The authors conducted two experiments to test their hypotheses, focusing on the issues of offshore drilling and the DREAM Act. Participants were exposed to competing frames (strong and weak) with or without partisan endorsements under polarized and non-polarized conditions. They assessed opinion changes using survey questions on support for the policy, evaluations of frame effectiveness, and the personal importance of their opinions. The experiments featured a representative U.S. sample and incorporated manipulations of frame strength, party endorsements, and elite polarization levels.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Elite polarization increases reliance on partisan cues over substantive arguments, especially when frames are equally strong.
- In polarized environments, partisans will favor frames endorsed by their party, regardless of frame strength.
- Polarized environments amplify the perceived importance of opinions formed with partisan endorsements.

These hypotheses were supported, showing that polarization shifts decision-making criteria toward partisan loyalty.

- 10. Main findings:** The study demonstrates that elite polarization fundamentally alters public opinion formation by strengthening the role of partisan endorsements. In non-polarized contexts, individuals are more likely to evaluate substantive arguments based on their strength, even when endorsed by opposing parties. However, in polarized environments, partisan cues dominate, leading partisans to favor their party's position regardless of the quality of competing arguments. This shift undermines the deliberative potential of strong, balanced arguments and highlights the role of polarization in reinforcing partisan loyalty at the expense of critical engagement. The findings suggest that elite polarization compromises the diversity and quality of public opinion in democratic competition.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Polarization intensifies the impact of party endorsements on opinions, decreases the impact of substantive information and, perhaps ironically, stimulates greater confidence in those—less substantively grounded—opinions" (p. 57).
- "Partisan motivated reasoning suggests that partisans will view their party's frame as more effective than a frame not sponsored by their party or a frame sponsored by the other party" (p. 59).
- "Under conditions of polarization, partisan identification becomes stronger and less ambivalent, leading to in-

creased motivated reasoning (and stronger party cue effects)" (p. 63).

### 1.5.7 Changing Minds or Changing Channels? Partisan News in an Age of Choice

Arceneaux, K., & Johnson, M. (2013, August). *Changing Minds or Changing Channels?: Partisan News in an Age of Choice* [Google-Books-ID: YZdyvQ9R\_hEC]. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** arceneaux\_changing\_2013
2. **Author(s):** Kevin Arceneaux and Martin Johnson
3. **Year:** 2013
4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press
5. **Keywords:** partisan media, political communication, media effects, polarization, selective exposure
6. **Summary:** Arceneaux and Johnson challenge the assumption that partisan media significantly increases polarization in the mass public. They argue that the influence of partisan news outlets, such as Fox News and MSNBC, is limited by self-selection. Their innovative experimental designs reveal that those who choose to watch partisan news are already ideologically polarized, and that partisan media has a modest effect on shifting opinions further. Instead, the larger concern lies in the high-choice media environment, which enables individuals to opt out of political news entirely.
7. **Theory:** The authors develop the *active audience theory*, which posits that the effects of partisan media are contingent on individual motivations. They identify two key factors driving media consumption: partisan motivation and a preference for news over entertainment. Only individuals with both high partisan motivation and a preference for news are likely to seek out partisan media content. This group is already ideologically extreme, limiting the potential for further polarization. For others, the availability of entertainment options in a high-choice media environment reduces exposure to political content altogether, contributing to political disengagement rather than polarization.
8. **Methods:** The book employs experimental designs that allow participants to choose their viewing options, simulating real-world media consumption. In their Selective Exposure Experiments (SEEs), participants could select from pro-attitudinal, counter-attitudinal, and entertainment programming. In Participant Preference Experiments (PPEs), participants' preferences for news or entertainment were measured before assigning them to pro-attitudinal, counter-attitudinal, or entertainment content. These designs assess the differential effects of forced exposure versus choice, offering novel insights into the dynamics of media influence.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - The effects of partisan media are modest when individuals can choose their programming, as opposed to being forced to watch specific content.
  - Pro-attitudinal content reinforces pre-existing views but has limited additional polarizing effects due to self-selection.
  - Individuals preferring entertainment over news are less affected by partisan media, reducing its overall impact in a high-choice environment.

These hypotheses are confirmed, demonstrating that partisan media primarily affects a small, pre-polarized audience.

10. **Main findings:** Arceneaux and Johnson conclude that partisan media's role in political polarization is overstated. Their experiments reveal that the effects of partisan media are diluted in a high-choice environment because only a small, ideologically motivated audience selects such content. While pro-attitudinal programming reinforces existing beliefs, it does little to shift attitudes further. The real consequence of the high-choice media environment is the widespread avoidance of political news by those preferring entertainment. This dynamic exacerbates political inequality by reducing political knowledge and engagement among less motivated individuals, leaving political discourse dominated by a polarized minority.

11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Active audience theory:* A framework suggesting that media effects are contingent on the motivations and preferences of the audience, particularly their partisan orientation and interest in news.
  - *Selective exposure:* The tendency for individuals to consume media content that aligns with their pre-existing attitudes and preferences.
  - *High-choice media environment:* A media landscape with abundant options, allowing individuals to select content based on personal preferences, often at the expense of incidental exposure to political news.

### 1.5.8 Competing Motives in the Partisan Mind: How Loyalty and Responsiveness Shape Party Identification and Democracy

Groenendyk, E. (2013, September). *Competing Motives in the Partisan Mind: How Loyalty and Responsiveness Shape Party Identification and Democracy* [Google-Books-ID: oftMAgAAQBAJ]. OUP USA

1. **Citation key:** groenendyk\_competing\_2013
2. **Author(s):** Eric W. Groenendyk
3. **Year:** 2013
4. **Publication:** Oxford University Press
5. **Keywords:** partisanship, motivated reasoning, loyalty, political psychology, accountability
6. **Summary:** Groenendyk explores the dual motivational forces that shape partisan identification: the desire for loyalty to one's party and the demand for responsiveness to objective realities. He presents a *dual-motivations theory*, where

directional motives drive individuals to affirm their partisan identity, while accuracy motives compel them to seek alignment with factual evidence. The book examines how individuals reconcile these competing motivations, often resorting to rationalization strategies to maintain their partisan identity even in the face of disconfirming information.

**7. Theory:** The core theoretical contribution of the book is the *dual-motivations theory*. Groenendyk argues that individuals' partisanship is shaped by:

- **Directional motives:** These encourage individuals to favor conclusions that reinforce their partisan identity, promoting a view of their party as superior.
- **Accuracy motives:** These compel individuals to seek conclusions that align with objective evidence, fostering a sense of justifiability in their partisan loyalty.

The tension between these motives leads individuals to adopt rationalization strategies, such as the "lesser of two evils" approach, where they downplay their party's flaws by emphasizing the perceived inadequacies of the opposition. Groenendyk frames this as *justificatory citizenship*, where individuals strive to uphold a favorable worldview about their party while meeting internalized standards of good citizenship.

**8. Methods:** Groenendyk uses a multi-method approach that includes:

- Population-based survey experiments to test causal relationships.
- Content analysis of open-ended survey responses to capture rationalization strategies.
- Statistical analyses of longitudinal datasets to examine how individuals respond to dissonant political information.

These methods allow Groenendyk to investigate the cognitive processes underlying partisan bias and the conditions under which individuals rationalize their party identification.

**9. Hypotheses:** Groenendyk hypothesizes that:

- Individuals employ rationalization strategies to reconcile directional and accuracy motives, particularly when faced with negative information about their party.
- Cognitive resources, such as political sophistication and working memory, enhance individuals' capacity for partisan rationalization.
- Partisan bias is more pronounced among politically engaged individuals due to their greater access to justificatory strategies.

These hypotheses are confirmed, illustrating the cognitive mechanisms through which individuals navigate conflicting motivations.

**10. Main findings:** Groenendyk finds that partisanship is sustained through a balance of loyalty and responsiveness. Directional motives dominate when partisan identity is threatened, prompting individuals to rationalize their loyalty through strategies like lowering evaluations of the opposing party. However, accuracy motives ensure that partisanship remains responsive to significant dissonance, albeit within the bounds of justificatory reasoning. Politically engaged individuals exhibit stronger partisan bias due to their enhanced cognitive resources and ability to construct rationalizations. While accountability pressures introduce some volatility, the overall picture is one of substantial partisan stability, shaped by psychological and cognitive processes.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Directional motives:* Psychological forces that drive individuals to seek information or conclusions that affirm their partisan identity.
- *Accuracy motives:* Motivations that compel individuals to align their beliefs and judgments with objective evidence.
- *Justificatory citizenship:* A cognitive process where individuals rationalize their partisan loyalty to maintain a favorable view of their party while adhering to internalized standards of good citizenship.

### 1.5.9 Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity

Huddy, L., Mason, L., & Aarøe, L. (2015). Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity. *American Political Science Review*, 109(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055414000604>

**1. Citation key:** huddy\_expressive\_2015

**2. Author(s):** Leonie Huddy, Lilliana Mason, and Lene Aarøe

**3. Year:** 2015

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** expressive partisanship, social identity theory, campaign involvement, political emotions, partisan identity

**6. Summary:** Huddy, Mason, and Aarøe examine the role of expressive partisanship in motivating campaign involvement and generating political emotions. Using social identity theory as a foundation, they argue that partisan identity, rather than policy alignment or ideological beliefs, is the key driver of campaign activity and emotional responses to electoral events. Through four studies, they demonstrate that strongly identified partisans are more likely to engage in campaigns and exhibit intense emotions such as anger or enthusiasm in response to perceived threats or reassurances about their party's electoral prospects.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose an *expressive model of partisanship*, rooted in social identity theory, which emphasizes the emotional and behavioral consequences of strong partisan identity. Partisan identity is conceptualized as an internalized sense of belonging to a political group that fosters ingroup bias and a desire to protect and elevate the group's status. The authors contrast this with an *instrumental model*, where partisanship is driven by issue-based or ideological

alignment. They hypothesize that the emotional and participatory dynamics of elections are better explained by the expressive model, as partisans react to threats or reassurances to their party's status rather than policy issues.

**8. Methods:** The study utilizes a combination of survey experiments and observational analyses across four distinct populations: political bloggers, New York State residents, a nationally representative sample from YouGov, and college students. Key measures include a multi-item partisan identity scale, ideological issue intensity, and campaign activity indicators. Experimental manipulations introduce threats or reassurances to party status and policy issues to assess their differential impact on anger, enthusiasm, and campaign involvement. These methods allow the authors to isolate the effects of expressive versus instrumental motivations.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Strong partisan identity is a more powerful predictor of campaign involvement than ideological issue intensity.
- Threats to party status elicit stronger emotional reactions (anger and enthusiasm) among strongly identified partisans than threats to policy issues.
- Campaign involvement and emotional responses are primarily driven by expressive rather than instrumental concerns.

Their findings confirm these hypotheses, highlighting the centrality of expressive motivations in political behavior.

**10. Main findings:** Huddy et al. find that partisan identity is a stronger predictor of campaign involvement than ideological or issue-based factors across all studies. Strong partisans are significantly more likely to engage in campaign activities and exhibit heightened anger or enthusiasm in response to experimental manipulations of party-related threats and reassurances. In contrast, ideological issue intensity has weaker and less consistent effects. Their analysis underscores the dominant role of expressive partisanship in mobilizing political action and shaping emotional responses, challenging the instrumental model's emphasis on issue alignment. The findings also highlight the potential for expressive partisanship to undermine normative democratic goals by prioritizing group loyalty over substantive policy considerations.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Strongly identified partisans feel angrier than weaker partisans when threatened with electoral loss and more positive when reassured of victory" (p. 9).
- "Partisans take action precisely because they wish to defend or elevate the party's political position. Their internalized sense of partisan identity means that the group's failures and victories become personal" (p. 12).
- "The traditional measure of partisan strength does not capture the expressive aspects of partisanship, which are critical to understanding political action and emotion" (p. 14).

### 1.5.10 Fear and Loathing across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization

Iyengar, S., & Westwood, S. J. (2015). Fear and Loathing across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(3), 690–707. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12152>

**1. Citation key:** iyengar\_fear\_2015

**2. Author(s):** Shanto Iyengar and Sean J. Westwood

**3. Year:** 2015

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** affective polarization, partisanship, group identity, implicit bias, partisan discrimination

**6. Summary:** Iyengar and Westwood explore the phenomenon of affective polarization in the United States, which they define as the tendency for partisans to exhibit positive affect toward their own party and negative affect toward opposing parties. Using a combination of implicit and explicit measures, they demonstrate that partisan animosity rivals or exceeds social divisions such as race in intensity. Their research illustrates that partisan cues influence nonpolitical judgments and behaviors, such as hiring and interpersonal trust, underscoring the pervasive impact of political identity on American social and political life.

**7. Theory:** The authors argue that affective polarization stems from partisanship functioning as a social identity. Drawing on social identity theory, they suggest that individuals classify opposing partisans as outgroup members, which engenders hostility. This animus is amplified by the absence of societal norms discouraging partisan bias, unlike those governing racial or gender discrimination. Furthermore, they posit that affective polarization is rooted in a primal attachment to partisan identity, which elicits stronger behavioral discrimination compared to ideological or policy-based divides.

**8. Methods:** The study employs several experimental and observational methodologies:

- **Implicit Association Tests (IAT):** To compare implicit affective biases based on partisanship and race.
- **Survey experiments:** Measuring explicit affect through feeling thermometers and decision-making tasks.
- **Behavioral games:** Including trust and dictator games to examine monetary allocations to in-group and out-group members.
- **Nonpolitical discrimination tasks:** Assessing biases in hiring and scholarship decisions based on partisan and racial cues.

These methods allow the authors to triangulate findings on partisan bias across different contexts and types of measures.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Partisan affect operates at an implicit level, comparable to or exceeding racial bias.

- Partisanship is a stronger determinant of nonpolitical judgments and behaviors than race.
- Negative outgroup animosity, rather than positive ingroup favoritism, drives partisan discrimination.

The results confirm these hypotheses, revealing the depth and scope of partisan polarization in American society.

**10. Main findings:** Iyengar and Westwood demonstrate that partisan identity significantly influences implicit attitudes and explicit behaviors. Partisan affect rivals or exceeds racial affect in both intensity and behavioral consequences. Their experiments show that partisanship affects scholarship awards, hiring decisions, and financial trust games, often overriding objective qualifications or fairness considerations. Additionally, the findings highlight that partisan discrimination is predominantly driven by animosity toward the outgroup rather than favoritism for the ingroup. The authors attribute the absence of social norms discouraging partisan bias as a key factor enabling these behaviors. They conclude that the social ramifications of affective polarization are profound, extending well beyond politics into everyday life.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We document that partisan affect rivals racial affect in intensity, and that the lack of social norms discouraging partisan discrimination enables its public expression" (p. 690).
- "Hostile feelings for the opposing party are ingrained or automatic in voters' minds, and affective polarization based on party is just as strong as polarization based on race" (p. 691).
- "Partisanship elicits more extreme evaluations and behavioral responses than the most salient social divide in American society—race" (p. 703).

### 1.5.11 Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity

Mason, L. (2018, April). *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity*. University of Chicago Press. Retrieved January 17, 2025, from <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/U/bo27527354.html>

- 1. Citation key:** mason\_uncivil\_2018
- 2. Author(s):** Lilliana Mason
- 3. Year:** 2018
- 4. Publication:** The University of Chicago Press
- 5. Keywords:** partisan identity, social sorting, polarization, political behavior, affective polarization
- 6. Summary:** Mason examines the role of partisan identity and social sorting in fueling political polarization in the United States. She argues that the alignment of multiple social identities along party lines—what she terms “social sorting”—has intensified affective polarization. This polarization is less about policy disagreements and more about the psychological and emotional effects of group-based identities. Mason asserts that this phenomenon undermines democracy by prioritizing group victory over governance and compromise.
- 7. Theory:** Mason builds on social identity theory and intergroup conflict research to propose that the sorting of social, religious, racial, and ideological identities into partisan camps has fundamentally reshaped American politics. This alignment magnifies partisans’ emotional attachment to their group, leading to increased prejudice, anger, and political activism. Mason argues that this “mega-identity” structure fosters a zero-sum perspective on politics, where winning is prioritized over policy outcomes, further entrenching division.
- 8. Methods:** The book synthesizes experimental research, historical data, and survey analyses. Mason draws on classic psychological experiments, such as the Robbers Cave study, to contextualize contemporary partisan dynamics. She uses data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) to document trends in ideological sorting and affective polarization, examining how these changes correlate with shifts in partisanship, social identity, and political behavior over time.
- 9. Hypotheses:** Mason hypothesizes that the alignment of social identities with partisanship amplifies affective polarization, leading to:
  - Increased partisan prejudice and stereotyping.
  - Heightened emotional reactivity to political wins and losses.
  - Greater political activism driven by identity-based motivations.

These hypotheses are supported by empirical evidence showing that socially sorted individuals display stronger in-group biases and are more likely to engage in partisan-driven behavior.

**10. Main findings:** Mason finds that social sorting has significantly increased partisan bias, with Democrats and Republicans perceiving each other more negatively than ever before. She emphasizes that this divide is rooted in identity-based conflict rather than substantive policy disagreements. Social polarization, driven by group alignment, exacerbates distrust and hostility, undermining democratic norms of compromise and mutual respect. Mason warns that this trend risks turning political parties into tools of division rather than governance, with voters prioritizing group loyalty over civic responsibility.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Partisan battles have helped organize Americans' distrust for 'the other' in politically powerful ways" (p. 11).
- "The separation of the country into two teams discourages compromise and encourages an escalation of conflict, with no camp staff to break up the fights" (p. 17).
- "Rather than simply disagreeing over policy outcomes, we are increasingly blind to our commonalities, seeing each other only as two teams fighting for a trophy" (p. 28).

### 1.5.12 The Parties in Our Heads: Misperceptions about Party Composition and Their Consequences

Ahler, D. J., & Sood, G. (2018). The Parties in Our Heads: Misperceptions about Party Composition and Their Consequences. *The Journal of Politics*, 80(3), 964–981. <https://doi.org/10.1086/697253>

1. **Citation key:** ahler\_parties\_2018
2. **Author(s):** Douglas J. Ahler and Gaurav Sood
3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** partisan identity, stereotypes, misperceptions, party composition, affective polarization
6. **Summary:** Ahler and Sood examine how Americans' misperceptions of the demographic composition of political parties contribute to partisan animus and extremity perceptions. Their research demonstrates that individuals significantly overestimate the prevalence of stereotypical groups within both the Democratic and Republican parties. These misperceptions, rooted in cognitive biases and representativeness heuristics, intensify affective polarization and lead to distorted views of the ideological extremity of out-party members.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on social identity theory and prototype-based stereotyping to argue that people view political parties through exaggerated, simplistic mental schemas. These schemas emphasize stereotypical groups perceived as emblematic of the parties, such as associating Democrats with LGBT individuals and Republicans with the wealthy. The authors propose that this cognitive bias is exacerbated by media portrayals and a lack of personal exposure to out-party members, fostering animosity and ideological misjudgments.
8. **Methods:** The study combines observational surveys with experimental designs to explore the extent and effects of misperceptions. Key methods include:
  - A YouGov survey of 1,000 participants estimating the demographic composition of partisans, compared to actual data from sources like ANES and Pew Research.
  - Experimental manipulation to correct misperceptions by providing participants with accurate demographic information about the out-party.
  - Analysis of the relationship between perceptual biases and measures of partisan animus, policy extremity perceptions, and social distance, using both regression and causal inference techniques.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Individuals overestimate the prevalence of stereotypical groups within both parties, with greater distortions in out-party perceptions.
  - Correcting these misperceptions reduces perceived ideological extremity and affective polarization.
  - Political engagement amplifies rather than mitigates these perceptual biases due to selective exposure to stereotype-reinforcing information.
- These hypotheses are confirmed by experimental results showing reduced partisan animus and extremity perceptions following exposure to accurate information.
10. **Main findings:** The study reveals significant and systematic misperceptions of party composition, with Americans overestimating the prevalence of stereotypical groups in both parties by over 300%. These biases are more pronounced for out-party perceptions. Experiments demonstrate that correcting these misperceptions reduces affective polarization and ideological misjudgments, particularly among individuals with the most skewed initial beliefs. The findings suggest that perceptual distortions are a key driver of partisan conflict, with media and limited cross-party interactions reinforcing these biases.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "People make large, systematic errors when judging party composition, considerably overestimating the extent to which partisans belong to groups they perceive as core to the party brand" (p. 965).
  - "Misperceptions about the out-party's actual composition exacerbate affective polarization and contribute to inaccurate perceptions of policy extremity" (p. 970).
  - "Correcting these widespread misperceptions appears to most strongly affect the partisan sentiments of the most misinformed, reducing both animus and perceived extremity" (p. 976).

### 1.5.13 Identity as Dependent Variable: How Americans Shift Their Identities to Align with Their Politics

Egan, P. J. (2020). Identity as Dependent Variable: How Americans Shift Their Identities to Align with Their Politics. *American Journal of Political Science*, 64(3), 699–716. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12496>

1. **Citation key:** egan\_identity\_2020
2. **Author(s):** Patrick J. Egan
3. **Year:** 2020
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** identity, social sorting, partisanship, demographic alignment, identity switching
6. **Summary:** Egan challenges the traditional notion that identities like race, religion, and sexuality are static, showing that political affiliations and ideologies can actively shape demographic identities over time. Using panel data from the General Social Survey (GSS), Egan demonstrates that small but significant shares of Americans alter their self-reported identities in alignment with partisan and ideological prototypes. These findings highlight the dynamic interplay between identity and politics in contemporary American society.

7. **Theory:** Egan draws on social identity theory, which posits that individuals adopt group-defining characteristics through self-categorization and depersonalization. He argues that as partisanship and ideology have become central to Americans' self-concept, individuals increasingly align their demographic identities—such as race, religion, and sexuality—with those of their political in-groups. This alignment is facilitated by the growing demographic distinctiveness of political coalitions, as documented in prior studies on social sorting.
8. **Methods:** Egan uses three-wave panel data from the General Social Survey (2006–2014), tracking identity changes over a four-year span. He employs logistic regression models with lagged dependent variables to predict shifts in identity categories, such as race, ethnicity, religion, class, and sexuality. The analysis incorporates controls for demographics, response consistency, and measurement error to ensure robust findings. The study also leverages dissimilarity indices to quantify the demographic distinctiveness of political coalitions.
9. **Hypotheses:** Egan hypothesizes that:
  - Individuals will shift their identities to better align with partisan and ideological group prototypes.
  - Identity shifts will be more pronounced among those with stable partisanship and ideology.
  - Political prototypes will exert the strongest influence on fluid identity categories like religion and sexuality.
 These hypotheses are supported, revealing significant identity shifts that align with partisan and ideological affiliations.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that identities traditionally considered stable, such as ethnicity, religion, and sexuality, are subject to politicized change. For instance, liberal Democrats are more likely to shift into identities such as being non-religious or LGBTQ+, while conservative Republicans are more likely to adopt identities like being born-again Christian. These shifts, though modest in magnitude, are consistent with partisan and ideological prototypes. Furthermore, individuals with consistent political affiliations over time exhibit greater tendencies to align their identities with their political group, highlighting the centrality of politics in shaping self-concept.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Many political scientists now point to group identity as a key independent variable predicting political behavior, but recent work challenges the assumption that identities are exogenous to politics" (p. 700).
  - "As partisanship and ideology have become salient social identities, some Americans adjust their demographic identities to better align with their political groups" (p. 702).
  - "The scope of politicized identity shifting also includes ethnicity, sexuality, and class, which until now have not been shown to be subject to short-term change that aligns with individual political characteristics" (p. 706).

#### 1.5.14 Social Desirability and Affective Polarization

Connors, E. C. [Elizabeth C]. (2023). Social Desirability and Affective Polarization. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 87(4), 911–934. <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfad053>

1. **Citation key:** connors\_social\_2023
2. **Author(s):** Elizabeth C. Connors
3. **Year:** 2023
4. **Publication:** Public Opinion Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** affective polarization, social desirability, self-monitoring, partisan behavior, polarization dynamics
6. **Summary:** Connors examines the role of social desirability in shaping affective polarization among partisans. Drawing on surveys and experimental designs, she investigates whether partisans perceive polarization as socially desirable and how this perception influences their expressed attitudes and behaviors. Her findings reveal that polarization is seen as a socially desirable trait within partisan groups and that this perception can alter public expressions of polarization. However, ingrained partisan attitudes and behaviors often mitigate the effect of experimental manipulations.
7. **Theory:** The study is grounded in social identity theory and the concept of social desirability. Connors argues that partisanship functions as a salient social identity, encouraging individuals to conform to group norms to gain in-group approval. Media narratives and societal exaggerations of polarization exacerbate this dynamic, portraying polarization as both widespread and acceptable. Consequently, partisans may exaggerate or modify their expressions of polarization to align with perceived social expectations, particularly in public or politically charged settings.
8. **Methods:** Connors employs a multi-method approach, including four survey experiments with randomized manipulations. Key methods include:
  - A "fake good, fake bad" experiment to assess whether polarization is perceived as socially desirable.
  - Recall prompts to elicit experiences where polarization was socially desirable or undesirable.
  - Privacy manipulations to evaluate the impact of perceived survey anonymity on polarization responses.
  - Logistic regression and interaction models to analyze the moderating role of self-monitoring on expressed polarization.

The data are drawn from diverse samples, including Prolific and MTurk respondents, with rigorous controls for demographics and prior exposure to polarization narratives.

9. **Hypotheses:** Connors hypothesizes the following:
  - **H1:** Partisans believe it is socially desirable to exhibit polarization.
  - **H2:** Social desirability can influence expressed polarization, moderated by self-monitoring.
  - **H3a:** Perceived survey privacy can alter polarization responses, moderated by self-monitoring.

- **H3b:** Ingrained polarization attitudes may resist changes in survey context.

Each hypothesis is evaluated across multiple experiments, with nuanced findings reflecting both support and limitations.

**10. Main findings:** Connors finds robust evidence that partisans perceive polarization as socially desirable, with respondents in “impress” conditions reporting higher levels of affective polarization. Self-monitoring plays a critical role in moderating these effects: high self-monitors are more likely to conform their polarization expressions to social expectations. Experimental manipulations of privacy reveal that higher self-monitors report less polarization when assured of anonymity. However, deeply ingrained partisan attitudes limit the efficacy of these treatments, highlighting the interplay between social norms and entrenched behaviors. The findings underscore the complexity of polarization dynamics, where social desirability influences public expressions but not necessarily deeply held beliefs.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “The rise in media coverage and overestimation of affective polarization by the public suggest that partisans could believe that to impress other partisans they should act affectively polarized, leading some partisans to do so” (p. 911).
- “Experimental results demonstrate that social desirability influences public expressions of polarization, particularly among high self-monitors” (p. 914).
- “Changes in survey context do not necessarily produce large changes in polarization responses... Perhaps stronger social pressures are needed to produce larger attitudinal effects” (p. 927).

## 1.6 Campaigns and Elections

### 1.6.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Contemporary research on American campaigns and elections has increasingly focused on the dynamic interplay of structural, behavioral, and contextual factors that shape electoral outcomes. Central themes include the effects of polarization and calcification, the role of identity politics, and the evolving influence of media and campaign strategies. Scholars have interrogated foundational theories of voting behavior and campaign effects, adapting these frameworks to the highly polarized environment of recent decades. The role of emotional appeals, elite coordination, and voter mobilization are critical areas of focus, reflecting the complexity of modern elections.
- **Polarization and Calcification:** The hardening of partisan identities, referred to as calcification, has emerged as a defining characteristic of modern American politics. Sides, Tausanovitch, and Vavreck (2022) argue that calcification limits the influence of economic or short-term contextual factors on voter decision-making, with partisan loyalty dominating electoral behavior. This phenomenon is further exacerbated by affective polarization, wherein voters harbor deep emotional hostility toward opposing partisans. These trends highlight the increasing predictability of election outcomes despite the ostensibly dynamic nature of campaigns.
- **Identity Politics and Voter Behavior:** The intensification of identity-based divisions has fundamentally altered the nature of political conflict in the United States. Issues related to race, religion, and gender have become central to partisan competition, as identity shocks—rhetorical or contextual events that activate group-based identities—drive voter engagement and polarization. This focus on identity reinforces existing partisan divides, often at the expense of issue-based deliberation.
- **The Role of Emotional Appeals:** Ted Brader’s *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds* (2020) emphasizes the strategic use of emotions in political advertising, particularly fear and enthusiasm. Brader’s experiments demonstrate that fear disrupts habitual voting patterns, prompting information-seeking and reassessment, while enthusiasm reinforces existing preferences and mobilizes participation. These findings suggest that emotional appeals can enhance, rather than undermine, voter engagement and decision-making, challenging critiques that view such strategies as inherently manipulative.
- **Campaign Effects and Voter Perceptions:** Gelman and King (1993) propose the “enlightened preferences” model, suggesting that campaigns serve to align voter preferences with underlying fundamentals like ideology and partisanship. They argue that while opinion polls may fluctuate during campaigns due to incomplete information or transient events, voter decisions ultimately stabilize around predictable outcomes. This model underscores the limited long-term impact of campaign events on election results, emphasizing the primacy of structural factors.
- **Elite Influence and the Invisible Primary:** In *The Party Decides* (2008), Cohen et al. highlight the enduring influence of party elites in shaping presidential nominations through the “invisible primary.” Despite the democratization of the nominating process, elite coordination via endorsements, fundraising, and strategic communication remains critical to candidate success. However, as Cohen et al. (2016) later note, the rise of factionalism and new media platforms has weakened elite control, allowing outsider candidates like Donald Trump to bypass traditional party structures.
- **Strategic Mobilization and Turnout:** Campaign strategies increasingly prioritize mobilization over persuasion in a calcified electorate. Targeted messaging, emotional appeals, and sophisticated data analytics are used to energize partisan bases, particularly in competitive districts. Hall (2015) illustrates the electoral risks of nominating extreme candidates, showing how polarization-driven primaries can diminish general-election prospects. These findings highlight the trade-offs inherent in balancing ideological purity with electoral viability.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Key debates in the field include the extent to which campaigns influence electoral outcomes versus merely reflecting underlying fundamentals, the implications of polarization for democratic governance, and the evolving role of digital media in shaping voter perceptions. Future research is likely to explore the

intersection of identity politics, technological innovation, and the changing institutional context of American elections.

### 1.6.2 The Puzzle of Midterm Loss

Erikson, R. S. (1988). The Puzzle of Midterm Loss [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 50(4), 1011–1029. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2131389>

1. **Citation key:** erikson\_puzzle\_1988
2. **Author(s):** Robert S. Erikson
3. **Year:** 1988
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** midterm elections, presidential penalty, surge and decline, regression to the mean, electoral dynamics
6. **Summary:** Erikson examines the persistent pattern of midterm election losses for the president's party in the United States, exploring various explanations such as regression to the mean, the surge-and-decline hypothesis, and negative referenda on presidential performance. Through an analysis of election data spanning 1902–1986, Erikson finds that none of these conventional theories fully explains the phenomenon. Instead, he proposes the "presidential penalty" hypothesis, which posits that the electorate systematically penalizes the party controlling the presidency, regardless of economic conditions or presidential approval.
7. **Theory:** Erikson challenges traditional explanations of midterm loss by emphasizing the role of the "presidential penalty." This theory suggests that midterm losses are not solely the result of contextual factors like declining coattails or negative evaluations of the president. Instead, the penalty reflects an inherent bias of the electorate against the party in power, motivated by tendencies toward negative voting and a preference for balanced governance. Erikson theorizes that voters may deliberately act to offset the ideological excesses of unified party control by strengthening the opposition in Congress.
8. **Methods:** The study utilizes historical election data from 1902 to 1986, analyzing vote shares and seat changes in midterm and presidential elections. Erikson employs regression analysis to test the relationship between vote outcomes in consecutive elections and to isolate the effect of the presidential penalty. His scatterplots and regression models demonstrate that the penalty persists across time, independent of short-term fluctuations in presidential approval or economic performance.
9. **Hypotheses:** Erikson tests the hypothesis that the president's party experiences consistent vote losses at midterms due to a "presidential penalty" rather than regression to the mean, surge-and-decline dynamics, or referendum effects. His findings support this hypothesis:
  - Midterm losses for the president's party occur even under favorable economic conditions and high presidential approval.
  - The penalty accounts for a consistent reduction in the vote share, averaging about 7–9 percentage points.
  - Other explanations, such as regression to the mean or surge-and-decline, fail to fit the data as robustly as the presidential penalty hypothesis.
10. **Main findings:** Erikson demonstrates that midterm election outcomes are best explained by the "presidential penalty." This penalty leads to systematic losses for the president's party, regardless of the president's popularity or the state of the economy. His analysis shows that while factors like withdrawn coattails or referendum effects may influence the magnitude of midterm losses, they do not account for the near universality of the phenomenon. Instead, the electorate appears predisposed to shift power away from the presidential party as a corrective mechanism, reinforcing the idea of balanced governance. Erikson's findings also highlight the limited predictive power of traditional models, which fail to accommodate the regularity and magnitude of the presidential penalty.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Midterm loss is an almost invariable historical regularity. In terms of seats, the one recorded midterm gain for the presidential party was the Democratic gain of 1934" (p. 1012).
  - "The midterm electorate penalizes the president's party for being the party in power: holding constant the presidential year House vote, the president's party does much worse at midterm than it would if it did not control the presidency" (p. 1013).
  - "The regularity of midterm loss is not a function of regression to the mean, surge and decline, or a negative referendum verdict on presidential performance. Instead, figures ... reveal an electoral pattern consistent only with the explanation of a presidential penalty" (p. 1027).

### 1.6.3 Why Are American Presidential Election Campaign Polls so Variable When Votes Are so Predictable?

Gelman, A., & King, G. (1993). Why Are American Presidential Election Campaign Polls so Variable When Votes Are so Predictable? [Publisher: Cambridge University Press]. *British Journal of Political Science*, 23(4), 409–451. Retrieved January 17, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/194212>

1. **Citation key:** gelman\_why\_1993
2. **Author(s):** Andrew Gelman and Gary King
3. **Year:** 1993
4. **Publication:** British Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** election polls, vote predictability, voter behavior, media influence, enlightened preferences
6. **Summary:** Gelman and King explore the paradox of why pre-election polls for American presidential elections exhibit

high variability, while final vote outcomes are highly predictable. Using individual and aggregate poll data, they propose that voter preferences stabilize over the campaign period due to an “enlightened preferences” model. This model suggests that voters ultimately make decisions based on fundamental political factors rather than transient campaign events.

**7. Theory:** The authors introduce the “enlightened preferences” hypothesis, which posits that voters assimilate information during the campaign, aligning their choices with stable, fundamental factors like ideology, partisanship, and issue preferences. Campaign events influence short-term poll fluctuations but do not fundamentally alter voters’ decisions, as these preferences emerge from accumulated knowledge and deliberation. Gelman and King challenge the media’s interpretation of poll variability as reflecting genuine shifts in voter intent.

**8. Methods:** The study analyzes over 67,000 individual responses from 49 polls conducted during the 1988 presidential campaign and aggregates poll data from 1952–1992. Graphical techniques are used to evaluate trends and test hypotheses about poll variability. The authors assess whether factors like question wording, sampling error, or non-response bias explain the observed patterns.

**9. Hypotheses:** Gelman and King hypothesize that:

- Voters make decisions based on fundamental variables like ideology and party identification, which stabilize over time.
- Poll fluctuations reflect incomplete information or short-term reactions to campaign events but do not predict election outcomes.
- The variability in polls is not due to measurement error or systematic bias but results from rational adjustments to campaign information.

The data support these hypotheses, showing consistent convergence of poll results toward the election outcome as campaigns progress.

**10. Main findings:** Gelman and King find that while opinion polls are volatile during the campaign, they converge predictably toward election outcomes due to voters’ alignment with fundamental political factors. Poll variability is driven by incomplete information early in the campaign and by reactions to transient events. However, these fluctuations do not indicate lasting changes in voter preferences. The authors emphasize that media coverage often misinterprets short-term poll changes as significant, ignoring the broader stability of voter decision-making processes. Their findings suggest that campaigns serve to inform voters, enabling them to make decisions consistent with their underlying preferences.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Responses to pollsters during the campaign are not generally informed or even, in a sense we describe, ‘rational.’ In contrast, voters decide, based on their enlightened preferences ... which candidate to support eventually” (p. 410).
- “The polls vary over the campaign because voters are in the process of learning, yet the outcome is predictable because this learning brings voters’ choices in line with their fundamental preferences” (p. 418).
- “The apparent volatility of opinion polls reflects the public’s incomplete information and short-term reactions, not fundamental shifts in voter intentions” (p. 425).

#### 1.6.4 Electoral Realignments

Mayhew, D. R. (2000). Electoral Realignments [Publisher: Annual Reviews]. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 3(Volume 3, 2000), 449–474. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.3.1.449>

**1. Citation key:** mayhew\_electoral\_2000

**2. Author(s):** David R. Mayhew

**3. Year:** 2000

**4. Publication:** Annual Review of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** electoral realignments, critical elections, periodicity, voter turnout, political parties

**6. Summary:** Mayhew critically examines the concept of electoral realignments as proposed by scholars such as Key, Schattschneider, Sundquist, and Burnham. He evaluates the empirical validity and theoretical utility of eleven distinct claims associated with the realignments framework, including cyclical periodicity, durable voter alignments, and the transformative effects of critical elections. His analysis reveals significant shortcomings in the realignments paradigm, suggesting that its explanatory power has diminished over time.

**7. Theory:** The realignment theory posits that certain elections—deemed “critical”—fundamentally reshape voter coalitions and political cleavages, resulting in long-lasting shifts in party dominance and policy direction. This framework often assumes a cyclical pattern, with realignments occurring approximately every 30 years. Mayhew interrogates these assumptions, emphasizing the need to distinguish between temporary electoral shifts and durable transformations. He challenges the notion of periodicity, arguing that realignments lack consistent timing and predictive power.

**8. Methods:** Mayhew conducts a detailed review of historical elections from 1800 to the 20th century, analyzing patterns in voter turnout, issue salience, and party dominance. He evaluates data from aggregate election returns and incorporates critiques from contemporary political science literature. This methodological approach enables him to test key claims of the realignments framework against empirical evidence.

**9. Hypotheses:** Mayhew examines the following hypotheses derived from the realignments literature:

- Critical elections produce durable voter alignments that persist over multiple election cycles.

- Electoral realignments occur in regular, cyclical patterns.
- Realignments are associated with high voter turnout and ideological polarization.

His findings refute these hypotheses, demonstrating inconsistencies in the historical record and challenging the predictive validity of realignments theory.

**10. Main findings:** Mayhew argues that the concept of electoral realignments lacks empirical robustness and fails to account for the complexity of American electoral history. He highlights the ambiguous criteria used to identify critical elections and the absence of consistent periodicity. While certain elections, such as 1932, align with the realignment framework, others—like 1896—appear less transformative upon closer inspection. Mayhew concludes that the theory's reliance on grand historical patterns obscures more nuanced, incremental changes in voter behavior and party dynamics. His critique underscores the limitations of the realignments genre as a tool for understanding contemporary political change.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The idea of sorting elections into 'realigning' and 'nonrealigning' categories has become increasingly difficult to sustain in light of historical evidence" (p. 450).
- "Realignments theory rests heavily on the notion of periodicity, yet the historical record reveals no consistent 30-year cycle of critical elections" (p. 455).
- "The realignments genre, while intellectually ambitious, often fails to provide a compelling explanation for the complex, incremental nature of political change in the United States" (p. 462).

#### 1.6.5 Entering the Arena? Gender and the Decision to Run for Office

Fox, R. L., & Lawless, J. L. (2004). Entering the Arena? Gender and the Decision to Run for Office [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.0092-5853.2004.00069.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(2), 264–280. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0092-5853.2004.00069.x>

**1. Citation key:** fox\_entering\_2004

**2. Author(s):** Richard L. Fox and Jennifer L. Lawless

**3. Year:** 2004

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** gender, political ambition, candidate emergence, sex-role socialization, U.S. elections

**6. Summary:** Fox and Lawless explore why women remain underrepresented in U.S. elective office, focusing on gender differences in the initial decision to run for office. Using data from their Citizen Political Ambition Study, a large-scale national survey of potential candidates, they find that women with comparable credentials to men are less likely to express political ambition. Two primary factors contribute to this gap: women receive less encouragement to run and are less likely to perceive themselves as qualified. The study highlights the persistent influence of traditional gender socialization and its implications for achieving gender parity in political institutions.

**7. Theory:** The authors argue that traditional sex-role socialization creates distinct barriers for women entering politics. This framework posits that women are socialized to prioritize private, family-oriented roles over public, political ones, which leads to reduced political ambition. Unlike institutional explanations such as incumbency and eligibility pool theories, Fox and Lawless emphasize individual-level factors, including the gendered dynamics of encouragement and self-perception. These influences undermine women's likelihood of running for office, even when external conditions and qualifications are similar to those of men.

**8. Methods:** The study analyzes responses from 3,765 participants in the Citizen Political Ambition Study, which surveyed an equal number of men and women from law, business, education, and activism—professions typically preceding political careers. Logistic regression models examine how factors like encouragement, self-perceived qualifications, and socio-demographics predict the likelihood of considering and pursuing a candidacy. The data allow the authors to assess gender differences in political ambition at the earliest stage of the candidate emergence process.

**9. Hypotheses:** The study tests the hypotheses that:

- Women are less likely than men to consider running for office, even when controlling for similar qualifications and backgrounds.
- Women's political ambition is negatively affected by lower levels of external encouragement and self-perceived qualifications.
- Traditional socialization factors, such as family responsibilities and political culture, contribute to the gender gap in candidacy.

These hypotheses are largely supported by the data, with significant gender differences in political ambition driven primarily by encouragement and self-perception.

**10. Main findings:** Fox and Lawless reveal that women are less likely to consider or pursue a candidacy than men, even when they share comparable credentials and professional success. Men in the study were 37% more likely than women to view themselves as "very qualified" to run for office. Encouragement from political actors doubled the likelihood of considering a candidacy for both genders, but women were significantly less likely to receive such encouragement. The findings suggest that while structural barriers, such as incumbency, are important, the gender gap in political ambition is rooted in individual-level dynamics influenced by socialization. This gap challenges conventional expectations that increasing women's presence in pipeline professions will alone ensure gender parity in politics.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Women who share the same personal characteristics and professional credentials as men express significantly lower levels of political ambition to hold elective office” (p. 265).
- “Two factors explain this gender gap: first, women are far less likely than men to be encouraged to run for office; second, women are significantly less likely than men to view themselves as qualified to run” (p. 267).
- “Our findings call into question the leading theoretical explanations for women’s numeric underrepresentation and indicate that, because of vestiges of traditional sex-role socialization, prospects for gender parity in U.S. political institutions are less promising than conventional explanations suggest” (p. 268).

#### 1.6.6 The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform

Cohen, M., Karol, D., Noel, H., & Zaller, J. (2008, October). *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*. University of Chicago Press.

1. **Citation key:** cohen\_party\_2008
2. **Author(s):** Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller
3. **Year:** 2008
4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press
5. **Keywords:** political parties, presidential nominations, invisible primary, party coalitions, reform era
6. **Summary:** Cohen, Karol, Noel, and Zaller argue that political parties remain the central actors in presidential nominations despite reforms that ostensibly democratized the process. The authors emphasize the role of “intense policy demanders,” or coalitions of activists, interest groups, and party elites, in shaping outcomes. They demonstrate that parties coordinate through an “invisible primary,” using endorsements, fundraising, and strategic communication to consolidate support behind a candidate even before the public voting begins. This book challenges the notion that nominations have become solely candidate-centered affairs, revealing the enduring power of party networks.
7. **Theory:** The authors posit that political parties function as coalitions of organized groups seeking to achieve collective policy goals. These groups evaluate candidates and coordinate support during the pre-primary phase, influencing outcomes through an “invisible primary” mechanism. This theory contrasts with the view that party influence waned following the McGovern-Fraser reforms of the 1970s. Instead, the authors argue that parties adapted to these changes by shifting their coordination to the pre-primary phase, enabling them to retain control over the nomination process while accommodating new institutional rules.
8. **Methods:** The authors use both qualitative and quantitative approaches to test their theory. They analyze historical nomination processes from the pre-reform and post-reform eras, examine patterns of endorsements by party elites, and track the relationship between early endorsements and primary success. Data sources include campaign finance records, media coverage, and historical accounts of party coordination. Statistical models assess the impact of elite endorsements on candidate viability and nomination outcomes.
9. **Hypotheses:** The book examines several hypotheses related to party influence:
  - Party coalitions coordinate during the invisible primary to consolidate support for a preferred candidate.
  - Candidates with strong party endorsements prior to the primaries are more likely to secure the nomination.
  - The McGovern-Fraser reforms did not diminish party control but altered the timing and mechanism of coordination.
 These hypotheses are supported by evidence showing that endorsements and party support are strong predictors of nomination success.
10. **Main findings:** The authors find that parties continue to dominate presidential nominations through the invisible primary, where endorsements, fundraising, and elite support coalesce to shape the field of viable candidates. Candidates who garner early support from party networks are significantly more likely to win the nomination. The McGovern-Fraser reforms did not erode party influence but shifted its locus from conventions to the pre-primary phase. The findings challenge the notion of candidate-centered politics by demonstrating that party coalitions remain central to the nomination process, albeit in a reconfigured form.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Invisible primary:* The period before public voting begins during which party elites and interest groups coordinate to influence the nomination process.
  - *Intense policy demanders:* Groups or individuals within a party coalition who prioritize specific policy goals and play an active role in candidate selection.
  - *Party coalitions:* Networks of officeholders, activists, and organized groups that work together to advance shared political and policy goals.
  - *McGovern-Fraser reforms:* A series of changes to the Democratic Party’s nominating rules in the 1970s, designed to make the process more open and democratic.

#### 1.6.7 The Positive Case for Negative Campaigning

Mattes, K., & Redlawsk, D. P. (2015a). Chapter 1. Indroduction. *The Positive Case for Negative Campaigning*. Chicago University Press

Mattes, K., Redlawsk, D. P., & Mancevski, S. (2015). Chapter 2. Voters and Negativity, and Why the Media Can’t Help. *The Positive Case for Negative Campaigning*. Chicago University Press

Mattes, K., & Redlawsk, D. P. (2015b). Chapter 4. Examining Voter Response to Real Campaign Ads. *The Positive Case for Negative Campaigning*. Chicago University Press

1. **Citation key:** mattes\_chapter\_2015, mattes\_chapter\_2015-1, mattes\_chapter\_2015-2
2. **Author(s):** Kyle Mattes and David P. Redlawsk
3. **Year:** 2015
4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press
5. **Keywords:** negative campaigning, voter behavior, campaign strategy, political advertising, electoral psychology
6. **Summary:** Mattes and Redlawsk challenge the conventional wisdom that negative campaigning is inherently detrimental to democratic processes. They argue that negative campaigns provide voters with valuable and often critical information about candidates that would not otherwise surface. Using surveys, experiments, and analyses of campaign advertisements, they demonstrate that voters respond to negativity in nuanced ways, differentiating between civil and uncivil ads, as well as relevant and irrelevant attacks.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that negative campaigning serves two primary purposes: providing voters with diagnostic information about candidates and holding candidates accountable for their claims. They critique the "positivity bias" in scholarly and public discourse, arguing that the aversion to negativity stems largely from a failure to differentiate between types of attacks. Civil, relevant negative ads, they argue, contribute positively to democratic discourse by informing voter decision-making.
8. **Methods:** Mattes and Redlawsk employ a mixed-methods approach:
  - Surveys capturing voter attitudes toward negativity, including reactions to hypothetical and real-world campaign ads.
  - Experiments using manipulated ads to measure voter reactions to civility, relevance, and negativity.
  - Content analysis of historical and contemporary campaign advertisements to trace trends in negativity.
 These methods allow them to isolate the effects of negative ads on voter perceptions, trust, and electoral engagement.

9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Voters distinguish between relevant and irrelevant negative ads, reacting less negatively to the former.
  - Civil, issue-based negative ads are less likely to generate backlash compared to uncivil, personal attacks.
  - Negative campaigning increases voter attention and information retention, even as it generates mixed emotional reactions.
 These hypotheses are supported by empirical findings demonstrating nuanced voter responses to negative campaign strategies.

10. **Main findings:** The authors find that voters are not uniformly opposed to negative campaigning. Civil and relevant negative ads can increase voter engagement and provide valuable information, while uncivil and irrelevant attacks are more likely to provoke backlash. The perception of negativity is influenced by how ads are framed and described, suggesting that public aversion to negativity is often overstated. By focusing on issue-based, credible attacks, campaigns can inform voters without alienating them. The findings challenge the normative view that negative campaigning erodes democratic processes, instead suggesting that it has an integral role in informing voters and fostering accountability.

11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Negative campaigning:* Political advertising or messaging that critiques an opponent rather than promoting the sponsor.
  - *Civility:* The degree to which a negative ad refrains from personal or inflammatory attacks.
  - *Relevance:* The extent to which the content of a negative ad is pertinent to the election or the candidate's qualifications.
  - *Diagnostic information:* Information that aids voters in making more informed electoral decisions, often provided through contrast ads or critiques.

#### 1.6.8 What Happens When Extremists Win Primaries?

Hall, A. B. (2015). What Happens When Extremists Win Primaries? *American Political Science Review*, 109(1), 18–42. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055414000641>

1. **Citation key:** hall\_what\_2015
2. **Author(s):** Andrew B. Hall
3. **Year:** 2015
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** primary elections, extremism, electoral outcomes, legislative behavior, polarization
6. **Summary:** Hall examines the consequences of nominating ideologically extreme candidates in U.S. House primary elections. Using a regression discontinuity design, he demonstrates that the nomination of extremists reduces a party's general-election vote share and decreases their probability of victory, while also altering subsequent legislative behavior. The study underscores the tradeoff between ideological purity and electability, highlighting how primary nominations influence both electoral outcomes and legislative polarization.
7. **Theory:** Hall theorizes that primary voters often favor ideologically extreme candidates, but this preference comes at an electoral cost in general elections, where moderates have broader appeal. The tradeoff lies in prioritizing candidates

who represent a party's ideological core versus those more likely to secure victory. He further argues that extremist nominations can shift legislative behavior, as general-election dynamics and district-level preferences influence roll-call voting.

**8. Methods:** Hall employs a regression discontinuity design (RDD) to analyze primary elections for the U.S. House between 1980 and 2010. He classifies candidates as extremists or moderates based on donor contribution patterns and measures the impact of extremist nominations on general-election outcomes and roll-call behavior. The RDD ensures comparability between districts where extremists narrowly win or lose primaries, isolating the causal effects of extremist nominations.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- The nomination of an extremist candidate reduces the party's general-election vote share and probability of victory.
- The effect of nominating extremists varies across district types, with larger penalties in competitive districts and minimal penalties in safe districts.
- Extremist nominations influence subsequent legislative behavior by altering roll-call voting patterns.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with substantial evidence of electoral penalties and downstream effects on legislative behavior.

**10. Main findings:** Hall finds that nominating extremist candidates significantly decreases a party's general-election performance. The study estimates a 9–13 percentage point decline in vote share and a 35–54 percentage point reduction in the probability of victory when an extremist is nominated. This penalty is most pronounced in competitive districts, while it diminishes in safe districts where partisanship overrides candidate ideology. Moreover, extremist nominations impact legislative behavior, as districts represented by moderates exhibit roll-call voting closer to the median voter's preferences, whereas extremist nominations polarize district-level representation. Hall's analysis reveals how primary voters' ideological preferences can inadvertently undermine their broader electoral and legislative objectives.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The nomination of an extremist today makes the party much more likely to lose the general election today, and because of the incumbency advantage, the opposing party is much more likely to win the election again two years later, and four years later, and on" (p. 19).
- "By selecting especially partisan candidates, primaries may contribute to the large and growing polarization of U.S. legislatures" (p. 19).
- "When the extremist goes from barely losing the primary to barely winning it... the party's general-election vote share decreases noticeably" (p. 24).

### 1.6.9 Party Versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System

Cohen, M., Karol, D., Noel, H., & Zaller, J. (2016). Party Versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 49(04), 701–708. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096516001682>

**1. Citation key:** cohen\_party\_2016

**2. Author(s):** Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller

**3. Year:** 2016

**4. Publication:** PS: Political Science & Politics

**5. Keywords:** presidential nominations, party unity, factionalism, invisible primary, party coalitions

**6. Summary:** This article revisits the framework established in *The Party Decides* to evaluate how factionalism and external forces have reshaped presidential nominating contests in the reformed system. The authors argue that although party coalitions once effectively used the invisible primary to select broadly acceptable candidates, recent cycles have seen a decline in elite coordination due to factional divisions, increased media coverage, and early fundraising dynamics. Using the 2016 election as a case study, the article examines the challenges of balancing party unity with the incentives for factionalism in the modern nominating process.

**7. Theory:** Cohen and colleagues extend the theoretical insights of Nelson Polsby and their own work in *The Party Decides*, proposing that presidential nominations are shaped by competing incentives for unity and division within party coalitions. They argue that the rise of factional candidates stems from systemic changes, including the democratization of the nomination process, increased media visibility of early contests, and the role of early money. These changes have eroded the ability of party elites to control nominations through pre-primary coordination, resulting in outcomes that reflect both factional preferences and broader party goals.

**8. Methods:** The authors conduct a historical and theoretical analysis of nomination contests from the 1980s to 2016. They integrate data on elite endorsements, campaign fundraising, and media coverage, examining the shifting dynamics of the invisible primary. Case studies of key nomination battles, including Hillary Clinton's 2016 contest against Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump's unexpected rise in the Republican primaries, provide empirical grounding for their arguments.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Party coalitions aim to select consensus candidates to maximize electability and governability.
- Increased media visibility and the democratization of the process have empowered factional candidates, making elite coordination more difficult.
- Early money and new communication platforms have created opportunities for insurgent campaigns to bypass

traditional party structures.

These hypotheses are explored through the theoretical framework of party unity versus factionalism and supported by evidence from recent nomination cycles.

**10. Main findings:** The authors conclude that while the invisible primary remains an important mechanism for party coordination, its effectiveness has diminished due to systemic and contextual changes. Factionalism, fueled by deep intra-party divisions and the rise of new media, has disrupted the ability of party elites to steer nominations toward broadly acceptable candidates. The 2016 Republican primary illustrates how a lack of elite coordination allowed an outsider candidate like Donald Trump to win the nomination, while Hillary Clinton's success in the Democratic primary highlights the enduring influence of party insiders in contexts of greater unity. The findings suggest that the balance between unity and factionalism in nominations is contingent on the specific dynamics of each election cycle.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Presidential nominations present incentives for both party unity and factional division. Which is more important depends on such systematic factors as the current level of intra-party harmony or disharmony, opportunities for insurgents to communicate with voters, and the availability of funding to insurgents" (p. 702).
- "The invisible primary gave a relatively small group of party officials and group leaders a near monopoly over the early politics of presidential nominations, a monopoly they exercised to the benefit of party unity. That invisibility is all but gone today" (p. 704).
- "The Trump nomination is one of the most remarkable developments in the history of American politics. No politician has come as close to the presidency with as little elite support as Trump had" (p. 706).

#### 1.6.10 Campaigning for Hearts and Minds: How Emotional Appeals in Political Ads Work

Brader, T. (2020, July). *Campaigning for Hearts and Minds: How Emotional Appeals in Political Ads Work* [Google-Books-ID: iv\_vDwAAQBAJ]. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** brader\_campaigning\_2020

2. **Author(s):** Ted Brader

3. **Year:** 2020 (Originally 2006)

4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press

5. **Keywords:** emotions, political advertising, voter behavior, fear, enthusiasm, affective intelligence

6. **Summary:** Ted Brader examines the role of emotions in political advertising, challenging conventional views that emotional appeals undermine rational decision-making. Using innovative experiments and extensive content analysis, Brader demonstrates how fear and enthusiasm, in particular, influence voter behavior by shaping attention, motivation, and decision-making. He argues that emotions are essential to political engagement and that their effects can be constructive, rather than manipulative, depending on the nature of the appeal.

7. **Theory:** Brader builds on the theory of affective intelligence, positing that emotions like fear and enthusiasm serve distinct psychological functions in political decision-making. Fear disrupts habitual behavior, prompting voters to seek new information and reassess their choices, while enthusiasm reinforces existing preferences and encourages political participation. Brader argues that emotional appeals in political ads are effective not because they bypass rationality, but because they interact with voters' predispositions and cognitive processes, enabling informed engagement.

8. **Methods:** Brader employs a mixed-methods approach:

- Experimental studies conducted during a real gubernatorial campaign, using non-student samples, to test the effects of emotional appeals on voter behavior.
- Content analysis of 1,400 political advertisements from 1999–2000 to evaluate the prevalence and types of emotional appeals used.
- Statistical analysis to assess how fear and enthusiasm influence attention, information-seeking, and political engagement.

This combination of methods allows Brader to identify both causal effects and broader trends in political advertising.

9. **Hypotheses:**

- Fear appeals increase information-seeking behavior and cause voters to reevaluate their positions.
- Enthusiasm appeals reinforce existing attitudes and increase voter participation.
- Emotional appeals in political ads interact with voters' levels of political sophistication and engagement.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with fear shown to disrupt habitual behavior and enthusiasm fostering increased political action.

10. **Main findings:** Brader finds that fear appeals are particularly effective in drawing voters' attention and motivating them to seek additional information, often leading to reassessment of their prior commitments. Enthusiasm appeals, on the other hand, solidify existing preferences and mobilize voters to participate. His content analysis reveals that emotional appeals are widespread in political advertising, with fear and enthusiasm being the most commonly targeted emotions. Brader also highlights that political sophisticates are more susceptible to emotional appeals, contrary to the assumption that they are immune. This work underscores the dual role of emotions in fostering both deliberation and engagement, demonstrating that their effects can enhance, rather than undermine, democratic processes.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Emotional appeal:* A strategic communication tactic used in political advertising that leverages emotional triggers—such as fear or enthusiasm—to influence voter behavior and decision-making.

- *Fear appeal*: A type of emotional appeal designed to disrupt habitual political behavior by invoking anxiety or concern, leading voters to seek new information and reconsider their prior choices.
- *Enthusiasm appeal*: An emotional appeal aimed at reinforcing voters' existing preferences and motivating greater political participation through positive emotions such as hope or excitement.
- *Affective intelligence theory*: A theoretical framework suggesting that emotions guide political behavior by activating different psychological systems—fear prompts vigilance and reassessment, while enthusiasm fosters habitual action and reinforcement of existing preferences.
- *Political sophisticates*: Individuals with higher levels of political knowledge and engagement who, contrary to expectations, are more susceptible to emotional appeals in political advertising due to their deeper processing of campaign messages.
- *Information-seeking behavior*: The act of seeking additional knowledge or clarification about political candidates or issues, often triggered by emotional appeals such as fear.
- *Content analysis*: A systematic method used to study and categorize political advertisements, focusing on the prevalence, type, and impact of emotional appeals across campaigns.
- *Cognitive disruption*: A psychological effect where habitual thought patterns or decisions are interrupted, often due to fear appeals, prompting voters to reexamine their beliefs and preferences.

#### 1.6.11 The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Campaign and the Challenge to American Democracy

Sides, J., Tausanovitch, C., & Vavrek, L. (2022a). Chapter 1. The Storm Is Here. *The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Campaign and the Challenge to American Democracy*. Princeton University Press

Sides, J., Tausanovitch, C., & Vavrek, L. (2022b). Chapter 2. The Fight. *The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Campaign and the Challenge to American Democracy*. Princeton University Press

Sides, J., Tausanovitch, C., & Vavrek, L. (2022c). Chapter 3. Somewhere between "Landslide" and "Oh, Shit". *The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Campaign and the Challenge to American Democracy*. Princeton University Press

- 1. Citation keys:** sides\_chapter\_2022, sides\_chapter\_2022-1, sides\_chapter\_2022-2
- 2. Author(s):** John Sides, Chris Tausanovitch, and Lynn Vavreck
- 3. Year:** 2022
- 4. Publication:** The Bitter End: The 2020 Presidential Campaign and the Challenge to American Democracy (Princeton University Press)
- 5. Keywords:** calcification, polarization, identity politics, Trump administration, affective polarization
- 6. Summary:** Sides, Tausanovitch, and Vavreck examine the 2020 presidential election in the context of growing political polarization and calcification in American politics. They explore how long-term partisan trends and short-term shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, economic turmoil, and racial justice protests, shaped the election's outcome. The authors argue that political divisions are increasingly driven by identity-based conflicts, and these divisions have led to a calcified electorate that is resistant to persuasion but highly reactive to mobilization efforts.
- 7. Theory:** The authors propose that the 2020 election reflects two interrelated trends: partisan calcification and the rise of identity politics. Calcification refers to the hardening of partisan identities, reducing the likelihood of voters defecting from their party and diminishing the impact of external events on voting behavior. Identity politics, encompassing issues of race, religion, and gender, has become central to political conflict, intensifying polarization. These dynamics create a political environment where mobilization of the base is more effective than persuasion of swing voters.
- 8. Methods:** The analysis draws on survey data, including the Cooperative Election Study (CES) and the American National Election Studies (ANES), as well as media content analysis and qualitative accounts of campaign strategies. The authors examine trends in partisan alignment, voter perceptions, and issue salience across demographic groups, focusing on the interplay between long-term structural shifts and the immediate context of the 2020 campaign.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that partisan polarization, particularly along identity-based lines, limits the influence of traditional electoral fundamentals such as economic conditions. They further argue that campaign strategies in 2020 prioritized base mobilization over persuasion due to the calcified nature of the electorate.
- 10. Main findings:** The book finds that the 2020 election was shaped by unprecedented levels of partisan polarization and identity-driven politics. Despite external shocks such as the pandemic and economic downturn, voting patterns remained remarkably stable compared to 2016, with Donald Trump losing narrowly in key battleground states. The authors attribute this stability to calcification, where voters' preexisting partisan loyalties and identity-based concerns overshadowed other factors. The election also highlighted deepening affective polarization, with voters expressing strong negative feelings toward the opposing party.

#### 11. Key Definitions:

- *Calcification*: The process by which partisan identities harden, reducing voter responsiveness to external events and increasing loyalty to one's party.
- *Affective polarization*: Emotional hostility and distrust between partisans, characterized by negative perceptions of the opposing party's members.
- *Identity shocks*: Events or rhetoric that activate voters' social and political identities, intensifying partisan divisions.
- *Partisan parity*: A condition in which Democrats and Republicans are closely balanced in numerical strength,

raising the stakes of electoral outcomes.

## 1.7 Interest Groups

### 1.7.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Interest group literature has evolved from foundational theories of pluralism and collective action, which emphasized the democratic balancing role of competing interest groups, to more complex models that examine environmental constraints, elite influence, and strategic lobbying. Early theorists like Truman highlighted the stabilizing role of group competition, while Olson introduced the challenges of collective action, arguing that selective incentives are crucial for mobilizing large groups. Over time, critiques emerged, such as Schattsneider's view on the elitist bias of interest groups, and ecological models that focused on environmental factors limiting group survival. Later contributions explored the influence of external patrons, intersectional biases, and the nuanced lobbying strategies that characterize modern interest group dynamics, ultimately revealing that the landscape is shaped by both internal and external forces, with a significant role played by policy structures and elite interests.
- **Pluralism and Collective Action Foundations:** The early development of interest group theory was heavily influenced by David Truman's *The Governmental Process* (1951), which established the pluralist view that interest groups, arising from shared social interactions, act as critical stabilizers in the U.S. democratic process by competing to influence policy. Truman argued that this competition among groups creates a "balance wheel," fostering flexibility in policy-making and representing diverse interests. However, Truman's pluralism faced a significant challenge from Mancur Olson in *The Logic of Collective Action* (1971), which addressed the inherent problem of free-riding in group mobilization. Olson asserted that large groups face organizational costs and struggle with collective action issues, particularly when providing public goods that individuals can benefit from without contributing. Olson's theory proposed selective incentives as a solution, arguing that exclusive benefits are essential for mobilizing large groups and that small groups, by contrast, organize more easily due to more concentrated benefits and lower costs. Together, Truman and Olson laid foundational frameworks, with Truman highlighting the inclusive, democratic potential of interest groups and Olson cautioning that rational individual incentives could undermine group formation without additional mechanisms to secure participation.
- **Critique of Pluralism and Scope of Conflict:** By the mid-20th century, scholars like E.E. Schattschn-eider in *The Semisovereign People* (1975) began critiquing Truman's pluralist optimism, pointing out that interest groups predominantly represent elite voices, reinforcing social inequality rather than balancing it. Schattschneider proposed the "scope of conflict" theory, suggesting that political conflict's democratic value depends on how broadly it engages the public. He argued that while interest groups are limited in scope and tend to reflect upper-class biases, political parties, by contrast, have a unique capacity to mobilize the public. This expansion of the conflict's scope ensures that more marginalized voices are included, counterbalancing elite interest group influence. Schattschneider's critique highlighted the limits of pluralism, particularly in its over-reliance on interest groups, suggesting that for democracy to thrive, the scope of political conflict must regularly expand to include wider public involvement—a point that reshaped later discussions on interest groups.
- **Environmental Constraints and Population Ecology:** The 1970s saw a shift toward understanding the environmental factors that shape interest group formation and survival, encapsulated by Michael Hannan and John Freeman's population ecology model. Their work, *The Population Ecology of Organizations* (1977), introduced ecological principles into interest group theory, arguing that organizational survival is shaped not by adaptive behavior but by environmental "niches" that support certain types of groups over others. They proposed that structural inertia and environmental selection, rather than intentional adaptation, dictate which organizations persist over time, with interest groups emerging and declining based on resource availability and competition. Expanding on this idea, Lowery and Gray applied the population ecology model specifically to interest group density in states with their ESA model (Energy-Stability-Area) in *The Population Ecology of Gucci Gulch* (1995). They argued that environmental factors, such as political stability, constituency size, and governmental resources, determine the equilibrium of interest group density, suggesting that environmental constraints are critical in understanding why interest group landscapes vary between states. Together, these studies introduced the idea that external conditions, rather than purely internal dynamics, limit the number and types of interest groups that can survive.
- **Resource Mobilization and Patronage:** Jack Walker's study, *The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups* (1983), shifted the focus from internal group resources to the critical role of external patronage in sustaining interest groups. Walker argued that, contrary to theories suggesting member support as the primary financial base for groups, external funding sources—such as foundations, wealthy individuals, and government agencies—are often essential for group survival. This dependency on external resources is especially true for citizen groups, which struggle with Olson's collective action problem without patronage. Walker found that patronage enables groups to sustain themselves despite the free-rider problem, but it also means that patrons often influence the ideological leanings of the groups they fund. His work underscored the influence of financial backing on interest group advocacy, challenging prior theories that emphasized self-sustaining group membership alone.
- **Lobbying Dynamics and Legislative Subsidy:** Interest group influence through lobbying was reexamined in the late 20th century, notably by Baumgartner and Leech and Hall and Deardorff. Baumgartner and Leech critiqued traditional models of lobbying, suggesting that lobbying is not merely transactional but an iterative process embedded in broader social networks. Their work argued for longitudinal approaches to study lobbying as an ongoing activity shaped by changing public and legislative landscapes. Building on this idea, Hall and Deardorff's legislative subsidy theory in *Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy* (2006) reframed lobbying not as vote-buying but as a support mechanism. They

argued that lobbyists provide resources like policy expertise to allies rather than attempting to change opponents' views, which explains why lobbying efforts often focus on assisting friendly legislators in promoting shared goals. This legislative subsidy model highlighted the cooperative, rather than confrontational, nature of much lobbying, suggesting that lobbying's primary function is to mobilize supportive legislators by easing their resource constraints, a departure from models focused on persuasion.

- **Intersectional Representation and Biases in Advocacy:** In a major development addressing marginalized voices within interest groups, Dara Strolovitch analyzed internal biases in her 2006 study on intersectional representation. Strolovitch found that advocacy organizations often prioritize issues that benefit more advantaged subgroups within marginalized communities, neglecting those that affect the most disadvantaged. Her work, rooted in intersectional theory, revealed that even organizations dedicated to supporting marginalized groups can reflect broader societal biases, as organizational resources tend to favor issues perceived as broadly relevant over those affecting narrower or more disadvantaged subgroups. This study broadened the understanding of how internal biases and strategic considerations shape which issues receive advocacy, challenging assumptions of equitable representation within interest groups.
- **Policy-Focused Analysis and Elite Domination:** In response to shortcomings in voter-focused models, Hacker and Pierson in *After the "Master Theory"* (2014) proposed a policy-focused approach, emphasizing how policies themselves structure political conflicts and power dynamics. By examining cases like partisan polarization and income inequality, they argued that policies serve as both the battleground and prize of political conflicts, especially as organized interests leverage policy changes to entrench their power. Similarly, Gilens and Page's landmark study, *Testing Theories of American Politics* (2014), provided empirical support for elite domination theories, finding that economic elites and organized business groups have significant influence on policy, whereas the preferences of average citizens have little effect. These findings affirmed that U.S. democracy is heavily influenced by affluent interests, suggesting a significant democratic deficit.
- **Contemporary Approaches to Lobbying and Advocacy:** In recent years, interest group literature has further explored nuanced lobbying strategies and minority advocacy. Kenneth Kollman's *Outside Lobbying* (1998) introduced the concept of signaling through public mobilization, where interest groups demonstrate widespread support to pressure policymakers indirectly. Michael Minta's 2020 study on racial diversity in Congress revealed that the legislative success of minority interest groups is closely tied to descriptive representation, with bills supported by civil rights organizations advancing more readily in racially diverse committees. Keith Schnakenberg (2017) expanded on lobbying strategies by modeling informational lobbying as a coalition-building effort, where groups influence policy by coordinating with allied legislators. These approaches emphasize that lobbying and advocacy are not merely about direct influence but involve a complex interplay of coalition-building, representation, and strategic signaling in democratic systems.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Ongoing debates in interest group research include questions of democratic responsiveness, the extent of elite dominance, and the effectiveness of lobbying in shaping policy outcomes. While some argue that interest groups amplify public opinion and promote democratic engagement, others highlight the overrepresentation of affluent interests, creating a potential democratic deficit. Future research is likely to focus on the influence of digital mobilization and social media, the role of intersectionality in group representation, and the effects of shifting institutional structures on group influence. Additionally, the growing role of policy-focused approaches that view policies as active forces in shaping political dynamics could lead to new insights into how policies interact with group interests to sustain or challenge existing power structures.

### 1.7.2 The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion

Truman, D. B. (1951). *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*. Knopf

1. **Citation key:** truman\_governmental\_1951
2. **Author(s):** David Bicknell Truman
3. **Year:** 1951
4. **Publication:** The Governmental Process (Knopf / University of Michigan)
5. **Keywords:** interest groups, pluralism, political process, collective action, government structure
6. **Summary:** In *The Governmental Process*, Truman argues that understanding American politics requires recognizing the central role of interest groups. He describes politics as fundamentally shaped by the conflict and competition among various interest groups, which in turn influence policy-making. Interest groups arise from social interactions among individuals with shared characteristics and interests. When these groups make claims upon government institutions, they become political interest groups, competing to affect governmental decisions. Truman posits that this pluralism, driven by interest group competition, acts as a stabilizing force within the U.S. political system. Furthermore, the government itself plays an active role by establishing conditions that enable interest groups to operate and respond to threats. Truman situates his argument within the tradition of pluralism, contrasting it with Schattschneider's emphasis on parties and Olson's theory on the challenges of collective action for larger groups.
7. **Theory:** Truman's pluralist theory suggests that interest groups serve as a "balance wheel" in the political system, providing representation for diverse societal interests. He contends that the U.S. political structure, with its emphasis on federalism, liberty, and rights, fosters an environment where interest groups can form and operate effectively. Through their competition, these groups contribute to a flexible, adaptable policy-making process. Truman also emphasizes that the influence of interest groups depends on both their internal resources and their strategic positions in society, including their organizational structure, leadership skills, and available resources.

**8. Methods:** Truman's analysis is largely theoretical, drawing on qualitative observations of the U.S. political system. He examines the role of interest groups from a sociological perspective, emphasizing how frequent social interactions foster group formation based on shared attitudes. His approach situates interest groups as key actors in the governmental process, assessing how their characteristics and social positioning affect their influence.

**9. Hypotheses:** Truman hypothesizes that:

- Interest groups will form as a result of shared attitudes and will seek to make claims upon other groups and governmental institutions.
- The influence of interest groups depends on their resources, leadership, and positioning within the social and political structure.
- A pluralistic system with diverse interest group representation functions as a stabilizing force in democratic governance.

These hypotheses support his view that pluralism within the U.S. political structure allows for flexible and responsive policy-making.

**10. Main findings:** Truman concludes that pluralism, driven by competition among interest groups, is essential for the stability of the U.S. political system. The government's structure enables interest groups to rise and represent diverse interests, accommodating flexibility in policy-making. He emphasizes that interest groups' influence is moderated by their organizational strength, leadership, and resources.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Interest Group:* A group formed based on shared attitudes, seeking to influence societal and governmental behavior to promote, maintain, or enhance their interests. When making claims upon governmental institutions, an interest group becomes a political interest group.
- *Pluralism:* A system in which multiple competing interest groups act as a "balance wheel" within the political process, stabilizing democratic governance by ensuring that diverse societal interests are represented and that policy-making remains adaptable to changing demands.

### 1.7.3 The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups

Mancur Olson Jr. (1971, January). *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups, With a New Preface and Appendix*. Harvard University Press

**1. Citation key:** mancur\_olson\_jr\_logic\_1971

**2. Author(s):** Mancur Olson Jr.

**3. Year:** 1971

**4. Publication:** The Logic of Collective Action (Harvard University Press)

**5. Keywords:** collective action, free-rider problem, public goods, group theory, selective incentives

**6. Summary:** Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action* challenges the notion that groups with shared interests will naturally act collectively to pursue them. He argues that individuals in any group attempting collective action will have incentives to "free ride" on the efforts of others if the group is providing public goods, which are both non-excludable and non-rivalrous. As a result, large groups face difficulties organizing for collective action due to higher organizational costs and lower per capita benefits, whereas small groups find it easier to mobilize. Olson introduces the concepts of selective incentives and different types of groups to explain the conditions under which collective action is achievable.

**7. Theory:** Olson's theory suggests that collective action is unlikely to occur in large groups due to the free-rider problem, where individuals can benefit from the public good without contributing to its provision. He categorizes groups into three types—privileged, intermediate, and latent—each facing distinct challenges and potential solutions for collective action. Olson argues that selective incentives, either positive or negative, are necessary to motivate contributions in larger groups, as these incentives align individual interests with group objectives, thereby reducing free-riding.

**8. Methods:** Olson's work is primarily theoretical, drawing from economic principles to analyze organizational behavior across fields like political science, sociology, and economics. He uses case studies from labor unions, pressure groups, and corporations to illustrate his points, contrasting the relative ease of collective action in small versus large groups and explaining how selective incentives and group type affect organizational effectiveness.

**9. Hypotheses:** Olson hypothesizes that:

- Large groups are less effective at achieving collective action without selective incentives, due to higher organizational costs and lower per capita benefits.
- Different group types (privileged, intermediate, and latent) face varying degrees of difficulty in mobilizing for collective action.
- Selective incentives are essential for overcoming the free-rider problem in large groups, encouraging contributions by making participation individually advantageous.

These hypotheses support his view that collective action is not a straightforward outcome of shared interests but requires specific incentives and organizational structures.

**10. Main findings:** Olson concludes that without selective incentives, large groups will struggle to mobilize for collective action due to the free-rider problem. Small groups, on the other hand, are more capable of organizing since the benefits to each member from a successful action are relatively higher. Olson's framework has implications for understanding why certain interest groups, especially smaller or privileged groups, succeed in advancing their objectives, while diffuse, large groups often fail.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Public Goods*: Goods that are non-excludable (one cannot prevent others from consuming them) and non-rivalrous (one person's consumption does not reduce availability for others). Public goods often suffer from the free-rider problem, as individuals have little incentive to contribute to their provision if they can benefit without paying costs.
- *Selective Incentives*: Benefits or punishments provided exclusively to group members who actively participate in or contribute to a collective action. Selective incentives are designed to counteract the free-rider problem by aligning individual interests with group goals, encouraging participation even in large groups.
- *Free-Rider Problem*: A situation where individuals in a group benefit from the collective action of others without contributing themselves. The free-rider problem is particularly acute in large groups providing public goods, as members may prefer to rely on others' contributions while avoiding personal costs.

**1.7.4 The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America**

Schattschneider, E. E. (1975). *The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America*. Dryden Press

**1. Citation key:** schattschneider\_semisovereign\_1975

**2. Author(s):** E. E. Schattschneider

**3. Year:** 1975

**4. Publication:** The Semisovereign People (Dryden Press)

**5. Keywords:** democracy, pluralism, political conflict, party politics, pressure groups

**6. Summary:** Schattschneider's *The Semisovereign People* argues that the American political system is shaped by conflict and that democracy's vitality depends on broadening the scope of this conflict to include more public involvement. Schattschneider critiques pluralism, especially its overreliance on interest groups, which he argues are biased towards upper-class interests. He contends that political parties, rather than interest groups, offer a more inclusive avenue for public participation, as parties can mobilize voters and present clear policy alternatives. In Schattschneider's view, conflicts in politics are won or lost based on who can involve the most people, and the political system's health relies on competitive dynamics that enable the "semi-sovereign" people to exert influence.

**7. Theory:** Schattschneider theorizes that the "scope of conflict" determines political outcomes, as groups expand or limit the participation of bystanders to gain an advantage. He asserts that pressure groups are limited in scope and biased toward higher socioeconomic classes, whereas political parties facilitate broader, more democratic participation. By bringing conflicts into the public realm, parties can counterbalance the elitist bias of pressure groups and give the people a meaningful role in governance.

**8. Methods:** Schattschneider's approach is theoretical, grounded in observational analysis and critique of contemporary political dynamics in the United States. He uses conceptual insights about the nature of conflict, group representation, and political organization to critique pluralism and develop a model of democratic engagement that emphasizes competition between parties as essential for involving the public in decision-making.

**9. Hypotheses:** Schattschneider hypothesizes that:

- Expanding the scope of conflict to involve more participants will alter political outcomes, often benefiting those initially at a disadvantage.
- Political parties are better suited than pressure groups to mobilize the public and represent diverse interests.
- Democratic participation relies on competitive party dynamics, as competition provides the public with clear choices and a pathway to influence governance.

These hypotheses support his view that democracy functions best when public involvement in conflict is encouraged through competitive political parties.

**10. Main findings:** Schattschneider concludes that American democracy's shortcomings stem from a lack of effective public engagement, largely due to the upper-class bias in interest group politics. He argues that the solution lies in revitalizing party competition to mobilize voters and clarify policy alternatives, thereby empowering the "semi-sovereign" public. Political conflict, he asserts, is fundamental to democracy, and its scope and intensity determine the level of public involvement and political responsiveness.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Scope of Conflict*: The extent of public participation in a political conflict. Schattschneider argues that expanding the scope of conflict by involving a wider audience can shift power dynamics, often benefiting those at a disadvantage by attracting broader support.
- *Pressure Group System*: A system of interest groups that seeks to influence government decisions. Schattschneider critiques this system for its upper-class bias and narrow scope, arguing that it primarily represents elite interests and excludes broader public involvement.
- *Semi-Sovereign People*: A term used by Schattschneider to describe the limited, but crucial, role the public plays in American democracy. While the public may not directly control policy, they can influence outcomes through competitive party politics that mobilize and organize public opinion.

**12. Key quotations:<sup>2</sup>**

- "The flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent."

<sup>2</sup>Page numbers are not listed. This book was sourced from a web archive.

- “All conflict has about it some elements that go into the making of a riot. Nothing attracts a crowd as quickly as a fight. Nothing is so contagious.”
- “The outcome of every conflict is determined by the extent to which the audience becomes involved in it. That is, the outcome of all conflict is determined by the scope of its contagion.”
- “The people are powerless if the political enterprise is not competitive.”

### 1.7.5 After the “Master Theory”: Downs, Schattschneider, and the Rebirth of Policy-Focused Analysis

Hacker, J. S., & Pierson, P. (2014). After the “Master Theory”: Downs, Schattschneider, and the Rebirth of Policy-Focused Analysis. *Perspectives on Politics*, 12(3), 643–662. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592714001637>

1. **Citation key:** hacker\_after\_2014
2. **Author(s):** Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson
3. **Year:** 2014
4. **Publication:** Perspectives on Politics
5. **Keywords:** policy-focused political science, Downsian theory, Schattschneider, political behavior, partisan polarization, income inequality, interest groups, policy drift
6. **Summary:** This article critiques the Downsian paradigm, which centers on voter behavior and electoral competition, arguing that it inadequately addresses the role of policy and organized interests in American politics. Hacker and Pierson advocate for a shift toward a policy-focused approach that emphasizes how policies themselves shape political conflicts, actors, and outcomes. They illustrate this through cases of partisan polarization and income inequality, demonstrating how policy-focused analysis can offer insights that are missed by frameworks that prioritize electoral competition.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that policies function as both the “terrain” on which political conflicts unfold and the “prize” that motivates organized interests. Building on Schattschneider’s insights, Hacker and Pierson suggest that policy dynamics, rather than voter preferences alone, drive significant political changes. This approach emphasizes the role of policies in structuring power, influencing group mobilization, and reinforcing or altering social inequalities.
8. **Methods:** Hacker and Pierson employ a theoretical critique of the Downsian perspective, drawing on two case studies to illustrate their arguments: partisan polarization and income inequality. In the case of partisan polarization, they analyze how the U.S. Republican Party’s rightward shift has intensified political divides, with policies facilitating organized interests’ influence on party alignment. They argue that policy choices and institutional arrangements, such as tax cuts and deregulation, have fostered conditions where wealthy interest groups drive polarization, a dynamic not fully explained by electoral competition alone. For income inequality, they examine policy drift—wherein policies remain formally unchanged but adaptively serve elite interests due to lack of policy updates—focusing on tax, labor, and welfare policies. This drift amplifies inequality as the wealthy mobilize resources to block or modify reforms that might curb their advantages. Their methodological approach combines historical analysis with a focus on structural policy changes, revealing how policies shape political behaviors and institutional dynamics over time.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Partisan polarization is exacerbated by policy dynamics, with specific policies intensifying party divides by aligning party interests with those of influential organized groups.
  - Income inequality persists and grows due to policy drift, which disproportionately benefits affluent groups by preventing necessary policy updates that could mitigate inequality.
- These hypotheses challenge the Downsian framework by demonstrating the primacy of policy structures over voter-driven electoral outcomes.
10. **Main findings:** Hacker and Pierson conclude that policy-focused analysis offers a more robust framework for understanding American politics than the Downsian model. They argue that policies are not merely outputs of political processes but active components that shape political structures and actor motivations, especially among organized groups. By shifting attention from elections to policies, they provide a perspective that better accounts for contemporary trends like rising inequality and intense partisan polarization.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “The Downsian perspective has increasingly failed to capture the dynamics of modern American politics, where policies and organized groups often take precedence over the preferences of voters” (p. 646).
  - “In a political world with policy at its core, durable outcomes are not just possible; they are the biggest prize of all” (p. 647).
  - “Schattschneider’s alertness to the reality of big government was prescient, for he wrote on the eve of a quantum increase in state activism...” (p. 648).
  - “The policy-focused approach... emphasizes that many of the central rules are set not by formal institutions, but by the extensive policy arrangements associated with modern governance” (p. 649).

### 1.7.6 The Population Ecology of Organizations

Hannan, M. T., & Freeman, J. (1977). The Population Ecology of Organizations [Publisher: University of Chicago Press]. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(5), 929–964. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2777807>

1. **Citation key:** hannan\_population\_1977
2. **Author(s):** Michael T. Hannan and John Freeman

3. **Year:** 1977
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Sociology
5. **Keywords:** population ecology, organizational adaptation, selection, structural inertia, environmental selection
6. **Summary:** Hannan and Freeman present a population ecology framework for understanding organizational behavior, proposing it as an alternative to the prevalent adaptation perspective. This theory focuses on how organizational forms are selected and maintained within an environment, emphasizing structural inertia and the limits of adaptation. According to Hannan and Freeman, most organizational forms remain static due to internal and external pressures, and successful survival often relies on selection rather than on adaptation. The theory argues that environmental selection pressures favor certain organizational forms that best fit the constraints of their environments over time, while others are "selected out."
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the adaptation perspective that assumes organizations can successfully change in response to environmental cues. Instead, they argue that structural inertia limits organizations' ability to adapt and that survival is more dependent on selection within an organizational population. This selection is based on ecological principles where environments select for organizational forms that are best suited to persist under certain conditions. The theory posits that organizations often resist change due to internal investments, political dynamics, normative constraints, and the need for stability. The population ecology model suggests that, instead of constant adaptation, organizations are subject to environmental forces that "select" those forms that exhibit an equilibrium with the environment.
8. **Methods:** Hannan and Freeman adopt an ecological approach, using mathematical and theoretical modeling to explore organizational selection and adaptation. The authors discuss variables that influence organizational stability and survival within a given "niche." They introduce ecological concepts like "carrying capacity," "competition coefficients," and "niche theory" to describe the population dynamics of organizations. Using equations like the Lotka-Volterra model for competing populations, they show how different organizational forms can coexist, compete, or be eliminated within environments depending on resources and competition intensity. None of this detail is particularly relevant to political science.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors propose that structural inertia and environmental selection influence organizational survival through:
  - Strong inertial pressures that limit organizational adaptability.
  - Competition among organizational forms for limited resources within environments.
  - Ecological niches that allow for only a limited diversity of organizational forms to coexist.
 These hypotheses underscore the emphasis on selection over adaptation, highlighting that organizations most often succeed by fitting into stable environmental niches rather than through active changes.
10. **Main findings:** Hannan and Freeman conclude that the survival of organizations is largely influenced by ecological selection processes rather than adaptive change. They argue that structural inertia makes many organizations resistant to change and that environments tend to favor organizational forms that are well-suited to existing environmental constraints. In contexts where resources are limited and competition is intense, only organizations that match the environmental requirements survive, reducing diversity in organizational forms.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "There are a number of obvious limitations on the ability of organizations to adapt. That is, there are a number of processes that generate structural inertia" (p. 930).
  - "The principle of isomorphism implies that social organizations in equilibrium will exhibit structural features that are specialized to salient features of the resource environment" (p. 938).
  - "The point here is that populations of organizational forms will be selected for or against depending upon the amount of excess capacity they maintain and how they allocate it" (p. 949).

### 1.7.7 The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America

Walker, J. L. (1983). The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 77(2), 390–406. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1958924>

1. **Citation key:** walker\_origins\_1983
2. **Author(s):** Jack L. Walker
3. **Year:** 1983
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** interest groups, political patronage, group formation, group maintenance, citizen groups
6. **Summary:** Walker's study addresses the origins and maintenance of interest groups, shifting focus from group influence on policymaking to the critical role of external patronage in sustaining interest groups. Based on survey data from national voluntary associations, Walker identifies that financial support from government agencies, private foundations, and wealthy individuals is vital to group formation and survival. This patronage allows groups to overcome the collective action dilemma by securing stable funding beyond membership dues. The research highlights how external patronage, rather than internal membership support, is essential for interest groups, especially citizen groups, in the contemporary American political landscape.
7. **Theory:** Walker challenges traditional theories of group formation, particularly those positing that internal member

contributions are the primary means of sustaining groups. Instead, he argues that patronage from external sources (like foundations and government agencies) enables groups to navigate Olson's collective action dilemma. This patronage-driven model posits that external funding is often essential to create and maintain groups that would otherwise struggle to garner sufficient resources solely through membership dues. Walker theorizes that these patrons not only provide financial support but also influence the ideological alignment of the groups they sponsor.

**8. Methods:** The study uses a survey conducted with 564 national voluntary associations, sampled from the *Congressional Quarterly's Washington Information Directory*, to assess the role of external funding in group formation and maintenance. Walker investigates the types of groups that receive outside funding, the sources of this funding (e.g., government, private foundations, individual donors), and the extent to which these resources contribute to the group's survival. He categorizes groups by sector (profit, mixed, nonprofit, and citizen) and compares their funding sources and financial independence from members, using statistical analyses to reveal patterns in group reliance on external patronage.

**9. Hypotheses:** Walker hypothesizes that:

- External patronage is crucial for the formation and maintenance of citizen and nonprofit groups, as these sectors lack ready-made communities or consistent membership dues.
- The availability of external funds will influence both the number of interest groups and the types of interests they represent.
- Groups with external funding tend to reflect the political and ideological orientations of their patrons.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with Walker finding significant dependence on external support across most interest group sectors.

**10. Main findings:** Walker concludes that the growth and maintenance of interest groups in the U.S. heavily rely on financial support from patrons such as foundations and government agencies. He finds that citizen groups, in particular, receive less than half of their funding from member contributions, making them highly dependent on external sources. Moreover, government and foundation patronage often align with groups that support increased governmental intervention, indicating that patrons select groups reflecting their interests. Walker suggests that, without these patrons, the number and diversity of interest groups would sharply decline.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Without the influence of the patrons of political action, the flourishing system of interest groups in the United States would be much smaller and would include very few groups seeking to obtain broad collective or public goods" (p. 397).
- "Many private sector groups receive patronage from large corporations through the unequal sharing of financial burdens by their membership, but...these systems of unequal contribution constitute a form of corporate patronage that closely resembles the subsidies from government and foundations extended to groups in the public sector" (p. 401).
- "The data show that citizen groups receive a smaller proportion of their total revenue from publications and conference fees than any of the other types of groups" (p. 402).

#### 1.7.8 The Population Ecology of Gucci Gulch, or the Natural Regulation of Interest Group Numbers in the American States

Lowery, D., & Gray, V. (1995). The Population Ecology of Gucci Gulch, or the Natural Regulation of Interest Group Numbers in the American States [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 39(1), 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111755>

**1. Citation key:** lowery\_population\_1995

**2. Author(s):** David Lowery and Virginia Gray

**3. Year:** 1995

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** population ecology, interest groups, state politics, environmental constraints, ESA model

**6. Summary:** Lowery and Gray apply population ecology theory to the study of interest groups in U.S. states, challenging traditional mobilization theories that focus primarily on group formation dynamics. Their approach, called the Energy-Stability-Area (ESA) model, posits that environmental constraints, such as constituency size, governmental resources, and political stability, regulate the density and diversity of interest groups within states. The ESA model analogizes states to ecosystems where interest group populations are limited by available "space" and "energy," thus offering a novel explanation for variations in interest group density across states.

**7. Theory:** The ESA model draws from biological ecology, suggesting that interest group populations, like biological populations, are regulated by environmental factors. According to the ESA framework:

- **Space** relates to the number of potential constituents that an interest group can represent.
- **Energy** represents the level of governmental resources or policy issues that stimulate interest group activity.
- **Stability** encompasses political stability, with stable environments supporting higher interest group densities.

The ESA model suggests that interest group density reaches equilibrium as groups compete for limited resources, much like species in an ecosystem. Lowery and Gray critique prior theories, including Olson's group mobilization theory, for assuming limitless growth potential, overlooking the impact of environmental constraints on group survival and growth.

**8. Methods:** Lowery and Gray utilize regression analysis to test their model using data on six categories of interest groups

(e.g., agriculture, construction, environmental). They operationalize “space” by counting potential constituents, such as the number of businesses in a sector. “Energy” is represented by the availability of relevant government resources, while “stability” is measured through indicators like political competition. State-level data provides the basis for examining how environmental variables correlate with interest group density across different sectors.

9. **Hypotheses:** Lowery and Gray hypothesize that interest group density will be positively associated with:

- The size of the potential constituency (space),
- The availability of relevant government resources (energy),
- The stability of the political environment.

Their hypotheses align with the ESA model, suggesting that interest groups’ density is shaped by environmental constraints, where higher resources and more stable environments promote greater interest group diversity and density.

10. **Main findings:** The study confirms that environmental factors significantly predict interest group density, with larger constituencies, greater government resources, and political stability supporting higher densities of organized interests. This support for the ESA model challenges the assumption that interest group formation is driven purely by mobilization efforts, highlighting the role of external constraints. The findings imply that interest group populations, like biological populations, reach an equilibrium influenced by their environmental context.

11. **Key quotations:**

- “If we are to understand interest-group populations, we must employ theories designed to answer population-level questions. Simply put, we need a population-ecology theory of interest groups” (p. 5).
- “Environmental constraints then determine the ultimate contours of organized-interest populations by bringing selective pressures to bear so that not all groups survive” (p. 24).
- “The variables that dominate our results—constituent number and the resources of constituent interest and interest certainty—reflect those two concepts” (p. 25).

### 1.7.9 The Multiple Ambiguities of Counteractive Lobbying

Baumgartner, F. R., & Leech, B. L. (1996). The Multiple Ambiguities of "Counteractive Lobbying" [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 40(2), 521–542. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111636>

1. **Citation key:** baumgartner\_multiple\_1996
2. **Author(s):** Frank R. Baumgartner and Beth L. Leech
3. **Year:** 1996
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** interest groups, lobbying, counteractive lobbying, legislative influence, research methodology
6. **Summary:** This article critiques the prevailing research methodologies and theoretical models surrounding the concept of counteractive lobbying. Baumgartner and Leech argue that contradictory findings in lobbying studies often stem from limitations in research design, incomplete models, and overgeneralized conclusions. They review the literature on lobbying, particularly focusing on recent studies that fail to accurately capture the complex dynamics of interest-group influence. Through an analysis of Austen-Smith and Wright’s work on counteractive lobbying, they underscore the need for more nuanced and contextually aware approaches that account for the longitudinal and social nature of lobbying activities.
7. **Theory:** Baumgartner and Leech contend that lobbying is inherently social and iterative, involving complex, sustained interactions rather than isolated incidents. They emphasize that lobbying strategies are contingent on issue salience, public attention, and the competitive landscape, which affects group dynamics and influence. Rather than focusing narrowly on the “counteractive” nature of lobbying in specific instances, the authors suggest that lobbying influence should be understood as an ongoing process embedded in broader political and social networks.
8. **Methods:** The authors conduct a critical review of methodological issues in lobbying research, specifically addressing the weaknesses of cross-sectional designs and the tendency to ignore indirect lobbying strategies. They assess Austen-Smith and Wright’s approach, particularly its use of data from a single legislative event—the 1987 Bork nomination—to generalize about lobbying behavior. Baumgartner and Leech argue for the use of longitudinal designs to better capture the temporal and interactive elements of lobbying, as well as the need to account for both direct and indirect strategies in research on interest-group influence.
9. **Hypotheses:** Baumgartner and Leech critique the hypothesis of counteractive lobbying, which posits that interest groups lobby legislators who oppose them to offset rival lobbying efforts. They propose that:
  - Counteractive lobbying may occur, but it is context-dependent, influenced by public salience and legislative conditions.
  - A more nuanced approach to lobbying should consider both direct and indirect forms of influence.
  - The effectiveness of counteractive lobbying varies across different legislative stages and issue types.
 These points suggest that a singular hypothesis about counteractive lobbying is insufficient to explain the range of lobbying behaviors observed.
10. **Main findings:** The authors conclude that counteractive lobbying, as presented by Austen-Smith and Wright, is an oversimplified concept that fails to account for the iterative and social dimensions of lobbying. They argue that lobbying is not merely a transactional activity but a relational one, where groups build long-term influence networks. Baumgartner and Leech advocate for future studies to incorporate more comprehensive models that reflect these complexities, allowing for a deeper understanding of how lobbying affects legislative outcomes.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Contradictions in a field of study may stem from the diverse and useful research methodologies being brought to bear on important new questions and, therefore, be a healthy sign of resurgence of interest in the topic. Or, contradictions may stem from incomplete models, inaccurate measurements, overgeneralizations from case studies, or inappropriate research designs" (p. 523).
- "In particular, [cross-sectional studies] render it difficult to distinguish, even in theory, between behavior aimed at fence-sitters and that aimed at counteraction. This problem could have been addressed with a different, longitudinal data set, or by making more complete use of the ACU data used in the existing data set to distinguish between these fence-sitting and counteractive hypotheses" (p. 527).
- "Not only is the measurement of lobbying activity faulty, as discussed above, but even the conceptual definition is incomplete. The definition of lobbying used by Austen-Smith and Wright corresponds neither to the literature that they claim to refute nor to the facts of the Bork case" (p. 529).
- "By adopting a cross-sectional variance model of a continuing process, Austen-Smith and Wright inevitably distort the process they attempt to explain. While all models must necessarily involve simplification, the authors discount the degree to which the particular simplifications that they accept actually mislead" (p. 532).

**1.7.10 Outside Lobbying: Public Opinion and Interest Group Strategies**

Kollman, K. (1998). *Outside Lobbying: Public Opinion and Interest Group Strategies*. Princeton University Press

**1. Citation key:** kollman\_outside\_1998

**2. Author(s):** Kenneth Kollman

**3. Year:** 1998

**4. Publication:** Outside Lobbying (Princeton University Press)

**5. Keywords:** outside lobbying, public opinion, interest groups, signaling, conflict expansion

**6. Summary:** In this book, Kenneth Kollman examines the strategies behind "outside lobbying," wherein interest group leaders mobilize the public to sway policymakers. Kollman challenges the traditional view that lobbying groups appeal to the public primarily for internal benefits, such as recruiting new members. Instead, he argues that outside lobbying is a strategic tool that groups use to demonstrate broad public support to legislators, signaling that a given issue has strong public backing. Through interviews with over 90 interest group leaders and a combination of rational choice theory and statistical analysis, Kollman demonstrates that groups most often turn to public mobilization when they believe they already have substantial support. His analysis covers a variety of cases, including NAFTA and health care, to illustrate the dynamics of outside lobbying in different political contexts.

**7. Theory:** Kollman's theory posits that outside lobbying is driven by two primary motives: signaling and conflict expansion. Interest groups use public mobilization as a signal to policymakers, conveying the salience of an issue among the electorate. At the same time, mobilizing the public can expand the scope of the conflict by increasing issue visibility, compelling policymakers to engage. Kollman suggests that these tactics are most effective when the group's stance aligns with pre-existing public opinion, leveraging grassroots pressure to achieve policy influence.

**8. Methods:** Kollman combines rational choice modeling, interviews, and public opinion analysis to develop his theory of outside lobbying. He conducted interviews with over 90 leaders from various types of interest groups—public interest groups, labor unions, trade associations, and corporations—to understand their strategic motivations. Kollman also used statistical models to analyze public opinion data and group behavior patterns, correlating the frequency and intensity of outside lobbying efforts with public opinion trends on key issues. Case studies, including the 1993 NAFTA debate and the 1994 health care reform efforts, provide real-world applications of his theoretical framework, illustrating how different groups leverage public support in lobbying campaigns.

**9. Hypotheses:** Kollman's research leads to several hypotheses about when and why outside lobbying is used:

- Interest groups use outside lobbying primarily when they believe there is substantial public support for their position, allowing them to leverage popular opinion as a tool of influence.
- Outside lobbying is a strategic choice to signal issue salience to policymakers, showing that the issue resonates with voters.
- Mobilization of public opinion through outside lobbying increases the visibility of a policy conflict, expanding its scope and potentially drawing more political attention to the issue.

These hypotheses are supported by Kollman's interviews and statistical analyses, showing that groups tend to engage in outside lobbying not merely to gain members, but to signal legitimacy and influence policy outcomes.

**10. Main findings:** Kollman concludes that outside lobbying is a deliberate tactic used by interest groups to amplify their influence on public policy. His research shows that groups primarily turn to public mobilization when they perceive strong public support, using this to pressure policymakers indirectly. He finds that lawmakers are often more responsive to signals that appear genuinely grassroots-driven, such as handwritten letters, as opposed to orchestrated campaigns. Kollman also discusses the limitations of outside lobbying, noting instances where public mobilization failed to influence policy outcomes, as in some parts of the health care reform debate, despite strong public backing. His work highlights the complex interplay between public opinion, interest group strategy, and legislative decision-making, suggesting that outside lobbying can enhance democratic responsiveness, albeit with mixed results depending on the political context.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Outside lobbying*: A strategy used by interest groups to mobilize citizens outside of the policymaking community to pressure public officials through actions like letter-writing campaigns, protests, and public relations efforts, distinct from direct “inside” lobbying.
- *Signaling*: In the context of lobbying, signaling refers to the use of public opinion to demonstrate to policymakers that an issue has widespread support, thereby increasing its salience in legislative deliberations.
- *Conflict expansion*: The process by which interest groups seek to broaden the scope of an issue by mobilizing public support, increasing the visibility of a conflict to attract greater political attention and pressure policymakers.

### 1.7.11 Organized Interests and the Decision of Whom to Lobby in Congress

Hojnacki, M., & Kimball, D. C. (1998). Organized Interests and the Decision of Whom to Lobby in Congress. *American Political Science Review*, 92(4), 775–790. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2586303>

1. **Citation key:** hojnacki\_organized\_1998
2. **Author(s):** Marie Hojnacki and David C. Kimball
3. **Year:** 1998
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** lobbying, organized interests, Congress, legislative process, interest groups, coalition building
6. **Summary:** This study examines how organized interests decide which members of Congress to target with lobbying efforts, focusing specifically on interactions between lobbyists and committee members in the U.S. House of Representatives. Hojnacki and Kimball argue that organized interests prioritize lobbying their legislative allies in committees, as allies can act on behalf of their preferences by shaping legislative content and mobilizing other members. However, groups with robust resources may extend their efforts to undecided or even opposing committee members, seeking to expand their supportive coalition and influence legislative outcomes at critical stages in the legislative process.
7. **Theory:** Hojnacki and Kimball propose that organized interests have two main legislative goals when a bill is referred to a committee: (1) expanding the size of their supportive coalition and (2) affecting the content and outcome of legislation. These goals drive interest groups to prioritize lobbying allies who are likely to actively shape the legislative process in favor of their policy preferences. However, groups with extensive resources, such as strong district ties, may also seek to sway undecided or opposing committee members, thus extending their coalition-building efforts beyond natural allies.
8. **Methods:** Using a survey of organized interests, the authors examine dyadic relationships between lobbyists and committee members in the House on four issues from the 104th Congress: product liability, financial services deregulation, crime control, and grazing policy. The authors adopt the group-legislator dyad as the unit of analysis, allowing them to assess how factors such as legislator characteristics, group resources, and issue context shape lobbying decisions. The model includes variables for legislator positions (e.g., ally, uncertain, or opponent), committee leadership roles, and group resources such as district support and coalition membership, and uses probit regression to analyze the probability of lobbying each committee member.
9. **Hypotheses:** Hojnacki and Kimball hypothesize that:
  - Groups are more likely to lobby legislative allies than undecided or opposing committee members.
  - Groups with stronger resources, particularly district support, are more likely to lobby beyond their allies, targeting undecided and even opposing members.
  - Issue context and legislator characteristics, such as committee leadership, increase the likelihood of lobbying specific members.

These hypotheses are largely confirmed in the study, supporting the view that both coalition expansion and legislative content shaping drive lobbying strategies in committees.

10. **Main findings:** Hojnacki and Kimball find that organized interests indeed prioritize lobbying allies in committee, given allies’ potential to influence legislation. However, organizations with greater resources, such as strong district support, also engage undecided and opposing committee members, suggesting that well-resourced groups aim to expand their coalitions actively. Committee leaders are more frequently targeted, highlighting their strategic importance in the legislative process. These findings suggest that group resources and the specific legislative stage significantly shape lobbying strategies, with groups targeting allies for direct influence and utilizing broader strategies when resources allow.

11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Organized interests are more likely to lobby their allies in committee than their opponents or undecided members. This tendency is consistent with a group’s desire to shape the content of legislation and mobilize legislators to act on its behalf” (p. 776).
  - “Committee leaders are more likely to be the target of direct lobbying efforts than are other committee members... leaders shape the content of legislation and often are instrumental in determining whether, and how swiftly, proposals move beyond committee” (p. 782).
  - “Groups with a strong base of support in a member’s district will almost certainly choose to lobby that member... Organizations with strong foundations in legislative districts have a clear advantage over groups without such ties” (p. 784).

### 1.7.12 Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy

Hall, R. L., & Deardorff, A. V. (2006). Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy. *American Political Science Review*, 100(1), 69–84. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055406062010>

1. **Citation key:** hall\_lobbying\_2006
2. **Author(s):** Richard L. Hall and Alan V. Deardorff
3. **Year:** 2006
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** lobbying, legislative subsidy, interest groups, policy-making, democratic institutions
6. **Summary:** This article presents a novel theory of lobbying as a “legislative subsidy,” challenging traditional views that frame lobbying as either vote-buying or persuasion. Hall and Deardorff argue that lobbying functions more as a supportive grant to legislators, offering them resources like policy information, legislative labor, and political intelligence. Rather than changing legislators’ preferences, this model suggests that lobbying primarily mobilizes allies to promote common objectives. The theory explains the focus of lobbyists on assisting their allies rather than attempting to convert undecided or opposing legislators, thus providing a fresh perspective on interest group influence.
7. **Theory:** The legislative subsidy theory proposes that lobbying is centered on assisting legislators by enhancing their capacity to work toward shared goals rather than attempting to alter their policy preferences. Hall and Deardorff argue that the legislative subsidy operates on legislators’ resource constraints, allowing them to allocate more effort to issues they and the lobbyists mutually support. This approach contrasts with conventional theories by emphasizing lobbying as a function of legislative resource allocation rather than direct persuasion or exchange.
8. **Methods:** Hall and Deardorff’s theoretical approach combines empirical observations of lobbying patterns with a formal model of legislative subsidy. They build on existing literature on policymaking and congressional behavior to frame their hypotheses and examine lobbying’s indirect effects on legislative outcomes. The article draws on prior empirical studies that reveal patterns of interest group behavior inconsistent with exchange or persuasion models, using these findings to support their subsidy framework. Additionally, the theory includes several testable hypotheses about whom lobbyists target and how lobbying affects legislative activities, with implications for further empirical research.
9. **Hypotheses:** Hall and Deardorff hypothesize that lobbying as a legislative subsidy results in:
  - Lobbyists targeting allied legislators rather than undecided or opposition members.
  - Increased legislative effort on issues supported by both the lobbyist and the legislator.
  - Minimal lobbying aimed at influencing votes directly, focusing instead on enhancing allied legislators’ capacity.
 These hypotheses contrast with traditional models by predicting that lobbying efforts are most intensively directed toward reinforcing allies rather than attempting to sway undecided or opposing members.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that viewing lobbying as a subsidy clarifies why lobbyists invest resources in supportive legislators rather than focusing on undecided or opposing members. This approach highlights lobbying’s role in mobilizing legislative action by overcoming resource limitations rather than manipulating preferences. Consequently, lobbying efforts primarily enhance allied legislators’ effectiveness in advancing shared policy goals, revealing the broader, less transactional nature of lobbying’s influence.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “The main idea is that lobbying is primarily a form of legislative subsidy—a matching grant of costly policy information, political intelligence, and labor to the enterprises of strategically selected legislators” (p. 70).
  - “The proximate political objective of this strategy is not to change legislators’ minds but to assist natural allies in achieving their own, coincident objectives” (p. 70).
  - “Lobbyists freely but selectively provide labor, policy information, and political intelligence to like-minded but resource-constrained legislators. Legislators, in turn, should seek policy-relevant services from like-minded lobbyists” (p. 76).
  - “Lobbyists are not irrational for lobbying their strongest allies. They are rationally allocating resources to those members most likely to use them to advance the lobbyists’ objective” (p. 77).

### 1.7.13 Informational Lobbying and Legislative Voting

Schnakenberg, K. E. (2017). Informational Lobbying and Legislative Voting. *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(1), 129–145. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12249>

1. **Citation key:** schnakenberg\_informational\_2017
2. **Author(s):** Keith E. Schnakenberg
3. **Year:** 2017
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** informational lobbying, interest groups, legislative influence, legislative voting, coalition-building
6. **Summary:** This article examines how interest groups use informational lobbying to influence legislative voting by strategically conveying information to legislators. Schnakenberg’s model highlights the complexity of lobbying in a multimember legislature, showing that interest groups often target allies, not for direct persuasion, but to assist them in swaying other legislators. The findings show that lobbying allies, rather than undecided or opposing legislators, can be a more efficient pathway to legislative influence in certain settings.

- 7. Theory:** Schnakenberg proposes that lobbying strategies must be adapted to the collective choice context of legislatures, where coalition-building is key. In a system where access to legislators is costly, interest groups optimize influence by coordinating with allied legislators who can then transmit the group's message to other, less sympathetic legislators. This coalition approach diverges from traditional informational lobbying models that typically target undecided or opposing legislators directly, and it suggests that interest groups may actually reduce legislators' welfare if lobbying distorts coalition formation.
- 8. Methods:** Using formal modeling, Schnakenberg develops a game-theoretic framework with two models of informational lobbying: (1) unlimited access, where interest groups can lobby any legislator directly, and (2) limited access, where lobbying involves a cost, restricting which legislators can be approached. These models enable predictions about when and how lobbying is most effective in a collective voting environment, focusing on scenarios where interest groups seek to sway coalitions rather than individuals.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The article hypothesizes that interest groups will favor lobbying allied legislators over opposing or undecided ones due to:
- The high cost of direct lobbying access, making allies more efficient intermediaries.
  - The strategic use of allies to influence opponents indirectly, rather than through direct lobbying efforts.
  - The potential for lobbying to decrease overall legislative welfare if it fosters unrepresentative coalition outcomes.
- These hypotheses are supported by the formal modeling, which demonstrates that indirect lobbying through allies can indeed sway legislative coalitions.
- 10. Main findings:** Schnakenberg concludes that informational lobbying often entails aligning with supportive legislators to indirectly influence the legislative body. This strategy reveals that interest group influence can be both effective and welfare-reducing if it disrupts optimal coalition-building. Importantly, the model challenges previous theories by showing that direct persuasion of legislators may be less common than coalition-oriented approaches.
- 11. Key quotations:**
- "I... show that informational lobbying may be most often directed at allies. This result rests on two facts: Access to legislators is costly, and legislators can actively lobby for their preferred position" (p. 131).
  - "An influential equilibrium is one in which a proposal that would have failed passes with some positive probability due to [the interest group's] lobbying efforts" (p. 137).
  - "Lobbying activity should most often be directed at allies. The fact that interest groups tend to focus their attention on allies is generally seen as evidence in contradiction of informational theories of lobbying" (p. 140).

#### 1.7.14 Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement

Chong, D. (1991, June). *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** chong\_collective\_1991
2. **Author(s):** Dennis Chong
3. **Year:** 1991
4. **Publication:** Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement (University of Chicago Press)
5. **Keywords:** collective action, civil rights movement, rational choice theory, social movements, public goods
6. **Summary:** In *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*, Dennis Chong addresses the dynamics of public-spirited collective action by analyzing the American civil rights movement through the lens of rational choice theory. Chong's study investigates the challenges and mechanisms of organizing collective action, focusing on the social, psychological, and moral incentives that drive political activism. Employing game theory and dynamic models, he illustrates how rational individuals make decisions to engage in social movements and how these choices result in collective outcomes. Chong's analysis highlights the strategic role of community resources, the importance of resilience, and the impact of governmental responses, emphasizing how the civil rights movement overcame opposition to secure governmental concessions.
7. **Theory:** Chong integrates rational choice theory with insights from social psychology to explain why individuals engage in collective action for public goods despite the "free-rider problem." He proposes that beyond material rewards, participants are motivated by social, psychological, and moral incentives, such as reputational concerns, moral commitments, and social pressures. This framework seeks to reconcile individual-level rationality with the broader collective action needed for social movements like the civil rights movement, which demanded extensive cooperation from diverse actors to achieve impactful change.
8. **Methods:** Chong uses a combination of game-theoretic models and qualitative case analysis. He applies the "prisoner's dilemma" framework to illustrate the collective action problem and incorporates secondary literature to analyze the civil rights movement's mobilization strategies. Chong identifies variables such as leadership, community obligations, and governmental responsiveness, examining their roles in fostering collective outcomes. His approach involves theoretical modeling rather than quantitative data analysis, drawing on existing accounts of civil rights activism to demonstrate how movements can sustain themselves through non-material incentives and strategic interactions.
9. **Hypotheses:** Chong hypothesizes that individuals are more likely to participate in collective action when:
  - Social and psychological incentives, such as reputation and solidarity, reinforce individual commitments to the cause.
  - Collective efforts are nearing success, increasing the perceived efficacy of participation.
  - Nonviolent strategies necessitate total cooperation, as any deviation could undermine the movement's legitimacy.

These hypotheses are supported through Chong's qualitative exploration of civil rights activism, where reputational, moral, and social incentives were crucial to sustaining momentum.

10. **Main findings:** Chong concludes that rational choice models can accommodate social, psychological, and moral incentives that motivate public-spirited collective action. His analysis suggests that movements like the civil rights movement succeed by fostering a shared sense of obligation among participants, leveraging social networks, and engaging in strategic nonviolent resistance to gain political concessions. Chong argues that collective action is most sustainable when participants perceive imminent success, highlighting the importance of timing and incremental victories in building and maintaining momentum.

11. **Key definitions:**

- *Public-Spirited Collective Action:* A form of collective action driven by motivations beyond personal material gain, involving a commitment to shared social or moral goals, often requiring individuals to make sacrifices for the public good.
- *Free-Rider Problem:* The challenge in collective action where individuals may benefit from public goods without contributing, as personal sacrifices are not required for everyone to enjoy the benefits.
- *Reputational Incentives:* Social motivations that compel individuals to participate in collective action to maintain their standing within a group or community, encouraging alignment with collective goals despite individual costs.

#### 1.7.15 Do Interest Groups Represent the Disadvantaged? Advocacy at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender

Strolovitch, D. Z. (2006). Do Interest Groups Represent the Disadvantaged? Advocacy at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender. *The Journal of Politics*, 68(4), 894–910. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00478.x>

1. **Citation key:** strolovitch\_interest\_2006

2. **Author(s):** Dara Z. Strolovitch

3. **Year:** 2006

4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics

5. **Keywords:** interest groups, representation, disadvantaged subgroups, intersectionality, advocacy

6. **Summary:** Strolovitch investigates how well national advocacy organizations represent disadvantaged subgroups within marginalized communities, focusing on intersectional identities that may suffer from compounded disadvantages. Through a mixed-methods approach using survey data and interviews, the study examines biases within organizations that advocate for marginalized groups, revealing that issues affecting more advantaged subgroups often receive greater attention than those impacting the most disadvantaged. This work underscores the complexity of representation in interest group advocacy, highlighting challenges in addressing the nuanced needs of diverse constituencies.

7. **Theory:** The study builds on theories of intersectionality and representation, suggesting that interest groups may exhibit internal biases that mirror the broader societal bias against marginalized subgroups. Strolovitch posits that these biases arise not only from strategic calculations—such as appealing to the “median member”—but also from the organizational framing of issues. Intersectional theory is central here, as it reveals how intersecting identities (e.g., race, gender, and class) shape group dynamics and influence which policy issues gain traction within advocacy organizations.

8. **Methods:** Strolovitch employs both quantitative and qualitative methods. A survey was administered to 286 national advocacy organizations representing marginalized groups, such as women, racial minorities, and economic justice organizations, supplemented by in-depth interviews with 40 organizational leaders. The study classifies issues into four categories—universal, majority, advantaged-subgroup, and disadvantaged-subgroup issues—and analyzes the levels of advocacy each type of issue receives. This classification allows for a nuanced assessment of whether advocacy efforts align with the needs of the most disadvantaged subgroups within each organization’s constituency.

9. **Hypotheses:** The study hypothesizes that:

- Advocacy organizations will devote more resources to advantaged-subgroup and majority issues compared to disadvantaged-subgroup issues, despite the latter potentially aligning more closely with the organization’s mission of supporting marginalized populations.
- Issues framed as affecting broader segments of an organization’s membership are likely to receive higher levels of advocacy, reinforcing biases against issues perceived as affecting a narrow or disadvantaged subset of the membership.

These hypotheses are confirmed, as disadvantaged-subgroup issues receive substantially less advocacy than issues affecting advantaged or majority subgroups, even within organizations that claim to represent marginalized communities..

10. **Main findings:** Strolovitch finds that although advocacy organizations purport to represent disadvantaged members, their activity is heavily skewed toward issues that benefit advantaged subgroups. This occurs because issues affecting advantaged subgroups are often framed as having broader relevance, while those impacting the most disadvantaged are marginalized as narrow or particularistic concerns. Additionally, organizations tend to prioritize issues with higher levels of member interest and agreement, leading to underrepresentation of the needs of disadvantaged subgroups. This pattern suggests a double standard in advocacy that favors issues benefiting more privileged subgroups within marginalized communities.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "I find that while advocacy groups provide some representation for their disadvantaged members, they are substantially less active when it comes to issues affecting disadvantaged subgroups than they are when it comes to issues affecting more advantaged subgroups" (p. 894).
- "Organizations frame issues affecting advantaged subgroups as if they were majority issues that affect many more members than they actually do, while framing issues affecting disadvantaged subgroups as affecting a narrow portion of their membership" (p. 905).
- "The level of activity that organizations devote to an issue depends more on the relative advantage of the subgroup affected by the issue than it does on the relative size of the affected group" (p. 900).
- "Levels of advocacy are closely related to the relative status of the subgroup that is affected, and issues are framed in ways that tend to overestimate the breadth of the impact of advantaged-subgroup issues while underestimating the impact of disadvantaged-subgroup issues" (p. 907).

**1.7.16 Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens**

Gilens, M., & Page, B. I. (2014). Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens. *Perspectives on Politics*, 12(3), 564–581. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592714001595>

**1. Citation key:** gilens\_testing\_2014

**2. Author(s):** Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page

**3. Year:** 2014

**4. Publication:** Perspectives on Politics

**5. Keywords:** economic elites, interest groups, public policy, majoritarian democracy, pluralism, elite domination

**6. Summary:** This study examines the influence of different actors—average citizens, economic elites, and organized interest groups—on U.S. policy decisions. Gilens and Page argue that average citizens have little to no independent impact on public policy outcomes, which are largely shaped by economic elites and organized business interests. The study challenges traditional theories of democracy that posit significant influence by the median voter, instead supporting theories of economic-elite domination and biased pluralism, where policy outcomes reflect the preferences of affluent individuals and business-oriented groups.

**7. Theory:** Gilens and Page position their analysis within four theoretical frameworks: Majoritarian Electoral Democracy, Economic-Elite Domination, Majoritarian Pluralism, and Biased Pluralism. Majoritarian Electoral Democracy suggests that policies reflect the preferences of the median voter, while Economic-Elite Domination posits that wealthy individuals hold the most influence. Majoritarian Pluralism envisions that various groups contribute to balanced representation, whereas Biased Pluralism emphasizes the dominance of business-oriented interest groups. Their findings lend strong support to the latter two theories, particularly suggesting that policy outcomes are heavily swayed by elite and business interests rather than by majority preferences.

**8. Methods:** The authors employ a unique data set of 1,779 policy issues from surveys conducted between 1981 and 2002, which provided data on the policy preferences of citizens across income levels, economic elites (approximated by individuals in the 90th income percentile), and both mass-based and business-oriented interest groups. Policy influence was measured based on alignment with policy outcomes within four years of the survey. Using a logistic regression model, Gilens and Page estimated the independent effects of each group on policy change likelihood, differentiating the influence of average citizens, affluent citizens, and organized groups on the policy process.

**9. Hypotheses:** Gilens and Page hypothesize that:

- Average citizens' policy preferences have minimal influence on actual policy outcomes.
- Economic elites exert a substantial independent influence on U.S. policy.
- Business-oriented interest groups have a strong, positive effect on policy outcomes.
- Mass-based interest groups may have some influence, but it is generally weaker compared to business groups.

These hypotheses were largely supported, as the study found limited impact from the preferences of average citizens but significant influence from both economic elites and organized business groups.

**10. Main findings:** The study concludes that U.S. policy making is primarily shaped by economic elites and organized interest groups, with negligible independent influence from the general public. The results reveal that when elites or business interests support a policy, it has a higher likelihood of enactment, whereas policies preferred solely by average citizens are rarely adopted. This dominance by elites and interest groups implies a form of democratic deficit, where the political system is less responsive to the majority of citizens.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The central point that emerges from our research is that economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on U.S. government policy, while mass-based interest groups and average citizens have little or no independent influence" (p. 564).
- "The estimated impact of average citizens' preferences drops precipitously, to a non-significant, near-zero level. Clearly the median citizen or 'median voter' at the heart of theories of Majoritarian Electoral Democracy does not do well when put up against economic elites and organized interest groups" (p. 571).
- "These results suggest that reality is best captured by mixed theories in which both individual economic elites and organized interest groups (including corporations, largely owned and controlled by wealthy elites) play a substantial part in affecting public policy, but the general public has little or no independent influence" (p. 572).

### 1.7.17 Diversity and Minority Interest Group Advocacy in Congress

Minta, M. D. (2020). Diversity and Minority Interest Group Advocacy in Congress [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 73(1), 208–220. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912919885024>

1. **Citation key:** minta\_diversity\_2020
2. **Author(s):** Michael D. Minta
3. **Year:** 2020
4. **Publication:** Political Research Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** minority interest groups, advocacy, civil rights, legislative success, congressional diversity
6. **Summary:** This article examines how racial and ethnic diversity in Congress influences the legislative success of minority interest groups, especially those representing Black and Latino populations. Minta argues that traditional lobbying metrics, such as campaign contributions, are inadequate for assessing the success of civil rights groups due to their unique constraints as public charities. Instead, he posits that increased diversity among congressional members, particularly in committee roles, enhances the legislative influence of these organizations. His analysis reveals that minority civil rights groups see more legislative progress when bills are referred to committees with a higher proportion of Black and Latino members.
7. **Theory:** Minta suggests that minority legislators serve as natural allies for civil rights groups, often championing policies that align with the interests of Black and Latino communities. He posits that this alignment is strengthened by racial and ethnic diversity within Congress, which fosters a supportive environment for minority interest advocacy. This theory builds on the concept that minority legislators, especially those affiliated with organizations like the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC), act as advocates who use their committee positions to push for policies prioritized by civil rights organizations.
8. **Methods:** The study uses data from lobbying disclosure reports for the 110th (2007–2008) and 111th (2009–2010) Congresses to measure legislative success based on the likelihood of committee markups on bills supported by the NAACP, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (LCCR), and UnidosUS. Minta employs probit regression models to examine how the racial composition of committees, along with factors like sponsorship and committee chair characteristics, affects the advancement of these bills in the House of Representatives.
9. **Hypotheses:** Minta hypothesizes that legislative success for civil rights groups is more likely when:
  - Bills they support are referred to committees with a higher proportion of Black and Latino legislators.
  - Minority legislators serve as committee chairs for the referred committees.
 These hypotheses are confirmed, indicating that committee diversity plays a critical role in facilitating legislative success for minority interest groups.
10. **Main findings:** Minta concludes that diversity within congressional committees is significantly associated with the success of minority interest groups. Committees with higher proportions of Black and Latino members are more likely to advance legislation supported by civil rights organizations, reflecting the importance of descriptive representation in achieving substantive outcomes. Additionally, while financial contributions to campaigns are often vital for gaining access in Congress, minority civil rights organizations can achieve legislative influence through strategic partnerships with racially and ethnically diverse legislators.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The presence of racial and ethnic diversity on congressional committees has a significant positive impact on the success of minority interest groups in the legislative process" (p. 209).
  - "Civil rights organizations have fewer resources than business groups to contribute to political campaigns, making their success heavily reliant on racial and ethnic diversity within Congress" (p. 210).
  - "Even in committees with liberal Democratic members, it is the presence of Black and Latino legislators that increases the likelihood of markups on bills supported by civil rights groups" (p. 213).
  - "The legislative advocacy for civil rights is bolstered not only by the presence of Black and Latino members but also by the informal networks these members maintain with civil rights organizations" (p. 215).
  - "The findings suggest that racial diversity on committees goes beyond mere symbolic representation, playing a substantial role in advancing minority-focused policy agendas within Congress" (p. 217).

## 1.8 Political Parties

### 1.8.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The literature on American political parties has evolved from early theories emphasizing their organizational role and responsibility to more nuanced models that highlight parties as coalition-builders, brands, and essential institutions for managing democracy and competition. Foundational theories posited that cohesive party organizations are critical for effective representation and governance. As scholarship progressed, the focus expanded to explore parties' role in candidate selection, ideological sorting, and coalition-building among interest groups, with recent works examining how extended party networks and ideological polarization shape American democracy.
- **Responsible Party Theory and Organizational Strength:** The 1950 American Political Science Association Report, "Proposals for Party Responsibility," emphasized the need for cohesive, nationally-oriented parties to enhance democratic accountability. This early framework called for reforms to increase party unity and programmatic capacity, including the establishment of a Party Council and reformation of campaign finance practices to ensure that parties

act as responsible agents of governance. The report argued that parties should be structured to enforce legislative alignment and consistency, creating a unified response to legislative and electoral responsibilities. Later, Gibson et al.'s study (1983) on party organizational strength empirically assessed this concept, finding that state parties had grown stronger and more programmatically capable over time, particularly within the Republican Party. This development countered narratives of "party decline" and demonstrated that parties' organizational strength enhances their resilience in changing electoral landscapes.

- **Southern Politics and Factionalism:** V.O. Key's *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (1949) provided an in-depth analysis of the one-party dominance in the South, highlighting the Democratic Party's role as a mechanism for elite control through factionalism rather than as a cohesive political organization. Key argued that Southern politics were shaped by racial and class dynamics, where "black belt" elites controlled state politics to maintain racial hierarchies. His work demonstrated how regionalism and factionalism limited genuine democratic competition, creating a dysfunctional form of democracy in the South. This analysis provided a crucial early understanding of intraparty factionalism and how party dominance could mask deeper divisions based on localism and economic interests.
- **Party as an Informational Brand:** Snyder and Ting's (2002) "An Informational Rationale for Political Parties" introduced a model of parties as brands that help voters identify candidates' policy preferences, reducing informational asymmetry. They argued that party labels serve as low-cost cues that screen candidates for ideological consistency, particularly when candidates' individual positions are not directly observable. This theory posited that party labels enable voters to make informed choices and that strong party branding leads to platform convergence. Snyder and Ting's work demonstrated that parties serve a critical function by simplifying voter decision-making and managing ideological coherence within their ranks.
- **The Party Decides and the Invisible Primary:** Cohen et al.'s *The Party Decides* (2008) examined the influence of party insiders in presidential nominations, emphasizing the "invisible primary" stage where party elites consolidate support for candidates. The authors argued that despite reforms intended to increase direct voter control, party coalitions still play a decisive role in shaping nomination outcomes by coordinating endorsements and shaping media narratives. This theory positioned party elites as critical gatekeepers in the nomination process, highlighting the power of coalition-building among interest groups and influential figures to pre-select candidates aligned with the party's policy goals.
- **Political Parties as Endogenous Institutions and Polarization:** In *Why Parties? A Second Look* (2011), John Aldrich argued that parties are "endogenous institutions" shaped by the ambitions of political actors seeking to coordinate action and achieve electoral success. He traced the evolution of parties from early U.S. history to modern candidate-centered campaigns, arguing that parties adapt to serve the strategic needs of office-seeking politicians and respond to technological changes. Aldrich's work underscored that ideological activists and partisan sorting have intensified polarization within American parties, demonstrating that parties remain central to organizing elections and facilitating coalition-building, even amidst shifts toward candidate autonomy.
- **Group-Centered Theory of Political Parties and Polarization:** Bawn et al. (2012) proposed a group-centered model of parties, where policy-demanding groups, rather than politicians, drive party agendas and candidate selection. Their work emphasized the "electoral blind spot," where parties use voter inattentiveness to advance specific policy goals that do not necessarily align with the median voter's preferences. This approach challenged traditional politician-centered theories, arguing that interest groups and activists play a dominant role in structuring party behavior, ultimately leading to increased polarization as groups prioritize ideological rigidity over voter preferences.
- **Extended Party Networks (EPN) and Challenger Success:** Desmarais, La Raja, and Kowal (2015) introduced the concept of Extended Party Networks (EPNs), arguing that a coalition of partisan interest groups supports challengers in U.S. House races by providing ideological credibility and resources. Their network analysis demonstrated that challengers integrated into cohesive EPNs have higher electoral success due to the support of ideologically aligned communities. This study highlighted how EPNs enhance challenger success by consolidating resources and amplifying ideological consistency, indicating that modern party support is often network-based and ideologically coherent.
- **Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism:** Skocpol and Williamson's "The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism" (2016) examined the Tea Party's impact on the Republican Party, highlighting the movement's grassroots support combined with elite-driven agendas. They argued that the Tea Party reshaped Republican conservatism by pushing the party further rightward, driven by middle-class members resistant to government programs and elites seeking deregulation and budget cuts. This study illustrated the tension between grassroots activists and national elites within a political movement, revealing the complex ways in which internal party dynamics can shift ideological positions and strategies.
- **Motivated Reasoning and Partisan Influence on Public Opinion:** Leeper and Slothuus (2014) explored how political parties shape public opinion through motivated reasoning, where citizens align information with preexisting partisan beliefs. Their work posited that parties structure opinion formation by leveraging cognitive biases, with citizens more likely to reinforce partisan views under "directional motivation" but able to evaluate information critically when accuracy motivation is high. This theory offered a psychological perspective on how parties influence public opinion and entrench partisan divisions.
- **Future Directions and Ongoing Debates:** Current debates in party literature focus on how parties navigate internal factions, manage polarization, and maintain influence over candidate selection. Future research may explore the impact of social media on party dynamics, the role of extended networks in electoral success, and the potential for reform to mitigate polarization. Scholars are also examining how parties balance coalition-building among diverse

interest groups with the need for electoral competitiveness, especially as polarization challenges traditional party structures in an increasingly fragmented political landscape.

### 1.8.2 Proposals for Party Responsibility

Part II. Proposals for Party Responsibility [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. (1950). *The American Political Science Review*, 44(3), 37–84. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1951000>

1. **Citation key:** noauthor\_part\_1950
2. **Author(s):** American Political Science Association
3. **Year:** 1950
4. **Publication:** The American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** responsible parties, American politics, national party structure, intraparty democracy, congressional organization, legislative accountability, campaign finance, political participation
6. **Summary:** This 1950 report presents a set of proposals to enhance party responsibility within the American two-party system. Aimed at addressing the fragmentation and localism within parties, the recommendations advocate for a cohesive, nationally-oriented party structure that prioritizes programmatic unity and systematic accountability. The report suggests structural reforms across national, state, and local levels, including the establishment of a Party Council, clearer conventions for platform development, enhanced committee roles within Congress, and reformation of campaign finance practices. These proposals are intended to streamline party functions, enforce legislative alignment with party policies, and ensure that both parties act as responsible agents of democratic governance.
7. **Theory:** The report's theory centers on the need for strong, cohesive political parties to ensure effective representation and democratic accountability. It posits that fragmentation and decentralization within American political parties hinder their ability to serve as agents of collective action and policy implementation. By centralizing authority and encouraging a robust intraparty democratic structure, parties can better organize around coherent national platforms and provide a unified response to legislative and electoral responsibilities. This approach, the report argues, would transform parties into entities capable of delivering on campaign promises and upholding a higher standard of political responsibility.
8. **Methods:** The report's proposals emphasize institutional reforms rather than empirical analysis. Recommendations cover a range of structural and procedural adjustments: the introduction of a Party Council to oversee platform development, a reevaluation of the roles of local party meetings, and increased legislative party unity within Congress. It also suggests adjustments in campaign finance regulation to minimize the influence of large contributors and the establishment of a more transparent party selection process for committees.
9. **Hypotheses:** The report does not explicitly present hypotheses but implies that stronger party organization and legislative unity will lead to greater accountability and alignment with party policies. Proposals implicitly test the hypothesis that structured, responsible party systems can improve democratic functions.
  - Enhanced party unity through structural reforms will lead to greater legislative accountability.
  - Intrinsic financial reforms within parties will decrease undue influence from major contributors and foster democratic participation.
10. **Main findings:** The report's findings highlight the limitations of the American two-party system in terms of organizational and legislative efficacy. It underscores the importance of creating a unified party structure to ensure consistent policy advocacy and electoral accountability. The proposals reveal that both internal party unity and external legislative organization are crucial for a responsible, democratic party system that can deliver on its platform and act cohesively within Congress.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "To justify its existence a party so conceived must demonstrate its capacity to direct the course of public policy in line with announced programs. This, in turn, means that those who speak for the party must follow a unified course of action" (p. 5).
  - "Regardless of the general proportion of party membership in each house, the majority party in the house should have a comfortable margin of control within each committee. The same applies, for the same reasons, to subcommittees" (p. 6).
  - "The institution of a Party Council, with its emphasis on a national program and continuous reconsideration of party policy in terms of current issues, will prompt party members to think more in terms of policy, less in terms of personalities" (p. 19).

### 1.8.3 Southern Politics in State and Nation

Key, V. O. [Valdimer Orlando]. (1984, October). *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (2nd ed.). University of Tennessee Press

1. **Citation key:** key\_southern\_1984
2. **Author(s):** V. O. Key, Jr.
3. **Year:** 1984 (originally published in 1949)
4. **Publication:** Southern Politics in State and Nation (University of Tennessee Press)
5. **Keywords:** Southern politics, race relations, one-party system, Democratic Party, political factions, regionalism, disenfranchisement
6. **Summary:** Key's seminal work provides a comprehensive analysis of the political landscape across Southern U.S.

states, focusing on the roles of racial dynamics, one-party rule, and factionalism in shaping the region's political structures. Through state-by-state case studies, Key explores how the predominance of the Democratic Party sustains a one-party system with limited real competition. His analysis reveals how the dominance of "black belt" areas—regions with high African American populations—has historically driven Southern states to align politically on racial issues, creating a unified stance against federal interventions. Key argues that the South's political solidarity on racial issues masks considerable internal diversity, with factions defined by localism, economic interests, and historical legacies rather than cohesive political parties.

**7. Theory:** Key posits that Southern politics is driven by the intersection of racial and class dynamics, primarily orchestrated by white elites in the "black belt" who exert control over state politics to maintain racial order and socio-economic power. He asserts that the Democratic Party in the South functions less as a unified party and more as a mechanism for elite control, with factionalism and internal competition serving to suppress alternative political movements and maintain the status quo. This structure, he argues, leads to a dysfunctional form of democracy where real political opposition is absent and policy issues are rarely contested substantively.

**8. Methods:** Key uses extensive empirical data, including voter turnout, electoral patterns, and qualitative interviews, to explore political practices across eleven Southern states. His methodology emphasizes a comparative state-by-state analysis, drawing on statistics, historical records, and firsthand accounts from political actors. This approach enables Key to uncover patterns and variations in Southern political structures and to highlight the importance of socio-economic and racial cleavages.

**9. Hypotheses:** Key suggests that the prevalence of one-party rule and factionalism in the South is deeply tied to the region's racial hierarchy and economic dependencies. He proposes that:

- The "black belt" areas, with higher African American populations, hold disproportionate political power and drive the South's conservative stance on racial issues.
- One-party dominance fosters factionalism rather than cohesive political opposition, resulting in fragmented and ineffective governance.
- Southern political structures are resistant to change due to the ingrained racial and class-based divisions that align local politics against national reform efforts.

These hypotheses are generally supported throughout Key's analysis, particularly in his observations of voting behaviors, regional economic divides, and political resistance to federal policies.

**10. Main findings:** Key concludes that Southern politics operates under a façade of unity primarily driven by race-related concerns, but is, in reality, fragmented by factionalism and localism. This system prevents the emergence of a stable, organized opposition, leading to a form of "chaotic factionalism" within the Democratic Party. Key contends that this structure perpetuates social and economic inequality by discouraging genuine political competition and policy discourse. He also identifies a gradual but underlying trend toward liberalization, contingent upon incremental political inclusion of African Americans and structural reforms.

#### 11. Key definitions:

- *Black Belt:* Geographic regions in the South characterized by high African American populations, historically dominated by white elites who leverage racial dynamics to control political power and preserve economic interests.
- *One-Party System:* A political system dominated by a single political party, in this case, the Democratic Party in the South, where lack of genuine competition results in factionalism and hinders democratic accountability.
- *Factionalism:* A division within a political party, often marked by competing groups or interests, particularly prominent in the South's Democratic Party, where factions replace organized opposition.
- *White Primary:* A mechanism used in the South to disenfranchise African American voters by restricting primary elections to white voters only, effectively limiting political participation and maintaining racial segregation in political power.
- *Disenfranchisement Devices:* Legal and procedural tools, such as poll taxes and literacy tests, employed primarily in Southern states to suppress the African American vote and maintain white political dominance.
- *Regional Solidarity:* The collective alignment of Southern states, particularly on racial issues, resulting in a unified front against federal interventions that challenge the established racial hierarchy.
- *Machine Politics:* A system of political control based on authoritative organizations or "machines" that leverage patronage, loyalty, and control over elections; prominent in certain Southern states, such as Virginia, where the Byrd machine dominates.

#### 1.8.4 Assessing Party Organizational Strength

Gibson, J. L., Cotter, C. P., Bibby, J. F., & Huckshorn, R. J. (1983). Assessing Party Organizational Strength [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 27(2), 193–222. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111015>

1. **Citation key:** gibson\_assessing\_1983
2. **Author(s):** James L. Gibson, Cornelius P. Cotter, John F. Bibby, and Robert J. Huckshorn
3. **Year:** 1983
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** party organization, party strength, state politics, party complexity, programmatic capacity, political parties,

bureaucratization, interparty competition

6. **Summary:** This study evaluates the concept of party organizational strength in the context of U.S. state political parties from 1960 to 1980. By focusing on the organizational structure and programmatic capacity of party organizations, Gibson and his colleagues propose that the strength of party organizations can be measured by factors such as bureaucratic complexity, staff resources, and the capacity to sustain programmatic activities that support both candidates and the party institution. Contrary to the narrative of "party decline," the authors find that, over two decades, party organizations have generally grown stronger, especially within the Republican Party.
7. **Theory:** The article posits that the resilience and growth of party organizational strength can stabilize parties amidst fluctuating party identification among the electorate. Drawing from an organizational theory perspective, the authors argue that party vitality depends on the level of organizational complexity (e.g., permanent staff, specialized roles) and programmatic capacity (e.g., campaign support, voter mobilization efforts). This conceptual framework contrasts with voter-centric evaluations of party strength by proposing that internal organizational factors also play a crucial role in party durability and electoral competitiveness.
8. **Methods:** The authors conduct a longitudinal analysis using a sample of 100 state parties, gathering data from party chairpersons and state party leaders over four time periods: 1960-1964, 1965-1969, 1970-1974, and 1975-1980. Indicators for measuring organizational strength include staff size and structure, budget levels, professionalization, and both institutional and candidate-directed programmatic activities. These indicators allow for an empirical assessment of the changes in party organizational strength across regions and between the two major U.S. political parties.
9. **Hypotheses:** The article presents the following hypotheses regarding the impact of organizational strength on party functionality and electoral success:
  - Stronger party organizations will exhibit greater bureaucratic complexity and resource stability, enhancing their resilience against electoral dealignment.
  - Higher programmatic capacity in party organizations will correlate with increased support for candidates and contribute to sustained party strength.

Findings indicate partial support: Republican party organizations demonstrate significant growth in strength, while Democratic organizations exhibit some decline, particularly in the Midwest. Overall, organizational strength correlates with the stability of party operations and adaptability to electoral changes.

10. **Main findings:** The study reveals that party organizations became more complex and programmatically capable over the two-decade period, particularly within Republican state parties. Increased staff specialization, budget growth, and professionalization of leadership indicate a trend toward stronger, more structured party organizations. The researchers conclude that strong organizational structures may provide resilience against anti-party forces, such as dealignment and competition from independent political action committees (PACs), which challenge party dominance in elections.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Compared with those of the early 1960s, state parties in the late 1970s were more likely to maintain electoral mobilization programs, to conduct public opinion polls, to provide services to candidates, and to publish newsletters" (p. 206).
- "Republicans are less involved in issue leadership (especially in the South), are much more likely to engage in public opinion polling (74 versus 35 percent), have larger budgets and staffs, and offer substantially more services to their candidates" (p. 207).
- "Our analysis indicates that the year in which *The American Voter* appeared marked the beginning of a decade or more of growth for party organizations" (p. 215).

#### 1.8.5 An Informational Rationale for Political Parties

Snyder, J. M., & Ting, M. M. (2002). An Informational Rationale for Political Parties [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(1), 90-110. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3088416>

1. **Citation key:** snyder\_informational\_2002
2. **Author(s):** James M. Snyder, Jr. and Michael M. Ting
3. **Year:** 2002
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** party labels, screening, adverse selection, moral hazard, party discipline, political brand
6. **Summary:** This article presents a model of political parties as informational tools that function as "brands" to provide voters with low-cost signals of candidates' policy preferences. The authors argue that party labels serve as screening mechanisms to help voters distinguish among candidates with similar ideological preferences, especially when candidates' individual policy positions are not directly observable. By imposing costs on party membership, parties can effectively screen candidates who align with their platforms, making party labels meaningful. This model suggests that when party labels are highly informative, parties converge on platforms; when less informative, platforms diverge as parties adopt extreme positions to reduce the heterogeneity of their membership.
7. **Theory:** Snyder and Ting theorize that party labels operate as signaling devices that reduce informational asymmetries between voters and candidates. They propose that parties act as aggregators of ideologically similar candidates and serve as screening devices, creating a form of adverse selection. The model focuses on two theoretical issues—adverse selection and moral hazard—and posits that the discipline or screening imposed by parties serves to distinguish can-

didates according to ideological proximity to the party's platform, thus aiding voter decision-making.

8. **Methods:** The authors employ a formal model to evaluate how party labels influence voter welfare and candidate behavior in a two-party system. The model posits that parties announce platforms before elections, and candidates have unobservable policy preferences. Voters, in turn, learn about the candidates based on party affiliation, which acts as a low-cost informational cue.

9. **Hypotheses:** The authors present three main predictions:

- Parties enhance voter welfare by aggregating candidate preferences and communicating these to voters.
- In a two-party system, party platforms will converge when the cost of party membership is high or screening is strong, and diverge when costs are low or screening is weak.
- Party membership choices are endogenous, with candidates balancing ideological proximity to the party and the electoral benefits of membership.

The results support these predictions, highlighting the role of party labels in reducing voter uncertainty and shaping candidate alignment.

10. **Main findings:** Snyder and Ting's model demonstrates that party labels provide a low-cost source of information about candidates' preferences, which is crucial for voter decision-making in contexts where candidates cannot commit to policies pre-election. Party labels serve as a tool to limit ideological diversity within parties and, when highly informative, lead to platform convergence. The findings underscore the value of party brands in electoral efficiency and candidate differentiation.

11. **Key quotations:**

- "When party labels are very informative, the parties' platforms converge. When party labels are less informative, however, platforms diverge, because taking an extreme position allows a party to reduce the variance of its members' preferences" (p. 90).
- "Party labels may be valuable to candidates and voters because they provide low-cost information about the preferences of groups of candidates across multiple offices" (p. 92).
- "Parties might be able to restrict access to the label. Alternatively, sorting into parties might occur as a result of candidates' own choices" (p. 92).

#### 1.8.6 The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform

Cohen, M., Karol, D., Noel, H., & Zaller, J. (2008, October). *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*. University of Chicago Press.

1. **Citation key:** cohen\_party\_2008

2. **Author(s):** Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller

3. **Year:** 2008

4. **Publication:** The Party Decides (University of Chicago Press)

5. **Keywords:** presidential nominations, political parties, invisible primary, party coalitions, endorsements, election reforms, American politics

6. **Summary:** *The Party Decides* examines the enduring influence of party insiders in presidential nominations despite reforms intended to increase direct voter control. Through historical analysis and empirical data, Cohen, Karol, Noel, and Zaller argue that party elites still guide the nomination process during the "invisible primary" phase, where they consolidate support for candidates they believe can represent the party's policy goals. This elite support often determines frontrunners even before the official primary season begins, illustrating the persistent role of party coalitions in shaping election outcomes.

7. **Theory:** The authors propose that political parties function as coalitions of interest groups that prioritize endorsing and supporting candidates aligned with their policy goals. Rather than being candidate-centered or fully democratized by reforms, the nomination process remains under the influence of these coalitions, which mobilize early in the invisible primary. The authors suggest that the reforms of the 1970s did not diminish the power of party elites but instead shifted their coordination efforts to the pre-primary stage, allowing them to control candidate selection in a way similar to pre-reform conventions.

8. **Methods:** The authors employ a combination of qualitative historical analysis and quantitative data on party endorsements to illustrate patterns of insider influence in nominations. By examining endorsement data, media coverage, and polling trends, they demonstrate that candidates with significant support from party insiders are more likely to succeed in the official primaries and caucuses. This approach underscores the correlation between early endorsements and nomination success, reinforcing the idea that the invisible primary is a critical phase controlled by party networks.

9. **Hypotheses:**

- Party insiders maintain substantial influence over the nomination process by consolidating support for candidates during the invisible primary.
- Candidates who secure endorsements from party coalitions are more likely to gain media attention and perform well in subsequent primaries and caucuses.
- The reforms of the 1970s did not democratize the nomination process but instead restructured party influence to the pre-primary stage.

The authors find strong support for these hypotheses, indicating that despite the appearance of democratization, party insiders continue to shape the nomination process through early endorsements and coalition-building.

**10. Main findings:** The study concludes that party elites continue to exert significant control over presidential nominations through early endorsements and support consolidation in the invisible primary. These actions help shape public perception and media narratives, giving endorsed candidates a critical advantage. This process enables parties to unify behind candidates who align with their collective policy interests, illustrating that parties retain substantial influence in shaping the general election candidates, even in a reformed, ostensibly voter-driven nomination process.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Invisible Primary*: The phase before official primaries begin, in which party elites, interest groups, and influential figures align and endorse candidates, consolidating support in a way that often determines frontrunners before voter participation.
- *Party Coalitions*: Networks of interest groups, party insiders, and political actors who come together to promote candidates that align with their shared policy goals and ideological preferences.
- *Endorsements*: Public support or approval from prominent party members or groups that signal credibility and increase a candidate's visibility within party networks, often influencing media coverage and voter perceptions.
- *Reform Era (1970s)*: A period of changes in the presidential nomination process, including the introduction of primaries and caucuses aimed at democratizing nominations, which altered but did not eliminate the influence of party elites.
- *Party Influence in Nominations*: The continued role of party insiders and coalitions in shaping presidential nominations through early support, endorsements, and influence during the invisible primary phase.

#### 1.8.7 Why Parties? A Second Look

Aldrich, J. H. (2011, May). *Why Parties?: A Second Look*. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** aldrich\_why\_2011

2. **Author(s):** John H. Aldrich

3. **Year:** 2011

4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press

5. **Keywords:** American political parties, party polarization, candidate-centered campaigns, political institutions, democratic accountability

6. **Summary:** In *Why Parties? A Second Look*, John H. Aldrich reexamines the role of American political parties as adaptive institutions that evolve to solve the challenges of democratic governance. He argues that parties serve as tools for ambitious office seekers to achieve goals related to their political careers, policy preferences, and power consolidation. Aldrich traces the evolution of parties from early American history through modern shifts toward candidate-centered campaigns and party polarization. Despite transformations in how parties operate, Aldrich suggests that they remain essential to democratic function by providing the structure needed for organizing elections, facilitating collective action, and enabling coalition-building.

7. **Theory:** Aldrich theorizes that political parties are “endogenous institutions,” meaning they are shaped by the preferences and goals of political actors rather than by external forces. According to Aldrich, parties primarily serve the interests of officeholders and candidates, providing a framework for coordinating political activities that allow for the pursuit of individual ambitions within a structured system. He emphasizes the role of historical context and technological changes in transforming the party system, particularly noting the rise of ideological activists and partisan sorting as key drivers of contemporary party polarization.

8. **Methods:** Aldrich’s analysis combines historical case studies of party formation with rational choice theory to assess the motivations behind party development. He examines critical periods in American history, focusing on shifts in the electoral, institutional, and technological environments that have influenced party behavior. The book also integrates empirical studies on modern party dynamics, particularly the shift from mass-based parties to candidate-centered campaigns and the impact of ideological activists on party alignment.

9. **Hypotheses:** Aldrich’s hypotheses suggest that:

- Parties adapt to serve the goals of office-seeking politicians, with changes in structure and focus responding to electoral and technological shifts.
- Modern polarization is driven by ideological activists who shape party platforms, leading to greater sorting of candidates and voters along party lines.

These hypotheses are confirmed, showing that party evolution aligns with the strategic needs of political actors, particularly in adapting to shifts that allow candidates more autonomy.

10. **Main findings:** Aldrich concludes that while the American party system has become more candidate-centered, parties continue to play a central role in facilitating democratic governance. The rise of ideological activists has contributed to polarization by pushing parties toward more extreme positions, resulting in a clearer ideological distinction between the two major parties. Despite the challenges posed by candidate independence, Aldrich finds that parties remain essential as service providers to candidates and as mediators of collective action and choice.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Endogenous Institution*: An institution shaped primarily by the internal goals and strategies of its members—in this case, political parties are formed and adapted by political actors based on their ambitions and the requirements of the political environment.
- *Candidate-Centered Campaigns*: A political approach in which candidates, rather than parties, are the primary focus

of campaign efforts, often resulting in greater autonomy for candidates and a shift away from traditional party structures.

- *Party Polarization*: The process by which political parties move toward more ideologically extreme positions, often due to the influence of ideological activists within each party.
- *Ideological Activists*: Highly motivated individuals within a party who seek to influence its direction, often pushing for policies that align with their ideological stance, thereby affecting candidate positions and party polarization.
- *Partisan Sorting*: The alignment of voters and candidates along ideological lines, where liberals align with one party and conservatives with the other, leading to a clearer partisan divide.

#### 1.8.8 A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands, and Nominations in American Politics

Bawn, K., Cohen, M., Karol, D., Masket, S., Noel, H., & Zaller, J. (2012). A Theory of Political Parties: Groups, Policy Demands and Nominations in American Politics. *Perspectives on Politics*, 10(3), 571–597. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592712001624>

1. **Citation key:** bawn\_theory\_2012
2. **Author(s):** Kathleen Bawn, Martin Cohen, David Karol, Seth Masket, Hans Noel, and John Zaller
3. **Year:** 2012
4. **Publication:** Perspectives on Politics
5. **Keywords:** interest groups, political parties, policy demands, candidate nomination, electoral politics, coalition building, voter knowledge, legislative polarization
6. **Summary:** This article proposes an alternative theory of American political parties, presenting them as coalitions primarily driven by interest groups and activists rather than solely by office-seeking politicians. These group-based parties prioritize advancing specific agendas, often using the candidate nomination process to select individuals loyal to their policy demands. Unlike traditional party theories that view parties as responsive to voter preferences, this framework emphasizes an “electoral blind spot,” where parties leverage voter inattentiveness to push for policies that do not necessarily align with the median voter’s interests. This theory challenges the prevailing politician-centered model by underscoring the role of organized groups in shaping party behavior and policy-making.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that American political parties are best understood as coalitions of policy-demanding groups rather than as vehicles for politician-centered competition. This theory diverges from mainstream views by positing that parties prioritize satisfying the demands of organized interests over appealing to the electorate’s median preferences. According to Bawn et al., this structure allows parties to “exploit” an “electoral blind spot” where complex policies and inattentive voters create leeway for pursuing group-specific agendas. In this view, parties function less as instruments of popular sovereignty and more as mechanisms for interest group coalition-building and agenda-setting.
8. **Methods:** The article primarily provides a theoretical framework supported by historical case studies and comparisons with legislator-centered theories. The authors review empirical research on party evolution, coalition formation, and policy positioning to illustrate how interest groups shape nominations and policy agendas, focusing on historical shifts in party coalitions and polarization trends in contemporary U.S. politics.
9. **Hypotheses:** Bawn et al. state several hypotheses regarding the structure and influence of group-based political parties:
  - If policy demanders control nominations, parties will prioritize coalition agendas over median voter preferences.
  - Parties operating within the “electoral blind spot” will support policy demands that would otherwise be unpopular if widely understood by voters.
  - Polarization within parties will increase as organized interest groups exert more influence over nominations and policy agendas.
10. **Main findings:** The findings support the idea that American political parties have historically adapted to serve the interests of policy-demanding groups, often at the expense of responsiveness to general voter preferences. The analysis shows that coalitions of organized interests drive party polarization and influence candidate selection by prioritizing group-centric agendas over centrist or popular positions. The authors argue that this interest group dominance in party politics leads to heightened ideological rigidity and that the “electoral blind spot” allows parties to enact policies without facing significant electoral consequences.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “We propose a theory of political parties in which interest groups and activists are the key actors, and coalitions of groups develop common agendas and screen candidates for party nominations based on loyalty to their agendas” (p. 571).
- “In our account, parties are no great friends of popular sovereignty. Electoral competition does constrain group-centric parties to be somewhat responsive to citizen preferences, but they cede as little policy to voters as possible” (p. 572).
- “This electoral blind spot allows policy-demanding groups to nominate and elect candidates who pursue policies

much more extreme than voters would choose if they were fully informed" (p. 576).

### 1.8.9 Political Parties, Motivated Reasoning, and Public Opinion

Leeper, T. J., & Slothuus, R. (2014). Political Parties, Motivated Reasoning, and Public Opinion Formation [Publisher: [International Society of Political Psychology, Wiley]]. *Political Psychology*, 35, 129–156. Retrieved November 9, 2024, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43783792>

1. **Citation key:** leeper\_political\_2014
2. **Author(s):** Thomas J. Leeper and Rune Slothuus
3. **Year:** 2014
4. **Publication:** Political Psychology
5. **Keywords:** political parties, motivated reasoning, partisan bias, public opinion, political psychology
6. **Summary:** This article explores the role of political parties in shaping public opinion, focusing on the concept of motivated reasoning—a cognitive framework where individuals process information in a way that aligns with their preexisting attitudes or party loyalties. Leeper and Slothuus argue that motivated reasoning explains how citizens interact with political information based on their partisan identities and the motivations driving their cognitive effort. Political parties structure and mobilize opinion formation through directional motivation (where partisans defend their views) and accuracy motivation (where individuals seek truth even if it challenges their biases). This theory provides insights into the persistence of partisan divisions and offers a psychological basis for understanding why parties can influence public opinion so powerfully.
7. **Theory:** Leeper and Slothuus apply motivated reasoning theory to analyze the influence of political parties on opinion formation. They argue that citizens' political reasoning is shaped by two types of motivation: directional motivation, where individuals reinforce pre-existing beliefs, and accuracy motivation, where individuals prioritize truth-seeking. Political parties, as major social structures in democracies, leverage these motivations to mobilize support and reinforce partisan perceptions. The theory posits that motivated reasoning helps explain both the entrenchment of partisan divisions and the nuanced ways in which citizens align their opinions with party cues, varying based on the intensity of partisan identity and situational contexts.
8. **Methods:** This theoretical framework relies on synthesizing past empirical studies in political psychology, motivated reasoning, and partisan influence. The authors review literature on partisan identity, cognitive biases, and opinion formation to demonstrate how political parties serve as a filter through which citizens interpret political information. Key studies reviewed include work on perceptual screens (Campbell et al., 1960) and experimental studies of partisan identity effects in political attitudes (Taber and Lodge, 2012; Druckman et al., 2013).
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Citizens who identify strongly with a political party are more likely to exhibit directional motivated reasoning, supporting positions that align with their party even when evidence contradicts them.
  - When accuracy motivation is emphasized, citizens are more likely to engage in information-seeking behaviors that challenge their biases, leading to more balanced opinions.

These hypotheses find support in research indicating that partisan identity generally fosters motivated reasoning but that accuracy motivation can mitigate bias under certain conditions.
10. **Main findings:** Leeper and Slothuus find that motivated reasoning is a crucial mechanism through which political parties shape public opinion. They argue that while partisan identification often biases information processing, the presence of accuracy motivation can lead citizens to evaluate information more critically. The study suggests that partisan cues heavily influence low-effort reasoning, but accuracy-driven reasoning can counteract some partisan biases, especially in highly polarized contexts.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Political parties provide the key link between citizens and democratic leadership. Political parties are fundamental to democratic competition and representation" (p. 129).
  - "The ubiquity of parties and partisanship might easily bolster a view of human reasoning dominated by automatic partisan bias, a perceptual screen that filters politics through partisan predispositions and spits out attitude-reinforcing beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors" (p. 130).
  - "The ideal world devoid of partisan conflict that Madison envisions is a dystopia: it is a world where the average citizen . . . is called up to make sense of the chaos of political realities on their own and form opinions without the institutional coordination of professional political combatants" (p. 149).

### 1.8.10 The Fates of Challengers in U.S. House Elections

Desmarais, B. A., La Raja, R. J., & Kowal, M. S. (2015). The Fates of Challengers in U.S. House Elections: The Role of Extended Party Networks in Supporting Candidates and Shaping Electoral Outcomes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(1), 194–211. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12106>

1. **Citation key:** desmarais\_fates\_2015
2. **Author(s):** Bruce A. Desmarais, Raymond J. La Raja, and Michael S. Kowal
3. **Year:** 2015
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** Extended Party Network, U.S. House Elections, challenger success, campaign finance, interest group coalitions

tions, political network analysis

6. **Summary:** This study examines how extended party networks (EPNs), comprised of interconnected interest groups, influence challenger success in U.S. House elections. EPN theory contends that a network of partisan interest groups supports favored candidates, offering ideological credibility and resources to bolster a challenger's campaign. By analyzing campaign finance data and community detection within EPNs, Desmarais et al. find that challengers with strong EPN integration have better electoral outcomes. The study uses network analysis to track how contributions and endorsements from cohesive, partisan communities of interest help challengers establish consistent messaging and policy signals, thereby improving their prospects against incumbents.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on the theory that political parties function as coalitions of policy-demanding interest groups rather than solely candidate-centered structures. They posit that EPNs, as collections of interconnected interest groups, help organize resources and policy signals around challengers who align with the partisan coalition's agenda. This framework shifts from traditional candidate-centered theories to a more network-driven model, where interest groups play a central role in electoral success by reducing ambiguity about challengers' policy stances.
8. **Methods:** Desmarais et al. employ a network analytic method known as community detection to operationalize EPN support. They construct a bipartite network of interest group contributions and U.S. House candidates, analyzing data from the 1994–2010 election cycles. Using community detection algorithms, they categorize candidates based on the density and coherence of PAC support to identify partisan EPN integration. The authors apply matching and regression models to assess the effect of EPN backing on challenger success, controlling for variables such as campaign expenditures and district partisanship.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Challengers with significant EPN integration will experience a higher likelihood of electoral success compared to challengers without such backing.
- EPN support offers unique advantages that go beyond the financial resources of individual campaign contributions, impacting electoral success by enhancing ideological consistency and message clarity.

Empirical analyses confirm these hypotheses, showing that EPN-backed challengers have a statistically significant advantage in elections, an effect that persists when controlling for typical predictors of success such as campaign expenditures.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds that EPN integration improves challenger success by approximately 12 percentage points. This effect is notable given the traditional disadvantage challengers face relative to incumbents. The analysis reveals that challengers supported by cohesive, partisan EPNs benefit from the reputational credibility and ideological signaling that networked endorsements confer, beyond the impact of direct campaign finance. The authors conclude that EPNs provide a structural advantage in the form of coordinated backing from ideologically consistent interest groups, which is pivotal for challengers in U.S. House races.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "An important implication of the EPN theory is that candidates, especially challengers, who are targeted by partisan coalitions of interests are inherently more appealing to the party, on a policy basis, than those who do not receive the support of the network" (pp. 194-195).
- "The potency of the signal sent by EPN support for a candidate lies in the power of multiple consistent signals to discriminate the underlying preferences of a candidate. Since the ideology of interest groups can be inferred based on the candidates they support (Bonica 2013), when many like-minded groups in a policy domain back a candidate (e.g., Sierra Club, League of Conservation Voters, and National Resources Defense Council support the same candidate), this provides multiplicative certainty in a candidate's policy preferences" (p. 197).
- "If interest groups with strong policy agendas shape who wins office, then officeholders might have far less discretion about the direction of party policy than previously theorized" (p. 197).

#### 1.8.11 The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism

Skocpol, T., & Williamson, V. (2016, August). *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*. Oxford University Press

1. **Citation key:** skocpol\_tea\_2016
2. **Author(s):** Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson
3. **Year:** 2016
4. **Publication:** The tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism (Oxford University Press)
5. **Keywords:** Tea Party, Republican conservatism, grassroots activism, political mobilization, ideological polarization, social movements
6. **Summary:** Skocpol and Williamson's study examines the rise and impact of the Tea Party movement on American conservatism and the Republican Party. Initiated by Rick Santelli's 2009 call for resistance against perceived overreach in government programs, the Tea Party swiftly mobilized into a movement that deeply influenced American political dynamics. By analyzing grassroots activism, elite support, and the media's role, the authors present a nuanced portrayal of Tea Party supporters as primarily middle-aged, middle-class Americans resistant to government programs they perceive as benefiting "undeserving" groups. They highlight a distinct ideological split between grassroots members, who support programs like Social Security, and national elites who advocate for policy reforms and budget cuts. The book argues that this divergence reflects broader tensions within American conservatism, reshaping the Republican

- Party's goals and tactics.
7. **Theory:** Skocpol and Williamson theorize that the Tea Party's emergence stems from a combination of grassroots conservative activism and elite-driven agendas. The grassroots membership, composed primarily of middle-aged and older Americans, rallies against government programs perceived to benefit marginalized groups at their expense. Simultaneously, national elites leverage this grassroots energy to push for broader conservative goals, such as deregulation and fiscal conservatism. The Tea Party's influence reveals a complex interplay where grassroots and elite agendas converge and diverge, reshaping the Republican Party's priorities and methods.
  8. **Methods:** The authors use mixed methods, combining ethnographic observations, interviews with Tea Party members, and analysis of media and public opinion data. They conducted site visits and interviews at Tea Party meetings across several states, allowing them to capture diverse regional and individual perspectives within the movement. Additionally, they examine media coverage and public records to assess how national elites and conservative media shape Tea Party narratives and public perceptions.
  9. **Hypotheses:** Although not explicitly stated as hypotheses, the authors implicitly examine several propositions regarding the Tea Party's impact and nature.
    - Tea Party members oppose "big government" but support select social programs like Social Security and Medicare.
    - The grassroots and elite factions within the Tea Party often have divergent goals, particularly concerning social programs.
    - Media, particularly conservative outlets like Fox News, play a critical role in amplifying and shaping the Tea Party's influence and public image.
- The findings support these propositions, illustrating how grassroots members' selective support for government programs contrasts with elites' ideological commitment to reducing government size.
10. **Main findings:** Skocpol and Williamson find that the Tea Party has reshaped Republican conservatism by pushing the party further rightward, primarily through grassroots mobilization fueled by fears of an overreaching government. They show that this movement embodies deep-seated cultural and economic anxieties, often directed against groups seen as undeserving of government support. National elites within the movement, while benefiting from grassroots energy, often pursue separate goals focused on deregulation and reducing federal expenditures, creating a tension that shapes the party's legislative and electoral strategies.
  11. **Key definitions:**
    - *Tea Party Movement:* A conservative movement that emerged in 2009 in response to government intervention in the economy, characterized by grassroots activism and a blend of fiscal and social conservatism. It includes both local groups and national organizations.
    - *Grassroots Activism:* Political mobilization initiated by ordinary citizens, often characterized by local organization and individual participation, as opposed to elite-driven agendas.
    - *Astroturfing:* A strategy by which elites or organizations create the appearance of grassroots support to advance their agendas, often seen in the national Tea Party support provided by groups like FreedomWorks.
    - *Elite Support:* In this context, refers to backing from national conservative organizations, wealthy donors, and political figures who align with Tea Party principles but often have different policy priorities than grassroots members.
    - *Media Influence:* The role played by conservative media outlets, particularly Fox News, in promoting and sustaining the Tea Party's message and public profile.

## 1.9 Representation

### 1.9.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The concept of representation in American politics has been the focus of extensive scholarly debate, evolving from simple delegate-trustee dichotomies to more complex frameworks incorporating dynamic, dyadic, and symbolic representation. Foundational works like Edmund Burke's writings on the trustee model laid the groundwork for conceptualizing representation as either aligning with constituents' preferences (delegate model) or relying on representatives' independent judgment (trustee model). Over time, scholars expanded these ideas to capture the interplay between public opinion, institutional constraints, and elite behavior, arguing that representation is a multifaceted and dynamic process influenced by both electoral and nonelectoral mechanisms.
- **Dynamic Representation:** A major development in the study of representation is the concept of dynamic representation, introduced by Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson (1995). This framework posits that representation occurs through both electoral turnover and rational anticipation, whereby policymakers adjust their behavior to align with shifting public opinion to avoid electoral repercussions. The dynamic model views public opinion as a "thermostat," with policymakers responding to fluctuations by enacting policies that either enhance or curtail government action. This theory underscores the adaptability of democratic institutions, showing that representation is not static but an ongoing process mediated by electoral cycles and public feedback.
- **Dyadic Representation and Issue Salience:** Hill and Hurley (1999) revisited dyadic representation, examining the interaction between mass and elite preferences across different issue types. They argue that reciprocal linkages exist for party-defining issues, one-way linkages dominate salient but non-party-defining issues, and hard issues exhibit minimal mass-elite connections. This nuanced typology emphasizes that representation varies by issue complexity

and salience, highlighting the conditional nature of mass-elite relationships.

- **Institutional Design and Senate Apportionment:** Representation is also profoundly shaped by institutional structures, as demonstrated in Frances E. Lee's (1998) study of Senate apportionment. The equal representation of states in the Senate, irrespective of population, creates structural biases favoring smaller states, which receive disproportionate federal resources. This institutional arrangement incentivizes senators from smaller states to pursue distributive policies that benefit their constituencies, often at the expense of broader equity. Such findings illustrate how institutional rules mediate the responsiveness and outcomes of representation.
- **Symbolic and Surrogate Representation:** Jane Mansbridge's (2003) work expands traditional notions of representation by introducing forms like surrogate and gyroscopic representation. Surrogate representation occurs when representatives advocate for individuals outside their formal constituencies, often based on shared identity or ideology. Gyroscopic representation emphasizes the role of intrinsic values and principles in guiding representatives' actions. These frameworks challenge the narrow focus on electoral accountability, proposing that representation also encompasses systemic and deliberative dimensions.
- **Elite Manipulation and Public Opinion:** Jacobs and Shapiro (2000) critique the notion of democratic responsiveness by showing how politicians use polling and media to shape public opinion rather than align with it. Their concept of "crafted talk" reveals a shift from genuine responsiveness to symbolic gestures that create the illusion of alignment with public preferences. This dynamic underscores the challenges of achieving substantive representation in a context dominated by elite-driven narratives.
- **Challenges of Equal Representation:** Lee and Oppenheimer (1999) argue that the Senate's equal representation of states undermines democratic ideals by amplifying the influence of small states. Their work demonstrates that this institutional design skews legislative outcomes, perpetuating inequalities in resource distribution and policymaking. These findings highlight the tension between formal equality and substantive equity in representation.
- **Contemporary Debates and Future Directions:** Contemporary scholarship on representation continues to explore the implications of polarization, campaign finance, and technological change. Scholars debate whether current institutional arrangements effectively balance competing democratic principles, such as responsiveness and accountability, against practical challenges like elite manipulation and institutional inertia. Future research is likely to focus on how evolving norms, such as intersectionality and digital engagement, reshape the practice and study of representation.

### 1.9.2 Dynamic Representation

Stimson, J. A., Mackuen, M. B., & Erikson, R. S. (1995). Dynamic Representation [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 89(3), 543–565. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2082973>

1. **Citation key:** stimson\_dynamic\_1995
2. **Author(s):** James A. Stimson, Michael B. MacKuen, and Robert S. Erikson
3. **Year:** 1995
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** dynamic representation, public opinion, policy responsiveness, rational anticipation, elections
6. **Summary:** Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson explore how public opinion influences policymaking in the United States, focusing on the concept of dynamic representation. They argue that policy responsiveness occurs through two primary mechanisms: electoral turnover and rational anticipation, where policymakers adjust to public opinion to avoid electoral repercussions. Their analysis examines responsiveness across the presidency, Congress, and the Supreme Court, finding evidence that public opinion systematically shapes policy outcomes.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose a model of dynamic representation, emphasizing that public opinion shifts over time and that government institutions respond through elections and anticipatory adjustments by policymakers. They argue that representation is a time-structured process, with public opinion functioning as a "thermostat" to regulate policy direction. Policymakers balance their preferences with the need to align with public opinion to maintain electoral viability, resulting in both direct and indirect policy adjustments.
8. **Methods:** The study employs time-series analysis, integrating data on public opinion (measured via Stimson's Policy Mood index) and policy outputs across the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The authors use the Kalman filter model to estimate the effects of public opinion on policy liberalism while controlling for other factors like partisan composition and institutional dynamics. The analysis spans decades, enabling the study of both short- and long-term responsiveness.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Public opinion drives changes in policy through electoral turnover, as shifts in voter preferences lead to changes in government composition.
  - Policymakers engage in rational anticipation, adjusting their behavior in response to perceived trends in public opinion.
  - The level and mechanism of responsiveness vary across government institutions, reflecting their distinct roles and constraints.

Each hypothesis is supported by the findings, with variations observed in responsiveness between branches.

10. **Main findings:** The study demonstrates that public opinion significantly influences policy, with both electoral turnover and rational anticipation contributing to dynamic representation. The House and Senate exhibit strong re-

sponsiveness, though mechanisms differ: the House relies more on rational anticipation, while the Senate responds primarily through electoral turnover. The presidency reflects public opinion through both party alignment and direct responsiveness. The Supreme Court, while less responsive than elected branches, shows modest alignment with long-term public preferences. Overall, the study highlights the adaptability of U.S. institutions to shifts in public sentiment, emphasizing the interplay between electoral and anticipatory mechanisms.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Public opinion moves meaningfully over time, and government officials sense this movement and alter their behavior in response to the sensed movement. This is dynamic representation” (p. 543).
- “The public makes judgments about current public policy—most easily that government’s actions need to be enhanced or trimmed back. These judgments will change as policy changes, as real-world conditions change, or as ‘politically colored’ perceptions of policy and conditions change” (p. 544).
- “Rational anticipation produces dynamic representation without need for actual electoral defeats. Politicians modify their behavior at the margin to minimize risk or maximize electoral payoff” (p. 547).

#### 1.9.3 Representation and Public Policy: The Consequences of Senate Apportionment for the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds

Lee, F. E. (1998). Representation and Public Policy: The Consequences of Senate Apportionment for the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds. *The Journal of Politics*, 60(1), 34–62. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2648000>

1. Citation key: lee\_representation\_1998

2. Author(s): Frances E. Lee

3. Year: 1998

4. Publication: Journal of Politics

5. Keywords: Senate apportionment, federal funds, geographic distribution, distributive politics, public policy

6. Summary: Frances E. Lee examines the policy effects of Senate apportionment on the geographic distribution of federal funds. The study argues that the overrepresentation of small states in the Senate leads to disproportionate allocations of federal resources to these states. By analyzing federal domestic assistance programs, the author identifies patterns in funding distribution driven by the Senate’s coalition-building dynamics, emphasizing the impact of nondiscretionary and discretionary distributive policies.

7. Theory: Lee theorizes that the equal representation of states in the Senate (irrespective of population size) fundamentally affects policymaking by encouraging coalition-building strategies that prioritize benefits for small states. This institutional logic is coupled with individual incentives, as senators from small states gain more electoral visibility and credit by delivering per capita benefits. The study suggests that this dynamic is particularly evident in nondiscretionary distributive policies, where Congress directly controls funding formulas.

8. Methods: The study employs pooled cross-sectional time-series regression analyses using data from the U.S. Domestic Assistance Programs Database (1983–1990). Lee categorizes federal programs into redistributive, nondiscretionary distributive, and discretionary distributive types, analyzing the effects of Senate apportionment on per capita federal outlays while controlling for state-level needs such as income, unemployment, and population size.

9. Hypotheses:

- States that are overrepresented in the Senate receive more federal funds per capita than underrepresented states, particularly in nondiscretionary distributive policies.
- Redistributive policies, which are entitlement-driven and less influenced by geographic considerations, show minimal effects from Senate apportionment.
- Discretionary distributive programs also exhibit a small-state advantage, though to a lesser extent than nondiscretionary programs.

Each hypothesis is supported by the findings, with substantial small-state advantages observed in nondiscretionary distributive policies.

10. Main findings: Lee finds that Senate apportionment significantly influences the geographic distribution of federal funds, with overrepresented states receiving disproportionately higher per capita allocations. This effect is strongest in nondiscretionary distributive policies, where funding formulas favor small states. For example, small states like Wyoming received \$209 per capita annually under these programs, compared to \$132 for large states like California. The study also identifies moderate effects in discretionary distributive programs but finds no significant influence in redistributive policies. These patterns highlight how Senate dynamics lead to universalistic coalition-building that disproportionately benefits small states, particularly in areas such as transportation and environmental quality.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “The equal representation of states in the Senate grants enhanced power to senators from small states by comparison to a legislative chamber that apportions representatives according to population” (p. 35).
- “The institutional logic of coalition building in the Senate is likely to produce legislation disproportionately favorable to less populous states, even in the absence of overt conflict between large and small states” (p. 39).
- “In nondiscretionary distributive policies, Senate apportionment leaves its deepest imprint on public policy, as Congress makes explicit choices about how funds are allocated geographically” (p. 42).

### 1.9.4 Dyadic Representation Reappraised

Hill, K. Q., & Hurley, P. A. (1999). Dyadic Representation Reappraised [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 43(1), 109–137. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2991787>

1. **Citation key:** hill\_dyadic\_1999
2. **Author(s):** Kim Quaile Hill and Patricia A. Hurley
3. **Year:** 1999
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** dyadic representation, mass-elite linkages, party-defining issues, representation theory, LISREL modeling
6. **Summary:** Hill and Hurley revisit the theory of dyadic representation, arguing that mass-elite linkages vary by issue type. They propose that reciprocal linkages are likely on party-defining issues, one-way linkages from mass to elite on salient but non-party-defining issues, and no linkages on complex (hard) issues. Their study utilizes data from the 1958 American Representation Study and employs LISREL structural equation modeling to examine linkages for social welfare, civil rights, and foreign policy.
7. **Theory:** The authors develop a typology of issues to predict patterns of mass-elite linkages:
  - *Party-defining issues:* These exhibit reciprocal linkages as elite polarization clarifies mass preferences and constituents pressure elites to respond accordingly.
  - *Salient, non-party-defining issues:* These show one-way linkages from mass to elite due to electoral pressures on legislators.
  - *Hard issues:* These lack clear linkages because they involve technical complexity or limited public engagement.
 The theory emphasizes the evolution of issues over time, as well as elite and mass interaction in shaping policy representation.
8. **Methods:** The authors use a unique version of the 1958 American Representation Study, combining mass and elite survey data and roll-call voting records. They employ LISREL structural equation modeling to test hypotheses about linkage patterns across three issue areas: social welfare (party-defining), civil rights (salient but not party-defining in 1958), and foreign policy (hard issue). The LISREL models incorporate multiple indicators for latent variables like district preferences, legislator preferences, and roll-call liberalism.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Social welfare issues will exhibit reciprocal mass-elite linkages.
  - Civil rights issues will show a one-way linkage from mass to elite preferences.
  - Foreign policy issues will show no significant linkage between mass and elite preferences.
 All hypotheses are supported, with results varying across issue types.
10. **Main findings:** The analysis confirms distinct linkage patterns by issue type. Social welfare exhibits strong reciprocal linkages, with elite preferences influencing mass attitudes and vice versa. Civil rights, in its nascent stage as a salient issue in 1958, shows a significant one-way linkage from mass to elite, reflecting constituent-driven pressures on legislators. Foreign policy, characterized by technical complexity and limited public engagement, reveals no significant linkage between mass and elite preferences. The findings underscore the role of issue salience and party polarization in shaping the nature of representation.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "We argue that issues that function as main lines of cleavage between competing political parties should be characterized by reciprocal linkages between mass and elite preferences, while highly complex issues on which party distinctions are unclear should be characterized by no linkages between mass and elite" (p. 109).
  - "For the policy issue of social welfare, we find the hypothesized reciprocal relationship. For foreign policy, there is no link between mass and elite preferences, also as hypothesized. For civil rights, we find evidence of only a one-way linkage—from mass to elite opinion" (p. 126).
  - "Representation can be achieved in ways more complex than suggested by the delegate theory of representation, and it is no less representation for not having originated at the grass-roots level" (p. 128).

### 1.9.5 Sizing Up the Senate: The Unequal Consequences of Equal Representation

Lee, F. E., & Oppenheimer, B. I. (1999, October). *Sizing Up the Senate: The Unequal Consequences of Equal Representation* [Google-Books-ID: Agp7ZPLNGeUC]. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** lee\_sizing\_1999
2. **Author(s):** Frances E. Lee and Bruce I. Oppenheimer
3. **Year:** 1999
4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press
5. **Keywords:** Senate representation, state equality, federal funds, policymaking, distributive politics
6. **Summary:** Lee and Oppenheimer investigate the consequences of equal state representation in the U.S. Senate, particularly its effects on representation, elections, and policymaking. The book demonstrates how small states benefit disproportionately from federal resources and policy outcomes due to the Senate's apportionment rules. Through an analysis of Senate structure, election dynamics, and legislative behavior, the authors show how equal representation amplifies the influence of less populous states in ways that permeate all aspects of the institution's operation.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that the U.S. Senate's equal representation of states, regardless of population size, creates

structural inequities that shape representational and policy outcomes. This apportionment incentivizes Senators from small states to pursue distributive benefits for their constituents while also allowing them to exert outsized influence on party dynamics and federal spending. The theory emphasizes the historical contingency of Senate design and the institutional logic driving disproportionate benefits for small states.

**8. Methods:** The book employs historical analysis, institutional theory, and empirical data, including federal spending patterns and election results, to examine the implications of Senate apportionment. Case studies and statistical models are used to demonstrate the effects of representation on legislative behavior, committee dynamics, and federal resource allocation.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Senate apportionment disproportionately benefits small states in terms of federal funds and policymaking influence.
- Senators from small states have closer relationships with their constituents, enhancing their electoral security.
- Equal representation skews legislative coalitions and policy outputs to favor the interests of smaller states.

Each hypothesis is supported through detailed analysis, demonstrating the unique advantages conferred upon small states.

**10. Main findings:** The authors reveal that small states gain significantly from Senate apportionment. These advantages manifest in higher per capita federal spending and greater legislative influence. Small-state Senators frequently dominate service-oriented committees, allowing them to channel resources disproportionately to their constituencies. Furthermore, Senate elections in small states tend to be less competitive, as incumbents benefit from closer constituent relationships and lower campaign costs. The book concludes that these dynamics collectively reinforce inequities in representation and policymaking, challenging the ideal of equal democratic representation.

**11. Key Definitions:**

- *Equal representation*: The allocation of two Senate seats per state, regardless of population, as mandated by the U.S. Constitution.
- *Distributive politics*: The allocation of federal resources to specific constituencies, often influenced by legislative priorities and coalitions.
- *Service-oriented committees*: Congressional committees that focus on delivering benefits to constituents rather than shaping broad policy.

### 1.9.6 Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness

Jacobs, L. R., & Shapiro, R. Y. (2000a). Chapter 1. The Myth of Pandering and Theories of Political Motivation. *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democracy*. University of Chicago Press

Jacobs, L. R., & Shapiro, R. Y. (2000b). Chapter 2: Crafted Talk and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness. *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democracy*. University of Chicago Press

Jacobs, L. R., & Shapiro, R. Y. (2000c). Chapter 3. The New Democrats and the Crafting of Public Opinion. *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democracy*. University of Chicago Press

Jacobs, L. R., & Shapiro, R. Y. (2000d). Chapter 4. Storming the Bully Pulpit. *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democracy*. University of Chicago Press

Jacobs, L. R., & Shapiro, R. Y. (2000e). Chapter 9. Dilemmas of Democracy. *Politicians Don't Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democracy*. University of Chicago Press

**1. Citation key:** jacobs\_chapter\_2000-4, jacobs\_chapter\_2000-3, jacobs\_chapter\_2000-2, jacobs\_chapter\_2000-1, jacobs\_chapter\_2000

**2. Author(s):** Lawrence R. Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro

**3. Year:** 2000

**4. Publication:** University of Chicago Press

**5. Keywords:** political manipulation, public opinion, crafted talk, democratic responsiveness, policymaking, survey data

**6. Summary:** Jacobs and Shapiro's *Politicians Don't Pander* argues that the ideal of democratic responsiveness—the alignment of public policy with the preferences of the electorate—has been fundamentally undermined by strategic manipulation of public opinion. Politicians, rather than being guided by the will of the people, increasingly use polling and media to shape public opinion in ways that support their predetermined policy goals. By systematically examining survey data, archival records, and case studies of key policy initiatives, the authors reveal how modern political leaders prioritize elite-driven agendas over genuine responsiveness to public preferences, challenging long-held assumptions about the relationship between public opinion and policymaking.

**7. Theory:** The authors theorize a shift from a model of "democratic responsiveness" to one dominated by "crafted talk," wherein political leaders strategically manipulate public opinion to create the illusion of alignment between their policies and voter preferences. This shift is driven by:

- The professionalization of polling and media strategies, which provide politicians with precise tools to gauge and influence public attitudes.
- The increasing polarization of the electorate, which reduces the incentive for politicians to appeal broadly and instead encourages targeted messaging to partisan bases.

- Structural changes in the policymaking process, where political leaders use symbolic gestures to placate public opinion while pursuing elite-driven priorities.

These dynamics highlight a divergence between the rhetoric of democratic accountability and the realities of elite control, suggesting that public opinion is often a rhetorical tool rather than a guiding force in policymaking.

**8. Methods:** Jacobs and Shapiro adopt a mixed-methods approach to investigate their claims, combining quantitative analysis, archival research, and qualitative case studies. They analyze decades of survey data to identify trends in public opinion and its alignment with policy outcomes, focusing on key issues such as health care reform, economic policy, and welfare. Archival research, including internal documents from presidential administrations, reveals the strategic use of polling and media campaigns to shape public perceptions. Case studies of the Clinton administration's health care initiative and other major policy debates illustrate how leaders employ "crafted talk" to manage public opinion rather than respond to it. By integrating these methods, the authors provide a comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms through which political manipulation undermines democratic responsiveness.

**9. Hypotheses:** Jacobs and Shapiro propose a series of hypotheses to explain the decline in democratic responsiveness and the rise of elite-driven policymaking:

- Politicians do not use public opinion polls to align their policies with voter preferences but rather to craft messages that create the appearance of responsiveness while pursuing predetermined agendas. This hypothesis is supported by evidence of strategic polling practices and message development during major policy debates, such as the Clinton administration's health care reform efforts.
- The increasing professionalization of polling and media strategies enables politicians to manipulate public opinion more effectively, reducing the direct influence of voter preferences on policymaking. This hypothesis is grounded in the evolution of polling practices, which have shifted from measurement tools to strategic instruments for shaping public discourse.
- Polarization and ideological sorting among voters diminish the need for broad-based appeals, allowing politicians to focus on mobilizing partisan bases rather than responding to the median voter. This hypothesis is supported by evidence of declining ticket-splitting and increasing congruence between party identification and voting behavior.
- Symbolic gestures and rhetorical strategies serve as substitutes for substantive policy responsiveness, allowing politicians to placate public opinion without altering their policy priorities. This hypothesis is illustrated by case studies showing how symbolic responsiveness is used to deflect criticism and maintain public support.

**10. Main findings:** The book demonstrates that the traditional model of democratic responsiveness has been supplanted by strategies of manipulation and control. Politicians use polling not to align policies with public preferences but to craft messages that make their policies appear responsive. For example, the Clinton administration used polling extensively during the health care reform debate to shape the public narrative around their proposals, focusing on symbolic appeals rather than substantive policy changes. This pattern is replicated across other policy areas, where the rhetoric of responsiveness masks a deeper reality of elite-driven decision-making. The authors also highlight the role of polarization and partisan media in amplifying these dynamics, further reducing the capacity for genuine public influence on policymaking. Jacobs and Shapiro's analysis reveals a troubling erosion of democratic accountability in modern American politics. By exposing the prevalence of political manipulation and the strategic use of public opinion data, the authors challenge the foundational assumption that public preferences drive policymaking. Instead, they argue that the tools of democratic engagement have been co-opted to consolidate elite power, undermining the normative ideals of representative democracy. The book calls for renewed attention to the institutional and structural conditions that enable these practices, emphasizing the need for reforms to restore the balance between public influence and elite control in the policymaking process.

#### 11. Key Definitions:

- *Democratic responsiveness:* The alignment of public policy with the preferences of the electorate, reflecting the ideal of representative democracy.
- *Crafted talk:* A form of political communication that uses polling and media strategies to shape public opinion in ways that support elite policy goals, rather than responding to preexisting public preferences.
- *Symbolic responsiveness:* The use of rhetoric, gestures, or minor policy adjustments to create the appearance of alignment with public opinion, without substantive policy changes.
- *Elite-driven policymaking:* A process where political leaders prioritize their own agendas or those of influential interest groups over the expressed preferences of the general public.
- *Partisan polarization:* The growing ideological divide between political parties, which reduces the incentive for cross-party appeals and increases the focus on mobilizing partisan bases.

#### 1.9.7 Lipstick and Logarithms: Gender, Institutional Context, and Representative Bureaucracy

Keiser, L. R., Wilkins, V. M., Meier, K. J., & Holland, C. A. (2002). Lipstick and Logarithms: Gender, Institutional Context, and Representative Bureaucracy. *American Political Science Review*, 96(3), 553–564. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055402000321>

1. Citation key: keiser\_lipstick\_2002

2. Author(s): Lael R. Keiser, Vicky M. Wilkins, Kenneth J. Meier, and Catherine A. Holland

3. Year: 2002

4. Publication: American Political Science Review

5. **Keywords:** representative bureaucracy, gender, active representation, passive representation, institutional context
6. **Summary:** Keiser et al. examine the conditions under which passive representation (the demographic representativeness of bureaucrats) translates into active representation (policy outcomes that benefit underrepresented groups). Using the context of education, they find that gender diversity among bureaucrats can lead to improved policy outcomes for women, specifically in the case of female students' performance in mathematics. Their findings highlight the role of institutional context, such as discretion, hierarchy, and stratification, in mediating the relationship between passive and active representation.

7. **Theory:** The authors develop a framework to explain when and how passive representation leads to active representation, particularly in the context of gender. They theorize that the link between passive and active representation is influenced by several institutional and contextual factors:

- Bureaucratic discretion is essential, as constrained bureaucrats have limited opportunities to affect policy outcomes.
- The salience of the policy issue to the demographic characteristic is critical for fostering representation.
- Institutional structures, such as hierarchy and stratification, shape whether bureaucrats identify with their demographic group or prioritize their organizational role.

They argue that gender representation is more likely in flat organizations with high levels of discretion and in agencies where gendered issues are central to the organizational mission.

8. **Methods:** The study uses data from 607 Texas high schools (1995–1998) to test their framework. The authors conduct regression analyses to explore the relationship between the percentage of female math teachers and female students' math performance. They also investigate the mediating effects of institutional variables such as hierarchy (measured by the ratio of teachers to administrators) and stratification (the percentage of female administrators). Control variables include poverty, race, class size, teacher salaries, and task difficulty, ensuring robustness in their findings. The study employs both organizational-level and individual-level analyses to capture the dynamics of representative bureaucracy.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Female math teachers positively influence female students' math performance, especially in schools with low hierarchy and high levels of female administrators.
- Institutional context, including stratification and hierarchy, moderates the relationship between passive and active representation.
- Representative bureaucracy is more likely to occur in settings with discretionary decision-making and gendered policy issues.

These hypotheses are largely confirmed by the empirical analysis.

10. **Main findings:** The study demonstrates that female math teachers significantly improve female students' math performance, with stronger effects in less hierarchical organizations and those with a higher percentage of female administrators. For example, a one-percentage-point increase in female math teachers corresponds to a 0.055 percentage-point increase in girls' math pass rates on exit exams, which represents a meaningful reduction in gender gaps. Furthermore, institutional factors such as flat organizational structures and stratification enhance the likelihood of active representation. The findings underscore the importance of contextualizing gender representation within the broader institutional environment.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "The null finding that there is no link between passive and active representation with respect to gender is flawed because it does not explicitly incorporate the institutional and political context of the bureaucratic experience into empirical analysis" (p. 555).
- "In schools with more female administrators, female teachers were associated with higher ACT, SAT, and advanced placement rates for girls" (p. 562).
- "Passive representation can lead to active representation for gender in public education, and the benefits of diversity go beyond providing equal opportunity to individuals" (p. 562).

#### 1.9.8 Rethinking Representation

Mansbridge, J. (2003). Rethinking Representation. *American Political Science Review*, 97(4), 515–528. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055403000856>

1. **Citation key:** mansbridge\_rethinking\_2003
2. **Author(s):** Jane Mansbridge
3. **Year:** 2003
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** representation, promissory representation, anticipatory representation, gyroscopic representation, surrogate representation, democratic accountability
6. **Summary:** Mansbridge critiques traditional theories of representation, which emphasize promissory representation—where representatives make and fulfill promises to their constituents—and introduces three additional forms: anticipatory, gyroscopic, and surrogate representation. These alternative forms reflect how representatives navigate their roles in contexts of uncertainty, evolving preferences, and broader systemic demands, requiring a shift from dyadic to systemic and deliberative accountability.

**7. Theory:** Mansbridge's theoretical framework expands the concept of representation beyond the traditional dyadic accountability model:

- **Promissory representation** involves fulfilling campaign promises and aligns with traditional principal-agent models.
- **Anticipatory representation** focuses on representatives acting in ways that align with what they believe constituents will want in the future.
- **Gyroscopic representation** centers on representatives who act based on their internal principles and values, chosen by voters for their predictability.
- **Surrogate representation** addresses the representation of individuals outside a representative's formal constituency, often tied to shared identity or ideological commitments.

Mansbridge argues for evaluating these forms through systemic and deliberative criteria rather than individual accountability, recognizing that representation encompasses a spectrum of practices with plural normative standards.

**8. Methods:** The article is primarily a theoretical exploration, synthesizing normative theory and empirical insights. Mansbridge draws from a wide array of existing literature, including political theory, empirical studies, and case examples, to illustrate the practical implications of each form of representation. Historical and contemporary examples are used to ground the theoretical distinctions, and a normative framework is constructed to evaluate the systemic legitimacy of different representational forms.

**9. Hypotheses:** Although not explicitly stated as hypotheses, Mansbridge suggests that:

- Traditional promissory representation inadequately captures the full scope of democratic representation.
- Alternative forms like anticipatory, gyroscopic, and surrogate representation are essential for understanding how representatives act in practice.
- Evaluative criteria for representation must move from individual accountability to systemic and deliberative metrics.

These propositions are supported through theoretical argumentation and illustrative examples.

**10. Main findings:** Mansbridge concludes that democratic representation must be understood as a multifaceted process. Traditional promissory models are insufficient for capturing the complexities of representative behavior in modern democracies. Anticipatory representation emphasizes future-oriented accountability, while gyroscopic representation relies on the intrinsic values of representatives. Surrogate representation highlights the role of representatives who act for individuals outside their electoral constituency. These forms necessitate systemic and deliberative criteria for evaluating their democratic legitimacy, focusing on inclusiveness, deliberative quality, and proportional representation of conflicting interests and perspectives.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "None of these more recently recognized forms meets the criteria for democratic accountability developed for promissory representation, yet each generates a set of normative criteria by which it can be judged" (p. 515).
- "Anticipatory representation directs empirical attention away from the relation between Time 1 (the authorizing election) and Time 2 (the representative's period of service) and toward the relations that arise between the beginning of Time 2 and Time 3 (the next election)" (p. 517).
- "Surrogate representation must meet the criteria for proportional representation of interests on relatively conflictual issues (an aggregative criterion) and adequate representation of perspectives on matters of both conflict and more common interest (a deliberative criterion)" (p. 524).

#### 1.9.9 Manufactured Responsiveness: The Impact of State Electoral Laws on Unified Party Control of the Presidency and House of Representatives, 1840–1940

Engstrom, E. J., & Kernell, S. (2005). Manufactured Responsiveness: The Impact of State Electoral Laws on Unified Party Control of the Presidency and House of Representatives, 1840–1940. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(3), 531–549. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2005.00140.x>

**1. Citation key:** engstrom\_manufactured\_2005

**2. Author(s):** Erik J. Engstrom and Samuel Kernell

**3. Year:** 2005

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** electoral laws, unified government, gerrymandering, presidential coattails, congressional elections

**6. Summary:** Engstrom and Kernell explore how state electoral institutions shaped the responsiveness of nineteenth-century U.S. elections, often producing unified government control of the presidency and House of Representatives. They argue that institutional mechanisms like consolidated party ballots and strategic gerrymandering amplified presidential coattails, resulting in pronounced partisan swings in congressional outcomes. Their analysis traces the evolution of these practices and their subsequent decline in the early twentieth century as electoral reforms dismantled these mechanisms.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose that the highly responsive electoral outcomes of the nineteenth century were manufactured through two key institutional mechanisms:

- **Consolidated Party Ballots:** Ballots that linked presidential and congressional candidates of the same party, encouraging straight-ticket voting and amplifying coattail effects.
- **Efficient Gerrymandering:** Deliberate drawing of congressional districts to maximize the dominant party's seat

gains by narrowly winning multiple districts.

These mechanisms worked synergistically to amplify slight shifts in presidential preferences into large swings in House representation. The authors contend that the dismantling of these institutions, through reforms like the Australian ballot, reduced electoral responsiveness in the twentieth century.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a pooled time-series cross-sectional analysis of state-level election data from 37 non-Southern states between 1840 and 1940. Key variables include:

- **Dependent variable:** The percentage of state House seats won by the Democratic Party.
- **Independent variables:** Presidential vote shares, ballot types (consolidated vs. reformed), and districting strategies.

The authors utilize logistic transformations to estimate swing ratios and analyze how different institutional arrangements affected vote-to-seat conversion. They incorporate state fixed effects and lagged dependent variables to control for temporal and geographic variations.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Consolidated party ballots amplify presidential coattails, leading to greater alignment between presidential and congressional outcomes.
- Efficient gerrymandering maximizes swing ratios by creating narrowly contested districts.
- The adoption of the Australian ballot and other electoral reforms reduces responsiveness by decoupling presidential and congressional voting patterns.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with findings showing significant effects of institutional arrangements on electoral responsiveness.

**10. Main findings:** Engstrom and Kernell demonstrate that nineteenth-century elections were uniquely responsive due to state-level electoral institutions. Consolidated ballots and strategic gerrymandering magnified presidential coattails, resulting in frequent unified government control. For example, in the pre-reform era, swing ratios were significantly higher (4.64) compared to the post-reform period (3.48), reflecting the decline in responsiveness. Ballot reforms, including the adoption of the Australian ballot, disrupted these mechanisms by facilitating split-ticket voting and reducing the predictability of electoral outcomes. The analysis underscores the role of institutional design in shaping electoral outcomes, challenging conventional theories that attribute responsiveness solely to voter preferences or nationalization.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Ballot reforms weakened the link between presidential and congressional voting, creating a decoupling of coattails and reducing the responsiveness of elections to marginal shifts in voter preferences” (p. 537).
- “Our findings remind us that in addition to voter preferences and party platforms, one must also take into account such seemingly mundane matters as how and when votes are cast and where they are distributed across districts” (p. 544).
- “In the consolidated party ballot and efficient gerrymandering, nineteenth-century politicians opted for institutions that magnified slight swings in presidential preferences into pronounced shifts of fortunes in House elections” (p. 545).

#### 1.9.10 Inc incumbency, Redistricting, and the Decline of Competition in U.S. House Elections

Abramowitz, A. I., Alexander, B., & Gunning, M. (2006). Inc incumbency, Redistricting, and the Decline of Competition in U.S. House Elections. *The Journal of Politics*, 68(1), 75–88. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00371.x>

**1. Citation key:** abramowitz\_inc incumbency\_2006

**2. Author(s):** Alan I. Abramowitz, Brad Alexander, and Matthew Gunning

**3. Year:** 2006

**4. Publication:** The Journal of Politics

**5. Keywords:** incumbency, redistricting, partisan polarization, U.S. House elections, competition

**6. Summary:** Abramowitz, Alexander, and Gunning analyze the decline in competition in U.S. House elections over 50 years, focusing on incumbent reelection rates, close race percentages, and electoral outcomes. They test three hypotheses—redistricting, partisan polarization, and incumbency—to explain this decline, finding support for partisan polarization and incumbency, but not redistricting. The authors argue that demographic shifts and ideological realignments, coupled with increasing campaign finance disparities, have led to fewer competitive districts and reduced electoral competition.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose three theoretical explanations for declining competition in U.S. House elections:

- **Redistricting Hypothesis:** Declining competition is due to partisan gerrymandering, which creates safer districts for incumbents.
- **Partisan Polarization Hypothesis:** Competition declines because of increasing ideological polarization and geographic sorting, reducing the number of marginal districts.
- **Inc incumbency Hypothesis:** The advantages of incumbency, including fundraising and electoral experience, deter challengers and solidify incumbents’ positions, even in marginal districts.

The authors suggest that these mechanisms work in tandem to reinforce the incumbency advantage and diminish competitiveness.

**8. Methods:** The study uses data on U.S. House elections from 1946 to 2004, examining measures such as: Incumbent reelection rates and the percentage of close races (decided by less than 10 percentage points), changes in district partisanship using normalized presidential vote data, and challenger campaign spending from 1972 to 2002. Statistical analyses include regression and path analyses to assess the direct and indirect effects of district partisanship, incumbency, and campaign spending on electoral outcomes. The authors disaggregate their analysis by decade and district type, distinguishing between safe, marginal, and high-risk districts to identify broader trends in electoral competitiveness.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- If the redistricting hypothesis is correct, the number of safe districts should increase significantly following redistricting cycles.
- If the partisan polarization hypothesis is correct, the number of safe districts should increase steadily over time, irrespective of redistricting.
- If the incumbency hypothesis is correct, competition in marginal districts should decline due to the growing financial and institutional advantages of incumbents.

The analysis confirms the partisan polarization and incumbency hypotheses while finding little support for the redistricting hypothesis.

**10. Main findings:** The authors demonstrate that the decline in competition is primarily driven by increasing partisan polarization and the financial advantages of incumbents. Redistricting has minimal direct impact on the number of safe or marginal districts. Instead, demographic changes, ideological sorting, and campaign finance trends have reduced the number of high-risk districts, leaving incumbents increasingly entrenched. For instance, the percentage of competitive races in marginal districts fell dramatically over the study period, with only 11% of contests in marginal districts decided by less than 10 points by 2002–2004. Additionally, challengers in high-risk districts faced increasing financial disadvantages, with only 7% of races being highly competitive when challengers spent less than \$500,000.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “The increasing correlation among district partisanship, incumbency, and campaign spending means that the effects of these three variables tend to reinforce each other to a greater extent than in the past” (p. 85).
- “Redistricting appears to have little or nothing to do with this trend: almost all of the change in district partisanship has occurred between redistricting cycles” (p. 86).
- “The decreasing proportion of Democrats and Republicans representing marginal or high-risk districts means that there are fewer members who have an incentive to cross party lines on issues in order to appeal to supporters of the opposing party” (p. 87).

### 1.9.11 It's Nothing Personal: The Decline of the Incumbency Advantage in US House Elections

Jacobson, G. C. (2015b). It's Nothing Personal: The Decline of the Incumbency Advantage in US House Elections [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 77(3), 861–873. <https://doi.org/10.1086/681670>

**1. Citation key:** jacobson\_its\_2015

**2. Author(s):** Gary C. Jacobson

**3. Year:** 2015

**4. Publication:** The Journal of Politics

**5. Keywords:** incumbency advantage, congressional elections, nationalization, party loyalty, polarization

**6. Summary:** Jacobson examines the decline of the incumbency advantage in U.S. House elections, attributing it to increasing party loyalty, polarization, and the nationalization of electoral politics. This trend has reduced the ability of incumbents to maintain support in districts leaning toward the opposing party, as straight-ticket voting and presidential approval have become stronger determinants of electoral outcomes. The analysis highlights the systemic shift from candidate-centered to party-centered elections.

**7. Theory:** The article posits that the incumbency advantage has diminished because of:

- **Rising Party Loyalty:** Voters increasingly align their congressional choices with party preferences, reducing cross-party support for incumbents.
- **Nationalization of Elections:** Congressional elections are increasingly influenced by presidential approval and national party dynamics rather than local or individual candidate factors.
- **Polarization:** The electorate has become more ideologically consistent, making partisan identity a stronger determinant of voting behavior.

Jacobson argues that these changes have weakened incumbents' ability to cultivate a personal vote, especially in districts unfavorable to their party.

**8. Methods:** The study uses aggregate election data and individual-level survey data to analyze trends in the incumbency advantage from the 1950s to 2014. Key measures include:

- The incumbency advantage, estimated using the Gelman-King index and other traditional measures (e.g., sophomore surge and slurge).
- Party loyalty, ticket-splitting rates, and congruence between House votes and presidential approval ratings.
- Variance shared between presidential and congressional votes at the district level.

Regression models and time-series analyses assess how these factors have evolved over time, with attention to regional and partisan variations. The study also examines campaign finance data to understand the role of challenger spending

in reducing the incumbency advantage.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- The incumbency advantage has declined due to increasing party loyalty and reduced ticket splitting.
- The nationalization of elections has made presidential approval a stronger determinant of congressional election outcomes.
- Polarization has reduced the ability of incumbents to attract cross-party support.

The analysis confirms all three hypotheses, highlighting a systemic shift in electoral dynamics.

**10. Main findings:** Jacobson finds that the incumbency advantage has fallen to levels not seen since the 1950s, primarily because of rising party loyalty and the nationalization of elections. Ticket-splitting has declined dramatically, with 2012 showing the lowest rates in decades. The correlation between presidential and congressional votes has reached record highs, indicating increased electoral coherence. Incumbents now struggle to win districts favoring the opposing party, as voters are less influenced by individual candidate traits and more by party identity. For example, by 2014, only five incumbents won districts leaning toward the rival party, compared to over 50 in the 1970s and 1980s. The study also notes the growing role of independent expenditures and outside spending in targeting vulnerable incumbents.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "The incumbency advantage rose in parallel with a steady decline in party loyalty and rise in ticket splitting from the 1950s through the early 1980s; since then, it has fallen in near lockstep with a rise in party loyalty and straight-ticket voting" (p. 862).
- "The diminishing electoral impact of House incumbency is illustrated in yet another way by the fates of House members swept into office by strong national tides who took seats from the rival party in districts favoring that party" (p. 868).
- "The decline in the incumbency advantage, combined with the Republican structural advantage, has enabled Republicans to win the House in eight of the 10 elections held since 1994 despite losing the popular vote for president in every election during this period except 2004" (p. 871).

## 1.10 Race and Gender

### 1.10.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Research on race and gender in American politics has shifted from descriptive accounts of disparities to nuanced theoretical and empirical examinations of structural inequality, intersectionality, and identity politics. Foundational works on racial attitudes, such as Bobo's concept of racial hegemony and Sears' symbolic racism, examine how dominant group interests shape resistance to policies promoting substantive equality. Concurrently, gender-focused studies, including those by Mansbridge and Swers, highlight the deliberative and policy impacts of descriptive representation while exploring the intersectional dynamics of race and gender. Recent scholarship has increasingly integrated intersectionality, exploring how overlapping identities influence political behavior and systemic inequalities in representation.
- **Racial Attitudes and Group Dynamics:** Bobo's theory of racial hegemony posits that white opposition to racial policies stems from a rational defense of group advantage rather than emotional hostility. This perspective contrasts with Sears' concept of symbolic racism, which integrates subtle antiblack sentiment with traditional American values like individualism. Both frameworks demonstrate how systemic inequalities persist despite public endorsement of abstract racial equality. Symbolic racism, for instance, explains opposition to redistributive policies like affirmative action as a defense of meritocracy, masking underlying racial biases. These foundational theories highlight how dominant groups justify maintaining privilege through evolving ideological constructs.
- **Intersectionality in Political Representation:** The intersection of race and gender is central to understanding descriptive representation and its impact on substantive policymaking. Mansbridge's contingent theory of descriptive representation emphasizes its value in contexts of mistrust and uncrystallized interests, particularly for historically marginalized groups. Similarly, Swers demonstrates that women in Congress prioritize issues like health and education, amplifying representation for women's interests. Intersectionality further complicates these dynamics, as Holman and Schneider reveal that racial and gender identities interact with framing effects to shape political ambition differently across demographic groups. For instance, demand-side frames emphasizing structural barriers increase ambition among white and Asian women, while Black women respond more positively to supply-side narratives.
- **Identity Politics and Polarization:** Tesler's "spillover of racialization hypothesis" illustrates how racial identity shapes partisan polarization in the Obama era, transforming non-racial issues into racially polarized debates. Jardina extends this discussion by examining white identity politics, arguing that demographic and cultural shifts have heightened perceptions of threat among white Americans, fostering solidarity and resistance to policies perceived as undermining their group status. Similarly, Cassese and Barnes explore how whiteness and sexism intersect to influence white women's political behavior, particularly in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. These studies underscore the centrality of identity in shaping public opinion and partisan alignments.
- **Methodological Innovations:** Recent studies have adopted innovative methods to explore the subjective and structural dimensions of race and gender in politics. Wong et al.'s map-based approach redefines racial context by capturing subjective perceptions of community boundaries, challenging reliance on administrative units. Pérez's experimental design reveals how xenophobic rhetoric shapes Latino political attitudes, demonstrating divergent responses based on identity salience and acculturation levels. These methodological advances deepen our understanding of how identity

and context shape political behavior.

- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Key debates in this field include the role of racial and gender identity in sustaining or mitigating systemic inequalities, the impact of intersectionality on political behavior, and the effectiveness of descriptive representation in achieving substantive equality. Future research may focus on the implications of digital mobilization for identity politics, the evolving role of whiteness in a diversifying electorate, and the intersections of race, gender, and class in shaping policy preferences. Additionally, the growing prominence of policy-focused approaches offers opportunities to examine how institutional structures perpetuate or disrupt inequalities, providing a framework for addressing challenges in representation and equity.

### 1.10.2 Racial Hegemony: Group Conflict, Prejudice, and the Paradox of American Racial Attitudes

Bobo, L. D. (1984). *Racial Hegemony: Group Conflict, Prejudice, and the Paradox of American Racial Attitudes* [Ph.D.]. University of Michigan [ISBN: 9798204501713]. Retrieved November 14, 2024, from <https://www.proquest.com/docview/303293066/abstract/A216804329EF4458PQ/1>

1. **Citation key:** bobo\_racial\_1984
2. **Author(s):** Lawrence Douglas Bobo
3. **Year:** 1984
4. **Publication:** Doctoral Dissertation, University of Michigan
5. **Keywords:** racial hegemony, group conflict, symbolic racism, racial attitudes, prejudice
6. **Summary:** This dissertation examines the paradox of contemporary racial attitudes in the United States, where progress in supporting abstract principles of racial equality contrasts sharply with resistance to policies aimed at implementing those principles. Bobo critiques traditional prejudice-based frameworks and emphasizes the concept of racial hegemony, proposing that dominant group attitudes reflect efforts to justify and maintain group advantage. The work integrates perspectives on group conflict, symbolic racism, and structural inequality to explore the persistence of racial disparities despite changing public attitudes.
7. **Theory:** Bobo's racial hegemony thesis posits that dominant group attitudes are shaped by efforts to sustain structural inequality and group advantage. Drawing from Gramscian notions of hegemony, Bobo argues that white opposition to policies such as busing and affirmative action stems less from emotional hostility or traditional prejudice and more from the defense of dominant group privileges. The theory integrates elements of symbolic racism, where opposition to racial policies is framed in terms of individualism and meritocracy, masking underlying group interests. The study situates these attitudes within a broader historical and cultural context, highlighting how dominant ideologies evolve to reconcile inequalities with democratic ideals.
8. **Methods:** Bobo employs survey data, including items from the 1972 and 1976 National Election Studies and the 1974 Fall Omnibus Study, to analyze white attitudes toward racial policies. He uses factor analysis to identify dimensions of racial attitudes and tests competing models of symbolic racism and group conflict. Logistic regression models are applied to assess the influence of political ideology, demographic factors, and objective interests on opposition to policies like school busing and affirmative action.
9. **Hypotheses:** The dissertation tests the hypothesis that white opposition to racial policies reflects group conflict dynamics rather than traditional prejudice. Specifically:
  - White opposition to busing and affirmative action is predicted to be rooted in group interest and the defense of racial hegemony.
  - Symbolic racism will serve as a key mediator, linking broader ideological commitments to opposition to specific racial policies.
- These hypotheses are largely confirmed, with results supporting the role of group conflict and symbolic racism in shaping racial attitudes.
10. **Main findings:** Bobo's analysis reveals that white attitudes toward racial policies are driven by a desire to maintain group advantage rather than by emotional hostility or irrational prejudice. Support for abstract principles of racial equality, such as school integration, is high, but enthusiasm wanes for policies perceived as threatening white privilege. The study highlights the enduring influence of structural inequality and cultural norms in shaping racial attitudes. Symbolic racism, framed around meritocratic and individualistic values, emerges as a critical factor, reflecting a rationalization of resistance to policy changes that challenge racial hierarchies.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The thesis of the present research supports the explanation of the gap between principles and implementation: dominant group attitudes represent efforts to justify and defend an advantaged position" (p. 4).
  - "White opposition to busing or affirmative action is not best understood as an emotional and aversive reaction to contact with a social group they have been raised to dislike. Such opposition is, rather, the natural outgrowth of a set of largely segregated and unequal social relations" (p. 5).
  - "A dominant group seeks to articulate a set of beliefs that persuade themselves as well as others that their privileged status is for the general good" (p. 21).

### 1.10.3 Symbolic Racism

Sears, D. O. (1988). Symbolic Racism. P. A. Katz & D. A. Taylor (Eds.), *Eliminating Racism: Profiles in Controversy* (pp. 53–84). Springer US. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-0818-6\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-0818-6_4)

1. **Citation key:** sears\_symbolic\_1988
2. **Author(s):** David O. Sears
3. **Year:** 1988
4. **Publication:** In P. A. Katz et al. (Eds.), *Eliminating Racism* (Springer)
5. **Keywords:** symbolic racism, racial attitudes, individualism, race relations, prejudice
6. **Summary:** Sears introduces the concept of symbolic racism to explain the evolving nature of racial attitudes in the United States. He argues that symbolic racism blends antiblack sentiment with traditional American values, particularly individualism. This form of racism does not overtly oppose racial equality in principle but resists policies aimed at achieving substantive equality. The chapter reflects on over a decade of research on symbolic racism, its critiques, and its utility in understanding contemporary racial dynamics.
7. **Theory:** Symbolic racism is rooted in the tension between traditional American values and the societal changes required to achieve racial equality. Sears contends that symbolic racism reflects a subtle form of prejudice that opposes measures like affirmative action and busing under the guise of defending individualism and meritocracy. Unlike traditional forms of racism, symbolic racism does not openly reject racial equality but resists policy interventions perceived as disrupting social norms or unfairly benefiting minority groups. This perspective highlights the interplay of cultural values and racial biases in shaping political attitudes.
8. **Methods:** The concept was developed through empirical analysis of public opinion surveys and experimental studies. Sears examines the relationship between racial attitudes and support for racial policies, using data from national surveys conducted during the 1960s and 1970s. These studies assess how symbolic racism mediates the impact of political ideology, demographic factors, and regional differences on policy preferences.
9. **Hypotheses:** The chapter posits that symbolic racism:
  - Predicts opposition to racial policies more strongly than traditional forms of prejudice.
  - Emerges from the intersection of antiblack sentiment and values such as individualism and self-reliance.
 These hypotheses are supported by evidence showing that symbolic racism consistently correlates with resistance to policies like affirmative action, even among individuals who endorse abstract principles of racial equality.
10. **Main findings:** Sears finds that symbolic racism serves as a potent predictor of opposition to racial policies, independent of traditional prejudice or political ideology. It is particularly influential in shaping public attitudes toward policies perceived as redistributive or preferential. The persistence of symbolic racism underscores the challenges of achieving substantive racial equality in a society that values individualism and meritocracy. The study highlights the nuanced ways in which cultural values and biases influence political behavior and public opinion.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Egalitarian public policies were being implemented on a massive scale, backed by overwhelming white support for the formal principles of racial equality. But there were clear warning signs of widespread opposition to further implementation" (p. 53).
  - "We proposed that a new form of racism had emerged in white America, which we termed symbolic racism. This was not racism composed of derogations of and antagonism toward blacks per se, or of support for formal inequality. Rather, it blended some antiblack feeling with the finest and proudest of traditional American values, particularly individualism" (p. 54).
  - "Symbolic racism was introduced to explain a rather specific phenomenon: the political role of whites' racial attitudes" (p. 54).

#### 1.10.4 Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics

Dawson, M. C. (1994). *Behind the Mule: Race and Class in African-American Politics*. Princeton University Press

1. **Citation key:** dawson\_behind\_1994
2. **Author(s):** Michael C. Dawson
3. **Year:** 1994
4. **Publication:** Princeton University Press
5. **Keywords:** race, class, Black utility heuristic, linked fate, political behavior
6. **Summary:** Dawson examines the interplay between race and class in shaping African-American political behavior. He introduces the concept of the Black Utility Heuristic (BUH), which posits that African-Americans evaluate politics through a group-centric lens due to historical and ongoing racial discrimination. The book explores the conditions under which class differences might weaken this unity, while also discussing how institutions within the Black community sustain collective political behavior.
7. **Theory:** The central argument revolves around the Black Utility Heuristic, which suggests that African-Americans perceive their individual well-being as linked to the broader status of the Black community. Dawson posits that this perspective emerges from systemic racial discrimination that affects all class levels. Institutions like Black churches and civil rights organizations reinforce this shared perspective, maintaining political unity despite economic stratification. However, Dawson also theorizes that increasing class divergence could eventually weaken this heuristic.
8. **Methods:** Dawson employs survey data from the 1984 and 1988 *National Black Election Studies* (NBES) to test the Black Utility Heuristic. He analyzes responses to questions about linked fate, economic disparities, and political preferences, controlling for variables such as income, education, and geographic location. The book combines quantitative data analysis with qualitative insights to explore how race and class interact in shaping political behavior.

**9. Hypotheses:** Dawson hypothesizes that:

- African-Americans maintain political unity due to a shared perception of racial linked fate, regardless of class differences.
- Class differences will become more politically salient only if institutional and social networks within the Black community weaken.

These hypotheses are supported by empirical data, which show strong levels of linked fate and consistent political behavior across economic strata.

**10. Main findings:** The study confirms that the perception of linked fate is a powerful determinant of African-American political behavior. Approximately two-thirds of Black respondents in the NBES expressed a sense of linked fate, demonstrating that race remains a unifying factor despite growing class stratification. Dawson argues that the strength of institutions like Black churches and media sustains this unity. However, he warns that the increasing economic divide could challenge this collective identity in the future, particularly if institutional supports weaken or racial discrimination becomes less overt.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The Black Utility Heuristic helps explain why African-Americans have remained politically unified despite growing class stratification" (p. 136).
- "Linked fate remains a central mechanism through which African-Americans evaluate political issues, reflecting the enduring impact of systemic racial discrimination" (p. 138).
- "As long as institutions within the Black community remain robust, the sense of linked fate is likely to persist, even in the face of economic divergence" (p. 211).

#### 1.10.5 Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent "Yes"

Mansbridge, J. (1999). Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women? A Contingent "Yes" [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 61(3), 628–657. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2647821>

**1. Citation key:** mansbridge\_should\_1999

**2. Author(s):** Jane Mansbridge

**3. Year:** 1999

**4. Publication:** The Journal of Politics

**5. Keywords:** descriptive representation, mistrust, deliberation, group interests, democracy

**6. Summary:** Mansbridge argues that disadvantaged groups benefit from descriptive representation in specific historical and institutional contexts. Descriptive representation involves representatives who share the experiences and characteristics of their constituents. This type of representation is particularly valuable in addressing group mistrust, uncristallized interests, historical subordination, and low de facto legitimacy. The article explores the conditions under which descriptive representation enhances substantive representation and legitimizes governance.

**7. Theory:** The theory centers on the deliberative and symbolic roles of descriptive representation in advancing democratic principles. Mansbridge posits that shared experiences between representatives and constituents improve communication, trust, and policy deliberation. In contexts of historical discrimination and systemic exclusion, descriptive representation helps reconstruct social meanings of equality and governance capability. The approach also counters essentialism by emphasizing the contingent, rather than absolute, necessity of descriptive representation.

**8. Methods:** The article employs a normative and theoretical analysis, supported by empirical examples, to evaluate the costs and benefits of descriptive representation. Mansbridge draws on historical and contemporary case studies, such as the role of African American legislators in the United States and the impact of women representatives on gender-related policies. She synthesizes insights from political theory, history, and empirical political science to outline the practical implications of her argument.

**9. Hypotheses:** Mansbridge hypothesizes that descriptive representation:

- Enhances communication and trust in contexts of group mistrust.
- Promotes substantive representation by addressing uncristallized interests.
- Contributes to the reconstruction of social meanings in historically marginalized groups.
- Increases the de facto legitimacy of democratic institutions.

These hypotheses are supported through a combination of normative reasoning and illustrative examples.

**10. Main findings:** Mansbridge concludes that descriptive representation plays a critical role in specific contexts. It bridges communication gaps in situations of group mistrust, as seen in the example of African American legislators serving as conduits for Black constituents. Descriptive representation also facilitates deliberation on emerging issues, providing a voice to historically excluded perspectives. Furthermore, it reconstructs the social meaning of political equality and enhances institutional legitimacy by visibly incorporating marginalized groups into governance. While acknowledging the risks of essentialism and reduced accountability, Mansbridge argues that these costs are outweighed by the benefits in certain contexts.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "In contexts of group mistrust and uncristallized interests, the better communication and experiential knowledge of descriptive representatives enhances their substantive representation of the group's interests by improving the quality of deliberation" (p. 629).
- "The deliberative function of democracy requires descriptive representation far more than does the aggregative

function. It is primarily when we ask how to improve deliberation... that we discover the virtue of shared experience, which lies at the core of descriptive representation" (p. 630).

- "The presence or absence in the ruling assembly... of a proportional number of individuals carrying the group's ascriptive characteristics shapes the social meaning of those characteristics in a way that affects most bearers of those characteristics in the polity" (p. 649).

#### 1.10.6 Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy

Gilens, M. (2000, October). *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*. University of Chicago Press. Retrieved November 14, 2024, from <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/W/bo3633527.html>

1. **Citation key:** gilens\_why\_2000
2. **Author(s):** Martin Gilens
3. **Year:** 2000
4. **Publication:** Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy (University of Chicago Press)
5. **Keywords:** welfare policy, racial attitudes, public opinion, media representation, antipoverty programs
6. **Summary:** Gilens examines the intersection of race, media representation, and public attitudes toward welfare policy in the United States. He argues that public hostility to welfare stems from racially charged stereotypes perpetuated by the media, which portray welfare recipients as undeserving and disproportionately Black. These stereotypes, rather than actual program characteristics or cost considerations, drive opposition to welfare. Gilens uses survey data, media content analysis, and historical context to demonstrate how racialized narratives about welfare have shaped public opinion and policy decisions.
7. **Theory:** Gilens advances the theory that racial attitudes, specifically stereotypes about Black Americans, significantly influence public opposition to welfare. He posits that public opinion is shaped less by the principle of welfare assistance and more by perceptions of who benefits from these programs. According to Gilens, media representations contribute to this perception by disproportionately depicting African Americans as welfare recipients, thereby reinforcing stereotypes of dependency and undeservingness. He critiques alternative theories, such as symbolic racism and self-interest, arguing that they inadequately explain the strength of racialized opposition to welfare.
8. **Methods:** Gilens employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analyses. He utilizes:
  - *Survey data analysis:* Examines attitudes toward welfare using data from the General Social Survey (GSS), National Election Studies (NES), and other national polls to identify correlations between racial attitudes and welfare preferences.
  - *Content analysis:* Analyzes media portrayals of welfare recipients in print and television news from 1967 to 1992. This includes a coding of images to measure the racial composition of individuals depicted in stories about poverty and welfare.
  - *Comparative analysis:* Contrasts welfare programs perceived as "deserving" (e.g., Social Security) with "undeserving" programs (e.g., Aid to Families with Dependent Children) to contextualize how racialized narratives differentiate these programs.
9. **Hypotheses:** Gilens hypothesizes that:
  - **H1:** Racial attitudes are the strongest predictors of opposition to welfare, surpassing economic self-interest or general ideological conservatism.
  - **H2:** Media portrayals of welfare recipients contribute to the public's racialized perceptions of welfare dependency.
  - **H3:** Welfare programs perceived as benefiting minorities face greater public opposition compared to those perceived as universally applicable.
 His findings confirm all three hypotheses, demonstrating the centrality of racialized stereotypes in shaping public opinion on welfare.
10. **Main findings:** Gilens concludes that public opposition to welfare is deeply rooted in racial attitudes and stereotypes. His analysis reveals that perceptions of welfare recipients as predominantly Black and undeserving are heavily influenced by media portrayals, which overrepresent Black individuals in negative contexts related to welfare. These perceptions reinforce the idea that welfare recipients lack work ethic and exploit public assistance. Survey data confirms that racial attitudes are more predictive of welfare opposition than economic self-interest or ideological conservatism. Gilens also finds that welfare programs benefiting middle-class, predominantly white Americans, such as Social Security, enjoy widespread support, underscoring the racialized nature of welfare stigmatization.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Deserving poor:* Individuals perceived as having legitimate reasons for receiving public assistance, often due to circumstances beyond their control (e.g., elderly or disabled).
  - *Undeserving poor:* Individuals perceived as exploiting welfare benefits due to laziness or lack of effort, often racialized in media and public discourse.
  - *Symbolic racism:* A form of racial prejudice that manifests through opposition to policies perceived as favoring minorities, under the guise of defending traditional values like individualism and self-reliance.

### 1.10.7 The Difference Women Make: The Policy Impact of Women in Congress

Swers, M. L. (2002, September). *The Difference Women Make: The Policy Impact of Women in Congress*. University of Chicago Press. Retrieved November 14, 2024, from <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/D/bo3632862.html>

1. **Citation key:** swers\_difference\_2002
2. **Author(s):** Michele L. Swers
3. **Year:** 2002
4. **Publication:** The Difference Women Make: The Policy Impact of Women in Congress (University of Chicago Press)
5. **Keywords:** gender representation, women in Congress, legislative behavior, feminist policy, social welfare
6. **Summary:** Swers investigates the impact of female legislators on policymaking in the U.S. Congress. Drawing from data on the 103rd and 104th Congresses, she examines how gender influences legislative priorities and behavior. The book evaluates the extent to which women in Congress advocate for issues affecting women and the conditions under which their gender shapes policy outcomes. Swers employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of legislative data with qualitative insights from interviews with legislators and staff. Her findings reveal that while gender shapes legislative behavior, its effects are mediated by political context, party affiliation, and institutional structures.
7. **Theory:** Swers theorizes that female legislators bring a distinctive perspective to policymaking due to their shared experiences and identification with women's issues. She posits that women in Congress are more likely than their male counterparts to prioritize legislation addressing women's health, education, and welfare. This difference is attributed to empathy and a commitment to representing shared social identities. However, Swers also acknowledges that institutional constraints, such as committee assignments and party dynamics, mediate the extent of women's influence. The theory builds on the concept of descriptive representation, arguing that shared gender identity fosters substantive policy advocacy.
8. **Methods:** Swers employs a rigorous mixed-methods approach to evaluate the impact of gender on legislative behavior:
  - **Quantitative analysis:** Using an original dataset of bills and amendments related to women's issues from the 103rd and 104th Congresses, Swers examines patterns in sponsorship, co-sponsorship, committee amendments, floor amendments, and roll-call voting. Regression analysis is used to control for party affiliation, constituency characteristics, and institutional factors.
  - **Qualitative analysis:** Interviews with 28 legislators and staffers provide context and insight into the motivations and constraints faced by female representatives. As a note, Swers differentiates between feminist, anti-feminist, and social welfare bills to explore how the salience of gender varies across issue areas.
9. **Hypotheses:** Swers tests several hypotheses related to gender and legislative behavior:
  - **H1:** Female legislators are more likely than male legislators to sponsor and support bills addressing women's issues, particularly feminist policies.
  - **H2:** The influence of gender on legislative behavior is mediated by institutional factors, such as party affiliation, majority/minority status, and committee membership.
  - **H3:** Gender has a stronger impact on feminist bills compared to social welfare legislation, which may reflect broader, non-gender-specific concerns.
- These hypotheses are largely supported, with findings highlighting the significant, albeit context-dependent, impact of gender on policymaking.
10. **Main findings:** Swers concludes that women in Congress play a distinct role in advancing women's issues, though their influence is shaped by institutional and political contexts. Female legislators are more likely than their male colleagues to advocate for feminist and women's health policies. However, their impact on social welfare legislation is less pronounced, reflecting the broader scope of these issues. Swers also finds that the presence of women in Congress amplifies attention to women's concerns, even in the face of institutional constraints. She highlights the importance of committee assignments and party leadership in enabling or limiting women's legislative impact. Despite these challenges, Swers argues that increasing the number of women in Congress enhances representation for women's interests.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - **Descriptive representation:** The idea that elected officials represent constituents based on shared characteristics, such as gender, race, or ethnicity.
  - **Feminist legislation:** Policies aimed at achieving gender equity or addressing issues specific to women, such as reproductive rights and workplace equality.
  - **Social welfare legislation:** Policies addressing broader societal concerns, including welfare, healthcare, and education, which may have gendered implications but are not exclusively feminist.

### 1.10.8 The Jackie (and Jill) Robinson Effect: Why Do Congresswomen Outperform Congressmen?

Anzia, S. F., & Berry, C. R. (2011). The Jackie (and Jill) Robinson Effect: Why Do Congresswomen Outperform Congressmen? [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00512.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(3), 478–493. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00512.x>

1. **Citation key:** anzia\_jackie\_2011
2. **Author(s):** Sarah F. Anzia and Christopher R. Berry

3. **Year:** 2011
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** gender representation, sex-based selection, legislative performance, congressional behavior, electoral discrimination
6. **Summary:** Anzia and Berry propose the “Jackie (and Jill) Robinson Effect,” arguing that congresswomen outperform congressmen because of sex-based selection processes. Due to voter bias and perceived discrimination, only the most capable and ambitious women enter and succeed in politics. This results in women legislators who are, on average, more talented and hardworking than their male counterparts. Using a variety of data from congressional districts and federal spending records, the authors demonstrate that women legislators secure more discretionary federal spending for their districts and sponsor and cosponsor more legislation than male legislators.
7. **Theory:** The authors develop a theory grounded in the economics of discrimination and political agency models. They posit that sex-based selection stems from two mechanisms:
  - *Electoral discrimination:* Female candidates must be significantly better than male counterparts to overcome voter bias, leading to a performance premium for women elected to office.
  - *Self-selection:* Women who perceive electoral bias or underestimate their qualifications only pursue political office if they are exceedingly capable and confident in their abilities to overcome obstacles.

Anzia and Berry connect this theory to broader frameworks of political selection and moral hazard. They argue that the overperformance of congresswomen is a natural outcome of the higher thresholds they face at the candidate selection and election stages, which filters for higher-quality female legislators.

8. **Methods:** The authors employ an approach with several methods:
  - **Core quantitative analysis:** Using Federal Assistance Award Data System (FAADS) records from 1984–2004, they measure discretionary spending allocated to congressional districts. A fixed-effects differences-in-differences (DiD) model compares spending levels in districts represented by women versus men.
  - **Legislative behavior:** Analysis of bill sponsorship and cosponsorship rates quantifies the productivity of male and female legislators.
  - **Contextual factors:** The study includes controls for party affiliation, seniority, district demographics, and electoral margins. They also explore the impact of constituent ideology and district competitiveness.
  - **Regression discontinuity analysis:** Anzia and Berry analyze spending changes following mixed-sex, close elections to strengthen causal inference.

9. **Hypotheses:**
  - **H1:** Congresswomen secure more discretionary federal spending for their districts than congressmen.
  - **H2:** Congresswomen sponsor and cosponsor more legislation than congressmen.
  - **H3:** The performance premium for congresswomen is more pronounced in districts with higher levels of discrimination or conservative ideology.

All hypotheses are supported, with evidence of significant overperformance by female legislators, particularly in more conservative districts where voter bias is likely stronger.

10. **Main findings:** Anzia and Berry find that congresswomen outperform congressmen across multiple measures of legislative effectiveness. Women secure 9% more discretionary federal spending for their districts, translating to approximately \$49 million annually. They also sponsor and cosponsor significantly more bills than men. These differences are attributed to sex-based selection: women must be exceptionally capable to succeed in politics, given voter bias and self-screening mechanisms. The study also reveals that congresswomen’s performance advantages are larger in more conservative districts, consistent with their theory of selection under discrimination. Finally, they find that women who succeed deceased husbands in office (widows) do not exhibit the same performance premium, providing further evidence that sex-based selection drives these outcomes.

11. **Key quotations:**
  - “If voters are prejudiced against women, then a woman must be better than the man she runs against in order to win. Moreover, if women anticipate discrimination by voters, or simply underestimate their own qualifications, then only the most formidable women will run for office to begin with” (p. 478).
  - “Our theory shows that there is no inconsistency between these sets of findings. If only higher-quality female candidates will actually run for office, then we would not necessarily expect to observe a vote or campaign funding differential between male and female candidates even if there is, in fact, discrimination by voters and donors” (p. 481).
  - “Within districts over time, roughly 9% more federal spending is brought home when there is a woman representing the district in Congress than when the same district is represented by a man” (p. 485).

#### 1.10.9 Bringing the Person Back In: Boundaries, Perceptions, and the Measurement of Racial Context

Wong, C., Bowers, J., Williams, T., & Simmons, K. D. (2012). Bringing the Person Back In: Boundaries, Perceptions, and the Measurement of Racial Context [Publisher: Cambridge University PressNew York, USA]. *The Journal of Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381612000552>

1. **Citation key:** wong Bringing\_2012
2. **Author(s):** Cara Wong, Jake Bowers, Tarah Williams, and Katherine Drake Simmons
3. **Year:** 2012

4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** racial context, context effects, pseudoenvironments, measurement, political psychology
6. **Summary:** Wong et al. critique the reliance on administratively defined geographic units in studies of racial context and propose a map-based methodology to better capture individual perceptions of context. They argue that current approaches fail to align with psychological and sociological theories, which emphasize subjective perceptions of the environment. Using a pilot survey, the authors demonstrate that individuals' perceptions of their communities often deviate from Census-defined units and discuss the implications for understanding context effects in political behavior.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on sociological and psychological frameworks to argue that context is best understood as a subjective construct, shaped by individual perceptions rather than objective administrative boundaries. Drawing from Parsons and Shils (1951), they conceptualize context as the "situation of action" — the portion of the external world to which an individual is oriented and in which they act. This framework integrates Walter Lippmann's notion of "pseudoenvironments," highlighting the role of cognitive biases and social constructs in shaping how individuals perceive their surroundings. By re-centering the individual's subjective understanding of context, the authors link psychological theories of information processing with sociological theories of racial threat.
8. **Methods:** Wong et al. conduct a pilot study with 62 black and white respondents in a Midwestern county. Participants used maps to draw their "local communities" and describe their perceptions of racial, economic, and partisan characteristics. The authors then compared these subjective perceptions to objective measures derived from Census and election data. Their methodology includes:
  - *Map-drawing task:* Respondents defined the boundaries of their "local communities" on maps, which were digitized and analyzed using GIS software.
  - *Perception surveys:* Participants estimated demographic and partisan characteristics of their communities at three geographic levels: local community, block group, and national.
  - *Comparison with objective data:* The authors compared subjective perceptions with objective indicators, such as Census data and election returns, to assess accuracy and patterns of misperception.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - **H1:** Individuals' subjective perceptions of racial and economic context will diverge from objective measures, with greater divergence at larger geographic scales.
  - **H2:** Misperceptions of context are influenced by media consumption and personal experience, leading to systematic biases.
  - **H3:** Subjectively defined communities will vary widely among individuals, even within the same geographic area.

All hypotheses are supported, with significant misalignment between subjective and objective measures and wide variation in the boundaries individuals perceive as their "communities."
10. **Main findings:** Wong et al. find that subjective perceptions of context often differ from objective indicators and that individuals define their "local communities" in highly idiosyncratic ways. On average, respondents overestimate the racial diversity and unemployment levels of their communities while underestimating the proportion of partisans. These misperceptions are more pronounced at larger geographic scales (e.g., national vs. local). Additionally, black and white respondents living in the same block group perceive its racial composition differently, reflecting the influence of social and cognitive biases. The authors argue that these findings highlight the limitations of using Census-defined units to study context effects, as such measures fail to capture the subjective experiences that shape political attitudes and behavior.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The results help deepen and extend our knowledge about how context matters in politics, showing that governmental administrative units do not define the environments relevant to individuals, and that people do not 'see' what the Census 'sees'" (p. 1153).
  - "By measuring an environment that is relevant to the individual, researchers can also avoid a serious methodological problem—the modifiable areal unit problem—that could explain the inconsistency of results in research on racial threat and contact" (p. 1154).
  - "We wanted to allow individuals to define for themselves (using maps) what they mean by 'community,' rather than assume that how context affects political judgments must occur within administrative units defined by government officials" (p. 1158).

#### 1.10.10 Xenophobic Rhetoric and Its Political Effects on Immigrants and Their Co-Ethnics

Pérez, E. O. (2015). Xenophobic Rhetoric and Its Political Effects on Immigrants and Their Co-Ethnics [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12131>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(3), 549–564. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12131>

1. **Citation key:** perez\_xenophobic\_2015
2. **Author(s):** Efrén O. Pérez
3. **Year:** 2015
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** xenophobia, ethnic identity, Latino politics, political trust, ethnocentrism, acculturation
6. **Summary:** Pérez examines how xenophobic political rhetoric influences the political attitudes and behaviors of Latino

immigrants and their co-ethnics. He argues that such rhetoric raises the salience of ethnic identity and threatens its worth, prompting distinct responses based on the strength of individuals' identification with their ethnic group. Through a nationally representative survey experiment, he finds that xenophobic rhetoric decreases political trust and increases ethnocentrism and support for pro-group policies among high-identifying Latinos, while low identifiers tend to dissociate from their group.

**7. Theory:** Drawing on social identity theory (SIT) and self-categorization theory, Pérez posits that xenophobic rhetoric functions as an identity threat by devaluing ethnic group membership. High-identifying individuals, whose group identity is central to their self-concept, respond by bolstering ingroup pride and affirming their group's positive distinctiveness. In contrast, low-identifying individuals, for whom ethnic identity is less salient, may disengage from or disidentify with their ethnic group. Pérez defines xenophobic rhetoric as political discourse that not only highlights ethnic identity but also undermines its perceived value. This dual process of salience and threat differentiates xenophobic rhetoric from non-xenophobic discourse, which merely raises ethnic identity salience.

**8. Methods:** The study employed a survey experiment conducted on a nationally representative sample of 1,203 Latino adults. Participants were randomly assigned to a control group, a non-xenophobic rhetoric condition (emphasizing the issue of illegal immigration without negative allegations), or a xenophobic rhetoric condition (highlighting illegal immigration while making negative claims about immigrants). Measures included:

- **Political trust:** A survey item assessing confidence in government.
- **Ethnocentrism:** Feeling thermometer ratings of Latinos, whites, and blacks, with ethnocentrism calculated as the relative favorability of Latinos.
- **Pro-group politics:** Support for policies affirming Latino identity, such as maintaining Spanish language or voting for Latino candidates.

The analysis focused on interaction effects between treatment conditions, strength of Latino identity, and acculturation levels.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- **H1a:** High-identifying Latinos exposed to xenophobic rhetoric will exhibit reduced political trust and increased ethnocentrism and support for pro-group politics.
- **H1b:** Low-identifying Latinos exposed to xenophobic rhetoric will display reduced ingroup pride and less political engagement.
- **H2a:** The effects of xenophobic rhetoric will be stronger among less acculturated Latinos.
- **H2b:** Alternatively, more acculturated Latinos will react more strongly due to heightened sensitivity to discrimination.

Results supported H1a and H1b, with acculturation effects aligning more closely with H2a.

**10. Main findings:** Pérez finds that xenophobic rhetoric sharpens intergroup boundaries and polarizes responses based on ethnic identity strength. High-identifying Latinos exposed to xenophobic rhetoric displayed significantly lower trust in government and heightened ethnocentrism and pro-group attitudes compared to low-identifying counterparts. These effects were most pronounced among less acculturated Latinos, such as first-generation immigrants and those primarily speaking Spanish. Non-xenophobic rhetoric increased ethnocentrism among high identifiers but lacked the identity-threatening element needed to elicit sharp responses from low identifiers. These results demonstrate how xenophobic rhetoric politicizes ethnic identity, driving divergent political behaviors within immigrant communities.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Xenophobic rhetoric raises the salience of ethnic identity while devaluing its worth. High identifiers respond by affirming their group's positive distinctiveness, whereas low identifiers disengage" (p. 550).
- "In light of xenophobic rhetoric, high-identifying Latinos become less politically trusting, more ethnocentric, and more supportive of policies that exude ingroup pride" (p. 550).
- "By documenting how xenophobic rhetoric transforms the salience of ethnic identity into political behavior, my results illustrate the conditions under which identity politics becomes a potent force within immigrant communities" (p. 560).

#### 1.10.11 Post-Racial or Most-Racial? Race and Politics in the Obama Era

Tesler, M. (2016, April). *Post-Racial or Most-Racial?: Race and Politics in the Obama Era*. University of Chicago Press. Retrieved November 14, 2024, from <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/P/bo22961444.html>

1. **Citation key:** tesler\_post-racial\_2016

2. **Author(s):** Michael Tesler

3. **Year:** 2016

4. **Publication:** Post-Racial or Most-Racial? Race and Politics in the Obama Era (University of Chicago Press)

5. **Keywords:** racialization, Barack Obama, racial attitudes, political polarization, spillover effects

6. **Summary:** Tesler investigates the paradoxical dynamics of race in the Obama era, presenting a central argument that President Barack Obama's presidency did not mark the dawn of a post-racial America but instead intensified racial divisions in public opinion and political behavior. Introducing the "spillover of racialization hypothesis," Tesler demonstrates how Obama's racial identity and policies perceived as favoring minorities transformed issues previously unrelated to race into racially polarized debates. Using extensive survey data, Tesler reveals the growing racialization of partisanship, public policy, and even non-political domains during Obama's presidency.

**7. Theory:** Tesler's theoretical framework is anchored in the spillover of racialization hypothesis, which posits that Obama's prominence in American politics made race "chronically accessible," influencing how Americans perceived unrelated policies and political figures. This theory suggests that racial attitudes increasingly shaped evaluations of Obama, his policies, and his political opponents. Tesler also distinguishes between old-fashioned racism, rooted in overt prejudice, and modern racial resentment, characterized by subtle perceptions that minorities unfairly benefit from government programs. He argues that the racialization of politics under Obama is a function of both these forms of racial bias and the unique context of a Black president.

**8. Methods:** Tesler employs a multi-method approach, integrating survey experiments, observational data, and time-series analyses:

- *Survey data:* Analyzes data from sources like the American National Election Studies (ANES), Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), and bespoke surveys designed by Tesler to measure racial attitudes, policy preferences, and partisan identities.
- *Experiments:* Includes controlled experiments, such as comparing evaluations of a Portuguese water dog owned by the Obamas versus one owned by Senator Edward Kennedy, to demonstrate racial spillover effects in seemingly trivial contexts.
- *Time-series analysis:* Tracks changes in public opinion and racial polarization across Obama's two terms, particularly regarding health care reform, partisan identity, and voting behavior.

**9. Hypotheses:** Tesler tests the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Public evaluations of policies and political figures during Obama's presidency became increasingly shaped by racial attitudes.
- **H2:** Racial spillover effects are stronger for policies perceived as disproportionately benefiting African Americans (e.g., the Affordable Care Act).
- **H3:** The racialization of partisan identities intensified during Obama's presidency, with racial liberals becoming more Democratic and racial conservatives becoming more Republican.

These hypotheses are supported, with findings showing widespread racial spillover effects across diverse domains.

**10. Main findings:** Tesler demonstrates that Obama's presidency significantly heightened the racial polarization of American politics. Racial attitudes increasingly shaped public evaluations of policies like health care reform, even when these policies were not explicitly racialized. For instance, the branding of the Affordable Care Act as "Obamacare" intensified opposition among racial conservatives, reflecting a spillover of racialized perceptions. Tesler also finds that racial polarization in partisan identities grew during this period, with whites who held racially conservative views becoming more Republican, while those with racially liberal attitudes became more Democratic. The spillover of racialization extended beyond politics, influencing evaluations of unrelated entities like the Obama family's dog. Tesler concludes that Obama's presidency inadvertently made race a more salient and polarizing factor in American public life.

#### 11. Key definitions:

- *Racial resentment:* A modern form of racial prejudice characterized by the belief that minorities unfairly benefit from government assistance at the expense of whites.
- *Spillover of racialization hypothesis:* The idea that the presence of a prominent Black political figure (e.g., Obama) increases the influence of racial attitudes on issues and figures previously unrelated to race.
- *Chronically accessible:* A state where race becomes a persistent and salient lens through which individuals evaluate political and non-political matters.

#### 1.10.12 Gender, race, and political ambition: how intersectionality and frames influence interest in political office

Holman, M. R., & Schneider, M. C. (2018). Gender, race, and political ambition: How intersectionality and frames influence interest in political office. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 6(2), 264–280. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2016.1208105>

1. **Citation key:** holman\_gender\_2018

2. **Author(s):** Mirya R. Holman and Monica C. Schneider

3. **Year:** 2018

4. **Publication:** Politics, Groups, and Identities

5. **Keywords:** political ambition, intersectionality, stereotype threat, gender, racial identity, supply and demand

6. **Summary:** Holman and Schneider explore how gender and racial identities intersect with media and political framing to shape political ambition among women and men of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. They argue that "supply-side" frames (blaming underrepresentation on women's individual choices) and "demand-side" frames (blaming it on structural barriers) influence political ambition differently across racial and gender lines. Using experimental data, the study finds that white and Asian women show increased political ambition when exposed to demand-side explanations, while Black women respond positively to supply-side frames. Latinas' political ambition remains unaffected by these narratives.

7. **Theory:** The study integrates theories of intersectionality, stereotype threat, and framing effects to explain the malleability of political ambition. Holman and Schneider argue that narratives attributing women's underrepresentation to individual failings (supply-side frames) can trigger stereotype threat, reducing ambition by reinforcing negative stereotypes. Demand-side frames, which attribute underrepresentation to systemic barriers, can counteract these effects by validating external obstacles and fostering resilience. The authors emphasize that racial identity interacts

with these frames, as historical and cultural contexts shape how different groups internalize narratives of discrimination or failure. For instance, Black women's unique experiences with systemic bias and resilience may explain their contrasting responses to supply-side frames.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a survey experiment conducted with 656 participants recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Participants were randomized into supply-side or demand-side framing conditions, where they read vignettes explaining women's political underrepresentation as due to personal or structural factors. The main dependent variable was a composite measure of political ambition derived from three survey questions assessing participants' interest in running for office, likelihood of candidacy, and perceived enjoyment of a political career. Intersectional subgroup analyses were conducted to assess differences across gender and racial/ethnic groups.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- **H1:** Demand-side frames will increase women's political ambition more than supply-side frames.
- **H2:** The effects of supply-side and demand-side frames will vary across racial/ethnic groups, with white and Asian women responding more positively to demand frames and Black women responding more positively to supply frames.
- **H3:** Men's political ambition will be unaffected by framing conditions.

The findings confirmed these hypotheses, with significant variations across racial and gender groups.

**10. Main findings:** The study reveals that supply and demand frames have distinct effects on political ambition depending on gender and racial identity. Demand-side frames significantly increased political ambition among white and Asian women by reframing underrepresentation as a structural problem rather than an individual failing. Conversely, Black women showed increased ambition under supply-side frames, potentially reflecting their historical resilience against systemic barriers. Latinas' political ambition remained consistent across conditions, highlighting the need for further research into this group. Men's ambition was largely unaffected by framing, underscoring gendered differences in responsiveness to political narratives. The authors conclude that framing strategies must account for intersectional identities to effectively address the political ambition gap.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Attributing women's underrepresentation to demand factors allows white and Asian women to 'discount' the possibility that failure rests on their own abilities, thus increasing political ambition" (p. 266).
- "Black women respond differently from other groups, with higher political ambition in supply treatments, reflecting their unique history of overcoming systemic barriers" (p. 273).
- "These findings underscore the importance of intersectionality in understanding how frames affect political ambition, as different groups internalize these narratives in distinct ways" (p. 274).

### 1.10.13 White Identity Politics

Jardina, A. (2019). *White Identity Politics*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108645157>

**1. Citation key:** jardina\_white\_2019

**2. Author(s):** Ashley Jardina

**3. Year:** 2019

**4. Publication:** Cambridge University Press

**5. Keywords:** white identity, racial politics, immigration, group consciousness, dominant group identity

**6. Summary:** Jardina examines the emergence of white racial identity as a significant force in American politics, arguing that demographic and social changes have heightened perceptions of threat among many white Americans. This identity is rooted not in overt hostility but in a sense of solidarity and a desire to preserve perceived group interests. Using comprehensive survey data and analysis, Jardina explores how white identity shapes attitudes on immigration, social welfare, globalization, and vote choice, highlighting its growing influence on political behavior and public opinion in a diversifying nation.

**7. Theory:** Jardina's theory focuses on dominant group identity, proposing that white identity becomes salient and politically consequential when the group perceives its status as threatened. This identity is distinct from racial prejudice and reflects a reactionary response to demographic and cultural shifts. Drawing from social psychology and inter-group relations theories, Jardina argues that in-group favoritism, rather than out-group hostility, underpins much of white identity politics. She identifies racial solidarity as a central organizing principle for political attitudes and behavior, explaining how it shapes preferences for policies that maintain group dominance, such as restrictive immigration measures and resistance to globalization.

**8. Methods:** Jardina employs extensive survey data, including questions from the American National Election Studies (ANES) and original survey instruments developed to measure white identity and consciousness. The analyses utilize regression models to isolate the effects of white racial identity on policy preferences, attitudes toward racial and ethnic minorities, and voting behavior. The book also incorporates qualitative analyses of historical and contemporary political rhetoric to contextualize the emergence of white identity politics.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- **H1:** White racial identity is distinct from racial prejudice and emerges in response to perceived group threats.
- **H2:** White identity predicts support for policies perceived to benefit whites (e.g., restrictive immigration policies, opposition to globalization).
- **H3:** White identity influences vote choice in elections featuring candidates perceived to challenge or protect white

interests.

These hypotheses are supported by statistical and qualitative evidence throughout the book.

- 10. Main findings:** Jardina finds that white identity significantly shapes political attitudes and behavior, particularly on issues involving race and immigration. Whites who strongly identify with their racial group are more likely to oppose immigration, support policies perceived as benefiting whites (e.g., Social Security, Medicare), and favor political candidates who appeal to racial solidarity. These attitudes are not exclusively tied to economic anxiety or prejudice but reflect a broader sense of group attachment and perceived threat. Jardina also demonstrates that white identity, while distinct from racial resentment, is exacerbated by political rhetoric emphasizing demographic change and perceived loss of status.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *White identity*: A psychological attachment to whiteness as a social group, marked by feelings of solidarity and shared interests among white Americans.
- *Group consciousness*: A heightened awareness of group membership combined with a belief in the need for collective action to defend group interests.
- *Dominant group identity*: The identity held by a group traditionally dominant in social, economic, and political hierarchies, activated in response to perceived threats to its status.

#### 1.10.14 Reconciling Sexism and Women's Support for Republican Candidates

Cassese, E. C., & Barnes, T. D. (2019). Reconciling Sexism and Women's Support for Republican Candidates: A Look at Gender, Class, and Whiteness in the 2012 and 2016 Presidential Races. *Political Behavior*, 41(3), 677–700. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-018-9468-2>

1. **Citation key:** cassese\_reconciling\_2019

2. **Author(s):** Erin C. Cassese and Tiffany D. Barnes

3. **Year:** 2019

4. **Publication:** Political Behavior

5. **Keywords:** gender gap, intersectionality, system justification theory, hostile sexism, voting behavior, whiteness

6. **Summary:** This study examines why a majority of white women supported Donald Trump in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, despite his overt sexism. Using intersectionality and system justification theory as frameworks, the authors analyze how whiteness, class, and gender intersect to shape political behavior. They find that many white women endorse sexist beliefs, and these beliefs strongly influenced their vote choice in 2016, more so than in 2012. The paper emphasizes the importance of accounting for heterogeneity among women voters, particularly white women, when evaluating the gender gap in political behavior.

7. **Theory:** Cassese and Barnes draw on system justification theory and intersectionality to explain the apparent paradox of white women's support for Trump. System justification theory suggests that individuals may endorse ideologies or beliefs, such as sexism, that legitimize existing social hierarchies, even when those beliefs undermine their group's interests. Intersectionality highlights how the combined effects of race, gender, and class create distinctive political behaviors. The authors argue that whiteness offers white women a degree of privilege that outweighs the disadvantages associated with their gender. As a result, white women may adopt sexist attitudes to maintain their racial and class-based status advantages while distancing themselves from economic and racial inequality.

8. **Methods:** The authors analyze data from the 2012 and 2016 American National Election Studies (ANES) to evaluate white women's political behavior. Using measures of hostile sexism, perceived discrimination against women, and socio-demographic variables (e.g., education, income, partisanship), they employ regression models to examine how these factors influenced vote choice. The analysis compares patterns from 2012 and 2016 to assess changes in the salience of sexism across the two elections.

9. **Hypotheses:**

- **H1:** Disadvantaged white women (e.g., lower-income or less-educated) are more likely to endorse sexist beliefs.
- **H2:** White women with higher levels of hostile sexism are more likely to vote for Donald Trump in 2016.
- **H3:** White women with stronger perceptions of discrimination against women are less likely to vote for Trump in 2016.
- **H4:** Hostile sexism influences vote choice similarly for white men and women.
- **H5:** The salience of sexism increased from 2012 to 2016, making it a stronger predictor of vote choice in 2016.

Hypotheses are largely supported, though there are nuances in the relationship between sexism and vote choice across gender and elections.

10. **Main findings:** Cassese and Barnes find that hostile sexism and the denial of discrimination against women were strong predictors of white women's support for Donald Trump in 2016 but not for Mitt Romney in 2012. Low-income and less-educated white women were more likely to endorse sexist beliefs and to vote for Trump. These findings challenge narratives that Trump's support came predominantly from economically disadvantaged white men, highlighting instead the role of economically marginalized white women. The analysis shows that sexism operated similarly for white men and women, but perceptions of gender discrimination had a stronger impact on white women's vote choice. The 2016 election campaign amplified the salience of sexism, making it a central factor in shaping political behavior.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Hostile sexism and the denial of discrimination against women were strong predictors of white women's sup-

- port for Trump in 2016, even when controlling for partisanship and ideology" (p. 692).
- "White women who harbored sexist attitudes were more likely to be tolerant of Trump's sexism and to cast their vote for him on election day" (p. 695).
  - "We argue that some white women are motivated to distance themselves from the disadvantage associated with their gender. As a result, their belief systems emphasize and privilege their relationships with white men while underscoring their racial advantage over poor and minority women" (p. 695).

## 1.11 Congress

### 1.11.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of legislative institutions in the United States has evolved into a nuanced examination of how structural, behavioral, and strategic factors influence congressional behavior and policymaking. Foundational theories, such as Mayhew's focus on the electoral connection, argue that reelection drives congressional behavior, shaping institutional norms and legislative processes. Subsequent scholarship introduced complementary and competing perspectives, such as Krehbiel's informational theory, which highlights the role of expertise and information asymmetries, and Cox and McCubbins' procedural cartel theory, which emphasizes agenda control by majority parties. These theories provide a multi-dimensional framework for understanding legislative dynamics, integrating rational choice, institutional constraints, and partisan strategies. Together, these approaches reveal the complexity of legislative behavior, underscoring the interplay between individual motivations, institutional design, and collective action in Congress.
- **Electoral Incentives and Legislative Behavior:** David Mayhew's *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (2004) argues that members of Congress act as single-minded seekers of reelection, structuring their behavior around activities such as advertising, credit-claiming, and position-taking. These activities are facilitated by the committee system, decentralized party control, and institutional norms, which prioritize responsiveness to constituents over collective legislative efficiency. Mayhew's work underscores the centrality of electoral incentives in explaining congressional behavior and institutional arrangements.
- **Information and Congressional Organization:** Keith Krehbiel's *Information and Legislative Organization* (1992) shifts focus to the role of information in shaping congressional institutions. Krehbiel contends that Congress organizes itself to address information asymmetries, with committees serving as venues for expertise development and dissemination. This informational theory contrasts with traditional distributive perspectives, arguing that committees are designed not for bargaining but for improving legislative decision-making under uncertainty.
- **Partisan Agenda Control:** Gary Cox and Mathew McCubbins' *Setting the Agenda* (2005) advances the procedural cartel theory, emphasizing the majority party's control over the legislative agenda as a primary source of power. They argue that agenda control allows majority parties to block unfavorable bills (negative agenda power) and advance their priorities (positive agenda power). This theory reframes party government by highlighting how institutional mechanisms protect majority party cohesion and influence legislative outcomes.
- **Conditional Party Government:** David Rohde's work on Conditional Party Government (CPG) theorizes that members delegate authority to party leaders under conditions of intraparty homogeneity and interparty polarization. This framework explains the rise of strong party leadership in periods of heightened partisanship, such as the post-1994 Republican Revolution, and its implications for legislative organization and policymaking.
- **Legislative Effectiveness and Entrepreneurship:** Recent scholarship, such as Buccianeri, Volden, and Wiseman's (2024) development of State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (SLES), evaluates how individual lawmakers contribute to legislative productivity. Historical analyses, such as Finocchiaro and MacKenzie's (2018) study of legislative entrepreneurship, explore how institutional reforms and constituency characteristics shape bill sponsorship and policy innovation. These studies highlight the factors driving legislative success, from institutional design to individual strategy.
- **Lobbying and Legislative Subsidy:** Richard Hall and Alan Deardorff's *Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy* (2006) reconceptualizes lobbying as a form of resource provision rather than persuasion. Their legislative subsidy model argues that lobbyists provide policy expertise and labor to aligned legislators, enabling them to pursue shared goals more effectively. This theory challenges transactional models of lobbying, emphasizing its collaborative nature.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Current debates in legislative studies include the impact of polarization on institutional performance, the effectiveness of reforms aimed at enhancing deliberative democracy, and the role of informational asymmetries in amplifying leadership power. Future research is likely to focus on the implications of digital lobbying, the evolving role of party competition, and the intersection of race, gender, and institutional power in shaping legislative outcomes.

### 1.11.2 Congress: The Electoral Connection

Mayhew, D. R. (2004, November). *Congress: The Electoral Connection, Second Edition* [Google-Books-ID: j17QomTrD1EC]. Yale University Press

1. **Citation key:** mayhew\_congress\_2004
2. **Author(s):** David R. Mayhew
3. **Year:** 2004 (original publication: 1974)
4. **Publication:** Yale University Press
5. **Keywords:** Congress, electoral connection, legislative behavior, reelection, political theory

6. **Summary:** Mayhew's *Congress: The Electoral Connection* presents a theoretical framework positing that members of Congress are primarily motivated by the goal of reelection. This assumption informs their behavior, institutional design, and policy outcomes. Mayhew argues that Congress's organization—particularly its committees, offices, and norms—is designed to facilitate three primary activities: advertising, credit-claiming, and position-taking. These activities are strategically pursued to enhance members' electoral prospects, explaining much of the legislative process and outcomes.
7. **Theory:** Mayhew introduces a rational-choice perspective, asserting that legislators act as single-minded seekers of reelection. This framework underpins his analysis of congressional behavior, emphasizing how institutional structures support activities that maximize electoral benefits. Committees allow members to claim credit for distributive benefits; weak party systems permit flexibility in constituent-oriented actions; and advertising ensures name recognition. Mayhew also discusses how these mechanisms influence legislative efficiency and policy production, often prioritizing electoral considerations over broader policy objectives.
8. **Methods:** Mayhew employs a deductive, theoretical approach, analyzing existing empirical studies to support his arguments. He does not conduct original empirical research but synthesizes findings from congressional behavior literature to demonstrate the alignment between reelection motives and institutional design. His work uses examples of legislative activities, committee assignments, and institutional norms to illustrate how these elements serve electoral goals.
9. **Hypotheses:** Mayhew hypothesizes that all significant aspects of congressional behavior—such as legislative decision-making, committee assignments, and interactions with constituents—can be explained by members' pursuit of reelection. These hypotheses are indirectly tested through his analysis of existing empirical data and theoretical deductions.
10. **Main findings:** Mayhew finds that the electoral connection is a powerful explanatory tool for understanding congressional behavior. He identifies three primary activities pursued by legislators:
  - **Advertising:** Efforts to increase name recognition without explicit policy content.
  - **Credit-claiming:** Taking responsibility for delivering particularized benefits to constituents.
  - **Position-taking:** Publicly expressing stances on issues to align with voter preferences.
 Mayhew argues that Congress's decentralized structure, including its committee system and weak party control, is designed to support these activities. While this ensures responsiveness to constituent demands, it can also result in inefficiency and policy fragmentation. His analysis highlights the trade-offs between individual electoral incentives and collective legislative productivity.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - **Advertising:** Activities aimed at building name recognition and creating a favorable image among constituents without focusing on substantive policy issues.
  - **Credit-claiming:** Efforts by legislators to associate themselves with specific benefits or policies that provide direct advantages to their constituents.
  - **Position-taking:** Public declarations of support or opposition to particular policies, primarily aimed at signaling alignment with constituent preferences.

### 1.11.3 U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration

Fenno, R. F. (1977). U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 71(3), 883–917. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1960097>

1. **Citation key:** fenno\_us\_1977
2. **Author(s):** Richard F. Fenno, Jr.
3. **Year:** 1977
4. **Publication:** The American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** U.S. Congress, constituencies, representative behavior, political support, electoral goals
6. **Summary:** Fenno explores how U.S. House members perceive and interact with their constituencies. He identifies a framework of four concentric circles that shape representatives' perceptions of their constituents: the geographical constituency, the re-election constituency, the primary constituency, and the personal constituency. Using observational data gathered while accompanying representatives in their districts, Fenno examines how these perceptions influence congressional behavior and the cultivation of electoral support.
7. **Theory:** Fenno posits that representatives' behavior is fundamentally shaped by their perceptions of their constituencies, which are not uniform but hierarchical. The "geographical constituency" encompasses the entire district, while the "re-election constituency" consists of likely voters. Within this, the "primary constituency" includes the strongest supporters, and the "personal constituency" represents the innermost circle of intimate advisers and confidants. This layered framework influences how members allocate resources, present themselves, and interact with constituents.
8. **Methods:** Fenno employs an ethnographic approach, conducting open-ended fieldwork from 1970 to 1976. He accompanied 17 House members across various districts, observing their interactions with constituents, analyzing demographic and political dynamics, and documenting how members described and navigated their constituencies. His qualitative, exploratory method emphasized "soaking and poking," capturing the nuances of representative behavior in natural settings.
9. **Hypotheses:** Fenno does not explicitly frame hypotheses but suggests that representatives' constituency perceptions

are shaped by factors such as electoral security, geographical characteristics, and district diversity. He argues that these perceptions influence behavior, particularly in how members allocate time and resources and develop "home styles" to connect with their constituencies.

10. **Main findings:** Fenno finds that representatives view their constituencies through a hierarchical lens, with each circle demanding different forms of engagement. The "geographical constituency" is described in demographic and spatial terms, while the "re-election constituency" focuses on voter support. Representatives tailor their "home styles" to nurture support, often balancing time between district and Washington. Variability in district demographics, electoral security, and personal relationships drives differences in representatives' behaviors. For instance, those with heterogeneous districts emphasize outreach to diverse groups, whereas those with homogeneous districts rely on consistent messaging. Fenno emphasizes that the cultivation of electoral support happens primarily in the district, not Washington.

11. **Key quotations:**

- "The constituency a representative reacts to is the constituency he or she sees. The corollary assumption is that the rest of us cannot understand the representative-constituency relationship until we can see the constituency through the eyes of the representative" (p. 884).
- "Within his geographical constituency, each congressman perceives a smaller, explicitly political constituency. It is composed of the people he thinks vote for him. And we shall refer to it as his re-election constituency" (p. 886).
- "Representatives, and prospective representatives, think about their constituencies because they seek support there. They want to get nominated and elected, then renominated and re-elected. For most members of Congress most of the time, this electoral goal is primary" (p. 889).

#### 1.11.4 Information and Legislative Organization

Krehbiel, K. (1992, August). *Information and Legislative Organization* [Google-Books-ID: aQxSq1RPjuoC]. University of Michigan Press

1. **Citation key:** krehbiel\_information\_1992
2. **Author(s):** Keith Krehbiel
3. **Year:** 1992
4. **Publication:** University of Michigan Press
5. **Keywords:** legislative organization, informational theory, distributive politics, congressional committees, rational choice
6. **Summary:** Krehbiel's *Information and Legislative Organization* challenges the traditional distributive view of legislative organization by emphasizing the importance of information. He argues that the organization of Congress, particularly its committee system, is designed to address problems of incomplete information by fostering expertise and facilitating the dissemination of policy-relevant knowledge. This informational perspective explains legislative behavior and outcomes as the result of rational actors seeking to optimize decision-making efficiency rather than solely pursuing distributive benefits.
7. **Theory:** Krehbiel posits that legislative organization is primarily shaped by the need to address information asymmetries rather than by the pursuit of distributive benefits. Members of Congress have well-defined preferences over policy outcomes but often lack complete information about how specific policy choices will affect these outcomes. Committees serve as mechanisms to develop and share expertise, enabling legislators to make more informed decisions. This informational theory contrasts with the distributive perspective, which emphasizes committees as arenas for bargaining and the allocation of particularized benefits.
8. **Methods:** The book employs both theoretical modeling and empirical analysis. Krehbiel constructs a formal framework based on rational choice theory and games of incomplete information. He tests the predictions of his model using a mix of legislative data, historical case studies, and analyses of committee behavior. By comparing the informational and distributive theories, Krehbiel evaluates which better explains observed patterns in legislative organization and decision-making.
9. **Hypotheses:** Krehbiel hypothesizes that:
  - Committees are composed of members with diverse preferences and expertise rather than being biased toward distributive interests.
  - Legislative rules and procedures, such as restrictive rules, are designed to enhance information transmission rather than to protect distributive bargains.
  - Post-floor decision-making processes prioritize informational efficiency, selectively delegating authority to experts rather than favoring distributive interests.
- These hypotheses are supported by his empirical findings, which reveal that informational considerations play a central role in legislative organization.
10. **Main findings:** Krehbiel's analysis demonstrates that the informational theory of legislative organization provides a compelling alternative to the distributive perspective. He finds that committees often reflect the diversity of the parent chamber, enhancing their ability to gather and disseminate relevant policy information. Legislative rules are structured to facilitate informed decision-making rather than to protect logrolls or distributive deals. His work also highlights the role of committee specialization in improving legislative efficiency, with expertise serving as a key factor in shaping both legislative behavior and institutional design.

## 11. Key definitions:

- *Distributive politics*: The allocation of particularized benefits to specific constituencies or interests, often facilitated through legislative bargaining.
- *Informational theory*: A perspective emphasizing the role of information in shaping legislative organization and behavior, focusing on how institutions address problems of incomplete information to improve decision-making.
- *Committee specialization*: The development of expertise within committees to enhance legislative efficiency and the quality of policy outcomes.

### 1.11.5 Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions

Shepsle, K., & Weingast, B. R. (1994). Positive Theories of Congressional Institutions. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 19(2), 149–179. <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/440423>

1. **Citation key:** shepsle\_positive\_1994
2. **Author(s):** Kenneth A. Shepsle and Barry R. Weingast
3. **Year:** 1994
4. **Publication:** Legislative Studies Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** Congress, legislative institutions, rational choice, committee system, political theory
6. **Summary:** Shepsle and Weingast explore the development and evolution of positive theories concerning congressional institutions. They provide a comprehensive review of the rational choice literature, emphasizing how institutional structures influence legislative behavior and outcomes. The authors highlight theoretical debates and synthesize perspectives that focus on informational efficiency, gains from exchange, and partisan coordination as driving forces behind congressional organization.
7. **Theory:** The authors discuss three major frameworks:
  - **Distributive Perspective:** Focuses on gains from exchange among legislators with heterogeneous preferences, highlighting the committee system as a mechanism for facilitating durable bargains.
  - **Informational Perspective:** Argues that legislative institutions are designed to improve decision-making under uncertainty by incentivizing specialization and information gathering within committees.
  - **Partisan Perspective:** Emphasizes the role of parties as collective entities solving coordination problems and maintaining legislative order through agenda control and enforcement mechanisms.

These perspectives are not mutually exclusive; rather, they address different facets of congressional organization and behavior.

8. **Methods:** The study is a theoretical synthesis rather than an empirical investigation. Shepsle and Weingast analyze key contributions from the rational choice tradition, incorporating insights from both theoretical modeling and empirical studies. They review foundational works, such as those by Krehbiel, Cox, McCubbins, and others, to compare and contrast different explanations for institutional design and legislative outcomes.

9. **Hypotheses:** Shepsle and Weingast hypothesize that:

- Legislative institutions serve as solutions to collective action and informational problems.
- Committees are structured to balance distributive and informational needs while reflecting partisan interests.
- Institutional arrangements evolve to address changes in the political and legislative environment.

These hypotheses align with the broader rational choice framework, emphasizing the endogenous nature of institutional development.

10. **Main findings:** The authors find that positive theories of congressional institutions offer complementary insights into legislative behavior. They argue that the distributive, informational, and partisan models each address distinct aspects of legislative organization, and their integration provides a more complete understanding of Congress. The committee system, for example, facilitates both policy specialization (informational theory) and distributive bargaining (gains from exchange), while partisan mechanisms ensure collective coordination and control. Shepsle and Weingast highlight the dynamic nature of Congress, noting that institutional arrangements adapt over time to reflect shifts in political priorities and external pressures.

## 11. Key quotations:

- "The newer theories, especially those emphasizing informational aspects of decision making and partisan features of legislative politics, constitute departures from an earlier tradition of modeling gains from exchange" (p. 149).
- "To be blunt, there were central features in the theory of abstract legislatures with no significant counterpart in congressional practice... while, on the other hand, there were central aspects of substantive stories about Congress little elaborated in the abstract theories" (p. 151).
- "Committees may be powerful in a legislature not (only) because they monopolize agenda power but (also) because they monopolize information and expertise" (p. 160).

### 1.11.6 Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking

Krehbiel, K. (1998, July). *Pivotal Politics: A Theory of U.S. Lawmaking*. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** krehbiel\_pivotal\_1998
2. **Author(s):** Keith Krehbiel

3. **Year:** 1998
  4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press
  5. **Keywords:** lawmaking, gridlock, veto, filibuster, supermajority, congressional decision-making
  6. **Summary:** In *Pivotal Politics*, Krehbiel offers a comprehensive theory of lawmaking in the U.S. federal government. Rejecting the conventional wisdom that gridlock is a consequence of partisan polarization or divided government, Krehbiel attributes policy stalemates to the structural requirements for supermajorities, including veto overrides and filibuster cloture. His formal model introduces the concept of “pivotal players” whose preferences determine legislative outcomes, thus explaining the persistence of bipartisan coalitions and the variability of legislative productivity.
  7. **Theory:** Krehbiel’s pivotal politics model is rooted in rational choice theory. He assumes a unidimensional policy space where actors (the president and legislators) have single-peaked preferences. The model identifies two critical players in the legislative process: the veto pivot, whose vote is required to override a presidential veto, and the filibuster pivot, whose vote is necessary to invoke cloture in the Senate. Gridlock occurs when the status quo falls within the “gridlock interval,” a range where neither the president nor pivotal legislators find it beneficial to change policy. This theory shifts focus from partisan dynamics to institutional constraints, suggesting that gridlock is an inherent feature of supermajoritarian institutions.
  8. **Methods:** Krehbiel employs both theoretical modeling and empirical analysis to validate his framework. He uses historical data on legislative productivity, vetoes, and cloture votes, particularly drawing on Mayhew’s dataset of significant legislation. Through case studies, such as the family leave and economic stimulus bills, Krehbiel illustrates how his model explains legislative outcomes better than alternative theories like party government models.
  9. **Hypotheses:** The key hypotheses of the model are:
    - Legislative gridlock is determined by the size of the gridlock interval, not by partisan composition or divided government.
    - Bipartisan coalitions and supermajorities are common because pivotal players determine outcomes.
    - Changes in the gridlock interval, driven by shifts in pivotal players’ preferences or external factors, directly affect legislative productivity.
- Empirical findings consistently support these hypotheses.
10. **Main findings:** Krehbiel finds that supermajoritarian rules, rather than partisanship or divided government, are the primary determinants of gridlock. The model explains why bipartisan coalitions are often necessary and why legislative output fluctuates despite changes in party control. For example, Krehbiel demonstrates that gridlock intervals expand when pivotal players’ preferences diverge significantly from the median legislator’s position. He also highlights the importance of institutional features like the Senate filibuster and presidential veto in shaping legislative dynamics, offering a more nuanced understanding of policy-making inefficiencies.
  11. **Key definitions:**
    - *Gridlock interval:* The range of policy positions between the veto and filibuster pivots where no legislative changes are possible.
    - *Veto pivot:* The legislator whose vote is pivotal in overriding a presidential veto.
    - *Filibuster pivot:* The legislator whose vote is pivotal in overcoming a filibuster and invoking cloture.
    - *Supermajoritarian rules:* Institutional requirements, such as veto overrides and cloture votes, that necessitate more than a simple majority to enact legislation.

#### 1.11.7 Participation in Congress

Hall, R. L. (1998, September). *Participation in Congress* [Google-Books-ID: wvtv7Dhc7DwC]. Yale University Press

1. **Citation key:** hall\_participation\_1998
2. **Author(s):** Richard L. Hall
3. **Year:** 1998
4. **Publication:** Yale University Press
5. **Keywords:** legislative participation, Congress, policymaking, rational choice, legislative norms
6. **Summary:** Hall’s *Participation in Congress* addresses a critical gap in legislative studies by shifting the focus from voting behavior to participation. He argues that participation is the central mechanism through which members influence policy, shaped by the interaction of institutional positions, electoral incentives, and personal interests. The book introduces a rational choice model of participation, analyzing how members allocate their time and resources to engage in legislative activities across subcommittee, committee, and floor proceedings.
7. **Theory:** Hall develops a utilitarian theory of legislative participation, proposing that members of Congress engage in policymaking when the expected benefits—electoral gains, policy success, or institutional rewards—outweigh the costs, such as time, effort, and opportunity costs. Participation is not evenly distributed; rather, it reflects strategic decisions driven by legislators’ interests and institutional constraints. Hall critiques traditional normative theories of congressional behavior, arguing that participation patterns reveal underlying incentives rather than adherence to unwritten norms or folkways.
8. **Methods:** Hall employs mixed methods, combining data from committee markup records, interviews with congressional staff, and archival research. He constructs formal and informal measures of participation, analyzing legislative activity within three House committees. These data allow him to test hypotheses about the determinants of participation, particularly the roles of electoral interests, personal policy preferences, and institutional positions.

**9. Hypotheses:** Hall hypothesizes that:

- Members with stronger electoral or personal policy interests are more likely to participate.
- Institutional positions, such as committee leadership or jurisdiction, increase participation.
- Participation is selective, with most legislative activities concentrated among a small group of highly motivated members.

His findings support these hypotheses, demonstrating significant variation in participation across institutional settings and issue areas.

**10. Main findings:** Hall finds that participation is the primary mechanism through which legislators influence policy outcomes. Electoral and personal policy interests are significant motivators, with members strategically allocating resources to maximize their influence. Institutional positions also shape participation patterns, as leaders and committee members with jurisdictional authority are more active. Hall highlights the selective and uneven nature of participation, with most legislative work performed by a small subset of members. This self-selection challenges traditional theories of majoritarianism, showing that legislative influence depends more on activity intensity than voting patterns.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Participation:* Active engagement by legislators in the policymaking process, including bill drafting, amendment proposals, and coalition-building.
- *Electoral interests:* Motivations tied to securing reelection or appealing to constituents.
- *Personal policy preferences:* Individual legislators' substantive interests in specific policy areas.
- *Rational abdication:* The calculated decision by legislators to refrain from participating due to high costs or low expected benefits.

#### 1.11.8 Issue Politics in Congress

Sulkin, T. (2005). *Issue politics in Congress - USC (includes Law and Medicine)* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press

**1. Citation key:** sulkin\_issue\_2005

**2. Author(s):** Tracy Sulkin

**3. Year:** 2005

**4. Publication:** Cambridge University Press

**5. Keywords:** Congress, legislative responsiveness, elections, issue uptake, campaigns

**6. Summary:** Sulkin's *Issue Politics in Congress* examines the concept of issue uptake, where members of Congress adjust their legislative agendas based on the criticisms made by their electoral challengers. Sulkin argues that this dynamic enhances both individual and institutional responsiveness by linking campaign priorities to subsequent legislative behavior. Her analysis reveals that legislators use issue uptake strategically to strengthen electoral prospects and address constituent concerns, demonstrating that campaigns have lasting impacts on governance.

**7. Theory:** Sulkin introduces the theory of issue uptake, which posits that legislators respond to criticisms from their challengers by addressing those issues in their legislative agendas. This behavior is driven by the strategic goal of minimizing electoral vulnerability and improving reelection prospects. Sulkin's approach bridges the gap between electoral and legislative studies, emphasizing that campaigns do not merely influence voter behavior but also shape winners' policymaking efforts. The theory challenges traditional notions of legislative responsiveness by expanding it to include agenda-setting, rather than just voting behavior.

**8. Methods:** Sulkin uses a mixed-methods approach, analyzing data from over 470 congressional campaigns and legislative sessions. She collects information on campaign issues, legislative activities, and electoral outcomes to measure uptake levels. Her dataset includes over 200,000 instances of bill sponsorships, cosponsorships, and floor statements. Sulkin employs both quantitative analysis and case studies to test hypotheses about individual, temporal, and institutional variations in uptake, providing a comprehensive view of the phenomenon.

**9. Hypotheses:** Sulkin outlines several hypotheses:

- **H1: Individual Variation.** Legislators with higher electoral vulnerability are more likely to engage in uptake.
- **H2: Location of Uptake.** Uptake will vary across legislative activities, with simpler actions (e.g., cosponsorship) showing higher levels of uptake.
- **H3: Timing of Uptake.** For senators, uptake increases as elections approach, while House members, with shorter terms, show no significant variation in uptake timing.
- **H4: Institutional Variation.** Uptake is more pronounced in the House than in the Senate due to institutional differences.
- **H5: Electoral Impact.** Engaging in uptake improves legislators' vote shares in subsequent elections.

These hypotheses are empirically supported, with findings highlighting the strategic nature of legislative responsiveness.

**10. Main findings:** Sulkin's research demonstrates that uptake is a prevalent and systematic form of legislative responsiveness. Legislators actively incorporate challenger critiques into their agendas, reflecting strategic motivations to address perceived weaknesses and enhance reelection prospects. Uptake varies by activity type, with less demanding actions like cosponsorship being more common than substantive policy proposals. Senators engage in more issue uptake as elections near, while House members exhibit consistent levels across their terms. Institutional differences also shape uptake patterns, with House members showing higher levels of responsiveness. Sulkin concludes that campaigns play a crucial role in shaping legislative agendas, linking electoral dynamics to policy outcomes.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Issue uptake*: The process by which legislators incorporate challengers' campaign criticisms into their legislative agendas.
- *Legislative responsiveness*: Actions taken by legislators to address constituent concerns or external criticisms through policymaking efforts.
- *Electoral vulnerability*: The degree to which a legislator faces a credible threat of losing reelection.
- *Strategic motivation*: The calculated effort by legislators to align their actions with electoral and policy goals to maximize political survival.

**1.11.9 Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives**

Cox, G. W., & McCubbins, M. D. (2005, September). *Setting the Agenda: Responsible Party Government in the U.S. House of Representatives* [Google-Books-ID: fm9qVy379AQC]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** cox\_setting\_2005

2. **Author(s):** Gary W. Cox and Mathew D. McCubbins

3. **Year:** 2005

4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press

5. **Keywords:** agenda control, responsible party government, legislative organization, procedural cartel, party power

6. **Summary:** Cox and McCubbins challenge traditional theories of party influence by advancing the procedural cartel theory, which highlights agenda control as the primary source of majority party power in the U.S. House of Representatives. They argue that the majority party's ability to block unwanted bills and prioritize favorable ones allows it to exert substantial legislative influence without relying solely on voting cohesion. The book's empirical analysis demonstrates the extent of this agenda-setting power across congressional history.

7. **Theory:** The procedural cartel theory posits that majority parties control the legislative agenda by monopolizing key positions that grant veto and proposal rights. Unlike traditional views emphasizing party discipline on floor votes, this theory argues that agenda-setting power enables the majority party to shape outcomes by deciding which bills reach the floor. Positive agenda power ensures favorable bills are considered, while negative agenda power blocks legislation contrary to the majority party's interests. This framework redefines party responsibility in Congress by focusing on the strategic management of legislative opportunities.

8. **Methods:** Cox and McCubbins employ a mixed-methods approach, integrating formal modeling with historical and statistical analysis. They examine data from all bills considered in the House from the 45th to 105th Congresses (1877–1999), focusing on roll rates, agenda composition, and the institutional distribution of procedural powers. Their models compare the effects of majority party agenda control under procedural cartel and nonpartisan theories, providing robust evidence for their claims.

9. **Hypotheses:**

- Majority parties exert significant control over legislative outcomes through agenda power.
- Negative agenda power minimizes the likelihood of bills unfavorable to the majority party reaching the floor.
- Positive agenda power ensures that priority legislation aligns with the majority party's policy goals.

The findings confirm these hypotheses, highlighting the effectiveness of agenda-setting mechanisms over traditional party discipline.

10. **Main findings:** Cox and McCubbins show that the majority party's control of agenda-setting powers dramatically influences legislative outcomes. Through strategic use of veto rights, the majority party prevents bills opposed by its members from reaching a vote. Simultaneously, its positive agenda power enables the advancement of legislation that reflects the majority's policy preferences. This dual strategy ensures legislative outcomes favorable to the majority party while maintaining internal cohesion. The authors argue that this form of agenda control, rather than floor voting unity, is the cornerstone of responsible party government in Congress.

11. **Key definitions:**

- *Agenda control*: The ability of a political entity to determine which issues are considered for legislative action.
- *Negative agenda power*: The capacity to block bills from reaching a vote on the floor, thereby protecting the majority party from unfavorable outcomes.
- *Positive agenda power*: The ability to ensure that favorable bills advance through legislative stages to a final-passage vote.
- *Procedural cartel*: A framework in which the majority party monopolizes procedural tools to manage the legislative agenda and maintain party dominance.

**1.11.10 Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy**

Hall, R. L., & Deardorff, A. V. (2006). Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy. *American Political Science Review*, 100(1), 69–84. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305406062010>

1. **Citation key:** hall\_lobbying\_2006

2. **Author(s):** Richard L. Hall and Alan V. Deardorff

3. **Year:** 2006

4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review

5. **Keywords:** lobbying, legislative subsidy, interest groups, Congress, policymaking
6. **Summary:** Hall and Deardorff challenge traditional theories of lobbying, which focus on vote-buying or persuasion, by proposing a new model: lobbying as a legislative subsidy. They argue that lobbying functions as a “matching grant” of policy expertise, political intelligence, and labor to legislators who are natural allies of the lobbying group. Instead of changing legislators’ preferences, lobbying aims to enhance their legislative capacity to pursue shared policy goals.
7. **Theory:** The theory of lobbying as legislative subsidy redefines lobbying as the provision of resources to legislators already aligned with the lobbyist’s goals. The model posits that legislators face resource constraints—time, labor, and information—limiting their capacity to act on their legislative agendas. Lobbyists, as specialists, alleviate these constraints by subsidizing legislators’ efforts, enabling them to work more effectively on issues of mutual interest. This theory diverges from traditional exchange models by focusing on collaboration with allies rather than transactional influence or persuasion of undecided lawmakers.
8. **Methods:** The authors construct their theory through formal modeling, supported by empirical observations from previous lobbying studies. They outline key assumptions about legislators’ resource constraints, priorities, and the strategic allocation of lobbying resources. By using conceptual examples and drawing on historical lobbying patterns, the model is shown to explain regularities in lobbying behavior that existing theories fail to address.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Lobbyists target their strongest allies, where allies are defined as legislators whose preferences align with the lobbyist’s goals.
  - Lobbyists do not target their enemies or legislators perceived as neutral because the return on investment for these groups is minimal.
  - Legislative subsidies increase the legislative effort of aligned legislators, allowing them to devote more resources to shared policy objectives.
  - Public interest groups without significant financial resources can still gain access to legislators by providing high-quality policy expertise and legislative intelligence.

These hypotheses are supported by the observed patterns of lobbying, where lobbyists concentrate on providing assistance to likeminded legislators rather than seeking to change preferences.

10. **Main findings:** The authors demonstrate that lobbying is most effective when directed at legislators who are already inclined to support the lobbyist’s objectives. This strategic targeting helps legislators overcome resource constraints and enables them to engage more actively in legislative processes. The study highlights the unique role of public interest groups, which often lack financial resources but can still influence policymaking through expertise and credibility. By framing lobbying as a form of subsidy, the authors provide a compelling explanation for why lobbyists focus on allies rather than undecided or opposing legislators.

11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Lobbying is primarily a form of legislative subsidy—a matching grant of costly policy information, political intelligence, and labor to the enterprises of strategically selected legislators” (p. 69).
  - “The proximate political objective of this strategy is not to change legislators’ minds but to assist natural allies in achieving their own, coincident objectives” (p. 69).
  - “The theory of lobbying as legislative subsidy suggests that we might want to rethink the implications of these patterns for democratic ethics” (p. 80).

#### 1.11.11 Ideology and Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting

Poole, K. T., & Rosenthal, H. (2007). *Ideology and Congress: Second Revised Edition of Congress: A Political Economic History of Roll Call Voting* [Google-Books-ID: KaVfAAAAQBAJ]. Transaction Publishers

1. **Citation key:** poole\_ideology\_2007
2. **Author(s):** Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal
3. **Year:** 2007 (original publication: 1997)
4. **Publication:** Oxford University Press
5. **Keywords:** Congress, ideology, roll call voting, spatial models, party alignment
6. **Summary:** Poole and Rosenthal’s *Ideology and Congress* presents a groundbreaking analysis of congressional roll call voting from 1789 to 1985. Using spatial models of voting, the authors demonstrate that most roll call behavior in Congress can be explained by ideological dimensions, with one primary dimension—economic redistribution—dominating across history. They argue that political parties play a critical role in structuring these ideological alignments and maintaining stable coalitions. The book’s comprehensive data and methodological rigor make it a foundational text for the study of legislative behavior.
7. **Theory:** The authors posit that roll call voting in Congress can be understood through spatial models, where legislators’ preferences are arrayed along ideological dimensions. The primary dimension, economic redistribution, captures most voting patterns, though a second dimension related to race becomes significant in certain historical periods. Party affiliation and coalition-building are central to maintaining alignment along these dimensions. Their approach also addresses vote cycling, showing how parties impose discipline to ensure stability and avoid legislative chaos.
8. **Methods:** Poole and Rosenthal employ the NOMINATE (Nominal Three-Step Estimation) method, a probabilistic spatial model, to estimate legislators’ ideological positions. This model uses over 200 years of roll call voting data, covering 11,473 legislators and 70,234 votes. By placing legislators in a multidimensional ideological space, the authors

identify patterns of stability, polarization, and realignment. The D-NOMINATE model adds a dynamic component, tracking changes in legislators' ideological positions over time.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Roll call voting in Congress is primarily structured along one ideological dimension (economic redistribution), with a secondary dimension emerging during specific periods (e.g., race in the mid-20th century).
- Party affiliation explains much of the alignment along these dimensions, reflecting the role of parties in maintaining coalitions and logrolling agreements.
- Ideological stability is the norm, but periods of realignment correspond to major political and economic shifts (e.g., the New Deal).

These hypotheses are supported by robust empirical findings.

**10. Main findings:** Poole and Rosenthal find that roll call voting in Congress has a simple, stable structure dominated by a single ideological dimension. This dimension aligns closely with economic redistribution and party affiliation, with polarization increasing during certain periods (e.g., the Civil War, post-1980). The authors demonstrate that party discipline and coalition-building mitigate vote cycling, ensuring legislative stability. They also highlight exceptions to the one-dimensional model, such as the emergence of a second dimension related to race during the mid-20th century. Their analysis shows that ideology is a more powerful predictor of roll call voting than constituency interests or strategic considerations.

#### 11. Key definitions:

- *Ideological dimension*: An abstract space representing legislators' preferences, where positions reflect attitudes toward specific policy areas (e.g., economic redistribution).
- *NOMINATE*: A probabilistic spatial model used to estimate legislators' ideological positions based on roll call voting data.
- *Vote cycling*: A phenomenon where no stable majority exists, leading to unpredictable legislative outcomes. Parties mitigate this by imposing discipline.
- *Dynamic alignment*: The process by which legislators' positions shift over time, reflecting broader political and economic trends.

### 1.11.12 Party Power or Preferences? Quasi-Experimental Evidence from American State Legislatures

Cox, G. W., Kousser, T., & McCubbins, M. D. (2010). Party Power or Preferences? Quasi-Experimental Evidence from American State Legislatures [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 72(3), 799–811. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381610000174>

1. **Citation key:** cox\_party\_2010

2. **Author(s):** Gary W. Cox, Thad Kousser, and Mathew D. McCubbins

3. **Year:** 2010

4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics

5. **Keywords:** agenda control, party power, legislative behavior, quasi-experiments, state legislatures

6. **Summary:** Cox, Kousser, and McCubbins investigate whether the majority party's control over the legislative agenda can influence legislative outcomes independently of legislator preferences. They conduct two quasi-experiments in American state legislatures—Colorado and California—to examine the effects of changes in agenda control on legislative roll rates and policy direction. The study finds that majority parties use agenda control to minimize intra-party conflict, increase minority rolls, and protect policies aligned with their preferences, demonstrating that agenda power is a significant determinant of legislative outcomes.

7. **Theory:** The authors posit that majority parties exert influence not merely through voting discipline but by controlling which bills are considered for a vote. Agenda control enables majority parties to avoid legislation that splits their membership while promoting bills that align with their ideological goals. This theory, grounded in the procedural cartel model, emphasizes the strategic management of legislative agendas as a primary mechanism of party power, distinct from individual legislator preferences or constituency demands.

8. **Methods:** The study employs two quasi-experimental designs to isolate the effects of agenda control:

- In Colorado, the 1988 G.A.V.E.L. Amendment removed the majority party's agenda-setting power by guaranteeing a hearing and vote for all bills. The authors compare roll rates and policy shifts before and after this rule change.
- In California, the authors analyze the Suspense File process, which grants majority leaders control over bills with significant fiscal implications, allowing comparison of bills subjected to agenda control versus those bypassing it.

They utilize roll-call data and spatial models to evaluate majority and minority roll rates, as well as policy movements, under varying degrees of agenda control.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Majority party agenda control reduces the likelihood of majority rolls while increasing the frequency of minority rolls.
- Legislative outcomes will shift toward the majority party's preferences when it controls the agenda.
- Removing agenda control results in greater policy shifts toward the chamber's floor median.

The findings consistently support these hypotheses.

**10. Main findings:** The study reveals that majority party agenda control significantly shapes legislative outcomes. In Colorado, removing agenda control through the G.A.V.E.L. Amendment led to an increase in majority rolls and a higher proportion of leftward policy shifts, reflecting the chamber's median preferences. In California, the Suspense File process allowed majority leaders to block bills unfavorable to their party while advancing those that rolled the minority. These results demonstrate that agenda control enables majority parties to protect their policy interests, unify their members, and influence the legislative process beyond individual preferences or constituency demands.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The majority party uses its control over the agenda to screen out bills that would split its own membership, devotes more floor time to bills that divide majority from minority party legislators, and ultimately uses agenda control to protect the policy interests of its members" (p. 799).
- "Evaluating legislative behavior in both states on a range of measures yields a consistent finding: Agenda control gives the majority party influence that is independent of legislator preferences" (p. 806).
- "Our results show that endowing majority leaders with greater agenda-setting powers (or removing those powers) does affect their ability to influence legislative outcomes" (p. 810).

#### 1.11.13 Using Roll Call Estimates to Test Models of Politics

Clinton, J. D. (2012). Using Roll Call Estimates to Test Models of Politics [Publisher: Annual Reviews]. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 15(Volume 15, 2012), 79–99. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-043010-095836>

**1. Citation key:** clinton\_using\_2012

**2. Author(s):** Joshua D. Clinton

**3. Year:** 2012

**4. Publication:** Annual Review of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** roll call voting, ideal point estimation, formal theory, legislative behavior, agenda-setting models

**6. Summary:** Clinton explores how roll call voting data can be used to test theories of political behavior and institutions. While roll call votes provide valuable insights into the preferences of political elites, their interpretation depends heavily on the statistical and theoretical models applied. Clinton emphasizes that the nonrandom selection of roll call votes and assumptions about individual choice behavior may affect the validity of ideal point estimates and their implications for understanding legislative processes.

**7. Theory:** The article highlights the challenges of using roll call data to infer legislators' preferences. Clinton critiques the conventional ideal point estimation methods, which rely on models of individual choice. These models assume legislators vote based solely on policy preferences and proximity to their ideal point, but Clinton argues that strategic behavior, voting errors, and agenda-setting constraints often distort these estimates. He discusses how integrating theoretical and statistical models can help address these issues, enabling more accurate tests of formal theories like median voter, positive agenda-setting, and negative agenda-setting models.

**8. Methods:** Clinton employs simulations to examine how selection models and voting errors affect ideal point recovery. By simulating roll call votes under different agenda-setting conditions—uniform selection, positive agenda-setting (PAS), and negative agenda-setting (NAS)—and varying levels of voting error, he evaluates the consistency of ideal points with true preferences. He also compares different modeling assumptions, such as random abstentions and strategic voting, and their impact on the validity of roll call analyses.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Roll call data reflects legislators' true preferences only under specific modeling assumptions, such as minimal voting error and consistent selection processes.
- Strategic voting and nonrandom agenda-setting distort ideal point estimates, making them unreliable proxies for true preferences.
- Integrating formal and empirical models reduces the likelihood of misinterpreting ideal points and improves the validity of theoretical tests.

These hypotheses are supported through simulation results and theoretical analysis.

**10. Main findings:** Clinton demonstrates that ideal points derived from roll call analyses are sensitive to modeling assumptions. Strategic voting, selection biases, and nonrandom abstentions often introduce distortions that complicate the interpretation of roll call data. For example, under the NAS model with minimal voting error, legislators' estimated ideal points cluster around extremes, reflecting the constrained policy space rather than true preferences. Clinton advocates for integrated approaches that align theoretical and empirical models to address these limitations. He concludes that while roll call data remains a critical tool for political analysis, scholars must carefully consider the assumptions underlying their models to draw valid conclusions.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Measuring the preferences of political elites is critically important for analyzing the determinants and consequences of elite behavior" (p. 79).
- "The nonrandom selection of roll calls and the assumptions of statistical models can produce ideal points that fail to capture the variation in preferences used to generate the observed votes" (p. 92).
- "The ideal points estimated from observed roll calls cannot necessarily be treated as measuring legislators' true preferences because the estimated ideal points are the set of points that rationalize the revealed—presumably equilibrium—behavior of legislators given the assumed model of individual choice" (p. 95).

### 1.11.14 Reflections on the Practice of Theorizing: Conditional Party Government in the Twenty-First Century

Rohde, D. W. (2013). Reflections on the Practice of Theorizing: Conditional Party Government in the Twenty-First Century. *The Journal of Politics*, 75(4), 849–864. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381613000911>

1. **Citation key:** rohde\_reflections\_2013
2. **Author(s):** David W. Rohde
3. **Year:** 2013
4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** conditional party government, congressional institutions, rational choice, party leadership, institutional change
6. **Summary:** Rohde revisits the theory of Conditional Party Government (CPG), tracing its development over four decades and addressing criticisms. He situates CPG within rational-choice frameworks, emphasizing goal-oriented behavior of members of Congress who delegate power to party leadership based on intraparty homogeneity and interparty divergence. The article reflects on CPG's theoretical contributions and its implications for studying Congress, particularly in periods of heightened partisanship.
7. **Theory:** The CPG theory posits that congressional members delegate significant authority to party leaders when two conditions are met: (1) high intraparty homogeneity of preferences and (2) significant divergence between the parties. Members' willingness to delegate arises from the expectation that leaders will advance collective party goals without jeopardizing individual members' interests. Rohde integrates insights from rational-choice theory and principal-agent models, framing CPG as a "bottom-up" theory driven by rank-and-file members. He also adapts CPG to account for evolving contexts, such as the post-1994 competitive party environment, by introducing majority control as a fourth member goal alongside reelection, policy, and institutional influence.
8. **Methods:** Rohde employs a historical-theoretical approach, synthesizing empirical observations of Congress with prior literature. He examines institutional reforms, such as the Democrats' seniority changes and the Republican Revolution's leadership restructuring, and interprets these events through the lens of CPG. The article reflects on case studies, such as the 104th Congress's appropriations process, to test CPG predictions against real-world developments.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Members of Congress will delegate power to party leaders when intraparty homogeneity and interparty divergence are high.
  - Changes in institutional rules and leadership structures are driven by members' collective and individual goals.
  - Contextual factors, such as majority status uncertainty, alter the relative salience of member goals and influence CPG dynamics.

These hypotheses are supported by historical case studies and legislative developments analyzed in the article.

10. **Main findings:** Rohde finds strong empirical support for CPG's predictions. Legislative reforms in the 1970s and the Republican Revolution of 1994 illustrate how members empowered party leaders when ideological cohesion within parties increased and polarization between parties deepened. For example, the Republican leadership under Speaker Newt Gingrich exercised significant control over committee appointments and appropriations processes to achieve conservative policy goals. Rohde highlights that the evolving competitive context of congressional elections, starting in 1994, necessitated an adaptation of CPG to include majority control as a central goal. This evolution underscores the theory's robustness in explaining shifts in legislative behavior and institutional power dynamics.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "The theory assumes that members of Congress have both electoral and policy goals and that they seek to design their institution to foster those goals" (p. 850).
- "The Republican majority exhibited strong interest in achieving conservative policy outcomes, going so far as to permit the government to shut down twice during their efforts" (p. 855).
- "If many analyses in varying contexts using many different empirical indicators all support the implications of a theory, then I think we can have a fair amount of confidence in that explanatory framework" (p. 862).

### 1.11.15 Legislating in the Dark: Information and Power in the House of Representatives

Curry, J. M. (2015). *Legislating in the Dark: Information and Power in the House of Representatives*. University of Chicago Press. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226281858.001.0001>

1. **Citation key:** curry\_legislating\_2015
2. **Author(s):** James M. Curry
3. **Year:** 2015
4. **Publication:** The University of Chicago Press
5. **Keywords:** Congress, legislative leadership, information asymmetries, policymaking, U.S. House of Representatives
6. **Summary:** Curry examines the power dynamics in the U.S. House of Representatives, focusing on how legislative leaders use information asymmetries to influence the policymaking process. He argues that legislative leaders exploit these asymmetries by controlling access to information, framing policy debates, and shaping legislative outcomes. This concentration of informational power in the hands of leaders affects rank-and-file members' ability to participate effectively, altering the balance of representation and deliberation in Congress.
7. **Theory:** The central premise of Curry's theory is that information is a critical resource in Congress, unevenly dis-

tributed between leaders and rank-and-file members. Legislative leaders use their superior access to information strategically to advance partisan agendas and maintain control over the policymaking process. Curry identifies three principles: (1) information is a valuable commodity, (2) it is unequally distributed, and (3) leaders and rank-and-file members have distinct legislative goals. These disparities enable leaders to frame legislation in ways that prioritize party objectives over individual representation and deliberation.

**8. Methods:** Curry employs a mixed-methods approach, including participant observation during two fellowships on Capitol Hill, interviews with 32 members of Congress and staffers, and quantitative analysis of over 500 bills from 1999 to 2010. The study incorporates insights from qualitative methods to develop indicators of leadership influence, which are then tested using statistical models. Case studies, such as the consideration of the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, illustrate how leadership strategies operate in practice.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Leadership power is derived from control over information and the ability to restrict access to legislative details.
- Rank-and-file members depend on leaders for cues and summaries to guide their legislative decisions.
- Leaders' use of informational advantages amplifies partisan unity on key votes but undermines deliberative processes.

These hypotheses are confirmed through qualitative evidence and quantitative analyses, which reveal how informational tactics bolster leadership influence while diminishing rank-and-file autonomy.

**10. Main findings:** Curry demonstrates that legislative leaders leverage informational asymmetries to dominate policy-making in the House. By drafting bills in secret, restricting access to legislative language, and framing information to align with party goals, leaders shape the preferences and actions of rank-and-file members. This dynamic enhances partisan cohesion but compromises individual representation and deliberation. For example, the rushed passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 exemplifies how leaders manipulate information to achieve legislative objectives, leaving members reliant on leadership-provided talking points.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Information is a key source of power for legislative leaders, shaping the tactics and strategies by which they exercise leadership" (p. 3).
- "By keeping rank-and-file lawmakers in the dark about the details of legislation, leaders increase their dependency and solidify their own authority" (p. 17).
- "The House leadership's use of informational asymmetries undermines deliberative democracy by prioritizing partisan goals over representative decision-making" (p. 195).

#### 1.11.16 Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign

Lee, F. E. (2016). *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign*. University of Chicago Press. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226409184.001.0001>

**1. Citation key:** lee\_insecure\_2016

**2. Author(s):** Frances E. Lee

**3. Year:** 2016

**4. Publication:** The University of Chicago Press

**5. Keywords:** party competition, partisan conflict, U.S. Congress, legislative behavior, majority control

**6. Summary:** Frances E. Lee examines how the highly competitive nature of U.S. party politics, particularly since 1980, has fundamentally altered congressional behavior. She argues that the shift from long-term partisan dominance to an era of insecure majorities has intensified partisan conflict in Congress, with members focusing increasingly on messaging and electoral strategy rather than legislative compromise. This dynamic contributes to legislative gridlock and amplifies partisan polarization.

**7. Theory:** Lee's theory emphasizes that party competition for majority control incentivizes members of Congress to engage in confrontational and partisan behavior. She argues that the perception of competitiveness shapes the behavior of both majority and minority parties, with majority parties prioritizing efforts to consolidate power and minority parties focusing on discrediting the majority. Unlike theories that center on ideological polarization, Lee highlights strategic behavior rooted in competitive dynamics as a key driver of contemporary partisanship.

**8. Methods:** The book employs a mixed-methods approach, including interviews with current and former congressional staff, historical analysis, and quantitative data. Lee analyzes election outcomes, congressional roll-call votes, leadership contests, and partisan messaging strategies. She also uses case studies, such as debt ceiling debates, to illustrate how party competition manifests in legislative behavior.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Increased party competition leads to heightened partisan conflict and decreased bipartisan collaboration.
- Majority and minority parties prioritize messaging and electoral strategy over substantive legislative outcomes.
- Competitive conditions incentivize strategic behavior that magnifies partisan divisions.

These hypotheses are supported by evidence showing that party competition correlates with increased partisan messaging, more frequent use of message votes, and a decline in bipartisan initiatives.

**10. Main findings:** Lee finds that the post-1980 era of competitive party politics has transformed congressional behavior. Legislative leaders increasingly focus on controlling the agenda, framing policy debates, and staging votes to highlight partisan divisions. Minority parties strategically oppose majority initiatives, even when they align with their

preferences, to undermine the governing party's credibility. This dynamic exacerbates gridlock and reinforces public perceptions of a dysfunctional Congress. The analysis demonstrates that partisan conflict is not solely a product of ideological differences but also a result of strategic behavior driven by competitive incentives.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "The central argument of this book is that these changed competitive circumstances have had far-reaching effects on political incentives in Washington" (p. 5).
- "Parties continually contrive to give voters an answer to the question, 'Why should you support us and not the other party?'" (p. 24).
- "The renewal of competition for majority control stands at the root of much change in the behavior of parties and leaders in Congress" (p. 45).

#### 1.11.17 Cardinals or Clerics? Congressional Committees and the Distribution of Pork

Berry, C. R., & Fowler, A. (2016). Cardinals or Clerics? Congressional Committees and the Distribution of Pork. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(3), 692–708. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12192>

1. Citation key: *berry\_cardinals\_2016*

2. Author(s): Christopher R. Berry and Anthony Fowler

3. Year: 2016

4. Publication: American Journal of Political Science

5. Keywords: Congress, appropriations, distributive politics, committee assignments, pork-barrel spending

6. Summary: Berry and Fowler investigate the influence of congressional committee assignments on federal spending. They employ a within-member research design to isolate the effects of committee and subcommittee positions on distributive politics, focusing primarily on the powerful House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Their findings challenge prevailing theories of congressional committees, showing that rank-and-file membership on committees has minimal impact on federal outlays, while leadership positions, particularly Appropriations subcommittee chairs, significantly increase funding for their constituents.

7. Theory: The authors challenge the traditional distributive model, which posits that committee assignments allow members to direct resources to their districts. Instead, they argue that only leadership positions, such as subcommittee chairs, have a significant impact on spending outcomes. This theory departs from canonical views by suggesting that committee influence is narrowly concentrated among senior members rather than broadly distributed among all committee participants.

8. Methods: The study uses a differences-in-differences research design with legislator fixed effects to analyze changes in federal spending when legislators gain or lose committee assignments. The authors construct a novel dataset linking federal programs to the jurisdiction of specific Appropriations subcommittees. They analyze the effects of committee and subcommittee membership on logged federal outlays at the district and state levels, while accounting for potential confounders such as constituency demands, legislator ability, and seniority.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Rank-and-file membership on congressional committees has little to no effect on federal spending.
- Leadership positions, such as Appropriations subcommittee chairs, significantly increase federal outlays for constituents.
- The effects of committee positions are limited to the policy domains directly under the subcommittee's jurisdiction.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with strong evidence that leadership positions matter far more than committee membership for securing federal funds.

10. Main findings: The study finds that general committee membership does not significantly affect federal spending, even in policy areas under the committee's jurisdiction. Leadership positions on Appropriations subcommittees, however, lead to substantial increases in federal outlays. For example, subcommittee chairs in the House increase funding by an average of 96%, while ranking minority members see increases of 68%. In contrast, rank-and-file members of Appropriations subcommittees experience little to no change in funding. These findings suggest that power within committees is highly concentrated, with distributive benefits accruing primarily to senior leaders rather than ordinary members.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Membership on important committees such as Appropriations produces no detectable increase in federal funding for a legislator's constituents" (p. 692).
- "The chairs of Appropriations subcommittees—the so-called 'cardinals' of Congress—are an exception to the rule. These leadership positions do generate more funding for constituents, but only from programs under the jurisdiction of their subcommittee" (p. 692).
- "Our results are at least partly inconsistent with virtually all previous theories of congressional committees and distributive politics, opening the door for new theories that can explain why rank-and-file members of Congress would cede significant power to a small number of senior members from both parties" (p. 693).

### 1.11.18 Making Washington Work: Legislative Entrepreneurship and the Personal Vote from the Gilded Age to the Great Depression

Finocchiaro, C. J., & MacKenzie, S. A. (2018). Making Washington Work: Legislative Entrepreneurship and the Personal Vote from the Gilded Age to the Great Depression. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62(1), 113–131. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12326>

1. **Citation key:** finocchiaro\_making\_2018
2. **Author(s):** Charles J. Finocchiaro and Scott A. MacKenzie
3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** legislative entrepreneurship, bill sponsorship, electoral reforms, personal vote, premodern House of Representatives
6. **Summary:** Finocchiaro and MacKenzie examine the role of legislative entrepreneurship in the premodern U.S. House of Representatives, focusing on how electoral reforms, constituency characteristics, and institutional factors influenced bill sponsorship from 1881 to 1931. They argue that reforms such as the Australian ballot and nominating primary incentivized legislators to cultivate personal votes, significantly shaping the patterns of legislative activity. The study uses original data on more than 417,000 bills to explore how institutional changes and individual characteristics affected legislative behavior during this transformative period.
7. **Theory:** The authors posit that electoral system reforms fundamentally altered members' incentives by encouraging them to focus on cultivating personal votes through legislative activities. They argue that reforms like the Australian ballot and nominating primary decreased party control over candidates and voters, thereby increasing members' autonomy in representing their constituents. This independence led to greater emphasis on introducing bills targeting narrow, constituency-specific interests. The study also highlights the role of resource constraints, electoral vulnerability, and institutional positions in shaping members' legislative strategies.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining matching techniques and event count models to analyze individual-level bill sponsorship data. By coding bills into categories (private, local, and policy), the authors assess how electoral reforms and constituency characteristics influenced legislative entrepreneurship. The analysis includes matched samples comparing members in reform and non-reform settings to isolate the effects of electoral system changes. Additional controls, such as institutional roles, seniority, and previous political experience, are included to account for individual and contextual variation.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Electoral reforms like the Australian ballot and nominating primary increase the sponsorship of private and local bills by encouraging legislators to seek personal votes.
  - Members representing constituencies with higher demand for targeted legislation, such as veterans or industrial workers, will sponsor more private and local bills.
  - Institutional resources, such as committee membership and seniority, reduce the costs of bill sponsorship, leading to higher legislative activity.

These hypotheses are supported by the empirical analysis, with reforms shown to significantly increase private bill introductions and constituency demand shaping members' legislative priorities.

10. **Main findings:** The study demonstrates that the Australian ballot and nominating primary reforms substantially increased the volume of private and local bills, with members from reform states introducing significantly more targeted legislation. Members' institutional positions, such as committee membership and seniority, were also critical in shaping their legislative behavior, particularly for local and policy bills. Additionally, electoral vulnerability and constituency characteristics, such as the size of the veteran population, played a significant role in driving legislative entrepreneurship. These findings underscore the long-term impact of electoral reforms on legislative behavior and the evolution of representation in Congress.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "We find that two reforms—the Australian ballot and nominating primary—increased sponsorship of bills designed to cultivate personal votes, thereby contributing to the growth in private legislation and bills aimed at local constituencies" (p. 113).
- "Private bills, especially pension claims that required no expertise and attracted little controversy, provided a viable low-cost bill sponsorship strategy" (p. 117).
- "These findings illuminate the factors shaping legislative entrepreneurship and, with it, the character of representation" (p. 123).

### 1.11.19 Legislative Effectiveness in the American States

Bucchianeri, P., Volden, C., & Wiseman, A. E. (2024). Legislative Effectiveness in the American States. *American Political Science Review*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055424000042>

1. **Citation key:** buccianeri\_legislative\_2024
2. **Author(s):** Peter Buccianeri, Craig Volden, and Alan E. Wiseman
3. **Year:** 2024
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** legislative effectiveness, state legislatures, State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (SLES), institutional de-

- sign, legislative behavior
6. **Summary:** This study introduces and validates the State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (SLES), a comprehensive metric to assess the effectiveness of individual lawmakers in state legislatures across the United States. Spanning 97 legislative chambers from 1987 to 2018, the SLES evaluates lawmakers based on the bills they sponsor, the progress of these bills through the legislative process, and their substantive significance. The authors demonstrate how institutional contexts, such as polarization and majority-party cohesion, influence legislative effectiveness and propose SLES as a valuable tool for future research on state legislative behavior.
  7. **Theory:** The authors posit that legislative effectiveness depends on lawmakers' ability to advance substantive and significant proposals through the legislative process. Institutional factors, such as majority-party cohesion, polarization, and procedural rules, mediate this effectiveness. They argue that the SLES captures lawmakers' relative contributions to legislative productivity, shedding light on broader questions about institutional design, party dynamics, and representation.
  8. **Methods:** The authors analyze legislative data from state archives, tracking over 1.8 million bills to construct the SLES. Bills are coded into categories—commemorative, substantive, and substantive/significant—and their progress through five legislative stages (e.g., introduction, committee action, passage) is weighted to compute the scores. The analysis includes criterion validation (comparing SLES with North Carolina's subjective rankings) and construct validation (examining patterns of seniority, committee membership, and majority-party influence). Regression models explore how polarization, institutional design, and electoral competition shape legislative effectiveness.
  9. **Hypotheses:**
    - Majority-party legislators are more effective than minority-party legislators, with effectiveness amplified under conditions of high polarization and majority-party cohesion.
    - Institutional factors, such as legislative professionalism and procedural rules, enhance the effectiveness of committee chairs, senior members, and majority-party legislators.
    - In states with competitive electoral environments, majority-party lawmakers exhibit greater legislative dominance.
- These hypotheses are supported, with the findings highlighting significant institutional and contextual influences on legislative effectiveness.
10. **Main findings:** The authors find that majority-party legislators are consistently more effective than their minority-party counterparts, particularly in polarized and cohesive legislatures. Committee chairs and senior members benefit from their institutional roles, further enhancing their legislative productivity. Professionalism and institutional rules, such as gatekeeping and calendar control, amplify majority-party advantages. The study also reveals gender and racial disparities in effectiveness scores, with women and minority lawmakers facing systemic obstacles. The SLES provides a robust tool for analyzing legislative behavior across diverse institutional settings, offering insights into the impact of party dynamics, procedural rules, and institutional reforms.
  11. **Key quotations:**
    - "The SLES captures the proven ability of individual lawmakers to advance their agenda through the legislative process, emphasizing substantive policy change over commemorative proposals" (p. 2).
    - "We demonstrate that polarization and majority-party cohesion amplify the legislative dominance of majority-party lawmakers, consistent with theories of conditional party government" (p. 11).
    - "The SLES opens new avenues for studying legislative behavior, institutional design, and representative democracy, enabling cross-state and longitudinal analyses that were previously infeasible" (p. 13).

## 1.12 The Courts

### 1.12.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The literature on courts and the judiciary has evolved from theories that emphasize the Court's role as a quasi-democratic policymaker to more nuanced models that consider ideological, institutional, and political constraints on judicial decision-making. Foundational theories, like those of Dahl, framed the Supreme Court as aligning with the dominant political coalition rather than acting as an independent counter-majoritarian institution. Over time, scholarship expanded to consider the ideological motivations of judges (the attitudinal model), the influence of legal and institutional constraints, and the capacity of courts to drive social change or represent marginalized groups. This evolution reflects a complex understanding of the judiciary as both a politically responsive institution and one constrained by legal doctrine, public opinion, and institutional roles within the American political system.
- **Courts as Policymakers and Political Institutions:** Robert Dahl's seminal work, "Decision-making in a Democracy: The Supreme Court as a National Policy-Maker" (1957), argued that the Supreme Court is a policymaker closely aligned with the dominant political coalition, rather than an autonomous protector of minority rights. Dahl proposed that the Court's role is limited by its need to maintain legitimacy with elected officials, reflecting prevailing political forces rather than standing against them. Gerald Rosenberg's *The Hollow Hope* (1991) extended this view by emphasizing the Court's limited capacity to effectuate social change independently, suggesting that judicial rulings are constrained by institutional limits and dependence on executive enforcement. This perspective, known as the "constrained court" view, challenges the notion that courts are powerful agents of change, arguing instead that meaningful reform typically requires legislative and executive support.
- **Attitudinal Model and Judicial Behavior:** The attitudinal model, advanced by Jeffrey Segal and Harold Spaeth in

"The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model Revisited" (2002), posits that justices decide cases based primarily on personal policy preferences rather than legal principles. This model argues that judicial decisions are predictable based on ideological leanings, as legal doctrines can often be manipulated to support varying outcomes. Segal and Spaeth provide extensive empirical support, showing correlations between justices' ideological positions and voting patterns. However, critiques like Howard Gillman's "What's Law Got to Do with It?" (2001) argue that the attitudinal model oversimplifies judicial behavior by downplaying the constraining role of legal principles and professional norms.

- **Judicial Independence and Political Pressures:** Scholars have explored how selection systems and external pressures affect judicial independence. Brandice Canes-Wrone, Tom Clark, and Jason Kelly's study on "Judicial Selection and Death Penalty Decisions" (2014) found that judges facing election pressures, particularly in nonpartisan systems, are more responsive to public opinion on contentious issues like the death penalty, highlighting how selection mechanisms mediate judicial behavior. Similarly, Blasingame et al. (2023) demonstrated that the Trump administration's quota policy in immigration courts pressured judges to increase deportation orders, illustrating how executive influence can compromise judicial independence within administrative courts.
- **Constraints and Legal Doctrine:** The role of legal doctrine as a constraint on judicial decision-making has been central to discussions of judicial behavior. Rachael Hinkle's *Legal Constraint in the U.S. Courts of Appeals* (2015) shows that legal constraints, particularly the doctrine of *stare decisis*, influence judicial behavior by limiting ideological expression in certain contexts. Hinkle's findings suggest that judges exhibit less ideological bias when handling binding precedents, reinforcing the importance of legal constraints in appellate courts.
- **Judicial Power and Social Change:** Gerald Rosenberg's *The Hollow Hope* (2008) critically assessed the Court's capacity to drive social change, particularly in areas like civil rights and abortion. Rosenberg argues that courts are often limited by the need for legislative and executive support, with significant social change occurring primarily when external conditions are favorable. This view, aligned with the "constrained court" model, suggests that judicial rulings alone are insufficient for lasting reform, as seen in limited desegregation effects following *Brown v. Board of Education* without federal enforcement.
- **Ideological and Strategic Motivations in Judicial Decision-Making:** Lee Epstein and Jack Knight's *Reconsidering Judicial Preferences* (2013) challenges the purely ideological perspective, proposing a strategic model where judges consider factors like institutional context and reputation alongside policy goals. This model suggests that judicial decisions are influenced not only by ideology but also by career advancement, reputation, and collegiality, offering a broader framework to understand judicial behavior.
- **Legitimacy and Public Opinion:** The impact of public opinion on judicial legitimacy has been a significant focus, especially following polarizing rulings. James Gibson's study "Losing Legitimacy: The Challenges of the *Dobbs* Ruling to Conventional Legitimacy Theory" (2024) examines how the Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision on abortion rights challenged its institutional legitimacy. Gibson argues that while the Court's legitimacy is typically insulated by a "positivity bias," the moral and ideological salience of *Dobbs* weakened this protection, resulting in a notable decline in diffuse support for the Court.
- **Future Directions and Ongoing Debates:** Ongoing debates in the judiciary literature center on the balance between judicial independence and responsiveness to public opinion, the role of ideology versus legal doctrine in shaping decisions, and the Court's capacity to influence social change. Future research is likely to explore the effects of digital media on public perceptions of judicial legitimacy, the intersection of judicial selection systems and political responsiveness, and the Court's evolving role in a polarized political environment. Additionally, scholars are increasingly interested in how courts can balance legal constraints with the need for democratic accountability, particularly in an era of intensified political and social divides.

### 1.12.2 Decision-making in a Democracy: The Supreme Court as a National Policy-Maker

Dahl, R. A. (2001). Decision-making in a democracy: The Supreme Court as a national policy-maker. *Emory Law Journal*, 50(2), 563–582

1. **Citation key:** dahl\_decision-making\_2001
2. **Author(s):** Robert A. Dahl
3. **Year:** 2001 (originally published in 1957)
4. **Publication:** Emory Law Journal (originally published in the Journal of Public Law)
5. **Keywords:** Supreme Court, policy-making, democracy, majority rule, judicial review
6. **Summary:** Dahl's seminal article examines the role of the U.S. Supreme Court not only as a legal institution but also as a political one. He argues that the Court functions as a national policy-maker, particularly in cases where legal criteria alone are insufficient. This role brings the Court into a complex relationship with democratic principles, as it makes policy decisions that impact the distribution of rights and liberties. Dahl explains that the Court's ability to counter the preferences of the majority is limited by its alignment with the dominant national political coalition, given that justices are appointed by elected officials. Consequently, the Court generally does not act independently from the prevailing political alliances but reflects the views of the dominant lawmaking majority over time.
7. **Theory:** Dahl posits that the Supreme Court's decisions are shaped by the need to align with the preferences of the national political majority. This alignment occurs because the Court's legitimacy relies on maintaining the support of influential political actors. Although the Court has a degree of independence, it typically supports the policy goals of the dominant political coalition, acting more as a "policy enforcer" than an autonomous policy-maker. In rare instances, the Court may resist majority preferences, but such resistance is typically short-lived, as the political process

eventually overcomes judicial obstacles.

8. **Methods:** Dahl's approach is primarily theoretical and historical. He analyzes the Court's historical record on judicial review, particularly cases where it declared federal legislation unconstitutional. By examining these cases, he assesses whether the Court protected minority rights against the will of the majority or acted in alignment with the national political coalition. Dahl reviews key cases and legislative responses to assess the Court's ability to influence policy autonomously.

9. **Hypotheses:**

- The Court's policy-making role is constrained by its alignment with dominant political alliances.
- The Court's decisions generally reflect the policy preferences of the lawmaking majority, as justices are appointed by elected officials who support specific political agendas.
- The Court does not systematically counter the majority but rather reinforces the policies of the dominant coalition.

Dahl supports these hypotheses through historical analysis, showing that the Court's independence is limited by its alignment with the national political coalition. Instances of resistance to majority preferences, such as during the New Deal, were temporary, and political realignments ultimately brought the Court in line with prevailing coalitions.

10. **Main findings:** Dahl concludes that the Court operates as part of the broader political system, typically supporting rather than opposing the dominant political alliance. When the Court does resist majority preferences, this resistance is often temporary, as political realignments eventually bring the Court into alignment with the dominant coalition. Therefore, Dahl argues, the Court is not an independent defender of minority rights against the tyranny of the majority, as often claimed, but rather an institution that reinforces the policies of the national majority.

11. **Key quotations:**

- "If the Court were assumed to be a 'political' institution, no particular problems would arise, for it would be taken for granted that the members of the Court would resolve questions of fact and value by introducing assumptions derived from their own predispositions or those of influential clienteles and constituents" (p. 565).
- "The fact is, then, that the policy views dominant on the Court are never for long out of line with the policy views dominant among the lawmaking majorities of the United States" (p. 570).
- "It is futile ... to suppose that the Court could have possibly acted much differently in these areas of policy from the way in which it did in fact act" (p. 579).
- "Few of the Court's policy decisions can be interpreted sensibly in terms of a 'majority' versus a 'minority.' In this respect, the Court is no different from the rest of the political leadership" (p. 580).
- "By itself, the Court is almost powerless to affect the course of national policy" (p. 580).

### 1.12.3 The Road Taken: Robert A. Dahl's Decision-making in a Democracy: The Supreme Court as a National Policy-Maker

Rosenberg, G. N. (2001). The road taken: Robert A. Dahl's Decision-making in a democracy: The Supreme Court as a national policy-maker. *Emory Law Journal*, 50(2), 613–630

1. **Citation key:** rosenberg\_road\_2001

2. **Author(s):** Gerald N. Rosenberg

3. **Year:** 2001

4. **Publication:** Emory Law Journal

5. **Keywords:** Supreme Court, Dahl, policy-making, judicial independence, legitimacy

6. **Summary:** Rosenberg's article reflects on the enduring impact of Robert A. Dahl's 1957 article on the U.S. Supreme Court's role as a national policy-maker. Rosenberg analyzes why Dahl's article has remained influential in academic discourse, noting its questions of fundamental importance, clarity, and methodology. He argues that Dahl's insights have guided multiple research trajectories, such as understanding the Supreme Court as a political institution. Rosenberg also critiques some limitations of Dahl's work, including the article's assumptions and occasional lack of empirical support, but emphasizes Dahl's contribution to rethinking the Supreme Court's function in American politics.

7. **Theory:** Rosenberg underscores Dahl's proposition that the Supreme Court functions as part of the dominant political coalition rather than as an independent protector of minority rights. Dahl's perspective challenges the traditional view of judicial independence, suggesting instead that the Court's decisions are influenced by prevailing political forces and the policy goals of the national majority.

8. **Methods:** Rosenberg employs a critical analysis of Dahl's methods and findings. He reviews Dahl's assumptions, such as equating a national majority with the lawmaking majority in Congress and the notion that this majority remains dominant for four years. Rosenberg evaluates the historical evidence Dahl presented and examines the broader implications of viewing the Court as a policy-making entity shaped by political dynamics.

9. **Hypotheses:**

- Dahl's hypothesis that the Supreme Court aligns with the dominant national political coalition.
- The assumption that a lawmaking majority in Congress represents a national majority.
- Dahl's assertion that the Court's decisions reflect the preferences of the dominant political alliance rather than an autonomous policy position.

Rosenberg finds that Dahl's hypotheses generally hold, especially regarding the Court's alignment with the prevailing political coalition. However, he also highlights Dahl's assumptions, noting that some were later questioned in the literature. For instance, Dahl's proxy for a national majority through Congress has received critique, as has the assumption

of a four-year dominance period for lawmaking majorities.

- 10. Main findings:** Rosenberg concludes that Dahl's article was influential because it posed essential questions and redirected judicial scholarship towards viewing the Supreme Court as both a legal and political institution. Rosenberg emphasizes that Dahl's work invited future scholarship to consider the interplay between the Court and other political branches, judicial selection, and the role of public opinion in judicial legitimacy. He also underscores Dahl's insight that judicial decisions are often constrained by political pressures.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "One of the deep, dark secrets of the academic world is how small the audience is for our scholarship. Most academics hope that their colleagues will read what they write, but they know that collegiality goes only so far" (p. 614).
- "This was a striking claim for both normative and empirical reasons. Normatively, one of the strongest defenses for allowing a non-electorally accountable Court to invalidate the acts of democratically accountable branches is that the Court acts on constitutional principle, not partisan preference" (p. 627).
- "I have tried to convey a sense of why *Decision-Making in a Democracy* has been such an influential piece of scholarship. I credit its success to three main factors: its asking questions of fundamental importance to the study of the Supreme Court; its careful, well thought-out, empirical methodology presented in an exceedingly well-written way; and its raising a host of questions that subsequent scholars have addressed" (p. 629).

#### 1.12.4 What's Law Got to Do with It? Judicial Behavioralists Test the "Legal Model" of Judicial Decision Making

Gillman, H. (2001). What's Law Got to Do with It? Judicial Behavioralists Test the "Legal Model" of Judicial Decision Making. *Law and Social Inquiry*, 26(2), 456–504

1. **Citation key:** gillman\_whats\_2001

2. **Author(s):** Howard Gillman

3. **Year:** 2001

4. **Publication:** Law & Social Inquiry

5. **Keywords:** judicial behavior, legal realism, judicial decision-making, attitudinal model, legal model

6. **Summary:** Gillman's article examines the ongoing debate between the behavioralist and legalist perspectives in understanding judicial decision-making. Behavioralists argue that judges' decisions are primarily influenced by ideological preferences rather than adherence to legal principles, while legalists maintain that judicial decisions are rooted in good-faith legal interpretation. Gillman critiques the attitudinal model favored by behavioralists, suggesting that it overlooks the nuanced ways in which law and legal norms may constrain judicial behavior. He explores how the methodological approaches of behavioralism may sometimes conflate political motivations with legal reasoning, thereby underestimating the autonomy of legal doctrines.

7. **Theory:** Gillman discusses the foundational divide between behavioralist and interpretivist views, with behavioralists treating judicial behavior as measurable and ideologically driven, while interpretivists focus on the qualitative dimensions of judicial deliberation and the integrity of legal principles. Behavioralists rely on positivist assumptions, asserting that empirical data on ideological voting patterns can reveal insights into judicial motivations. By contrast, interpretivists emphasize that judicial actions should not merely be reduced to ideological preferences but should be understood within the broader context of legal fidelity and interpretive norms.

8. **Methods:** Gillman reviews political science research on judicial behavior, particularly studies by Spaeth and Segal, which utilize quantitative analyses to test the attitudinal model. He critiques these studies for their reliance on coding judicial decisions in a way that potentially disregards the complexity of legal reasoning. Gillman suggests that combining behavioral data with interpretivist insights could yield a more balanced view of how ideological preferences and legal norms intersect in judicial decision-making.

9. **Hypotheses:** Gillman posits that:

- Behavioralists' reliance on quantifiable ideological data often overlooks the role of legal principles in judicial decision-making.
- Interpretivist perspectives provide essential insights into how legal norms can operate independently of political motivations.
- A more comprehensive approach to judicial behavior would account for both ideological tendencies and the substantive impact of legal doctrines.

These hypotheses align with his critique of the attitudinal model's limitations in capturing the full scope of judicial influences.

10. **Main findings:** Gillman concludes that the behavioralist approach, while valuable for understanding patterns in judicial behavior, lacks the capacity to fully address the ways in which legal norms and judicial roles shape decision-making. He argues for a more integrative model that respects both empirical data on ideological voting and interpretivist accounts of legal reasoning. Gillman also warns that reducing judicial decision-making to ideological calculations risks misrepresenting the judiciary's role and could erode public trust in its legitimacy.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Behavioralists provide extremely useful descriptive data for anyone interested in patterns of decisional outcomes, and this is essential for analyzing the political implications of having different sorts of judges on the bench" (p. 495).

- "It was an article of faith that no additional justification had to be given for focusing on other variables ... it led researchers to offer misleading or at least incautious conclusions about the extent to which law influenced judicial decision making" (p. 473).
- "The time seems ripe for reflecting on the contributions made by behavioralists in resolving questions about law and judicial decision making" (p. 468).
- "While most legal scholars would agree that the language of 'liberal' or 'conservative' is a useful shorthand for summarizing a judge's worldview, behavioralists have a tendency to treat these as the only appropriate labels" (p. 471).

### 1.12.5 The Supreme Court and The Attitudinal Model Revisited

Segal, J. A., & Spaeth, H. J. (2002). *The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model Revisited*. Cambridge University Press

- Citation key:** segal\_supreme\_2002
- Author(s):** Jeffrey Allan Segal and Harold J. Spaeth
- Year:** 2002
- Publication:** The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model Revisited (Cambridge University Press)
- Keywords:** attitudinal model, judicial behavior, ideology, judicial decision-making, Supreme Court, legal model
- Summary:** The book *The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model Revisited* argues that Supreme Court justices make decisions based primarily on their personal policy preferences rather than legal doctrine. The authors provide evidence for this "attitudinal model" in contrast to the traditional "legal model" which states that justices' votes are based on precedent, the plain meaning of legal texts, and the intent of the framers. The authors show that these legal factors can be used to support either side in a given case and that their quality cannot be reliably measured. In contrast, the authors present evidence suggesting that the facts of the case and the ideological leanings of the justices can accurately explain and predict their votes. The authors also examine the "separation-of-powers model," a version of rational choice theory, which claims that the Court often defers to Congress in statutory cases to avoid being overruled. The authors find fault with the assumptions and evidence for the separation-of-powers model and show that the structure of the American political system generally allows the justices to freely vote their preferences. The book concludes by summarizing the historical trends of the Supreme Court and examining the Court's role in a constitutional democracy.
- Theory:** Segal and Spaeth posit that Supreme Court justices decide cases primarily based on their own ideological preferences rather than adhering strictly to legal doctrine. The authors argue that legal factors like precedent, original intent, and plain meaning are often malleable and can be manipulated to justify decisions that align with a justice's pre-existing policy preferences. This stands in contrast to the traditional "legal model," which assumes that justices strive to neutrally apply legal principles to the facts of a case. The authors provide extensive empirical evidence to support the attitudinal model by demonstrating strong correlations between justices' ideological leanings, as measured by their confirmation votes, and their voting patterns in numerous case areas, notably search and seizure. They find that the attitudinal model can accurately predict judicial decisions on the merits, particularly when considering both a justice's ideology and specific case facts. The book also critically examines alternative models, like the "separation-of-powers model," a rational choice theory that suggests the Court strategically defers to Congress to avoid being overruled, but finds these models less compelling in explaining judicial behavior.
- Methods:** The authors test their theory through a variety of quantitative methods using data from the U.S. Supreme Court Judicial Database. This includes data on the justices' backgrounds, the chronology of cases, the substance of cases, case outcomes, judicial votes and opinion assignments. The authors examine a variety of case areas, including search and seizure, sex discrimination, economic activity, federalism, and civil liberties. They use these data to test hypotheses derived from both the legal model and the attitudinal model by examining correlations between the facts of a case, the legal doctrines cited, and the ideological leanings of the justices. For example, they employ a logit model to examine the influence of case facts on the justices' votes in search and seizure cases, finding that the facts of the case alone can explain a significant portion of the Court's decisions, but that adding ideological variables greatly increases the model's predictive power. The authors also conduct analyses of opinion assignments, finding that while the Chief Justice does try to distribute opinions equally, ideological factors also influence opinion assignments. The authors suggest that their quantitative approach is superior to the qualitative case study approach frequently used by other scholars of judicial politics.
- Hypotheses:** Segal and Spaeth posits that:
  - **Hypotheses about Judicial Behavior at Certiorari**
    - **Reversal Strategies:** Justices are more likely to vote to grant *certiorari* when they disagree with the lower court decision. Justices who want to affirm are less likely to provide the fourth and deciding vote to grant *cert.*
      - \* Mixed support is found for this hypothesis. While some studies show a link between justices' *certiorari* votes and their later votes on the merits, others note strategic behavior mainly among justices inclined to affirm. Analyses of the Warren Court suggest a relationship between support for a justice's position and their likelihood of granting *cert* when wanting to affirm, but not when wanting to reverse.
    - **Prediction Strategies:** Justices vote strategically on *certiorari* based on expected merits outcomes, favoring cases they believe their side will win.
      - \* Support is also mixed. Brenner and Krol found that justices were more likely to grant *certiorari* if they

wanted to reverse, if their side would win on the merits, and if they aligned ideologically with the majority. However, some scholars argue justices avoid strategic voting at *certiorari*, citing a “shared conception” of their role.

- **Hierarchical Control:** The Supreme Court uses *certiorari* grants to maintain control over lower courts, especially when a lower court’s ruling conflicts ideologically with the Supreme Court’s preferred doctrines.

- \* Evidence supports this hypothesis. Analyses indicate the Court is more likely to grant *certiorari* to cases where a conservative lower court issued a liberal ruling, or vice versa, signaling disapproval of ideologically divergent decisions.

- **Hypotheses about the Influence of Precedent**

- ***Stare Decisis* in Ordinary Cases:** Justices are more likely to follow precedent in ordinary cases than in landmark cases.

- \* Confirmed. Studies show greater support for *stare decisis* in ordinary cases, particularly in economic and civil liberties cases, though precedential behavior remains minimal overall.

- **Ideological Influence on *Stare Decisis*:** Justices will uphold ideologically aligned precedents and overturn those that conflict with their views.

- \* Confirmed. Analysis indicates that justices tend to uphold precedents consistent with their ideology while challenging those that oppose it.

- **Hypotheses about the Attitudinal Model**

- **Case Facts:** Case-specific facts significantly influence Supreme Court decisions.

- \* Supported. In search and seizure cases, factors such as search location and warrant presence are significant predictors, though facts alone don’t fully explain decisions.

- **Judicial Attitudes:** A justice’s ideological views strongly correlate with their votes.

- \* Strongly confirmed. Justices’ ideological scores correlate with their voting patterns, especially for those with prior lower court experience, indicating ideology as a stable voting predictor.

- **Interaction of Facts and Attitudes:** Both case facts and judicial attitudes are needed to explain decisions.

- \* Confirmed. Logit analyses show improved predictive power when both case facts and judicial attitudes are included, suggesting justices balance case details against policy preferences.

- **Hypotheses about the Separation-of-Powers Model**

- **Judicial Deference:** The Court defers to Congress in statutory cases to avoid potential overrides.

- \* Rejected. Analysis of statutory cases reveals no evidence of deference to Congress. Qualitative case studies supporting the separation-of-powers model are deemed inadequate, with scholars suggesting large-scale data analysis for a rigorous assessment of congressional influence.

The hypotheses examined in *The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model Revisited* provide strong support for the attitudinal model’s explanatory power in Supreme Court decision-making. Although legal and institutional factors play a role, a justice’s ideological preferences remain the most powerful predictor of their votes.

10. **Main findings:** The authors conclude that the ideological attitudes of Supreme Court justices are the most powerful predictor of their votes, far more so than legal factors such as precedent, plain meaning, or legislative intent. Using quantitative analysis of cases in a variety of issue areas, Segal and Spaeth find strong correlations between justices’ ideological scores, based on their confirmation votes, and their voting patterns in cases. The authors demonstrate this in their analysis of search and seizure cases, where they find that the facts of the case are influential, but adding ideological variables significantly increases the model’s predictive power. They also find that the attitudinal model accurately explains the justices’ behavior at the *certiorari* stage, as justices are more likely to vote to grant review in cases where they disagree with the lower court’s decision and believe they are likely to win on the merits. While the authors acknowledge the role of institutional factors and strategic behavior, they ultimately conclude that the Supreme Court is largely unconstrained in its decision-making and that justices predominantly vote based on their policy preferences. The book provides a comprehensive critique of the competing “legal model,” arguing that legal factors are often indeterminate and can be used to support either side in a case, and the authors find little empirical evidence to support the “separation-of-powers model” which claims that justices strategically defer to Congress.

11. **Key quotations:**

- “If various aspects of the legal model can support either side of any given dispute that comes before the Court, and the quality of these positions cannot be reliably and validly measured *a priori*, then the legal model hardly satisfies as an explanation of Supreme Court decisions. By being able to ‘explain’ everything, in the end it explains nothing” (p. 87).
- “The attitudinal model holds that the Supreme Court decides disputes in light of the facts of the case vis-a-vis the ideological attitudes and values of the justices” (p. 88).
- “Consistent with what we more systematically demonstrate below to be the Court’s actual behavior, attitudinalists believe the structure of the American political system virtually always allows the justices to engage in rationally sincere behavior on the merits” (p. 113).

#### 1.12.6 American Adversarialism: Reviewing Robert A. Kagan’s Adversarial Legalism: The American Way of Law

Kritzer, H. M. (2004). American Adversarialism Reviewing Robert A. Kagan’s Adversarial Legalism: The American Way of Law. *Law & Society Review*, 38(2), 349–383. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0023-9216.2004.03802011.x>

1. **Citation key:** kritzer\_american\_2004
2. **Author(s):** Herbert M. Kritzer
3. **Year:** 2004
4. **Publication:** Law & Society Review
5. **Keywords:** adversarial legalism, legal culture, litigation, American exceptionalism, regulation
6. **Summary:** Kritzer reviews Robert A. Kagan's book, *Adversarial Legalism: The American Way of Law*, examining Kagan's argument that the United States' unique reliance on adversarial legalism as a method of policy implementation and dispute resolution is a defining aspect of American law. Kritzer explores Kagan's concept of adversarial legalism, which is characterized by formal legal contestation and litigant activism, and contrasts it with alternative, less adversarial approaches found in other countries. Kritzer critically engages with Kagan's assessment of the costs and benefits of adversarial legalism, questioning some of Kagan's claims and highlighting the limitations and impacts of this system on American society.
7. **Theory:** Kritzer discusses Kagan's theory that adversarial legalism arises from a uniquely American combination of distrust in centralized government, a strong focus on individual rights, and a fragmented legal system. Kagan argues that these elements produce a system that favors legalistic and adversarial approaches to policy-making and enforcement. In his review, Kritzer reflects on Kagan's suggestion that adversarial legalism results in both heightened legal costs and inefficiencies, while also emphasizing accountability and rights protections.
8. **Methods:** This review analyzes Kagan's arguments using a critical assessment of his examples, particularly focusing on the four major areas Kagan covers: criminal justice, civil justice, social welfare policy, and environmental regulation. Kritzer evaluates Kagan's use of historical and comparative examples to support his arguments, assessing the validity and limitations of these examples in illustrating the broader implications of adversarial legalism.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - The unique characteristics of American political and legal culture encourage a highly adversarial, legalistic approach to dispute resolution and policy implementation.
  - Adversarial legalism has increased in the United States, driven by expanded individual rights and increased regulation.
  - Adversarial legalism produces high costs, legal uncertainty, and inefficiencies in American policy-making and dispute resolution.

Kritzer notes that while Kagan supports these hypotheses with substantial evidence, the review suggests some qualifications. For example, Kritzer questions whether the increased adversarial nature of American law is as distinctive or recent as Kagan claims, and whether adversarial legalism necessarily leads to worse outcomes than alternative approaches.
10. **Main findings:** Kritzer concludes that Kagan's concept of adversarial legalism is a valuable lens through which to view the distinctiveness of American law. However, he raises concerns about Kagan's conclusions, particularly the claim that adversarial legalism is predominantly negative. Kritzer suggests that Kagan may overstate the inefficiencies and costs without fully acknowledging potential benefits, such as enhanced accountability and responsiveness to individual rights. Kritzer also questions whether adversarial legalism is as unique to the U.S. as Kagan implies, noting similar trends in other contexts.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "American adversarial legalism has both positive and negative effects" (p. 3); while Kagan acknowledges these effects, his bottom line remains that adversarial legalism is, on balance, more of a negative than a positive" (p. 352).
  - "Kagan's description of American legal culture might overstate its distinctiveness, and his argument for adversarial legalism as a recent trend may overlook deeper historical roots of adversarialism in the U.S. legal system" (p. 354)
  - "In the American psyche, law is closely tied to detailed rules, and the primary approach to policy is not focused on how to get to a desired outcome but rather on establishing a set of rules to govern behavior with the a priori hope that it will lead to a desired outcome" (p. 361).

#### 1.12.7 "Interpose Your Friendly Hand": Political Supports for the Exercise of Judicial Review by the United States Supreme Court

Whittington, K. E. (2005). "Interpose Your Friendly Hand": Political Supports for the Exercise of Judicial Review by the United States Supreme Court. *American Political Science Review*, 99(4), 583–596. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055405051890>

1. **Citation key:** whittington\_interpose\_2005
2. **Author(s):** Keith E. Whittington
3. **Year:** 2005
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** judicial review, Supreme Court, constitutional interpretation, political support, federalism, judicial independence
6. **Summary:** Whittington argues that judicial review is not inherently counter to the interests of current government officials. Instead, when elected officials encounter obstacles that prevent them from implementing their policy agendas, they may support the Supreme Court's exercise of judicial review as a mechanism to overcome these obstructions.

Whittington illustrates this “overcoming obstructions” theory with case studies in U.S. constitutional history, exploring how judicial review has been used to address challenges related to federalism, entrenched interests, and fragmented political coalitions. This dynamic challenges the notion that judicial activism is always oppositional to the political status quo.

**7. Theory:** Whittington presents the theory that judicial review can act as a tool of regime enforcement rather than opposition. He proposes that political leaders may welcome an active judiciary when it helps to dismantle barriers such as entrenched state interests or coalition-based resistance to policy changes. Judicial activism, in this view, aligns with the governing coalition’s objectives when it aids in dismantling political obstacles, allowing the judiciary to act as an ally rather than an antagonist to elected officials.

**8. Methods:** Whittington employs historical case studies to illustrate instances where judicial review has been supported by political actors to address specific structural barriers. He examines Supreme Court decisions that acted against state resistance, entrenched economic interests, and internal coalition challenges, using these examples to highlight how judicial intervention can support the policy goals of governing coalitions.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Political leaders support judicial review when it aids in overcoming structural obstacles such as federalism, entrenched interests, and coalition fragmentation.
- Judicial review functions as a regime-enforcement mechanism when the judiciary aligns ideologically with the governing coalition.
- The judiciary can act as a vehicle for advancing policy objectives that the political branches are unable or unwilling to implement directly.

Whittington’s analysis supports these hypotheses, demonstrating through historical examples that political coalitions often find judicial review beneficial for advancing agendas in situations where direct action is constrained.

**10. Main findings:** Whittington concludes that judicial review can be understood as a cooperative mechanism that supports the dominant political coalition’s goals. He shows that judicial activism, rather than being uniformly oppositional, frequently serves the interests of elected officials by circumventing political and structural constraints. This analysis shifts the understanding of judicial review from a purely counter-majoritarian check to a complex tool that can uphold or even advance the regime’s policy objectives.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “When current elected officials are obstructed from fully implementing their own policy agenda, they may favor the active exercise of constitutional review by a sympathetic judiciary to overcome those obstructions and disrupt the status quo” (p. 584).
- “It is unrealistic to assume that only political actors currently out of power stand to benefit from an active judiciary” (p. 584).
- “The Court could jeopardize its legitimacy, however, if it flagrantly opposes the major policies of the dominant alliance” (p. 585).

#### 1.12.8 The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?

Rosenberg, G. N. (2008, September). *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** rosenberg\_hollow\_2008
2. **Author(s):** Gerald N. Rosenberg
3. **Year:** 2008 (Second Edition)
4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press
5. **Keywords:** judicial power, social change, civil rights, constrained court view, dynamic court view, litigation, judicial limitations
6. **Summary:** *The Hollow Hope* critically examines the capacity of American courts, particularly the Supreme Court, to effectuate social change through judicial rulings. Rosenberg argues that courts, due to institutional limitations and dependence on other branches of government, are inherently weak in driving significant social reform. He contrasts the “dynamic court” view, which sees courts as powerful agents of change, with the “constrained court” view, which emphasizes their limitations. Through case studies on issues such as civil rights, abortion, and marriage equality, Rosenberg contends that meaningful reform typically requires legislative and executive support. This edition extends his analysis with new data on issues like marriage equality and abortion access, reinforcing his thesis on the limited power of courts to enact social change independently.
7. **Theory:** Rosenberg’s theory posits that courts are generally ineffective at producing substantial social reform on their own, a concept known as the “constrained court” view. He argues that the judiciary lacks the institutional tools, such as enforcement mechanisms, to implement change without cooperation from other branches of government. His framework suggests that significant social change through the courts only occurs when specific supportive conditions are met, including external political and economic incentives that encourage compliance with judicial rulings. Rosenberg critiques the “dynamic court” perspective, which asserts that courts can drive change independently, challenging this view with empirical evidence.
8. **Methods:** Rosenberg employs a case study approach, analyzing the outcomes of landmark court decisions in areas such as civil rights (e.g., *Brown v. Board of Education*), abortion rights (e.g., *Roe v. Wade*), and same-sex marriage. He

utilizes data from public opinion surveys, media coverage, legislative records, and educational resources to evaluate both the direct and indirect effects of these judicial decisions. His analysis distinguishes between immediate legal effects and broader societal changes, focusing on whether courts alone can produce lasting impact or if external factors are crucial.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Courts are generally ineffective at producing significant social change due to institutional constraints.
- Judicial decisions only result in substantive reform when external conditions, such as legislative or executive support, align to enforce compliance.
- Litigation-based social reform is often limited by counter-mobilization and backlash, which may undermine or reverse court-ordered changes.

Rosenberg's findings confirm these hypotheses, demonstrating that, across multiple issue areas, judicial rulings alone have limited power to produce lasting social reform without the active support of other governmental actors.

**10. Main findings:** Rosenberg concludes that judicial rulings are insufficient for driving major social change independently, as they often face barriers to implementation and resistance from opposing social forces. For example, he argues that *Brown v. Board of Education* had minimal immediate impact on school desegregation without subsequent federal legislation and enforcement. His analysis of the same-sex marriage cases further supports his thesis, illustrating how court decisions spurred counter-mobilization rather than widespread acceptance. Rosenberg suggests that courts are more effective in reinforcing trends initiated by other branches or in areas where societal consensus is already shifting.

#### 11. Key definitions:

- *Constrained Court View*: A perspective that sees courts as limited in their ability to enact social change due to lack of enforcement power, reliance on other branches of government, and institutional constraints.
- *Dynamic Court View*: An opposing perspective that considers courts as powerful agents capable of driving social reform independently, especially through landmark decisions.
- *Judicial Backlash*: The counter-mobilization or negative public and political response to a court decision, often leading to legislative or popular resistance that can undermine the decision's impact.
- *Implementation Deficit*: The gap between judicial rulings and their actual enforcement or real-world impact, resulting from practical challenges or lack of support from other political actors.
- *Supportive Conditions for Judicial Efficacy*: Specific factors that enable courts to achieve social change, including political support, public opinion alignment, and economic incentives that encourage compliance with judicial decisions.
- *Litigation Strategy for Social Reform*: The use of court cases to attempt to achieve policy or social change, often employed by social movements but critiqued by Rosenberg as limited in effect without broader political and institutional support.

#### 1.12.9 Untangling the Causal Effects of Sex on Judging

Boyd, C. L., Epstein, L., & Martin, A. D. (2010). Untangling the Causal Effects of Sex on Judging. *American Journal of Political Science*, 54(2), 389–411. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00437.x>

1. **Citation key:** boyd\_untangling\_2010

2. **Author(s):** Christina L. Boyd, Lee Epstein, and Andrew D. Martin

3. **Year:** 2010

4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

5. **Keywords:** gender, judicial behavior, sex discrimination, causal inference, semiparametric matching, federal courts

6. **Summary:** Boyd, Epstein, and Martin examine whether a judge's gender affects judicial decision-making, focusing on individual effects (differences in male and female judges' decisions) and panel effects (influence of a female judge's presence on male colleagues). Using data from cases across 13 areas of law and employing semiparametric matching methods, they conclude that gender differences are restricted to sex discrimination cases. Male judges are generally less supportive of plaintiffs in these cases, but they become more likely to rule favorably for plaintiffs when a female judge is present on the panel. The findings challenge broad assumptions about pervasive gender effects in judicial decision-making.

7. **Theory:** The authors discuss several theoretical perspectives explaining potential gender effects in judging, including "different voice" theory, which posits distinct worldviews for male and female judges; the "representational" theory, suggesting female judges may represent women's interests in gender-relevant cases; and the "informational" perspective, asserting that female judges may bring unique expertise, especially in sex discrimination cases. The "organizational" theory argues that professional constraints and shared training minimize gender-based differences.

8. **Methods:** Boyd, Epstein, and Martin use semiparametric matching to analyze judicial decisions across the U.S. Court of Appeals, focusing on individual and panel effects. By comparing matched samples of male and female judges, they isolate the impact of gender. Additionally, they examine panel effects to assess changes in male judges' decisions when serving with female colleagues, applying this method across 13 legal areas.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Individual effects: Male and female judges will display differences in decisions, particularly in sex discrimination cases.

- Panel effects: Male judges will show greater support for sex discrimination plaintiffs when a female judge is present on the panel.

These hypotheses are supported, with gender-based effects consistently observed in sex discrimination cases but not in other legal domains.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that gender-based judicial effects primarily occur in sex discrimination cases. Female judges are more likely to favor plaintiffs in these cases, and male judges on mixed-gender panels become more supportive of plaintiffs. However, gender effects do not significantly appear in other areas of law, indicating that gender influences are issue-specific rather than widespread in judicial behavior.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "When a woman serves on a panel with men, the men are significantly more likely to rule in favor of the rights litigant" (p. 390).
- "Female judges possess information that their male colleagues perceive 'as more credible and persuasive' than their own knowledge about sex discrimination" (p. 392).
- "Almost without exception, female and male judges do not reach different decisions ... with only sex discrimination cases producing a statistically significant difference" (p. 401).
- "We observe causal effects ranging from 0.12 to 0.14—meaning that the likelihood of a male judge ruling in favor of the plaintiff increases by 12% to 14% when a female sits on the panel" (p. 406).

#### 1.12.10 Reconsidering Judicial Preferences

Epstein, L., & Knight, J. (2013). Reconsidering Judicial Preferences. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 16(1), 11–31. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-032211-214229>

**1. Citation key:** epstein\_reconsidering\_2013

**2. Author(s):** Lee Epstein and Jack Knight

**3. Year:** 2013

**4. Publication:** Annual Review of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** judging, judicial behavior, motives, ideology, reputation, strategic accounts

**6. Summary:** This article critically examines the widely held belief that judges primarily pursue their ideological preferences, arguing that this policy-driven view may not fully capture the complexity of judicial motivations. Epstein and Knight review evidence showing that while policy preferences do influence judicial behavior, they are not the only factor, nor always the dominant one. They propose that motivations such as career advancement, reputation, leisure, and adherence to legal principles can also shape judicial decision-making. This view challenges the traditional attitudinal model, suggesting a more nuanced approach that accounts for multiple motivations.

**7. Theory:** Epstein and Knight critique the attitudinal model, which assumes judges are driven solely by policy goals. They advocate for a strategic model where judges are influenced by an array of motivations, including institutional context and the anticipated reactions of other actors. This approach suggests that judges balance their ideological preferences with other factors, like legal norms and the need to maintain professional relationships. By considering these diverse motivations, the strategic model offers a more realistic perspective on judicial decision-making, suggesting that judges sometimes prioritize legal precedent or collegial harmony over ideological goals.

**8. Methods:** The authors conduct a literature review of existing theoretical and empirical studies on judicial behavior, focusing on works from both political science and law. They compare findings that support the attitudinal model with those suggesting alternative motivations. Key examples include studies on judicial dissent rates, reversal rates, and patterns of compliance with precedent across different courts. They also analyze data from prior research on the impact of the Solicitor General's success in the Supreme Court, which appears inconsistent with a purely policy-driven model.

**9. Hypotheses:** Epstein and Knight propose that:

- Judges' decisions are not solely based on policy preferences; they also consider legal constraints, institutional context, and personal motivations.
- Judges' behavior reflects a mix of ideological, strategic, and reputational concerns, varying by the institutional setting and case type.

Their review of the literature suggests support for these hypotheses, as empirical evidence shows judges often conform to legal norms, prioritize collegiality, and consider the implications of reversal, all of which imply motivations beyond simple policy preferences.

**10. Main findings:** The study concludes that judicial behavior cannot be fully explained by policy preferences alone. Epstein and Knight find that evidence supporting a broader set of motivations, such as career advancement, collegiality, and adherence to precedent, challenges the dominance of the attitudinal model. They suggest that a more comprehensive approach that includes strategic, legal, and personal motivations provides a more accurate understanding of judicial decision-making. This shift implies that political scientists studying courts should incorporate these factors to better explain judicial choices across different cases and contexts.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Among political scientists, not only is it uncontroversial to say that judges seek to etch their political values into law; it would be near heresy to suggest otherwise" (p. 11).
- "Strategic accounts assume that when goal-oriented justices make their decisions, they take into account the

- preferences and likely actions of other relevant actors, including their colleagues, elected officials, and the public" (p. 12)
- "There are now too many well-observed but often ignored patterns in raw data (i.e., facts) at odds with an exclusive focus on policy motivations to continue to deem them idiopathic, exceptions, or anomalies" (p. 15).
  - "High unanimity rates and support for the Solicitor General have been nearly constant over the past seven decades. A third fact seemingly incompatible with policy-centric preferences is the decline in the Court's plenary docket" (p. 17).

### 1.12.11 Judicial Selection and Death Penalty Decisions

Canes-Wrone, B., Clark, T. S., & Kelly, J. P. (2014). Judicial Selection and Death Penalty Decisions. *American Political Science Review*, 108(1), 23–39. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000622>

1. **Citation key:** canes-wrone\_judicial\_2014
2. **Author(s):** Brandice Canes-Wrone, Tom S. Clark, and Jason P. Kelly
3. **Year:** 2014
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** judicial selection, death penalty, public opinion, judicial independence, partisan elections, nonpartisan elections, reappointment
6. **Summary:** This study investigates the effect of judicial selection mechanisms on state supreme court judges' death penalty decisions in the context of rising public and interest group pressures. By analyzing data on over 12,000 judicial votes from 2,000 death penalty cases across different states from 1980 to 2006, the authors assess how judicial selection systems (partisan, nonpartisan, commission-retention, and reappointment) influence judges' responsiveness to public opinion on capital punishment. The findings reveal that nonpartisan election systems create the greatest pressure on judges to conform to public support for the death penalty, while partisan election systems and reappointment show different responsiveness patterns. This study highlights how changes in judicial campaign dynamics impact judicial independence across selection systems.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose three perspectives on how judicial selection systems shape judges' responsiveness to public opinion. The "Partisan Signals" hypothesis suggests that in the absence of partisan labels, judges in nonpartisan systems face greater plebiscitary pressures. The "Dynamic Representation" hypothesis posits that in partisan election systems, judges respond incrementally to rising public support for the death penalty. Lastly, the "Indirect Accountability" hypothesis argues that judges in reappointment systems may exhibit similar responsiveness as those in partisan elections due to the indirect electoral accountability mechanism. These hypotheses suggest that selection mechanisms mediate judicial decisions in ways that align or contrast with democratic accountability.
8. **Methods:** Using a dataset of over 12,000 votes on death penalty cases across 25 U.S. states, the authors employ logistic regression models with fixed effects to examine the impact of judicial selection systems on judges' likelihood of affirming death penalty sentences. The study also assesses changes within states that switch from one selection system to another, allowing them to observe both the direct effect of selection systems and the dynamic responsiveness of judges to varying levels of public support. Their analysis incorporates several controls for case-specific factors and judge attributes.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - **Partisan Signals Hypothesis:** Judges facing nonpartisan elections will be more likely to uphold death penalty sentences, reflecting heightened responsiveness to public opinion in the absence of partisan cues.
  - **Dynamic Representation Partisan Elections Hypothesis:** Judges facing partisan elections will respond more to changes in public support for capital punishment, aligning with dynamic representation models.
  - **Indirect Accountability Hypothesis:** Judges in reappointment systems will exhibit similar responsiveness to judges in partisan elections, due to indirect accountability pressures.
10. **Main findings:** The study concludes that judicial selection mechanisms significantly influence judges' decisions on the death penalty. Nonpartisan election systems create the highest likelihood of judges aligning with public opinion in favor of the death penalty, while judges in partisan elections show incremental responsiveness as public support increases. Commission-retention and reappointment systems reveal varying levels of influence but do not produce the same plebiscitary pressures observed in nonpartisan elections. The findings underscore how different selection systems shape judicial behavior, with "new-style" judicial campaigns increasing plebiscitary pressures and undermining judicial independence in nonpartisan settings.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Nonpartisan elections encourage judges to cater to majority popular support for the death penalty; moreover, this impact is due to the incentives of the system, not merely the selection of different types of judges" (p. 23).
  - "These results counter the idea that the commission-retention system insulates judges from the plebiscitary pressures associated with partisan elections" (p. 32).
  - "Our findings support the Partisan Signals hypothesis and contradict the conventional wisdom from the ABA ... judges subject to nonpartisan elections are more, not less, likely to make the popular decision of upholding a

death penalty appeal" (p. 33).

- "The Dynamic Representation model implies that judges who face partisan elections become more likely to issue popular decisions as the level of public support for a position increases." (p. 33).

### 1.12.12 Legal Constraint in the US Courts of Appeals

Hinkle, R. K. (2015). Legal Constraint in the US Courts of Appeals [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 77(3), 721–735. <https://doi.org/10.1086/681059>

1. Citation key: hinkle\_legal\_2015

2. Author(s): Rachael K. Hinkle

3. Year: 2015

4. Publication: Journal of Politics

5. Keywords: judicial constraint, Courts of Appeals, stare decisis, legal doctrine, ideological influence

6. Summary: This article investigates the concept of legal constraint on judicial decision-making within the U.S. Courts of Appeals, particularly focusing on Fourth Amendment search and seizure cases. Hinkle explores whether judges are genuinely influenced by legal doctrine or if ideological preferences dominate their decisions. By examining differences in judges' use of binding versus persuasive precedents, the study offers insights into the constraining power of the law, especially regarding the doctrine of *stare decisis*.

7. Theory: The author posits that if judges are constrained by legal doctrine, this constraint should be observable through differential treatment of binding and persuasive precedents. Specifically, judges should exhibit reduced ideological influence when handling binding precedents, as the doctrine of *stare decisis* would require them to follow the precedent regardless of personal ideological leanings. The study suggests that this constraint may be more visible in actions that are more readily observable, such as negative treatment of a precedent, rather than in subtler actions like case citation choices.

8. Methods: Hinkle uses a data set of Fourth Amendment-related circuit cases, analyzing approximately 13,345 precedents published between 1953 and 2010 and subsequent citations from 1990 to 2010. The study applies a matching technique to ensure comparability between binding and persuasive precedents, using machine learning techniques to select precedents most relevant to each case. The analysis focuses on both citation frequency and the treatment of precedents, comparing cases with binding versus persuasive authority to assess ideological influence and legal constraint.

9. Hypotheses: Hinkle's hypotheses focus on the role of binding versus persuasive precedents in judicial decision-making:

- Judges should exhibit less ideological influence when citing and treating binding precedents compared to persuasive ones, due to the legal doctrine of *stare decisis*.
- Positive treatment of precedents should show less ideological bias, as it is often implicitly understood as compliance with legal doctrine.
- Negative treatment of persuasive precedents should reflect greater ideological influence compared to binding precedents, as binding precedents are constrained by *stare decisis*.

Hinkle's findings largely confirm these hypotheses, showing that judges are significantly more constrained in the negative treatment of binding precedents, reflecting a stronger adherence to legal doctrine in observable actions like negative citations.

10. Main findings: The study concludes that legal constraint in the U.S. Courts of Appeals is not uniformly applied across all judicial actions. While ideology influences judges' citation choices, there is consistent evidence that judges are legally constrained when negatively treating binding precedents compared to persuasive ones. This distinction suggests that *stare decisis* exerts a measurable influence over judicial behavior, especially in actions that are more visible and thus more likely to be scrutinized by higher courts or the public. The findings underscore the conditional nature of legal constraint, suggesting it is strongest when judicial actions are more observable and thus more susceptible to review or reversal.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "To most people, the claim that law is central to judicial decision making hardly seems controversial. The idea that judges neutrally apply law to specific factual situations is foundational in our legal system. Yet empirical evidence of judges' actions being constrained by law is a different matter. One of the most consistently observed factors in empirical work has not been law but a judge's ideology" (p. 722).
- "While positive treatment is not significantly correlated with the key explanatory variables, the patterns of negative treatment provide evidence of legal constraint" (p. 730).
- "Negative treatment is subject to legal constraint. Both hypothesized patterns emerge to support this conclusion. There is both ideological dampening and an overall lower likelihood of negatively treating binding precedents" (p. 733).
- "The institutional structure of the US Courts of Appeals combines with the legal doctrine of *stare decisis* to create a unique research opportunity. Not only does it address endogeneity concerns, it also provides key insight into the role of a fundamental legal principle in the context of an institution with broad policy-making power" (p. 734).

### 1.12.13 Constitutions Unentrenched: Toward an Alternative Theory of Constitutional Design

Versteeg, M., & Zackin, E. (2016). Constitutions Unentrenched: Toward an Alternative Theory of Constitutional Design. *American Political Science Review*, 110(4), 657–674. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055416000447>

1. **Citation key:** versteeg\_constitutions\_2016
2. **Author(s):** Mila Versteeg and Emily Zackin
3. **Year:** 2016
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** constitutional design, entrenchment, flexibility, constitutional specificity, state constitutions
6. **Summary:** This article challenges the prevailing notion in constitutional theory that successful constitutions must be entrenched and relatively immutable to maintain their authority over time. Versteeg and Zackin argue that the reality of democratic constitutions, both globally and within U.S. states, shows a preference for flexibility and specificity over rigidity. Their study reveals that many democratic constitutions are frequently amended or replaced, and are highly detailed, addressing a wide range of specific policies rather than solely broad governmental principles. They suggest that specific, flexible constitutions serve as an alternative model for constraining political power by reducing the discretion of political agents through frequent updates.
7. **Theory:** Versteeg and Zackin propose that unentrenched and specific constitutions represent a legitimate alternative approach to constitutional design. Unlike entrenched constitutions, which constrain political actors by creating long-term commitments that are difficult to change, specific and flexible constitutions achieve control by detailing specific policies and allowing for frequent updates. This model minimizes the “dead hand” problem by enabling current generations to maintain constitutional relevance in changing contexts. Moreover, unentrenched constitutions are seen as a method to limit judicial and legislative discretion by providing clear, policy-specific directives rather than vague principles open to interpretation.
8. **Methods:** Using quantitative data from democratic constitutions across countries and U.S. states from the late 18th century to the present, Versteeg and Zackin measure entrenchment by the average duration between constitutional revisions (via amendment or replacement) and specificity by word count and topic scope. The authors further employ regional case studies to identify historical patterns in constitutional design, exploring shifts in entrenchment and specificity over time.
9. **Hypotheses:** Versteeg and Zackin hypothesize that constitutions with high specificity and flexibility function effectively to control political agents by constraining their options through detailed provisions. They find support for this hypothesis, observing that:
  - Constitutions with high specificity address detailed policy issues, limiting the scope of interpretative discretion for political agents.
  - Flexible constitutions, which are easily amendable, serve as tools for current generations to maintain control over governance.
  - This model of constitutional design aligns with democratic principles by enabling majoritarian control over policy while maintaining constitutional relevance.
10. **Main findings:** Versteeg and Zackin conclude that modern democratic constitutions, contrary to traditional constitutional theory, are often both specific and flexible. They find that these features are common in democratic national constitutions worldwide as well as in U.S. state constitutions, where flexibility allows frequent updates to reflect current democratic needs. Their findings suggest that this design mitigates agency problems by reducing the interpretative latitude available to judges and other governmental actors, thus enhancing democratic control. The authors argue that the trend towards specific, flexible constitutions reflects an alternative model of constitutionalism that may offer distinct advantages over the entrenched constitutional model in terms of democratic accountability and responsiveness.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “The empirical reality is that the majority of democratic constitutions today are subject to frequent revision, and are therefore ill-equipped to facilitate the entrenchment of their contents” (p. 657).
  - “Specific and unentrenched constitutions limit the discretion of those responsible for implementing the constitution. By increasing the scope of constitutional mandates, citizens can also dictate exactly which policies executives and legislatures must enact and which they must refrain from enacting in manifold areas of governance” (p. 660).
  - “The historical data we have collected suggest that, over the past two centuries, democratic constitutions have become less entrenched, while their specificity has increased” (p. 662).
  - “Not only are most democratic constitutions not particularly well entrenched, they are not particularly spare either. Instead of limiting themselves to the broad outlines of government’s structures and citizens’ rights, they contain highly specific provisions on a wide range of topics” (p. 663).

### 1.12.14 How the Trump Administration’s Quota Policy Transformed Immigration Judging

Blasingame, E. N., Boyd, C. L., Carlos, R. F., & Ornstein, J. T. (2023). How the Trump Administration’s Quota Policy Transformed Immigration Judging. *American Political Science Review*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055423001028>

1. **Citation key:** blasiningame\_how\_2023
2. **Author(s):** Elise N. Blasingame, Christa Chavez, and Holly Straut-Eppsteiner
3. **Year:** 2023
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review

5. **Keywords:** immigration courts, political responsiveness, judicial independence, quota policy, Trump administration
6. **Summary:** This article investigates the impact of the Trump administration's quota policy on the behavior of immigration judges in the United States. By imposing performance quotas, the administration aimed to increase removal orders, aligning judicial actions more closely with its immigration agenda. Blasingame et al. analyze how these quotas influenced case outcomes, focusing on increased removal rates. The study reveals that, under the policy, immigration judges issued significantly more *in absentia* and merits-based removal orders, supporting the administration's goal of maximizing deportations.
7. **Theory:** The study posits that performance quotas can act as a political constraint, driving judicial behavior towards outcomes favorable to executive goals. The authors argue that immigration judges, faced with potential career sanctions, adjusted their decisions to align with the administration's removal targets, particularly as many judges operate within the executive branch and lack the same judicial independence as Article III judges.
8. **Methods:** Using a difference-in-differences design with matched pre- and post-policy data, the authors examine removal decisions made by immigration judges before and after the quota policy implementation in October 2018. This approach allows for a causal inference regarding the policy's impact on judicial behavior, particularly in two key areas: *in absentia* and merits-based removals.
9. **Hypotheses:** The study hypothesizes that the quota policy led to increased removal rates, both *in absentia* and on the merits, especially among judges previously inclined to favor noncitizens. Findings confirm this, with:
  - An increase in *in absentia* removal rates, especially among Democratic, female, and Latinx judges, suggesting they felt a stronger need to comply with the policy to avoid career repercussions.
  - A heightened rate of merits-based removals for judges lacking prior experience in immigration enforcement, indicating differential responsiveness based on background.
  - Consistent increases in removal orders by judges who previously demonstrated leniency, showing the policy's effectiveness in modifying their behavior.
- These findings support the hypothesis that judges modified their decision-making to meet the quota policy's removal targets.
10. **Main findings:** Blasingame et al. conclude that the Trump administration's quota policy successfully increased removal rates in U.S. immigration courts, aligning judicial actions with political priorities. Specifically, the policy led to thousands of additional deportation orders, disproportionately impacting noncitizens lacking legal representation. The authors argue that the policy exemplifies how executive interventions can compromise judicial independence within administrative courts. They caution that this shift toward politically responsive judicial behavior could erode due process, prioritizing case resolution speed over justice. Additionally, the study underscores the need for reforms to enhance the independence of immigration judges to prevent political interference in their rulings.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "The quota policy mandated higher rates of case completions and lower appellate reversals per judge-year, putting immigration judges in a bind unlike any they had faced before" (p. 2).
- "Critics claimed the quota policy was an attack on immigration judges' independence and a concerted effort to push Trump's immigration policy goals of fast and frequent removals" (p. 5).
- "Our findings confirm that the policy led to increased rates of *in absentia* and merits removals, accomplishing its stated efficiency objectives and reinforcing pro-removal preferences within the judiciary" (p. 8).
- "The conditional average treatment effect reveals a significant uptick in removal orders, particularly for Democratic, female, and Latinx judges post-policy, indicating that the policy pressured these judges to align their rulings with administration goals" (p. 10).
- "Calls for immigration court reform to bolster judicial independence are likely to persist, as findings like ours suggest that political influence remains a formidable challenge within this domain of administrative justice" (p. 12).

#### 1.12.15 Losing Legitimacy: The Challenges of the Dobbs Ruling to Conventional Legitimacy Theory

Gibson, J. L. (2024). Losing legitimacy: The challenges of the *Dobbs* ruling to conventional legitimacy theory. *American Journal of Political Science*, 68(3), 1041–1056. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12834>

1. **Citation key:** gibson\_losing\_2024
2. **Author(s):** James L. Gibson
3. **Year:** 2024
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** institutional legitimacy, positivity bias, Supreme Court, Dobbs decision, moral polarization, judicial authority
6. **Summary:** This article examines the effects of the Supreme Court's 2022 *Dobbs* decision on its institutional legitimacy. Building on legitimacy theory, Gibson explores whether the *Dobbs* ruling—by revoking abortion rights established in *Roe v. Wade*—challenged the Court's perceived authority, especially given the moral polarization surrounding abortion. The study argues that while previous rulings had negligible long-term effects on the Court's legitimacy, *Dobbs* was distinctive in catalyzing legitimacy-threatening reactions due to its moral salience and conservative ideological shift.
7. **Theory:** Gibson applies legitimacy theory, particularly the concept of positivity bias, which posits that unfavorable

judicial decisions typically have limited impact on institutional support because of legitimacy-enhancing symbols associated with judicial authority. However, *Dobbs* serves as an exception; Gibson suggests that issues with strong moral foundations, like abortion, are less insulated by positivity bias and more likely to affect diffuse support for the Court when such issues align with ideological polarization.

**8. Methods:** Using national survey data from July 2022, Gibson assesses changes in public support for the Supreme Court following the *Dobbs* decision. A longitudinal approach is used to analyze shifts in specific and diffuse support pre- and post-*Dobbs*, employing multivariate regression models to test hypotheses on legitimacy and its association with factors like ideological alignment, performance satisfaction, and demographic indicators.

**9. Hypotheses:** The hypotheses focus on the impact of the *Dobbs* decision on Court legitimacy and the conditions under which legitimacy theory's positivity bias might fail:

- The positivity bias of legitimacy theory predicts minimal impact from *Dobbs* on institutional legitimacy due to the “reservoir of goodwill” from judicial symbols.
- High attentiveness to the *Dobbs* decision amplifies the connection between opposition to the ruling and reduced legitimacy.
- Issues deeply grounded in moral concerns (like abortion) are more likely to diminish diffuse support when ruled against by the Court.
- Strong partisan and ideological attachments influence willingness to extend legitimacy to the Court in response to *Dobbs*.

These hypotheses were partially supported. *Dobbs* markedly affected the Court’s legitimacy, with diffuse support more vulnerable among those holding morally grounded opposition to the decision and strong partisan ties, thus challenging conventional positivity bias theory.

**10. Main findings:** Gibson’s analysis reveals that *Dobbs* has had an unprecedented legitimacy-denying effect on the Court, with diffuse support for the institution eroding among Americans, especially those ideologically opposed to the decision and sensitive to moral implications of abortion. The findings suggest that while legitimacy theory’s positivity bias generally shields the Court, it falters on issues with deep moral divisions and polarizing social significance. For many Americans, *Dobbs* represented “the last straw” in a perceived conservative shift, pushing diffuse support below a threshold that may signal a legitimacy crisis if trends continue.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Unlike almost all previous research on the impact of events on the Court, *Dobbs* materially undermined the institution’s legitimacy, in part owing to abortion being an issue tenaciously grounded in moral concerns” (p. 1042).
- “If the reservoir of goodwill is activated by symbols, then even unwelcome decisions inflict little damage to the court. *Dobbs*, however, seems to present an exception” (p. 1043).
- “That *Dobbs* assessments are so closely associated with diffuse support even in an equation that can explain 40% of the variance in legitimacy attitudes is notable—and ominous for the Court” (p. 1050).
- “A Court with a super-majority of conservatives may be on a trajectory of increasing alienation from the preferences of its constituents, as the *Dobbs* ruling challenges traditional legitimacy theory” (p. 1054).

## 1.13 The Executive

### 1.13.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Literature on presidential power emphasizes the evolving dynamics of executive authority in the U.S. political system, focusing on the interplay between institutional constraints, public accountability, and policy implementation. Early studies such as Neustadt’s seminal work on persuasion framed presidential power as dependent on negotiation and strategic leadership. Subsequent analyses, including Skowronek’s typology of political time, contextualized presidential leadership within historical cycles of regime vulnerability and resilience. Recent scholarship has further dissected the mechanisms of unilateral power, media influence, and public appeals, illustrating how modern presidents navigate increasingly polarized and fragmented political environments. Overall, the study of the executive branch highlights the balance between innovation and constraint in the exercise of presidential power.
- **Institutional Foundations of Presidential Power:** Richard Neustadt’s *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents* (1960; updated 1991) argued that presidential authority is rooted not in formal powers but in the capacity to persuade and negotiate with key stakeholders. Neustadt highlighted the importance of professional reputation and public prestige, emphasizing the presidency’s institutional weakness in achieving policy goals unilaterally. Similarly, Skowronek’s *The Politics Presidents Make* (1997) provided a historical framework, identifying four types of presidential leadership—reconstructive, disjunctive, articulative, and preemptive—based on their position within cycles of regime stability and change. Both works underscored the contingent nature of presidential power, shaped by historical and institutional contexts.
- **Media and Public Opinion:** The role of media in presidential power has been a focal point of analysis, particularly in the context of technological change. Baum and Kernell’s *Has Cable Ended the Golden Age of Presidential Television?* (1999) demonstrated how media fragmentation, driven by the rise of cable television, diminished the effectiveness of direct presidential appeals to the public. They argued that alternative programming has eroded the “captive audience” once commanded by presidential broadcasts, challenging presidents to adapt their communication strategies in a fragmented media landscape. This shift has implications for public opinion and policy responsiveness, as presidents

increasingly rely on targeted appeals to influence specific constituencies.

- **Unilateral Action and Bureaucratic Control:** The expansion of unilateral presidential powers has been a significant area of inquiry, particularly regarding executive orders and administrative actions. Lowande and Rogowski's *Presidential Unilateral Power* (2021) synthesized empirical studies, highlighting the strategic use of unilateral directives to bypass legislative gridlock. Their analysis revealed that while presidents leverage these powers for policy innovation, they face constraints from judicial review, public accountability, and bureaucratic compliance. Similarly, David Lewis's *The Politics of Presidential Appointments* (2008) examined the trade-offs of politicization in federal agencies, demonstrating how political appointments can enhance executive control at the expense of bureaucratic efficiency and performance.
- **Public Appeals and Democratic Accountability:** Brandice Canes-Wrone's *Who Leads Whom? Presidents, Policy, and the Public* (2006) explored the dynamics of public appeals, arguing that presidents strategically mobilize public opinion to align legislative behavior with majority preferences. Her Public Appeals Theory highlighted the selective nature of presidential engagement, which balances responsiveness with policy effectiveness. This framework challenges concerns about plebiscitary politics, suggesting that public appeals can enhance democratic accountability when managed strategically.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Key debates in the study of presidential power revolve around the balance between responsiveness and accountability, the institutional constraints on unilateral actions, and the impact of media fragmentation on presidential communication. Future research is likely to explore the role of digital platforms in shaping presidential appeals, the implications of increasing polarization for executive-legislative relations, and the evolving dynamics of bureaucratic control in an era of institutional thickening. These areas promise to refine our understanding of how modern presidents navigate complex political landscapes to exercise power effectively.

### 1.13.2 Street-Level Bureaucracy: The Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services

Lipsky, M. (1983, June). *Street-Level Bureaucracy: The Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service* [Google-Books-ID: mu6FAwAAQBAJ]. Russell Sage Foundation

1. **Citation key:** lipsky\_street-level\_1983
2. **Author(s):** Michael Lipsky
3. **Year:** 1983 (30th Anniversary Edition, 2010)
4. **Publication:** Street-Level Bureaucracy: The Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services (Russell Sage Foundation)
5. **Keywords:** street-level bureaucracy, public administration, discretion, policy implementation, equity
6. **Summary:** Michael Lipsky examines the critical role of frontline public service workers—termed “street-level bureaucrats”—in shaping public policy through their discretionary actions. Lipsky argues that policy implementation often diverges from formal directives due to resource constraints and the inherent complexity of public service delivery. The book emphasizes how street-level bureaucrats’ decisions, often made under conditions of limited resources and high ambiguity, become de facto policy. The updated edition includes reflections on how discretion can align with equity and responsiveness in public administration, addressing both its challenges and potential.
7. **Theory:** Lipsky’s central thesis is that public policies are, in practice, made by the frontline workers who implement them. These workers, operating under constraints such as limited time, inadequate resources, and conflicting objectives, rely on discretion to fulfill their roles. This discretion results in significant variation in service delivery, which can both uphold and undermine policy goals. Lipsky challenges traditional hierarchical views of bureaucracy, proposing that informal practices and discretionary decisions are central to understanding how policy is enacted. He further explores how structural inequities and biases influence these discretionary actions, often reinforcing societal disparities.
8. **Methods:** This book adopts a theoretical and qualitative approach, drawing on case studies and observations from various public service domains, including education, welfare, and law enforcement. Lipsky analyzes the structural and environmental conditions shaping the behavior of street-level bureaucrats, such as resource scarcity, conflicting goals, and organizational norms. The book integrates insights from sociology, public administration, and political science to develop its conceptual framework.
9. **Hypotheses:** Lipsky hypothesizes that:
  - Discretionary actions of street-level bureaucrats significantly shape the actual implementation of public policy.
  - Resource scarcity and ambiguous policies lead to the development of coping mechanisms that structure service delivery in systematic ways.
  - Discretion, while necessary for responsiveness, can perpetuate inequities due to biases and the lack of robust accountability mechanisms.
- These hypotheses are supported through theoretical analysis and empirical illustrations, demonstrating both the inevitability of discretion and its complex implications.
10. **Main findings:** Lipsky concludes that street-level bureaucrats are pivotal actors in the policy process, often mediating the relationship between the state and citizens. Their discretionary decisions effectively determine who receives services, the quality of those services, and the interpretation of policy mandates. While discretion allows for adaptability and responsiveness, it also introduces variability and the potential for bias, particularly in racially and socially charged contexts. The updated edition highlights how modern governance reforms, such as performance measurement and privatization, have intensified these dilemmas, further constraining frontline workers while increasing pressures for efficiency. Lipsky argues for an “enabling approach” to policy design that focuses on creating conditions for equitable

and effective service delivery.

### 11. Key Definitions:

- *Street-level bureaucrats*: Frontline public service workers who interact directly with citizens and have substantial discretion in implementing policies.
- *Discretion*: The judgment and decision-making authority exercised by street-level bureaucrats in the absence of clear, prescriptive policies.
- *Coping mechanisms*: Informal strategies developed by street-level bureaucrats to manage resource constraints and workload pressures.
- *Policy-as-produced*: The practical outcomes of public policy as shaped by the actions and decisions of implementing actors, distinct from formal policy directives.
- *Structural inequities*: Systemic disparities in resource allocation and service delivery that arise from and reinforce social hierarchies.

#### 1.13.3 Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan

Neustadt, R. E. (1991, March). *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* [Google-Books-ID: elGozuIX\_o8C]. Simon; Schuster

1. **Citation key:** neustadt\_presidential\_1991

2. **Author(s):** Richard E. Neustadt

3. **Year:** 1991 (Original: 1960)

4. **Publication:** Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan (The Free Press)

5. **Keywords:** presidential power, persuasion, leadership, modern presidency, executive branch

6. **Summary:** Neustadt's seminal work examines the dynamics of presidential leadership, focusing on how modern presidents wield influence through persuasion rather than formal authority. The updated edition traces the evolution of this argument through case studies from Roosevelt to Reagan, exploring how individual presidents navigated institutional constraints, public expectations, and their relationships with Congress and other political actors. Neustadt argues that the presidency's inherent weakness as an institution requires skillful negotiation, strategic thinking, and the cultivation of professional reputation and public prestige.

7. **Theory:** Neustadt's central thesis is encapsulated in the statement, "Presidential power is the power to persuade." He asserts that the president's formal powers are insufficient to achieve policy goals without securing the cooperation of other political actors, such as Congress, the bureaucracy, and the public. Presidential influence derives from the ability to negotiate, anticipate political risks, and manage relationships effectively. Neustadt introduces key concepts like "professional reputation" and "public prestige" to explain how presidents build the credibility needed to secure compliance and support.

8. **Methods:** Neustadt employs a qualitative case study approach, drawing from historical episodes and firsthand accounts of presidential decision-making. He integrates analyses of Truman's handling of the steel industry strike, Eisenhower's response to Little Rock desegregation, Kennedy's navigation of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and Reagan's handling of the Iran-Contra affair. Through these examples, Neustadt illustrates his theoretical claims about the interplay of persuasion, discretion, and strategic foresight in presidential leadership.

9. **Hypotheses:** Neustadt posits the following:

- Presidential success depends on a leader's ability to persuade key stakeholders rather than relying on constitutional authority alone.
- Professional reputation and public prestige are essential to the president's ability to negotiate and influence outcomes.
- Presidents who fail to anticipate the long-term consequences of their decisions risk undermining their own power and effectiveness.

These hypotheses are supported by case analyses demonstrating how presidents navigated crises and managed relationships with political actors.

10. **Main findings:** Neustadt concludes that the presidency is institutionally weak, requiring skillful leadership to exercise effective power. Persuasion emerges as the cornerstone of presidential influence, with success contingent on building credibility among Washington elites and maintaining public support. Neustadt critiques several presidents for their strategic missteps, such as Truman's handling of General MacArthur and Carter's fixation on detail. Conversely, he highlights Roosevelt as the model of effective leadership, emphasizing FDR's mastery of negotiation and strategic foresight. The updated edition extends these lessons to address the challenges of modern governance, including rising public expectations, media pressures, and increasing congressional independence.

### 11. Key Definitions:

- *Presidential power*: The ability to persuade and negotiate rather than command, leveraging reputation and prestige to secure cooperation.
- *Professional reputation*: The perception among political elites of a president's competence and reliability in fulfilling commitments.
- *Public prestige*: The level of public support and esteem a president commands, which influences their leverage with other political actors.

- **Power stakes:** The strategic calculations a president must make to protect and enhance their influence over time.
- **Discretion:** The president's ability to prioritize and make decisions within institutional constraints and amidst competing demands.

#### 1.13.4 The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to George Bush

Skowronek, S. (1997, March). *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton, Revised Edition* [Google-Books-ID: 6RUf5eY15T0C]. Harvard University Press

- 1. Citation key:** skowronek\_politics\_1997
- 2. Author(s):** Stephen Skowronek
- 3. Year:** 1997 (Original: 1993)
- 4. Publication:** The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to George Bush (Harvard University Press)
- 5. Keywords:** presidential leadership, political time, regime cycles, reconstructive presidents, American political development
- 6. Summary:** Skowronek provides a historical theory of presidential leadership that categorizes presidents based on their position in political and institutional "time." He introduces the concept of "political time" to analyze how presidents operate within recurrent patterns of political authority, shaped by the vulnerability or resilience of the existing political regime and the president's relationship to it. The book argues that presidents engage in leadership that is order-shattering, order-affirming, and order-creating, offering a framework for understanding the cyclical nature of American political development and the challenges faced by different types of presidential leadership.
- 7. Theory:** Skowronek's central thesis is that presidential power and leadership must be understood within the context of "political time," which defines the opportunities and constraints imposed by the existing regime. He categorizes presidencies into four archetypes:
  - *Reconstructive leadership:* Presidents who rise against a vulnerable regime and establish a new order (e.g., Jefferson, Lincoln, Roosevelt).
  - *Disjunctive leadership:* Presidents affiliated with a failing regime, often seen as ineffectual (e.g., Carter, Hoover).
  - *Articulative leadership:* Presidents affiliated with a resilient regime who expand or modify it (e.g., Polk, Johnson).
  - *Preemptive leadership:* Presidents opposed to a resilient regime, challenging its authority without fully dismantling it (e.g., Nixon, Eisenhower).
- Skowronek emphasizes how presidents' strategies are shaped by their temporal position in the political cycle, their relationship to the regime, and the expectations of their era.
- 8. Methods:** The book uses a comparative historical approach, drawing on case studies of presidents from John Adams to George Bush. Skowronek analyzes these cases within his theoretical framework to illustrate how different leadership types emerge and interact with the evolving institutional context. He integrates insights from American political development and historical institutionalism to construct his typology of political time.
- 9. Hypotheses:** Skowronek hypothesizes that:
  - Presidential leadership styles and success depend on the interaction between a president's position in political time and the regime's vulnerability or resilience.
  - Reconstructive presidents have the greatest capacity for transformative leadership, while disjunctive presidents are constrained by failing regimes.
  - The modern presidency faces increasing institutional constraints, making reconstructive leadership less feasible in contemporary political time.

These hypotheses are supported through detailed case analyses and comparisons of leadership strategies across eras.

- 10. Main findings:** Skowronek concludes that presidential leadership is inherently disruptive, as presidents must navigate tensions between their own ambitions and the constraints of the existing political order. Reconstructive presidents have historically been the most transformative, but the complexity of modern governance has diminished the opportunities for such leadership. The thickening of government institutions and the erosion of traditional regime cycles have led to a period of perpetual preemption, where presidents face persistent challenges to their authority. Skowronek critiques the contemporary presidency for its reliance on outdated leadership models that fail to address these structural changes.
- 11. Key Definitions:**
  - *Political time:* The cyclical nature of regime dynamics, shaped by the resilience or vulnerability of governing commitments and a president's relationship to them.
  - *Reconstructive presidents:* Leaders who overthrow a vulnerable regime and establish a new political order.
  - *Disjunctive presidents:* Leaders affiliated with a failing regime, often struggling to maintain authority.
  - *Articulative presidents:* Leaders who build on and refine a resilient regime, balancing continuity and adaptation.
  - *Preemptive presidents:* Leaders who oppose a resilient regime, challenging its principles without completely dismantling it.

#### 1.13.5 Has Cable Ended the Golden Age of Presidential Television?

Baum, M. A., & Kernell, S. (1999). Has Cable Ended the Golden Age of Presidential Television? [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 93(1), 99–114. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2652103>

//doi.org/10.2307/2585763

1. **Citation key:** baum\_has\_1999
2. **Author(s):** Matthew A. Baum and Samuel Kernell
3. **Year:** 1999
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** presidential communication, media fragmentation, cable television, public opinion, political disaffection
6. **Summary:** Baum and Kernell examine whether the advent of cable television has diminished the effectiveness of presidential television broadcasts. Using cross-sectional survey data and time-series Nielsen audience ratings from 1969 to 1998, they explore two hypotheses: rising political disaffection and the proliferation of cable programming. They conclude that cable television, not political disaffection, has ended the era of presidents commanding "captive audiences," challenging the effectiveness of direct presidential appeals.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that modern presidents have increasingly relied on television as a platform for public persuasion. However, the rise of cable television has given audiences alternative programming, reducing the dominance of presidential broadcasts. Unlike earlier eras, when broadcast networks ensured large audiences by suspending regular programming, the cable era offers viewers more choices, significantly raising the opportunity costs of watching presidential addresses. The authors also posit that public cynicism, while prevalent, plays a secondary role in the declining viewership of presidential broadcasts.
8. **Methods:** Baum and Kernell employ both cross-sectional (1996 NES survey) and time-series (128 Nielsen ratings) data. They use logit regression models to analyze individual viewing decisions and OLS regression to examine trends in audience ratings over time. Key independent variables include cable subscription rates, measures of political disaffection (trust in government and external efficacy), and situational factors such as the timing and content of presidential addresses.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Cable television has reduced the viewership of presidential broadcasts by providing alternative programming options.
  - Political disaffection, while widespread, has a negligible impact on audience decline compared to the structural changes introduced by cable.

These hypotheses are confirmed through empirical analysis, with cable penetration emerging as the dominant factor in declining audience ratings.
10. **Main findings:** The authors find that cable television significantly reduces the likelihood of individuals watching presidential broadcasts. While political disaffection is statistically insignificant in most models, cable's effect is robust across both survey and time-series analyses. Their results show a clear decline in presidential viewership beginning in the Reagan administration, coinciding with the expansion of cable subscriptions. The study also reveals strategic adaptations by presidents and networks, such as rationing prime-time slots and rotating coverage among networks. These changes reflect the increasing difficulty presidents face in commanding national attention.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "If modern presidents lose their prime-time audience, they will surrender a political asset that will be difficult to replace by other means" (p. 100).
  - "The cumulative evidence indicates that cable technology has allowed the public to become strategically discriminating in its viewing decisions" (p. 101).
  - "What broadcast technology gave the president, cable technology appears to be taking away" (p. 110).

#### 1.13.6 Who Leads Whom? Presidents, Policy, and the Public

Canes-Wrone, B., Howell, W. G., & Lewis, D. E. (2008). Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Reevaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis. *The Journal of Politics*, 70(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381607080061>

1. **Citation key:** canes-wrone\_toward\_2008
2. **Author(s):** Brandice Canes-Wrone
3. **Year:** 2008 (Original: 2006)
4. **Publication:** Who Leads Whom? Presidents, Policy, and the Public (University of Chicago Press)
5. **Keywords:** presidential leadership, public opinion, policymaking, political communication, rational choice theory
6. **Summary:** Canes-Wrone explores how presidents influence policymaking through public appeals and their engagement with mass opinion. The book investigates whether these appeals align presidential actions with the preferences of the public or if they are driven by strategic considerations. Through a mix of theoretical models, statistical analysis, and historical case studies, Canes-Wrone argues that presidential engagement with public opinion shapes policy outcomes, often aligning with majority preferences without significant demagoguery.
7. **Theory:** The book introduces the Public Appeals Theory, which posits that presidents strategically utilize public appeals to align legislative behavior with majority preferences, leveraging public opinion as a tool to achieve policy goals. Canes-Wrone identifies two primary mechanisms:
  - Public appeals increase the salience of issues, compelling Congress to prioritize voter preferences on high-profile matters.
  - Presidents selectively engage in public appeals for policies they support, using mass opinion to enhance legislative success while avoiding demagoguery.

The theory challenges the perception of plebiscitary leadership as inherently harmful, emphasizing strategic considerations and the institutional constraints faced by modern presidents.

**8. Methods:** Canes-Wrone employs a mixed-methods approach, combining formal theoretical models with empirical testing. The analysis integrates:

- Statistical models analyzing public opinion and legislative outcomes from 1957 to 2000.
- Case studies of domestic and foreign policy appeals, including Ronald Reagan's tax cuts and Bill Clinton's NATO peacekeeping mission in Bosnia.
- Quantitative data on congressional voting behavior and presidential approval ratings.

This methodology allows for a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of public appeals on policymaking.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Presidential appeals increase legislative responsiveness to public opinion on salient issues.
- Presidents are less likely to endorse popular policies they believe will harm societal welfare unless facing electoral incentives.
- Public appeals are more effective in the context of domestic policy than foreign affairs.

These hypotheses are supported through statistical and case study evidence.

**10. Main findings:** Canes-Wrone concludes that presidents' involvement of the mass public does influence policymaking, increasing alignment with majority preferences while avoiding pervasive demagoguery. She finds the following: Public appeals enhance legislative responsiveness on high-salience issues. Presidents strategically avoid advocating for popular policies they perceive as harmful, particularly during periods of high approval or non-electoral cycles. The effectiveness of public appeals varies across policy domains, with greater success observed in domestic contexts. The findings challenge traditional concerns about the detrimental effects of plebiscitary politics, suggesting that presidential engagement with public opinion is often beneficial to democratic accountability.

**11. Key Definitions:**

- *Public appeals*: Presidential communications aimed at mobilizing public opinion to influence legislative outcomes.
- *Policy pandering*: Presidential endorsement of popular policies that may not align with long-term societal welfare.
- *Current opinion*: The immediate preferences of the mass public, distinct from "latent opinion" that may develop over time.
- *Societal welfare*: Policies that align with the long-term interests of the citizenry, as perceived by the president.
- *Political salience*: The degree to which an issue commands public and legislative attention, shaping its prioritization in policymaking.

### 1.13.7 The Politics of Presidential Appointments: Political Control and Bureaucratic Performance

Lewis, D. E. (2008). *The politics of presidential appointments: Political control and bureaucratic performance*. Princeton university press

**1. Citation key:** lewis\_politics\_2008

**2. Author(s):** David E. Lewis

**3. Year:** 2008

**4. Publication:** Princeton University Press

**5. Keywords:** presidential appointments, politicization, bureaucracy, public administration, policy implementation

**6. Summary:** David E. Lewis investigates the relationship between presidential appointments and bureaucratic performance. The book provides a systematic analysis of why and how presidents politicize the federal bureaucracy, exploring the consequences for agency performance and public policy outcomes. Using case studies, interviews, and quantitative analysis, Lewis reveals the trade-offs between political control and bureaucratic competence, emphasizing the challenges modern presidents face in balancing these demands.

**7. Theory:** Lewis introduces a theory of politicization, which posits that presidents use appointments as a dual mechanism:

- *Policy control*: Appointees allow presidents to steer agency decision-making in ways that align with their political agendas.
- *Patronage*: Appointments are also tools to reward political allies and build coalitions.

He highlights the inherent tension between responsiveness to political leadership and the development of a professional, competent bureaucracy. Politicization, while enhancing presidential influence, can undermine long-term agency performance and erode institutional knowledge.

**8. Methods:** Lewis employs a mixed-methods approach to assess the extent and effects of politicization:

- Quantitative analysis of datasets like the Plum Book, covering trends in presidential appointments from 1960 to 2004.
- Case studies, including FEMA's performance during Hurricane Katrina, to illustrate how politicization affects agency capacity.
- Interviews with policymakers and agency officials to provide qualitative insights into the dynamics of political appointments.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Presidents increase politicization in agencies with significant policy-making responsibilities to ensure alignment

with their priorities.

- Politicization negatively impacts agency performance, particularly in domains requiring technical expertise.
- Agencies with high levels of politicization exhibit lower employee morale and diminished operational efficiency.

These hypotheses are supported by both statistical and qualitative evidence.

10. **Main findings:** Lewis finds that politicization is a strategic tool used by presidents to maximize influence over policy outcomes, but it often comes at the cost of bureaucratic efficiency and expertise. His analysis demonstrates: Agencies with high levels of political appointments perform worse on objective performance metrics, such as the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) scores. The turnover associated with political appointees disrupts agency stability and diminishes institutional capacity. Politicization is more pronounced in agencies with discretionary budgets or politically salient missions, such as FEMA and the Department of Education. The book emphasizes the long-term risks of excessive politicization, including reduced public trust in government institutions.

#### 11. Key Definitions:

- *Politicization:* The process of increasing the number and influence of political appointees within federal agencies.
- *Merit system:* A personnel system in which hiring and promotion are based on competence rather than political loyalty.
- *Agency performance:* The ability of a federal agency to achieve its objectives efficiently and effectively, often measured through objective metrics like PART scores.
- *Patronage:* The distribution of government jobs to political allies or supporters as a reward for their loyalty or contributions.

#### 1.13.8 Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Reevaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis

Canes-Wrone, B., Howell, W. G., & Lewis, D. E. (2008). Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power: A Reevaluation of the Two Presidencies Thesis. *The Journal of Politics*, 70(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381607080061>

1. **Citation key:** canes-wrone\_toward\_2008

2. **Author(s):** Brandice Canes-Wrone, William G. Howell, and David E. Lewis

3. **Year:** 2008

4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics

5. **Keywords:** presidential power, two presidencies, foreign policy, domestic policy, delegation, budgetary appropriations, agency design

6. **Summary:** Canes-Wrone, Howell, and Lewis revisit and reevaluate Wildavsky's "two presidencies" thesis, which posits that presidents wield greater power in foreign policy compared to domestic policy. The authors develop an institutional logic to explain this phenomenon and test it in two areas: budgetary appropriations and administrative agency design. Their findings suggest that presidents indeed have greater influence in foreign affairs, attributed to first-mover advantages, informational asymmetries, and differing electoral incentives. The study extends the two presidencies thesis, demonstrating its relevance in contemporary politics.

7. **Theory:** The institutional logic underpinning the two presidencies thesis highlights three main factors:

- *First-mover advantage:* Presidents can unilaterally initiate foreign policy actions, setting the agenda and constraining legislative responses.
- *Informational asymmetry:* Presidents typically have access to more comprehensive and timely information on foreign affairs, which Congress often lacks.
- *Electoral incentives:* Presidential elections are more influenced by foreign policy outcomes than congressional elections, incentivizing Congress to delegate authority to the executive in this domain.

This logic implies that foreign policymaking has increasingly shifted to the executive, both through explicit delegation and legislative inaction.

8. **Methods:** The authors employ a mixed-methods approach, analyzing:

- *Budgetary appropriations data (1969–2000):* Examining presidential success in securing funding changes for foreign versus domestic agencies.
- *Agency design data (1946–2000):* Assessing structural differences between foreign and domestic policy agencies to determine levels of presidential control.

They use statistical models with panel-corrected standard errors and control for factors such as unified government, war periods, and agency-specific characteristics.

9. **Hypotheses:**

- Presidents achieve greater success in securing foreign policy appropriations compared to domestic ones.
- Foreign policy agencies are more likely to have structural features that enhance presidential control than domestic agencies.
- The two presidencies effect persists even in contexts of diminished bipartisanship or legislative oversight.

These hypotheses are confirmed by the empirical findings.

10. **Main findings:** The study reaffirms the two presidencies thesis, showing that presidents exercise greater influence in foreign than domestic policymaking. Presidents' budgetary requests for foreign agencies are approximately 8 percentage points closer to enacted appropriations compared to domestic agencies. Foreign policy agencies are more likely to feature characteristics that enhance presidential control, such as single-administrator leadership and exemption from

party-balancing requirements. The two presidencies effect holds even when accounting for factors like unified government and legislative polarization. These findings suggest that institutional advantages and delegation dynamics reinforce presidential dominance in foreign policy.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Presidents benefit from antecedent action and are more able to obtain it in foreign than domestic affairs" (p. 4).
- "Foreign policy decisions that once were made in Congress have progressively become the responsibility of presidents and their subordinates" (p. 6).
- "The two presidencies should be a particularly noticeable feature of the U.S. presidency...foreign policy remains a domain where presidents achieve their objectives more readily" (p. 14).

#### 1.13.9 Presidential Unilateral Power

Lowande, K., & Rogowski, J. C. (2021). Presidential Unilateral Power. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24(1), 21–43. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041719-102043>

1. **Citation key:** lowande\_presidential\_2021
2. **Author(s):** Kenneth Lowande and Jon C. Rogowski
3. **Year:** 2021
4. **Publication:** Annual Review of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** unilateral action, executive decrees, presidential power, policy making, separation of powers, public accountability
6. **Summary:** Lowande and Rogowski provide a comprehensive review of the literature on presidential unilateral power, focusing on how presidents bypass Congress to enact policies via directives such as executive orders. They argue that the empirical evidence on the constraints and impacts of unilateral actions is mixed, and they propose a need for greater conceptual and methodological clarity. The authors emphasize the interplay between institutional constraints and public accountability in shaping the use of unilateral power.
7. **Theory:** The article presents two key theoretical perspectives on unilateral power:
  - *Separation of Powers:* Presidents strategically deploy unilateral actions when institutional constraints like congressional gridlock or judicial review prevent legislative progress. These actions reflect attempts to achieve policy preferences despite potential interbranch opposition.
  - *Public Accountability:* Unilateral actions are influenced by presidents' electoral incentives, as these directives signal leadership or responsiveness to public opinion. The authors highlight the tension between democratic accountability and the potential for overreach inherent in unilateral governance.

The article critiques the neglect of agency problems within the executive branch, suggesting that bureaucratic compliance and policy implementation challenges are often underestimated.

8. **Methods:** The authors conduct a meta-analysis of nearly 100 studies on presidential unilateral power. They categorize research designs, assess methodological trends, and identify gaps in empirical strategies. The review highlights:
  - A reliance on time-series regression models and case studies.
  - Significant measurement challenges, such as variations in how unilateral actions are defined and quantified.
  - The limited generalizability of findings due to a focus on post-WWII American presidencies and aggregate measures of executive productivity.

9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Presidents are more likely to issue unilateral directives during periods of congressional gridlock or divided government.
  - Unilateral actions are influenced by public approval ratings, with less popular presidents turning to unilateralism as a compensatory mechanism.
  - Bureaucratic agency problems, such as compliance issues, moderate the effectiveness of unilateral actions.

These hypotheses are discussed in light of existing studies, which provide mixed support for the separation-of-powers framework.

10. **Main findings:** The review identifies several patterns and challenges in the study of unilateral power. Empirical evidence suggests presidents frequently use unilateral powers to bypass legislative constraints, particularly in foreign policy and during times of divided government. Public opinion plays a complex role, as unilateral actions can both enhance perceptions of presidential leadership and provoke backlash due to concerns about overreach. The literature suffers from significant methodological limitations, including inconsistent definitions of unilateral actions and under-powered research designs. The authors call for a centralized repository of presidential directives and advocate for more granular, directive-level analyses to improve theoretical and empirical clarity.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "The salience of presidential unilateral power coincides with developments within Congress... rendering the legislative process less available as a means for presidents to pursue their agendas" (p. 21).
- "Unilateral power offers the potential for presidents to eschew legislative negotiations and instead create new policy outcomes through direct action" (p. 25).
- "Empirical studies offer a relatively mixed view of how the president's political relationship with Congress interacts with unilateral activity" (p. 30).

## 1.14 Policy and Federalism

### 1.14.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of American federalism and policy development has shifted significantly over time, evolving from a focus on the democratic potential of decentralized governance to a critical examination of its role in exacerbating inequality and democratic backsliding. Foundational works emphasized federalism's capacity to encourage policy experimentation and safeguard against tyranny, but recent scholarship, such as Grumbach's analyses of democratic performance, Michener's work on Medicaid's federated structure, and Kettl's critique of policy variation, reveal the limitations and inequities inherent in the American federalist system. The intersection of state autonomy, partisanship, and policy feedback has become a central theme, illustrating how federalism interacts with broader political and institutional forces to shape both policy outcomes and democratic engagement.
- **Federalism and Democratic Backsliding:** Grumbach's research highlights the role of partisan dynamics in driving democratic backsliding at the state level. By introducing the State Democracy Index, Grumbach demonstrates how Republican control correlates with significant declines in democratic performance, driven by policies like gerrymandering, voter suppression, and election manipulation. His work challenges traditional assumptions about the democratic potential of federalism, arguing that state-level governance often amplifies national partisan agendas, undermining democratic norms and contributing to polarization.
- **Policy Feedback and Geographic Inequalities:** Michener's work on Medicaid illustrates the geographic disparities and democratic inequalities reinforced by federalism. The Contextualized Feedback (CF) model demonstrates how state-level discretion in Medicaid implementation conditions beneficiaries' political engagement and perpetuates racial and economic inequities. Medicaid, as a federated policy, highlights how decentralized governance can lead to significant variation in policy outcomes, with marginalized groups disproportionately affected by these disparities.
- **Policy Variation and Inequality:** Kettl critiques the "fourth generation" of federalism, characterized by increasing state autonomy and policy divergence. His analysis of Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act and disparities in infrastructure investment reveals the deep inequalities entrenched by state-level discretion. Kettl's advocacy for Hamiltonian federalism calls for stronger national coordination to address these inequities, arguing that the current federalist system undermines national cohesion and democratic trust.
- **The Role of Partisanship in Policy Diffusion:** Grumbach and others identify partisan policy learning as a critical driver of policy divergence across states. States increasingly adopt policies based on ideological alignment rather than evidence of success, exacerbating polarization and undermining the ideal of states as "laboratories of democracy." This trend illustrates how nationalization and partisanship have transformed federalism into a mechanism for advancing extreme partisan agendas rather than fostering innovation or equality.
- **Social Policy and Democratic Citizenship:** Michener's analysis of Medicaid and Mettler's work on the G.I. Bill underscore the dual role of social policies as tools of empowerment and exclusion. While policies like the G.I. Bill fostered civic engagement and inclusion among veterans, Medicaid's fragmented implementation often marginalizes beneficiaries, limiting their political capacity. These findings highlight the importance of policy design in shaping democratic engagement and social equality.
- **Contemporary Challenges and Future Directions:** The intersection of federalism, partisanship, and policy feedback presents significant challenges for American democracy. Scholars emphasize the need for national-level reforms to address geographic disparities and strengthen democratic norms. Future research is likely to focus on the role of digital mobilization, intersectionality, and institutional reform in mitigating the vulnerabilities of decentralized governance. Additionally, the study of federalism's impact on policy diffusion, political polarization, and democratic backsliding will remain central to understanding the evolving dynamics of American governance.

### 1.14.2 Laboratories of Democratic Backsliding

Grumbach, J. M. (2023). Laboratories of Democratic Backsliding. *American Political Science Review*, 117(3), 967–984. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422000934>

1. **Citation key:** grumbach\_laboratories\_2023
2. **Author(s):** Jacob M. Grumbach
3. **Year:** 2023
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** democracy, backsliding, state politics, federalism, polarization, partisan competition, gerrymandering, voting rights
6. **Summary:** This study introduces the State Democracy Index, a novel measure of subnational democratic performance across the 50 U.S. states from 2000 to 2018, employing 51 indicators of democratic quality such as gerrymandering, voting accessibility, and election integrity. The research reveals significant declines in democratic performance, particularly in Republican-controlled states, attributing this trend to national partisan dynamics rather than state-level competition or demographic change.
7. **Theory:** Grumbach posits that partisan control, particularly by the Republican Party, is the primary driver of democratic backsliding at the state level, as national coalitions incentivize policies limiting electoral access and fairness. The study explores the interaction of party competition, polarization, and demographic change, finding that Republican governance exerts the most substantial influence on declining democratic performance.

**8. Methods:** The State Democracy Index is constructed using Bayesian factor analysis for mixed data. The study employs a difference-in-differences design, examining variations in democratic performance over time and across states, while controlling for competition, polarization, and demographic factors. Robustness checks include alternative democracy measures and synthetic control analyses.

**9. Hypotheses:** The study tests multiple hypotheses concerning the factors influencing democratic performance:

- Increased partisan competition improves democratic performance by encouraging voter inclusion.
- Polarization exacerbates democratic backsliding by incentivizing restrictive electoral policies.
- Republican control of state governments reduces democratic performance.
- Demographic change interacts with Republican control to influence backsliding.

The findings confirm that Republican control is strongly associated with democratic backsliding, while competition and polarization have minimal or inconsistent effects.

**10. Main findings:** The research demonstrates that democratic backsliding is concentrated in Republican-controlled states, driven by policies such as gerrymandering, voter ID laws, and disenfranchisement. Polarization and demographic changes, such as racial diversity, have limited impact compared to the overwhelming influence of party governance.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Republican control of state government reduces democratic performance. The magnitude of democratic contraction from Republican control is surprisingly large, about one-half of a standard deviation." (p. 973)
- "Democratic backsliding in states like North Carolina and Wisconsin affects other states, and, more importantly, democracy in the United States as a whole." (p. 974)
- "The results emphasize the importance of national political forces over local demographic or political dynamics in explaining democratic performance." (p. 978)

#### 1.14.3 Laboratories Against Democracy: How National Parties Transformed State Politics

Grumbach, J. (2022, July). *Laboratories Against Democracy: How National Parties Transformed State Politics* [Google-Books-ID: UhdYEAAAQBAJ]. Princeton University Press

**1. Citation key:** grumbach\_laboratories\_2022

**2. Author(s):** Jacob M. Grumbach

**3. Year:** 2022

**4. Publication:** Princeton University Press

**5. Keywords:** federalism, state politics, democratic backsliding, partisan polarization, policy diffusion

**6. Summary:** In *Laboratories Against Democracy*, Jacob Grumbach challenges the traditional view of American federalism as a bulwark of democracy and policy innovation. Grumbach argues that the nationalization of political parties and gridlock at the federal level have turned states into central arenas for policymaking, but with troubling consequences for democracy. By shifting political and financial resources to state governments, national parties and organized interests have exacerbated policy polarization, increased partisan learning, and contributed to democratic erosion. Drawing on new datasets and a comprehensive measure of state democratic health, Grumbach demonstrates that federalism, far from fostering innovation and equality, has become a key driver of policy divergence and democratic backsliding in the United States.

**7. Theory:** Grumbach builds his analysis on the idea that American federalism has become a critical site for national political competition, driven by the growing polarization and nationalization of the Democratic and Republican parties. Traditionally, federalism has been celebrated for its capacity to encourage policy experimentation, protect against tyranny, and promote efficiency. Grumbach counters this idealized view by showing how partisan polarization has altered the dynamics of state policymaking. First, he argues that national interest groups and activists have exploited decentralized governance to advance extreme partisan agendas, leading to heightened policy variation and polarization across states. Second, he demonstrates that policy diffusion—the spread of successful policies from one state to another—has become increasingly partisan, as states emulate policies based on party alignment rather than policy success. Finally, Grumbach identifies democratic backsliding as a consequence of this process, particularly in Republican-controlled states, where gerrymandering, voter suppression, and other anti-democratic practices have been used to entrench political power. These developments, Grumbach contends, reveal the vulnerabilities of federalism in an era of polarized national politics.

**8. Methods:** Grumbach uses a combination of quantitative analysis, historical evidence, and original data to support his arguments. He constructs a comprehensive *State Democracy Index* to measure democratic performance in all 50 states over time, based on indicators such as voter registration, turnout rates, gerrymandering, and access to voting. Using this index, he analyzes changes in democratic health between 2000 and 2018, highlighting states that have experienced significant backsliding. Additionally, Grumbach examines state policy outcomes across 135 issue areas to demonstrate the growing link between party control and policy divergence. He also conducts statistical tests to show how partisan polarization has influenced policy learning, with states increasingly adopting policies from co-partisan states rather than evaluating policies based on their success. This rigorous methodological approach allows Grumbach to trace the causes and consequences of state-level political polarization and democratic decline.

**9. Hypotheses:** Grumbach hypothesizes that the nationalization of political parties has transformed state politics, with three primary consequences:

- *Policy resurgence:* States have become central to policymaking as national gridlock pushes interest groups to seek

partisan victories at the state level.

- *Partisan policy learning:* States emulate policies based on party alignment rather than evidence of success, exacerbating polarization.
- *Democratic backsliding:* State governments, particularly those controlled by Republicans, have engaged in anti-democratic practices, including voter suppression and gerrymandering.

These hypotheses are confirmed through extensive data analysis, which demonstrates the growing divergence in state policies, the partisan nature of policy diffusion, and the erosion of democratic norms in certain states.

10. **Main findings:** Grumbach concludes that federalism, once considered a safeguard of democracy and a venue for policy innovation, has become a key driver of polarization and democratic backsliding. National parties and organized interest groups have leveraged state governments to implement extreme partisan agendas, leading to greater policy variation across states. Policy diffusion has become increasingly partisan, undermining the idea of states as "laboratories of democracy." Furthermore, Grumbach shows that democratic backsliding is concentrated in Republican-controlled states, where practices such as gerrymandering, voter suppression, and restrictions on civil liberties have eroded democratic performance. These findings challenge the traditional view of federalism and highlight the need for national-level reforms to address the vulnerabilities of decentralized governance.

11. **Key definitions:**

- **State Democracy Index:** A composite measure developed by Grumbach to evaluate democratic performance in all 50 states. The index includes indicators such as voter registration, turnout rates, gerrymandering, and access to voting, allowing for comparisons over time and across states.
- **Partisan Policy Learning:** The process by which states emulate policies based on party alignment rather than evidence of success. Grumbach argues that this dynamic undermines the ideal of unbiased policy diffusion and contributes to greater polarization.
- **Democratic Backsliding:** The erosion of democratic norms and practices, such as free and fair elections, civil liberties, and political accountability. Grumbach identifies gerrymandering, voter suppression, and restrictions on voting rights as key drivers of democratic backsliding in certain states.

#### 1.14.4 Bringing the State Back In to Civic Engagement: Policy Feedback Effects of the G.I. Bill for World War II Veterans

Mettler, S. (2002). Bringing the State Back In to Civic Engagement: Policy Feedback Effects of the G.I. Bill for World War II Veterans. *American Political Science Review*, 96(02), 351–365. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055402000217>

1. **Citation key:** mettler\_bringing\_2002

2. **Author(s):** Suzanne Mettler

3. **Year:** 2002

4. **Publication:** The American Political Science Review

5. **Keywords:** G.I. Bill, civic engagement, policy feedback, political participation, resource effects, interpretive effects, democratic inclusion

6. **Summary:** This study evaluates the civic and political effects of the G.I. Bill's educational provisions for World War II veterans, focusing on its capacity to promote democratic engagement. Through an innovative policy feedback framework, Mettler investigates how government programs shape individual participation in public life, considering both resource and interpretive effects. Original survey data and interviews reveal that the G.I. Bill significantly increased civic and political participation among veterans, particularly those from less privileged backgrounds, fostering inclusion and a sense of obligation to society.

7. **Theory:** Mettler introduces a policy feedback model that emphasizes how government programs influence civic engagement by altering recipients' resources and interpretive frameworks. Policies such as the G.I. Bill function as institutions that shape participants' capacity for and predisposition toward public involvement. The study hypothesizes that broad, inclusive policies with standardized procedures can promote democratic participation by enhancing both material resources and civic identity.

8. **Methods:** The study employs mixed methods, including a mail survey of 716 World War II veterans and 28 in-depth interviews. The survey measures civic and political participation (e.g., memberships in organizations, campaign activities) while controlling for variables such as socioeconomic status and parental influence. Original quantitative data are complemented by qualitative insights, enabling a detailed examination of how veterans perceived and acted on the G.I. Bill's provisions.

9. **Hypotheses:**

- The G.I. Bill's educational provisions increased veterans' civic and political participation by enhancing their resources and civic capacity.
- Recipients from less privileged backgrounds experienced greater gains in civic and political engagement due to the G.I. Bill's democratizing effects.
- Veterans who perceived the G.I. Bill as fostering reciprocity were more likely to engage in civic life.

These hypotheses were supported by findings that demonstrated significant positive effects of the G.I. Bill on both civic and political engagement, with resource and interpretive effects disproportionately benefiting less advantaged veterans.

10. **Main findings:** The study identifies the G.I. Bill as a critical factor in fostering civic and political participation among veterans. The policy's design provided resources (education, financial aid) and interpretive benefits (a sense of dig-

nity and inclusion), which collectively elevated democratic engagement. Veterans from less privileged backgrounds experienced the most pronounced gains, suggesting that universal, well-administered policies can mitigate social inequalities in civic involvement.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “The analysis reveals that the G.I. Bill produced increased levels of participation—by more fully incorporating citizens, especially those from less privileged backgrounds, through enhancement of their civic capacity and predisposition for involvement” (p. 351).
- “Receiving such unexpected and valuable resources may well have promoted a sense of reciprocity among veterans, prompting them to view civic engagement as a way to give back to society” (p. 358).
- “The G.I. Bill’s universal eligibility and standardized procedures avoided the stigmatization often associated with means-tested programs, thereby fostering dignity and inclusion among recipients” (p. 360).

#### 1.14.5 A Public Transformed? Welfare Reform as Policy Feedback

Soss, J., & Schram, S. F. (2007). A Public Transformed? Welfare Reform as Policy Feedback. *American Political Science Review*, 101(1), 111–127. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055407070049>

1. Citation key: soss\_public\_2007

2. Author(s): Joe Soss and Sanford F. Schram

3. Year: 2007

4. Publication: The American Political Science Review

5. Keywords: welfare reform, policy feedback, public opinion, poverty politics, racial attitudes, policy evaluation

6. Summary: This study examines the mass opinion effects of welfare reform in the United States during the 1990s. Drawing on theories of policy feedback, the authors explore whether the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) reshaped public attitudes toward welfare recipients, the poor, and poverty policy. Their findings suggest that welfare reform reduced the salience of welfare as a public issue but did not substantively transform public attitudes or partisan dynamics as reform advocates had anticipated.

7. Theory: The analysis situates welfare reform within the broader theory of policy feedback, which posits that public policies shape political landscapes by influencing public attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. The authors develop a framework that evaluates feedback effects based on policy visibility and proximity. They argue that the extent and nature of feedback effects depend on these dimensions, with welfare reform occupying a “distant-visible” category that limits transformative potential.

8. Methods: The authors employ a time-series analysis of public opinion data from surveys such as the General Social Survey (GSS) and National Election Studies (NES). Their approach compares pre- and post-reform periods while controlling for key demographic and political variables. They assess changes in public attitudes toward welfare, the poor, and racialized perceptions of aid, as well as partisan identification and electoral behavior.

### 9. Hypotheses:

- Welfare reform will transform public perceptions of welfare and recipients, leading to more favorable attitudes (rejected).
- Welfare reform will reduce racialized associations with welfare and aid to the poor (partially supported).
- Welfare reform will reduce the salience of welfare as a political issue, creating opportunities for broader anti-poverty efforts (supported).
- Welfare reform will increase public support for the Democratic Party by reshaping perceptions of their policy stance (rejected).

The findings reject the transformative hypotheses but provide partial support for the deracialization hypothesis and stronger support for the negation hypothesis.

10. Main findings: The analysis reveals that welfare reform reduced the salience of welfare as a public issue but did not substantively change underlying public attitudes or partisan dynamics. Negative stereotypes of welfare recipients persisted, and the racialization of poverty remained stable. While welfare became less central to public evaluations of political parties, this did not translate into greater public support for Democrats or anti-poverty policies.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “Despite its lingering association with welfare, the public’s willingness to invest in the poor has stayed the same or diminished” (p. 118).
- “Work requirements and time limits may be popular, but they did not generate more positive images of poor people, welfare recipients, or welfare itself” (p. 120).
- “Welfare became less salient to the public after 1996, both in its own right and as a basis for party evaluation” (p. 120).

#### 1.14.6 Policy Impact and Voter Mobilization: Evidence from Farmers’ Trade War Experiences

Jares, J. A., & Malhotra, N. (2024). Policy Impact and Voter Mobilization: Evidence from Farmers’ Trade War Experiences. *American Political Science Review*, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055424000571>

1. Citation key: jares\_policy\_2024

2. Author(s): Jake Alton Jares and Neil Malhotra

3. **Year:** 2024
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** voter mobilization, policy feedback, distributive politics, rural politics, trade war, policy outcomes, campaign contributions
6. **Summary:** This study investigates the mobilizing effects of economic policies on political engagement, focusing on the 2018 U.S.-China trade war and President Trump's Market Facilitation Program (MFP). The research explores how variations in compensation received by farmers impacted their voter turnout and campaign contributions. Despite significant differences in policy outcomes for over 165,000 farmers, the findings reveal negligible effects on turnout and campaign contributions, challenging traditional theories about the mobilizing power of economic benefits.
7. **Theory:** The study is grounded in theories of voter mobilization and policy feedback. It argues that economic benefits from government policies could enhance voter turnout and campaign contributions, aligning with theories that voters reward effective governance. However, alternative perspectives suggest that mobilization may not follow conventional patterns, especially within partisan bases. The research also revisits the concept of "pocketbook voting" in rural contexts, contrasting it with cultural and geographic identity-driven political behavior.
8. **Methods:** The authors employ a natural experiment based on the 2018 trade war and the MFP, which provided monetary compensation to farmers affected by tariffs. Farm-level compensation outcomes were determined by crop portfolios established before the trade war. The study utilizes detailed administrative data on policy outcomes, voter turnout, and campaign contributions, coupled with advanced statistical techniques like Double Machine Learning (DML) to address causal inference challenges. Three main analyses assess the effects of varying compensation levels on Republican and non-Republican voter turnout and contributions.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Greater compensation from the MFP would increase voter turnout among Republicans.
  - Compensation would have little to no mobilizing effect on non-Republicans.
  - Improved compensation outcomes would lead to higher campaign contributions among farms benefiting more from the policy.

These hypotheses were not supported; the findings indicated that variations in compensation outcomes had negligible impacts on political engagement.
10. **Main findings:** The study's primary conclusion is that even significant variations in economic benefits did not mobilize Republican voters or increase campaign contributions meaningfully. It challenges conventional views that economic benefits are strong motivators of political participation, particularly among a partisan base. Instead, the findings align more closely with theories emphasizing cultural and geographic identity in rural political behavior over economic incentives.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "We find negligible effects of improved compensation outcomes on Republican and non-Republican turnout and contributions alike" (p. 1).
  - "The political engagement of MFP-eligible farmers in 2018 broadly increased relative to the general population in a manner that cut across individual-level policy experiences" (p. 2).
  - "Our findings are much more consistent with accounts that political involvement is mostly driven by post-materialist concerns rather than traditional conceptions of the 'pocketbook farm vote'" (p. 3).

#### 1.14.7 Fragmented Democracy

Michener, J. (2018a, March). Chapter 1: Medicaid, Political Life, and Fragmented Democracy. *Fragmented Democracy: Medicaid, Federalism, and Unequal Politics* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108224987>

Michener, J. (2018b, March). Chapter 2: Democratic Citizenship and Contextualized Policy Feedback. *Fragmented Democracy: Medicaid, Federalism, and Unequal Politics* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108224987>

Michener, J. (2018c, March). Chapter 3: Federalism, Health Care, and Inequity. *Fragmented Democracy: Medicaid, Federalism, and Unequal Politics* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108224987>

Michener, J. (2018d, March). Chapter 8: Federalism and Political Inequality. *Fragmented Democracy: Medicaid, Federalism, and Unequal Politics* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108224987>

1. **Citation keys:**
  - michener\_chapter\_2018
  - michener\_chapter\_2018-1
  - michener\_chapter\_2018-2
  - michener\_chapter\_2018-3
2. **Author(s):** Jamila Michener
3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** Fragmented Democracy: Medicaid, Federalism, and Unequal Citizenship (Cambridge University Press)
5. **Keywords:** Medicaid, federalism, political participation, inequality, democratic citizenship, social welfare policy, policy feedback, geographic disparities, health care policy
6. **Summary:** This book investigates the relationship between Medicaid, federalism, and democratic inequality. Michener explores how Medicaid's federated structure amplifies geographic disparities, influencing both access to resources

and the political lives of beneficiaries. She highlights how federalism produces inequities in political participation and democratic citizenship, particularly for marginalized populations. By introducing the Contextualized Feedback (CF) model, Michener integrates policy feedback and contextual political behavior theories to explain the impact of Medicaid's fragmented structure on democratic engagement and political inequality. The book emphasizes Medicaid's dual role as both a site of empowerment and exclusion depending on state-level policy design and implementation.

7. **Theory:** Michener argues that Medicaid's federalist structure systematically generates geographic variation in policy design, implementation, and experiences. This variation, in turn, conditions beneficiaries' political capacity, shaping their engagement with democratic processes. Using the CF model, she links federalism, policy feedback, and contextual dynamics, showing how state and local governance structures influence Medicaid beneficiaries' political attitudes and behaviors. Federalism enables inequitable discretion in policy decisions, exacerbating racial, economic, and political disparities.
8. **Methods:** Michener employs a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative interviews with Medicaid beneficiaries, state administrative data, historical and legal analyses, and quantitative survey data. This design allows her to integrate personal narratives with broader patterns of political participation and geographic inequality. Historical policy reviews illustrate the evolution of federalism's influence on health care, while individual experiences highlight the multilevel impact of Medicaid's structure on beneficiaries' political lives.
9. **Hypotheses:** Michener hypothesizes that Medicaid's federalist structure produces geographic disparities in policy design and implementation, influencing political participation and deepening inequality. These hypotheses are consistently supported across chapters, with findings that:
  - Federalism amplifies geographic inequities in Medicaid access, eligibility, and quality of services.
  - State-level discretion in Medicaid implementation conditions beneficiaries' political engagement and democratic capacity.
  - Geographic disparities in Medicaid reinforce broader patterns of racial, economic, and political inequalities.
  - Policy feedback mechanisms interact with federalism to shape beneficiaries' political behavior, particularly in localized contexts.
  - Federalism systematically undermines political equality by creating structural conditions that erode the political capacity of marginalized groups.

10. **Main findings:** Michener concludes that federalism drives significant material and political inequalities in Medicaid, shaping the democratic experiences of beneficiaries across geographic contexts. Medicaid's fragmented implementation reflects systemic disparities in policy outcomes, with state and local governance structures exacerbating inequality. While Medicaid holds potential as a tool for reducing inequities and fostering political engagement, its federated design often reinforces exclusionary dynamics, particularly for marginalized racial and economic groups. Addressing these inequities requires deliberate policy reforms aimed at promoting geographic equity and strengthening democratic participation.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Medicaid varies dramatically from place to place, shaping not just access to health care, but also the experiences of democratic citizenship" (p. 3).
- "The political lives of Medicaid beneficiaries are deeply influenced by the program's federated structure, which conditions their access to resources and opportunities for participation" (p. 5).
- "Federalism generates inequity by creating geographic variation in access to vital resources, contributing to both material and political inequities" (p. 12).
- "Institutionally embedded contexts affect individuals' experiences with policies, which can in turn affect their political capacity and shape a wide range of participatory actions" (p. 29).
- "The trouble with federalism as identified here is not simply that it subsidizes geographic inequality. The dilemma arises when institutions systematically and consistently encumber particular groups" (p. 59).
- "Medicaid's fragmented policy structure generates preposterous situations: cross the state line and you can get treated for your cancer; otherwise, you're out of luck" (p. 163).
- "Federalism is both a producer of politics and a product of politics. It acts as a purveyor of political inequality by unevenly eroding the political capacity of social policy beneficiaries in particular locales" (p. 169).

#### 1.14.8 Why Doesn't the United States Have a European-Style Welfare State?

Alesina, A., Glaeser, E. L. (L., & Sacerdote, B. (2001). Why Doesn't the United States Have a European-Style Welfare State? *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, 2001(2), 187–277. <https://doi.org/10.1353/eca.2001.0014>

1. **Citation key:** alesina\_why\_2001
2. **Author(s):** Alberto Alesina, Edward Glaeser, and Bruce Sacerdote
3. **Year:** 2001
4. **Publication:** Brookings Papers on Economic Activity
5. **Keywords:** welfare state, redistribution, American exceptionalism, racial heterogeneity, political institutions, income inequality
6. **Summary:** This article investigates why the United States has a significantly smaller welfare state compared to European countries. The authors examine economic, political, and behavioral explanations for this divergence. While the U.S. has higher income inequality before taxes and transfers, factors such as racial heterogeneity, political institutions,

and differing beliefs about poverty contribute to lower support for redistribution. They argue that the United States' historical development, constitutional constraints, and individualistic culture reinforce resistance to a European-style welfare state.

**7. Theory:** Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote argue that the smaller welfare state in the U.S. is primarily due to political and behavioral factors. Political institutions, such as the lack of proportional representation and the strong protection of private property, limit redistribution. Behavioral factors include racial heterogeneity, which reduces support for welfare among the white majority, and beliefs that poverty is a result of individual failure rather than systemic disadvantage. These factors are compounded by the U.S.'s unique historical development and economic structure.

**8. Methods:** The authors use cross-country comparisons and historical analyses to explore the differences in welfare systems between Europe and the U.S. They analyze economic indicators such as income inequality, income mobility, and tax structures. Additionally, they draw on survey data (e.g., *World Values Survey*) to assess public attitudes toward poverty and government intervention. The study also includes historical evidence to illustrate the political and institutional roots of American exceptionalism.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that the United States' smaller welfare state can be explained by:

- Greater racial heterogeneity, which reduces willingness to redistribute wealth due to racial divisions.
- Political institutions (e.g., non-proportional representation and strong property rights) that limit the political power of the poor.
- Cultural beliefs that poverty results from individual laziness rather than systemic inequality.

These hypotheses are supported by cross-country data, historical analysis, and public opinion surveys.

**10. Main findings:** The article concludes that the key reasons for the smaller welfare state in the U.S. are political and cultural rather than economic. The authors find that:

- Racial heterogeneity is a significant factor: countries with more racial fragmentation redistribute less.
- Political institutions in the U.S., such as the absence of proportional representation and the role of the courts, limit redistributive policies.
- Cultural beliefs in the U.S., including the perception that poverty reflects individual failings rather than misfortune, reduce support for welfare programs.

They emphasize that historical and political development has entrenched these differences, making the U.S. resistant to adopting European-style welfare policies.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "America's troubled race relations are clearly a major reason for the absence of an American welfare state" (p. 188).
- "Europeans overwhelmingly believe that the poor are poor because they have been unfortunate. In contrast, Americans are more likely to view the poor as lazy" (p. 188).
- "The relative political stability of the United States over more than two centuries means that it is still governed by an eighteenth-century constitution designed to protect property" (p. 189).

#### 1.14.9 Hiding in Plain Sight: American Politics and the Carceral State

Gottschalk, M. (2008). Hiding in Plain Sight: American Politics and the Carceral State [Publisher: Annual Reviews]. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11(Volume 11, 2008), 235–260. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.060606.135218>

**1. Citation key:** gottschalk\_hiding\_2008

**2. Author(s):** Marie Gottschalk

**3. Year:** 2008

**4. Publication:** Annual Review of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** carceral state, mass incarceration, penal policy, political development, criminal justice, American democracy

**6. Summary:** This article explores the rise and consolidation of the carceral state in the United States, a development that is unprecedented among Western democracies. Gottschalk analyzes the historical, institutional, and political causes of mass incarceration and argues that its consequences extend far beyond the criminal justice system, fundamentally transforming American democratic institutions. Despite the retrenchment of state power in other policy domains, the state has dramatically expanded its authority through penal policies. Gottschalk contends that this carceral expansion has deep historical roots and challenges the common assumption that the carceral state emerged solely in response to rising crime rates. Instead, political and institutional developments, racial dynamics, and broader cultural shifts have underpinned the growth of punitive policies in the U.S. The carceral state, she concludes, has not only entrenched systemic inequality but has also reshaped notions of citizenship, political participation, and governance.

**7. Theory:** Gottschalk situates her analysis within the framework of American Political Development (APD), arguing that the carceral state represents a critical turning point in U.S. political history. She rejects simplistic explanations that attribute mass incarceration to crime trends, instead focusing on political and institutional transformations. The expansion of the carceral state reflects a "durable shift in governing authority," whereby law enforcement, prosecutors, and correctional systems have consolidated power. This shift occurred alongside the weakening of welfare institutions, demonstrating how state retrenchment in one policy domain can coexist with expansion in another. Gottschalk emphasizes that race plays a central, though complex, role in the carceral state. While racial disparities in imprisonment are undeniable, she cautions against reducing the carceral state to a mere extension of historical racial control

mechanisms, such as slavery and Jim Crow. Instead, race interacts with broader political, economic, and institutional dynamics that explain both the scale and severity of mass incarceration. She further argues that the carceral state reflects a broader mode of “governing through crime,” where crime-control strategies extend into schools, workplaces, and immigration policies. This approach redefines citizenship by legitimizing exclusion and disenfranchisement, creating a class of “partial citizens” who are marginalized both politically and economically.

**8. Methods:** Gottschalk employs a historical-institutional approach to trace the origins and consequences of the carceral state. She synthesizes insights from political science, history, criminology, and sociology to demonstrate how political decisions, institutional developments, and cultural shifts coalesced to produce the current penal regime. Her analysis incorporates historical evidence of penal policies dating back to the 19th century, illustrating the long-standing role of punishment in American political development. She also draws on comparative analysis to highlight the distinctiveness of U.S. penal policy relative to other Western democracies. In addition, Gottschalk engages with contemporary scholarship on the political consequences of mass incarceration, including its effects on voter disenfranchisement, labor markets, and social inequality.

**9. Hypotheses:** Gottschalk argues that the carceral state did not arise as a direct response to crime but rather emerged from political and institutional dynamics that predate the 1960s. She asserts that race, while central, must be analyzed within the context of broader institutional developments and political decisions that shaped penal policy. She also hypothesizes that the carceral state fundamentally undermines democratic governance by disenfranchising marginalized populations, distorting political representation, and exacerbating socioeconomic inequality. Finally, she posits that the carceral state reflects a broader mode of governance, whereby crime-control strategies are applied to diverse policy areas, reshaping notions of citizenship and belonging.

**10. Main findings:** Gottschalk concludes that the carceral state represents a defining feature of contemporary American political development. Its expansion reflects the intersection of race, political decisions, and institutional arrangements that predate the modern era. She demonstrates that mass incarceration disproportionately targets marginalized populations, particularly African Americans and other minorities, while also transforming democratic governance. The carceral state undermines political participation by disenfranchising millions of citizens, particularly in urban and minority communities. It also exacerbates socioeconomic inequality by limiting the economic opportunities of former prisoners and their families. Furthermore, Gottschalk highlights the broader implications of the carceral state, arguing that it legitimizes a mode of governance that emphasizes crime control across many policy areas, from education to immigration. This expansion of state power challenges the conventional view of the U.S. state as weak and raises fundamental questions about the nature of American democracy.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Over the past three decades, the United States has built a carceral state that is unprecedented among Western countries and in US history.” (p. 235)
- “The carceral state has grown so huge that it has begun to transform fundamental democratic institutions, from free and fair elections to an accurate and representative census.” (p. 236)
- “The criminalization of immigration policy is just one example of how the ‘technologies, discourses, and metaphors of crime and criminal justice’ have been migrating to all kinds of institutions and public policies that seem far afield from crime fighting.” (p. 246)

#### 1.14.10 Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy

Schneider, A., & Ingram, H. (1993). Social Construction of Target Populations: Implications for Politics and Policy [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 87(2), 334–347. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2939044>

1. **Citation key:** schneider\_social\_1993
2. **Author(s):** Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram
3. **Year:** 1993
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** social construction, policy design, target populations, public policy, political participation, democratic governance
6. **Summary:** This article develops a theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between the social construction of target populations and public policy design. Schneider and Ingram argue that policies are not neutral tools of governance but instead reflect and reinforce social constructions of groups affected by them. These social constructions—images and stereotypes of particular populations—guide policymakers’ decisions on who benefits from or is burdened by policy and shape citizens’ orientations toward government and participation. By distinguishing between positively and negatively constructed groups and powerful versus powerless populations, the authors provide a systematic explanation for how policies can perpetuate inequalities, impact democratic governance, and influence patterns of political participation.
7. **Theory:** Schneider and Ingram argue that social constructions—the culturally shared characterizations and normative evaluations of groups—fundamentally influence the policy process. These constructions affect how elected officials formulate policies, select tools, and justify decisions. Policies, in turn, reinforce or alter social constructions by sending messages about group deservingness and the nature of citizenship. The authors propose a typology that classifies target populations based on two dimensions: their political power (strong or weak) and their social construction (positive or negative). The resulting categories are:

- **Advantaged groups:** Powerful and positively constructed, such as the elderly or business elites, who receive substantial benefits justified by their perceived deservingness and alignment with public interests.
- **Contenders:** Powerful but negatively constructed, like unions or the wealthy, who receive hidden benefits or symbolic burdens to satisfy public sentiment while serving their interests.
- **Dependents:** Weak but positively constructed groups, such as children or mothers, who receive symbolic or minimal benefits, often accompanied by stigmatizing mechanisms.
- **Deviants:** Weak and negatively constructed populations, such as criminals or drug addicts, who are burdened with punitive policies that reinforce their marginalization.

This framework explains why some groups consistently benefit from policy while others are systematically burdened. Social constructions also influence participation by shaping citizens' perceptions of government responsiveness and their role in society. Advantaged groups receive messages of empowerment and legitimacy, while dependents and deviants internalize messages of passivity or exclusion. Schneider and Ingram argue that these dynamics undermine democratic ideals by reinforcing inequalities in participation and representation.

8. **Methods:** The authors develop their theory through a synthesis of prior literature in political science, sociology, and public policy. They draw on empirical evidence, including legislative histories, policy texts, and case studies, to illustrate how social constructions influence agenda setting, policy design, and citizen participation. By integrating theoretical insights from scholars like Harold Lasswell, Murray Edelman, and Theodore Lowi, Schneider and Ingram construct a comprehensive framework that links social constructions to policy processes and outcomes.
9. **Hypotheses:** Schneider and Ingram argue that policies reflect the social constructions of target populations and that these constructions influence both the allocation of benefits and burdens and the messages policies send to citizens. They hypothesize that:
  - Policies disproportionately benefit powerful, positively constructed groups while imposing burdens on powerless, negatively constructed groups.
  - Policies reinforce social constructions by legitimizing stereotypes and sending implicit messages about group deservingness and citizenship.
  - Social constructions shape political participation, encouraging advantaged groups to mobilize while discouraging dependents and deviants from engaging in politics.

These hypotheses are supported by theoretical reasoning and illustrative examples of policy outcomes.

10. **Main findings:** Schneider and Ingram conclude that the social construction of target populations has significant implications for politics, policy, and democracy. Policies systematically advantage powerful, positively constructed groups while marginalizing the powerless and negatively constructed. This dynamic reinforces existing inequalities and distorts democratic governance by encouraging participation among the advantaged and suppressing it among marginalized groups. The authors argue that policies send powerful messages about the nature of citizenship and government responsiveness, shaping citizens' political orientations and participation patterns. They emphasize that overcoming these inequalities requires policies that empower all groups and challenge negative social constructions.

11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The social construction of target populations refers to the cultural characterizations or popular images of the persons or groups whose behavior and well-being are affected by public policy" (p. 334).
  - "Policies that have detrimental impacts on, or are ineffective in solving important problems for, certain types of target populations may not produce citizen participation directed toward policy change because the messages received by these target populations encourage withdrawal or passivity" (p. 335).
  - "Advantaged groups have the resources and capacity to shape their own constructions and to combat attempts that would portray them negatively" (p. 337).

#### 1.14.11 How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Political Activism and the American Welfare State

Campbell, A. L. (2011, October). *How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Political Activism and the American Welfare State* [Google-Books-ID: 1d40ajGuylIC]. Princeton University Press

1. **Citation key:** campbell\_how\_2011
2. **Author(s):** Andrea Louise Campbell
3. **Year:** 2011
4. **Publication:** Princeton University Press
5. **Keywords:** political participation, policy design, Social Security, political inequality, welfare state
6. **Summary:** In *How Policies Make Citizens*, Andrea Campbell examines how public policies shape political participation and reinforce political inequality. Through a detailed case study of senior citizens' mobilization around Social Security, she argues that policy design can empower certain groups while discouraging others from participating in politics. Campbell shows how Social Security transformed senior citizens from an impoverished and politically disengaged group to one of the most politically active demographics in the United States. Using extensive historical data and surveys, she demonstrates that Social Security not only provided material benefits but also mobilized seniors, particularly low-income individuals, to defend their programs and interests. However, this empowerment for seniors also exacerbated political inequalities between older and younger citizens. Campbell's analysis highlights how policy design shapes citizenship, political behavior, and the responsiveness of government to different groups.
7. **Theory:** Campbell advances a theory of policy feedback to explain how government policies influence political par-

ticipation and shape democratic citizenship. Policies, she argues, produce both *resource effects* and *interpretive effects*. Resource effects occur when policies provide material benefits—such as income through Social Security—that enable citizens to overcome barriers to participation, such as lack of time or financial constraints. For example, Social Security benefits provide seniors, particularly low-income seniors, with the means to engage in political activity such as voting and contacting officials. Interpretive effects occur when policies shape citizens' perceptions of themselves and their relationship to government. Social Security conveys to seniors that they are a deserving and powerful constituency, encouraging them to defend the program and remain politically active. Campbell demonstrates that these feedback effects create a reciprocal relationship between policies and participation: policies mobilize certain groups, and this mobilization influences subsequent policymaking. However, not all policies have these positive effects. Means-tested welfare programs, by contrast, stigmatize beneficiaries and undermine their political efficacy, reducing their participation relative to their socioeconomic backgrounds. Campbell's theory therefore emphasizes that policy design matters, with profound implications for political equality and the quality of democracy.

**8. Methods:** Campbell employs a mixed-methods approach, combining historical analysis, quantitative survey data, and archival research. She draws on multiple datasets, including the *National Election Studies* (NES), the American Citizen Participation Study, and congressional roll-call data. Through statistical analysis, she examines the relationship between Social Security and political participation, demonstrating that seniors' political engagement increased in response to policy changes. Campbell also uses archival research to trace the historical development of Social Security and its impact on the political mobilization of senior citizens. This historical perspective allows her to show how Social Security institutionalized senior citizens as a politically active group, transforming their political behavior and influence over time.

**9. Hypotheses:** Campbell hypothesizes that Social Security increased political participation among senior citizens through its resource and interpretive effects. This hypothesis is confirmed by her findings, which show that:

- Social Security benefits reduce socioeconomic barriers to participation, particularly for low-income seniors.
- Social Security shapes seniors' perceptions of themselves as a deserving and empowered political group, leading them to defend the program through political activity.
- Policies that stigmatize recipients, such as means-tested welfare programs, have the opposite effect, reducing participation and reinforcing political inequality.

Campbell's findings underscore the importance of policy design in shaping political behavior and democratic citizenship.

**10. Main findings:** Campbell concludes that Social Security transformed senior citizens into one of the most politically active groups in the United States, demonstrating the powerful feedback effects of public policy. By providing material benefits and fostering a sense of deservingness, Social Security mobilized seniors to defend the program and influence policymaking. This mobilization was particularly strong among low-income seniors, reducing political inequality within the senior population. However, Campbell also highlights the limits of these effects, noting that policies like Social Security can exacerbate inequalities between groups. While seniors became increasingly active, younger citizens, who lack comparable policies, have remained politically disengaged. Campbell argues that policy design shapes democratic participation and that policymakers must consider both the economic and political effects of proposed reforms, such as Social Security privatization, which could undermine seniors' political engagement and exacerbate inequality.

#### 11. Key definitions:

- *Policy feedback:* The process by which public policies influence political behavior and attitudes. Policies can provide resources that enable participation or send messages that shape citizens' perceptions of themselves and their relationship to government.
- *Resource effects:* The material benefits provided by policies that reduce barriers to participation. For example, Social Security income enables seniors, especially those with low socioeconomic status, to engage in political activity.
- *Interpretive effects:* The messages conveyed by policies that shape citizens' perceptions of their role in politics. Social Security fosters a sense of deservingness and empowerment among seniors, encouraging them to defend the program and remain politically active.

#### 1.14.12 The Divided States of America: Why Federalism Doesn't Work

Kettl, D. F. (2022, March). *The Divided States of America: Why Federalism Doesn't Work* [Google-Books-ID: 8Z1EEAAAQBAJ]. Princeton University Press

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2. **Author(s):** Donald F. Kettl

3. **Year:** 2022

4. **Publication:** Princeton University Press

5. **Keywords:** federalism, inequality, policy variation, state power, American democracy

6. **Summary:** In *The Divided States of America*, Donald F. Kettl examines the evolution of American federalism and its consequences for political and economic inequality. Kettl argues that while federalism was designed to balance national and state interests, it has instead exacerbated inequalities between states and weakened the foundations of American democracy. He traces four generations of federalism, showing how power shifts between national and state gov-

ernments have shaped public policy. In the current “fourth generation” of federalism, policies such as health care, education, and infrastructure have become increasingly uneven across states, leaving citizens’ access to public services dependent on where they live. Kettl critiques this system for failing to address growing inequality, arguing for a Hamiltonian reform of federalism that would strengthen national coordination and oversight.

**7. Theory:** Kettl argues that American federalism has become increasingly unstable and inequitable because it allows states too much discretion in implementing national policies. Historically, federalism was a pragmatic compromise designed to unite the colonies under a single nation while preserving state autonomy. However, Kettl contends that federalism has always embedded inequality by design, as citizens’ rights and opportunities have depended on state-level decisions. He identifies four key generations of federalism:

- **First generation:** From the founding through the Civil War, federalism centered on debates over state sovereignty and the limits of federal power, particularly around issues like slavery.
- **Second generation:** From Reconstruction to the mid-20th century, federalism became a tool to enforce segregation and racial inequality through doctrines like “separate but equal.”
- **Third generation:** The Civil Rights Movement and the Great Society programs (1950s–1960s) marked a brief era of federal intervention to address inequality, exemplified by policies like Medicaid.
- **Fourth generation:** Since the 1970s, federalism has decentralized policymaking, with states gaining greater autonomy to administer federal programs. This shift has amplified policy disparities, as wealthier and politically dominant states implement more expansive programs, while poorer states lag behind.

Kettl theorizes that this fourth generation has entrenched inequality, as state discretion leads to vastly different policy outcomes in health care, education, and infrastructure. Federalism no longer fosters innovation but exacerbates divisions by enabling partisan and regional disparities. Drawing on Hamilton’s vision of a strong federal government, Kettl advocates for reforms to address inequality and restore national cohesion.

**8. Methods:** Kettl uses a historical-institutional approach to analyze the development of federalism and its impact on contemporary policy outcomes. He synthesizes historical records, policy analysis, and case studies to trace the four generations of federalism. Kettl also presents empirical data to illustrate inequalities across states in areas such as poverty, health care, infrastructure, and education. For example, he highlights differences in Medicaid expansion following the Affordable Care Act (ACA), showing how state discretion has led to disparate health outcomes. Through this analysis, Kettl demonstrates the growing divergence between states and its consequences for democratic governance.

**9. Hypotheses:** Kettl argues that federalism has contributed to growing inequality and political disunity in the United States. He hypothesizes that:

- State discretion in implementing federal policies exacerbates inequalities in public services and economic opportunities.
- The decentralization of power since the 1970s has led to greater policy variation across states, driven by partisan divisions.
- Addressing these inequalities requires a stronger national role in policy design and implementation, following Hamilton’s vision of federalism.

These hypotheses are supported through historical examples and data showing how federal programs like Medicaid and infrastructure spending have been implemented unevenly across states.

**10. Main findings:** Kettl concludes that American federalism, while originally designed to balance state and national interests, has become a source of inequality and instability. In the current “fourth generation” of federalism, state discretion has allowed wealthier states to advance more equitable and expansive policies, while poorer states have struggled to meet basic needs. Kettl highlights significant disparities in health care access, education quality, infrastructure, and poverty rates as evidence of federalism’s failure. He argues that these inequalities undermine trust in government, exacerbate political polarization, and threaten national cohesion. To address these challenges, Kettl advocates for reforming federalism by centralizing policy implementation and redistributing resources to reduce disparities between states.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Generations of Federalism:* Kettl identifies four historical phases of American federalism, each characterized by shifting power dynamics between the federal and state governments. The “fourth generation” (1970s–present) is marked by increasing state autonomy and policy disparities.
- *Policy Variation:* Differences in policy design and implementation across states, which result in unequal access to public services such as health care, education, and infrastructure. Kettl attributes this variation to state discretion in administering federal programs.
- *Hamiltonian Federalism:* A vision of federalism based on Alexander Hamilton’s advocacy for a strong national government. Kettl uses this concept to argue for reforms that would centralize policy implementation and address state-level inequalities.

#### 1.14.13 Reforms at Risk: What Happens After Major Policy Changes Are Enacted

Patashnik, E. M. (2008). *Reforms at Risk: What Happens After Major Policy Changes are Enacted* [Google-Books-ID: rlcVAQAAIAJ]. Princeton University Press

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2. **Author(s):** Eric M. Patashnik
3. **Year:** 2008
4. **Publication:** Princeton University Press
5. **Keywords:** policy reform, policy feedback, political sustainability, implementation, general-interest policies
6. **Summary:** In *Reforms at Risk*, Eric Patashnik examines the critical but often overlooked question of whether major policy reforms endure after they are enacted. While much of the scholarship on policy change focuses on the initial adoption of reforms, Patashnik shifts attention to the post-reform phase, analyzing why some reforms persist while others are eroded or reversed. Through detailed case studies of reforms in areas such as tax policy, agricultural subsidies, airline deregulation, emissions trading, welfare state reform, and procurement, Patashnik identifies the conditions under which reforms achieve long-term sustainability. He argues that successful reforms destroy existing policy subsystems, alter political dynamics, and generate positive policy feedbacks that entrench new interests and coalitions. Far from viewing reforms as fixed endpoints, Patashnik highlights the ongoing political struggles that determine their fate, offering practical lessons for policymakers on how to design reforms that can survive opposition and institutional inertia.
7. **Theory:** Patashnik's central argument is that reforms endure when they fundamentally alter the political and economic dynamics of the policy arena. Drawing on insights from institutional theory and policy feedback literature, he identifies three key factors that contribute to the sustainability of reforms. First, reforms must *disrupt existing policy subsystems*, dismantling the relationships among special interest groups, bureaucracies, and legislators that sustain the status quo. By breaking these "iron triangles," reforms can prevent entrenched interests from reversing the changes. Second, reforms that generate *positive policy feedback effects* are more likely to persist. Feedback effects occur when policies create new benefits, constituencies, and coalitions that have a vested interest in defending the reforms. For example, market-based reforms may produce economic winners who become politically invested in maintaining the new system. Finally, Patashnik argues that reforms must *reconfigure political expectations and coalitional patterns*, reshaping the incentives of actors and making it costly for opponents to undo the changes. Successful reforms, he contends, often unleash "creative destruction," a process in which entrenched interests weaken and new alignments emerge to support the reform. By combining these elements, Patashnik presents a nuanced theory of post-reform dynamics that bridges institutional, political, and economic perspectives.
8. **Methods:** Patashnik employs a comparative case study approach, examining six major policy reforms in the United States to identify patterns and variations in their outcomes. The cases include enduring reforms such as airline deregulation and emissions trading for acid rain, as well as reforms that were eroded or reversed, such as the 1986 Tax Reform Act, the Freedom to Farm Act, and the 1988 Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act. For each case, Patashnik traces the politics of reform adoption, the institutional and economic changes brought about by the reform, and the subsequent struggles over its implementation and sustainability. He uses historical analysis and archival research to reconstruct the post-reform political dynamics, highlighting the role of interest groups, policy feedback effects, and institutional design. By selecting cases that vary in their outcomes, Patashnik provides a robust framework for understanding the conditions under which reforms succeed or fail.
9. **Hypotheses:** Patashnik argues that reforms are more likely to endure if they disrupt existing policy subsystems, generate positive policy feedback effects, and reconfigure political expectations and coalitional dynamics. His analysis confirms that:
  - Reforms that destroy entrenched interests and create new economic winners are more durable because opponents lose the capacity and incentives to resist.
  - Policies that produce clear and sustained benefits generate constituencies and coalitions that defend the reforms from rollback.
  - Institutional design matters: reforms that embed rules and processes that favor their continuation are harder to reverse.These findings challenge the view that reforms inevitably fail due to special interest capture and suggest that enduring change is possible when reforms are strategically designed to alter political and economic incentives.
10. **Main findings:** Patashnik concludes that the sustainability of policy reforms depends on their ability to disrupt the status quo and create new political dynamics. Enduring reforms, such as airline deregulation and emissions trading, succeeded because they dismantled existing policy subsystems, realigned economic incentives, and generated constituencies with a stake in maintaining the reforms. In contrast, reforms like the 1986 Tax Reform Act and the Freedom to Farm Act failed because they did not sufficiently alter the underlying political dynamics or create lasting coalitions to support the changes. Patashnik emphasizes that the struggle over reforms does not end with their enactment; instead, the post-reform phase is marked by ongoing political contestation. His analysis highlights the importance of designing reforms that can withstand opposition and adapt to changing circumstances, offering practical insights for policymakers seeking to achieve durable change.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Policy feedback effects:* The ways in which policies shape political dynamics by creating new benefits, constituencies, and coalitions that support their continuation. Positive feedback effects increase the durability of reforms by generating vested interests.
  - *Policy subsystems:* The networks of interest groups, legislators, and bureaucracies that sustain existing policies. Successful reforms disrupt these subsystems, weakening entrenched interests and reshaping the political landscape.

- *Creative destruction:* A process in which reforms dismantle existing economic and political arrangements, creating opportunities for new interests and coalitions to emerge in support of the changes. This dynamic helps entrench reforms by realigning incentives and expectations.



Figure 1.1: Constructing theory



## **2 Public Opinion and Political Attitudes**

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2.1	Introduction . . . . .	172
2.2	Psychological Perspectives on Decision Making . . . . .	173
2.2.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	173
2.2.2	Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science . . . . .	173
2.2.3	Contrasting Rational and Psychological Analyses of Political Choice . . . . .	174
2.2.4	The Political Psychology of Rational Choice Theory . . . . .	175
2.2.5	Toward a Psychology of Framing Effects . . . . .	175
2.2.6	Choices, Values, and Frames . . . . .	176
2.2.7	Experimental Methodology in Political Science . . . . .	177
2.2.8	The Unmet Potential of Interdisciplinary Research: Political Psychological Approaches to Voting and Public Opinion . . . . .	178
2.2.9	Emotion and Political Psychology . . . . .	179
2.2.10	Political Psychology in International Relations: Beyond the Paradigms . . . . .	179
2.2.11	The Political Psychology of Information Processing . . . . .	180
2.3	Political Belief Systems . . . . .	181
2.3.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	181
2.3.2	From Confusion to Clarity: Issues and American Voters, 1956-1968 . . . . .	182
2.3.3	Mass Belief Systems Revisited: Political Change and Attitude Structure . . . . .	183
2.3.4	Mass Political Attitudes and the Survey Response . . . . .	183
2.3.5	Change in the Structure of American Political Attitudes: The Nagging Question of Question Wording . . . . .	184
2.3.6	A Hierarchical Model of Attitude Constraint . . . . .	185
2.3.7	Measuring Political Sophistication . . . . .	186
2.3.8	Explaining Political Sophistication . . . . .	187
2.3.9	Political Sophistication and Policy Reasoning: A Reconsideration . . . . .	187
2.3.10	Affective Polarization and Political Belief Systems: The Role of Political Identity and the Content and Structure of Political Beliefs . . . . .	188
2.4	Political Information and Misinformation . . . . .	189
2.4.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	189
2.4.2	Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting: Do Presidential Candidates “Waltz Before a Blind Audience?” . . . . .	190
2.4.3	What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters . . . . .	191
2.4.4	Misinformation and the Currency of Democratic Citizenship . . . . .	191
2.4.5	The Social Communication of Political Expertise . . . . .	192
2.4.6	Developing Valid Knowledge Scales . . . . .	193
2.4.7	Public Opinion and Democratic Accountability: How Citizens Learn about Politics . . . . .	194
2.4.8	News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout . . . . .	195
2.4.9	Estimating the Causal Effects of Media Coverage on Policy-Specific Knowledge . . . . .	195
2.4.10	The Question(s) of Political Knowledge . . . . .	196

2.4.11	Political Misinformation . . . . .	197
2.4.12	Educative Interventions to Combat Misinformation: Evidence from a Field Experiment in India . . . . .	198
2.4.13	Measuring Misperceptions . . . . .	198
2.5	Heuristics and Decision Making . . . . .	<b>199</b>
2.5.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	199
2.5.2	Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases . . . . .	200
2.5.3	The Value of Biased Information: A Rational Choice Model of Political Advice . . . . .	201
2.5.4	The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns . . . . .	202
2.5.5	Public Opinion and Heuristic Processing of Source Cues . . . . .	202
2.5.6	The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Know? . . . . .	203
2.5.7	The Political Environment and Citizen Competence . . . . .	204
2.5.8	Elite Cues and Citizen Disagreement with Expert Opinion . . . . .	205
2.5.9	When Can Politicians Scare Citizens Into Supporting Bad Policies? . . . . .	205
2.5.10	The More You Know: Voter Heuristics and the Information Search . . . . .	206
2.5.11	Heuristic Projection: Why Interest Group Cues May Fail to Help Citizens Hold Politicians Accountable . . . . .	207
2.6	Citizen Competence and Information Processing . . . . .	<b>208</b>
2.6.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	208
2.6.2	An Impression-Driven Model of Candidate Evaluation . . . . .	209
2.6.3	Accessibility and the Political Utility of Partisan and Ideological Orientations . . . . .	209
2.6.4	Conceptual Foundations of Citizen Competence . . . . .	210
2.6.5	On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame? . . . . .	211
2.6.6	The Political Environment and Ballot Proposition Awareness . . . . .	212
2.6.7	How Deliberation Affects Policy Opinions . . . . .	213
2.6.8	Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)relevance of Framing Effects . . . . .	214
2.6.9	How Elitism Undermines the Study of Voter Competence . . . . .	214
2.6.10	The Limits of Deliberative Discussion: A Model of Everyday Political Arguments . . . . .	215
2.6.11	The Fact of Experience: Rethinking Political Knowledge and Civic Competence . . . . .	216
2.7	Affect and Decision Making . . . . .	<b>217</b>
2.7.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	217
2.7.2	Affective and Semantic Components in Political Person Perception . . . . .	218
2.7.3	Attitude Attribution: A Group Basis for Political Reasoning . . . . .	218
2.7.4	Anxiety, Enthusiasm, and the Vote: The Emotional Underpinnings of Learning and Involvement During Presidential Campaigns . . . . .	219
2.7.5	Hot Cognition or Cool Consideration? Testing the Effects of Motivated Reasoning on Political Decision Making . . . . .	220
2.7.6	Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions . . . . .	221
2.7.7	Threat, Anxiety, and Support of Antiterrorism Policies . . . . .	222
2.7.8	Hot Politics? Affective Responses to Political Rhetoric . . . . .	222
2.8	Values, Value Conflict, and Attitudinal Ambivalence . . . . .	<b>223</b>
2.8.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	223
2.8.2	The Nature of Human Values . . . . .	224
2.8.3	Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion: The Role of Core Beliefs and Values . . . . .	225
2.8.4	The Political Culture of Ambivalence: Ideological Responses to the Welfare State . . . . .	226
2.8.5	American Ambivalence Towards Abortion Policy: Development of a Heteroskedastic Probit Model of Competing Values . . . . .	226

2.8.6	Beyond Bipolar Conceptualizations and Measures: The Case of Attitudes and Evaluative Space . . . . .	227
2.8.7	The Electoral Consequences of Ambivalence toward Presidential Candidates . . . . .	228
2.8.8	Group Attachment and the Reduction of Value-Driven Ambivalence . . . . .	229
2.8.9	Ambivalence, Information, and Electoral Choice . . . . .	230
2.8.10	The Social Dimension of Political Values . . . . .	231
2.8.11	Hard Choices, Easy Answers: Values, Information, and American Public Opinion . . . . .	232
2.9	Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Politics . . . . .	232
2.9.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	232
2.9.2	Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties: A Cross-Section of the Nation Speaks Its Mind . . . . .	233
2.9.3	Symbolic Racism: Problems of Motive Attribution in Political Analysis . . . . .	234
2.9.4	Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics . . . . .	235
2.9.5	Race and the Decline of Class in American Politics . . . . .	236
2.9.6	The Scar of Race . . . . .	236
2.9.7	Political Tolerance and American Democracy . . . . .	237
2.9.8	Asians: A Monolithic Voting Bloc? . . . . .	238
2.9.9	Racial Attitudes and Opposition to Welfare . . . . .	239
2.9.10	Perceptions of Racial Group Competition: Extending Blumer's Theory of Group Position to a Multiracial Social Context . . . . .	239
2.9.11	Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals . . . . .	240
2.9.12	Racial Prejudice and Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action . . . . .	241
2.9.13	The Dynamics of the Partisan Gender Gap . . . . .	242
2.9.14	Who Is Responsible for the Gender Gap? The Dynamics of Men's and Women's Democratic Macropartisanship, 1950–2012 . . . . .	242
2.9.15	Blaming Women or Blaming the System? Public Perceptions of Women's Underrepresentation in Elected Office . . . . .	243
2.9.16	Reconciling Sexism and Women's Support for Republican Candidates: A Look at Gender, Class, and Whiteness in the 2012 and 2016 Presidential Races . . . . .	244
2.9.17	How Gender Affects the Efficacy of Discussion as an Information Shortcut . . . . .	245
2.9.18	Public Perceptions of Women's Inclusion and Feelings of Political Efficacy . . . . .	246
2.9.19	The Wages of Latinidad: How Immigration Enforcement Mitigates Anti-Black Assimilation	246
2.10	Social Influence and Decision Making . . . . .	247
2.10.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	247
2.10.2	Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign . . . . .	248
2.10.3	Facilitating Communication across Lines of Political Difference: The Role of Mass Media .	249
2.10.4	Framing and Deliberation: How Citizens' Conversations Limit Elite Influence . . . . .	250
2.10.5	Political Disagreement: The Survival of Diverse Opinions within Communication Networks	250
2.10.6	The Workplace as a Context for Cross-Cutting Political Discourse . . . . .	251
2.10.7	Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy . . . . .	252
2.10.8	Talking About Politics: Informal Groups and Social Identity in American Life . . . . .	253
2.10.9	Partisanship in a Social Setting . . . . .	254
2.10.10	Through the Grapevine: Informational Consequences of Interpersonal Political Communication . . . . .	255
2.10.11	The Social Consequences of Political Anger . . . . .	256
2.10.12	Social Desirability and Affective Polarization . . . . .	256
2.11	Political Geography . . . . .	257
2.11.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	257
2.11.2	The Uncertain Geographic Context Problem . . . . .	258

2.11.3	Bringing the Person Back In: Boundaries, Perceptions, and the Measurement of Racial Context . . . . .	259
2.11.4	A Spatial Analysis of the Impact of West German Television on Protest Mobilization During the East German Revolution . . . . .	260
2.11.5	Assessing Contextual Measurement Strategies . . . . .	261
2.11.6	Demography, Politics, and Partisan Polarization in the United States, 1828 - 2016 . . . . .	261
2.11.7	Race and Poverty Matters: Black and Latino Linked Fate, Neighborhood Effects, and Political Participation . . . . .	262
2.11.8	Defining Racial and Ethnic Context with Geolocation Data . . . . .	263
2.11.9	Measuring the Rural Continuum in Political Science . . . . .	264
2.11.10	The Urban-Rural Divide and Residential Contentment as Antecedents of Political Ideology	265
2.11.11	Are Rural Attitudes Just Republican? . . . . .	266
2.11.12	Feeling Out of Place: Who Are the Non-Rural Rural Identifiers, and Are They Unique Politically? . . . . .	267
2.12	The Media . . . . .	267
2.12.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	267
2.12.2	News That Matters: Television and American Opinion . . . . .	268
2.12.3	Media Exposure and Political Discussion in U.S. Elections . . . . .	269
2.12.4	Who Deliberates? Mass Media in Modern Democracy . . . . .	270
2.12.5	Impersonal Influence: How Perceptions of Mass Collectives Affect Political Attitudes . .	271
2.12.6	News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Politically Knowledgeable Citizens Are Guided by a Trusted Source . . . . .	271
2.12.7	Effects of "In-Your-Face" Television Discourse on Perceptions of a Legitimate Opposition .	272
2.12.8	The Aggregate Dynamics of Campaigns . . . . .	273
2.12.9	Media Coverage and Public Approval of the U.S. Supreme Court . . . . .	274
2.12.10	Partisan Media Effects Beyond One-Shot Experimental Designs . . . . .	275
2.13	Political Communication . . . . .	275
2.13.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	275
2.13.2	The Mass Media and the Dynamics of American Racial Attitudes . . . . .	276
2.13.3	Newspaper Closures Polarize Voting Behavior . . . . .	277
2.13.4	New Approaches to Method and Measurement in the Study of Political Communication Effects . . . . .	278
2.13.5	Who Leads? Who Follows? Measuring Issue Attention and Agenda Setting by Legislators and the Mass Public Using Social Media Data . . . . .	278
2.13.6	How Does Local TV News Change Viewers' Attitudes? The Case of Sinclair Broadcasting .	279
2.13.7	The Great and Powerful Dr. Oz? Alternative Health Media Consumption and Vaccine Views in the United States . . . . .	280
2.13.8	News and Democratic Citizens in the Mobile Era . . . . .	281
2.13.9	Entertaining Beliefs in Economic Mobility . . . . .	282
2.14	Political Trust . . . . .	282
2.14.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	282
2.14.2	Comment: The Political Relevance of Trust in Government . . . . .	283
2.14.3	The Political Relevance of Political Trust . . . . .	284
2.14.4	The Media's Role in Public Negativity Toward Congress: Distinguishing Emotional Reactions and Cognitive Evaluations . . . . .	285
2.14.5	Political Trust, Ideology, and Public Support for Government Spending . . . . .	286
2.14.6	A Tale of Political Trust in American Cities . . . . .	287
2.14.7	The Skeptical American: Revisiting the Meanings of Trust in Government and Confidence in Institutions . . . . .	287
2.14.8	When Trust Matters: The Case of Gun Control . . . . .	288

2.15 Macro Politics . . . . .	289
2.15.1 Subject Area Summary . . . . .	289
2.15.2 What Moves Public Opinion? . . . . .	290
2.15.3 The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending . . . . .	291
2.15.4 Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections . . . . .	292
2.15.5 Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification . . . . .	292
2.15.6 Public Opinion in America: Moods, Cycles, and Swings . . . . .	293
2.15.7 Macropartisanship and Macroideology in the Sophisticated Electorate . . . . .	294
2.15.8 Political Ignorance and Collective Policy Preferences . . . . .	295
2.15.9 Silent Voices: Social Welfare Policy Opinions and Political Equality in America . . . . .	296
2.15.10 The Macro Polity . . . . .	297
2.15.11 Collective Preferences in Democratic Politics: Opinion Surveys and the Will of the People .	297
2.15.12 The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences . . . . .	298
2.15.13 Uninformed Votes? Reappraising Information Effects and Presidential Preferences . . . . .	299

## 2.1 Introduction

The study of public opinion and political attitudes represents a foundational area within the field of American politics, encompassing a diverse range of theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and methodological approaches. This chapter introduces key discussions surrounding how individuals develop, process, and express political attitudes, drawing upon interdisciplinary research from psychology, sociology, and behavioral economics. The sections that follow examine the psychological underpinnings of decision-making, the structure of political belief systems, the role of misinformation, heuristics, citizen competence, and the effects of affective responses on political choices. Together, these topics underscore the complexity of political cognition and behavior, revealing how various cognitive, emotional, and social factors shape individual and collective political attitudes.

A central theme of this chapter is the psychological dimension of political decision-making, which challenges traditional models that assume rational and informed political actors. Early scholarship in this domain introduced the notion of bounded rationality, recognizing that cognitive limitations and informational constraints profoundly shape political behavior. Subsequent research further problematized rational choice assumptions by incorporating insights from prospect theory, which demonstrates that individuals evaluate choices relative to reference points, often displaying loss aversion and susceptibility to framing effects. Scholars also explore how emotions influence political judgment, illustrating how fear, anger, and enthusiasm shape policy preferences, partisan attachment, and political mobilization.

Political belief systems constitute another key focus of this chapter. Understanding the coherence and structure of mass attitudes has long been a concern of political scientists, with early works questioning whether the American public exhibits ideological constraint in their political reasoning. Later studies refined this perspective, considering how cognitive sophistication, political knowledge, and identity-based predispositions influence the organization of beliefs. Research on affective polarization, for instance, highlights how partisanship increasingly structures not only political preferences but also social and interpersonal dynamics. These discussions raise broader questions about the stability of attitudes and the mechanisms through which individuals interpret and process political information.

The issue of political information and misinformation is also examined in this chapter, particularly in light of contemporary concerns about media fragmentation and digital disinformation. While foundational studies in political science investigated the limited information capacities of voters, recent research expands on this by analyzing the role of misinformation, cognitive biases, and motivated reasoning in political learning. Studies on political knowledge and accountability interrogate whether citizens acquire sufficient information to make informed decisions and how misperceptions persist despite corrective efforts. The literature reviewed here offers empirical insights into the effects of media exposure, elite messaging, and interpersonal discussion in shaping public understanding of political issues.

Another critical area explored in this chapter is heuristics and decision-making. Heuristic processing enables individuals to navigate complex political environments with limited cognitive effort, relying on mental shortcuts such as party cues, elite endorsements, and issue frames. While heuristics can enhance political efficiency, they also introduce systematic biases that influence judgment and decision-making. This section considers the strengths and limitations of heuristic reasoning, particularly as it relates to democratic competence and policy preferences.

The concept of citizen competence and information processing is closely related to discussions on heuristics and misinformation. Scholars have long debated the extent to which ordinary citizens engage in systematic political reasoning or rely on cognitive shortcuts. This section examines models of political sophistication, including the role of impression-driven evaluation, deliberative engagement, and the political utility of ideological orientations. The empirical research presented here evaluates whether citizens possess the necessary cognitive and informational resources to make reasoned political choices and whether democratic systems effectively aggregate individual preferences into meaningful political outcomes.

The final sections of this chapter investigate the intersection of emotion, values, and political decision-making. Emotions play a crucial role in political psychology, shaping information processing, persuasion, and electoral behavior. Studies on affective responses demonstrate how emotional stimuli—such as campaign ads, crisis messaging, or partisan rhetoric—condition political engagement and policy preferences. Moreover, political values and attitudinal ambivalence contribute to the complexity of belief formation, with competing values often leading to internal conflict and instability in policy attitudes. These discussions provide a nuanced understanding of the affective and value-driven dimensions of public opinion.

In sum, this chapter offers an extensive review of the psychological, cognitive, and affective factors that shape political attitudes and decision-making. By integrating diverse theoretical frameworks and empirical findings, it provides a comprehensive foundation for understanding the complexities of public opinion in democratic politics. The studies examined here collectively illustrate how individuals form political preferences, navigate informational environments, and respond to emotional and cognitive stimuli. As the field continues to evolve, future research will likely expand on these themes by incorporating insights from neuroscience, behavioral economics, and digital media studies, further enriching our understanding of the psychological dimensions of political behavior.

## 2.2 Psychological Perspectives on Decision Making

### 2.2.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Psychological approaches to decision-making in political science have expanded significantly, incorporating foundational concepts from cognitive psychology and behavioral economics. The subject area critically examines rationality frameworks, such as bounded and substantive rationality, and explores the psychological processes underlying political choices. Key contributions include the integration of prospect theory, critiques of rational choice assumptions, and interdisciplinary methods to study emotions, heuristics, and information processing in political contexts. These perspectives challenge traditional models by emphasizing cognitive limitations, contextual influences, and the role of affect in shaping political behavior.
- **Rationality Frameworks in Political Science:** Herbert Simon's work on bounded rationality revolutionized the understanding of decision-making by highlighting cognitive constraints and the importance of procedural rationality over substantive rationality. Simon argued that political actors are limited in their ability to process information, necessitating models that reflect these constraints. Similarly, Quattrone and Tversky's introduction of prospect theory illustrated systematic deviations from rational choice principles, emphasizing the roles of framing, reference points, and loss aversion. Their findings provided robust explanations for phenomena such as incumbency advantage and voter behavior during economic crises.
- **Psychological Critiques of Rational Choice Theory:** Scholars like Riker emphasized the adaptability of rational choice theory while acknowledging its limitations in accounting for bounded rationality and cognitive biases. Riker argued that theoretical models like expected utility remain invaluable for linking goals to outcomes but require iterative refinement to incorporate empirical anomalies and situational specificity. Kahneman and Tversky further critiqued the invariance principle central to rational choice, demonstrating how framing effects and loss aversion lead to preference reversals and deviations from expected utility maximization.
- **Emotions and Political Decision-Making:** Brader and Gadarian's work on the affective dimensions of political psychology underscored the influence of emotions such as fear, anger, and enthusiasm on political behavior. Their research integrated insights from affective intelligence theory, emphasizing the adaptive functions of emotional responses and their impact on cognitive processing, engagement, and partisanship. Group-based emotions, such as collective anger or pride, were shown to play critical roles in social movements and intergroup dynamics, further expanding the scope of psychological analysis in political science.
- **Information Processing and Misinformation:** Dual-process models, as explored by Jerit and Kam, provide a nuanced framework for understanding variability in cognitive effort and motivations during information processing. These models distinguish between heuristic (System I) and systematic (System II) processing, highlighting the influence of contextual factors, emotional states, and misinformation on public opinion and democratic decision-making. The persistence of false beliefs and the conditions for misinformation resistance remain critical areas for interdisciplinary research.
- **Methodological Innovations:** Political psychology has embraced experimental methodologies to test theoretical models and causal relationships. McDermott highlighted the advantages of controlled experiments in isolating variables and addressing methodological challenges such as internal and external validity. The increasing use of interdisciplinary methods, including behavioral economics and neuroscience, has enriched the field's capacity to analyze complex political phenomena, bridging gaps between individual decision-making and systemic outcomes.
- **Interdisciplinary Integration:** Druckman, Kuklinski, and Sigelman critiqued the superficial integration of psychology into political science, advocating for deeper collaboration and methodological immersion. Their analysis revealed conceptual drift and selective borrowing as barriers to interdisciplinary progress. By contrast, Kertzer and Tingley's review of political psychology in international relations highlighted the successful incorporation of psychological insights into explaining microfoundational mechanisms, such as emotions, identity, and cognitive biases, in global political behavior.
- **Future Directions:** Ongoing debates in the field include the balance between normative and descriptive models of decision-making, the implications of emotional and cognitive biases for democratic responsiveness, and the role of misinformation in shaping public opinion. Future research is likely to emphasize digital mobilization, the interplay of systemic and individual factors, and the interdisciplinary potential of integrating psychological, economic, and neuroscientific perspectives to address complex political challenges.

### 2.2.2 Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science

Simon, H. A. (1985). Human Nature in Politics: The Dialogue of Psychology with Political Science [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 79(2), 293–304. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1956650>

1. **Citation key:** simon\_human\_1985
2. **Author(s):** Herbert A. Simon
3. **Year:** 1985
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** bounded rationality, cognitive psychology, substantive rationality, political behavior, decision-making
6. **Summary:** Simon examines two distinct theories of rationality—procedural (bounded) rationality from cognitive psychology and substantive rationality from economics—and their applications in political science. Through illustrative

- examples from the literature, he critiques the over-reliance on substantive rationality without sufficient empirical research to identify auxiliary assumptions that contextualize human behavior. He advocates for a political science approach grounded in bounded rationality to better reflect the cognitive and contextual limitations of decision-makers.
- 7. Theory:** Simon distinguishes between substantive rationality, which assumes decision-making based on optimal adaptation to objective circumstances, and procedural rationality, which accounts for cognitive limitations and decision-making processes bounded by available information and computational capacity. He posits that most political behavior aligns with bounded rationality due to the constraints of attention, information, and cognitive processing. This perspective underscores the need to empirically study decision-making processes and situational perceptions rather than relying solely on abstract models of rational choice.
- 8. Methods:** The article is primarily theoretical, drawing on examples from political science, economics, and cognitive psychology to demonstrate the limitations of substantive rationality in explaining political behavior. Simon critiques empirical studies that fail to test auxiliary assumptions about utility functions and decision-making processes. He also emphasizes the methodological significance of understanding attention mechanisms, uncertainty, and the generation of decision alternatives.
- 9. Hypotheses:** Simon does not present formal hypotheses but argues the following points:
- Political behavior is better explained by procedural rationality than substantive rationality.
  - Rational choice models require auxiliary assumptions, which must be empirically validated to be predictive.
  - Understanding the mechanisms of attention and decision-making is critical for explaining bounded rationality.
- 10. Main findings:** Simon concludes that substantive rationality, while useful in abstract models, is insufficient for predicting real-world political behavior without empirical validation of auxiliary assumptions. Bounded rationality provides a more accurate framework, highlighting the cognitive and contextual limitations faced by decision-makers. Examples, such as Duverger's Law and studies on economic voting, demonstrate that auxiliary assumptions often play a greater role than rationality principles in explaining political phenomena. Simon calls for a stronger integration of cognitive psychology into political science to address these complexities.
- 11. Key quotations:**
- "The principle of rationality, unless accompanied by extensive empirical research to identify the correct auxiliary assumptions, has little power to make valid predictions about political phenomena" (p. 293).
  - "People are, at best, rational in terms of what they are aware of, and they can be aware of only tiny, disjointed facets of reality" (p. 302).
  - "Nothing is more fundamental in setting our research agenda and informing our research methods than our view of the nature of the human beings whose behavior we are studying" (p. 304).

### 2.2.3 Contrasting Rational and Psychological Analyses of Political Choice

Quattrone, G. A., & Tversky, A. (1988). Contrasting Rational and Psychological Analyses of Political Choice [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 82(3), 719–736. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1962487>

1. **Citation key:** quattrone\_contrasting\_1988
2. **Author(s):** George A. Quattrone and Amos Tversky
3. **Year:** 1988
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** prospect theory, rational choice, political decision-making, loss aversion, reference points
6. **Summary:** Quattrone and Tversky compare rational choice theory, represented by expected utility theory, with psychological models, particularly prospect theory, to explain political decision-making. Using experiments involving hypothetical political scenarios, they demonstrate systematic violations of the rational theory's assumptions, including risk aversion in the domain of gains and risk-seeking behavior in the domain of losses. The findings illustrate how reference points, framing, and loss aversion influence preferences, challenging the universality of rational choice as a descriptive model of political behavior.
7. **Theory:** The authors juxtapose the normative rational choice framework, which assumes consistent preferences and utility maximization, with prospect theory, which incorporates cognitive biases, such as framing effects and loss aversion. Prospect theory posits that individuals evaluate outcomes relative to a reference point, exhibiting risk aversion for gains and risk-seeking for losses. This contrasts with the invariant preferences of rational choice theory, emphasizing how contextual factors and psychological processes shape political decisions.
8. **Methods:** Quattrone and Tversky employ experimental designs to test predictions from both theories. Participants, primarily undergraduate students, were presented with hypothetical political scenarios, including elections and policy referenda, to assess choices under varying risk conditions. The scenarios manipulated reference points, gains, and losses to examine framing effects and preferences. Statistical analyses, including chi-square tests, were used to evaluate differences in risk attitudes and violations of rational choice principles.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Individuals exhibit risk aversion in the domain of gains and risk-seeking behavior in the domain of losses, consistent with prospect theory.
  - Framing effects and reference points significantly influence preferences, leading to systematic violations of invariance predicted by rational choice theory.

- Loss aversion results in a preference for the status quo and incumbency advantage in political contexts.
- 10. Main findings:** The study confirms that human decision-making deviates from the predictions of rational choice theory. Participants showed risk aversion when outcomes were framed as gains and risk-seeking when framed as losses. Shifts in reference points led to reversals of preferences, violating the principle of invariance central to rational choice. These patterns explain political phenomena like incumbency advantage and voter behavior during economic downturns, where loss aversion makes voters more likely to accept risks associated with challengers. The results highlight the descriptive inadequacy of rational choice theory in capturing the psychological complexity of political decision-making.
- 11. Key quotations:**
- “Our results show how a shift in the reference point could lead to reversals of preferences in the evaluation of political and economic options, contrary to the assumption of invariance” (p. 719).
  - “Losses loom larger than corresponding gains, which explains why individuals are often reluctant to trade or deviate from the status quo” (p. 725).
  - “The descriptive failure of normative principles, such as invariance and coherence, does not mean that people are unintelligent or irrational... the errors are systematic, rather than idiosyncratic” (p. 734).

#### 2.2.4 The Political Psychology of Rational Choice Theory

Riker, W. H. (1995). The Political Psychology of Rational Choice Theory [Publisher: [International Society of Political Psychology, Wiley]]. *Political Psychology*, 16(1), 23–44. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3791448>

1. **Citation key:** riker\_political\_1995
2. **Author(s):** William H. Riker
3. **Year:** 1995
4. **Publication:** Political Psychology
5. **Keywords:** rational choice theory, expected utility, political psychology, decision-making, bounded rationality
6. **Summary:** Riker evaluates the explanatory power of rational choice theory (RCT) in political psychology, focusing on its utility in modeling human decision-making. He emphasizes the scientific necessity of theoretical models and critiques alternatives such as behaviorism for their lack of explanatory mechanisms. The article outlines the strengths and limitations of rational choice theory, particularly in accounting for goal-oriented behavior under uncertainty, and discusses its capacity to adapt and evolve through empirical testing and theoretical refinement.
7. **Theory:** Rational choice theory assumes that individuals act purposively, ordering goals to achieve optimal outcomes. While RCT relies on principles of expected utility maximization, Riker acknowledges that individuals often face bounded rationality, where decisions are constrained by limited information and cognitive capacities. He critiques behaviorist approaches, which focus solely on observable behavior without considering intentions, arguing that RCT provides a more robust framework by integrating goals, means, and outcomes.
8. **Methods:** This is a theoretical analysis supported by illustrative examples from political and economic contexts. Riker draws on foundational works, such as Olson's logic of collective action and legislative behavior studies, to demonstrate the application of rational choice models. He contrasts these with empirical anomalies, such as Allais's and Ellsberg's paradoxes, to highlight the iterative process of refining rational choice theory through testing and adaptation.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Rational choice theory provides a superior framework for explaining political decision-making compared to behaviorist approaches.
  - Expected utility theory, despite its abstractions, remains a valid and adaptable tool for understanding rational behavior in political contexts.
  - Iterative testing and empirical refinement strengthen the explanatory power of rational choice models over time.
10. **Main findings:** Riker affirms that rational choice theory is indispensable for understanding political behavior, particularly in its ability to link goals, actions, and outcomes through a structured theoretical framework. He highlights its adaptability through empirical testing and its capacity to explain complex phenomena, such as voting behavior and legislative organization. Despite criticisms from psychological studies emphasizing cognitive biases, Riker argues that these do not invalidate RCT but rather necessitate refinements, such as incorporating bounded rationality and situational specificity.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “The value of a generalization is that it allows for prediction. Unfortunately, however, empirical generalizations cannot explain why a predicted effect occurs. Yet science is aimed at explanation as much as at prediction” (p. 23).
  - “While many people may make mistakes in laboratory puzzles, such people are probably fairly rare in significant decision-making situations” (p. 36).
  - “Rational choice theory provides reasons for decisions in terms of actors' goals... It is, so far as I know, the only model that allows for such explanations” (p. 40).

#### 2.2.5 Toward a Psychology of Framing Effects

Nelson, T. E., Oxley, Z. M., & Clawson, R. A. (1997). Toward a Psychology of Framing Effects. *Political Behavior*, 19(3), 221–246. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1024834831093>

1. **Citation key:** nelson\_toward\_1997
2. **Author(s):** Thomas E. Nelson, Zoe M. Oxley, and Rosalee A. Clawson
3. **Year:** 1997
4. **Publication:** Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** framing effects, political communication, public opinion, psychological mechanisms, media framing
6. **Summary:** Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson explore the psychological mechanisms underlying framing effects, demonstrating that framing is distinct from persuasion through belief change. By conducting experiments, they investigate how framing influences political attitudes by emphasizing certain considerations already in long-term memory. Their findings reveal that framing alters the weight of existing beliefs rather than introducing new information, shaping public opinion in subtle but significant ways.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that framing operates by altering the perceived relevance or weight of preexisting considerations stored in memory, rather than by introducing novel information. They distinguish framing from traditional persuasion, which typically relies on changing beliefs. Frames guide individuals in weighting competing considerations, often influencing attitudes by shaping the context in which decisions are made. Nelson et al. emphasize that framing is not limited to individual psychological processes but also reflects the ways in which media and political elites shape public discourse. For instance, they highlight how episodic and thematic frames influence public attributions of responsibility for social problems, such as poverty. The authors also propose that the psychological impact of framing is mediated by individuals' familiarity with and sophistication about the framed issue, arguing that well-informed individuals may be more susceptible to framing because they have a richer knowledge base for frames to activate.
8. **Methods:** The authors conducted an experiment with 116 undergraduate participants at Ohio State University, employing two frames to explore opinions on welfare policy: a "recipient frame" (emphasizing undeserving welfare recipients) and an "economy frame" (highlighting welfare's economic cost). Participants completed a two-part questionnaire, assessing their familiarity with welfare arguments and their attitudes toward welfare. Framing effects were measured by changes in the relationship between participants' beliefs about poverty and their welfare opinions. Multivariate regression analyses were used to identify interactions between frames and participants' familiarity with the issue. A secondary analysis used data from the 1989 National Election Study (NES) to examine how general political sophistication moderates framing effects.
9. **Hypotheses:** Nelson et al. hypothesize that:
  - Framing effects operate by altering the weight of considerations, not by introducing new beliefs.
  - Familiarity with the framed issue enhances susceptibility to framing effects.
  - Political sophistication, whether issue-specific or general, does not insulate individuals from framing effects but may amplify them.

These hypotheses are supported by experimental and survey evidence showing the distinct psychological mechanisms of framing.
10. **Main findings:** The study demonstrates that framing effects stem from the activation of existing beliefs, with frames influencing the weight assigned to particular considerations in forming opinions. For example, under the recipient frame, beliefs about the causes of poverty became stronger predictors of welfare attitudes, particularly for participants familiar with arguments about welfare recipients. Interestingly, framing effects were more pronounced among well-informed participants, suggesting that political sophistication enhances the impact of framing by providing a richer cognitive context for frames to activate. These findings distinguish framing from persuasion, emphasizing its role in shaping the salience of existing beliefs rather than altering belief content. The analysis of NES data corroborates these findings, indicating that general political knowledge does not shield individuals from framing effects.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Frames operate by activating information already at the recipients' disposal, stored in long-term memory" (p. 225).
  - "Framing is not merely persuasion via belief change; it represents another subtle, yet important, manner in which political communication shapes popular thinking about politics" (p. 227).
  - "Our results lend credence to the suggestion that the mass media can profoundly influence public opinion even without any overt attempt at persuasion or manipulation" (p. 235).

### 2.2.6 Choices, Values, and Frames

Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (2000, September). *Choices, Values, and Frames* [Google-Books-ID: P5GsREMBUmAC]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** kahneman\_choices\_2000
2. **Author(s):** Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky (Eds.)
3. **Year:** 2000
4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press
5. **Keywords:** prospect theory, decision-making, framing effects, loss aversion, bounded rationality
6. **Summary:** This edited volume is a seminal collection of articles by Kahneman and Tversky that advances prospect theory as a descriptive model of decision-making under risk and uncertainty. The book challenges the normative assumptions of expected utility theory, emphasizing the role of framing, reference points, and loss aversion in shap-

ing preferences. The collection explores the cognitive and psychological processes underlying choices, highlighting systematic deviations from rational choice models and presenting empirical evidence from diverse contexts.

**7. Theory:** The core of prospect theory lies in its departure from the expected utility framework. Kahneman and Tversky argue that individuals evaluate outcomes relative to a reference point rather than absolute wealth, with gains and losses treated asymmetrically. The theory introduces an S-shaped value function, which is concave for gains (risk-averse behavior) and convex for losses (risk-seeking behavior). The concept of loss aversion—a greater sensitivity to losses than to equivalent gains—is central, as is the notion of decision weights, which reflect nonlinear probability distortions. These principles explain phenomena like framing effects, where identical outcomes presented differently elicit contrasting preferences.

**8. Methods:** The book synthesizes experimental findings from decision-making research, with studies employing hypothetical scenarios, monetary gambles, and real-world examples. Key experiments, such as the “Asian disease problem,” demonstrate how changes in framing (e.g., lives saved vs. lives lost) influence risk attitudes. The authors also explore anomalies like the endowment effect, where individuals assign higher value to possessions merely because they own them. Decision weights and the failure of invariance are analyzed through controlled experiments.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Decision-making is influenced by framing effects, where equivalent options framed as gains or losses elicit different preferences.
- Loss aversion leads individuals to overvalue losses relative to gains, affecting choices across economic and social contexts.
- Decision weights are non-linear, with individuals overweighting small probabilities and underweighting moderate to large probabilities.

**10. Main findings:** The volume substantiates the descriptive accuracy of prospect theory, demonstrating its applicability to both risky and riskless choices. Framing effects undermine the invariance principle of rational choice, revealing how context shapes preferences. Loss aversion and non-linear probability weighting explain anomalies in economic behavior, such as insurance purchasing and lottery participation. The theory is extended to address decision-making beyond monetary gambles, encompassing public health policies and consumer behavior. By emphasizing psychological realism, the book bridges gaps between economics and psychology, offering a robust alternative to the rational actor model.

**11. Key Definitions:**

- *Prospect theory*: A behavioral model of decision-making that evaluates outcomes relative to a reference point, incorporating loss aversion and non-linear probability weighting.
- *Framing effect*: The phenomenon where the presentation of options as gains or losses influences preferences, contrary to the principle of invariance.
- *Loss aversion*: The tendency for individuals to experience losses more intensely than gains of equivalent magnitude.
- *Endowment effect*: The observed phenomenon where individuals assign higher value to items they own compared to items they do not own.
- *Decision weights*: Psychological probabilities that overweight small probabilities and underweight moderate to large probabilities, deviating from objective probabilities.

### 2.2.7 Experimental Methodology in Political Science

McDermott, R. (2002). Experimental Methodology in Political Science. *Political Analysis*, 10(4), 325–342. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25791696>

1. **Citation key:** mcdermott\_experimental\_2002
2. **Author(s):** Rose McDermott
3. **Year:** 2002
4. **Publication:** Political Analysis
5. **Keywords:** experimental methods, political science, internal validity, external validity, laboratory experiments
6. **Summary:** McDermott provides a comprehensive analysis of experimental methodology in political science, emphasizing its utility for causal inference, theory testing, and addressing unresolved debates in the discipline. The article distinguishes between the traditions of experimental economics, social psychology, and political science, highlighting their methodological differences and commonalities. It also addresses key methodological concerns, such as internal and external validity, the use of deception, and the trade-off between control and realism in experimental design.
7. **Theory:** McDermott argues that experiments are a vital tool for political science, offering a controlled environment to isolate causal relationships and test theoretical models. She contrasts the methodological traditions of behavioral economics and social psychology, noting that political science experiments often bridge these approaches. The article emphasizes the importance of experimental realism over mundane realism, ensuring that subjects are engaged in meaningful tasks while maintaining methodological rigor. Experiments are framed as complementary to other methods, particularly for examining underlying processes and generating hypotheses for broader studies.
8. **Methods:** This is a methodological critique and synthesis rather than an empirical study. McDermott reviews historical and contemporary uses of experiments in political science, addressing challenges such as ethical concerns, experimental biases, and the balance between internal and external validity. She draws on examples from political science,

behavioral economics, and social psychology to illustrate key points. The article includes discussions of laboratory versus field experiments, highlighting the strengths and limitations of each.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Experiments provide unparalleled control for testing causal relationships, making them indispensable for political science.
- Internal validity should be prioritized over external validity, as causal inference is the primary strength of experiments.
- Experimental realism, rather than mundane realism, is critical to obtaining valid and meaningful results.

**10. Main findings:** McDermott concludes that experiments are underutilized in political science, despite their advantages in establishing causation and testing theoretical models. She emphasizes that concerns about external validity often overlook the iterative nature of scientific inquiry, where generalizability is achieved through replication and aggregation of studies. The article highlights the necessity of balancing control and realism, addressing ethical concerns, and using deception judiciously to enhance experimental realism. McDermott also notes the interdisciplinary potential of experiments, encouraging collaboration with behavioral economics and psychology.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Experiments may not be useful for all research questions or problems, but can be especially helpful to investigators who... seek a stronger basis for causal argumentation or are interested in developing and testing theoretical models" (p. 326).
- "The goal of clever experimentation is to increase the realism and interest of the task without sacrificing control. In theory, it should be possible to maximize both goals simultaneously" (p. 332).
- "Internal validity refers to whether you are studying what you think you are studying... Without high levels of internal validity, it becomes impossible to render accurate causal claims" (p. 335).

### 2.2.8 The Unmet Potential of Interdisciplinary Research: Political Psychological Approaches to Voting and Public Opinion

Druckman, J. N., Kuklinski, J. H., & Sigelman, L. (2009). The Unmet Potential of Interdisciplinary Research: Political Psychological Approaches to Voting and Public Opinion [Publisher: Springer]. *Political Behavior*, 31(4), 485–510. Retrieved August 20, 2024, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40587296>

**1. Citation key:** druckman\_unmet\_2009

**2. Author(s):** James N. Druckman, James H. Kuklinski, and Lee Sigelman

**3. Year:** 2009

**4. Publication:** Political Behavior

**5. Keywords:** interdisciplinary research, political psychology, voting, public opinion, heuristics, priming

**6. Summary:** Druckman, Kuklinski, and Sigelman critique the interdisciplinary integration of political psychology into research on voting and public opinion. They argue that while political psychology is seen as a paradigmatic interdisciplinary field, its integration has often been superficial, with political scientists borrowing selectively from psychology without sufficient immersion in the original frameworks. They advocate for deeper collaboration and integration between disciplines to enhance the rigor and relevance of political psychological research.

**7. Theory:** The authors evaluate the interdisciplinary nature of political psychology, particularly its reliance on psychological concepts like heuristics, priming, and motivated reasoning. They contend that true interdisciplinary collaboration requires immersion and integration: immersion into the methodologies and traditions of another discipline and integration of its concepts into a unified framework. By these standards, much of political psychology falls short, relying instead on selective borrowing that leads to conceptual drift and misapplication.

**8. Methods:** The article employs a theoretical critique and review of literature, analyzing the application of psychological concepts in political science. Using examples such as heuristics, priming, and motivated reasoning, the authors assess the extent to which political scientists have successfully integrated psychological insights. They include empirical observations, such as citation trends, to demonstrate the asymmetry in interdisciplinary borrowing between the two fields.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Effective interdisciplinary research requires immersion into and integration of methods and theories from both disciplines involved.
- Political psychology exhibits incomplete interdisciplinary integration, with political scientists borrowing psychological concepts without full understanding or proper application.
- The lack of true interdisciplinary collaboration limits the theoretical and practical contributions of political psychology to understanding voting and public opinion.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find that political psychology often fails to achieve the immersion and integration necessary for interdisciplinary research. They identify issues such as the selective borrowing of psychological concepts, conceptual drift, and insufficient collaboration with psychologists. Despite these shortcomings, the authors argue that political psychology holds potential for deeper interdisciplinary integration if researchers address these limitations. They advocate for institutional support, interdisciplinary teams, and a focus on long-term, collaborative research projects to bridge gaps between disciplines.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “True interdisciplinary research requires not only borrowing but also immersion and integration; otherwise, concepts are misapplied and theoretical advancement is stunted” (p. 487).
- “Without clearer specification and attention to the evolution of concepts in psychology, political psychology risks perpetuating theoretical ambiguities and undermining its interdisciplinary aspirations” (p. 493).
- “Political scientists have borrowed extensively from psychology, yet psychologists have shown little interest in incorporating political science concepts into their work” (p. 499).

### 2.2.9 Emotion and Political Psychology

Brader, T., & Marcus, G. E. (2013, September). Emotion and Political Psychology. L. Huddy, D. O. Sears, & J. S. Levy (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (pp. 192–246). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199760107.013.0006>

- 1. Citation key:** brader\_emotion\_2013
- 2. Author(s):** Ted Brader and Shana Gadarian
- 3. Year:** 2013
- 4. Publication:** Chapter 6 in the Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology (2nd Edition)
- 5. Keywords:** emotion, political psychology, affective intelligence theory, group-based emotions, political behavior
- 6. Summary:** Brader and Gadarian examine the role of emotions in political psychology, highlighting their significance in shaping public opinion, political behavior, and intergroup relations. They explore theoretical approaches to understanding emotions, such as dimensional and discrete emotion frameworks, and emphasize how emotions influence cognitive processing and decision-making. The chapter integrates insights from neuroscience, social psychology, and evolutionary theories, providing a comprehensive overview of the antecedents, functions, and political consequences of specific emotions like fear, anger, and enthusiasm.
- 7. Theory:** The authors emphasize the centrality of emotions as adaptive responses to environmental signals, which shape behavior by triggering physiological, cognitive, and motivational processes. They discuss affective intelligence theory (AIT), which posits three distinct emotional systems: disposition (triggered by success or failure in achieving goals), surveillance (responding to unfamiliar or threatening stimuli), and aversion (motivated by normative violations). These systems help explain the diverse emotional responses to political events and their consequences for information processing, engagement, and partisanship. The chapter also explores group-based emotions, which arise from social identities and play a critical role in collective political action.
- 8. Methods:** Brader and Gadarian synthesize findings from various methodological approaches, including laboratory experiments, surveys, and physiological measurements such as facial coding and skin conductance. They highlight the strengths and limitations of these methods, particularly regarding the measurement of emotions and their political effects. The chapter also discusses the interdisciplinary potential of combining psychological and neuroscientific tools to deepen understanding of emotional processes.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - Emotions influence political cognition and behavior by shaping attention, memory, and decision-making processes.
  - Fear and anxiety enhance information seeking and risk aversion, while anger promotes risk-taking and partisanship.
  - Group-based emotions, such as collective anger or pride, motivate political engagement and solidarity within social groups.
- 10. Main findings:** The chapter demonstrates that emotions are integral to political psychology, shaping how individuals process information and make decisions. Fear increases vigilance and motivates protective actions, whereas anger fosters certainty and mobilization. Enthusiasm boosts political engagement and reinforces existing attitudes. Group-based emotions, such as empathy or collective anger, play a crucial role in driving social movements and intergroup relations. The authors emphasize that emotional responses are often automatic and unconscious, but they significantly influence political behavior and public opinion. Their analysis underscores the importance of studying both individual and collective emotions to understand political dynamics.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “Emotions are best understood as reactions to signals about the significance that circumstances hold for an individual’s goals and well-being” (p. 193).
  - “Group-based emotions, like anger, fear, and hatred, can bind people to past experiences, cause mistrust across groups, and hinder the resolution of conflict” (p. 199).
  - “Fear interrupts ongoing behavior, while redirecting attention and other cognitive activity toward dealing with the threat... It motivates people to remove the danger, if that is readily doable, or, if not, to remove themselves from the danger” (p. 203).

### 2.2.10 Political Psychology in International Relations: Beyond the Paradigms

Kertzer, J. D., & Tingley, D. (2018). Political Psychology in International Relations: Beyond the Paradigms. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 21(1), 319–339. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041916-020042>

- 1. Citation key:** kertzer\_political\_2018
- 2. Author(s):** Joshua D. Kertzer and Dustin Tingley

3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** Annual Review of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** political psychology, international relations, behavioral revolution, emotions, rationality
6. **Summary:** Kertzer and Tingley review the evolution of political psychology in international relations (IR), highlighting the field's shift from traditional paradigms toward more interdisciplinary and methodologically diverse approaches. They identify emerging trends, including increased interest in emotions, public opinion, and neurobiological and evolutionary perspectives. The authors argue that political psychology offers valuable tools for understanding microfoundational mechanisms in IR, such as decision-making, public attitudes, and the psychological underpinnings of conflict and cooperation.
7. **Theory:** The authors assert that political psychology in IR has moved beyond its historical focus on cognitive biases and rationality critiques to embrace broader frameworks, such as emotional and evolutionary approaches. They emphasize the importance of psychological microfoundations in explaining macro-level phenomena, bridging the gap between individual-level decision-making and systemic theories. Political psychology is presented as a means to complement rational choice and structuralist paradigms, offering insights into the role of emotions, identity, and psychological predispositions in shaping international outcomes.
8. **Methods:** This review integrates theoretical and empirical insights, using data-driven analyses of manuscript classifications in leading IR journals to identify trends in the field. Kertzer and Tingley also highlight interdisciplinary methodologies, such as experiments, surveys, and neurobiological studies, that have enriched the study of political psychology in IR. They underscore the methodological diversity of the field, which increasingly incorporates tools from behavioral economics, social neuroscience, and evolutionary psychology.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Psychological approaches in IR offer valuable insights into microfoundational mechanisms underlying international phenomena.
  - Emotional and neurobiological perspectives complement traditional cognitive approaches in understanding decision-making and behavior in IR.
  - Political psychology in IR should focus on bridging the study of elite and mass behavior to provide a more comprehensive understanding of international outcomes.
10. **Main findings:** Kertzer and Tingley argue that political psychology in IR has undergone a significant transformation, with increased methodological diversity and interdisciplinary collaboration. They identify key developments, including the rise of research on emotions, public opinion, and genetic and evolutionary approaches. These trends reflect a shift from traditional paradigms to a more pluralistic understanding of IR, emphasizing microfoundations and the interplay of individual, group, and systemic factors. The authors advocate for greater integration of psychological insights into the study of international political economy (IPE) and suggest that IR scholars actively engage with developments in psychology to enrich their analyses.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "As psychology has become more influential in IR and IR has become less sectarian and more theoretically pluralist, an important swath of contemporary IR research has begun to draw on psychology even without labeling itself as such" (p. 321).
  - "Recent developments in psychological approaches to IR mirror broader changes in the discipline... Psychology in IR is not just about why decision makers make mistakes anymore" (p. 331).
  - "Psychological work in IR is better positioned than ever before to contribute to the accumulation of knowledge outside of the narrow confines of political science" (p. 332).

### 2.2.11 The Political Psychology of Information Processing

Jerit, J., & Kam, C. D. (2023, September). Information Processing. L. Huddy, D. O. Sears, J. S. Levy, & J. Jerit (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (pp. 517–554). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197541302.013.14>

1. **Citation key:** jerit\_information\_2023
2. **Author(s):** Jennifer Jerit and Cindy D. Kam
3. **Year:** 2023
4. **Publication:** Chapter in the Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology, 3rd Edition
5. **Keywords:** information processing, dual-process models, cognitive psychology, misinformation, political attitudes
6. **Summary:** Jerit and Kam explore how individuals process political information, focusing on the mechanisms through which information is acquired, interpreted, stored, and retrieved. The chapter emphasizes the role of dual-process models in understanding variability in cognitive effort and motivations in information processing. The authors argue for greater integration between the study of information processing and research on misinformation, offering a comprehensive framework to understand political behavior.
7. **Theory:** The authors utilize dual-process theories from psychology, distinguishing between System I (automatic, heuristic) and System II (deliberate, systematic) modes of processing. They argue that motivations—both epistemic (accuracy-driven) and directional (outcome-oriented)—play a critical role in shaping how information is processed. They also discuss the broader democratic implications of these processes, including the conditions under which citizens rise to the occasion, muddle through, or are misled by misinformation.

- 8. Methods:** This chapter synthesizes theoretical and empirical insights, employing a narrative review of existing literature. It integrates findings from cognitive psychology, political psychology, and experimental research to elucidate the dynamics of information processing. The authors highlight studies on heuristics, misinformation, and emotional triggers, drawing on diverse methodologies including experiments, surveys, and observational studies.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
- Information processing is influenced by individual differences and contextual factors, with dual-process models capturing variability across and within individuals.
  - Misinformation processing occurs within the same cognitive framework as other stimuli, with the persistence of false beliefs tied to both cognitive and motivational factors.
  - Political and social contexts, such as elite polarization or emotional appeals, can shift individuals from heuristic to systematic processing or vice versa.
- 10. Main findings:** Jerit and Kam provide a nuanced account of information processing, emphasizing the variability across individuals and situations. They argue that System I processing often dominates political contexts due to its efficiency and low cognitive cost but highlight instances where System II processing is activated, such as during unexpected events or high-stakes decisions. Misinformation is addressed as a critical challenge, with the authors stressing the need for research on conditions that enable misinformation resistance or correction. They also discuss how emotional states like fear or anger influence processing modes, often reinforcing preexisting attitudes or fostering selective information search. Ultimately, the authors call for interdisciplinary efforts to advance understanding of these processes and their implications for democracy.
- 11. Key quotations:**
- “The political psychology of information processing explores how individuals construct pictures inside their heads—and how these pictures inform political judgments” (p. 2).
  - “System I processing is less effortful, often automatic, and relies on heuristic cues, while System II entails deliberation and systematic evaluation of information” (p. 6).
  - “Understanding how citizens process misinformation is essential for evaluating the durability of public opinion and the quality of democratic decision-making” (p. 19).

## 2.3 Political Belief Systems

### 2.3.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of political belief systems has evolved to address how individuals organize their attitudes and preferences in response to political, social, and methodological influences. Early models emphasized ideological inconsistency in the mass public, but subsequent research has highlighted the roles of political events, methodological artifacts, and cognitive frameworks in shaping belief systems. Foundational work by Converse characterized belief systems as largely unstructured, while later contributions demonstrated greater coherence, particularly when accounting for contextual and methodological factors. Contemporary research explores the hierarchical organization of beliefs, the influence of political sophistication, and the impact of measurement error on observed consistency, providing a nuanced understanding of how political attitudes are formed and structured.
- **Foundations and Early Critiques:** Philip Converse's seminal work on belief systems portrayed the mass public as ideologically incoherent, emphasizing low correlations between issue attitudes as evidence of weak constraint. However, Nie and Andersen challenged this view, arguing that political salience during the 1960s fostered greater ideological consistency, particularly among younger and more educated voters. Similarly, Achen's critique of Converse highlighted the role of measurement error in underestimating attitude stability, suggesting that methodological flaws rather than voter incompetence often drive findings of inconsistency. These early debates established a foundation for understanding the interplay between cognitive limitations, political context, and methodological design in shaping belief systems.
- **Hierarchical Models and Ideological Constraint:** Building on Converse's framework, Peffley and Hurwitz introduced a hierarchical model of belief systems, positing that ideological constraint involves both abstract principles and specific issue preferences. They demonstrated that liberal-conservative ideology serves as an organizing principle for attitudes across economic, racial, and foreign policy domains. This model revealed that earlier measures underestimated ideological coherence by focusing exclusively on direct correlations between issue attitudes, overlooking higher-order structures that mediate belief organization.
- **The Role of Methodological Artifacts:** Bishop, Tuchfarber, and Oldendick's analysis of survey design underscored the impact of methodological artifacts, such as question wording and response formats, on measures of ideological consistency. Their findings suggested that much of the reported rise in sophistication during the 1960s reflected improved survey reliability rather than substantive changes in voter attitudes. This critique highlighted the importance of methodological rigor in accurately capturing the structure of political belief systems.
- **Political Sophistication and Cognitive Complexity:** Luskin's work redefined political sophistication as a multidimensional construct encompassing knowledge size, range, and cognitive organization. He argued that sophistication emerges from the interplay of exposure to information, cognitive ability, and motivation, with interest and intelligence playing central roles. Luskin's findings challenged traditional assumptions about the determinants of sophistication, emphasizing that motivation and cognitive capacity are more influential than mere exposure to information.
- **Domain-Specific Reasoning:** Goren's research on domain-specific reasoning contested the sophistication-interaction

theory by demonstrating that citizens across all levels of sophistication rely on core principles, such as equality and self-reliance, in forming policy preferences. His findings suggested that political sophistication has limited impact on the structure and use of these principles, emphasizing the accessibility and simplicity of domain-specific reasoning in guiding public opinion.

- **Affective Polarization and Belief Systems:** Turner-Zwinkels et al. examined the interplay between political identity, belief system content, and structure in driving affective polarization. They found that similarity in belief system content reduces polarization by fostering outgroup liking, while similarity in structure strengthens ingroup cohesion but amplifies outgroup disfavor. Their research highlighted the dual role of belief systems in shaping partisan dynamics, offering insights into the psychological underpinnings of polarization.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Key debates in the study of political belief systems include the extent to which ideological consistency reflects genuine organization versus methodological artifacts, the role of political sophistication in shaping attitudes, and the impact of affective polarization on democratic functioning. Future research is likely to explore the interaction between belief system dynamics and emerging phenomena such as digital information environments, cross-national differences in polarization, and the role of identity in shaping political cognition.

### 2.3.2 From Confusion to Clarity: Issues and American Voters, 1956-1968

Pomper, G. M. (1972). From Confusion to Clarity: Issues and American Voters, 1956-1968 [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 66(2), 415-428. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1957786>

1. **Citation key:** pomper\_confusion\_1972
2. **Author(s):** Gerald M. Pomper
3. **Year:** 1972
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** issue voting, party identification, ideological awareness, voting behavior, critical elections
6. **Summary:** Pomper examines the evolving relationship between voters' policy preferences and their party identification in the United States during the period from 1956 to 1968. Using data from national election surveys, he traces how American voters became increasingly aware of policy distinctions between the Democratic and Republican parties. This awareness peaked during the 1964 election, which Pomper argues represents a critical turning point in modern American political behavior.
7. **Theory:** Pomper contends that political awareness and ideological clarity among voters are shaped by the salience of issues emphasized in election campaigns. He challenges earlier findings from "The American Voter" that suggested a general ideological unawareness among the electorate. Instead, Pomper argues that voters respond meaningfully to clear partisan cues when presented with distinct and salient issue differences. He builds on theories of critical elections to suggest that ideological alignment between voters and parties strengthens when elections emphasize clear issue contrasts.
8. **Methods:** The study relies on national election survey data collected between 1956 and 1968. Pomper focuses on six key policy issues consistently addressed in these surveys, including federal aid to education, medical care, job guarantees, fair employment practices, school integration, and foreign aid. He examines trends in the ideological alignment of party identification and voter perceptions of party differences over time. Key metrics include the percentage of voters perceiving party distinctions and the proportion identifying Democrats as the more liberal party. The analysis employs gamma coefficients to measure the strength of the relationship between party identification and issue positions.
9. **Hypotheses:** Pomper hypothesizes that voter awareness of party differences increased significantly between 1956 and 1968, particularly during the 1964 election. He further posits that ideological alignment between voters and parties strengthens when campaigns focus on clear and salient issues. His analysis confirms these hypotheses, demonstrating increased ideological awareness and a stronger correlation between party identification and policy preferences over time.
10. **Main findings:** Pomper finds that voter perceptions of party differences and ideological clarity increased dramatically between 1956 and 1968, with the most significant changes occurring during the 1964 election. By 1968, voters were more likely to associate the Democratic Party with liberal policy positions on issues such as civil rights and government intervention. This period also marked a growing alignment between voters' policy preferences and their partisan identification. However, Pomper notes that this ideological realignment was uneven across demographic groups, with younger and more educated voters demonstrating greater awareness of party differences.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "On five of the six issues—all but foreign aid—party identification meant something by 1968 other than a traditional reaffirmation: it was now related to the policy preferences of the voter" (p. 419).
  - "The data developed in this article lead to three implications. First, the central importance of the 1964 campaign lends support to the supposition that this election was a critical election, initiating a new political era in the United States" (p. 424).
  - "The party characteristics which had been so clearly marked in 1964 remained relatively evident to the voters four years later. The lessons remained learned even though differences between the candidates had narrowed considerably" (p. 423).

### 2.3.3 Mass Belief Systems Revisited: Political Change and Attitude Structure

Nie, N. H., & Andersen, K. (1974). Mass Belief Systems Revisited: Political Change and Attitude Structure [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 36(3), 540–591. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2129245>

1. **Citation key:** nie\_mass\_1974
2. **Author(s):** Norman H. Nie with Kristi Andersen
3. **Year:** 1974
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** attitude structure, political ideology, belief systems, political change, mass public, elite public
6. **Summary:** Nie and Andersen revisit the structure of mass belief systems to examine how political attitudes evolved in the American public from 1956 to 1972. They challenge earlier findings that the mass public lacked ideological consistency, arguing that political events and increased political salience in the 1960s spurred greater ideological organization among the electorate. Their analysis draws on longitudinal survey data to demonstrate a significant increase in attitude constraint over time.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on Philip Converse's seminal work on mass belief systems, which argued that the public lacks a consistent ideological structure. Nie and Andersen propose that changes in political salience—driven by civil rights movements, the Vietnam War, and domestic unrest—have fostered a more ideologically consistent electorate. They posit that the evolving political environment, rather than inherent characteristics of the mass public, determines the extent of ideological organization.
8. **Methods:** Using data from the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center and the National Opinion Research Center, the authors analyze trends in attitude consistency across five core issue domains: social welfare, racial integration, government size, black welfare, and Cold War policies. Employing gamma coefficients to measure inter-item correlations, they assess the extent of liberal-conservative consistency in public opinion over seven time points, spanning presidential and congressional election years from 1956 to 1972.
9. **Hypotheses:** Political attitudes in the mass public have become more ideologically constrained over time. Increased ideological organization is driven by political events and heightened salience of key issues during the 1960s. These changes are independent of inherent cognitive limitations, such as educational attainment, within the electorate. Findings support these hypotheses, showing a marked rise in attitude consistency after 1964, coinciding with critical political events.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that ideological consistency among the mass public increased dramatically between 1960 and 1964, coinciding with the rise of salient issues such as civil rights, the Vietnam War, and urban unrest. Attitudes across diverse issue domains became more correlated, reflecting a shift toward a cohesive liberal-conservative ideological spectrum. The authors note that this shift occurred among all educational groups, undermining theories that attribute ideological disorganization to cognitive limitations. Instead, they emphasize the role of political context in shaping belief systems. By the 1970s, levels of ideological consistency in the mass public rivaled those observed among political elites in the 1950s.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "We must be careful that we do not replace a common wisdom of impressionistic political science by a common wisdom based on a precise, but time-bound, research technique" (p. 541).
  - "If the lack of organization of mass political attitudes is based on enduring characteristics of the mass public, it should be relatively insensitive to such changes in the world of politics" (p. 544).
  - "From 1964 onward, attitudes in the mass public on the issues of social welfare, welfare measures specific for blacks, racial integration in the schools, and positions on the Cold War are substantially intercorrelated" (p. 559).

### 2.3.4 Mass Political Attitudes and the Survey Response

Achen, C. H. (1975). Mass Political Attitudes and the Survey Response [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 69(4), 1218–1231. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1955282>

1. **Citation key:** achen\_mass\_1975
2. **Author(s):** Christopher H. Achen
3. **Year:** 1975
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** survey response, measurement error, public opinion, political attitudes, democratic theory
6. **Summary:** Achen critiques Philip Converse's claims about the instability of political attitudes in the mass public by developing a statistical model that accounts for measurement error in survey responses. He argues that much of the perceived inconsistency in voters' political attitudes arises not from a lack of stability but from flaws in survey design and question formulation. Achen demonstrates that correcting for measurement error reveals greater coherence and stability in public opinion, challenging the view that mass publics are ideologically incoherent or apathetic.
7. **Theory:** Achen challenges the prevailing view that the instability of political attitudes undermines democratic theory. He asserts that voter responses are probabilistic and subject to variability arising from both genuine attitude change and measurement error. Achen argues that Converse's conclusions about voter instability are skewed because they fail to separate these two sources of variation. By introducing a model that distinguishes respondent variability from measurement error, Achen reframes the debate on the competence of the electorate, suggesting that methodological flaws rather than voter ignorance drive many findings of inconsistency.

- 8. Methods:** Achen employs data from Converse's panel study, analyzing survey responses across three time periods. He introduces a statistical model that disaggregates observed variation in survey responses into two components: true attitude change and measurement error. The model assumes random opinion changes and calculates the degree of measurement error by comparing correlations between responses at adjacent and non-adjacent time points. Achen tests the robustness of his model using both policy questions and control variables such as church attendance, applying Pearson correlations and correcting for attenuation due to error.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
- Measurement error significantly depresses observed correlations in survey responses, exaggerating voter instability.
  - When corrected for measurement error, public opinion demonstrates greater stability and ideological coherence than suggested by Converse's analysis.
  - Errors in survey design, such as vague question wording, are the primary sources of response inconsistency rather than voter incompetence.
- 10. Main findings:** Achen finds that measurement error accounts for much of the low correlations observed in Converse's study. Corrected correlations for political attitudes are significantly higher, indicating greater coherence and stability in public opinion than previously thought. For instance, corrected correlations for racial integration and guaranteed jobs exceed 0.80, compared to much lower uncorrected values. These results challenge the narrative that the mass public is ideologically incoherent, emphasizing instead the importance of refining survey methodologies. Achen also finds that measurement error is relatively consistent across demographic groups, suggesting that question design rather than respondent characteristics drives much of the observed variability.
- 11. Key quotations:**
- "Converse does not distinguish between these two sources of variability in voters' responses. In his analysis, both kinds of variability are attributed to subjects' changing positions. The result is an underestimate of voters' attitudinal stability" (p. 1221).
  - "What is impressive about the graphs, however, is the extent to which this is not true, the extent to which the subgroups cluster around intermediate values of measurement error. There is no evidence here of Converse's select group of sophisticates divided from the mass of the population" (p. 1229).
  - "The present results remind us that the errors involved may be substantial...Major improvements in our understanding of political thinking may therefore come to depend upon a considerably more advanced theoretical knowledge of our measuring instruments than we have yet mustered" (p. 1231).

### 2.3.5 Change in the Structure of American Political Attitudes: The Nagging Question of Question Wording

Bishop, G. F., Tuchfarber, A. J., & Oldendick, R. W. (1978). Change in the Structure of American Political Attitudes: The Nagging Question of Question Wording [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 22(2), 250–269. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2110616>

- 1. Citation key:** bishop\_change\_1978
- 2. Author(s):** George F. Bishop, Alfred J. Tuchfarber, and Robert W. Oldendick
- 3. Year:** 1978
- 4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
- 5. Keywords:** question wording, attitudinal consistency, issue voting, political sophistication, survey methodology
- 6. Summary:** Bishop, Tuchfarber, and Oldendick investigate how methodological artifacts, specifically changes in survey question wording and format, contribute to apparent changes in political sophistication and attitudinal consistency among American voters. Focusing on data from the 1956 and 1964 SRC Election Studies, they demonstrate that much of the observed increase in ideological consistency over this period can be attributed to differences in survey design rather than genuine changes in voter behavior or political attitudes.
- 7. Theory:** The authors challenge the prevailing narrative that the 1960s witnessed a substantial rise in voter ideological sophistication, arguing instead that this phenomenon largely reflects methodological artifacts in survey research. They emphasize that question wording and response formats significantly influence survey outcomes, affecting both the marginal distributions of attitudes and the inter-item correlations that measure consistency. This critique directly questions the conclusions of earlier studies, such as those by Nie and Andersen (1974), which attributed increased consistency to heightened political salience during the turbulent 1960s.
- 8. Methods:** The study compares data from the 1956 and 1964 SRC Election Studies, focusing on seven core issue questions. The authors examine changes in question wording, response categories, and filter questions across the two surveys. They analyze how these changes affect the distribution of responses and the gamma coefficients used to measure attitudinal consistency. Their methodology includes cross-tabulations and recoding exercises, allowing them to assess the extent to which differences in survey design influence observed trends in political attitudes.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - Changes in question wording and format between 1956 and 1964 significantly alter the distribution of responses and increase observed attitudinal consistency.
  - The observed rise in ideological sophistication during this period is largely attributable to methodological artifacts rather than genuine changes in voter behavior.
  - Survey design changes disproportionately affect less educated respondents, amplifying the apparent increase in

consistency.

All hypotheses are supported by the analysis. The authors find that changes in question wording, format, and filtering practices significantly distort measures of ideological consistency, particularly among less educated respondents.

**10. Main findings:** Bishop, Tuchfarber, and Oldendick demonstrate that methodological changes in the 1964 SRC Election Study, including shifts in question wording and the use of dichotomous response formats, inflate measures of attitudinal consistency and issue voting. They show that these changes disproportionately affect less educated respondents, who are more susceptible to question wording effects. The study concludes that much of the reported increase in ideological sophistication during the 1960s reflects improved survey reliability rather than substantive changes in voter attitudes. By replicating the analysis using consistent measures, they argue that ideological constraint and issue voting were relatively stable between 1956 and 1964.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The effects of these artifacts have some major implications for many current theories of electoral behavior" (p. 250).
- "The 1964 American national election marks a critical comparison point in this time series, for it is at this juncture that the sharpest upward shifts in consistency and issue voting have occurred" (p. 251).
- "To summarize our thesis, we are arguing that three methodologically related factors probably accounted for the great bulk of the upward shift in attitudinal consistency at the time of the 1964 election" (p. 265).

### 2.3.6 A Hierarchical Model of Attitude Constraint

Peffley, M. A., & Hurwitz, J. (1985). A Hierarchical Model of Attitude Constraint [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 29(4), 871–890. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111185>

1. **Citation key:** peffley\_hierarchical\_1985
2. **Author(s):** Mark A. Peffley and Jon Hurwitz
3. **Year:** 1985
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** ideological constraint, hierarchical model, belief systems, liberalism, political attitudes
6. **Summary:** Peffley and Hurwitz develop a hierarchical model of ideological constraint to demonstrate that citizens' abstract beliefs systematically structure their attitudes toward specific policy issues. Using a multiple-indicator LISREL model, they build on Converse's foundational work but critique his operationalization of constraint as limited to correlations between specific attitudes. By incorporating abstract principles and their influence on concrete attitudes, the authors find evidence of a structured and consistent belief system among the mass public.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that ideological constraint involves both "issue constraint" (relationships among specific attitudes) and "ideological constraint" (relationships between abstract principles and specific attitudes). They propose that political attitudes are hierarchically organized, with liberal-conservative ideology at the apex, abstract principles in policy domains (e.g., economic, racial, foreign policy), and specific issue preferences at the base. This model challenges Converse's emphasis on low correlations between issue attitudes as evidence of ideological incoherence, suggesting instead that such correlations underestimate the broader coherence of belief systems.
8. **Methods:** Peffley and Hurwitz test their hierarchical model using survey data collected in Minneapolis and St. Paul (N = 331) during 1981-1982. They measure political attitudes at three levels of abstraction: liberal-conservative self-placement, abstract beliefs about the government's role in various domains, and specific policy preferences. Using LISREL, a structural equation modeling approach, they estimate relationships between latent variables (abstract beliefs and ideology) and their respective indicators (survey responses). This approach allows them to correct for measurement error and assess the extent to which abstract attitudes constrain specific policy preferences.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Abstract beliefs constrain specific policy preferences within the same domain (e.g., racial attitudes influencing views on affirmative action).
  - Liberal-conservative ideology partially constrains abstract beliefs across domains (e.g., economic and racial domains).
  - The traditional correlation-based measures of constraint underestimate true ideological coherence.
- All hypotheses are confirmed. The LISREL model shows significant and robust relationships between abstract and specific attitudes, as well as partial constraint by liberal-conservative ideology across policy domains.
10. **Main findings:** The hierarchical model demonstrates that individuals' specific policy preferences are significantly influenced by abstract attitudes, which, in turn, are partially constrained by their ideological self-placement. For example, abstract beliefs about economic policy significantly predict support for specific welfare programs. Similarly, racial attitudes strongly influence preferences for policies such as affirmative action and busing. While liberal-conservative ideology does not fully constrain all domains, it serves as a significant organizing principle for abstract attitudes in economic, racial, and foreign policy domains. These findings challenge the pessimistic view of mass ideological incoherence and highlight the role of hierarchical organization in belief systems. The model also reveals that earlier correlation-based measures underestimated the extent of ideological constraint due to their inability to account for hierarchical relationships and measurement error.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Constraint implies a consistency between component idea elements in an ideology. Yet, Converse was clear in

- his contention that constraint involves more than mere ‘issue constraint’... It also connotes ‘ideological constraint,’ or a correspondence between these concrete views and more abstract or fundamental beliefs” (p. 872).
- “The data are quite consistent with the hierarchical model: specific policy positions are constrained by more general beliefs concerning the government’s role in particular policy domains. And these abstract beliefs are constrained, in part, by a more global liberal-conservative ideology” (p. 882).
  - “Our results suggest that the connection between such global measures and specific issue concerns is low because the relationship is an indirect one, mediated by attitudes at an intermediate level of abstraction” (p. 884).

### 2.3.7 Measuring Political Sophistication

Luskin, R. C. (1987). Measuring Political Sophistication [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 31(4), 856–899. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111227>

1. **Citation key:** luskin\_measuring\_1987
2. **Author(s):** Robert C. Luskin
3. **Year:** 1987
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** political sophistication, measurement, belief systems, constraint, cognitive complexity
6. **Summary:** Luskin evaluates the concept and measurement of political sophistication, arguing that existing measures often fail to capture its multidimensional nature. He critiques the field’s reliance on overly simplistic or inconsistent indicators and proposes a comprehensive definition of political sophistication as a combination of knowledge size, range, and cognitive organization (constraint). Luskin’s analysis highlights the theoretical and empirical challenges of measuring sophistication, offering methodological advancements and discussing their implications for understanding public opinion and political behavior.
7. **Theory:** Luskin defines political sophistication as the degree to which individuals possess extensive, diverse, and well-organized political knowledge. He argues that sophistication emerges from the interplay of three dimensions:
  - **Size:** The quantity of political information an individual possesses.
  - **Range:** The diversity of political topics covered by an individual’s knowledge.
  - **Constraint:** The cognitive organization and interconnectedness of political beliefs.
8. **Methods:** Luskin conducts a comprehensive review of existing measures of political sophistication, including correlation-based measures, abstraction indices, and factor-analytic techniques. He evaluates their theoretical validity, reliability, and empirical performance, drawing on survey data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) and other sources. Additionally, Luskin proposes new measures that better capture the multidimensional nature of sophistication, such as hierarchical models of belief systems and entropy-based statistics to assess constraint.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Political sophistication is a multidimensional construct encompassing size, range, and constraint.
  - Existing measures of sophistication underestimate its complexity and are often biased by methodological artifacts.
  - Higher levels of sophistication are associated with greater ideological consistency, more abstract reasoning, and more stable attitudes over time.
10. **Main findings:** Luskin’s analysis supports these hypotheses. He finds that traditional measures inadequately capture sophistication’s multidimensional nature and that more sophisticated individuals exhibit greater abstraction, consistency, and stability in their political attitudes.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Sophistication in this sense is a matter of cognition: the density, coverage, and organization of a person’s belief system” (p. 857).
  - “Constraint implies a consistency between component idea elements in an ideology, but the connections need not be strictly logical. They must only make sense to the individual whose belief system they are part of” (p. 858).
  - “Political sophistication is the conjunction of size, range, and constraint—a cognitive structure that transforms scattered croutons of knowledge into an intricate lattice of organized thought” (p. 860).

### 2.3.8 Explaining Political Sophistication

Luskin, R. C. (1990). Explaining Political Sophistication [Publisher: Springer]. *Political Behavior*, 12(4), 331–361. Retrieved January 19, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/586188>

1. Citation key: luskin\_explaining\_1990
  2. Author(s): Robert C. Luskin
  3. Year: 1990
  4. Publication: Political Behavior
  5. Keywords: political sophistication, cognitive complexity, belief systems, democratic theory, political behavior
  6. Summary: Luskin's article investigates why individuals vary in political sophistication. He develops a nonlinear, simultaneous equation model to test the effects of three key factors: exposure to political information, cognitive ability, and motivation. The analysis uses data from the 1976 American National Election Study (ANES) to evaluate the relative importance of these variables. Luskin finds that intelligence and political interest have strong effects on sophistication, while education and media exposure are less influential, challenging traditional assumptions in the field.
  7. Theory: Luskin argues that political sophistication is a multidimensional construct, defined by the extent to which individuals' political cognitions are numerous, broad in scope, and well-organized. He frames sophistication as dependent on three factors:
    - *Information*: The quantity of political information individuals encounter, primarily through education and media exposure.
    - *Ability*: Cognitive skills, particularly intelligence, enabling individuals to process and organize political information.
    - *Motivation*: Internal interest in politics, which drives individuals to seek, retain, and integrate information.
  8. Methods: Luskin employs a nonlinear simultaneous equation model using data from the 1976 ANES. Key variables include:
    - **Dependent variable**: Political sophistication, measured as a composite of integration (e.g., abstract reasoning) and differentiation (e.g., knowledge of political issues).
    - **Independent variables**: Political interest, education, exposure to political information in print media (EPIPM), intelligence (based on interviewer ratings), occupation (political impingement), age, and parental interest in politics.
- He uses a two-stage least squares (2SLS) estimation technique to account for the endogeneity of political interest and media exposure, enabling a robust analysis of direct and indirect effects.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Political sophistication depends on the interaction of information, ability, and motivation.
- Interest in politics and intelligence have the largest effects on sophistication.
- Education and media exposure contribute less significantly to sophistication than traditionally assumed.

The hypotheses are largely confirmed. Interest and intelligence emerge as the most influential factors, while the effects of education and media exposure are minimal. Luskin also finds evidence of significant interaction effects, where motivation amplifies the impact of ability and information.

10. Main findings: Luskin's analysis reveals that political sophistication is driven primarily by motivation and cognitive ability, with interest in politics and intelligence having the strongest effects. Education and media exposure, traditionally viewed as key determinants, show little direct influence. His findings suggest that sophistication is less about the quantity of information individuals encounter and more about their capacity and motivation to process it. Luskin argues that this underscores inherent limits to improving political sophistication through education or media interventions alone. He concludes that the distribution of political sophistication among the public is constrained by broader cognitive and motivational factors, which have implications for democratic theory and participation.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Political sophistication is political cognitive complexity, political expertise... It is a person's actual degree of sophistication, not merely whether or not it exceeds some high and necessarily arbitrary threshold, that matters" (p. 332).
- "The balance of evidence suggests, however, that mass publics everywhere are woefully unsophisticated by anything approaching elite standards" (p. 351).
- "Sophistication, in these results, is much less a function of the information to which people are exposed than of what they can and are motivated to make of it" (p. 351).

### 2.3.9 Political Sophistication and Policy Reasoning: A Reconsideration

Goren, P. (2004). Political Sophistication and Policy Reasoning: A Reconsideration. *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(3), 462–478. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0092-5853.2004.00081.x>

1. Citation key: goren\_political\_2004
2. Author(s): Paul Goren

3. **Year:** 2004
  4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
  5. **Keywords:** political sophistication, domain-specific reasoning, public opinion, constraint, structural equation modeling
  6. **Summary:** Goren challenges the prevailing sophistication-interaction theory of public opinion, which posits that the strength of the relationship between abstract principles and policy preferences is conditional on political sophistication. Using data from five NES surveys, he argues that all citizens, regardless of sophistication, hold and use domain-specific principles such as equality and self-reliance in social welfare policy and militarism in foreign policy. His findings suggest that political sophistication has limited impact on the structure and use of these principles, calling into question the consensus in public opinion research.
  7. **Theory:** Goren juxtaposes two competing theories of public opinion: the domain-specific reasoning theory and the sophistication-interaction model. The former posits that citizens across all levels of sophistication hold and rely on a limited number of core principles specific to policy domains, such as equality in social welfare and militarism in foreign policy, to guide their preferences. These principles are absorbed from the political environment due to their prominence in public discourse. Conversely, the sophistication-interaction theory suggests that only highly sophisticated individuals can effectively connect abstract principles to concrete policy preferences. Goren argues that the simplicity and ubiquity of domain-specific principles enable all individuals, regardless of sophistication, to use them in forming opinions.
  8. **Methods:** Goren employs confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test whether domain-specific principles are structured equivalently across levels of sophistication and whether their influence on policy preferences varies. His analysis focuses on two policy domains:
    - **Social welfare policy:** Principles include equality, self-reliance, and limited government, measured using survey items on spending preferences.
    - **Foreign policy:** Principles include militarism and anticomunism, measured using attitudes toward defense spending, contra aid, and nuclear weapons.
- Data come from the 1984, 1986, 1987, 1988, and 1990 NES surveys. Political sophistication is operationalized through knowledge scales, and models are stratified by sophistication levels. Goren assesses measurement equivalence using CFA and tests interaction effects between principles and sophistication using SEM.
9. **Hypotheses:**
    - **H1:** Domain-specific principles are structured equivalently across levels of sophistication.
    - **H2:** The influence of domain-specific principles on policy preferences does not vary by sophistication.
  10. **Confirmation:** Both hypotheses are largely confirmed. Measurement equivalence holds for most principles, and structural coefficients indicate that sophistication does not systematically condition the relationship between principles and preferences.
  11. **Main findings:** Goren finds robust support for the domain-specific theory of public opinion. Confirmatory factor analysis demonstrates that domain-specific principles such as equality and militarism are coherently and equivalently structured across sophistication levels. Structural equation modeling reveals that these principles guide policy preferences in social welfare and foreign policy domains regardless of sophistication. For instance, egalitarians favor more social spending, and militarists support higher defense spending, irrespective of their political knowledge. However, sophistication appears to matter for more arcane issues, such as contra aid, where only highly sophisticated individuals rely on militarism. These results suggest that the domain-specific theory better explains mass policy reasoning than the sophistication-interaction model.
  12. **Key quotations:**
    - "Sophistication does not systematically enhance the impact these principles have on policy preferences. Simply put, all citizens hold genuine core beliefs and values and rely more or less equally on these when taking positions on many specific issues" (p. 463).
    - "The information processing demands of using domain-specific principles are low, and citizens are more capable of principle-based reasoning than is typically recognized" (p. 465).
    - "The findings presented here rehabilitate the domain-specific theory of mass policy reasoning and suggest that the sophistication-interaction model does not apply as broadly as the conventional wisdom presumes" (p. 475).

### 2.3.10 Affective Polarization and Political Belief Systems: The Role of Political Identity and the Content and Structure of Political Beliefs

Turner-Zwinkels, F. M., van Noord, J., Kesberg, R., García-Sánchez, E., Brandt, M. J., Kuppens, T., Easterbrook, M. J., Smets, L., Gorska, P., Marchlewska, M., & Turner-Zwinkels, T. (2023). Affective Polarization and Political Belief Systems: The Role of Political Identity and the Content and Structure of Political Beliefs [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 01461672231183935. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672231183935>

1. **Citation key:** turner-zwinkels\_affective\_2023
2. **Author(s):** Felicity M. Turner-Zwinkels, Jochem van Noord, Rebekka Kesberg, Efrain García-Sánchez, Mark J. Brandt, Toon Kuppens, Matthew J. Easterbrook, Lien Smets, Paulina Gorska, Marta Marchlewska, and Tomas Turner-Zwinkels
3. **Year:** 2023
4. **Publication:** Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin

5. **Keywords:** affective polarization, political belief systems, political attitudes, political identity
6. **Summary:** Turner-Zwinkels et al. investigate the factors influencing affective polarization, focusing on the roles of political identity and the content and structure of political belief systems. Using data from two cross-national studies, including European and global samples, they examine how belief system content (e.g., left- vs. right-wing attitudes) and structure (e.g., consistency among beliefs) shape affective polarization. The findings reveal that similarity in belief system content increases liking toward outgroup members but decreases liking within ingroups, whereas similarity in belief system structure produces the opposite effect. These results provide insights into how both identity and belief system dynamics contribute to affective polarization.
7. **Theory:** The authors explore the interplay between political identity, belief system content, and belief system structure as drivers of affective polarization. Political identity is understood as a key factor, with individuals favoring their ingroup and disfavoring outgroups. Belief system content refers to specific attitudes on issues, while belief system structure captures how these attitudes are organized and interrelated. The study hypothesizes that affective polarization arises not only from identity-based biases but also from the ways in which belief systems align or diverge between individuals and groups.
8. **Methods:** The study employs data from two large-scale, cross-sectional surveys:
  - **Study 1:** Conducted in eight European countries, the sample includes 4,152 respondents, with belief system content and structure assessed using 10 political attitude items. A feeling thermometer measures group liking, and multilevel regression models examine relationships between identity, belief systems, and affective polarization.
  - **Study 2:** Using the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) dataset, this study analyzes responses from 29,994 participants in 36 countries. Similar measures and analytical techniques as in Study 1 are applied, with additional controls for demographic variables and variations across countries.
- Both studies include preregistered hypotheses and use random intercept multilevel models to account for individual-level and contextual differences.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - **H1a:** Similarity in belief system content within ingroups is associated with greater liking.
  - **H1b:** Similarity in belief system structure within ingroups is associated with greater liking.
  - **H2a:** Similarity in belief system content with outgroups is associated with greater liking.
  - **H2b:** Similarity in belief system structure with outgroups is associated with greater liking.
  - **H3a:** Similarity in belief system content with outgroups is associated with greater disliking.
  - **H3b:** Similarity in belief system structure with outgroups is associated with greater disliking.
- The hypotheses are partially confirmed. While similarity in belief system structure aligns with H1b and H2b, similarity in content produces mixed results. It increases outgroup liking (supporting H2a) but decreases ingroup liking (contradicting H1a). The effects of structure similarity with outgroups are smaller and inconsistent across studies, partially supporting H3b.
10. **Main findings:** The research demonstrates that both belief system content and structure influence affective polarization, though their effects differ. Similarity in content reduces ingroup liking but increases outgroup liking, suggesting that shared attitudes foster bridges across partisan divides. Conversely, similarity in structure strengthens ingroup cohesion but amplifies outgroup disfavor, particularly in tightly structured belief systems. Political identity remains a strong predictor of polarization, with individuals favoring their ingroups by a large margin. These findings challenge simplistic models of polarization by emphasizing the complexity of belief system dynamics.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Affective polarization was greatest when belief system content similarity was low and structure similarity was high” (p. 1).
  - “Similarity in the content of belief systems reduces affective polarization, while similarity in structure increases it, reflecting the dual role of belief systems in shaping partisan dynamics” (p. 9).
  - “Both political identity and political beliefs—both their content and structure—are relevant for understanding the psychological underpinnings of group liking and affective polarization” (p. 13).

## 2.4 Political Information and Misinformation

### 2.4.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Research on political knowledge, misinformation, and decision-making integrates psychological, cognitive, and sociological perspectives to understand how citizens acquire, process, and utilize political information. Foundational work in this field highlights the uneven distribution of political knowledge, the challenges of misinformation, and the cognitive biases that shape decision-making. Recent contributions have expanded the scope to include the impact of media environments, partisan biases, and misinformation correction strategies. The field underscores the complexity of political information processing, emphasizing the role of individual motivations, structural factors, and media dynamics in shaping democratic competence.
- **Foundations of Political Knowledge:** Early work by Delli Carpini and Keeter demonstrated that political knowledge is critical for democratic participation but unevenly distributed across demographic groups. Their findings revealed persistent disparities in knowledge based on race, gender, and socioeconomic status. Political knowledge is linked to greater political tolerance, consistent issue attitudes, and electoral participation, emphasizing its importance for democratic accountability.

- **The Challenge of Misinformation:** Kuklinski et al.'s influential study defined misinformation as confidently held but incorrect beliefs, emphasizing its resistance to correction and its ability to distort collective preferences. Subsequent research by Jerit and Zhao explored the psychological and partisan motivations that sustain misinformation, highlighting the challenges of corrective efforts, particularly on politically salient topics. These findings underscore the dual role of cognitive biases and media environments in perpetuating misinformation.
- **Media Influence and Political Information:** The rise of high-choice media environments, as explored by Prior, has exacerbated gaps in political knowledge and participation. Prior's research demonstrated that individuals with a preference for entertainment consume less political information, leading to greater inequality in political knowledge and voter turnout. Barabas and Jerit's work further highlighted the causal effects of media coverage on policy-specific knowledge, showing that the volume, breadth, and prominence of news significantly influence public awareness and understanding.
- **Decision-Making and Heuristics:** Building on Tversky and Kahneman's foundational research on heuristics, studies have examined how cognitive shortcuts influence political decision-making. These heuristics often simplify complex decisions but can also lead to biases. For instance, affective polarization, as investigated by Turner-Zwinkels et al., reveals how belief system content and structure interact with identity to shape partisan attitudes and group dynamics.
- **Misinformation Measurement and Correction:** Recent advancements by Graham have questioned the reliability of survey measures of misinformation, arguing that many incorrect responses reflect guesses rather than deeply held beliefs. Experimental interventions, such as media literacy training in Badrinath's study, show mixed results in combating misinformation, particularly in polarized political contexts where motivated reasoning dominates.
- **Future Directions:** Emerging research emphasizes the need for interdisciplinary approaches to address the challenges of misinformation, political knowledge gaps, and decision-making biases. Future studies are likely to focus on the effects of digital media environments, the role of algorithmic content curation, and strategies for enhancing political engagement and democratic accountability through targeted interventions and policy reforms.

#### 2.4.2 Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting: Do Presidential Candidates "Waltz Before a Blind Audience?"

Aldrich, J. H., Sullivan, J. L., & Borgida, E. (1989). Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting: Do Presidential Candidates "Waltz Before A Blind Audience?" [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 83(1), 123–141. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1956437>

1. **Citation key:** aldrich\_foreign\_1989
2. **Author(s):** John H. Aldrich, John L. Sullivan, and Eugene Borgida
3. **Year:** 1989
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** foreign affairs, issue voting, presidential elections, public opinion, attitude accessibility
6. **Summary:** Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida examine whether foreign policy attitudes influence presidential voting behavior in the United States. Challenging the traditional view that domestic issues dominate electoral outcomes, the authors argue that foreign affairs can significantly impact voter preferences, provided these attitudes are available, accessible, and salient. Using data from the 1980 and 1984 presidential elections, they demonstrate that foreign policy issues were as influential as domestic issues in shaping voter choices.
7. **Theory:** The authors critique the conventional wisdom that foreign policy attitudes are ill-formed, inaccessible, and irrelevant to voting behavior. Drawing on social psychology, they adopt a model of attitude accessibility, which posits that attitudes influence behavior only if they are retrievable from memory and salient in the decision-making context. They argue that campaigns and media coverage play a pivotal role in priming foreign policy attitudes, making them accessible during elections. The authors propose that significant public concern with foreign affairs, such as the arms race or international crises, increases the salience and electoral relevance of these issues.
8. **Methods:** The study uses survey data from the American National Election Studies (NES) for 1980 and 1984, along with a Gallup survey conducted in 1984. The authors assess the availability and accessibility of foreign and domestic policy attitudes using seven-point issue scales and measures of issue salience. They analyze whether voters perceive differences between candidates on foreign policy issues and estimate the impact of these perceptions on voting behavior. Probit regression models evaluate the relative influence of foreign and domestic policy attitudes on voter choice, controlling for candidate evaluations and party identification.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that (1) foreign policy attitudes are available and accessible during presidential elections, (2) these attitudes influence voting behavior as much as domestic policy attitudes, and (3) perceived differences between candidates on foreign policy enhance the impact of these attitudes. The results support these hypotheses, showing that foreign policy attitudes were salient and consequential in the 1980 and 1984 elections.
10. **Main findings:** Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida find that foreign policy attitudes were accessible and electorally significant in the 1980 and 1984 elections. Surveys show that a majority of voters could place themselves and the candidates on foreign policy issue scales and perceive meaningful differences between candidates. Probit analyses reveal that foreign policy attitudes had an impact on voter choice comparable to, and sometimes greater than, domestic policy attitudes. The findings challenge the idea that voters are disinterested in foreign affairs, emphasizing the importance of campaigns and media coverage in priming these attitudes.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The candidates' assumption that foreign policy issues are important in presidential campaigns is valid. There

is little theoretical reason to expect large differences in the availability and campaign accessibility of foreign and domestic attitudes" (p. 125).

- "Foreign and defense issues appear to be very important influences on the choices voters make, particularly when candidate differences on these issues are salient" (p. 133).
- "The anomaly—why candidates often campaign on foreign policy issues when so many scholars claim that the public does not respond to these appeals—has been resolved. The candidates are acting reasonably because voters do, in fact, respond to their appeals" (p. 136).

#### 2.4.3 What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters

Carpini, M. X. D., & Keeter, S. (1996, January). *What Americans Know about Politics and why it Matters*. Yale University Press

1. **Citation key:** carpini\_what\_1996
2. **Author(s):** Michael X. Delli Carpini and Scott Keeter
3. **Year:** 1996
4. **Publication:** *What Americans Know about Politics and Why It Matters* (Yale University Press)
5. **Keywords:** political knowledge, public opinion, democracy, political participation, inequality
6. **Summary:** Delli Carpini and Keeter provide an extensive analysis of political knowledge in the United States, examining its distribution, trends over time, and implications for democracy. They argue that political knowledge is essential for effective participation and representation in a democratic society. Their findings indicate a persistently low level of political knowledge among Americans, with disparities based on race, gender, and socioeconomic status. The authors advocate for structural reforms to address these disparities and enhance the overall political competence of the citizenry.
7. **Theory:** The authors build their theory on the premise that an informed electorate is critical for democracy. They argue that political knowledge enables citizens to connect their preferences to political actions and to evaluate leaders and policies effectively. Drawing on research from political science and psychology, they emphasize the roles of ability, motivation, and opportunity in determining levels of political knowledge. Delli Carpini and Keeter critique the elitist model of democracy, which accepts low public competence as inevitable, and instead posit that a well-informed public is both achievable and necessary for a more equitable democratic process.
8. **Methods:** The book synthesizes data from decades of public opinion research, including surveys from the American National Election Studies (NES) and other sources. The authors use descriptive statistics to analyze trends in political knowledge and multivariate regression techniques to explore the factors influencing it. They examine knowledge across various domains, such as institutions, processes, and policy issues, and compare data over time to assess changes in public competence.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Political knowledge is unevenly distributed, with significant disparities based on race, gender, and class.
  - Knowledge levels have remained relatively stable over time despite societal and technological changes.
  - Increasing political knowledge among disadvantaged groups would improve democratic representation and participation.

These hypotheses are supported by the findings, which reveal persistent inequalities and the critical role of structural factors in shaping political knowledge.

10. **Main findings:** Delli Carpini and Keeter find that political knowledge in the U.S. is unevenly distributed and has not significantly increased since the mid-20th century. They identify white, affluent men as the most informed demographic, with women, minorities, and the economically disadvantaged lagging behind. The authors highlight the importance of structural factors, such as education and access to information, in shaping these disparities. They also show that political knowledge is positively associated with political participation, tolerance, and issue consistency. While they propose several reforms to increase knowledge levels, they caution that addressing systemic inequalities is critical to achieving meaningful progress.

#### 11. Key Definitions:

- *Political knowledge:* The range of factual information about politics that is stored in long-term memory and available for use in understanding and evaluating political events and decisions.
- *Democratic competence:* The ability of citizens to understand political issues, form coherent preferences, and make decisions aligned with their interests and values.
- *Knowledge gap:* The disparity in political knowledge across different demographic groups, driven by variations in access, motivation, and cognitive resources.

#### 2.4.4 Misinformation and the Currency of Democratic Citizenship

Kuklinski, J. H., Quirk, P. J., Jerit, J., Schwieder, D., & Rich, R. F. (2000). Misinformation and the Currency of Democratic Citizenship [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 62(3), 790–816. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-3816.00033>

1. **Citation key:** kuklinski\_misinformation\_2000
2. **Author(s):** James H. Kuklinski, Paul J. Quirk, Jennifer Jerit, David Schwieder, and Robert F. Rich
3. **Year:** 2000

4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** misinformation, political knowledge, public opinion, heuristics, democracy
6. **Summary:** Kuklinski et al. analyze the role of misinformation—defined as confidently held but incorrect beliefs—in democratic decision-making. They argue that misinformation is distinct from ignorance and poses a greater obstacle to informed citizenship because it resists correction. Using empirical data on welfare policy beliefs, the authors demonstrate how misinformation can distort collective preferences and impede policy deliberation, offering insights into its implications for democratic theory and public opinion research.
7. **Theory:** The authors theorize that misinformation, unlike ignorance, creates entrenched biases that can distort individual and collective decision-making. They identify three psychological mechanisms underlying misinformation: inferential reasoning, consistency-seeking, and overconfidence. These mechanisms lead individuals to construct and reinforce inaccurate factual beliefs, which become difficult to correct even when presented with accurate information. Kuklinski et al. argue that misinformation undermines two key conditions for democratic citizenship: access to factual information and the ability to use it effectively in forming preferences.
8. **Methods:** The study employs survey experiments conducted with Illinois residents to examine beliefs and attitudes about welfare policy. The researchers used three groups: one received factual information about welfare, another answered a multiple-choice quiz, and a control group received no information. Regression analyses assessed the relationship between misinformation, confidence, and policy preferences. The authors also analyzed the collective impact of misinformation by simulating alternative scenarios of accurate and inaccurate beliefs.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - People hold inaccurate and confidently held beliefs about public policy (misinformation).
  - Misinformation is more resistant to correction than ignorance.
  - Collective preferences are significantly skewed by the prevalence of misinformation.
 These hypotheses are supported by evidence showing widespread and systematically biased misinformation about welfare, as well as the limited impact of corrective information on individual preferences.
10. **Main findings:** Kuklinski et al. find that misinformation is prevalent and significantly distorts both individual preferences and collective public opinion. Survey respondents consistently overestimated welfare spending and benefits while expressing high confidence in their inaccurate beliefs. Providing corrective information had minimal impact on their preferences, particularly among those most misinformed. Simulation results demonstrate that collective preferences can vary dramatically depending on the distribution of misinformation, highlighting its potential to shape public policy. These findings challenge optimistic views of heuristics and elite framing by underscoring the difficulty of overcoming misinformation in democratic contexts.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "If facts are the currency of citizenship, then the American polity is in a chronically impecunious state" (p. 791).
  - "Misinformation poses a more formidable problem than mere ignorance because it is harder to correct and has greater potential to distort collective preferences" (p. 793).
  - "Our findings suggest that the most confidently held beliefs are often the least accurate, creating a paradox that undermines efforts to educate the public" (p. 797).

#### 2.4.5 The Social Communication of Political Expertise

Huckfeldt, R. (2001). The Social Communication of Political Expertise [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(2), 425–438. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2669350>

1. **Citation key:** huckfeldt\_social\_2001
2. **Author(s):** Robert Huckfeldt
3. **Year:** 2001
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** political expertise, deliberative democracy, political communication, social networks, political knowledge
6. **Summary:** Huckfeldt investigates the role of political expertise within social communication networks and its implications for democratic deliberation. The article examines how citizens assess the political expertise of others, how these judgments shape patterns of communication, and the resulting consequences for collective political capacity. Using data from the 1996 U.S. election, the study highlights the asymmetrical distribution of political expertise and its potential to enhance democratic deliberation through informed social interaction.
7. **Theory:** Huckfeldt posits that the ability of individuals to identify political expertise within their social networks is a crucial element of deliberative democracy. He theorizes that such recognition fosters an efficient dissemination of political information, as individuals rely on knowledgeable discussants to supplement their understanding. However, biases, such as political agreement, may interfere with the accurate assessment of expertise, potentially undermining the deliberative process. Huckfeldt situates his theory within broader debates about the aggregation of individual political capacities into collective competence, referencing the public opinion paradox and theories of rational information-sharing.
8. **Methods:** The analysis is based on survey data collected from a two-stage snowball sample of registered voters and their discussants in Indianapolis and St. Louis during the 1996 U.S. election. The study employed measures of perceived and objective political expertise, including political knowledge tests, educational attainment, and political interest. Ordered logit models were used to evaluate the factors influencing perceived expertise and the frequency of

political discussions. Additional analyses explored the relationship between perceived expertise and the effectiveness of political communication.

**9. Hypotheses:** Huckfeldt hypothesizes that:

- Citizens are capable of recognizing political expertise within their social networks, and this recognition is influenced by objective measures of expertise such as knowledge, education, and political interest.
- Perceived expertise is also affected by subjective factors, including political agreement and partisan extremity.
- Citizens communicate more frequently about politics with those they perceive as politically expert.

These hypotheses are supported, with results demonstrating the interplay of objective expertise and subjective biases in shaping political communication patterns.

**10. Main findings:** Huckfeldt's findings suggest that perceived political expertise is strongly correlated with objective measures such as political knowledge, education, and interest. However, subjective factors, including perceived political agreement, also play a significant role in shaping perceptions of expertise. Citizens are more likely to engage in frequent political discussions with those they perceive as knowledgeable, and such interactions enhance the effectiveness of political communication by increasing the accuracy of shared information. The study highlights the asymmetry in political communication networks, where expertise is unevenly distributed but leveraged to improve collective deliberation.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The ability of citizens to make discriminating judgments regarding the political expertise of other individuals is centrally related to the potential for deliberative democracy" (p. 425).
- "Citizens communicate more frequently with those whom they judge to be politically expert, creating patterns of asymmetry that enhance the collective capacities of democratic deliberation" (p. 432).
- "The evidence presented here sustains the role of socially interdependent deliberation for the vitality of democratic politics. Not only do people exchange biased viewpoints, but they also acquire information and expertise" (p. 438).

#### 2.4.6 Developing Valid Knowledge Scales

Mondak, J. J. [Jeffrey J.]. (2001). Developing Valid Knowledge Scales [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(1), 224–238. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2669369>

**1. Citation key:** mondak\_developing\_2001

**2. Author(s):** Jeffrey J. Mondak

**3. Year:** 2001

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** political knowledge, survey design, don't know responses, measurement validity, political behavior

**6. Summary:** Mondak examines the implications of different survey protocols and item formats for measuring political knowledge. He focuses on the effects of encouraging versus discouraging "don't know" (DK) responses and the use of multiple-choice versus open-ended question formats. Using data from the 1998 NES Pilot and a local Tallahassee survey, Mondak finds that traditional practices in knowledge surveys systematically compromise validity. He argues for methodological revisions to improve the precision and utility of political knowledge measures.

**7. Theory:** Mondak theorizes that survey design choices, such as the treatment of DK responses, systematically influence the validity of political knowledge measures. Encouraging DK responses introduces a "guessing response set" that contaminates scores by conflating knowledge with personality traits like confidence or risk aversion. Open-ended questions exacerbate these issues by being resistant to corrections for partial information and prone to subjective scoring. Mondak advocates for protocols that discourage DKs and favor multiple-choice formats, which he posits maximize the validity of knowledge assessments and enable more accurate inferences about political behavior.

**8. Methods:** The study uses two split-ballot surveys to evaluate the impact of different survey protocols: the 1998 NES Pilot and a Tallahassee-area telephone survey. Key manipulations include prefacing knowledge questions with encouragements or discouragements of DKs and comparing multiple-choice and open-ended question formats. Mondak analyzes the effects of these protocols on response rates, survey length, and the reliability and validity of knowledge scales. Regression models test how these changes influence the relationship between knowledge and variables such as ideology and political tolerance.

**9. Hypotheses:** Mondak hypothesizes that:

- Encouraging DK responses reduces the validity of knowledge scales by introducing systematic error from guessing.
- Open-ended items yield lower validity compared to multiple-choice formats due to higher susceptibility to response effects and scoring subjectivity.
- Discouraging DK responses and using multiple-choice items will improve the ability of knowledge measures to predict political attitudes and behaviors.

These hypotheses are supported, with results showing that revised survey protocols produce more valid knowledge measures and sharper estimates of knowledge effects.

**10. Main findings:** Mondak finds that discouraging DK responses significantly reduces guessing and improves the validity of political knowledge measures. When DKs are discouraged, respondents are more likely to provide substantive answers, and knowledge scales better distinguish between informed and uninformed individuals. Multiple-choice

items outperform open-ended formats by avoiding response effects and facilitating more consistent scoring. These methodological improvements enhance the ability of knowledge measures to predict key political outcomes, such as ideological structuring of opinions and political tolerance.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "By encouraging DKs on knowledge items, we produce data plagued by a guessing response set. The guessing response set means that we may observe substantially different knowledge scores for respondents whose actual knowledge levels are identical" (p. 226).
- "Multiple-choice items are more resistant to response sets than all other objective test formats, and they maximize our capacity to form valid inferences regarding respondents' levels of knowledge" (p. 230).
- "Straightforward changes in survey procedure can improve validity without adverse effects on cost, reliability, or respondent morale. These changes enhance our ability to test hypotheses about political competence" (p. 237).

#### 2.4.7 Public Opinion and Democratic Accountability: How Citizens Learn about Politics

Hutchings, V. L. (2003). *Public Opinion and Democratic Accountability: How Citizens Learn about Politics* [Google-Books-ID: W7NwUvmHaYwC]. Princeton University Press

1. Citation key: hutchings\_public\_2003

2. Author(s): Vincent L. Hutchings

3. Year: 2003

4. Publication: Public Opinion and Democratic Accountability: How Citizens Learn about Politics (Princeton University Press)

5. Keywords: public opinion, democratic accountability, issue publics, political information, voter behavior

6. Summary: Hutchings investigates how public opinion influences democratic accountability, focusing on the role of "issue publics"—groups of citizens motivated by specific political issues. He argues that under the right conditions, these issue publics are activated and monitor political representatives, ensuring responsiveness to latent preferences. Through extensive data analysis, Hutchings demonstrates that political context and individual motivations interact to shape political awareness and issue voting, underscoring the dynamic nature of public accountability in democratic systems.

7. Theory: Hutchings builds on the concept of issue publics, proposing that most citizens are generally uninformed but become engaged when issues align with their specific interests. He theorizes that political accountability depends on the ability of these issue publics to recognize and respond to representatives' actions on key issues. Contextual factors, such as media coverage and campaign dynamics, interact with individual-level motivations to activate latent preferences. Hutchings describes issue publics as "sleeping giants" capable of influencing democratic outcomes when mobilized by salient political contexts.

8. Methods: Hutchings combines content analysis of media coverage with survey data, including the American National Election Studies (ANES) and Senate Election Study data from the 1990s. He examines how contextual factors, such as the prominence of certain issues in campaigns, influence citizens' knowledge of representatives' actions. The analysis covers three domains—labor, defense, and abortion—and uses regression models to explore the interaction between individual-level variables (e.g., group membership, political knowledge) and contextual factors (e.g., campaign salience, media coverage).

9. Hypotheses: Hutchings hypothesizes that:

- Citizens' ability to monitor representatives depends on the interaction of individual motivations and political contexts.
- Members of issue publics are more likely to acquire knowledge about their representatives' actions when those actions are made salient by campaigns or media coverage.
- The activation of issue publics leads to higher rates of issue voting and political accountability.

These hypotheses are supported by evidence showing that issue publics respond to contextually salient issues with increased knowledge and issue-specific voting behavior.

10. Main findings: Hutchings finds that citizens' political knowledge and engagement are highly contingent on contextual factors, such as media coverage and campaign dynamics. Issue publics—such as union households on labor issues or religious conservatives on abortion—exhibit higher levels of political knowledge and are more likely to vote based on issue-specific considerations when these issues are prominent. Media coverage of key congressional votes, particularly when representatives deviate from party lines or take leadership roles, increases public awareness and reinforces accountability mechanisms. However, Hutchings acknowledges limitations in media effects outside election cycles, suggesting that accountability is often campaign-driven.

### 11. Key Definitions:

- *Issue publics*: Groups of individuals motivated by specific political issues, whose preferences are activated by contextual factors such as campaigns and media coverage.
- *Latent preferences*: Political preferences that remain inactive until triggered by salient events or issues.
- *Political accountability*: The capacity of citizens to monitor and influence representatives' actions through electoral mechanisms and public opinion.

#### 2.4.8 News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout

Prior, M. (2005). News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2005.00143.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(3), 577–592. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2005.00143.x>

1. **Citation key:** prior\_news\_2005
  2. **Author(s):** Markus Prior
  3. **Year:** 2005
  4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
  5. **Keywords:** media choice, political knowledge, voter turnout, entertainment preferences, information inequality
  6. **Summary:** Prior examines the effects of increasing media choice, brought about by cable television and the internet, on political knowledge and voter turnout. He argues that greater media choice exacerbates gaps in knowledge and participation between those who prefer news and those who gravitate toward entertainment. Using survey data, Prior demonstrates that individuals' media content preferences significantly influence their political knowledge and likelihood to vote, with greater media choice leading to increased polarization in these outcomes.
  7. **Theory:** The article proposes that a high-choice media environment enables individuals to self-select content aligned with their preferences, intensifying disparities in political knowledge and turnout. Prior's framework builds on theories of selective exposure, arguing that in a low-choice environment, incidental exposure to news promoted baseline political knowledge among less interested individuals. However, the proliferation of entertainment options in a high-choice environment allows entertainment-oriented individuals to avoid news altogether, reducing their political knowledge and participation. This leads to widening gaps in knowledge and turnout driven by content preferences rather than socioeconomic factors.
  8. **Methods:** Prior uses two empirical studies to test his hypotheses. The first is a panel survey (News and Entertainment Survey) of 2,358 U.S. residents conducted in 2002-2003, designed to measure individuals' media content preferences, political knowledge, and turnout. The second study uses data from the National Election Studies (NES) and Pew Research Center surveys, allowing replication across different datasets and time periods. Key variables include measures of political knowledge, voter turnout, and relative entertainment preference (REP). Regression analyses, with interaction terms for media access and content preference, evaluate the relationships between REP, political knowledge, and turnout.
  9. **Hypotheses:**
    - Increasing media choice intensifies the impact of content preferences on political knowledge, with those preferring news becoming more knowledgeable and those preferring entertainment becoming less so.
    - Turnout gaps between news-oriented and entertainment-oriented individuals widen in high-choice media environments, as exposure to political information drives turnout.
    - The effects of content preferences are amplified by access to both cable television and the internet, which offer the greatest media choice.
- These hypotheses are confirmed, with results showing significant interactions between REP and media access in predicting political knowledge and turnout.
10. **Main findings:** Prior's findings reveal that content preferences strongly predict political knowledge and turnout in high-choice media environments. Individuals with a preference for news exhibit greater knowledge and are more likely to vote, whereas entertainment-oriented individuals show declining knowledge and turnout as media choice increases. Access to both cable television and the internet amplifies these effects, creating larger disparities. The study challenges the assumption that greater availability of political information inherently benefits democracy, highlighting the role of motivation over ability in driving political engagement.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Greater choice allows politically interested people to access more information and increase their political knowledge. Yet those who prefer nonpolitical content can more easily escape the news and therefore pick up less political information than they used to" (p. 577).
- "Inequality in political knowledge and turnout increases as a result of voluntary, not circumstantial, consumption decisions" (p. 580).
- "The decline in the size of news audiences over the last three decades has been identified as cause for concern by many observers... It was 'politics by default,' not politics by choice" (p. 588).

#### 2.4.9 Estimating the Causal Effects of Media Coverage on Policy-Specific Knowledge

Barabas, J., & Jerit, J. (2009). Estimating the Causal Effects of Media Coverage on Policy-Specific Knowledge [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00358.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(1), 73–89. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00358.x>

1. **Citation key:** barabas\_estimating\_2009
2. **Author(s):** Jason Barabas and Jennifer Jerit
3. **Year:** 2009
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** media coverage, political knowledge, policy-specific knowledge, causal inference, information inequality
6. **Summary:** Barabas and Jerit investigate how the volume, breadth, and prominence of media coverage influence cit-

izens' knowledge of policy-specific facts. They employ a novel approach that combines survey data with content analysis to estimate the causal effects of media exposure, addressing methodological challenges in prior research. Their results highlight the significant role of media coverage in enhancing policy-specific knowledge, offering insights into how media environments shape democratic competence.

**7. Theory:** The authors posit that policy-specific knowledge—a critical aspect of informed democratic participation—is shaped by citizens' exposure to media coverage. They theorize that the amount of media coverage, its distribution across outlets, and the prominence of news stories collectively determine public knowledge. Drawing on prior studies of media effects, the authors argue that these dimensions of media coverage enhance the accessibility and retention of information, thereby increasing policy-specific knowledge. This theory challenges earlier work that relied solely on self-reported media usage as a proxy for exposure.

**8. Methods:** The study uses a mixed-methods design, combining content analysis of media coverage with survey data. Barabas and Jerit analyze over 20 cross-sectional surveys, each linked to contemporaneous media content. They examine three primary variables: (1) the volume of media coverage (measured as the number of articles mentioning relevant policy facts), (2) the breadth of coverage (extent of topic representation across print and broadcast media), and (3) the prominence of stories (placement on front pages or early in broadcasts). A within-survey/within-subjects design allows comparisons of individual knowledge under varying media exposure conditions. The authors employ regression models to test the effects of these variables on respondents' policy-specific knowledge, controlling for individual demographics and prior knowledge.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- The volume of media coverage will positively influence policy-specific knowledge.
- The breadth of media coverage (coverage across multiple outlets) will enhance policy-specific knowledge.
- The prominence of media stories (e.g., front-page placement) will increase policy-specific knowledge.

All hypotheses are supported, with the data revealing significant effects of volume, breadth, and prominence on knowledge acquisition.

**10. Main findings:** The study demonstrates that media coverage significantly enhances policy-specific knowledge, with a non-linear relationship between volume and knowledge gains. The breadth of coverage ensures that more citizens are exposed to critical information, while prominence signals the importance of news, increasing retention and awareness. Results from within-survey/within-subjects analyses indicate that even modest increases in coverage can lead to substantial knowledge gains. Individual-level analyses confirm that education, age, and issue attentiveness amplify these effects, though media variables exert independent and robust influences. Overall, the findings underscore the critical role of media environments in shaping informed public opinion.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The volume, breadth, and prominence of news stories are powerful predictors of knowledge, more important, in fact, than a person's demographic characteristics or socioeconomic status" (p. 74).
- "What would seem to be a crucial determinant of knowledge—i.e., the volume of coverage—is not the only or even the most important factor in our models" (p. 74).
- "One of the most effective ways to raise awareness of important political developments may not be to increase the number of stories, but to make sure that whatever the level of coverage, stories appear prominently in the news" (p. 82).

#### 2.4.10 The Question(s) of Political Knowledge

Barabas, J., Jerit, J., Pollock, W., & Rainey, C. (2014). The Question(s) of Political Knowledge. *American Political Science Review*, 108(4), 840–855. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055414000392>

**1. Citation key:** barabas\_questions\_2014

**2. Author(s):** Jason Barabas, Jennifer Jerit, William Pollock, and Carlisle Rainey

**3. Year:** 2014

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** political knowledge, gender gap, media coverage, temporal-topical framework, public opinion

**6. Summary:** Barabas and colleagues introduce a temporal-topical framework to classify political knowledge questions into four types based on their recency and focus. They assess how factors like education, media coverage, and gender operate across these question types, analyzing over 300 knowledge items from surveys conducted in the late 2000s. Their findings reveal significant variation in predictors of knowledge across the framework's quadrants, challenging existing generalizations about knowledge acquisition and its determinants.

**7. Theory:** The study proposes that political knowledge can be categorized along two dimensions: a temporal dimension (static vs. surveillance) and a topical dimension (general vs. policy-specific). The authors argue that these dimensions influence how predictors such as education, media exposure, and gender operate. For instance, static-general knowledge (e.g., civics facts) is more strongly associated with education, while surveillance-policy knowledge (e.g., recent legislative changes) is primarily influenced by media coverage. The gender gap in political knowledge also varies depending on the relevance of the topic to women, with smaller or reversed gaps on gendered questions.

**8. Methods:** The authors use a meta-analysis of 31 surveys from the Pew Research Center and the Roper Center, encompassing 335 political knowledge items. Each question is coded along the temporal-topical dimensions. Additional data, such as media content analysis from the Pew Project for Media Excellence, provides measures of media coverage.

They employ hierarchical models to account for individual- and question-level clustering and test hypotheses regarding the differential effects of education, media coverage, and gender on knowledge across the framework's quadrants.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Education has a stronger positive effect on general knowledge than policy-specific knowledge.
- Media coverage positively influences knowledge of surveillance facts but has little to no effect on static facts.
- Gender gaps in knowledge shrink or reverse on questions that are gender-relevant, regardless of question type.

All hypotheses are supported, though the effect of media coverage is more pronounced for general knowledge than expected.

**10. Main findings:** The study reveals substantial variation in the determinants of political knowledge across question types. Education has a stronger relationship with static-general knowledge, reflecting the influence of formal education on civic learning. Media coverage is a significant predictor of surveillance knowledge, especially for general topics, where coverage often overlaps with major events. The gender gap in political knowledge persists on nongendered items but diminishes or reverses on gendered questions, highlighting the role of motivational factors. These findings suggest that existing measures of political knowledge may obscure important variations, emphasizing the need for diverse knowledge batteries in surveys.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The mechanisms for becoming informed—in particular, ability, opportunity, and motivation—operate differently across the four types of questions" (p. 840).
- "Knowledge of recent facts should be lower relative to facts that were established years or decades ago because there have been fewer opportunities for people to acquire such facts" (p. 841).
- "The shrinking of the knowledge gap between men and women on gender-relevant topics is invariant to differences across question types" (p. 849).

#### 2.4.11 Political Misinformation

Jerit, J., & Zhao, Y. (2020). Political Misinformation [Publisher: Annual Reviews]. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 23(Volume 23, 2020), 77–94. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050718-032814>

**1. Citation key:** jerit\_political\_2020

**2. Author(s):** Jennifer Jerit and Yangzi Zhao

**3. Year:** 2020

**4. Publication:** Annual Review of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** political misinformation, correction, public opinion, directional motives, partisan biases

**6. Summary:** Jerit and Zhao evaluate developments in the study of political misinformation since its conceptualization by Kuklinski et al. (2000). The review emphasizes the psychological underpinnings of misinformation, its correction, and the measurement challenges posed by partisan biases and expressive responding. They synthesize findings across political science, communications, and psychology to provide a comprehensive assessment of the factors contributing to misinformation and its persistence.

**7. Theory:** The authors define political misinformation as confidently held false beliefs, distinguishing it from ignorance and related phenomena such as rumors and conspiracy theories. They emphasize that misinformation results from both cognitive mechanisms, such as memory biases, and motivational factors, particularly directional reasoning driven by partisan attachments. According to the authors, directional motives—where individuals process information to confirm preexisting attitudes—often dominate over accuracy goals. These motivations, compounded by elite rhetoric and media environments, exacerbate the spread and resilience of misinformation. They further highlight the role of identity protection and partisan cheerleading in sustaining false beliefs.

**8. Methods:** The review synthesizes empirical studies that employ diverse methodologies, including experiments, survey analyses, and content analyses. Key studies examine the cognitive and motivational mechanisms underlying misinformation, the effectiveness of correction strategies, and the measurement of confidence in factual beliefs. The authors discuss evidence from experimental manipulations of misinformation and corrective interventions, along with observational studies analyzing media content and public opinion data.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Directional motives often override accuracy goals, leading individuals to cling to false beliefs, particularly when those beliefs align with their partisan identities.
- Corrective efforts are less effective for partisan or highly politicized topics compared to less salient or neutral issues.
- Expressive responding, where individuals intentionally provide false answers to reaffirm their partisan identities, complicates the measurement and correction of misinformation.

All hypotheses are supported, though the authors note substantial variation in corrective outcomes based on issue type, source credibility, and individual motivations.

**10. Main findings:** Jerit and Zhao argue that political misinformation poses significant challenges for democratic accountability, as it undermines informed public opinion and policy preferences. The review highlights the central role of partisan attachments and directional reasoning in sustaining misinformation, noting that correction efforts are frequently unsuccessful due to motivational biases. However, corrections are more effective for issues that do not threaten individuals' political identities. The authors also emphasize the methodological challenges of distinguishing genuine

misperceptions from partisan cheerleading, calling for improved measurement strategies, such as incorporating confidence assessments and experimental designs that manipulate incentives for accuracy.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “Misinformation occurs when people hold incorrect factual beliefs and do so confidently, a phenomenon that plagues political systems and is exceedingly difficult to correct” (p. 77).
- “Directional motives contribute to the problem of misinformation insofar as they lead to biases in how people obtain and evaluate information about the political world” (p. 79).
- “The motivational component of political misinformation implies that the prospects for correcting false beliefs are dim, particularly for topics that are closely tied to one’s partisan or ideological identity” (p. 89).

### 2.4.12 Educative Interventions to Combat Misinformation: Evidence from a Field Experiment in India

Badrinathan, S. (2021). Educative Interventions to Combat Misinformation: Evidence from a Field Experiment in India. *American Political Science Review*, 115(4), 1325–1341. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421000459>

1. Citation key: badrinathan\_educative\_2021

2. Author(s): Sumitra Badrinathan

3. Year: 2021

4. Publication: American Political Science Review

5. Keywords: political misinformation, media literacy, partisan reasoning, India, field experiment

6. Summary: Badrinathan examines the effectiveness of a media literacy intervention to combat political misinformation in India. Conducted during the 2019 general elections, the field experiment involved 1,224 participants in Bihar who received a 60-minute in-person training module. The findings indicate no significant average treatment effect, although the intervention revealed partisan-motivated reasoning among supporters of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), who became less able to identify pro-attitudinal misinformation as false.

7. Theory: The study theorizes that political misinformation in India spreads due to low education, increasing internet penetration, and reliance on encrypted communication platforms like WhatsApp. Motivated reasoning, where individuals process information in a way that aligns with their preexisting beliefs, exacerbates the challenge. The intervention aimed to equip participants with practical tools (e.g., reverse image searches, navigation of fact-checking websites) to enhance their critical engagement with political misinformation, hypothesizing that these skills could mitigate misinformation’s effects despite the cognitive biases tied to partisan identities.

8. Methods: The research employed a randomized field experiment, dividing participants into three groups: a control group and two treatment groups receiving pro-BJP or anti-BJP misinformation corrections. The intervention consisted of media literacy training covering inoculation strategies and tools like reverse image searches. Outcomes were measured using respondents’ ability to identify misinformation from a series of 14 news stories, half of which were politically slanted. The study employed OLS regression models to estimate treatment effects and explored interaction effects of partisanship and other demographic factors.

### 9. Hypotheses:

- A media literacy intervention will increase participants’ ability to identify misinformation compared to a control group.
- Partisanship will moderate the intervention’s effectiveness, with supporters of the ruling BJP less likely to update beliefs about pro-BJP misinformation.
- Digital literacy and political sophistication will positively correlate with the ability to discern misinformation.

The first hypothesis was not supported. The second hypothesis was confirmed, as BJP partisans demonstrated significant backfire effects, while non-BJP respondents showed modest improvements. The third hypothesis yielded mixed results.

10. Main findings: The intervention had no significant average treatment effect on misinformation identification. However, BJP supporters experienced a backfire effect, becoming less capable of identifying pro-BJP misinformation. Non-BJP partisans improved slightly in discerning misinformation, particularly anti-BJP content. The findings highlight the resilience of partisan-motivated reasoning and the challenges of combating misinformation in polarized contexts. Additionally, demographic analyses revealed that education correlated positively with misinformation discernment, while digital literacy had an unexpected negative association.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “The treatment backfires for BJP respondents while simultaneously working to improve information processing for non-BJP respondents” (p. 1325).
- “Misinformation campaigns in India appear inherently political, with much of the content stemming from organized party efforts” (p. 1328).
- “Finding that a strong, in-person treatment does not change opinions demonstrates the resilience of misinformation in India” (p. 1334).

### 2.4.13 Measuring Misperceptions

Graham, M. H. (2023). Measuring Misperceptions? *American Political Science Review*, 117(1), 80–102. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422000387>

1. Citation key: graham\_measuring\_2023

2. **Author(s):** Matthew H. Graham
3. **Year:** 2023
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** misperceptions, survey responses, temporal stability, public opinion, political misinformation
6. **Summary:** Graham investigates whether survey measures of misperceptions accurately capture deeply held, confident beliefs or reflect a mix of guesses and momentary inferences. Through a series of surveys across topics such as government budgets, scientific controversies, and political misinformation, the study demonstrates that self-reported certainty often fails to indicate firm belief, particularly for incorrect answers. Instead, most misperceptions arise from "miseducated" or blind guesses, challenging the validity of existing measurement practices.
7. **Theory:** Graham critiques prevailing definitions of misperceptions that emphasize confidence and steadfastness, arguing that survey responses are often unstable and do not necessarily reflect deeply held beliefs. The author proposes that misperceptions are better understood through a continuum from blind guessing to firm, knowledgeable belief. This reconceptualization aligns with classic public opinion research, which views survey responses as constructed judgments based on available considerations. The study also emphasizes the need for empirical validation of survey measures to differentiate true misperceptions from other forms of uncertainty or error.
8. **Methods:** The study uses five surveys, including original panel data and questions from the American National Election Studies (ANES), to assess the temporal stability of respondents' beliefs. By examining regression to the mean in follow-up surveys, Graham evaluates whether initial responses labeled as misperceptions are consistent over time. The analysis includes topics such as foreign aid, politicized controversies, and scientific claims. A novel intervention based on frame-of-reference training is tested to improve the stability of responses, and results are analyzed using conditional expectation functions and experimental manipulations.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Self-reported certainty among survey respondents does not reliably indicate deeply held beliefs, particularly for incorrect answers.
  - Regression to the mean will be more pronounced for incorrect answers than for correct answers, reflecting the influence of guessing and error.
  - Interventions aimed at improving measurement accuracy, such as frame-of-reference training, will increase response stability.

The hypotheses were supported, with findings showing significant instability among respondents reporting high certainty for incorrect answers and improvements in stability following training interventions.
10. **Main findings:** Graham demonstrates that widely used survey measures of misperceptions fail to distinguish between confidently held false beliefs and other forms of mistaken responses, such as miseducated guesses. Incorrect responses exhibit significantly lower temporal stability than correct answers, even among those reporting absolute certainty. This instability challenges the interpretation of survey-based misperception studies as evidence of deeply held false beliefs. However, the study finds that targeted training interventions can improve the reliability of survey measures by enhancing respondents' understanding of confidence scales. The results call for a reassessment of the prevalence, predictors, and consequences of misperceptions in public opinion research.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Survey measures commonly cited as evidence of widespread misperceptions fail to capture the firm, deep, confidently held beliefs described in leading accounts" (p. 80).
  - "Claims to be highly certain of incorrect answers are best interpreted as 'miseducated' guesses based on mistaken inferential reasoning" (p. 81).
  - "The lack of correspondence between prevailing interpretations of measured misperceptions and their observable measurement properties calls for a reassessment of existing evidence" (p. 89).

## 2.5 Heuristics and Decision Making

### 2.5.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Research on heuristics and decision-making in political science bridges cognitive psychology and rational choice theory, emphasizing the systematic biases introduced by heuristic reasoning. Foundational contributions by Tversky and Kahneman demonstrated how heuristics simplify decision-making under uncertainty but often lead to predictable errors. Subsequent studies expanded these insights to explore the roles of information shortcuts, elite cues, and psychological biases in voter behavior, emphasizing the interplay between cognitive efficiency and decision reliability. Contemporary research examines the limitations of heuristics in real-world contexts, highlighting the conditions under which they enhance or hinder democratic accountability.
- **Foundational Theories of Heuristics:** Tversky and Kahneman's seminal work on heuristics identified three key mechanisms—representativeness, availability, and anchoring—that simplify probability assessments but introduce systematic biases. Their findings challenged rational choice models by illustrating how cognitive shortcuts often neglect statistical principles, such as base rates and sample size considerations. These insights laid the groundwork for understanding judgment errors in political decision-making, from biased evaluations of risk to overconfidence in probabilistic reasoning.
- **Heuristics in Political Campaigns:** Popkin's theory of "low-information rationality" reframed heuristics as practical tools for voters navigating complex political environments. By relying on cues such as candidate image, endorsements,

and economic signals, voters approximate informed decisions despite limited knowledge. Popkin emphasized that campaigns strategically structure information to align with heuristic processing, enabling voters to make decisions consistent with their preferences while minimizing cognitive effort.

- **The Role of Elite Cues:** Darmofal critiqued optimistic accounts of heuristic-based decision-making, arguing that elite polarization often exacerbates public disagreement with expert opinion. His analysis demonstrated that elite cues, while simplifying information, can mislead voters when political discourse diverges from expert consensus. This finding underscores the dual-edged nature of heuristics, which can both aid and hinder effective decision-making depending on the informational and motivational context.
- **Psychological Realism and Political Manipulation:** Lupia and Menning explored the strategic use of fear appeals in political messaging, emphasizing the conditions under which citizens are most susceptible to manipulation. Their game-theoretic model integrated psychological insights about automatic fear responses, highlighting how contextual factors, such as feedback availability and issue salience, constrain the success of fear-based tactics. This research expanded the understanding of heuristics by linking cognitive processes to strategic political behavior.
- **Heuristics in Low-Information Elections:** Bernhard and Freeder examined voter reliance on heuristics in local and nonpartisan elections, where traditional cues like party affiliation are absent. Their findings revealed that political sophistication plays a crucial role in determining the quality of information voters seek and use. While heuristics enable efficient candidate evaluation, less sophisticated voters often rely on irrelevant or unverifiable considerations, highlighting the limitations of heuristic reasoning in unstructured informational environments.
- **Critiques and Limitations of Heuristics:** Broockman, Kaufman, and Lenz's research on heuristic projection challenged the efficacy of interest group cues in improving voter competence. Their findings demonstrated that voters often misinterpret cues due to psychological biases, such as projecting their own preferences onto unfamiliar groups. This misattribution reduces the utility of heuristics as tools for democratic accountability, emphasizing the need for voter education and institutional interventions to mitigate cognitive distortions.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Current debates focus on the conditions under which heuristics enhance versus hinder political judgment. Scholars examine how digital media, partisan polarization, and institutional design influence the effectiveness of heuristics in guiding voter behavior. Future research is likely to explore the interplay between heuristic reasoning and technological innovations, such as algorithmic content curation, and the role of institutional reforms in fostering more informed and accountable citizen decision-making.

### 2.5.2 Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases

Tversky, A., & Kahneman, D. (1974). Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases [Publisher: American Association for the Advancement of Science]. *Science*, 185(4157), 1124–1131. Retrieved January 19, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1738360>

1. **Citation key:** tversky\_judgment\_1974
2. **Author(s):** Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman
3. **Year:** 1974
4. **Publication:** Science
5. **Keywords:** heuristics, biases, judgment, uncertainty, cognitive psychology
6. **Summary:** Tversky and Kahneman explore how people make judgments under uncertainty using heuristic principles. While heuristics often simplify decision-making processes, they can lead to systematic and predictable errors. The authors focus on three key heuristics—representativeness, availability, and anchoring—illustrating their role in shaping probabilistic judgments and identifying common biases associated with each.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that individuals rely on heuristic principles to simplify the complex task of probability assessment and value prediction. These heuristics, though economical and often effective, are prone to biases due to their reliance on subjective judgment rather than normative statistical principles. For example, representativeness assesses probabilities based on similarity to a stereotype, neglecting base rates and sample size. Availability relies on the ease of recalling examples, leading to distortions influenced by salience or recency. Anchoring involves initial estimates serving as reference points that bias final judgments. The theory challenges rational models of decision-making by emphasizing cognitive shortcuts and their systematic errors.
8. **Methods:** The authors employ experimental studies to demonstrate biases caused by heuristics. In one experiment, participants judged the likelihood of events based on descriptions (e.g., the representativeness of a person for a profession) while ignoring base rates. Another experiment explored availability by showing that participants judged more familiar or vivid occurrences as more frequent. In anchoring studies, numerical estimates varied significantly depending on initial arbitrary values provided to participants. These methods highlight deviations from normative rules like Bayes' theorem and sampling theory.
9. **Hypotheses:** Tversky and Kahneman hypothesize that heuristics like representativeness, availability, and anchoring guide human judgment but produce biases. Their experiments confirm:
  - Representativeness leads to neglect of base rates and insensitivity to sample size.
  - Availability skews frequency judgments based on retrievability and salience.
  - Anchoring causes insufficient adjustment from initial values, biasing estimates.
10. **Main findings:** Tversky and Kahneman demonstrate that heuristics introduce systematic errors in judgment under uncertainty. Representativeness biases occur when individuals assess probabilities based on similarity, neglecting base

rates and statistical principles. Availability biases arise from the salience or retrievability of examples, skewing judgments of frequency or likelihood. Anchoring biases are evident when initial reference points distort final estimates, even when those anchors are irrelevant or arbitrary. These findings illustrate the limits of human intuition in probabilistic reasoning and have broad implications for decision-making in various contexts, from individual choices to policy judgments.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “This article shows that people rely on a limited number of heuristic principles which reduce the complex tasks of assessing probabilities and predicting values to simpler judgmental operations” (p. 1124).
- “The failure to understand the effect of regression leads one to overestimate the effectiveness of punishment and to underestimate the effectiveness of reward” (p. 1128).
- “The general tendency to overestimate the probability of conjunctive events leads to unwarranted optimism in the evaluation of the likelihood that a plan will succeed or that a project will be completed on time” (p. 1129).

#### 2.5.3 The Value of Biased Information: A Rational Choice Model of Political Advice

Calvert, R. L. (1985). The Value of Biased Information: A Rational Choice Model of Political Advice [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 47(2), 530–555. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2130895>

1. Citation key: calvert\_value\_1985

2. Author(s): Randall L. Calvert

3. Year: 1985

4. Publication: The Journal of Politics

5. Keywords: rational choice, biased information, political advice, utility maximization, Bayesian learning

6. Summary: Calvert examines the role of biased information in political decision-making through a rational choice model. The study explores how political actors, constrained by imperfect and costly information, use advice from biased and neutral sources to improve decision quality. It demonstrates that biased advice can be optimal under specific conditions, challenging conventional notions that unbiased information is always preferable.

7. Theory: The author develops a model grounded in utility maximization to analyze the decision-making process when actors rely on advisors with known biases. Unlike bounded rationality approaches, which assume cognitive limits, this model derives bounded behavior directly from imperfections in knowledge and advice. Biased information can be more valuable than neutral advice when the advisor's known bias aligns strategically with the decision maker's needs. For example, biased advice helps reduce the likelihood of major errors by offering a different perspective on extreme scenarios, even when the advice has no inherent cost advantages.

8. Methods: Calvert uses a Bayesian framework to model decision-making under uncertainty. The model assumes decision makers are utility-maximizing actors with incomplete information, who update their beliefs based on probabilistic advice from biased and unbiased sources. The study evaluates the utility of biased information under varying conditions, including differences in initial predispositions and advisor bias levels. The analysis incorporates Bayesian updating to predict how advice influences choices, emphasizing the tradeoffs between accuracy, bias, and decision quality.

9. Hypotheses: The study hypothesizes that:

- Biased information can be more valuable than unbiased information when the bias aligns with the decision maker's objectives.
- Decision makers with strong predispositions are more likely to prefer biased advisors because neutral advice is less likely to alter their initial beliefs.
- Rational actors selectively seek advice from biased sources to maximize decision quality under conditions of uncertainty.

The hypotheses are supported by the model's predictions, showing that biased advice can optimize decision outcomes under specific configurations of information costs and biases.

10. Main findings: The analysis reveals that biased advice is often preferable to neutral information in contexts where the decision maker's prior beliefs, costs of information, and the nature of advice align. Biased advisors provide value by offering insights that neutral sources may not, particularly in situations where surprising or counterintuitive information could shift the decision maker's preferences. For predisposed decision makers, biased sources are more effective at challenging entrenched beliefs. The study also demonstrates that the utility of biased advice varies predictably with changes in environmental conditions, such as the level of bias or the decision maker's initial uncertainty.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Even in this simple problem, the decision maker may prefer information that is biased. The rational decision maker should engage in selective exposure or ‘bolstering’ under certain reasonable circumstances” (p. 531).
- “The results are sometimes counterintuitive. There are, for example, perfectly ordinary circumstances in which the rational decision maker prefers a biased source of information over a neutral one” (p. 532).
- “Optimal use of information has several counterintuitive features... Depending on particular conditions of uncertainty and information costs, rational choice may call for seemingly irrational use of information” (p. 554).

### 2.5.4 The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns

Popkin, S. L. (1991, October). *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns*. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** popkin\_reasoning\_1991
2. **Author(s):** Samuel L. Popkin
3. **Year:** 1991
4. **Publication:** The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns (University of Chicago Press)
5. **Keywords:** voter behavior, heuristics, political campaigns, information shortcuts, rational choice theory
6. **Summary:** Popkin introduces the concept of “low-information rationality,” suggesting that voters make political decisions by relying on heuristics and informational shortcuts. He argues that these cognitive tools allow voters to make reasoned and effective choices despite limited political knowledge. By examining presidential campaigns, Popkin demonstrates how voters integrate observations from their daily lives, media coverage, and political cues into their decision-making process.
7. **Theory:** Popkin’s theory of low-information rationality challenges the idea that voters need comprehensive political knowledge to make rational choices. Instead, voters rely on accessible cues, such as a candidate’s image, media frames, and economic signals, to form judgments. The theory is rooted in rational choice principles, emphasizing that voters economize on information acquisition by using heuristics like the representativeness heuristic, recency effects, and the framing of alternatives. Popkin further contends that campaigns are structured to provide these cues, making it possible for even minimally informed voters to participate effectively in elections.
8. **Methods:** Popkin employs a mixed-methods approach, including case studies of presidential campaigns, analyses of voter surveys, and qualitative interpretations of media coverage. He focuses on how candidates frame issues and how voters process and interpret these frames. Using examples from multiple election cycles, Popkin illustrates how campaigns strategically disseminate information to influence voter perceptions. The book draws on cognitive psychology, particularly research on heuristics, to explain voter behavior.
9. **Hypotheses:** Popkin hypothesizes that:
  - Voters rely on heuristics and shortcuts to make decisions in low-information environments.
  - Campaigns are structured to provide voters with cues that align with their predispositions and simplify complex political information.
  - Despite limited information, voters can make decisions that approximate those made under fully informed conditions.

These hypotheses are supported by evidence from voter behavior and campaign strategies in various presidential elections.

10. **Main findings:** Popkin’s analysis reveals that voters are not irrational or uninformed but instead utilize heuristics to navigate political complexity. Campaigns play a crucial role in shaping these shortcuts, emphasizing candidate traits, economic conditions, and key issues to guide voter perceptions. He finds that voters often make decisions that are consistent with their preferences and values, even when their understanding of policy details is limited. Popkin highlights the dynamic interplay between voter cognition and campaign strategy, demonstrating how candidates tailor their messages to resonate with heuristic-driven decision-making.

#### 11. Key definitions:

- *Low-information rationality:* The process by which voters use heuristics and shortcuts to make political decisions in the absence of extensive knowledge.
- *Heuristics:* Cognitive shortcuts, such as representativeness and recency, that simplify decision-making by reducing the cognitive effort required to process information.
- *Framing:* The strategic presentation of information by candidates to shape voter perceptions and guide their choices.
- *Gut reasoning:* Practical, intuitive thinking that voters use when evaluating political candidates and issues, based on their experiences and contextual cues.

### 2.5.5 Public Opinion and Heuristic Processing of Source Cues

Mondak, J. J. [Jeffery J.]. (1993). Public Opinion and Heuristic Processing of Source Cues [Publisher: Springer]. *Political Behavior*, 15(2), 167–192. Retrieved January 19, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/586448>

1. **Citation key:** mondak\_public\_1993
2. **Author(s):** Jeffery J. Mondak
3. **Year:** 1993
4. **Publication:** Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** heuristics, public opinion, source cues, cognitive efficiency, bounded rationality
6. **Summary:** Mondak examines the role of heuristic processing in public opinion formation, specifically focusing on the influence of source cues—references to prominent political figures—on citizens’ judgments. He argues that heuristic strategies allow individuals to form efficient and reliable political opinions even in the absence of extensive deliberation or substantive knowledge. The study highlights how source cues can shape both opinion holding (whether a

person expresses an opinion) and opinion direction (the specific stance taken).

**7. Theory:** Drawing from cognitive psychology and rational choice theory, Mondak proposes that political judgments often rely on heuristic shortcuts due to constraints in cognitive capacity and information availability. He builds on Downsian economics and bounded rationality, suggesting that heuristic processing meets the dual demands of cognitive efficiency and decision reliability. Source cues serve as a prominent heuristic tool, enabling individuals to transfer their evaluations of political leaders to associated issues or policies. This approach aligns with the Elaboration Likelihood Model, where heuristic processing represents a peripheral route to persuasion, distinct from central, more deliberative processing.

**8. Methods:** Mondak employs quasi-experimental designs and survey data from a 1982 California Poll to test his hypotheses. The study compares responses under two conditions: with and without explicit source cues linking judicial candidates to their appointing governors. Using logit models, Mondak analyzes the effects of source cues on opinion holding and direction, while also accounting for variables such as cognitive need, source salience, and partisanship. The inclusion of interaction terms allows for a nuanced examination of how individual-level factors mediate the impact of heuristic processing.

**9. Hypotheses:** Mondak hypothesizes that:

- Source cues increase the likelihood of opinion holding by reducing cognitive demands.
- The influence of source cues on opinion direction is mediated by respondents' evaluations of the associated political leader and their need for cognitive efficiency.
- Heuristic reliance varies based on individual cognitive capacity and contextual salience of the issue or leader.

These hypotheses are supported, showing that source cues significantly affect both opinion holding and direction under conditions of low substantive knowledge.

**10. Main findings:** Mondak finds that source cues enhance opinion holding by providing accessible cognitive shortcuts for individuals with limited knowledge or high efficiency needs. The direction of opinions is strongly influenced by the respondent's evaluation of the political leader referenced in the cue, with stronger effects for those holding extreme views on the leader. While partisanship plays a role in shaping responses, it is less potent than the direct transfer of leader evaluations. Contextual salience, such as media coverage, reduces the need for heuristic reliance, demonstrating the conditional nature of heuristic effects.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Heuristic processing, reliance on simple rules of judgment, provides a cognitive mechanism that may enable citizens to advance informed yet efficient issue appraisals" (p. 167).
- "In processing political messages, both cognitive and economic forces compel the citizen to strive for efficiency. Hence, we should expect individuals to operate within the constraints of bounded rationality" (p. 168).
- "Source cues guide opinion direction because they link new judgments to citizens' existing political beliefs... The precise effect depends on characteristics of the decision maker" (p. 183).

### 2.5.6 The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Know?

Lupia, A., & McCubbins, M. D. (1998, March). *The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Know?* [Google-Books-ID: 2Vv6BhLC6HUC]. Cambridge University Press

**1. Citation key:** lupia\_democratic\_1998

**2. Author(s):** Arthur Lupia and Mathew D. McCubbins

**3. Year:** 1998

**4. Publication:** The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Know? (Cambridge University Press)

**5. Keywords:** voter knowledge, political learning, principal-agent theory, heuristics, political decision-making

**6. Summary:** Lupia and McCubbins address the question of whether citizens can acquire enough information to make reasoned decisions in democratic governance. They argue that individuals can make informed choices without extensive knowledge by relying on cues and signals from knowledgeable and trustworthy sources. The authors explore how institutional designs, communication structures, and incentives influence learning and decision-making processes for voters, legislators, and jurors.

**7. Theory:** Lupia and McCubbins build their framework on principal-agent theory and rational choice principles, positing that voters (principals) can delegate authority to political actors (agents) effectively if they identify reliable information sources. They argue that two conditions are critical for effective learning: the *knowledge condition*, where the information source is informed, and the *incentive condition*, where the source has a reason to convey truthful information. Institutions can enhance decision-making by creating accountability mechanisms, such as legal penalties for dishonesty, which incentivize agents to provide accurate information. The authors emphasize that even with limited knowledge, citizens can navigate complex political landscapes using these cues.

**8. Methods:** The authors employ a combination of theoretical modeling, experimental studies, and survey research. Their experiments simulate principal-agent dynamics using tasks where participants make decisions based on information provided by other participants acting as "speakers." The experiments vary the speakers' incentives to be truthful, their level of knowledge, and the principals' awareness of these factors. Additionally, survey data is used to examine real-world examples of how voters interpret cues from public figures in forming policy opinions.

**9. Hypotheses:** Lupia and McCubbins hypothesize that:

- Voters can make reasoned choices when they identify and rely on credible, knowledgeable, and incentivized

sources of information.

- Institutional mechanisms that promote truthful communication enhance the public's ability to learn from these sources.
- Heuristics, such as party affiliation or endorsements by trusted figures, enable voters to approximate informed decision-making without extensive deliberation.

These hypotheses are supported by experimental findings demonstrating the efficacy of cues under specific conditions and by survey evidence illustrating how voters use heuristics to align their preferences with policy outcomes.

**10. Main findings:** Lupia and McCubbins conclude that citizens can learn what they need to know to make effective decisions under certain conditions. Their experiments show that principals are more likely to trust and follow recommendations from speakers who meet the knowledge and incentive conditions. However, the authors acknowledge limitations, such as voters' challenges in identifying trustworthy sources and the potential for deception by political actors. The study highlights the role of institutions in mitigating these issues through mechanisms like transparency and accountability. The findings extend beyond voter behavior, addressing decision-making in legislative oversight and jury deliberations.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Principal-agent theory*: A framework that examines relationships where one party (the principal) delegates authority to another (the agent) to act on their behalf, emphasizing challenges like information asymmetry and trust.
- *Knowledge condition*: The requirement that an information source possesses sufficient expertise or accurate information to be reliable.
- *Incentive condition*: The necessity for an information source to have motivations aligned with providing truthful and useful information.
- *Reasoned choice*: Decisions made by individuals that reflect their preferences and are informed by accessible and credible information, even in the absence of detailed policy knowledge.

#### 2.5.7 The Political Environment and Citizen Competence

Kuklinski, J. H., Quirk, P. J., Jerit, J., & Rich, R. F. (2001). The Political Environment and Citizen Competence [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(2), 410–424. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2669349>

**1. Citation key:** kuklinski\_political\_2001

**2. Author(s):** James H. Kuklinski, Paul J. Quirk, Jennifer Jerit, and Robert F. Rich

**3. Year:** 2001

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** political environment, citizen competence, heuristics, information, motivation, tradeoffs

**6. Summary:** Kuklinski, Quirk, Jerit, and Rich explore the role of the political environment in shaping citizen competence. They challenge the optimistic view of the heuristics literature by arguing that the political environment can both enhance and inhibit political judgment. Using survey experiments focused on healthcare reform, the authors examine the effects of informational and motivational conditions on citizens' ability to make tradeoffs between competing goals.

**7. Theory:** The authors contend that citizen competence in political decision-making is not solely a function of individual cognitive abilities or political sophistication but is deeply influenced by the political environment. They identify two critical components: the *diagnostic value of information*, which refers to the clarity and relevance of information provided, and *motivational inducements*, which encourage citizens to take decision-making seriously. When these two elements align, citizens are more likely to make informed and responsible decisions. The authors argue that the interaction between information and motivation determines whether environmental conditions enable citizens to rise above inherent limitations in knowledge and cognitive capacity.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a survey experiment conducted with 1,160 adults in Illinois. Participants were exposed to different environmental conditions, including variations in the quality of information and motivational cues, to simulate real-world political contexts. The dependent variable measured participants' ability to make tradeoffs among conflicting goals in healthcare reform. Statistical analyses, including regression and ordered probit models, assessed the effects of these manipulations on decision-making performance. Key independent variables included education, political sophistication, and exposure to experimental treatments.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Higher diagnostic value of information improves citizen decision-making by clarifying tradeoffs.
- Motivational cues enhance performance only when accompanied by diagnostic information.
- In highly informative environments, individual attributes such as education and political sophistication have less impact on performance.

Results confirm these hypotheses, showing the critical interplay between information and motivation in shaping competence.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that citizens perform poorly in environments devoid of information and motivation, often failing to recognize necessary tradeoffs. General informational cues or motivational inducements alone do not significantly improve performance. However, when these elements are combined, citizens demonstrate a greater capacity for tradeoff-conscious decision-making. In highly diagnostic environments, the effects of individual attributes like education and sophistication diminish, suggesting that clear and accessible information can level the playing field.

The findings highlight the importance of structuring political environments to facilitate informed and responsible citizen participation.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “Motivation has an important effect on decision making only in an intermediate range of the information’s diagnostic value” (p. 411).
- “In an environment that explicitly states the limits of the feasible, neither induced motivation nor cognitive advantage appears to be necessary to tradeoff-conscious behavior” (p. 412).
- “The much-lamented limitations of citizen competence are less inherent in the capabilities and dispositions that individuals bring to politics and more a consequence of deficiencies in the political environment” (p. 423).

#### 2.5.8 Elite Cues and Citizen Disagreement with Expert Opinion

Darmofal, D. (2005). Elite Cues and Citizen Disagreement with Expert Opinion [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 58(3), 381–395. <https://doi.org/10.1177/106591290505800302>

1. **Citation key:** darmofal\_elite\_2005
2. **Author(s):** David Darmofal
3. **Year:** 2005
4. **Publication:** Political Research Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** elite cues, public opinion, citizen competence, heuristics, policy disagreement, expert opinion
6. **Summary:** Darmofal investigates the circumstances under which citizens diverge from expert opinions on public policy issues. The study challenges optimistic views of heuristic-based decision-making by arguing that elite cues often exacerbate public disagreement with experts, depending on the structure of elite discourse. Using survey data on issues like the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), nuclear energy safety, Japanese investment, and AIDS quarantines, Darmofal examines how elite polarization and individual attributes influence citizen judgments.
7. **Theory:** Darmofal critiques the heuristics literature for assuming that elite cues consistently guide citizens toward informed decisions. He argues that while cues can simplify decision-making, they often lead to divergence from expert opinions when elites are polarized or when citizens are tethered to trusted elites. The theory posits that disagreement with experts arises from three factors: elite polarization, citizens' preexisting biases toward cue-givers, and individual characteristics such as knowledge and personal experience. This framework emphasizes that political environments can either aid or hinder citizen decision-making based on the alignment between elite cues and expert consensus.
8. **Methods:** Darmofal employs a combination of survey data from 165 ABC News and 53 CBS News polls conducted between 1977 and 1996, focusing on four policy issues: SDI, nuclear energy safety, Japanese investment in the U.S., and AIDS quarantines. He identifies instances of expert consensus (defined as at least 75% agreement among policy experts) and examines how elite cues and individual attributes shaped public disagreement with experts. Probit regression models and predicted probabilities are used to assess the effects of variables such as partisan identification, presidential approval, education, and policy-specific knowledge.
9. **Hypotheses:** Darmofal hypothesizes that:
  - Citizens are more likely to disagree with experts when elites are polarized and when partisan elites challenge expert opinion.
  - Knowledge and education reduce disagreement with experts, but these effects are contingent on the policy issue.
  - Affective biases, such as trust in elite cue-givers, exacerbate disagreement with expert opinion.
 The hypotheses are supported, with results demonstrating that elite polarization and affective biases significantly shape public disagreement, while knowledge plays a more limited role.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that elite cues often lead citizens to diverge from expert opinions, particularly when partisan elites challenge expert consensus. Citizens exhibit strong partisan and source effects, with Republicans more likely to support SDI and Democrats more likely to question nuclear energy safety. While knowledge generally reduces disagreement, its impact varies by issue. For instance, better-educated respondents were less likely to disagree with experts on SDI but more likely to question nuclear energy safety due to media coverage. The findings highlight that heuristics and elite cues are unreliable shortcuts for effective decision-making, emphasizing the need for knowledge as a more consistent route to sound judgments.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Elite cues are not a consistent means to effective policy judgments. Instead, when it comes to reaching effective policy decisions, there is no substitute for knowledge” (p. 381).
  - “Aggregate disagreement with expert opinion was shaped significantly by political elites’ cues. Citizens were much less likely to agree with expert opinion when political elites challenged this opinion” (p. 387).
  - “The inherent problem with cue taking as a shortcut for decision making is that many citizens appear unable or unwilling to separate accurate cues from questionable ones” (p. 393).

#### 2.5.9 When Can Politicians Scare Citizens Into Supporting Bad Policies?

Lupia, A., & Menning, J. O. (2009). When Can Politicians Scare Citizens Into Supporting Bad Policies? [Leprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00359.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(1), 90–106. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00359.x>

1. **Citation key:** lupia\_when\_2009

2. **Author(s):** Arthur Lupia and Jesse O. Menning
3. **Year:** 2009
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** fear, political manipulation, game theory, psychological realism, citizen competence
6. **Summary:** Lupia and Menning analyze when and how politicians can use fear to manipulate citizens into supporting policies they might otherwise reject. They develop a game-theoretic model integrating psychological insights about fear responses to examine conditions under which politicians exploit citizen fear strategically. The authors challenge simplistic assumptions about fear-based political manipulation and highlight the role of psychological and contextual factors in shaping citizen responses.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that fear-based political manipulation is conditioned by the interplay between political strategy and psychological realism. Politicians exploit fear when it serves their utility, but their success depends on citizens' capacity to process feedback and inhibit automatic responses. Lupia and Menning assert that initial fear responses are automatic, but subsequent behavior can adapt based on feedback mechanisms and individual learning. The theory emphasizes that manipulation is not uniformly successful but varies with political context, citizen traits, and issue salience.
8. **Methods:** The authors employ a formal two-period game-theoretic model featuring a strategic politician and a partially strategic citizen. The model incorporates psychological premises about fear, such as automaticity and the role of feedback in shaping future responses. Key parameters include the likelihood of receiving informative feedback, the citizen's ability to inhibit fear responses, and the politician's cost of sending false signals. The equilibrium analysis reveals conditions under which politicians succeed or fail in using fear to manipulate.
9. **Hypotheses:** Lupia and Menning hypothesize that:
  - Politicians are more likely to use fear-based appeals when citizens are unlikely to receive feedback or adapt their responses.
  - Citizens with higher capacities for feedback-driven learning are less susceptible to fear manipulation.
  - Fear-based manipulation is more effective for ambiguous or distant threats where feedback is harder to obtain.
 These hypotheses are supported, with the model illustrating how variations in feedback availability and issue salience constrain or enable political manipulation.
10. **Main findings:** The authors find that fear appeals are effective only under specific conditions. Politicians exploit fear when they perceive low reputational costs and when citizens lack mechanisms to process corrective feedback. Issues characterized by ambiguity or distance (e.g., foreign terrorism) are more prone to fear-based manipulation, as citizens face greater challenges in assessing the validity of claims. Conversely, the availability of competitive information and robust feedback mechanisms diminishes the effectiveness of fear appeals. The findings underscore the importance of contextual and psychological factors in moderating the relationship between fear and political manipulation.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The politician's ability to manipulate through fear depends on how his current public support and expectations about the future interact with key attributes of the citizen's psychology" (p. 91).
  - "Fear appeals are most effective when issues are abstract, distant, or ambiguous—circumstances where feedback mechanisms are least likely to constrain manipulation" (p. 99).
  - "Laws or other social forces that fuel competitive information transmission can limit a politician's ability to scare citizens into supporting policies that they would otherwise reject" (p. 101).

#### 2.5.10 The More You Know: Voter Heuristics and the Information Search

Bernhard, R., & Freeder, S. (2020). The More You Know: Voter Heuristics and the Information Search. *Political Behavior*, 42(2), 603–623. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-018-9512-2>

1. **Citation key:** bernhard\_more\_2020
2. **Author(s):** Rachel Bernhard and Sean Freeder
3. **Year:** 2020
4. **Publication:** Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** heuristics, information search, local elections, voter competence, decision-making, political sophistication
6. **Summary:** Bernhard and Freeder examine the strategies voters use to gather information in low-information elections, such as local, nonpartisan, or primary contests, where traditional cues like party affiliation are unavailable. Through three survey experiments, the authors investigate voters' ability to request, acquire, and evaluate information about candidates, focusing on how political sophistication influences the quality of their decision-making. They find that while voters employ heuristics to eliminate undesirable candidates, the less sophisticated often rely on vague, irrelevant, or unverifiable considerations.
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the assumption that heuristics always lead to informed decision-making, particularly in low-information elections. They argue that citizens use a "deal-breaker" heuristic to eliminate candidates who fail to meet their most important criteria. However, the effectiveness of this approach depends on the political sophistication of the voter. Sophisticated voters seek specific, relevant, and verifiable information, while less sophisticated voters rely on personalistic and often irrelevant factors. The theory highlights the limitations of heuristic decision-making in the absence of structured information environments and the role of voter education in mitigating these deficiencies.
8. **Methods:** The study is based on three survey experiments involving 3,678 participants recruited from Mechanical

Turk and Survey Sampling International. Respondents were presented with hypothetical candidates running for offices ranging from local (e.g., clerk, comptroller, judge) to national (e.g., governor, president). Using open-ended questions, participants were asked to specify the information they would need to cast an informed vote. Responses were coded for content (e.g., policy, personal traits, political affiliation) and quality (e.g., relevance, specificity, verifiability). Statistical analyses, including t-tests and regressions, evaluated variations in search strategies by political knowledge, education, and the level of office.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors propose the following hypotheses:

- Voters prioritize information that allows them to eliminate undesirable candidates quickly (the “deal-breaker” heuristic).
- Politically sophisticated voters are more likely to request high-quality information that is specific, relevant, and verifiable.
- Information searches become less efficient and more personalistic as the salience of the office decreases.

The findings confirm these hypotheses, demonstrating significant differences in information search quality and strategy based on voter sophistication and office level.

**10. Main findings:** The study reveals that voters rely on a deal-breaker heuristic, harshly penalizing candidates who fail to meet their key criteria while gradually warming to those who do. Politically sophisticated voters request verifiable and specific information, such as policy stances and endorsements, while less sophisticated voters focus on personal traits and vague generalities. This gap is especially pronounced in low-salience elections, where many voters struggle to assess candidates’ qualifications effectively. The results highlight the need for institutional interventions, such as voter guides or online tools, to enhance the quality of information available to the electorate.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Respondents report prioritizing political and policy information over factors like race and gender, and domain experience over policy where appropriate; however, less-knowledgeable citizens rely more on personalistic considerations” (p. 612).
- “We find evidence that citizens make use of a ‘deal-breaker’ heuristic when searching for political information about candidates, prioritizing information that helps them eliminate unsuitable candidates quickly” (p. 618).
- “Many citizens appear comfortable basing their decisions on information gleaned from unverifiable, vague, or irrelevant searches, especially for less-known local offices” (p. 620).

### 2.5.11 Heuristic Projection: Why Interest Group Cues May Fail to Help Citizens Hold Politicians Accountable

Broockman, D. E., Kaufman, A. R., & Lenz, G. S. (2024). Heuristic Projection: Why Interest Group Cues May Fail to Help Citizens Hold Politicians Accountable. *British Journal of Political Science*, 54(1), 69–87. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123423000078>

**1. Citation key:** broockman\_heuristic\_2024

**2. Author(s):** David E. Broockman, Aaron R. Kaufman, and Gabriel S. Lenz

**3. Year:** 2024

**4. Publication:** British Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** heuristics, interest groups, voter competence, accountability, psychological biases

**6. Summary:** Broockman, Kaufman, and Lenz explore the efficacy of interest group (SIG) cues in enabling voters to hold politicians accountable. Through a series of survey experiments involving real interest groups and respondents’ actual representatives, the authors demonstrate that voters often misinterpret SIG cues due to heuristic projection, a psychological bias where individuals project their own preferences onto interest groups they are unfamiliar with. This misinterpretation undermines the conventional wisdom that SIG cues improve voter competence.

**7. Theory:** The authors challenge the established view that SIG cues provide voters with valuable information for assessing their representatives. Instead, they argue that voter ignorance and heuristic projection distort the effectiveness of these cues. Heuristic projection leads voters to assume that unfamiliar SIGs align with their own ideological preferences. This false consensus bias causes voters to misattribute agreement with their representatives even when SIG endorsements signal the opposite. The authors posit that these biases reduce the utility of SIG cues as tools for democratic accountability.

**8. Methods:** The study includes three survey experiments with a combined sample size exceeding 10,000 respondents. Participants were shown real SIG ratings of their actual representatives and asked to evaluate their representatives’ positions and actions. The experiments tested (1) respondents’ ability to correctly interpret SIG ideologies (Study 1), (2) the effect of SIG ratings on perceptions of representatives’ votes (Studies 2a and 2b), and (3) the impact of SIG cues on voter approval of representatives (Study 3). Statistical analyses included regression models with fixed effects to isolate the causal effects of SIG ratings on voter perceptions and approval.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Voters are largely unaware of SIG stances, leading to widespread heuristic projection.
- SIG ratings do not significantly improve voters’ accuracy in identifying representatives’ positions.
- Positive SIG ratings, irrespective of alignment, increase voter approval of representatives.

These hypotheses are supported by findings across all studies.

**10. Main findings:** The authors reveal that voters frequently project their preferences onto SIGs they do not recognize, assuming alignment where none exists. This projection leads to systematic misinterpretations of SIG ratings, reducing

their utility as heuristics for democratic accountability. Study 1 finds that respondents rarely correctly identify SIG ideologies. Studies 2a and 2b show that SIG ratings do not improve voters' accuracy in perceiving representatives' policy stances. Study 3 demonstrates that voters are more likely to approve of representatives receiving positive SIG ratings, regardless of whether the SIG aligns with their own preferences. These results suggest that SIG cues may exacerbate, rather than mitigate, voter misjudgments.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "We find that citizens often project their own views onto interest groups, even when those groups are clearly misaligned with their preferences, a phenomenon we call heuristic projection" (p. 73).
- "Positive SIG ratings increase voter approval of representatives across the board, even when voters disagree with the SIG, suggesting that these cues may distort rather than enhance accountability" (p. 84).
- "Our findings raise serious doubts about the traditional view that SIG cues improve voter competence by helping citizens make more accurate inferences about their representatives' actions" (p. 86).

## 2.6 Citizen Competence and Information Processing

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### 2.6.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of heuristics, citizen competence, and information processing in political science explores how individuals navigate complex political environments with limited information. Foundational research highlights the dual roles of heuristics as both simplifying mechanisms and sources of systematic biases. Recent work investigates the conditions under which heuristics and experiential knowledge support or hinder effective decision-making, emphasizing the importance of context, elite cues, and information accessibility in shaping voter behavior and political judgments.
- **Impression-Driven Candidate Evaluation:** Lodge, McGraw, and Stroh's (1989) impression-driven model challenges traditional memory-based approaches to candidate evaluation. They argue that voters form dynamic "on-line" judgments as they encounter information, integrating new details into a cumulative evaluation separate from memory retrieval. Experimental findings confirm that on-line evaluations better predict candidate preferences than recalled information, emphasizing heuristic-driven processing and systematic biases like stereotyping and projection.
- **Accessibility of Partisan and Ideological Orientations:** Huckfeldt et al. (1999) demonstrate that the accessibility of partisan and ideological identifications enhances their utility as heuristic tools. Using response latency data, the authors show that accessible orientations improve consistency in political judgments, strengthen ideological-partisan alignment, and bolster resistance to persuasion. This research underscores the importance of cognitive accessibility in enabling voters to navigate political complexity effectively.
- **Citizen Competence and Conceptual Clarity:** Kuklinski and Quirk (2001) critique traditional measures of citizen competence, emphasizing the need for rigorous frameworks that account for task-specific criteria and broader evaluative standards. Their analysis highlights the methodological challenges of assessing competence in the absence of definitive "right" decisions, advocating for nuanced criteria like "acting as if well-informed" to better capture the complexities of democratic engagement.
- **Limits of Framing Effects:** Druckman (2001) examines how source credibility constrains framing effects, showing that citizens selectively accept frames based on the perceived trustworthiness and expertise of the source. Experimental results reveal that credible sources significantly influence public opinion and the perceived importance of considerations, while noncredible sources have negligible effects. This research challenges assumptions about elite manipulation, emphasizing citizens' rational delegation in processing political information.
- **Ballot Proposition Awareness and the Political Environment:** Nicholson (2003) highlights the role of environmental factors, such as media coverage, campaign spending, and election timing, in shaping voter awareness of ballot propositions. Analyzing California ballot measures over 44 years, Nicholson finds that awareness increases with media coverage and salience but decreases with voter fatigue. These findings underscore the significance of the political context in fostering voter competence in direct democracy.
- **Deliberation and Policy Opinions:** Barabas (2004) investigates the effects of deliberation on public opinion, showing that exposure to diverse perspectives fosters enlightenment and consensus. Deliberation significantly increases factual knowledge and promotes opinion shifts toward consensual messages. However, its effects vary based on prior opinion strength and the quality of information presented, highlighting the transformative potential of deliberation in democratic decision-making.
- **Framing, Competition, and Deliberation:** Druckman (2004) explores how elite competition and heterogeneous group discussions mitigate framing effects. Experimental results demonstrate that counter-framing and deliberation diminish reliance on initial frames, fostering more reflective preference formation. This research emphasizes the importance of contextual and individual-level factors in moderating the influence of framing on political decision-making.
- **Reevaluating Voter Competence:** Lupia (2006) critiques elitist assumptions in voter competence research, arguing that heuristics and endorsements often enable voters to make decisions consistent with their preferences. He emphasizes the sufficiency of practical reasoning over encyclopedic political knowledge, advocating for a reevaluation of competence standards to better reflect the realities of democratic participation.
- **The Role of Experience in Political Knowledge:** Cramer and Toff (2017) challenge the dominance of factual knowledge in conceptualizing civic competence, proposing an expanded model that incorporates personal and experiential knowledge. Their findings demonstrate that lived experiences and social contexts play a critical role in shaping politi-

cal reasoning and engagement, suggesting a need to value diverse forms of knowledge in democratic discourse.

- **Affect and Decision-Making:** Abelson et al. (1982) highlight the independent roles of affective responses and semantic judgments in political evaluations, showing that emotional reactions often surpass cognitive assessments in predicting candidate preferences. Their work underscores the importance of emotion in shaping political behavior, challenging traditional cognitive models of decision-making.

### 2.6.2 An Impression-Driven Model of Candidate Evaluation

Lodge, M., McGraw, K. M., & Stroh, P. (1989). An Impression-Driven Model of Candidate Evaluation [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 83(2), 399–419. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1962397>

1. **Citation key:** lodge\_impression-driven\_1989
2. **Author(s):** Milton Lodge, Kathleen M. McGraw, and Patrick Stroh
3. **Year:** 1989
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** candidate evaluation, memory, impression-driven processing, political psychology, stereotyping, projection
6. **Summary:** Lodge, McGraw, and Stroh propose and test an impression-driven model of candidate evaluation, contrasting it with a memory-based model. Their research emphasizes that citizens do not rely on a veridical memory of candidate information to make evaluations. Instead, evaluations are formed dynamically as information is encountered and integrated into an “on-line” judgment. This model challenges traditional assumptions about memory and rationality in voter behavior.
7. **Theory:** The impression-driven model suggests that candidate evaluations are formed and updated “on-line” as new information is processed. This approach posits that individuals use a “judgment counter” to integrate new information into a running evaluation, which is then stored separately from the specific details of the information encountered. In contrast, the memory-based model assumes that evaluations are derived by recalling and weighing information from memory. The authors argue that impression-driven processing aligns better with cognitive psychology, as it minimizes the cognitive demands on voters and accounts for systematic biases, such as stereotyping and projection.
8. **Methods:** The study involved 422 non-student adults who were assigned to either memory-based or impression-driven processing conditions. Participants were exposed to a campaign brochure about a fictitious candidate, Congressman Williams, with systematic variations in their processing objectives (e.g., forming an impression or rating readability). The experimental design included measures of candidate evaluation, recall and recognition tasks, and manipulation checks for endorsements (positive, negative, or neutral). Key dependent variables included the on-line evaluation tally, recognition accuracy, and stereotyping/projection biases. Regression analyses and structural equation modeling were used to evaluate the data.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Impression-driven processing leads to stronger candidate evaluations influenced by “on-line” judgments rather than by specific information retrieved from memory.
  - Memory-based processing relies more heavily on the accuracy of recalled information to inform evaluations.
  - Stereotyping and projection biases systematically distort memory and influence candidate evaluation.
- Findings support these hypotheses, showing that on-line evaluations dominate in impression-driven conditions, while memory accuracy plays a secondary role.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that the impression-driven model better explains candidate evaluations than the memory-based model. On-line evaluations are significantly predictive of candidate judgments, whereas specific recalled information is not. Participants in impression-driven conditions showed systematic stereotyping biases, associating the candidate with party-consistent positions regardless of actual policy statements. Projection bias was also evident, with participants attributing personally preferred policies to positively evaluated candidates. These findings challenge the assumption that voters rely on memory accuracy for candidate evaluation, suggesting instead that they use heuristic-driven processing to simplify decision-making.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “People do not rely on the specific candidate information available in memory. Rather, consistent with the logic of the impression-driven processing model, an ‘on-line’ judgment formed when the information was encountered best predicts candidate evaluation” (p. 399).
  - “Our findings challenge the assumption of a direct relationship between memory for a candidate’s policy statements and evaluation of that candidate” (p. 415).
  - “The results raise both methodological and substantive challenges to how political scientists measure and model the candidate evaluation process” (p. 416).

### 2.6.3 Accessibility and the Political Utility of Partisan and Ideological Orientations

Huckfeldt, R., Levine, J., Morgan, W., & Sprague, J. (1999). Accessibility and the Political Utility of Partisan and Ideological Orientations [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 43(3), 888–911. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2991839>

1. **Citation key:** huckfeldt\_accessibility\_1999

2. **Author(s):** Robert Huckfeldt, Jeffrey Levine, William Morgan, and John Sprague
3. **Year:** 1999
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** accessibility, partisan identification, ideological orientation, heuristics, survey response
6. **Summary:** Huckfeldt, Levine, Morgan, and Sprague investigate how the accessibility of partisan and ideological orientations impacts their utility as heuristic devices in political decision-making. They argue that accessible ideological and partisan self-identifications enable individuals to make consistent political judgments, resist persuasion, and integrate complex political information effectively. Using response latency data collected during the 1996 U.S. election campaign, the authors demonstrate that accessibility enhances the political utility of partisan and ideological identifications.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that accessibility—the ease with which individuals retrieve partisan or ideological identifications from memory—enhances the utility of these orientations in political reasoning. Accessible orientations serve as heuristic shortcuts, simplifying decision-making in complex political contexts. The authors challenge traditional notions that political strength derives solely from extremity, arguing instead that accessibility is a critical dimension of political capacity. They contend that individuals with accessible orientations are better equipped to form consistent judgments, resist persuasive challenges, and align their ideological and partisan identifications with their political decisions.
8. **Methods:** The study uses survey data collected during the 1996 election campaign, involving 2,174 respondents and timed response measures. Respondents were asked to self-identify ideologically and politically, with response latencies recorded to assess accessibility. Key dependent variables included ideological consistency, partisan alignment, and resistance to persuasion. The authors employed regression analyses to examine the relationship between accessibility, extremity, and political utility, controlling for baseline response speed, political knowledge, and interest.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Accessibility enhances the utility of ideological and partisan orientations, leading to more consistent political judgments.
  - The relationship between ideology and partisanship is stronger among individuals with accessible self-identifications.
  - Accessibility moderates the impact of ideology and partisanship on resistance to persuasion, with more accessible orientations associated with greater resistance.

Results confirm these hypotheses, showing that accessibility significantly increases the utility of partisan and ideological identifications.
10. **Main findings:** The authors find that accessibility significantly enhances the political utility of ideological and partisan identifications. Respondents with accessible self-identifications displayed greater consistency in their political judgments and stronger alignment between ideology and partisanship. Additionally, these individuals were more resistant to persuasive arguments challenging their positions. Importantly, the effects of accessibility were independent of the extremity of self-identifications, suggesting that even moderates with accessible orientations can exhibit strong political capacity. The study highlights the role of accessibility in enabling individuals to navigate complex political landscapes effectively.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Accessible points of political orientation come to mind readily whenever an individual is confronted with political information... Such an accessible orientation becomes a constant companion as citizens make sense out of a wide array of political stimuli” (p. 892).
  - “Accessibility enhances the effect of ideology on the formation of political decisions and judgments... and also enhances the durability of these judgments, where durability is measured in terms of resistance to counter arguments” (p. 905).
  - “The utility of partisan and ideological self-identifications is directly related to their accessibility in the memory of the individual” (p. 910).

#### 2.6.4 Conceptual Foundations of Citizen Competence

Kuklinski, J. H., & Quirk, P. J. (2001). Conceptual Foundations of Citizen Competence. *Political Behavior*, 23(3), 285–311. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015063108221>

1. **Citation key:** kuklinski\_conceptual\_2001
2. **Author(s):** James H. Kuklinski and Paul J. Quirk
3. **Year:** 2001
4. **Publication:** Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** citizen competence, public opinion, political knowledge, heuristics, issue framing
6. **Summary:** Kuklinski and Quirk evaluate the conceptual foundations underpinning the study of citizen competence, identifying inconsistencies in existing frameworks for assessing how effectively citizens perform democratic tasks. By focusing on criteria such as issue consistency, political knowledge, and heuristic use, they critique the methods and assumptions in public opinion research, offering a more nuanced understanding of citizen performance. They argue that conceptual clarity and methodological rigor are essential for meaningful evaluations of citizen competence.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose a framework for understanding citizen competence by emphasizing four key elements

required for evaluation: task identification, criterion selection, empirical indicator choice, and standard setting. They highlight the difficulties in measuring competence, given the absence of definitive “right” decisions in politics. By contrasting simple and complex tasks, such as making decisions through heuristics versus understanding intricate policy details, they illustrate that evaluating competence requires nuanced criteria. They argue that oversimplifications, such as equating political knowledge with competence, miss critical aspects of how citizens engage with political information.

**8. Methods:** The authors review key literatures in public opinion and political behavior, focusing on three areas: mass belief systems and issue consistency, political knowledge, and heuristics. They critique empirical studies that rely on oversimplified measures, such as correlations between issue positions or factual recall, to assess competence. By examining methodological choices in these studies, they highlight how variations in criteria, indicators, and standards lead to divergent conclusions about citizen performance. Their analysis synthesizes evidence from major studies, including Converse’s work on belief systems and Delli Carpini and Keeter’s research on political knowledge.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Citizen competence depends on the clarity and rigor of evaluative frameworks, which vary widely across studies.
- Broader criteria, such as “acting as if well-informed,” provide a more robust but challenging basis for assessing competence than narrower criteria like issue consistency or tolerance.
- Conceptual and methodological inconsistencies across studies undermine the validity of conclusions about citizen competence.

The hypotheses are confirmed, showing that conceptual ambiguities in existing frameworks often result in conflicting findings.

**10. Main findings:** Kuklinski and Quirk find that conceptual clarity is critical for evaluating citizen competence but is often lacking in public opinion research. They demonstrate that studies frequently conflate tasks, criteria, and indicators, leading to inconsistent conclusions. For instance, they critique the use of political knowledge as a proxy for competence without accounting for how citizens integrate and use that knowledge in decision-making. They argue for adopting broader criteria, such as “getting it right,” which encompasses acting in alignment with one’s values and preferences under ideal conditions. However, they acknowledge the methodological challenges of measuring such criteria, including the difficulty of defining well-informed proxy groups. Their analysis underscores the importance of making evaluative standards explicit to advance the study of citizen competence.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Evaluating competence is more problematic in politics than in basketball for several reasons. First, in politics, there are no indisputably right decisions, comparable to free throws that go through the hoop” (p. 287).
- “The field would benefit from researchers choosing an appropriate set of elements and stating clearly how they propose to specify them for a particular study” (p. 306).
- “The choice of standards poses special difficulties. It depends on all of the other conceptual decisions; one cannot even talk about standards until tasks, criteria, and indicators are set” (p. 308).

### 2.6.5 On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame?

Druckman, J. N. (2001). On the Limits of Framing Effects: Who Can Frame? [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 63(4), 1041–1066. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-3816.00100>

**1. Citation key:** druckman\_limits\_2001

**2. Author(s):** James N. Druckman

**3. Year:** 2001

**4. Publication:** The Journal of Politics

**5. Keywords:** framing effects, source credibility, elite influence, belief importance, public opinion

**6. Summary:** Druckman investigates the limits of framing effects, emphasizing the role of source credibility as a constraint on elites’ ability to influence public opinion. Through two laboratory experiments, he demonstrates that the perceived credibility of the frame’s source significantly moderates the effectiveness of framing. This research challenges the assumption that elites can unilaterally manipulate public opinion, suggesting instead that citizens selectively accept frames based on source trustworthiness and expertise.

**7. Theory:** The author builds on framing theory by arguing that framing effects are moderated by source credibility. A credible source is defined as one perceived to possess relevant knowledge and trustworthiness. Druckman posits that frames influence public opinion by altering the perceived importance of considerations, rather than by changing the content of beliefs. This distinction sets framing apart from persuasion, where belief content is modified. He further argues that the public’s reliance on credible elites reflects rational delegation in political decision-making, where citizens seek guidance to process complex political information.

**8. Methods:** Druckman conducted two laboratory experiments using undergraduate participants.

- **Experiment 1:** Focused on government assistance to the poor, participants were exposed to frames emphasizing either humanitarian concerns or government expenditures. Frames were attributed to either a credible source (Colin Powell) or a noncredible source (Jerry Springer).
- **Experiment 2:** Examined tolerance for a Ku Klux Klan rally, with frames emphasizing free speech or public safety. Sources were either The New York Times (credible) or The National Enquirer (noncredible).

The dependent variables included overall opinions, belief importance ratings, and belief content measures. Path anal-

ysis was employed to assess how frames influenced the importance of underlying considerations, with random assignment ensuring causal inferences.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Frames attributed to credible sources will significantly influence public opinion and the perceived importance of considerations.
- Frames from noncredible sources will have minimal or no effect on public opinion or belief importance.
- Framing effects operate through changes in belief importance rather than belief content.

All hypotheses were confirmed, showing the moderating role of source credibility in framing.

**10. Main findings:** Druckman demonstrates that framing effects depend critically on source credibility. In Experiment 1, participants exposed to frames from Colin Powell showed significant shifts in their opinions and the importance they attributed to specific considerations. In contrast, frames from Jerry Springer had no measurable impact. Similarly, in Experiment 2, only frames attributed to The New York Times influenced participants' tolerance for the Ku Klux Klan rally, with frames from The National Enquirer proving ineffective. The findings reveal that framing works by altering the importance of specific considerations, such as humanitarian concerns or public safety, while leaving belief content unchanged. This suggests that framing is constrained by the rational judgment of citizens, who delegate to credible elites for guidance.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Frames work through a distinct process from persuasion, altering the perceived importance of considerations rather than the content of beliefs" (p. 1045).
- "The existence of framing effects may not indicate freewheeling manipulation but rather systematic selection by citizens seeking guidance from trusted sources" (p. 1060).
- "Framing effects may occur, not because elites seek to manipulate citizens, but rather because citizens delegate to credible elites for guidance" (p. 1061).

### 2.6.6 The Political Environment and Ballot Proposition Awareness

Nicholson, S. P. (2003). The Political Environment and Ballot Proposition Awareness. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(3), 403–410. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-5907.00029>

1. Citation key: nicholson\_political\_2003

2. Author(s): Stephen P. Nicholson

3. Year: 2003

4. Publication: American Journal of Political Science

5. Keywords: ballot propositions, political awareness, direct democracy, media coverage, voter fatigue

6. Summary: Nicholson examines the role of environmental factors in shaping voter awareness of ballot propositions in California between 1956 and 2000. While previous research focuses largely on individual-level determinants like education and partisanship, Nicholson emphasizes the importance of external factors such as campaign spending, media coverage, and election timing. His analysis reveals that the political environment significantly influences ballot proposition awareness, which is a critical first step toward voter competence and civic engagement in direct democracy.

7. Theory: The study posits that voter awareness of ballot propositions is shaped by a combination of individual and environmental factors, with a primary focus on the latter. Nicholson argues that awareness depends on voters' exposure to information, which varies with contextual factors like media coverage, campaign spending, and election timing. The framework draws from theories of political awareness, which stress the roles of ability, motivation, and opportunity in political learning. Nicholson asserts that the political environment serves as a primary channel for providing the opportunity for awareness, which in turn enables voters to make informed decisions.

8. Methods: Nicholson employs a quantitative analysis of 74 California ballot proposition elections over 44 years, using data from the Field Poll. He operationalizes awareness as the proportion of respondents who reported familiarity with specific propositions. Independent variables include midterm election timing, campaign spending, front-page media coverage, issue characteristics (e.g., morality and civil rights), voter fatigue (measured by the number of propositions on the ballot), and days to the election. Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is used to assess the impact of these factors on voter awareness, with robust regression checks to ensure the validity of results.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Awareness of ballot propositions increases with media coverage and campaign spending.
- Awareness is higher for propositions addressing morality or civil rights issues due to their salience.
- Voter fatigue, caused by an abundance of ballot propositions, reduces awareness for individual measures.
- Awareness increases as Election Day approaches, due to intensified campaigning and media coverage.
- Midterm elections enhance awareness of state-level ballot propositions, as national issues dominate in presidential election years.

The findings support all these hypotheses, demonstrating the importance of political context in shaping voter awareness.

**10. Main findings:** Nicholson finds that the political environment significantly influences voter awareness of ballot propositions. Awareness increases with media coverage (adding 16 percentage points on average) and campaign spending (adding 6 percentage points). Propositions addressing morality or civil rights issues are associated with 13 and 18 percentage point increases in awareness, respectively. Conversely, voter fatigue reduces awareness by approximately

1.2 percentage points per additional proposition on the ballot. Midterm elections boost awareness by 14 percentage points, while proximity to Election Day slightly increases familiarity. These results highlight the critical role of the information environment in enabling voters to engage with direct democracy mechanisms.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "The preceding analyses indicate that the electoral cycle, campaign spending, media coverage, issue characteristics, voter fatigue, and the number of days before the election shape voter awareness of ballot propositions" (p. 409).
- "Changes in the information environment, not just individual differences, drive citizens' basic political awareness" (p. 409).
- "Although voter awareness of ballot propositions is not a panacea for all the ills of direct democracy, it might help promote civic engagement and voter competence" (p. 410).

#### 2.6.7 How Deliberation Affects Policy Opinions

Barabas, J. (2004). How Deliberation Affects Policy Opinions. *American Political Science Review*, 98(4), 687–701. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055404041425>

1. Citation key: barabas\_how\_2004

2. Author(s): Jason Barabas

3. Year: 2004

4. Publication: American Political Science Review

5. Keywords: deliberation, public opinion, Social Security reform, policy opinions, consensus, enlightenment

6. Summary: Barabas examines the effects of deliberation on public opinion, focusing on Social Security reform. He argues that deliberation fosters both enlightenment and consensus, leading to changes in policy opinions and an increase in knowledge. Using two separate studies—a deliberative forum and a cross-sectional survey—he demonstrates that deliberation, characterized by diverse perspectives and open-mindedness, leads to selective opinion updating and measurable improvements in political knowledge.

7. Theory: Barabas develops a theoretical model of deliberative opinion updating, arguing that deliberation differs from ordinary discussion in that participants are exposed to diverse perspectives and encouraged to keep an open mind. He asserts that deliberation fosters two goals of democratic theory: enlightenment, by increasing factual knowledge, and consensus, by aligning opinions on key issues. Opinion change occurs when participants encounter precise, consensual messages and when they relax strongly held views. The process is conceptualized as a form of Bayesian updating, where prior opinions are adjusted based on the quality and clarity of new information encountered during deliberation.

8. Methods: The analysis is based on two studies:

- **Study 1:** A deliberative forum on Social Security reform, involving 408 participants and using pre- and post-forum surveys. Participants were encouraged to deliberate on reform options, such as raising payroll tax limits and reducing cost-of-living adjustments. Propensity score matching was employed to compare participants with nonparticipants.
- **Study 2:** A cross-sectional survey assessing the effects of ordinary discussions about Social Security. Respondents were asked about their discussion habits, knowledge, and policy preferences. Both studies employed quantitative methods, including regression analysis and propensity score matching, to isolate the effects of deliberation and discussion on opinion change and knowledge acquisition.

9. Hypotheses:

- Deliberation increases factual knowledge among participants.
- Aggregate opinion moves significantly in the direction of consensual deliberative messages.
- Individuals with weaker prior opinions exhibit greater opinion change than those with stronger prior opinions.

All hypotheses were supported, demonstrating the unique effects of deliberation on public opinion and knowledge.

10. Main findings: Barabas finds that deliberation significantly increases factual knowledge, as participants in the forum showed a 20% gain in correct responses on Social Security knowledge items. Deliberation also led to opinion shifts in the direction of consensual messages, such as increased support for raising payroll tax limits. In contrast, ordinary discussion produced weaker and less consistent effects on opinions and did not improve knowledge. Participants with weaker prior opinions were more likely to update their views during deliberation, highlighting the role of opinion strength in moderating the effects of deliberation. The findings underscore the potential of deliberation to enhance democratic decision-making by fostering informed and reflective public opinion.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Deliberation increases knowledge and alters opinions, but it does so selectively based on the quality and diversity of the messages as well as the willingness of participants to keep an open mind" (p. 687).
- "Consensus is desirable to the degree that it is accompanied by enlightenment. This means that any investigation of consensual movements in opinions will first have to consider the nature of the deliberation and whether citizens learn" (p. 690).
- "In two different studies, I have shown that citizens learn when they deliberate but not when they discuss politics. Deliberation is unique in that citizens discard their inaccurate factual perceptions as well as rigidly held political views" (p. 698).

### 2.6.8 Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)relevance of Framing Effects

Druckman, J. N. (2004). Political Preference Formation: Competition, Deliberation, and the (Ir)relevance of Framing Effects. *American Political Science Review*, 98(4), 671–686. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055404041413>

1. **Citation key:** druckman\_political\_2004
2. **Author(s):** James N. Druckman
3. **Year:** 2004
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** framing effects, preference formation, deliberation, elite competition, political psychology
6. **Summary:** Druckman examines the conditions under which framing effects influence political preferences, focusing on how contextual factors (e.g., elite competition and deliberation) and individual attributes (e.g., expertise) moderate these effects. The study seeks to address whether framing effects, which challenge the rationality assumptions foundational to many theories, are robust in political contexts. Through experimental designs involving diverse framing scenarios, Druckman finds that framing effects diminish or disappear when alternative frames are introduced or when individuals engage in heterogeneous group discussions.
7. **Theory:** The article posits that framing effects occur when the salience of specific information is manipulated, influencing preferences in ways that violate rational choice theory. Druckman builds on accessibility theory to suggest that framing effects result from unconscious processes where certain considerations become more accessible. However, these effects can be mitigated by two primary moderators: (1) \*\*contextual forces\*\*, such as exposure to competing frames (elite competition) or diverse perspectives (heterogeneous deliberation); and (2) \*\*individual characteristics\*\*, such as motivation to process information (need for cognition) and expertise. The theory predicts that deliberation and counter-framing reduce reliance on the initial frame, fostering more deliberate and rational decision-making.
8. **Methods:** The study employed an experimental design with 580 participants, randomly assigned to one of eight conditions varying by framing (positive or negative) and context (control, counter-framing, homogeneous group discussion, or heterogeneous group discussion). Participants responded to four well-established framing problems, two involving risk attitudes and two unrelated to risk, across domains such as employment, investment, and crime. Contextual and individual-level variables were tested through ordered probit models and interaction effects, with expertise operationalized as a combination of high motivation (need for cognition) and training (e.g., economics coursework).
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Framing effects are moderated by contextual factors, with counter-framing and heterogeneous group discussions reducing or eliminating these effects.
  - Individual-level variables, particularly expertise, moderate framing effects, especially in contexts that lack alternative perspectives (e.g., homogeneous groups).
  - Confidence in preferences increases with frame alignment but is tempered in deliberative contexts that encourage reflection.
10. **Main findings:** Druckman finds that framing effects are not robust across all political contexts. In control conditions, framing effects were significant, with participants exposed to negatively framed scenarios expressing preferences consistent with those frames 34% of the time compared to 17% in positive frames. However, these effects disappeared in counter-framing contexts and were significantly reduced in heterogeneous group discussions. Homogeneous group discussions moderated framing effects for experts but exacerbated them for non-experts. Confidence levels were higher when preferences aligned with the frame but were moderated by deliberative conditions, illustrating the complex interplay between framing, deliberation, and preference formation.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Understanding when framing effects occur will provide insight into when rationality assumptions apply, as opposed to alternative positive and normative approaches" (p. 671).
  - "Both counter-framing and heterogeneous discussions minimize framing effects, and in the former case, the effects are eliminated" (p. 679).
  - "While framing appears much less relevant to political contexts than often presumed, when it does occur, it might be even more deleterious than previously thought" (p. 682).

### 2.6.9 How Elitism Undermines the Study of Voter Competence

Lupia, A. (2006). How elitism undermines the study of voter competence [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08913810608443658>]. *Critical Review*, 18(1-3), 217–232. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08913810608443658>

1. **Citation key:** lupia\_how\_2006
2. **Author(s):** Arthur Lupia
3. **Year:** 2006
4. **Publication:** Critical Review
5. **Keywords:** voter competence, elitism, political knowledge, heuristics, democratic theory
6. **Summary:** Lupia critiques the elitist assumptions embedded in many studies of voter competence, arguing that traditional measures, such as political knowledge scales, fail to account for the contextual relevance of information to

voters' decision-making tasks. He proposes an alternative framework that emphasizes sufficiency and necessity of information for competent performance, contending that voters can make rational decisions using heuristics or proxies without requiring encyclopedic political knowledge.

**7. Theory:** The author challenges the traditional premise that voter competence requires detailed factual knowledge, such as recalling the names of political figures or legislative facts. Instead, he argues that competence should be evaluated based on the ability to perform electoral tasks effectively, regardless of the specific informational pathways used. Lupia emphasizes the sufficiency of heuristics and endorsements in enabling voters to make decisions consistent with their values and preferences, aligning with broader theories of bounded rationality and practical reasoning.

**8. Methods:** Lupia conducts a theoretical critique of existing measures of voter competence, drawing on examples from prominent studies such as Delli Carpini and Keeter's research on political knowledge. He evaluates these measures against criteria derived from research on decision-making and expertise in cognitive science. The discussion integrates theoretical models of sufficiency and necessity, offering illustrative examples (e.g., the use of party endorsements) to highlight the shortcomings of traditional approaches.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Voter competence does not depend on encyclopedic political knowledge but rather on the ability to make decisions consistent with one's preferences using available information.
- Traditional measures of political knowledge are insufficient for assessing competence, as they rely on an elitist worldview that overemphasizes federal-level politics and fact recall.
- Heuristics and endorsements can serve as effective proxies, enabling voters to perform competently without detailed political knowledge.

The hypotheses are supported through theoretical analysis, demonstrating that conventional measures of competence are often invalid and unnecessary.

**10. Main findings:** Lupia argues that conventional political knowledge measures reflect an elitist bias that undermines their validity as tools for assessing voter competence. He demonstrates that knowledge of facts such as the Chief Justice's name is neither necessary nor sufficient for making competent electoral decisions. Instead, voters rely on heuristics, such as party endorsements or trusted sources, which often lead to decisions consistent with their informed counterparts. Lupia critiques the assumption that all voters must meet the same informational standards as political elites, advocating for a reevaluation of what constitutes meaningful competence in democratic participation.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "It is not necessarily the case that the information that we feel that we must know has the same value to others" (p. 2).
- "Voters can be ignorant of ideological terms or the Chief Justice's name and still make competent choices in the voting booth" (p. 7).
- "Unless competent performance requires that the task be performed in a particular way, society does not benefit from attempts to regulate how people approach the task" (p. 21).

### 2.6.10 The Limits of Deliberative Discussion: A Model of Everyday Political Arguments

Jackman, S., & Sniderman, P. M. (2006). The Limits of Deliberative Discussion: A Model of Everyday Political Arguments [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 68(2), 272–283. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00405.x>

**1. Citation key:** jackman\_limits\_2006

**2. Author(s):** Simon Jackman and Paul M. Sniderman

**3. Year:** 2006

**4. Publication:** Journal of Politics

**5. Keywords:** deliberative democracy, political arguments, ideological consistency, political sophistication, counterarguments

**6. Summary:** Jackman and Sniderman examine whether everyday political discussions improve ideological consistency in individuals' positions. Using a simplified model of deliberation, called a "one-exchange argument," they explore how political sophistication and the quality of counterarguments affect individuals' ability to align their responses with their latent ideological orientations. Their findings reveal that deliberation often fails to enhance ideological consistency, even among politically sophisticated individuals, and that arguments of equal strength can lead to diverging conclusions.

**7. Theory:** The authors posit that deliberation, in theory, enhances the quality of citizens' judgments by increasing the alignment of their positions with their ideological orientations. However, they identify a paradox in political deliberation: while it can improve decision-making in other domains, political deliberation often leads to divergence rather than convergence in ideological consistency. Their model focuses on two mechanisms of change: argumentation (changes due to external persuasion) and deliberation (reconsidering positions based on the quality of arguments). The authors argue that political sophistication moderates these processes, as high-sophistication individuals are better equipped to distinguish substantive arguments from vacuous ones but are also more prone to cognitive biases that can entrench inconsistency.

**8. Methods:** The study relies on data from an experimental design embedded in a French public opinion survey. Participants were presented with initial ideological prompts on increasing unemployment benefits and then exposed to either

content-laden or content-free counterarguments. Their responses were analyzed pre- and post-counterargument. The key independent variables include political sophistication, ideological consistency of initial responses, and type of counterargument. Logistic regression models and nonparametric analyses were used to evaluate the impact of these factors on response changes.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Deliberation increases ideological consistency when participants receive high-quality counterarguments and have higher levels of political sophistication.
- Low-quality counterarguments have little effect on response changes, regardless of political sophistication.
- Politically sophisticated individuals are more likely to align their responses with their ideological orientations during deliberation.

The results largely refute these hypotheses, as ideological consistency remains unchanged or even decreases in response to deliberation.

**10. Main findings:** Jackman and Sniderman find that deliberation does not systematically enhance ideological consistency. Participants exposed to content-laden counterarguments were no more likely to align their responses with their ideological orientations than those exposed to content-free counterarguments. For low-sophistication respondents, deliberation often produced random shifts in responses. For high-sophistication respondents, initial consistency rates were high, but exposure to symmetric counterarguments often reduced consistency, reflecting the inherent risks of deliberation. The findings challenge the normative expectation that deliberation invariably leads to better-grounded political judgments.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Deliberation often means the weighing of the merits of new information...but in politics, deliberation commonly leads people to diverge in their conclusions rather than converge" (p. 273).
- "Our findings show that the proportion of people who take a position consistent with their most thoroughly considered view of the matter is as large at the end of an argument as at the beginning" (p. 282).
- "Arguments about politics—even high-quality arguments—do not leave more citizens—not even politically sophisticated ones—more likely to take positions consistent with their most thoroughly considered views" (p. 283).

#### 2.6.11 The Fact of Experience: Rethinking Political Knowledge and Civic Competence

Cramer, K. J., & Toff, B. (2017). The Fact of Experience: Rethinking Political Knowledge and Civic Competence. *Perspectives on Politics*, 15(3), 754–770. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592717000949>

1. Citation key: cramer\_fact\_2017

2. Author(s): Katherine J. Cramer and Benjamin Toff

3. Year: 2017

4. Publication: Perspectives on Politics

5. Keywords: political knowledge, experiential knowledge, civic competence, personal experience, deliberation

6. Summary: Cramer and Toff challenge the dominant "Information-Based Model of Civic Competence," which centers on factual political knowledge as the basis for democratic decision-making. Drawing on ethnographic observations and elite interviews, they propose an Expanded Model of Civic Competence that incorporates personal and experiential knowledge as critical components of political understanding and civic engagement. They argue that factual knowledge alone does not suffice to explain how citizens navigate political issues; instead, lived experiences and social contexts play an essential role in shaping political reasoning and behavior.

7. Theory: The authors argue that traditional measures of civic competence—anchored in factual political knowledge—fail to capture how individuals understand and process political information. They propose an Expanded Model of Civic Competence, emphasizing the role of experiential knowledge. This model asserts that understanding others' lived experiences and interpreting facts through personal and social contexts are crucial for fostering effective democratic engagement. By valuing experiential knowledge alongside factual information, the model seeks to redefine what it means to be an informed citizen, particularly in an era of polarized and fragmented media environments.

8. Methods: The authors base their analysis on data from three sources: (1) participant observation of community dialogues on race relations in Wisconsin and Illinois, (2) long-term ethnographic observation of informal political conversations across 27 communities in Wisconsin, and (3) interviews with 41 political journalists and public opinion researchers. They analyze these interactions to identify how individuals use personal experience and contextual knowledge in political discussions. The methodology combines qualitative coding of transcripts with inductive analysis of conversational themes.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Traditional measures of political knowledge underestimate the role of experiential knowledge in shaping civic competence.
- Citizens rely more heavily on personal and social contexts to interpret political facts than on abstract factual knowledge.
- Incorporating experiential knowledge into democratic discourse can enhance mutual understanding and reduce polarization.

These hypotheses are supported by the observation that individuals and even political elites often prioritize lived experiences over abstract facts in political reasoning.

**10. Main findings:** Cramer and Toff find that personal experiences and social contexts significantly influence how individuals understand and use political information. Experiential knowledge, such as interactions with government policies or personal encounters with inequality, often serves as the lens through which citizens interpret political facts. This reliance on experience is evident not only among ordinary citizens but also among political elites, such as journalists and public officials. The authors argue that factual knowledge alone cannot account for the nuances of political decision-making. They advocate for a broader conceptualization of civic competence that values empathy, experiential understanding, and the capacity to engage with diverse perspectives.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We argue that political observers and scholars ought to pay attention to the role of personal experience because normatively democracy requires the ability to recognize others' experiences as well as the ways in which one's own experiences influence how we interpret and use facts" (p. 757).
- "Civic competence requires an openness to understanding the lived experiences of others, not just knowledge of facts" (p. 758).
- "Even when public officials bring in objective facts they have acquired from experts, we observe that they often do so through the lens of their personal experience" (p. 762).

## 2.7 Affect and Decision Making

### 2.7.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The intersection of affect and decision-making in political science highlights the role of emotional and cognitive processes in shaping political preferences, behavior, and reasoning. Foundational studies emphasize the dual pathways of affective and semantic evaluations, while contemporary research extends these insights to explore how emotions like anxiety, enthusiasm, and fear influence political learning, campaign involvement, and policy support. This area of study integrates psychological theories with empirical analysis, advancing understanding of how emotions interact with cognitive processes to influence political decision-making.
- **Affective and Semantic Components in Political Perception:** Abelson et al. (1982) distinguish between affective responses (e.g., emotions like pride or anger) and semantic judgments (e.g., evaluations of honesty or competence) in political perception. Using surveys from the 1980 presidential campaign, they demonstrate that affective responses are stronger predictors of candidate preferences than semantic judgments or party identification. Their findings underscore the episodic and independent nature of positive and negative affect, challenging traditional cognitive-dominant frameworks.
- **Group-Based Political Reasoning:** Brady and Sniderman (1985) examine attitude attribution and the role of affective calculus in political reasoning. Their findings reveal that emotional evaluations of groups, such as liberals and conservatives, enable citizens to infer political positions with surprising accuracy, even in the absence of extensive political knowledge. This research emphasizes the heuristic value of affect in navigating complex political landscapes, demonstrating that likability heuristics provide coherence to public opinion.
- **Emotions and Campaign Dynamics:** Marcus and Mackuen (1993) propose a dual-system model where anxiety and enthusiasm play distinct roles in political behavior during campaigns. Anxiety disrupts habitual voting patterns, prompting political learning and attentiveness, while enthusiasm reinforces commitment and campaign involvement. Their findings illustrate how emotions function as adaptive mechanisms, enhancing democratic engagement by motivating participation and informed decision-making.
- **Motivated Reasoning in Decision-Making:** Redlawsk (2002) explores the impact of motivated reasoning, highlighting how affective biases shape political decision-making. His dynamic process-tracing experiment shows that voters process information in ways that reinforce pre-existing preferences, often at the expense of decision quality. These findings challenge Bayesian models of voter behavior, emphasizing the role of affect in creating biases that hinder rational evaluations.
- **Emotional Appeals in Political Advertising:** Brader (2005) investigates how political advertisements use emotional cues to influence voter behavior. His experiments reveal that enthusiasm appeals increase political participation by reinforcing loyalties, while fear appeals promote vigilance and reconsideration of preferences. This research demonstrates the strategic use of emotions in political communication to achieve both motivational and persuasive goals.
- **Anxiety, Threat, and Policy Support:** Huddy et al. (2005) distinguish between perceived threat and anxiety in shaping public opinion on antiterrorism policies. Their analysis shows that threat perception drives support for aggressive military actions, while anxiety fosters risk aversion and skepticism of such policies. These findings highlight the nuanced interplay between psychological reactions to terrorism and policy preferences, illustrating the distinct pathways through which emotions influence political attitudes.
- **Physiological Responses to Political Rhetoric:** Bakker et al. (2021) introduce the circumplex model of core affect, using physiological measures to examine how political rhetoric elicits emotional responses. They find that incongruent rhetoric provokes negative affect and heightened arousal, while congruent rhetoric does not generate positive affect. This study advances understanding of how physiological and emotional responses to rhetoric shape political attitudes and opinion change.
- **Future Directions:** Ongoing research in affect and decision-making aims to explore the implications of digital media environments, physiological measures, and emotional appeals on political behavior. Future studies are likely to integrate advances in neuropsychology and technology to further unravel the complex interplay between affective and

cognitive systems, enhancing the understanding of emotional influences in democratic processes.

### 2.7.2 Affective and Semantic Components in Political Person Perception

Abelson, R. P., Kinder, D. R., Peters, M. D., & Fiske, S. T. (1982). Affective and semantic components in political person perception. [Publisher: American Psychological Association]. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 42(4), 619–630. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.42.4.619>

1. **Citation key:** abelson\_affective\_1982
2. **Author(s):** Robert P. Abelson, Donald R. Kinder, Mark D. Peters, and Susan T. Fiske
3. **Year:** 1982
4. **Publication:** Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
5. **Keywords:** affective response, semantic judgments, political perception, political preference, emotion in politics
6. **Summary:** Abelson et al. explore the distinction between affective responses and semantic judgments in political person perception, focusing on how these components influence the evaluation and preference of political candidates. Using two national surveys conducted during the 1980 U.S. presidential campaign, they demonstrate that affective reactions (e.g., feelings of anger or pride) and semantic judgments (e.g., assessments of traits like honesty or competence) operate as independent dimensions. Their findings emphasize the predictive power of affective responses in determining political preferences, independent of trait-based evaluations and party identification.
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the traditional cognitive focus in social psychology by emphasizing the significance of affective responses. They argue that affective reactions provide a less filtered, more direct reflection of motivation and behavior compared to semantic judgments. While semantic judgments are shaped by consistency pressures and are filtered through cognitive processes, affective responses are episodic and less constrained by such pressures. The study builds on Zajonc's (1980) dual-system theory, which proposes distinct affective and cognitive systems, suggesting that affective evaluations may surpass semantic judgments in predicting political preferences.
8. **Methods:** Abelson et al. conducted two national surveys: a smaller feasibility study in March 1979 with 280 respondents and a larger survey in February 1980 with 1,008 respondents. Both employed probability sampling to ensure demographic representativeness. Respondents evaluated prominent political figures (e.g., Carter, Reagan, Kennedy) using affective checklists and trait inventories. The affective checklist recorded whether candidates elicited specific emotions (e.g., anger, pride), while the trait inventory assessed attributes like honesty and competence. Multiple regression analyses were used to compare the predictive validity of affective and semantic scores on overall candidate evaluations, measured via 100-point thermometer scales.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Positive and negative affective responses are relatively independent dimensions.
  - Affective responses are stronger predictors of political preferences than semantic judgments or party identification.
- Both hypotheses were confirmed. Affective dimensions were found to be nearly orthogonal, and their predictive validity surpassed that of semantic evaluations and partisan affiliation.
10. **Main findings:** The study reveals that affective responses to political figures are structured differently from semantic judgments. Positive and negative affective dimensions show minimal inverse correlation, unlike trait evaluations, which are strongly negatively correlated across positive and negative dimensions. Affective responses proved more robust in predicting thermometer ratings and candidate preferences, even when controlling for semantic judgments and party identification. These results underscore the importance of emotion in shaping political behavior and highlight the episodic nature of affective experiences, which allow for co-occurrence of positive and negative feelings toward the same candidate.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Summary scores of affect strongly predict political preference. This effect is independent of and more powerful than that for personality judgments" (p. 619).
  - "Positive and negative affects elicited by candidates are typically only very weakly correlated... Feeling good things about a political leader does not imply the absence of bad feelings" (p. 623).
  - "Affective responses add predictive validity in the political domain above and beyond that available from standard semantic judgments of candidates, and they have the very interesting property of near independence of positive and negative scores" (p. 630).

### 2.7.3 Attitude Attribution: A Group Basis for Political Reasoning

Brady, H. E., & Sniderman, P. M. (1985). Attitude Attribution: A Group Basis for Political Reasoning [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 79(4), 1061–1078. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1956248>

1. **Citation key:** brady\_attitude\_1985
2. **Author(s):** Henry E. Brady and Paul M. Sniderman
3. **Year:** 1985
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** attitude attribution, public opinion, affective calculus, likability heuristic, political reasoning
6. **Summary:** Brady and Sniderman examine how individuals attribute political attitudes to groups like liberals, conser-

vatives, Democrats, and Republicans. They propose that these attributions are influenced by an affective calculus or likability heuristic, wherein people rely on their emotional reactions to groups to infer political positions. Using data from the 1972 and 1976 National Election Studies, the authors show that many citizens can accurately estimate group positions despite limited political knowledge, highlighting the role of affect in shaping political reasoning.

7. **Theory:** The authors challenge traditional cognitive approaches to political reasoning by emphasizing the importance of affective responses in attitude attribution. They argue that individuals rely on a likability heuristic, which uses emotional evaluations of groups to infer political stances. This heuristic allows individuals to construct an accurate mental map of political alignments without extensive political knowledge. The study builds on theories of political affect and psychological consistency, suggesting that individuals' feelings toward groups interact with their own beliefs to shape their perceptions of group positions.
8. **Methods:** The study analyzes data from the 1972 and 1976 National Election Studies, focusing on respondents' placements of groups on seven-point ideological scales. These placements were compared to actual group positions derived from survey data. The authors employed regression models to examine the role of affect (measured through feeling thermometers) and individual beliefs in shaping attitude attributions. Additional models explored how political knowledge and demographic factors influenced the accuracy of these attributions.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Citizens can accurately attribute positions to politically strategic groups despite limited knowledge.
- Attitude attributions are shaped by an affective calculus that combines feelings toward groups with personal beliefs.

Both hypotheses were supported, with findings indicating that affect and individual beliefs jointly drive accurate attitude attributions.

10. **Main findings:** Brady and Sniderman demonstrate that citizens are surprisingly adept at placing groups like liberals and conservatives on ideological scales, often aligning their attributions with actual group positions. Affective responses significantly enhance attribution accuracy, with stronger feelings toward groups leading to more polarized perceptions. The study finds that conservatives are more likely to emphasize differences between liberals and conservatives, while liberals tend to minimize these distinctions. Political knowledge moderates the reliance on affect, with more knowledgeable individuals displaying greater attribution accuracy. The findings highlight the heuristic value of affect in political reasoning, showing that emotional evaluations serve as effective shortcuts for understanding complex political landscapes.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Citizens can draw an impressively accurate map of politics, of who wants what politically, of who takes the same side as whom and of who lines up on the opposing side of key issues" (p. 1061).
- "An affective calculus... provides citizens with a means to achieve coherence in their views about political issues, even in the face of limited political knowledge" (p. 1062).
- "The impact of affect on perceptions is at least three times larger than the impact of perceptions on affect, and possibly as much as five or ten times larger" (p. 1073).

#### 2.7.4 Anxiety, Enthusiasm, and the Vote: The Emotional Underpinnings of Learning and Involvement During Presidential Campaigns

Marcus, G. E., & Mackuen, M. B. (1993). Anxiety, Enthusiasm, and the Vote: The Emotional Underpinnings of Learning and Involvement During Presidential Campaigns [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 87(3), 672–685. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2938743>

1. **Citation key:** marcus\_anxiety\_1993
2. **Author(s):** George E. Marcus and Michael B. Mackuen
3. **Year:** 1993
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** emotion in politics, anxiety, enthusiasm, political learning, campaign involvement
6. **Summary:** Marcus and Mackuen examine the roles of anxiety and enthusiasm in shaping voter behavior during presidential campaigns. They propose a dual-system model of emotional response, where anxiety enhances political learning and reduces reliance on habitual voting, while enthusiasm increases political engagement and campaign involvement. Using survey data from the 1980 and 1988 U.S. presidential elections, the authors demonstrate that emotions provide a framework for efficient information processing and adaptive political decision-making.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on psychological and neurophysiological theories of emotion, positing that anxiety and enthusiasm function through distinct physiological and cognitive pathways. Anxiety triggers a behavioral inhibition system, prompting individuals to halt routine actions, focus attention, and engage in learning. Enthusiasm, by contrast, activates a behavioral approach system that motivates involvement and commitment. The theory challenges the traditional view of emotions as antithetical to rational political decision-making, instead suggesting that emotions complement cognitive processes to enhance democratic participation.
8. **Methods:** Marcus and Mackuen analyze survey data from the 1980 American National Election Studies (ANES) and a Missouri-based survey during the 1988 presidential campaign. They employ factor analyses to distinguish between anxiety and enthusiasm as separate dimensions of emotional response, and regression models to examine the impact of these emotions on political learning, campaign involvement, and voting preferences. Emotional responses were

measured using feeling thermometers and questions about emotional reactions to candidates, while political knowledge and engagement were assessed through changes in campaign interest and understanding of candidate positions over time.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Anxiety stimulates political learning by prompting individuals to seek information and reconsider habitual voting patterns.
- Enthusiasm drives campaign involvement by increasing emotional investment in a candidate or political cause.

Both hypotheses were supported, with anxiety linked to increased knowledge acquisition and enthusiasm associated with heightened campaign activity.

**10. Main findings:** The study demonstrates that anxiety and enthusiasm play distinct and complementary roles in political behavior. Anxiety promotes learning by interrupting complacency and encouraging attention to political information. This effect is most pronounced during periods of uncertainty or threat, such as contentious campaigns. Enthusiasm, in contrast, enhances campaign involvement by reinforcing commitment to a candidate or cause, increasing activities like voting and volunteering. While enthusiasm directly influences vote choice, anxiety indirectly shapes decisions by fostering informed evaluations. These findings challenge the view that emotions undermine rational political engagement, showing instead that they enhance adaptive decision-making in democratic contexts.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Anxiety works cooperatively with learning to shift attention to political matters and to diminish reliance on habit in voting decisions" (p. 676).
- "Enthusiasm, rather than anxiety, has a distinct effect on political involvement, increasing interest and activity during the campaign" (p. 677).
- "We suggest that people rely on their feelings to provide them with important strategic information... emotions aid, rather than disrupt, political reasoning" (p. 678).

#### 2.7.5 Hot Cognition or Cool Consideration? Testing the Effects of Motivated Reasoning on Political Decision Making

Redlawsk, D. P. (2002). Hot Cognition or Cool Consideration? Testing the Effects of Motivated Reasoning on Political Decision Making [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 64(4), 1021–1044. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2508.00161>

1. Citation key: redlawsk\_hot\_2002

2. Author(s): David P. Redlawsk

3. Year: 2002

4. Publication: Journal of Politics

5. Keywords: motivated reasoning, hot cognition, political decision-making, affect, candidate evaluation

6. Summary: Redlawsk investigates the role of motivated reasoning in political decision-making, emphasizing how affective biases influence information processing and evaluation of political candidates. Using a dynamic process-tracing experiment simulating a presidential primary election, the study shows that voters process information in ways that reinforce pre-existing preferences, often at the cost of decision quality. These findings challenge the Bayesian model of rational voter behavior by highlighting the interplay between cognition and affect in political reasoning.

7. Theory: Building on theories of motivated reasoning and hot cognition, Redlawsk argues that voters engage in on-line processing of political information, where affective reactions are integrated with cognitive evaluations in real-time. This process is driven by directional goals, leading voters to seek and interpret information in ways that confirm their existing beliefs. The study contrasts this with memory-based processing, where voters are accuracy-motivated and more likely to consider all information objectively. Redlawsk proposes that hot cognition—a mechanism where affective responses are automatically activated alongside cognitive evaluations—creates biases that hinder rational decision-making. This challenges the notion of voters as Bayesian updaters who revise their preferences based on new information.

8. Methods: Redlawsk employs a dynamic information board experiment involving 99 subjects who participated in a mock presidential primary election. The experiment featured six fictional candidates, and participants accessed information about them in real-time. Subjects were randomly assigned to on-line processing or memory-based processing conditions. Affective responses were measured using feeling thermometers, while information processing behaviors (e.g., search patterns and reaction times) were recorded. Decision quality was assessed by comparing participants' initial vote choices to those they made after receiving full candidate information post-election. Regression analyses tested the impact of affective incongruence on processing time, information search, and decision outcomes.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- **H1:** Voters processing on-line will take longer to process affectively incongruent information than congruent information, while memory-based processors will show no such difference.
- **H2:** Voters will direct more attention to information about preferred candidates, reflecting a confirmation bias in information search.
- **H3:** On-line processors will show increased support for preferred candidates when exposed to incongruent information, while memory-based processors will adjust their preferences more accurately.
- **H4:** Attitude strengthening due to incongruent information will lead to lower decision quality for on-line processors.

All hypotheses were supported, with results highlighting the biases introduced by on-line processing and their detrimental effects on decision-making.

**10. Main findings:** The study demonstrates that on-line processors exhibit significant biases in handling incongruent information, spending more time processing it and counterarguing against it. This leads to attitude strengthening, where negative information about a favored candidate paradoxically increases support for them. On-line processors also display confirmation bias in information search, focusing more on preferred candidates and ignoring disliked ones. These biases result in lower decision quality, as on-line processors often fail to update their preferences based on new information. In contrast, memory-based processors show greater accuracy in adjusting their evaluations, although they still exhibit some search biases. Overall, the findings challenge rational models of voter behavior, emphasizing the centrality of affect in political decision-making.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Motivated reasoners may discount, counterargue, or simply ignore new information that challenges existing evaluation and affect” (p. 1023).
- “On-line processors, when encountering negative information about a favored candidate, tend to strengthen their support rather than adjust it downward” (p. 1033).
- “These findings provide a direct challenge to the notion of candidate evaluation as a Bayesian updating process in which voters readily modify their prior expectations based on the value of new information” (p. 1041).

### 2.7.6 Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions

Brader, T. (2005). Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.0092-5853.2005.00130.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(2), 388–405. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0092-5853.2005.00130.x>

**1. Citation key:** brader\_striking\_2005

**2. Author(s):** Ted Brader

**3. Year:** 2005

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** emotions, political ads, enthusiasm, fear, voter behavior, political communication

**6. Summary:** Brader examines the role of emotions in shaping voter behavior through political advertising, particularly focusing on the effects of enthusiasm and fear. Using experimental methods, he finds that ads appealing to enthusiasm encourage political participation and reinforce existing preferences, while fear-inducing ads increase vigilance and persuade voters to reconsider their choices. These findings highlight the importance of emotions in democratic processes and provide insights into how political campaigns strategically use emotional appeals to achieve their objectives.

**7. Theory:** Drawing on psychological theories of emotion, Brader argues that emotions like enthusiasm and fear activate distinct cognitive and behavioral pathways. Enthusiasm arises from positive signals about goals, reinforcing commitment and motivating participation, while fear responds to threats, prompting individuals to break routines and seek new information. These mechanisms align with Marcus et al.’s theory of Affective Intelligence, which posits that emotions adapt behavior to environmental demands. Brader extends this theory to political advertising, suggesting that strategically cued emotions can significantly influence voters’ motivations, vigilance, and decisions.

**8. Methods:** Brader conducted two experiments during a gubernatorial primary in Massachusetts in 1998, involving 286 participants. Subjects were randomly assigned to view different campaign ads embedded in news broadcasts, with variations in verbal content and nonverbal cues (music and imagery) designed to elicit either enthusiasm or fear. Post-viewing surveys measured emotional responses, political engagement, and candidate preferences. Key dependent variables included campaign interest, intention to vote, information seeking, and persuasion. Regression analyses tested the effects of emotional cues on these outcomes while controlling for pretest political attitudes and behaviors.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Enthusiasm appeals increase political participation by reinforcing existing loyalties and motivating voters to stay involved.
- Fear appeals promote vigilance, leading voters to seek information and reconsider their preferences.

Both hypotheses were supported, with results demonstrating the distinct effects of enthusiasm and fear on political behavior.

**10. Main findings:** Brader’s experiments reveal that emotional cues in political ads significantly influence voter behavior. Enthusiasm appeals increase campaign interest and intention to vote by reinforcing existing preferences and motivating participation, but they do not enhance information seeking. In contrast, fear appeals promote vigilance by encouraging voters to seek and process information about the campaign, leading to changes in candidate preferences. These findings suggest that enthusiasm strengthens loyalty while fear facilitates persuasion by reducing reliance on prior preferences and increasing attention to contemporary evaluations. The study underscores the strategic use of emotions in political communication, showing that emotional appeals can foster democratically desirable behaviors like participation and informed decision-making.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Candidates can significantly alter the motivational and persuasive power of ads simply by using music and images to elicit emotions such as fear or enthusiasm” (p. 388).
- “The results not only add to our knowledge of advertising effects, but also show that emotional appeals can

- stimulate behavior, such as voting or reasoned choice, that is often seen as democratically desirable" (p. 389).
- "Enthusiasm reinforces commitment to existing goals and strengthens the motivation to act or stay involved, while fear breaks a person out of routines and activates thinking about alternative courses of action" (p. 390).

### 2.7.7 Threat, Anxiety, and Support of Antiterrorism Policies

Huddy, L., Feldman, S., Taber, C., & Lahav, G. (2005). Threat, Anxiety, and Support of Antiterrorism Policies [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2005.00144.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(3), 593–608. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2005.00144.x>

- 1. Citation key:** huddy\_threat\_2005
- 2. Author(s):** Leonie Huddy, Stanley Feldman, Charles Taber, and Gallya Lahav
- 3. Year:** 2005
- 4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
- 5. Keywords:** terrorism, threat perception, anxiety, public opinion, antiterrorism policies
- 6. Summary:** Huddy, Feldman, Taber, and Lahav examine the distinct roles of perceived threat and anxiety in shaping public support for antiterrorism policies following the September 11 attacks. Using a national telephone survey, they demonstrate that threat perception increases support for aggressive policies, while anxiety fosters risk aversion and decreases support for military actions. The study highlights the differing psychological and political consequences of these emotional reactions to terrorism.
- 7. Theory:** The authors differentiate between two psychological reactions to terrorism: perceived threat and anxiety. Perceived threat elicits support for retaliation and punitive actions, consistent with governments' goals to combat terrorism. Conversely, anxiety heightens risk aversion, often undercutting support for aggressive policies. These distinct effects align with psychological theories that link threat to out-group vilification and punitive action, while associating anxiety with avoidance behaviors. The authors propose that these emotional responses influence support for both international and domestic antiterrorism measures in fundamentally different ways.
- 8. Methods:** Data were collected from the Threat and National Security Survey (TNSS), a national telephone survey conducted between October 2001 and March 2002, involving 1,549 adults. The survey measured perceived threat, anxiety, and support for various antiterrorism policies, including military intervention, domestic surveillance, and civil liberties restrictions. Confirmatory factor analyses were used to distinguish between perceived threat and anxiety as separate latent constructs, and probit regression models tested their impact on policy preferences. Variables such as demographic factors, political ideology, and authoritarianism were included as controls.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - Perceived threat increases support for retaliatory policies and aggressive military actions.
  - Anxiety decreases support for aggressive policies but may increase support for domestic security measures.
  - Perceived threat and anxiety have distinct psychological antecedents and policy implications.

These hypotheses were supported, with threat driving support for international policies and anxiety fostering risk aversion.
- 10. Main findings:** The study reveals that perceived threat and anxiety are distinct emotional reactions with contrasting effects on policy preferences. Perceived threat strongly increases support for aggressive military actions, domestic surveillance, and civil liberties restrictions. Anxiety, on the other hand, reduces support for risky policies like military intervention but does not significantly affect support for domestic surveillance. The authors also find that threat perceptions are associated with heightened negative stereotyping of Arabs and support for restrictive immigration policies. These findings underscore the nuanced interplay between psychological reactions to terrorism and public opinion on antiterrorism policies.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - "The distinction between perceived threat and anxiety rests on their typical psychological effects: anxiety leads to an overestimation of risk and risk-averse behavior, whereas perceived threat increases support for outwardly focused retaliatory action" (p. 594).
  - "As perceptions of threat increase, people become significantly more supportive of measures that restrict the rights of groups broadly associated with terrorism and policies that limit civil liberties more generally" (p. 604).
  - "Our findings highlight the challenge governments face in gaining public support for military action: making people aware of the risk of terrorism without unduly scaring them" (p. 605).

### 2.7.8 Hot Politics? Affective Responses to Political Rhetoric

Bakker, B. N., Schumacher, G., & Rooduijn, M. (2021). Hot Politics? Affective Responses to Political Rhetoric. *American Political Science Review*, 115(1), 150–164. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000519>

- 1. Citation key:** bakker\_hot\_2021
- 2. Author(s):** Bert N. Bakker, Gijs Schumacher, and Matthijs Rooduijn
- 3. Year:** 2021
- 4. Publication:** American Political Science Review
- 5. Keywords:** political rhetoric, affective responses, core affect, arousal, valence, political attitudes
- 6. Summary:** Bakker, Schumacher, and Rooduijn establish the circumplex model of core affect in political science, focus-

ing on how political rhetoric elicits physiological and emotional responses. Their study measures arousal (intensity) and valence (direction) through skin conductance and facial electromyography (EMG). The results reveal that attitude extremity and incongruence with political rhetoric predict heightened arousal and negative affect, respectively, while affective responses influence opinion change independently of self-reported emotions.

**7. Theory:** The authors draw on the circumplex model of affect, which posits two dimensions: arousal (intensity) and valence (positive or negative direction). Affective responses are theorized as immediate, unconscious reactions to stimuli that precede cognitive evaluations. The theory integrates political psychology concepts, suggesting that political knowledge, attitude extremity, and congruence with rhetoric predict variability in affective responses. The study highlights the underexplored role of physiological measures in political science, advancing theories of motivated reasoning and affective intelligence.

**8. Methods:** The researchers conducted a lab experiment ( $N=397$ ) in the Netherlands, using physiological measures to capture affective responses to political rhetoric on immigration, climate change, redistribution, and the European Union. Participants viewed video clips with ideologically distinct rhetoric while physiological responses were recorded. Skin conductance measured arousal, while facial EMG assessed valence. Surveys before and after treatments captured political attitudes and knowledge. Regression models tested the effects of independent variables like attitude extremity, incongruence, and political knowledge on affective responses.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- H1: Greater political knowledge increases arousal in response to political rhetoric. (Not supported.)
- H2: More extreme attitudes lead to higher arousal in response to political rhetoric. (Supported.)
- H3: Incongruent rhetoric increases negative affect. (Supported.)
- H4: Congruent rhetoric increases positive affect. (Not supported.)
- H5: Incongruent rhetoric increases attention. (Not supported.)

**10. Main findings:** The study demonstrates that political rhetoric incongruent with prior attitudes elicits negative affect, while extreme attitudes are associated with heightened arousal. Congruent rhetoric, however, does not generate positive affect. Physiological measures reveal that affective responses can predict opinion changes independent of self-reported emotions. The findings advance the understanding of core affect in political science, underscoring the importance of physiological responses in shaping political attitudes.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We find that people with more extreme attitudes on an issue experience more arousal when exposed to political rhetoric" (p. 159).
- "Rhetoric that is incongruent with someone's attitudes produces negative affect, whereas congruent rhetoric does not produce positive affect" (p. 160).
- "The main contribution of this paper is that we establish the two-dimensional circumplex model in political science as a theory of core affect" (p. 161).

## 2.8 Values, Value Conflict, and Attitudinal Ambivalence

### 2.8.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The literature on values and ambivalence in political science explores the interplay between deeply held beliefs, societal influences, and political attitudes. Foundational works like Rokeach's *The Nature of Human Values* examine the hierarchical structure of values and their role in shaping attitudes and behaviors. Subsequent research integrates these insights with frameworks from psychology and neuroscience, highlighting the role of ambivalence, social influences, and value conflicts in driving public opinion and electoral decision-making. Recent studies emphasize the malleability of values in response to social contexts and cues, challenging traditional notions of their stability.
- **Values and Attitudes Foundations:** Milton Rokeach's seminal work, *The Nature of Human Values* (1973), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding values as determinants of attitudes and behaviors. Rokeach categorizes values into terminal (desired end-states, e.g., freedom, equality) and instrumental (modes of conduct, e.g., honesty, courage) and theorizes that inconsistencies between values and self-conceptions lead to behavioral change. Using the Value Survey, Rokeach empirically demonstrates how values influence political ideologies and societal behaviors, emphasizing their hierarchical organization and centrality to cognitive and behavioral change.
- **Core Beliefs and Public Opinion Structure:** Feldman's research on core beliefs and public opinion highlights the centrality of values like equality of opportunity and economic individualism in structuring political attitudes. His 1988 study critiques the focus on ideology, arguing that core values provide psychological constraints and a framework for consistent political evaluations. Feldman finds that these values are distinct yet influential, with equality predicting support for social welfare and individualism explaining opposition to government intervention. The findings emphasize that public attitudes are structured by values rather than overarching ideological principles.
- **Ambivalence in Political Culture:** Studies by Feldman and Zaller (1992) and Alvarez and Brehm (1995) explore the role of ambivalence in public opinion, focusing on value conflicts. Feldman and Zaller highlight the coexistence of egalitarian and individualistic values in American political culture, leading to inconsistent policy preferences on social welfare. Alvarez and Brehm extend this by developing a heteroskedastic probit model to analyze how value conflicts, such as individual autonomy versus the sanctity of life, drive ambivalence and response variability in abortion policy attitudes. Both studies underscore the complexity and tension within public opinion as shaped by competing values.
- **Evaluative Space and Beyond Bipolar Models:** Cacioppo, Gardner, and Berntson (1997) challenge traditional bipolar

models of attitudes by proposing the evaluative space model, which emphasizes the independent operation of positive and negative evaluative systems. This framework captures complex states like ambivalence and explains phenomena such as the negativity bias and positivity offset. The findings from psychology and neuroscience expand the understanding of attitudes beyond unidimensional continuums, highlighting their bivariate and context-dependent nature.

- **Ambivalence and Electoral Decision-Making:** Lavine (2001) and Basinger and Lavine (2005) investigate the effects of ambivalence on voter behavior and electoral choices. Lavine demonstrates that ambivalence destabilizes candidate evaluations and weakens the predictive strength of voting models, particularly in presidential elections. Basinger and Lavine explore partisan ambivalence in congressional elections, finding that it reduces reliance on party cues and enhances the role of ideology and economic performance in voter decision-making. Both studies reveal the nuanced and heterogeneous impacts of ambivalence on electoral behavior.
- **Social Influence and Political Values:** Connors (2020) explores the social dimensions of political values, arguing that values are context-dependent and reinforced by social networks. Experimental and observational evidence shows that individuals align their values with socially desirable norms, particularly in politically homogeneous environments. High self-monitors are especially susceptible to social cues, reframing values as dynamic constructs shaped by external influences.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Current debates in the study of values and ambivalence focus on the interplay between cognitive and social processes, the contextual variability of attitudes, and the implications for democratic representation. Researchers increasingly emphasize the role of social media and digital platforms in shaping value-based conflicts and the potential for experimental methods to unpack the dynamics of ambivalence and value change. Future work is likely to integrate insights from neuroscience, psychology, and computational modeling to further illuminate the complexities of political values and their influence on public opinion.

### 2.8.2 The Nature of Human Values

Rokeach, M. (1973). *The Nature of Human Values* [Google-Books-ID: TfRGAAAAMAAJ]. Free Press

1. **Citation key:** rokeach\_nature\_1973
2. **Author(s):** Milton Rokeach
3. **Year:** 1973
4. **Publication:** The Nature of Human Values (Free Press)
5. **Keywords:** values, terminal values, instrumental values, attitude change, self-conception
6. **Summary:** Milton Rokeach's \*The Nature of Human Values\* explores how values shape attitudes and behaviors. The book provides a framework for understanding values as both determinants and consequences of cultural, societal, and personal influences. Rokeach identifies two types of values—terminal values, which reflect desired end-states, and instrumental values, which refer to modes of behavior. Using his Value Survey, Rokeach demonstrates how values influence political ideologies, self-conceptions, and social behavior, emphasizing their critical role in both cognitive and behavioral change.
7. **Theory:** Rokeach's theory posits that values occupy a central place in human belief systems, functioning as both independent and dependent variables. Values, he argues, are shaped by cultural, societal, and personal factors and in turn influence attitudes and behaviors. He classifies values into terminal values (e.g., "freedom" and "equality") and instrumental values (e.g., "honesty" and "courage"). These values are hierarchically organized, with self-conceptions at the apex, followed by terminal values, instrumental values, attitudes, and behaviors. Rokeach further theorizes that cognitive and behavioral change occurs when inconsistencies arise between values and self-conceptions, leading to self-dissatisfaction and subsequent adjustments.
8. **Methods:** Rokeach employs the Value Survey, a tool where respondents rank-order 18 terminal and 18 instrumental values. This instrument is used across diverse samples, including college students and national populations from the United States, Canada, Australia, and Israel. The book includes experimental studies, such as those conducted with Michigan State University students, where changes in value rankings were induced through social comparison. Behavioral outcomes, like joining the NAACP or enrolling in specific academic programs, were tracked to measure the effects of value changes. Additionally, Rokeach conducts content analyses of political figures to connect value hierarchies to political ideologies.
9. **Hypotheses:** Rokeach hypothesizes that:
  - Individuals prioritize values in a hierarchical structure, with self-conceptions driving value-based changes.
  - Cognitive dissonance between values and self-conceptions leads to self-dissatisfaction and behavior modification.
  - Terminal values, such as freedom and equality, serve as predictors of political ideologies and behaviors.
 These hypotheses are supported through empirical studies, demonstrating value hierarchies and their predictive power in shaping attitudes and actions.
10. **Main findings:** Rokeach's research establishes that values are fundamental to understanding human behavior. Terminal values like freedom and equality correlate with political ideologies; for instance, socialists rank both values highly, while capitalists prioritize freedom over equality. Experimental studies show that value changes can be induced through targeted stimuli, leading to behavioral changes such as increased support for civil rights organizations. The hierarchical nature of values, with self-conceptions at the core, is shown to explain why value-based changes often result in long-term shifts in attitudes and behaviors. The findings underscore the utility of the Value Survey in both academic and practical contexts, although concerns about its methodological rigor remain.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Terminal values*: Desired end-states of existence, such as “freedom” and “equality.”
- *Instrumental values*: Modes of conduct that facilitate the attainment of terminal values, such as “honesty” and “courage.”
- *Value Survey*: An instrument developed by Rokeach to measure individuals’ rankings of terminal and instrumental values.
- *Self-conceptions*: Individuals’ beliefs about their morality and competence, which shape and are shaped by their values.

**2.8.3 Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion: The Role of Core Beliefs and Values**

Feldman, S. (1988). Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion: The Role of Core Beliefs and Values [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 32(2), 416–440. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111130>

**1. Citation key:** feldman\_structure\_1988

**2. Author(s):** Stanley Feldman

**3. Year:** 1988

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** core beliefs, values, public opinion, equality of opportunity, economic individualism, free enterprise system

**6. Summary:** Feldman investigates how core beliefs, specifically support for equality of opportunity, economic individualism, and the free enterprise system, contribute to the structure and consistency of public opinion. Drawing from data in the 1984 National Election Study (NES), the paper challenges the notion that public attitudes lack coherence, arguing instead that core values provide a framework for structuring political beliefs and preferences. Feldman demonstrates that these values are integral to issue preferences, performance evaluations, and candidate assessments.

**7. Theory:** Feldman critiques the traditional focus on ideology as the primary organizing principle of public opinion, highlighting instead the central role of core beliefs and values. He posits that values function as psychological constraints, providing a quasi-logical framework for evaluating political issues. Feldman’s approach builds on Converse’s (1964) concept of belief systems, emphasizing that core values such as equality and individualism are distinct yet influential in shaping attitudes. These values are hypothesized to operate through mechanisms of social learning and psychological reinforcement, leading to consistent patterns in political evaluations.

**8. Methods:** Using data from the 1984 NES pilot study, Feldman measures core beliefs through multi-item scales designed to assess support for equality of opportunity, economic individualism, and the free enterprise system. These scales were constructed from Likert-type items and refined using confirmatory factor analysis to ensure reliability. Feldman employs regression analyses to examine the relationships between these core beliefs and a variety of dependent variables, including policy preferences, retrospective performance evaluations, and candidate assessments. The study also includes demographic controls to isolate the effects of core beliefs.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Political attitudes are influenced by core values, such as equality of opportunity and economic individualism, rather than ideological reasoning.
- Support for equality of opportunity correlates positively with preferences for government social programs and minority aid.
- Economic individualism predicts opposition to government intervention and preferences for limited federal involvement.
- The free enterprise system has limited explanatory power for public attitudes due to widespread consensus or weak salience.

These hypotheses are largely supported, with equality and individualism emerging as significant predictors of political evaluations, while free enterprise plays a minimal role.

**10. Main findings:** Feldman finds that equality of opportunity is the most consistent predictor of public preferences across a range of policy areas, including social welfare, minority aid, and government interventions. Economic individualism significantly predicts preferences for limited government, particularly in federal-state relations and economic policies. Notably, the free enterprise system has negligible influence on public attitudes, suggesting a consensus or limited salience in the mass public. Feldman also demonstrates that core beliefs shape retrospective evaluations of political leaders, with equality strongly influencing assessments of Reagan’s economic policies and individualism affecting perceptions of his competence and integrity. These findings underscore the role of core values as foundational elements of public opinion, complementing but not replacing ideological and partisan identifications.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “The political thinking of much of the public cannot be adequately described as ideological in the sense of deductive reasoning from an overarching set of integrated principles” (p. 417).
- “Rather than structuring specific attitudes around overarching ideological principles, people may rely on specific beliefs and values to make sense of the political world” (p. 420).
- “Support for equality of opportunity emerges as the strongest correlate of public preferences, even when controlling for party and ideological identifications” (p. 428).

#### 2.8.4 The Political Culture of Ambivalence: Ideological Responses to the Welfare State

Feldman, S., & Zaller, J. (1992). The Political Culture of Ambivalence: Ideological Responses to the Welfare State [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 36(1), 268–307. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111433>

1. **Citation key:** feldman\_political\_1992
2. **Author(s):** Stanley Feldman and John Zaller
3. **Year:** 1992
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** public opinion, ambivalence, social welfare, ideology, value conflict
6. **Summary:** Feldman and Zaller investigate the ideological and cultural foundations of public opinion on social welfare policies in the United States. They argue that Americans frequently exhibit ambivalence, supporting both egalitarian principles and individualistic values. Drawing on data from open-ended questions in the 1987 National Election Studies (NES) pilot study, the authors find that value conflicts between individualism and humanitarianism contribute to inconsistent policy preferences. The paper highlights the tension between America's ideological commitment to limited government and its practical support for social welfare programs.
7. **Theory:** The authors theorize that the structure of American political culture fosters ambivalence in public opinion on social welfare. While egalitarianism and humanitarianism encourage support for welfare policies, individualism and opposition to government intervention constrain this support. Feldman and Zaller contend that these competing values coexist within most individuals, leading to ideological conflict and inconsistent policy preferences. They further posit that this ambivalence is more pronounced among liberals, who must reconcile support for activist government with a cultural emphasis on limited government and self-reliance.
8. **Methods:** The study utilizes open-ended responses from the 1987 NES pilot study, focusing on two key social welfare questions: government guarantees of jobs and standards of living, and government spending versus service provision. Respondents were asked to elaborate on their policy preferences through open-ended probes. The authors systematically coded these responses into categories reflecting core values (e.g., individualism, humanitarianism, opposition to government) and examined patterns of ambivalence. They analyzed responses across ideological groups, identifying differences in the structure and consistency of value-based justifications for welfare preferences.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Social welfare conservatives will exhibit less value conflict than social welfare liberals due to their reliance on individualism and opposition to government intervention.
  - Social welfare liberals will experience greater ambivalence, balancing their humanitarian impulses with the cultural emphasis on individualism and limited government.
  - Abstract values like individualism will be invoked more frequently in opposition to welfare policies, while concrete justifications (e.g., program-specific benefits) will dominate among supporters.
- These hypotheses are supported by findings that show higher levels of ambivalence among liberals and consistent reliance on individualism by conservatives.
10. **Main findings:** Feldman and Zaller demonstrate that American public opinion on social welfare policies is shaped by pervasive value conflict. Conservatives consistently invoke individualism and opposition to government as justifications for opposing welfare policies, while liberals rely more on concrete programmatic benefits and expressions of humanitarianism. However, even welfare supporters frequently acknowledge the importance of individualism, illustrating the depth of cultural ambivalence. The authors also find that political sophistication exacerbates this ambivalence among liberals, as they are more likely to articulate value-based conflicts. Conservatives, by contrast, show greater consistency in their ideological opposition to welfare, relying on well-established cultural values of individual responsibility and limited government.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Most people are internally conflicted about exactly what kind of welfare system they want...ordinary people are both regularly exposed to arguments that extol individualism and decry big government and also to political rhetoric that urges sympathy for the poor and state action to ameliorate existing social ills" (p. 293).
  - "Ambivalence with respect to social welfare policy is more pronounced among welfare liberals. They must reconcile their humanitarian impulses with the conservative principles of individualism and limited government" (p. 293).
  - "Our data reveal that even those who take consistently pro- or consistently antiwelfare positions often cite reasons for the opposite point of view, reflecting the enduring tension within American political culture" (p. 294).

#### 2.8.5 American Ambivalence Towards Abortion Policy: Development of a Heteroskedastic Probit Model of Competing Values

Alvarez, R. M., & Brehm, J. (1995). American Ambivalence Towards Abortion Policy: Development of a Heteroskedastic Probit Model of Competing Values [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 39(4), 1055–1082. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111669>

1. **Citation key:** alvarez\_american\_1995
2. **Author(s):** R. Michael Alvarez and John Brehm
3. **Year:** 1995

4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** abortion policy, ambivalence, core beliefs, heteroskedastic probit, public opinion
6. **Summary:** Alvarez and Brehm examine the roots of ambivalence in public opinion toward abortion policy, focusing on the role of conflicting core values such as women's rights and the sanctity of human life. Using data from the 1982 General Social Survey (GSS), the authors develop and employ a heteroskedastic probit model to assess how these conflicts influence attitudes across seven abortion policy scenarios. They find that ambivalence arises primarily in "difficult" policy questions, where multiple core values conflict, increasing the variability of individual responses.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that ambivalence in public opinion emerges from the tension between deeply held, conflicting core values. Drawing on the elaboration-likelihood model (ELM) and the concept of core beliefs, they argue that policy preferences are shaped by both cognitive and motivational factors. When core values conflict—such as individual autonomy versus the sanctity of life—individuals experience greater difficulty in forming stable preferences, particularly when survey questions invoke multiple, equally weighted values. This framework links ambivalence to variance in survey responses and challenges the assumption that public attitudes are always coherent and stable.
8. **Methods:** The study employs the 1982 GSS, which includes a series of questions on abortion policy under different scenarios. Alvarez and Brehm develop a heteroskedastic probit model to estimate both choice outcomes and the error variance associated with response ambivalence. Independent variables include measures of religiosity, gender, race, and support for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), along with variables capturing the number of reasons respondents provide for and against abortion. The authors use likelihood ratio tests to assess heteroskedasticity and examine how elaboration on conflicting core values predicts error variance.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Ambivalence in public opinion increases when conflicting core values, such as women's rights and the sanctity of life, are equally salient.
  - Error variance is higher for "difficult" policy questions that invoke multiple core values, compared to "easy" questions that involve a single dominant value.
  - Additional information reduces uncertainty but does not alleviate ambivalence caused by conflicting core beliefs.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with results demonstrating higher ambivalence for "difficult" questions and the persistence of error variance despite increased information.
10. **Main findings:** The study identifies significant heteroskedasticity in public responses to abortion policy questions, particularly for scenarios involving conflicting values. While support for "easy" policies like permitting abortion to save the mother's life exhibits low error variance, "difficult" scenarios such as abortion for economic reasons show higher variability. The interaction of pro- and anti-abortion reasons is a key predictor of error variance, underscoring the role of value conflict in shaping ambivalence. Religious intensity and frequency of church attendance consistently predict opposition to abortion, while support for the ERA aligns with greater acceptance. These findings highlight the role of core value conflict in driving instability and variability in public opinion.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Ambivalence rooted in conflict is the only one of the alternative explanations for an ability to recite both reasons for and against abortion policy that is consistent with all seven models" (p. 1073).
  - "Important political debates involve fundamentally tough questions, where deeply held and widely shared principles or values are in conflict" (p. 1055).
  - "When core beliefs conflict, it becomes difficult for an individual to determine their position on related policy choices" (p. 1058).

#### 2.8.6 Beyond Bipolar Conceptualizations and Measures: The Case of Attitudes and Evaluative Space

Cacioppo, J. T., Gardner, W. L., & Berntson, G. G. (1997). Beyond Bipolar Conceptualizations and Measures: The Case of Attitudes and Evaluative Space [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 1(1), 3–25. [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0101\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0101_2)

1. **Citation key:** cacioppo\_beyond\_1997
2. **Author(s):** John T. Cacioppo, Wendi L. Gardner, and Gary G. Berntson
3. **Year:** 1997
4. **Publication:** Personality and Social Psychology Review
5. **Keywords:** attitudes, evaluative space, positivity offset, negativity bias, ambivalence
6. **Summary:** Cacioppo, Gardner, and Berntson challenge the traditional bipolar conceptualization of attitudes, proposing a bivariate evaluative space model. They argue that attitudes are not limited to a unidimensional continuum between positive and negative poles but instead involve independent motivational systems that underlie positive and negative evaluations. Using evidence from psychology and neuroscience, the authors present a theoretical framework emphasizing the separability of positive and negative evaluations, their distinct activation functions, and their differential contributions to ambivalence and behavior.
7. **Theory:** The evaluative space model posits that attitudes are driven by two distinct motivational substrates: positivity and negativity. These systems operate independently and can be co-activated or uncoupled, resulting in complex evaluative states such as ambivalence. The model introduces key principles, including:
  - **Positivity offset:** A weak positive evaluation occurs even in neutral environments, encouraging exploration and engagement.

- **Negativity bias:** Negative evaluations elicit stronger responses per unit of activation, reflecting evolutionary pressures favoring rapid avoidance of threats.
- **Ambivalence asymmetry:** Ambivalence is more strongly associated with negative than positive evaluations due to the negativity bias and the positivity offset.
- **Heteroscedasticity principle:** Negative evaluations arise from a wider range of antecedents, increasing their prevalence and complexity compared to positive evaluations.

This framework subsumes the bipolar model, situating it as a special case within a broader bivariate representation of attitudes.

- 8. Methods:** The authors review evidence from psychology, neuroscience, and psychophysiology to support their model. Key studies include:

- Neurophysiological research demonstrating distinct brain mechanisms for positive and negative evaluations.
- Behavioral experiments illustrating the separability of positive and negative affective responses.
- Factor-analytic studies of self-reported attitudes, revealing independent dimensions of positivity, negativity, and ambivalence.

They also introduce the Bivariate Evaluations and Ambivalence Measures (BEAMs), a set of unipolar scales designed to capture positive and negative evaluations separately.

- 9. Hypotheses:**

- Positive and negative evaluations are independent and can be activated simultaneously or separately.
- Ambivalence arises from the co-activation of positive and negative evaluations, with stronger effects observed for negative inputs.
- Traditional bipolar measures underestimate ambivalence and fail to capture the complexity of evaluative processes.

These hypotheses are supported by the reviewed evidence, demonstrating the limitations of bipolar scales and the need for bivariate conceptualizations.

- 10. Main findings:** The evaluative space model provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding attitudes, capturing the complexity of positive and negative evaluations and their interactions. Key findings include:

- Positive and negative evaluations are functionally independent and governed by distinct activation principles.
- Ambivalence is associated with higher negativity and greater variability in evaluative responses, reflecting the heteroscedasticity of negative antecedents.
- Traditional bipolar scales mask ambivalence and fail to account for the coexistence of strong positive and negative evaluations.

The model's implications extend to various domains, including public opinion, intergroup relations, and health behavior, where understanding ambivalence and its antecedents is critical for predicting attitudes and actions.

- 11. Key quotations:**

- "Evidence is reviewed showing that the positive and negative evaluative processes underlying many attitudes are distinguishable, are characterized by distinct activation functions, and are related differentially to attitude ambivalence" (p. 3).
- "The positivity offset reflects a tendency to engage in exploratory behavior in neutral environments, promoting adaptive responses to unfamiliar stimuli" (p. 12).
- "Traditional bipolar measures fail to capture the independent activation of positivity and negativity, leading to an oversimplified understanding of ambivalence and its consequences" (p. 15).

### 2.8.7 The Electoral Consequences of Ambivalence toward Presidential Candidates

Lavine, H. (2001). The Electoral Consequences of Ambivalence toward Presidential Candidates [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(4), 915–929. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2669332>

**1. Citation key:** lavine\_electoral\_2001

**2. Author(s):** Howard Lavine

**3. Year:** 2001

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** ambivalence, presidential candidates, electoral decision-making, public opinion, attitude stability

**6. Summary:** Lavine investigates how ambivalence toward presidential candidates impacts electoral decision-making, candidate evaluations, and voting behavior. Using National Election Studies (NES) data from five U.S. presidential elections (1980–1996), the study examines whether ambivalence contributes to instability in candidate evaluations, delays the formation of voting intentions, and weakens predictors of vote choice, such as personality assessments and issue proximity. The findings indicate that ambivalence significantly undermines the stability and coherence of electoral attitudes and weakens the link between voter preferences and actual vote choice.

**7. Theory:** Lavine argues that ambivalence—holding simultaneous positive and negative evaluations of a political candidate—can undermine the stability and predictability of electoral decision-making. Drawing from cognitive psychology and political science, the study suggests that ambivalence creates tension and difficulty in reconciling conflicting considerations, such as personality traits and policy positions. Ambivalence is theorized to delay the crystallization of voting intentions and weaken the influence of both character judgments and issue proximity on overall candidate

evaluations. The theory posits that ambivalence arises from the salience of competing considerations and reflects the complexity of political belief systems.

- 8. Methods:** Lavine uses NES data to assess ambivalence through open-ended questions about respondents' likes and dislikes regarding major party candidates. The study operationalizes ambivalence using a formula that captures the intensity and similarity of positive and negative reactions. The analysis examines:

- The relationship between ambivalence and the timing of voting intention formation.
- The stability of candidate evaluations over time.
- The moderating effects of ambivalence on the influence of personality assessments and issue proximity.
- The connection between vote intention and actual vote choice.

Statistical techniques include regression analyses and interaction terms to isolate the effects of ambivalence while controlling for partisanship, education, and political interest.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Ambivalence increases instability in candidate evaluations over the course of a campaign.
- Ambivalence delays the formation of voting intentions compared to voters with one-sided attitudes.
- Ambivalence diminishes the influence of candidate character assessments and issue proximity on overall evaluations.
- Ambivalence weakens the connection between vote intention and vote choice.

These hypotheses are largely confirmed, demonstrating that ambivalence introduces variability and reduces the predictive utility of traditional electoral models.

- 10. Main findings:** Lavine finds that ambivalence is widespread in presidential elections, with rates of ambivalence averaging 27.7% across five election cycles. Ambivalence weakens the stability of candidate evaluations and delays the crystallization of vote intentions, with ambivalent voters finalizing decisions closer to election day. The study also shows that ambivalence undermines the predictive strength of personality assessments and issue proximity on candidate evaluations. For highly ambivalent voters, issue proximity had no significant relationship with candidate evaluations, while one-sided voters exhibited stronger and more stable connections. Ambivalence reduces the predictive linkage between vote intention and actual vote choice, leading to less consistent electoral outcomes.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Ambivalence creates instability in candidate evaluations, substantially delays the formation of citizens' voting intentions, and ultimately weakens the prediction of vote choice" (p. 915).
- "Ambivalent voters delay their decision, resonate with aspects of both campaigns, and find it particularly difficult to put their political ideas together in a consistent way" (p. 921).
- "Ambivalence would appear to capture a unique and fundamental—although to date largely ignored—aspect of mass belief systems and electoral choice" (p. 927).

### 2.8.8 Group Attachment and the Reduction of Value-Driven Ambivalence

Rudolph, T. J. (2005). Group Attachment and the Reduction of Value-Driven Ambivalence. *Political Psychology*, 26(6), 905–928. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2005.00450.x>

1. **Citation key:** rudolph\_group\_2005
2. **Author(s):** Thomas J. Rudolph
3. **Year:** 2005
4. **Publication:** Political Psychology
5. **Keywords:** ambivalence, value conflict, group attachment, campaign finance reform, public opinion
6. **Summary:** Rudolph examines how group attachment mitigates the destabilizing effects of value-driven ambivalence in public attitudes toward campaign finance reform. The study explores whether affective cues activate group attachments, enabling individuals to reconcile conflicts between competing values like political equality and political expression. Using survey data and experiments, the study finds that group attachments, when activated, significantly reduce response variability caused by ambivalence.
7. **Theory:** The article builds on the concept of value-driven ambivalence, defined as the simultaneous endorsement of conflicting values, such as political equality and political expression. Rudolph argues that group attachments act as heuristics, simplifying complex policy choices by framing value conflicts in terms of group interests. Affective cues—stimuli that evoke emotional connections to groups—activate these attachments, tipping the balance of considerations toward one value. This process reduces response variability by making tradeoffs between competing values more manageable. The theory challenges the assumption that the effects of ambivalence are fixed across contexts, proposing that they are conditional on the activation of group attachments.
8. **Methods:** The study uses data from the American Politics Study, which surveyed 1,229 respondents about campaign finance reform shortly after the 2000 U.S. election. Key variables include:
  - Ambivalence, measured using nominal and linear scales to capture the intensity and balance of support for competing values.
  - Group attachment, operationalized through experimental conditions exposing respondents to most-liked or least-liked interest groups.
  - Response variability, modeled using heteroskedastic ordered probit analyses to estimate how ambivalence, group

attachment, and affective cues interact.

The design includes experimental manipulations and multivariate regression models to test whether group attachment moderates the relationship between ambivalence and response variability.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Ambivalence increases response variability in policy attitudes due to conflicts between competing values.
- Group attachment, activated by affective cues, moderates the effects of ambivalence by facilitating tradeoffs between values.
- Response variability is higher among ambivalent respondents with greater political knowledge, as additional information exacerbates value conflicts.

These hypotheses are supported by the analysis, demonstrating the conditional nature of ambivalence's effects on response variability.

**10. Main findings:** Rudolph finds that group attachment significantly reduces the destabilizing effects of ambivalence on response variability. Ambivalence is most pronounced in the absence of affective cues, with respondents struggling to reconcile conflicts between political equality and political expression. When group attachment is activated, however, individuals assign disproportionate weight to the value aligned with their group's interests, simplifying decision-making and reducing variability. The study also highlights the limitations of linear ambivalence measures, showing that they often fail to distinguish between ambivalence and indifference. These findings underscore the contextual and heuristic nature of ambivalence, emphasizing the role of group dynamics in shaping political judgments.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Group attachments, when activated by affective cues, dampen the effects of ambivalence by simplifying value tradeoffs and reducing response variability" (p. 912).
- "The findings suggest that ambivalence is not a fixed attribute of public opinion but rather a conditional phenomenon, influenced by contextual factors such as group attachment" (p. 918).
- "Nominal measures of ambivalence provide a more nuanced understanding of response variability, revealing the moderating role of group attachments and the limitations of linear scales" (p. 924).

### 2.8.9 Ambivalence, Information, and Electoral Choice

Basinger, S. J., & Lavine, H. (2005). Ambivalence, Information, and Electoral Choice. *American Political Science Review*, 99(2), 169–184. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055405051580>

**1. Citation key:** basinger\_ambivalence\_2005

**2. Author(s):** Scott J. Basinger and Howard Lavine

**3. Year:** 2005

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** ambivalence, partisanship, voter behavior, congressional elections, political knowledge

**6. Summary:** Basinger and Lavine explore how partisan ambivalence shapes voter behavior in U.S. House elections, focusing on how ambivalent attitudes influence reliance on party identification, ideology, and economic performance in voting decisions. Using data from five election cycles (1990–2000), the authors find that ambivalence reduces reliance on partisan cues and moderates the impact of knowledge and campaign intensity on voter decision-making. The study highlights ambivalence as a key factor in explaining heterogeneity in electoral behavior.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose a dual-process model of voter decision-making, grounded in the principles of cognitive effort and sufficiency. They argue that voters with ambivalent partisan attitudes experience reduced confidence in party cues and must exert additional cognitive effort to achieve judgmental confidence. Highly informed voters with ambivalence are more likely to rely on ideology, while less informed ambivalent voters turn to economic evaluations. Campaign intensity amplifies these effects, making sophisticated voting more accessible across knowledge levels.

**8. Methods:** The analysis uses National Election Studies (NES) data from 1990–2000, with partisan ambivalence measured through open-ended responses about likes and dislikes of political parties. Key independent variables include:

- *Partisan ambivalence*: Operationalized as the balance and intensity of positive and negative evaluations toward parties.
- *Knowledge*: Assessed through factual political knowledge questions.
- *Campaign intensity*: Measured based on competitiveness, financial thresholds, and election closeness.

Multivariate logit models analyze interactions between ambivalence, knowledge, and campaign intensity, examining their effects on vote choice, reliance on ideology, and economic evaluations.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Voters with high ambivalence rely less on partisan cues.
- Politically informed ambivalent voters rely more on ideology.
- Politically uninformed ambivalent voters rely more on economic evaluations.
- Campaign intensity amplifies reliance on ideology and reduces reliance on economic performance.

These hypotheses are strongly supported, demonstrating the role of ambivalence in shaping complex voter behavior.

**10. Main findings:** Basinger and Lavine find that partisan ambivalence significantly reduces reliance on party identification, with ambivalent voters exhibiting more heterogeneous voting patterns. Among ambivalent voters, those with high political knowledge rely on ideological considerations, while less informed voters emphasize economic perfor-

mance. Campaign intensity moderates these effects, facilitating ideological voting and reducing economic voting across ambivalence levels. The study underscores the dynamic interplay between cognitive and contextual factors in voter decision-making, challenging static models of electoral choice.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Voters who are ambivalent about the political parties experience a gap between actual and desired confidence in their electoral choices, leading them to recruit additional considerations to make decisions" (p. 169).
- "Our findings suggest that partisan ambivalence is not merely a source of unpredictability in voting behavior but a catalyst for engaging with more complex decision-making criteria" (p. 176).
- "Intense campaigns reduce the stratifying effects of political knowledge, enabling voters across information levels to engage in more sophisticated forms of electoral choice" (p. 180).

#### 2.8.10 The Social Dimension of Political Values

Connors, E. C. [Elizabeth C.]. (2020). The Social Dimension of Political Values. *Political Behavior*, 42(3), 961–982. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-019-09530-3>

1. Citation key: connors\_social\_2020

2. Author(s): Elizabeth C. Connors

3. Year: 2020

4. Publication: Political Behavior

5. Keywords: political values, social influence, self-presentation, value change, partisan homogeneity

6. Summary: Connors examines whether political values, traditionally considered stable guides for political decision-making, are socially reinforced rather than intrinsic predispositions. Using experimental and observational data, the study demonstrates that political values are influenced by social contexts and cues, suggesting that these values may reflect social desirability rather than internal stability.

7. Theory: Connors challenges the prevailing assumption that political values are stable and transcendent across situations. Instead, she argues that these values are socially influenced and context-dependent. Drawing on theories of self-presentation and social conformity, she posits that individuals adopt political values to align with socially desirable norms within their environments. The theory suggests that individuals high in self-monitoring (those more attuned to social pressures) are particularly susceptible to value reinforcement through social cues. This approach reframes political values as malleable constructs shaped by the social groups to which individuals belong.

8. Methods: Connors employs a mixed-method approach:

- An **experiment** involving 192 participants recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) tests the causal relationship between social cues and political value endorsement. Participants were exposed to a social cue linking a politically neutral value (compromise vs. standing ground) to a positively viewed group. Self-monitoring was measured as a moderating variable.
- An **observational analysis** using the 2000 American National Election Studies (ANES) dataset examines the effect of politically homogeneous social networks on the endorsement of party-aligned values, such as equality and morality. Logistic regression models test whether social network homogeneity predicts greater party-congruent value endorsements, controlling for partisanship, ideology, and demographic factors.

9. Hypotheses:

- Social cues increase the likelihood of endorsing specific political values.
- Self-monitoring moderates the relationship between social cues and value endorsement, with high self-monitors more influenced by social cues.
- Homogeneous social networks reinforce party-congruent value endorsements.

All hypotheses are supported by the findings, confirming the role of social influence in shaping political values.

10. Main findings: Connors finds that political values are not stable internal predispositions but are influenced by social contexts. In the experiment, participants exposed to social cues endorsing compromise were more likely to favor compromise, particularly among high self-monitors. Observational data corroborate these findings, showing that individuals in politically homogeneous social networks are more likely to endorse party-congruent values. These results challenge the traditional view of political values as robust filters of political information, instead highlighting their susceptibility to social reinforcement.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "These results suggest that political values are socially reinforced, rather than intrinsic predispositions, and that individuals adopt values to align with the norms of their social environments" (p. 967).
- "The findings reveal that social cues influence value endorsement through self-presentation desires, particularly among individuals high in self-monitoring" (p. 972).
- "This research challenges the notion that political values are stable guides for decision-making, demonstrating instead that they reflect socially desirable responses shaped by partisan homogeneity and contextual cues" (p. 979).

### 2.8.11 Hard Choices, Easy Answers: Values, Information, and American Public Opinion

Alvarez, R. M., & Brehm, J. (2020, October). *Hard Choices, Easy Answers: Values, Information, and American Public Opinion*. Princeton University Press.

1. **Citation key:** alvarez\_hard\_2020
2. **Author(s):** R. Michael Alvarez and John Brehm
3. **Year:** 2020
4. **Publication:** Princeton University Press
5. **Keywords:** public opinion, response variability, ambivalence, uncertainty, equivocation
6. **Summary:** Alvarez and Brehm investigate the variability and complexity of public opinion by focusing on how values and information shape response variability. They introduce a tripartite framework categorizing opinion variability into ambivalence, uncertainty, and equivocation, each shaped by value conflict, information, and predispositions. Using heteroskedastic probit models and national survey data, the book challenges traditional models of opinion stability, offering a nuanced understanding of how individual attitudes interact with broader political processes.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that public opinion is inherently variable due to underlying value conflicts and the influence of information. They categorize response variability into three distinct types:
  - **Ambivalence:** Arising from conflicts between deeply held, incommensurable values, such as equality and individualism.
  - **Uncertainty:** Linked to low levels of information, where individuals struggle to contextualize values in decision-making.
  - **Equivocation:** Reflecting mutually reinforcing values that result in less conflict and more consistent responses.
 Alvarez and Brehm argue that these states have significant implications for political representation, as they complicate the ability of policymakers to discern clear public preferences.
8. **Methods:** The authors employ data from the General Social Survey (GSS) and the American National Election Studies (ANES), applying heteroskedastic probit models to measure response variability across issues like abortion, euthanasia, affirmative action, and attitudes toward the IRS. Their approach emphasizes variance modeling to distinguish between ambivalence, uncertainty, and equivocation. Key variables include:
  - Measures of conflicting predispositions (e.g., egalitarianism vs. individualism).
  - Levels of political knowledge and exposure to elite debate.
  - Response variability as a dependent variable to capture opinion instability.
 Statistical analyses explore the relationships between values, information, and opinion variability, while case studies highlight issue-specific dynamics.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Ambivalence increases response variability due to competing values, with greater variability emerging under higher levels of information.
  - Uncertainty reduces response variability as individuals gain more information, clarifying their predispositions.
  - Equivocation results in stable opinions due to the compatibility of underlying values.
 These hypotheses are supported across a range of policy domains, demonstrating the distinct impacts of each type of variability on public opinion.
10. **Main findings:** Alvarez and Brehm conclude that public opinion variability is more frequently shaped by uncertainty and equivocation than by ambivalence. Ambivalence is confined to issues involving fundamental value conflicts, such as abortion, while uncertainty characterizes attitudes on less salient topics with low informational engagement. Equivocation is prevalent when values align, resulting in stable preferences. The findings challenge the notion that opinion variability reflects random noise, emphasizing the structured nature of variability driven by values and information. The authors also highlight significant implications for representation, noting that variability complicates the translation of public preferences into policy.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Response variability is not random; it reflects structured relationships between values, information, and predispositions, challenging traditional notions of stable public opinion" (p. 153).
  - "Ambivalence is likely to occur only when competing values are incommensurable and the conflict involves deeply meaningful choices" (p. 228).
  - "Uncertainty and equivocation, rather than ambivalence, characterize most public opinion variability, with important implications for political representation" (p. 316).

## 2.9 Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Politics

### 2.9.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The body of research in racial, ethnic, and gender politics investigates the dynamic interplay between societal structures, political behavior, and public opinion as they relate to identity-based groups. Key studies explore themes like political tolerance, symbolic racism, partisan realignment, and representation, offering insights into how race, ethnicity, and gender intersect with broader political phenomena. Early scholarship, such as Stouffer's work on civil liberties, laid the groundwork for understanding tolerance in periods of national crisis, while more recent studies delve into nuanced dimensions like racial resentment, intersectionality, and symbolic representation. These

contributions collectively emphasize the importance of identity and structural factors in shaping political attitudes and institutional dynamics.

- **Political Tolerance and Civil Liberties:** Stouffer's pioneering 1955 study, "Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties," examined the public's attitudes toward civil liberties during the Cold War. Utilizing a national survey, Stouffer revealed widespread intolerance toward marginalized groups such as Communists and atheists, especially among less educated and rural populations. His findings underscored the influence of demographic and contextual factors on attitudes toward democratic norms, framing tolerance as a variable response to societal threats rather than a universal principle.
- **Racial Attitudes and Partisan Realignment:** The theory of issue evolution, as articulated by Carmines and Stimson in 1989, provides a seminal account of race-driven transformations in American politics. By highlighting elite-driven framing and the salience of civil rights as a moral issue, their work explains the long-term partisan realignment that saw Democrats embrace racial equality and Republicans adopt racial conservatism. This framework has been further expanded by studies like Huckfeldt and Kohfeld's exploration of the decline of class-based politics in favor of racial polarization, illustrating the enduring impact of race on partisan dynamics.
- **Symbolic Racism and Policy Preferences:** The concept of symbolic racism, critiqued by Sniderman and Tetlock (1986), has been pivotal in explaining the subtle ways racial prejudice manifests in public opinion. Their analysis challenges the conflation of racial animus with political conservatism, advocating for clearer distinctions between ideology and prejudice. Similarly, Gilens (1995) demonstrated that racial stereotypes significantly shape opposition to welfare policies, revealing the deep entanglement of race and public policy debates.
- **Gender and Political Behavior:** Research into the gender gap in partisanship has identified economic vulnerability, political conservatism, and social roles as key drivers of gendered political behavior. Studies like Box-Steffensmeier et al. (2004) employ time-series analyses to trace the persistence and growth of the partisan gender gap, emphasizing the intersection of macroeconomic conditions and structural changes in women's societal roles. More recent contributions, such as Stauffer (2021), explore how perceptions of gender representation in political institutions influence public evaluations of governmental responsiveness and efficacy.
- **Intersectionality and Representation:** Intersectional analyses, such as those by Cassese and Barnes (2019), reveal how race, class, and gender intersect to shape political behavior, particularly among white women in the context of hostile sexism and racial privilege. These studies underscore the complexity of identity-based influences on voting behavior, challenging simplistic narratives about gender solidarity or racial unity. Tam (1995) further critiques the notion of pan-ethnic political cohesion among Asian Americans, highlighting the heterogeneity of political attitudes and behaviors across subgroups.
- **Contemporary Challenges and Future Directions:** Ongoing debates in racial, ethnic, and gender politics revolve around the persistence of structural inequalities, the role of symbolic representation, and the implications of identity-based divisions for democratic governance. Future research is likely to focus on the evolving impact of digital mobilization, the interplay between identity and institutional reforms, and the potential for cross-group solidarity in addressing systemic challenges.

### 2.9.2 Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties: A Cross-Section of the Nation Speaks Its Mind

Stouffer, S. A. (1955). *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties: A Cross-section of the Nation Speaks Its Mind* [Google-Books-ID: ut00JrP4UN0C]. Transaction Publishers

1. **Citation key:** stouffer\_communism\_1955
2. **Author(s):** Samuel A. Stouffer
3. **Year:** 1955
4. **Publication:** Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties (Doubleday & Co.)
5. **Keywords:** civil liberties, tolerance, McCarthyism, public opinion, communism
6. **Summary:** Stouffer examines American public attitudes toward civil liberties, focusing on tolerance for divergent views during the early Cold War period. Drawing from an extensive national survey, including responses from both the general public and community leaders, Stouffer identifies significant variations in tolerance based on social and demographic factors. His analysis reveals a widespread tendency to curtail the rights of Communists, atheists, and other dissenters, but also highlights greater tolerance among better-educated and urban populations.
7. **Theory:** Stouffer challenges the assumption that Americans universally uphold civil liberties by demonstrating that public opinion often aligns with restrictive policies during periods of perceived threat. He conceptualizes tolerance as a willingness to support the rights of unpopular groups, such as Communists, atheists, and Socialists, to express their views. Stouffer argues that attitudes toward civil liberties are shaped by sociological and psychological variables, including education, age, religion, and geographic location. His findings are framed within the broader context of Cold War anxieties and McCarthy-era political pressures, suggesting that public support for democratic norms can waver under external or internal threats.
8. **Methods:** Stouffer conducted a nationwide survey in 1954, involving 4,933 individuals and an additional sample of 1,500 community leaders from mid-sized cities. The study employed structured interviews to gauge attitudes toward civil liberties, focusing on respondents' support for free speech, employment rights, and other freedoms for marginalized groups. Tolerance was measured through a scale assessing responses to hypothetical scenarios, such as allowing Communists or atheists to teach in schools, publish books, or deliver public speeches. Stouffer also analyzed demographic and contextual correlates, using statistical techniques to identify patterns in attitudes across different

- population subgroups.
- 9. Hypotheses:** Stouffer hypothesized that tolerance for civil liberties would correlate positively with education, urban residency, and youth, while being negatively associated with conservative religious views and rural settings. His findings confirmed these hypotheses:
- Higher education levels were strongly linked to greater tolerance for divergent opinions.
  - Urban residents displayed higher tolerance than their rural counterparts.
  - Younger respondents were more likely to support civil liberties than older individuals.
- 10. Main findings:** Stouffer's study revealed that a majority of Americans in 1954 supported restrictions on the civil liberties of Communists and other nonconformists. Over 60% of respondents believed Communists should be barred from teaching, giving speeches, or holding certain jobs, with similar attitudes toward atheists. However, community leaders, particularly those with higher education levels, exhibited significantly greater tolerance. These leaders were more likely to support the free expression of unpopular views, contrasting sharply with the broader public's attitudes. The study also identified education as the most influential factor in predicting tolerance, overshadowing other demographic variables such as age and gender. Stouffer concluded that public opinion on civil liberties was not as dire as critics suggested but emphasized the need for education to foster greater democratic values.
- 11. Key quotations:**
- "Despite the general trend of intolerance, community leaders exhibit a higher degree of support for civil liberties, indicating the potential for elite influence to counteract restrictive public sentiments" (p. 223).
  - "The data suggest that the general public's attitudes toward Communists and other dissenters are shaped more by fear and conformity than by a principled commitment to democratic norms" (p. 130).
  - "Tolerance for civil liberties is closely linked to education, urbanism, and youth, suggesting that democratic attitudes are not uniformly distributed across the population" (p. 142).

### 2.9.3 Symbolic Racism: Problems of Motive Attribution in Political Analysis

Sniderman, P. M., & Tetlock, P. E. (1986). Symbolic Racism: Problems of Motive Attribution in Political Analysis [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1986.tb00229.x>]. *Journal of Social Issues*, 42(2), 129–150. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1986.tb00229.x>

1. **Citation key:** sniderman\_symbolic\_1986
2. **Author(s):** Paul M. Sniderman and Philip E. Tetlock
3. **Year:** 1986
4. **Publication:** Journal of Social Issues
5. **Keywords:** symbolic racism, racial prejudice, traditional values, political attitudes, motive attribution
6. **Summary:** Sniderman and Tetlock critically examine the theory of symbolic racism, which suggests that modern racial prejudice is expressed through adherence to traditional American values such as individualism and self-reliance. They argue that symbolic racism theory lacks conceptual clarity, conflates racial prejudice with broader political ideologies, and fails to distinguish effectively between symbolic and old-fashioned racism. Their analysis challenges the methodological rigor and theoretical assumptions underpinning symbolic racism research.
7. **Theory:** Symbolic racism posits that racial prejudice is now expressed subtly, disguised as moral objections to behaviors perceived as violating traditional American values. Proponents argue that it reflects a blend of anti-Black affect and adherence to these values, distinct from overt, "old-fashioned" racism. Sniderman and Tetlock critique this framework on several grounds, including its reliance on ambiguous measures, failure to operationalize the distinction between symbolic and traditional racism, and its tendency to label opposition to policies like affirmative action as inherently racist. They suggest that symbolic racism theory overstates the role of racial prejudice while neglecting the influence of political ideology and values that are unrelated to race.
8. **Methods:** The authors review existing research on symbolic racism, focusing on its conceptual foundations, measurement strategies, and empirical findings. They critique the use of scales that conflate support for traditional values with racial prejudice and assess the validity of causal claims linking symbolic racism to opposition to policies like affirmative action and busing. Their analysis also examines the correlations between symbolic racism and old-fashioned racism, as well as the demographic and contextual factors influencing these attitudes.
9. **Hypotheses:** Sniderman and Tetlock hypothesize that symbolic racism theory conflates distinct forms of racial and ideological opposition, leading to exaggerated claims about the prevalence and significance of modern racial prejudice. Their analysis supports this hypothesis:
  - Measures of symbolic racism often include items reflecting political conservatism rather than racial animus.
  - The correlation between symbolic and old-fashioned racism is high, undermining claims that they represent distinct phenomena.
  - Opposition to race-based policies can be motivated by non-racial factors, such as skepticism toward government intervention or support for individualism.
10. **Main findings:** Sniderman and Tetlock argue that symbolic racism theory is conceptually flawed and methodologically weak. They highlight inconsistencies in its operationalization, noting that measures often fail to distinguish between racial prejudice and ideological opposition to government policies. Their review finds that the purported distinctiveness of symbolic racism is undermined by its high correlation with old-fashioned racism and the overlap in their demographic predictors. They also critique the theory's inability to address alternative explanations for op-

position to race-related policies, such as economic self-interest or principled conservatism. The authors conclude that symbolic racism, as currently conceived, lacks the empirical and theoretical rigor needed to substantiate its claims.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "If the causes of symbolic and old-fashioned racism are the same, then the two 'kinds' of racism are the same. Any differences between their measures would be a matter of degree or measurement error" (p. 137).
- "The blending, in one measure, of symbolic and old-fashioned racism raises awkward questions about the validity or utility of a distinction between them" (p. 139).
- "Symbolic racism, in this sense, is a pessimistic theory, deeply skeptical of the apparent erosion of popular prejudice over the last four decades" (p. 140).

#### 2.9.4 Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics

Carmines, E. G., & Stimson, J. A. (1989). *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics* [Google-Books-ID: WHjrDwAAQBAJ]. Princeton University Press

1. **Citation key:** carmines\_issue\_1989
2. **Author(s):** Edward G. Carmines and James A. Stimson
3. **Year:** 1989
4. **Publication:** Princeton University Press
5. **Keywords:** issue evolution, race, party realignment, political elites, civil rights
6. **Summary:** Carmines and Stimson develop the theory of issue evolution, using race as a case study to explain how political parties undergo long-term transformations driven by the salience of certain issues. Their work highlights how elite leadership and shifts in party coalitions have led to a realignment of racial attitudes in American politics. The authors argue that racial issues, more than economic concerns or class, have fundamentally reshaped the Republican and Democratic parties since the 1960s.
7. **Theory:** The theory of issue evolution proposes that certain issues, due to their salience and symbolic nature, can trigger long-term political realignments. Carmines and Stimson argue that the transformation of race into a central political issue in the United States was catalyzed by elite decisions, such as the Democratic Party's support for civil rights legislation in the 1960s. They stress that leadership plays a pivotal role in issue evolution by framing issues and influencing public opinion. Over time, party elites and activists polarize around the issue, which then becomes embedded in mass partisan alignments.
8. **Methods:** Carmines and Stimson employ a longitudinal, multi-method approach, combining analysis of public opinion surveys, congressional roll-call votes, elite interviews, and historical case studies. They focus on the electoral and legislative changes surrounding civil rights from the 1950s through the 1980s. The authors use statistical models to demonstrate shifts in partisan coalitions and analyze qualitative data to illustrate the role of elite framing in the realignment process. The book also includes a comparative analysis of related political realignments in other issue areas.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that elite-driven framing of race as a moral and symbolic issue facilitated a partisan realignment, with Democrats adopting a pro-civil rights stance and Republicans embracing racial conservatism. Key findings confirm these hypotheses:
  - Political elites play a central role in initiating issue evolution by defining party positions on divisive issues.
  - Race became the defining cleavage in American politics, supplanting class as the primary determinant of partisan alignment.
  - Mass partisan shifts followed elite polarization, demonstrating the downstream effects of issue framing.
10. **Main findings:** Carmines and Stimson demonstrate that race has fundamentally reshaped the ideological and demographic composition of American political parties. Their analysis identifies the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign as pivotal moments that solidified the parties' divergent racial stances. The Republican Party transitioned into the party of racial conservatism, while the Democratic Party became the champion of racial equality. This polarization was further reinforced by party activists and elites, who played a crucial role in reshaping public perceptions of the parties' racial identities. The authors argue that these changes were neither spontaneous nor purely voter-driven but were instead orchestrated by strategic elite decisions. They also highlight the enduring impact of race on political attitudes and the structure of ideological beliefs.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Issue evolution:* A process where changes in the salience and framing of an issue by political elites lead to long-term shifts in party coalitions and voter alignments.
  - *Symbolic issue:* An issue that carries moral or cultural significance, eliciting strong emotional reactions and shaping political identities beyond immediate material concerns.
  - *Elite polarization:* The process by which political elites, such as party leaders and activists, adopt opposing positions on an issue, creating clear distinctions between political parties.
  - *Partisan realignment:* A significant and enduring change in the composition of party coalitions, often resulting from shifts in the salience of specific issues.
  - *Civil rights realignment:* The transformation of American political parties during the 20th century, with the Democratic Party becoming associated with racial equality and the Republican Party with racial conservatism.

### 2.9.5 Race and the Decline of Class in American Politics

Huckfeldt, R. R., & Kohfeld, C. W. (1989). *Race and the Decline of Class in American Politics* [Google-Books-ID: bBhV02FurDMC]. University of Illinois Press

1. **Citation key:** huckfeldt\_race\_1989
2. **Author(s):** Robert Huckfeldt and Carol Weitzel Kohfeld
3. **Year:** 1989
4. **Publication:** University of Illinois Press
5. **Keywords:** race, class, party realignment, American politics, electoral politics
6. **Summary:** Huckfeldt and Kohfeld analyze the ascendancy of race and the decline of class as organizing principles in American politics. They argue that racial polarization, driven by the Democratic Party's embrace of civil rights, has supplanted class-based politics, fundamentally reshaping partisan coalitions. Using empirical data and mathematical modeling, the authors demonstrate how race has become the central axis of political conflict, undermining working-class unity and altering the dynamics of party competition.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that the transformation of American politics from class-based to race-based alignment reflects structural shifts in party coalitions. They argue that the Democratic Party's strategy to enfranchise and mobilize Black voters, beginning in the 1960s, alienated lower-class white voters, leading to a realignment that strengthened racial cleavages. Huckfeldt and Kohfeld emphasize the destabilizing effects of racial polarization, noting its role in fragmenting working-class coalitions and exacerbating partisan divides.
8. **Methods:** Huckfeldt and Kohfeld use a combination of longitudinal data analysis, mathematical modeling, and case studies to examine electoral trends and shifts in party allegiance. Their study includes a detailed analysis of voting patterns, focusing on the racial composition of electorates in different regions and its impact on party competition. Simulations are employed to illustrate the long-term effects of racial polarization on electoral dynamics, particularly in the South and urban areas.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that the decline of class as a political organizing principle is directly linked to the rise of racial polarization. They test this hypothesis through empirical analysis, finding:
  - Democratic reliance on Black voters accelerated white flight from the party, especially among working-class whites.
  - The Republican Party capitalized on racial tensions, solidifying its base among racially conservative white voters.
  - Racial divisions, rather than material class interests, now structure the American party system.
10. **Main findings:** Huckfeldt and Kohfeld argue that the racial polarization of American politics has diminished the significance of class-based coalitions, particularly within the Democratic Party. The Republican Party's "Southern Strategy" successfully attracted disaffected white voters, leading to a partisan realignment that entrenched racial divisions. Their analysis highlights the destabilizing effects of racial politics on democratic governance, noting that race-based party competition undermines the potential for cross-racial class coalitions. The authors suggest that addressing racial polarization requires a return to class-focused political strategies that emphasize shared economic interests across racial lines.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Racial polarization:* The process by which racial identity becomes a primary determinant of political behavior and party affiliation.
  - *Class politics:* Political alignment and coalition-building based on shared economic interests and social class.
  - *Partisan realignment:* A significant and enduring shift in the demographic composition and ideological orientation of political parties.
  - *Southern Strategy:* A Republican Party strategy aimed at gaining political support among white voters in the South by appealing to racial conservatism.
  - *Electoral coalition:* A group of voters with shared political interests who support a particular party or candidate.

### 2.9.6 The Scar of Race

Sniderman, P. M., & Piazza, T. (1993). *The Scar of Race* [Google-Books-ID: t0wal5N\_r4IC]. Harvard University Press

1. **Citation key:** sniderman\_scar\_1993
2. **Author(s):** Paul M. Sniderman and Thomas Piazza
3. **Year:** 1993
4. **Publication:** Harvard University Press
5. **Keywords:** race, racial attitudes, prejudice, political ideology, public opinion
6. **Summary:** Sniderman and Piazza challenge conventional perspectives on racial prejudice in the United States, arguing that opposition to race-conscious policies is often rooted in political ideology rather than racism. The authors critique the concept of "new racism," suggesting that traditional forms of ethnocentrism and adherence to the American creed of individualism better explain contemporary white opposition to policies like affirmative action. Through experiments and survey analyses, they argue that racial attitudes are more complex and context-dependent than typically assumed.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue against the "new racism" framework, which posits that modern racial prejudice is covert and disguised in opposition to policies benefiting racial minorities. Instead, they contend that racial attitudes are

shaped by a mix of ideological principles and traditional forms of ethnocentrism. The tension between values like individualism and egalitarianism within the American creed is central to their explanation of racial attitudes. They also suggest that whites' attitudes toward racial policies vary significantly depending on the specific issue and its framing.

**8. Methods:** Sniderman and Piazza use a combination of survey data and experiments to examine racial attitudes among white Americans. Their data include innovative experiments, such as the "laid-off worker" and "equal opportunity" experiments, which test whether white Americans discriminate at the individual level or across racial groups. They employ bivariate statistical analyses and some multivariate models to explore the relationship between racial attitudes, political ideology, and support for race-conscious policies. A notable methodological feature is their use of split-ballot experiments to isolate the effects of framing on public opinion.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that racial prejudice plays a smaller role in shaping opposition to race-conscious policies than typically assumed. Instead:

- Political ideology and individualism are key drivers of opposition to affirmative action and similar policies.
- Prejudice is rooted in broader ethnocentrism rather than specific animus toward Black Americans.
- Whites' attitudes toward racial policies are elastic and responsive to context and framing.

**10. Main findings:** Sniderman and Piazza find that racial attitudes are more nuanced than the "new racism" framework suggests. Their experiments indicate that white Americans often oppose race-conscious policies not out of racial hostility but due to ideological concerns about fairness and individualism. They argue that racial prejudice remains a factor among some groups, particularly the less educated, but is less central to opposition to policies like affirmative action. The authors also demonstrate that racial attitudes are influenced by framing effects, with policy support varying based on how issues are presented. Their findings challenge the notion that white Americans' racial attitudes are rigidly resistant to change.

#### 11. Key definitions:

- *New racism*: A framework suggesting that modern racial prejudice is subtle, covert, and expressed through opposition to policies benefiting racial minorities rather than overt hostility.
- *American creed*: The set of values emphasizing individualism, self-reliance, and egalitarianism that shape Americans' attitudes toward social and political issues.
- *Ethnocentrism*: A generalized bias favoring one's own ethnic or cultural group and expressing hostility toward outgroups.
- *Race-conscious policies*: Policies explicitly designed to address racial disparities, such as affirmative action or minority set-asides.
- *Framing effects*: The influence of how an issue is presented or described on individuals' attitudes and opinions.

#### 2.9.7 Political Tolerance and American Democracy

Sullivan, J. L., Piereson, J., & Marcus, G. E. (1993, May). *Political Tolerance and American Democracy*. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** sullivan\_political\_1993
2. **Author(s):** John L. Sullivan, James Piereson, and George E. Marcus
3. **Year:** 1993
4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press
5. **Keywords:** political tolerance, civil liberties, democratic norms, public opinion, group conflict
6. **Summary:** Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus explore the dynamics of political tolerance in the United States, examining how individuals reconcile their support for democratic norms with opposition to specific groups or ideologies. Using survey data and innovative measurement techniques, the authors challenge traditional views of tolerance as a linear, universally increasing phenomenon. Instead, they argue that tolerance is shaped by perceptions of threat, individual psychological traits, and contextual factors, offering a nuanced account of its variability across time and population groups.
7. **Theory:** The authors conceptualize political tolerance as the willingness to extend civil liberties to groups or individuals with whom one strongly disagrees. They argue that tolerance is not merely a reflection of democratic values but also a response to perceived threats and social context. Their framework integrates psychological and sociopolitical dimensions, emphasizing the role of individual attitudes toward democratic norms, self-esteem, and perceived threats from outgroups. The book critiques earlier approaches to measuring tolerance, which they argue conflated tolerance with preference, and introduces a "content-controlled" approach to better capture the nuances of tolerance.
8. **Methods:** The study employs survey experiments in which respondents are asked to select their least-liked group as the target for questions about political tolerance. This content-controlled approach allows for a more accurate measurement of tolerance by focusing on groups the respondent actively opposes. The authors analyze responses using both bivariate and multivariate statistical techniques, including structural equation modeling, to assess the effects of sociodemographic, psychological, and political factors on tolerance. Data from national surveys conducted in the 1980s provide the empirical foundation for their analysis.
9. **Hypotheses:** Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus hypothesize that political tolerance is influenced by both individual-level factors, such as psychological security and democratic norms, and contextual factors, such as perceptions of threat from target groups. Key findings confirm:

- Perceived threat is a primary determinant of intolerance, with higher levels of perceived threat leading to reduced tolerance.
  - Psychological security and adherence to democratic norms are positively associated with tolerance.
  - Contrary to previous research, education and age have limited direct effects on tolerance once psychological factors are accounted for.
- 10. Main findings:** The authors find that political tolerance in the United States is neither uniformly high nor consistently increasing over time. Instead, tolerance varies significantly depending on the perceived threat posed by the target group and the respondent's psychological and political predispositions. Their content-controlled measurement approach reveals that the public's willingness to tolerate disliked groups is more limited than earlier studies suggested. They also demonstrate that tolerance is not a fixed attribute but a dynamic response to changing social and political contexts, underscoring the importance of threat perceptions in shaping attitudes.
- 11. Key definitions:**
- *Political tolerance*: The willingness to permit the expression of ideas or interests one opposes, even when those ideas are deeply disliked.
  - *Content-controlled tolerance*: A measurement approach in which respondents select their least-liked group as the target of tolerance questions, ensuring that responses reflect genuine disapproval rather than neutrality or preference.
  - *Democratic norms*: Beliefs and values that emphasize the protection of civil liberties, the rule of law, and the equal treatment of all individuals within a democracy.
  - *Perceived threat*: The extent to which an individual perceives a group or idea as posing a danger to their values, safety, or societal stability.
  - *Psychological security*: A personal sense of stability and confidence, which reduces susceptibility to feelings of threat and fosters greater tolerance.

#### 2.9.8 Asians: A Monolithic Voting Bloc?

Tam, W. K. (1995). Asians-A Monolithic Voting Bloc? [Publisher: Springer]. *Political Behavior*, 17(2), 223–249. Retrieved January 20, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/586537>

1. **Citation key:** tam\_asians-monolithic\_1995
2. **Author(s):** Wendy K. Tam
3. **Year:** 1995
4. **Publication:** Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** Asian Americans, voting behavior, political participation, Pan-Asian hypothesis, socioeconomic status
6. **Summary:** Wendy K. Tam investigates whether Asian Americans can be treated as a homogeneous voting bloc or if their political behavior reflects substantial heterogeneity across ethnic subgroups. Using data from the 1986 general election in California, Tam challenges the Pan-Asian hypothesis, which assumes political cohesion among Asian Americans, and explores the role of ethnic and socioeconomic differences in shaping their voting behavior.
7. **Theory:** Tam critiques the Pan-Asian hypothesis, which assumes that Asian Americans share a unified political identity, and instead emphasizes the importance of disaggregating ethnic subgroups to better understand their political behavior. Tam identifies three theoretical approaches to studying Asian American voting behavior:
  - The Pan-Asian hypothesis, which treats Asian Americans as a single political entity.
  - An ethnicity-centered approach that recognizes distinct political identities for subgroups such as Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Americans.
  - A socioeconomic model that examines shared and divergent influences of class and education on political behavior.

Tam argues that both ethnicity and socioeconomic context interact to influence the political attitudes and actions of Asian Americans.

8. **Methods:** The study relies on voting and registration data from three Bay Area counties in California (Alameda, San Francisco, and Santa Clara) during the 1986 general election. Tam uses disaggregated data by ethnic subgroup (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Americans) and incorporates contextual variables, such as demographic characteristics and socioeconomic indicators, into the analysis. The methodological approach critiques the assumptions of ecological regression and highlights the importance of accounting for heterogeneity within the Asian American population.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Asian Americans do not form a monolithic voting bloc, and their political behavior varies significantly across ethnic subgroups.
  - Socioeconomic status and acculturation levels influence political participation and party affiliation among Asian Americans.
  - Contextual factors, such as geography and generational differences, play a significant role in shaping Asian American political behavior.
10. **Main findings:** Tam finds substantial variation in voting behavior among Asian American subgroups. Japanese Americans exhibit higher levels of political participation and stronger Democratic leanings compared to Chinese and Korean Americans, who display greater variance in party affiliation and issue stances. Geographic differences also shape political behavior, with suburban counties showing higher assimilation and party alignment than urban centers. Tam

concludes that treating Asian Americans as a single political entity oversimplifies the complexity of their political preferences and underestimates the influence of ethnic and socioeconomic diversity.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "The assumption of Asian American political homogeneity has persisted despite increasing evidence that ethnic subgroups exhibit diverse political attitudes and behaviors" (p. 36).
- "Japanese Americans demonstrate a higher degree of political integration, reflected in both their participation rates and their alignment with the Democratic Party" (p. 41).
- "Socioeconomic diversity and acculturation processes complicate the narrative of political cohesion among Asian Americans, particularly when comparing urban and suburban populations" (p. 44).

#### 2.9.9 Racial Attitudes and Opposition to Welfare

Gilens, M. (1995). Racial Attitudes and Opposition to Welfare [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 57(4), 994–1014. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2960399>

1. Citation key: gilens\_racial\_1995

2. Author(s): Martin Gilens

3. Year: 1995

4. Publication: Journal of Politics

5. Keywords: racial attitudes, welfare policy, opposition to welfare, racial stereotypes, public opinion

6. Summary: Martin Gilens examines the role of racial attitudes in shaping white Americans' opposition to welfare. Using survey data from the 1986 National Election Study, Gilens argues that negative stereotypes about Black Americans, particularly the belief that Black individuals lack commitment to the work ethic, are significant predictors of opposition to welfare policies. His analysis highlights how racial attitudes, more than economic self-interest or individualism, drive public opinion on welfare, suggesting that perceptions of race remain central to the politics of social welfare policy.

7. Theory: Gilens critiques traditional explanations of welfare opposition, such as economic self-interest and individualism, by emphasizing the centrality of racial stereotypes. He argues that negative perceptions of Black Americans as lazy and undeserving significantly influence white opposition to welfare. This framework suggests that even race-neutral welfare policies face resistance when they are perceived as disproportionately benefiting Black Americans. Gilens posits that such stereotypes are deeply rooted in American culture and persistently shape public opinion, despite broader declines in overt racial prejudice.

8. Methods: The study employs a covariance structure model to analyze data from the 1986 National Election Study (NES). Gilens uses multiple measures of racial attitudes, including perceptions of blame for racial inequality and stereotypes of Black Americans as lazy. He constructs indices for welfare opposition based on attitudes toward Food Stamp spending and general perceptions of welfare recipients. His analysis controls for demographic factors and alternative explanations such as economic self-interest, individualism, and egalitarianism.

### 9. Hypotheses:

- Racial attitudes are the strongest predictors of white opposition to welfare.
- Negative stereotypes about Black Americans, such as the belief that they lack commitment to the work ethic, significantly shape attitudes toward welfare.
- Economic self-interest and individualism play secondary roles compared to racial attitudes in shaping welfare opposition.

10. Main findings: Gilens finds that racial attitudes, particularly the stereotype of Black Americans as lazy, are the most significant predictors of white opposition to welfare, surpassing economic self-interest and individualism. White Americans who blame Black individuals for racial inequality are significantly less supportive of welfare programs. Additionally, Gilens shows that such racial attitudes influence support for different aspects of the welfare state, with means-tested programs like Food Stamps being the least popular. His findings underscore the enduring impact of race on American welfare policy, revealing how stereotypes about race shape ostensibly nonracial policy debates.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "The belief that Blacks lack commitment to the work ethic leads many white Americans who support spending for education, health care, and the elderly to oppose means-tested programs aimed exclusively at the poor" (p. 995).
- "Racial attitudes are not only the most important racial predictor of opposition to welfare, but the single most powerful predictor of whites' welfare views overall" (p. 1006).
- "As long as the centuries-old belief that Blacks lack commitment to the work ethic persists, white Americans' opposition to welfare will remain strong" (p. 1011).

#### 2.9.10 Perceptions of Racial Group Competition: Extending Blumer's Theory of Group Position to a Multiracial Social Context

Bobo, L., & Hutchings, V. L. (1996). Perceptions of Racial Group Competition: Extending Blumer's Theory of Group Position to a Multiracial Social Context [Publisher: [American Sociological Association, Sage Publications, Inc.]]. *American Sociological Review*, 61(6), 951–972. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2096302>

1. Citation key: bobo\_perceptions\_1996

2. **Author(s):** Lawrence Bobo and Vincent L. Hutchings
3. **Year:** 1996
4. **Publication:** American Sociological Review
5. **Keywords:** group competition, racial alienation, Blumer's theory, multiracial dynamics, group threat
6. **Summary:** Bobo and Hutchings extend Blumer's theory of group position to analyze perceptions of racial group competition in a multiracial context. Using survey data from the 1992 Los Angeles County Social Survey, the authors assess how racial alienation and broader structural beliefs shape perceptions of zero-sum competition across White, Black, Latino, and Asian respondents. The study underscores the salience of racial alienation in explaining intergroup tensions and situates feelings of threat within a historical and collective framework of social stratification.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on Blumer's theory, emphasizing that intergroup hostility arises from historically developed judgments about proper group positions in the social hierarchy. They argue that perceptions of competition and threat are deeply tied to a group's feelings of racial alienation and its collective experience of oppression. In their view, these perceptions are shaped not only by material conditions and individual prejudice but also by broader societal beliefs about inequality and opportunity. The framework integrates elements from self-interest, classical prejudice, stratification beliefs, and group position models to provide a comprehensive understanding of intergroup dynamics.
8. **Methods:** Bobo and Hutchings analyze data from the 1992 Los Angeles County Social Survey, a multiracial survey that oversampled African American and Asian American respondents. The survey includes measures of perceived group competition in domains like jobs, politics, housing, and economics, along with variables capturing racial alienation, prejudice, and stratification beliefs. Using multivariate regression analyses, the authors test hypotheses about the determinants of perceived group competition, focusing on differences across respondent and target racial groups.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Perceptions of competition are influenced by a group's sense of racial alienation.
  - Self-interest and material vulnerability contribute to perceptions of intergroup threat.
  - Prejudice, including negative affect and stereotyping, shapes competitive outlooks.
  - Beliefs about social stratification, such as individualism and structural inequality, moderate perceptions of group competition.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that racial alienation is the most consistent predictor of perceived competition, with higher feelings of alienation linked to stronger perceptions of intergroup threat. This pattern holds across all racial groups but is particularly pronounced for African Americans and Latinos. Prejudice also plays a significant role, with negative stereotypes and social distance measures strongly predicting perceptions of zero-sum competition. Contrary to expectations, self-interest and material vulnerability have limited explanatory power, suggesting that perceptions of threat are more deeply rooted in collective group experiences and societal beliefs than in individual circumstances.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Blumer's theory directs attention to perceptions of zero-sum competition for social resources, emphasizing the relational and positional character of racial prejudice and the sense of threat posed by out-groups to preferred group positions" (p. 956).
  - "Feelings of racial alienation have a collective dimension and become culturally shared, emerging from historical experience and the current social, political, and economic niches typically occupied by members of a racial group" (p. 957).
  - "Perceptions of group competition involve genuinely social-psychological processes that are not reducible to a single cause nor to purely individual-level psychological dynamics" (p. 965).

### 2.9.11 Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals

Kinder, D. R., & Sanders, L. M. (1996). *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals* [Google-Books-ID: QluVfkhp-KpsC]. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** kinder\_divided\_1996
2. **Author(s):** Donald R. Kinder and Lynn M. Sanders
3. **Year:** 1996
4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press
5. **Keywords:** racial resentment, public opinion, political behavior, symbolic racism, racial policies
6. **Summary:** Kinder and Sanders explore the enduring role of racial attitudes in shaping public opinion and political behavior in the United States. They argue that racial resentment, a form of modern prejudice rooted in perceptions of cultural inferiority and violations of traditional values, drives white opposition to race-targeted policies such as affirmative action and school integration. Drawing on extensive survey data, the authors highlight how racial resentment influences not only explicitly racial issues but also broader social and economic policy preferences.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on the concept of symbolic racism, which they reframe as racial resentment, emphasizing its connection to cultural values like individualism and self-reliance. They argue that racial resentment reflects a blend of prejudice and ideological principles, such as opposition to government intervention. This framework situates modern racial attitudes within a broader sociopolitical context, showing how they shape policy preferences and electoral outcomes. The authors also examine the role of framing by political elites, who use racial codewords to manipulate public opinion on racially charged issues.
8. **Methods:** The study employs data from multiple surveys, including the 1986 National Election Studies (NES) and

the General Social Survey (GSS). The authors analyze responses to questions about racial policies, such as affirmative action and welfare, using regression models to isolate the effects of racial resentment, self-interest, and political principles. They also conduct experiments on framing effects, altering the wording of survey questions to test how different frames influence attitudes.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Racial resentment significantly predicts white opposition to race-targeted policies.
- Political principles, such as support for limited government and equality, shape racial policy opinions but are secondary to racial resentment.
- Framing by political elites amplifies the salience of racial attitudes in public opinion and voting behavior.

**10. Main findings:** Kinder and Sanders demonstrate that racial resentment is the strongest predictor of white opposition to policies benefiting Black Americans. Their analyses reveal that self-interest has little explanatory power, while political principles like equality and limited government play a secondary role. Framing effects significantly shape public opinion, with racial resentment becoming more salient when policies are framed as providing unearned advantages to minorities. The authors also highlight how racial attitudes influence ostensibly nonracial issues, such as welfare and crime policy, illustrating the pervasive role of race in American politics.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Racial resentment*: A modern form of racial prejudice, rooted in perceptions of cultural inferiority and violations of traditional values like individualism and self-reliance.
- *Symbolic racism*: A related concept emphasizing abstract, moralistic objections to policies benefiting racial minorities.
- *Framing effects*: The influence of how an issue is presented on public opinion and policy preferences.
- *Political principles*: Ideological commitments, such as equality and limited government, that shape individuals' policy preferences.
- *Race-coded language*: Subtle references to racial issues used by political elites to frame policy debates and mobilize public opinion.

### 2.9.12 Racial Prejudice and Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action

Kuklinski, J. H., Sniderman, P. M., Knight, K., Piazza, T., Tetlock, P. E., Lawrence, G. R., & Mellers, B. (1997). Racial Prejudice and Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 41(2), 402–419. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111770>

**1. Citation key:** kuklinski\_racial\_1997

**2. Author(s):** James H. Kuklinski, Paul M. Sniderman, Kathleen Knight, Thomas Piazza, Philip E. Tetlock, Gordon R. Lawrence, and Barbara Mellers

**3. Year:** 1997

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** racial prejudice, affirmative action, public opinion, list experiment, racial attitudes

**6. Summary:** Kuklinski et al. examine the role of racial prejudice in shaping attitudes toward affirmative action among white Americans. Using innovative experimental methods embedded in a national survey, they analyze whether opposition to affirmative action is driven primarily by racial prejudice or by broader concerns about policy fairness. Their findings suggest that racial prejudice continues to be a significant factor but is not the sole driver of opposition to affirmative action.

**7. Theory:** The authors conceptualize racial prejudice as blatant animosity toward Black Americans, distinct from ideological opposition to affirmative action policies. They argue that while traditional survey measures of prejudice may underestimate its prevalence due to social desirability bias, innovative experimental techniques can provide more accurate insights. Kuklinski et al. emphasize the importance of distinguishing between prejudice-driven and policy-driven resistance to affirmative action to better understand public opinion and its implications for policy design.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a series of list experiments embedded in the 1991 Race and Politics Survey, designed to measure racial prejudice unobtrusively. Respondents are randomly assigned to different experimental conditions, including baseline and test conditions with additional race-related items. The authors use analysis of variance and regression techniques to estimate the prevalence of racial prejudice and its relationship to attitudes toward affirmative action. They also conduct supplementary experiments to explore how framing affects support for affirmative action.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Blatant racial prejudice persists among white Americans, though its prevalence is often underestimated.
- Opposition to affirmative action is partially driven by racial prejudice but also reflects broader concerns about policy fairness.
- White Americans' resistance to affirmative action is not fixed and can be influenced by framing and contextual factors.

**10. Main findings:** Kuklinski et al. find that racial prejudice remains a significant but not all-encompassing factor in opposition to affirmative action. Their experiments reveal that approximately 10% of non-Southern whites and 42% of Southern whites express anger at the idea of a Black family moving into their neighborhood, a stark measure of blatant prejudice. However, they also show that many whites oppose affirmative action on policy grounds, such as perceptions of unfairness, rather than racial animosity. Framing experiments demonstrate that support for affirmative

action increases when policies are presented as “extra efforts” rather than “preferential treatment.” These findings highlight the complexity of public attitudes toward race-related policies.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “Blatant racial prejudice remains a sad reality of American life, and more so in some regions than others” (p. 406).
- “Although whites overwhelmingly reject affirmative action if it involves preferential treatment, a clear majority favor going the extra mile to assure that all Blacks meriting assistance receive it” (p. 411).
- “Our results underline the risks that liberals and the Democratic Party face among the general citizenry. On the one hand, to abandon a policy that has benefited thousands of deserving African-Americans can only exacerbate the perception among them that they are being left behind” (p. 416).

#### 2.9.13 The Dynamics of the Partisan Gender Gap

Box-Steffensmeier, J. M., Boef, S. D., & Lin, T.-M. (2004). The Dynamics of the Partisan Gender Gap. *American Political Science Review*, 98(3), 515–528. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055404001315>

1. **Citation key:** box-steffensmeier\_dynamics\_2004
2. **Author(s):** Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Suzanna De Boef, and Tse-Min Lin
3. **Year:** 2004
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** gender gap, partisanship, time series analysis, political behavior, macroeconomic conditions
6. **Summary:** Box-Steffensmeier, De Boef, and Lin analyze the partisan gender gap in the United States from 1979 to 2000, focusing on how societal conditions and political climate influence gender differences in partisanship. Employing time-series data, they reveal that shifts toward conservatism, economic downturns, and structural changes in women’s economic roles have contributed to the gender gap’s persistence and growth over time.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that the partisan gender gap arises from dynamic interactions between political, economic, and social forces. They argue that political conservatism, economic vulnerability, and structural changes such as increased rates of single and professionally employed women have differential effects on men’s and women’s partisan identification. Women’s higher reliance on social welfare programs and differing economic experiences lead to distinct partisan preferences compared to men, particularly under adverse economic conditions or conservative political climates.
8. **Methods:** The study uses quarterly survey data from CBS News and The New York Times from 1977 to 2000 to measure partisanship trends. Time-series analysis, including autoregressive fractionally integrated moving average (ARFIMA) models, assesses the persistence and dynamics of the gender gap. Variables include measures of macropartisanship, macroeconomic indicators (unemployment, inflation, income growth), and structural factors (education levels, single motherhood rates). The authors also employ interaction terms to evaluate how economic conditions affect partisanship under different presidential administrations.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - The gender gap increases when the political climate shifts toward conservatism, as women disproportionately oppose conservative policies.
  - Economic downturns amplify the gender gap due to women’s greater economic vulnerability and reliance on welfare programs.
  - Structural changes, such as increases in single and professionally employed women, contribute to the gender gap but may also foster converging preferences between genders in some contexts.
10. **Main findings:** The partisan gender gap expanded significantly from the late 1970s through 2000, with women increasingly identifying as Democrats compared to men. Shifts toward political conservatism and economic decline had the largest effects on the gender gap, particularly when conservative policies disproportionately impacted women. Structural changes, including rising rates of single women and professional employment, also played a role, but their effects were more complex. Women’s economic autonomy sometimes aligned their preferences with men’s, reducing the gap. The analysis underscores the persistence of the gender gap and its sensitivity to macro-level political and economic conditions.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “We find that from 1979 to 2000, the partisan gender gap has grown when the political climate moved in a conservative direction, the economy deteriorated, and the percentage of economically vulnerable, single women increased” (p. 515).
  - “Women are more likely to support the Democratic party during periods of economic decline, highlighting the intersection of economic vulnerability and partisan preferences” (p. 520).
  - “The partisan gender gap is not simply a static phenomenon; its dynamics reveal the profound effects of macroeconomic and political conditions on gendered political behavior” (p. 526).

#### 2.9.14 Who Is Responsible for the Gender Gap? The Dynamics of Men’s and Women’s Democratic Macropartisanship, 1950–2012

Ondercin, H. L. (2017). Who Is Responsible for the Gender Gap? The Dynamics of Men’s and Women’s Democratic Macropartisanship, 1950–2012. *Political Research Quarterly*, 70(4), 749–761. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912917716336>

1. **Citation key:** ondercin\_who\_2017

2. **Author(s):** Heather L. Ondercin
3. **Year:** 2017
4. **Publication:** Political Research Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** gender gap, partisanship, social identity, party realignment, descriptive representation
6. **Summary:** Ondercin examines the evolution of the partisan gender gap in the United States from 1950 to 2012, arguing that shifts in party composition and gender representation in Congress have shaped men's and women's partisan attachments differently. Using a macro-level dataset and a Seemingly Unrelated Regression framework, the study uncovers how party signals regarding gender identity influence Democratic macropartisanship for men and women, contributing to the gender gap.
7. **Theory:** Ondercin argues that the gender gap in partisanship arises from men and women responding differently to changes in political party composition and elite signals about gender identity representation. Party realignments and the increasing visibility of women in Democratic congressional delegations provide cues about the parties' alignment with gendered interests. Men and women adjust their partisan preferences based on these cues, with men often moving away from the Democratic Party as women's representation increases and women moving closer to it.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a quarterly time-series dataset of men's and women's Democratic macropartisanship from Gallup surveys (1950–2012). It uses Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR) models to estimate how party composition, Southern realignment, social spending, and women's workforce participation affect partisan preferences. ARIMA models account for temporal dynamics, ensuring robust estimates of the independent variables' effects. Analyses are conducted for the full period and separately for pre- and post-1980 data to assess temporal variations in the gender gap.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - The gender gap is influenced by men's and women's distinct reactions to changes in party composition and descriptive representation.
  - Southern realignment and increased social spending contribute to the partisan divergence between genders.
  - Women's workforce participation influences the gender gap by shaping perceptions of economic and policy alignment with the Democratic Party.
10. **Main findings:** Ondercin finds that the gender gap in Democratic macropartisanship is a result of both men's and women's responses to political party dynamics. Men's partisanship declines as Democratic women become more visible in Congress, while women's partisanship increases. Southern realignment also contributes to the gap, particularly after 1980, as men are more likely to shift toward the Republican Party. Social spending has a smaller and less consistent effect. Overall, changes in the descriptive representation of women within the Democratic Party significantly influence partisan attachments and gendered political behavior.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The increased presence and visibility of women in the Democratic Party, therefore, has contributed to the growth of the gender gap" (p. 756).
  - "Men and women use the composition of the party-in-government as a cue regarding which party best represents their gendered interests" (p. 757).
  - "Examining the dynamics of men's and women's partisanship separately between 1950 and 2012 provides us with a better understanding of how, when, and why the gender gap emerged and changes over time" (p. 758).

#### 2.9.15 Blaming Women or Blaming the System? Public Perceptions of Women's Underrepresentation in Elected Office

Dolan, K., & Hansen, M. (2018). Blaming Women or Blaming the System? Public Perceptions of Women's Underrepresentation in Elected Office [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 71(3), 668–680. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912918755972>

1. **Citation key:** dolan\_blaming\_2018
2. **Author(s):** Kathleen Dolan and Michael Hansen
3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** Political Research Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** gender, elections, voting behavior, blame attribution, political representation
6. **Summary:** Dolan and Hansen investigate the reasons behind women's underrepresentation in elected office, focusing on public perceptions of systemic versus individual blame. Using data from the 2014 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), they analyze whether these blame attributions influence attitudes toward women in politics and voting behaviors. Their findings highlight significant differences in blame attributions based on gender, political knowledge, and ideology, with systemic blame associated with more positive attitudes toward women's representation.
7. **Theory:** The authors apply blame attribution theory to understand how individuals attribute responsibility for societal outcomes. They distinguish between systemic attributions (blaming institutional and societal barriers) and individual attributions (blaming women's choices or abilities). Dolan and Hansen argue that these attributions shape public attitudes and behaviors, including support for increasing women's representation and willingness to vote for female candidates. Systemic blame is expected to align with support for gender equity in politics, while individual blame reflects resistance to such progress.
8. **Methods:** Data were drawn from a 2014 CCES survey module with 1,600 respondents. The survey included eight items

measuring blame attributions related to women's underrepresentation, categorized into systemic (e.g., discrimination, media bias) and individual (e.g., family roles, interest in politics) factors. Factor analysis confirmed the categorization. The authors employed ordered logistic regression to predict blame attributions and logistic regression to examine their relationship with attitudes toward women in politics and voting behaviors in mixed-gender congressional races.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Women and politically knowledgeable individuals are more likely to attribute women's underrepresentation to systemic factors.
- Systemic blame is positively associated with support for increasing women's representation and belief in their governing efficacy.
- Systemic blame predicts voting for female candidates, while individual blame predicts voting against them.

The hypotheses were partially confirmed. Women and liberals were more likely to attribute underrepresentation to systemic factors, while politically knowledgeable individuals were less likely to do so. Systemic blame correlated with support for more women in office but had minimal impact on actual voting behavior.

**10. Main findings:** Dolan and Hansen find significant gender and ideological differences in blame attributions. Women are more likely than men to blame systemic factors, such as discrimination and media bias, for women's underrepresentation. Liberals and Democrats also exhibit higher systemic blame, while conservatives and Republicans lean toward individual blame. Systemic blame strongly correlates with positive attitudes about increasing women's representation and their governing efficacy. However, these attitudes do not translate into consistent voting behaviors in races involving female candidates, suggesting that partisanship and other traditional factors dominate vote choice.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Women are significantly more likely to see systemic roots for women's underrepresentation than are men, particularly in areas like discrimination and media bias" (p. 673).
- "Respondents who attribute women's underrepresentation to systemic causes are more likely to support increased representation of women in office and believe in their ability to improve governance" (p. 676).
- "While systemic blame influences attitudes about women in office, it does not significantly affect vote choice in mixed-gender congressional races, where traditional factors like partisanship dominate" (p. 678).

### 2.9.16 Reconciling Sexism and Women's Support for Republican Candidates: A Look at Gender, Class, and Whiteness in the 2012 and 2016 Presidential Races

Cassese, E. C., & Barnes, T. D. (2019). Reconciling Sexism and Women's Support for Republican Candidates: A Look at Gender, Class, and Whiteness in the 2012 and 2016 Presidential Races. *Political Behavior*, 41(3), 677–700. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-018-9468-2>

1. Citation key: cassese\_reconciling\_2019

2. Author(s): Erin C. Cassese and Tiffany D. Barnes

3. Year: 2019

4. Publication: Political Behavior

5. Keywords: gender gap, intersectionality, system justification theory, hostile sexism, voting behavior, whiteness, class

6. Summary: Cassese and Barnes analyze white women's voting behavior in the 2012 and 2016 U.S. presidential elections, focusing on the role of sexism, whiteness, and class. Using American National Election Studies (ANES) data, they find that many white women endorse hostile sexist attitudes, which were strongly predictive of voting for Donald Trump in 2016 but not for Mitt Romney in 2012. These findings highlight how sexism intersects with race and class to influence political behavior, challenging traditional narratives about gender solidarity in voting.

7. Theory: The authors integrate system justification theory and intersectionality to explain why many white women support Republican candidates despite the party's perceived gender inequities. System justification theory suggests that individuals endorse beliefs that reinforce the status quo, even at their own group's expense, while intersectionality highlights how overlapping identities (e.g., race, gender, class) shape political attitudes. White women, particularly those in lower economic classes or without college degrees, may adopt sexist beliefs as a way to maintain racial privilege, aligning their political behavior more closely with white men than with women of color.

8. Methods: The study uses data from the 2012 and 2016 ANES to examine the determinants of vote choice and attitudes about gender among white women. The authors measure hostile sexism using items about women demanding equality and complaining about discrimination, and modern sexism with perceptions of discrimination against women. Logistic regression models assess the influence of these attitudes on voting behavior, controlling for variables like education, income, and partisanship. The analysis also compares the predictive power of sexism in 2012 versus 2016, highlighting differences in the salience of gender-related attitudes across elections.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Disadvantaged white women (e.g., those with lower income or without college degrees) are more likely to endorse hostile sexist beliefs and deny gender-based discrimination.
- Hostile sexism increases the likelihood of voting for Donald Trump in 2016.
- Perceptions of discrimination against women decrease the likelihood of voting for Donald Trump in 2016.
- Hostile sexism and perceptions of discrimination influence vote choice similarly for white men and women.
- Hostile sexism and perceptions of discrimination have a greater impact on vote choice in 2016 than in 2012 due to the salience of sexism in the 2016 campaign.

The hypotheses were largely confirmed. Hostile sexism significantly predicted Trump support among white women, while perceptions of discrimination against women reduced this likelihood. Differences in sexism's predictive power between 2012 and 2016 were statistically significant, and the relationship between discrimination and vote choice was stronger for women than for men.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that white women's support for Donald Trump in 2016 was driven by hostile sexist beliefs and a tendency to downplay gender discrimination, especially among economically disadvantaged and less-educated women. These attitudes were not as predictive of vote choice in 2012, indicating that the 2016 campaign's focus on gender issues activated latent sexist beliefs. White women's political behavior reflects a desire to maintain racial and class privilege, even at the expense of broader gender solidarity. The findings challenge conventional theories of the gender gap, emphasizing the importance of intersectionality in understanding political behavior.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "White women's political preferences are more aligned with white men than with women of color, reflecting their position at the intersection of race and gender" (p. 687).
- "Our findings highlight the importance of race and class in shaping white women's political behavior, as many white women adopt sexist beliefs to reinforce their privileged status in society" (p. 689).
- "Hostile sexism strongly predicted support for Donald Trump in 2016, even after controlling for education, partisanship, and ideology, while it had no significant effect on vote choice in 2012" (p. 692).

### 2.9.17 How Gender Affects the Efficacy of Discussion as an Information Shortcut

Krupnikov, Y., Milita, K., Ryan, J. B., & Connors, E. C. (2020). How gender affects the efficacy of discussion as an information shortcut. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 8(2), 268–284. <https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2019.26>

**1. Citation key:** krupnikov\_how\_2020

**2. Author(s):** Yanna Krupnikov, Kerri Milita, John Barry Ryan, and Elizabeth C. Connors

**3. Year:** 2020

**4. Publication:** Political Science Research and Methods

**5. Keywords:** gender, social influence, discussion, voting behavior, experimental research

**6. Summary:** Krupnikov et al. explore gender differences in the use of political discussion as an information shortcut in decision-making. Using a group-based experimental framework, the authors demonstrate that women are more likely than men to accept and act on social information, even when such information is incorrect. This gendered behavior results in differences in the quality of voting decisions, contingent on the level of conflict between the sender and receiver of the information.

**7. Theory:** The authors draw on social role theory and prior work on social influence to argue that women's openness to social information stems from gendered expectations of interpersonal interaction and cooperation. While this greater receptivity can be beneficial in low-conflict scenarios, where social information is more accurate, it becomes a disadvantage in high-conflict settings where misleading information is more likely. Men's resistance to social influence, in contrast, protects them from misinformation but can also limit learning opportunities.

**8. Methods:** The study employs an incentivized group-based experiment conducted at universities in the United States and Germany. Participants are assigned to one of seven positions on an abstract policy scale and tasked with choosing between two computer-generated candidates. Information about the candidates is shared via discussion with randomly assigned partners. The study examines the extent to which participants rely on social information, focusing on the relationship between gender, the accuracy of shared information, and voting outcomes. Logistic regression models assess the probability of participants voting correctly based on experimental conditions.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Women are more likely than men to use social information when making voting decisions.
- Women are more likely than men to vote correctly in low-conflict scenarios where the sender and receiver of information have similar preferences.
- Men are more likely than women to vote correctly in high-conflict scenarios where the sender and receiver have divergent preferences.

The hypotheses were supported. Women's reliance on social information resulted in more correct votes in low-conflict scenarios but reduced their accuracy in high-conflict scenarios. Men's resistance to social information produced the opposite effect, with better performance in high-conflict situations but less adaptability in low-conflict settings.

**10. Main findings:** The results confirm that gender influences the efficacy of discussion as an information shortcut. Women are more receptive to social information and thus more likely to incorporate it into their decisions. However, this openness makes women more vulnerable to incorrect signals in high-conflict contexts. Men's reluctance to rely on external information leads to fewer mistakes in such scenarios but also limits their ability to benefit from accurate advice in low-conflict settings. These findings underscore the conditional benefits and drawbacks of gendered behaviors in political decision-making.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Women are significantly more likely to use social information in their voting decisions, reflecting broader patterns of social trust and consensus-building behaviors" (p. 275).
- "While women benefit from social influence in low-conflict contexts, they are also more likely to be misled when the information they receive is inaccurate" (p. 278).

- “Men’s resistance to social influence serves them well in high-conflict scenarios, where ignoring biased signals improves decision quality, but it also limits their adaptability in low-conflict settings” (p. 280).

### 2.9.18 Public Perceptions of Women’s Inclusion and Feelings of Political Efficacy

Stauffer, K. E. (2021). Public Perceptions of Women’s Inclusion and Feelings of Political Efficacy. *American Political Science Review*, 115(4), 1226–1241. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421000678>

- Citation key:** stauffer\_public\_2021
- Author(s):** Katelyn E. Stauffer
- Year:** 2021
- Publication:** American Political Science Review
- Keywords:** gender representation, descriptive representation, political efficacy, symbolic representation, public opinion
- Summary:** Stauffer investigates how public perceptions of women’s inclusion in political institutions influence feelings of external political efficacy. She demonstrates that individuals’ beliefs about women’s representation—rather than the actual levels of representation—are critical predictors of their evaluations of political institutions. Using survey and panel data, she identifies a robust relationship between perceptions of representation and efficacy, offering insights into the symbolic effects of descriptive representation.
- Theory:** Stauffer’s theoretical framework centers on the notion that symbolic representation, defined as the extent to which citizens feel “fairly and effectively represented,” is influenced by perceptions of descriptive representation. She argues that beliefs about women’s inclusion send signals about the openness and responsiveness of political institutions. These beliefs shape citizens’ evaluations of institutions regardless of the actual levels of representation, aligning with theories on the subjective interpretation of political representation.
- Methods:** The study uses data from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) spanning multiple survey years. It includes both cross-sectional and panel analyses to examine the relationship between perceptions of women’s representation and feelings of external political efficacy. Dependent variables include efficacy measures derived from survey questions about respondents’ sense of governmental responsiveness. Independent variables include respondents’ estimated percentages of women in Congress and state legislatures, actual representation levels, and a host of control variables (e.g., partisanship, ideology, political knowledge). The panel data further tests the causal impact of updated information on perceptions and efficacy.
- Hypotheses:**
  - Perceptions of women’s representation are positively associated with external efficacy.
  - The relationship between perceptions of representation and efficacy is similar for men and women, reflecting a sociotropic view of representation.
Both hypotheses were supported. Perceived levels of women’s representation significantly predicted higher external efficacy for both genders, with no notable difference in the magnitude of the relationship between men and women.
- Main findings:** Stauffer finds that beliefs about women’s representation strongly predict external political efficacy. This relationship persists across institutional contexts, including Congress and state legislatures. The panel data analysis reveals that when respondents are provided accurate information about women’s representation, their efficacy adjusts accordingly: those who underestimated representation report increased efficacy, while overestimators experience a decline. The study concludes that symbolic representation is largely shaped by subjective perceptions rather than objective realities, highlighting the importance of public awareness in achieving the benefits of descriptive representation.
- Key quotations:**
  - “While actual levels of women’s representation are a poor predictor of respondent efficacy, beliefs about women’s inclusion are a strong predictor of these attitudes” (p. 1231).
  - “Citizens do value gender diversity in their institutions, but increases in women’s actual levels of representation are unlikely to bolster public support unless these gains are highly visible” (p. 1236).
  - “Beliefs about women’s representation play a role in shaping respondent political efficacy, and this can be the case for men as well as women” (p. 1237).

### 2.9.19 The Wages of Latinidad: How Immigration Enforcement Mitigates Anti-Black Assimilation

Robertson, C., & Roman, M. F. (2024). The Wages of Latinidad: How Immigration Enforcement Mitigates Anti-Black Assimilation. *Political Behavior*, 46(2), 1127–1149. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-023-09862-1>

- Citation key:** robertson\_wages\_2024
- Author(s):** Crystal Robertson and Marcel F. Roman
- Year:** 2024
- Publication:** Political Behavior
- Keywords:** Latino politics, immigration, anti-Blackness, assimilation, intergroup relations, public opinion
- Summary:** Robertson and Roman examine how perceptions of immigration enforcement influence the relationship between acculturation and anti-Black attitudes among Latinxs in the U.S. They argue that the perceived threat of immigration enforcement disrupts the assimilation of anti-Black attitudes among acculturated Latinxs, fostering solidarity with Black communities. Using nationally representative surveys, the authors demonstrate that acculturated

Latinxs threatened by immigration enforcement adopt attitudes more akin to Black people, whereas unthreatened acculturated Latinxs tend to adopt dominant Anglo anti-Black norms.

**7. Theory:** The authors draw on reactive ethnicity and segmented assimilation theories to argue that immigration enforcement contexts influence how Latinxs acculturate to dominant racial attitudes. Reactive ethnicity theory suggests that exclusionary experiences motivate group solidarity against dominant societal norms. Segmented assimilation theory posits that immigrants' integration into society varies based on societal receptivity. Robertson and Roman hypothesize that immigration enforcement serves as a salient rebuff for acculturated Latinxs, challenging their integration expectations and discouraging the adoption of anti-Black attitudes. Conversely, unthreatened Latinxs may align with Anglo norms to gain socio-economic and cultural benefits associated with whiteness.

**8. Methods:** The study utilizes data from the 2016 and 2020 Collaborative Multi-Racial Post-Election Survey (CMPS), analyzing a sample of over 6,000 Latinxs. The dependent variables include measures of anti-Black attitudes (e.g., racial resentment, stereotypes, perceived threat) and opposition to Black political interests (e.g., support for Black Lives Matter). Acculturation is operationalized through an index combining generational status, English language usage, and citizenship. Immigration enforcement threat is measured via self-reported concerns about deportation of acquaintances. Linear models are employed to estimate the interaction between acculturation and perceived threat, controlling for demographic, socio-economic, and political factors.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Non-Black Latinxs unthreatened by immigration enforcement will adopt or maintain anti-Black attitudes as they acculturate.
- Non-Black Latinxs threatened by immigration enforcement will adopt attitudes aligned with Black people as they acculturate.

Both hypotheses are supported. The interaction between acculturation and perceived threat reveals that threat disrupts the assimilation of anti-Black attitudes among acculturated Latinxs, fostering solidarity with Black communities.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find that immigration enforcement threat significantly moderates the relationship between acculturation and anti-Black attitudes. Unthreatened Latinxs show increasing alignment with dominant anti-Black norms as they acculturate. In contrast, threatened acculturated Latinxs exhibit attitudes closer to those of Black individuals, including lower racial resentment and greater support for Black political interests. The findings underscore the importance of contextual factors like immigration policy in shaping racial attitudes and intergroup relations among Latinxs.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Acculturated non-Black Latinxs threatened by immigration enforcement adopt attitudes concerning Black people and Black political interests akin to Black people, while acculturated unthreatened Latinxs adopt or maintain attitudes closer to their Anglo counterparts" (p. 1127).
- "Immigration enforcement threat may play an outsized role in undercutting the adoption of anti-Black dominant group norms as non-Black Latinxs acculturate" (p. 1131).
- "Our findings show that the adoption of anti-Black attitudes by acculturated non-Black Latinxs is not guaranteed but is conditional on their reception in the host society" (p. 1144).

## 2.10 Social Influence and Decision Making

### 2.10.1 Subject Area Summary

**• Overview:** The study of social influence and decision-making within American politics encompasses a diverse set of research topics, ranging from the dynamics of voting behavior and public opinion formation to the mechanisms of deliberative democracy and the role of cross-cutting political discourse. Foundational works, such as Berelson et al.'s (1954) analysis of opinion formation during presidential campaigns, provide empirical insights into the social determinants of political preferences, emphasizing group dynamics and the stabilizing effects of campaigns. Subsequent research expanded on these foundations to explore the complexities of interpersonal political communication, elite framing, and the influence of mass media, offering a multifaceted understanding of how individuals engage with and respond to political information.

**• Voting Behavior and Opinion Formation:** Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee's *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* (1954) remains a cornerstone of voting behavior research. Conducted during the 1948 Truman-Dewey election, the study highlighted the significance of stable social group affiliations, such as religion and class, in shaping voter preferences. The authors introduced concepts like cross-pressure, illustrating how conflicting group memberships delay decision-making or lead to abstention. Campaigns were shown to resolve such indecision by reinforcing group loyalties, thereby stabilizing democratic systems. Their longitudinal panel design and comparative analysis with earlier studies underscored the cyclical nature of voter mobilization, marked by periodic reinforcement of group cohesion during elections.

**• Cross-Cutting Political Discourse and Deliberation:** Scholars like Diana C. Mutz have advanced the field by examining the conditions under which political discourse bridges ideological divides. Her seminal works, including *Facilitating Communication across Lines of Political Difference* (2001) and *Hearing the Other Side* (2006), demonstrate that exposure to opposing views fosters political tolerance but often dampens political participation. Mutz's analysis of media and interpersonal networks revealed the structural advantages of mass media in presenting diverse perspectives, as individuals are less able to selectively avoid dissimilar viewpoints in mediated contexts. However, her findings also

highlighted the trade-off between deliberative and participatory democratic ideals, where tolerance gained through cross-cutting interactions is offset by reduced political activism.

- **Elite Influence and Framing Effects:** Druckman and Nelson's experimental work on framing, particularly *Framing and Deliberation: How Citizens' Conversations Limit Elite Influence* (2003), explores how interpersonal conversations mediate elite framing effects. Their findings suggest that while isolated exposure to elite frames significantly shapes public opinion, cross-cutting group discussions mitigate these effects by promoting cognitive engagement and critical evaluation. Conversely, homogeneous discussions amplify framing effects, emphasizing the dual role of social networks in either constraining or reinforcing elite influence.
- **Social Networks and Political Diversity:** Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague's *Political Disagreement: The Survival of Diverse Opinions within Communication Networks* (2004) provides a nuanced understanding of how social network structures sustain political diversity. By integrating survey data with agent-based simulations, the authors demonstrate that sparse networks with non-overlapping ties facilitate exposure to diverse opinions, fostering deliberative engagement. However, such networks also generate cross-pressures that delay decision-making and increase cognitive ambivalence. Their findings emphasize the interplay between network density, opinion diversity, and democratic participation.
- **Emotional Dynamics and Social Polarization:** Recent studies, such as Webster, Connors, and Sinclair's *The Social Consequences of Political Anger* (2022), examine how political emotions like anger exacerbate social polarization. Their survey experiments revealed that anger toward opposing partisans drives individuals to sever social ties across various contexts, contributing to the erosion of cross-partisan interactions. These findings underscore the role of affective polarization in deepening societal divisions, extending the impact of political conflict beyond the political sphere into everyday social relationships.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Contemporary research in social influence and decision-making continues to grapple with the balance between fostering tolerance through deliberation and maintaining robust political participation. Emerging questions address the implications of digital media environments, the resilience of cross-cutting discourse in polarized societies, and the evolving role of emotions in shaping political behavior. Future studies are likely to explore innovative strategies for mitigating polarization, enhancing civic engagement, and promoting inclusive democratic practices in an increasingly interconnected and fragmented political landscape.

### 2.10.2 Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign

Berelson, B. (1954). *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* [Google-Books-ID: Iux07CCye5QC]. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** berelson\_voting\_1954
2. **Author(s):** Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee
3. **Year:** 1954
4. **Publication:** *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* (University of Chicago Press)
5. **Keywords:** voting behavior, opinion formation, presidential campaigns, cross-pressures, group dynamics
6. **Summary:** This book presents a groundbreaking study of voting behavior conducted during the 1948 Truman-Dewey presidential campaign in Elmira, New York. Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee examine how individuals form political opinions and make voting decisions within the context of social groups, cross-pressures, and campaigns. The authors use repeated interviews with a panel of voters to reveal patterns in decision-making, the role of social influence, and the broader implications for democratic stability and electoral behavior.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that voting is not an isolated act but is deeply embedded in social structures. They argue that social group membership—such as family, religious affiliation, and class—provides a stable foundation for political preferences. The theory further posits that cross-pressures, where individuals belong to multiple groups with conflicting political leanings, create uncertainty and delayed decision-making. Campaigns, according to the authors, serve to reassert group cohesion, heighten political interest, and resolve voter indecision. This dynamic maintains stability in democratic systems while also allowing for incremental change through marginal voters.
8. **Methods:** The research employed a longitudinal panel design, interviewing 1,267 households in Elmira at four points during the 1948 campaign: June, August, October, and November. The study explored voter demographics, attitudes toward candidates, and influences from family, friends, and media. Statistical analyses included cross-tabulations and correlation techniques to assess the impact of social group membership and cross-pressures on voting behavior. The authors also compared their findings to earlier studies, such as *The People's Choice* from the 1940 campaign, to validate their conclusions.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Voter decisions are strongly influenced by stable group memberships, such as religion and socioeconomic class.
  - Cross-pressured individuals are less likely to make early voting decisions and more prone to abstain.
  - Political campaigns reinforce group loyalties and reduce voter indecision, primarily mobilizing rather than converting voters.
 These hypotheses were confirmed by the data, which highlighted the centrality of group dynamics and the limited role of persuasion during campaigns.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that voting behavior is largely determined by enduring social affiliations, with political campaigns functioning to activate latent group loyalties rather than change opinions. Cross-pressured voters, who experience conflicting allegiances, are more likely to delay their decisions or abstain altogether, yet their eventual

choices often determine the electoral outcome. The authors also uncover a “pulsation effect,” where group cohesion weakens between elections but is restored during campaigns. This cyclical pattern stabilizes the political system, ensuring continuity despite low political engagement among the majority of voters.

### 11. Key definitions:

- *Cross-pressures*: Conflicting social group memberships that create tension in political decision-making.
- *Pulsation effect*: The periodic strengthening of group cohesion and loyalty during election campaigns.
- *Opinion leaders*: Influential individuals within social networks who mediate information from media to less politically engaged members.
- *Group-based voting*: The phenomenon where political preferences are shaped and maintained by social group affiliations.

#### 2.10.3 Facilitating Communication across Lines of Political Difference: The Role of Mass Media

Mutz, D. C. (2001). Facilitating Communication across Lines of Political Difference: The Role of Mass Media. *American Political Science Review*, 95(1), 97–114. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055401000223>

1. Citation key: mutz\_facilitating\_2001

2. Author(s): Diana C. Mutz and Paul S. Martin

3. Year: 2001

4. Publication: American Political Science Review

5. Keywords: political communication, mass media, cross-cutting views, deliberative democracy, political tolerance

6. Summary: Mutz and Martin investigate the role of mass media in facilitating exposure to political views that differ from one's own, a key component of deliberative democracy. Using data from two national surveys, the study compares interpersonal political discussions with exposure through various media channels. Their findings suggest that mass media, particularly mainstream outlets, expose individuals to more politically diverse perspectives than interpersonal networks, which tend to reinforce homogeneity.

7. Theory: The authors argue that exposure to diverse political views is essential for a well-functioning democracy, as it fosters deliberation, political tolerance, and legitimacy of democratic outcomes. However, interpersonal communication often fails to provide this exposure due to social homophily and selective interaction. In contrast, mass media have a structural advantage in presenting cross-cutting views because individuals have less ability or motivation to selectively avoid dissimilar perspectives in mediated contexts. This advantage, they contend, is vital for mitigating the polarizing effects of social and residential balkanization.

8. Methods: The study analyzes data from two sources: a national telephone survey conducted before the 1996 U.S. presidential election (Spencer survey) and the 1992 American and British components of the Cross-National Election Project (CNEP). The researchers use additive scales to measure exposure to dissimilar political views across interpersonal and mediated channels. They assess patterns of selective exposure by comparing levels of perceived disagreement through interpersonal discussants, newspapers, television, and other media. Statistical methods, including repeated-measures ANOVA and regression analysis, are applied to evaluate the media's contribution to cross-cutting exposure.

### 9. Hypotheses:

- Mass media will expose individuals to more cross-cutting political views than interpersonal networks.
- People will exhibit less selective exposure to mass media than to interpersonal political discussants.
- Strong partisanship will reduce exposure to dissimilar views through both interpersonal and mediated channels, but the effect will be stronger for interpersonal networks.

These hypotheses were supported by the data, demonstrating the comparative advantage of media in fostering exposure to diverse political perspectives.

10. Main findings: Mutz and Martin find that mass media, particularly newspapers and television, expose individuals to more politically diverse views than interpersonal networks, which are shaped by homophily and social selectivity. The media's impersonal nature reduces individuals' ability to avoid dissimilar views, while structural factors, such as geographic neutrality, further enhance exposure to opposing perspectives. By contrast, interpersonal communication often reinforces pre-existing political homogeneity. The authors also identify a partisan disparity, with Republicans perceiving greater disagreement in media content compared to Democrats. Despite these patterns, the growing specialization of media channels, particularly in digital contexts, poses challenges to maintaining this advantage.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “We hypothesize that mainstream news media will surpass interpersonal communication in their capacity to expose people to cross-cutting political perspectives for two reasons. First, there is a greater availability of dissimilar views in Americans' media environments than in their physical environments. Second, compared to personal interactions, people have less ability and desire to exercise selective exposure to news media content” (p. 99).
- “Our findings suggest that media are far more important than interpersonal networks in exposing people to views unlike their own. As a result, the media have the potential to make an extremely important contribution to awareness of diverse political perspectives and thus to national political integration” (p. 109).
- “Compared to most interpersonal networks, [mass media] are hotbeds of diversity, not because the media are doing such an exemplary job pursuing diversity, but because individuals are doing such a poor one, in part because of the desire to avoid conflict in interpersonal situations” (p. 110).

#### 2.10.4 Framing and Deliberation: How Citizens' Conversations Limit Elite Influence

Druckman, J. N., & Nelson, K. R. (2003). Framing and Deliberation: How Citizens' Conversations Limit Elite Influence [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1540-5907.00051>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(4), 729–745. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-5907.00051>

1. **Citation key:** druckman\_framing\_2003
2. **Author(s):** James N. Druckman and Kjersten R. Nelson
3. **Year:** 2003
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** framing effects, deliberation, elite influence, cross-cutting conversations, public opinion
6. **Summary:** Druckman and Nelson examine how interpersonal conversations mediate the impact of elite framing on public opinion. Through an experimental design involving discussions about campaign finance reform, the authors test whether elite framing effects persist when individuals engage in conversations with others who hold opposing or reinforcing views. The study demonstrates that cross-cutting conversations eliminate elite framing effects, while conversations among individuals with homogeneous views amplify such effects.
7. **Theory:** The authors contend that elite framing effects—where emphasis on specific considerations influences public opinion—can be moderated by interpersonal conversations. Drawing on theories of deliberative democracy and framing, they argue that framing effects are robust in isolated settings but can be undermined in diverse group discussions. Conversations that involve exposure to conflicting frames promote cognitive engagement, leading individuals to revisit their initial positions and diminish framing effects. Conversely, homogeneous discussions reinforce pre-existing frames, amplifying elite influence. This framework highlights the dual role of elites and social interactions in shaping public opinion, emphasizing that deliberative settings are critical for mitigating manipulation and fostering informed decision-making.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a laboratory experiment involving 261 participants from a university setting. Participants were exposed to news articles presenting a campaign finance reform debate framed as either a free-speech issue or a battle against special interests. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of three conditions: no discussion, homogeneous discussion (unmixed frame groups), or cross-cutting discussion (mixed frame groups). The authors measured participants' support for reform, importance ratings for free speech and special interest considerations, and their belief content regarding reform's impacts. Statistical techniques, including ANOVA and path analysis, were used to evaluate framing effects across the conditions.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Elite framing effects are stronger in no-discussion and homogeneous discussion settings than in cross-cutting discussion settings.
  - Cross-cutting discussions reduce the influence of elite frames by exposing participants to alternative perspectives.
  - Homogeneous discussions amplify elite framing effects through group polarization.
10. **Main findings:** Druckman and Nelson find that cross-cutting conversations eliminate elite framing effects, as participants exposed to conflicting frames revert to positions similar to those in the control group. By contrast, homogeneous discussions amplify framing effects, reinforcing participants' alignment with the frame they initially encountered. The authors also demonstrate that framing effects are short-lived, dissipating within ten days of exposure. Additionally, individual differences, such as a higher "need to evaluate" (NE), moderate framing effects, with high-NE individuals showing greater resistance to elite influence.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "In the political world where people receive and then discuss elite information, conversations can limit elite influence—but only if those conversations involve cross-cutting groups or individuals exposed to alternative arguments" (p. 735).
  - "Cross-cutting conversations eliminate elite framing effects, while homogeneous discussions amplify them, demonstrating the critical role of interpersonal interaction in mediating elite influence" (p. 737).
  - "Our results suggest that framing effects, while powerful in isolated settings, may be transient and subject to disruption by competing narratives in socially interactive environments" (p. 741).

#### 2.10.5 Political Disagreement: The Survival of Diverse Opinions within Communication Networks

Huckfeldt, R., Johnson, P. E., & Sprague, J. (2004, July). *Political Disagreement: The Survival of Diverse Opinions Within Communication Networks* [Google-Books-ID: SpfsnQEACAAJ]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** huckfeldt\_political\_2004
2. **Author(s):** Robert Huckfeldt, Paul E. Johnson, and John Sprague
3. **Year:** 2004
4. **Publication:** Political Disagreement: The Survival of Diverse Opinions within Communication Networks (Cambridge University Press)
5. **Keywords:** political disagreement, social networks, cross-pressures, deliberative democracy, electoral participation
6. **Summary:** Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague analyze the persistence of political disagreement within social networks and its implications for democratic engagement. Drawing on surveys and simulations, the authors explore how net-

work structure influences exposure to divergent opinions and sustains political diversity. The book argues that disagreement, while essential for democratic deliberation, interacts with network density and social ties to shape electoral participation and opinion formation.

**7. Theory:** The authors posit that political disagreement, defined as interaction among individuals with divergent political preferences, plays a crucial role in fostering deliberative democracy. Social networks, composed of individuals connected through overlapping or non-overlapping ties, determine the extent of exposure to diverse viewpoints. Dense networks with overlapping ties tend to reinforce homogeneity, while sparse networks promote heterogeneity and disagreement. They further argue that disagreement forces individuals to critically evaluate their positions, contributing to informed decision-making. However, this diversity also creates tensions, such as cross-pressure, which may delay decision-making or reduce participation. By integrating social psychological theories of conformity and cognitive dissonance with empirical network analysis, the authors provide a nuanced understanding of how disagreement persists despite tendencies toward homogeneity.

**8. Methods:** The book uses two main empirical approaches: survey analysis and computer simulations. Data from the 1996 Indianapolis-St. Louis voter surveys and the 2000 National Election Study (NES) form the basis for studying the effects of disagreement on political attitudes and behavior. Respondents were asked to name political discussants within their networks, allowing the authors to measure agreement levels and network density. The surveys were complemented by agent-based simulations, modeling how disagreement evolves over time in networks with varying structural properties. Statistical techniques, including regression and autocorrelation models, were used to analyze the relationship between network structure, opinion diversity, and electoral participation.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Political disagreement is more likely in sparse networks with non-overlapping social ties than in dense, overlapping networks.
- Exposure to disagreement within networks increases ambivalence toward political choices but does not significantly reduce turnout.
- Cross-pressure created by diverse networks delay voting decisions and increase cognitive engagement with political issues.

These hypotheses were supported, demonstrating how network heterogeneity facilitates disagreement and influences political behavior.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find that political disagreement is a common experience for voters, even within closely-knit networks. Sparse networks with non-overlapping ties are more likely to sustain diverse opinions, while dense networks promote homogeneity. Disagreement increases ambivalence, as respondents evaluate competing considerations, but its impact on turnout is marginal. Instead, disagreement fosters critical engagement with political issues, contributing to the deliberative function of democracy. The simulations further reveal that introducing autoregressive influence within networks mitigates the homogenizing effects of opinion diffusion, ensuring the persistence of diversity.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Political disagreement:* Interaction among individuals with divergent political preferences, challenging opinion homogeneity within social networks.
- *Cross-pressure:* Conflicts arising from overlapping social ties with divergent political alignments, leading to ambivalence and delayed decisions.
- *Network density:* The extent of overlap among social ties within a network, influencing the degree of homogeneity or heterogeneity in opinions.
- *Autoregressive influence:* A network dynamic where the opinion of an individual depends on the distribution of viewpoints within their broader network.

#### 2.10.6 The Workplace as a Context for Cross-Cutting Political Discourse

Mutz, D. C., & Mondak, J. J. [Jeffery J.]. (2006). The Workplace as a Context for Cross-Cutting Political Discourse [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 68(1), 140–155. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00376.x>

1. **Citation key:** mutz\_workplace\_2006
2. **Author(s):** Diana C. Mutz and Jeffery J. Mondak
3. **Year:** 2006
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** workplace, political discourse, cross-cutting conversations, political tolerance, political awareness
6. **Summary:** Mutz and Mondak investigate the role of the workplace as a unique environment for cross-cutting political discourse and its implications for political tolerance and awareness of opposing viewpoints. Using data from multiple surveys, they analyze the frequency, nature, and consequences of workplace-based political discussions. The study finds that the workplace fosters more politically diverse interactions than other social contexts, such as neighborhoods and voluntary associations, promoting greater understanding of differing perspectives and higher levels of political tolerance.
7. **Theory:** The authors theorize that the workplace is a uniquely conducive environment for cross-cutting political discourse because it minimizes self-selection, fosters regular and unavoidable interactions, and exposes individuals to diverse perspectives. Unlike voluntary associations or neighborhoods, which often promote homogeneity through

self-selection or social norms, the workplace compels interactions among people with varying political views. These dynamics, the authors argue, lead to meaningful exposure to differing perspectives, enhancing individuals' understanding of opposing rationales and fostering political tolerance. They suggest that this process supports the deliberative functions of democracy by encouraging citizens to engage with and appreciate the legitimacy of diverse political viewpoints. Furthermore, the authors propose that the structured nature of workplace interactions mitigates potential tensions arising from political disagreement, allowing discourse to occur without jeopardizing relationships.

**8. Methods:** The study draws on data from five major surveys, including the 1996 Spencer Foundation Survey, the 1984 South Bend Survey, and the 2000 National Election Study (NES). These datasets provide information on political discussion networks, the frequency of workplace interactions, and measures of political tolerance and awareness. The authors use both dyad-level and respondent-level analyses to examine the extent of political disagreement in the workplace. Statistical techniques, including regression analyses and Poisson models, are employed to assess the effects of workplace-based discourse on political tolerance and awareness of rationales for opposing viewpoints. The robustness of the findings is tested through comparisons across surveys and alternative model specifications.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- The workplace fosters more frequent cross-cutting political discourse compared to other social contexts.
- Exposure to political disagreement in the workplace enhances awareness of rationales for opposing viewpoints.
- Workplace-based political discussions increase political tolerance by promoting interactions across lines of difference.

The findings confirm these hypotheses, demonstrating that workplace interactions are uniquely effective in fostering diverse political dialogue and promoting deliberative outcomes.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find that the workplace excels as a setting for cross-cutting political discourse, surpassing other contexts like neighborhoods and voluntary associations in fostering interactions across political divides. They demonstrate that political disagreement in the workplace enhances awareness of opposing viewpoints, as measured by the ability to articulate rationales for differing opinions. Furthermore, workplace-based discourse is positively associated with higher levels of political tolerance, as exposure to disagreement encourages individuals to appreciate the legitimacy of alternative perspectives. The structured and involuntary nature of workplace interactions is identified as a key factor enabling these outcomes, as it minimizes self-selection and compels engagement with diverse viewpoints.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Interactions on the job expose workers to diverse viewpoints, promoting awareness of the legitimate bases of political conflict and fostering political tolerance" (p. 150).
- "The workplace surpasses other social contexts in the number of political discussants it provides, and cross-cutting political discourse flourishes with discussants from the workplace" (p. 153).
- "Despite the many reasons one might avoid talking about politics at work, our evidence consistently points to the workplace as a key context for cross-cutting social interactions" (p. 153).

### 2.10.7 Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy

Mutz, D. C. (2006, March). *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy* [Google-Books-ID: 4AAM-BAAAQBAJ]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** mutz\_hearing\_2006
2. **Author(s):** Diana C. Mutz
3. **Year:** 2006
4. **Publication:** Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy (Cambridge University Press)
5. **Keywords:** deliberative democracy, participatory democracy, cross-cutting discourse, political tolerance, political participation
6. **Summary:** Mutz explores the tension between deliberative democracy, which emphasizes exposure to opposing views, and participatory democracy, which stresses active political engagement. She identifies cross-cutting political discourse as a mechanism that promotes understanding and tolerance but simultaneously dampens political participation. Drawing on survey data and experimental findings, Mutz argues that the goals of deliberative and participatory democracy are often at odds, challenging assumptions about their mutual compatibility in democratic theory.
7. **Theory:** Mutz posits that exposure to cross-cutting discourse—interactions with individuals holding opposing political views—yields significant benefits for deliberative democracy by fostering tolerance and an appreciation of differing perspectives. However, she argues that such exposure creates ambivalence and reduces the likelihood of active political participation. This "paradox of democracy" underscores a fundamental trade-off between deliberative and participatory goals. Mutz suggests that social network structures influence the prevalence of cross-cutting conversations, with more diverse networks promoting tolerance but discouraging activism. Furthermore, she highlights the role of psychological factors, such as conflict avoidance, in mediating the effects of cross-cutting discourse. Ultimately, Mutz's theory challenges the assumption that deliberation and participation are complementary, instead presenting them as competing objectives in democratic practice.
8. **Methods:** The book combines national survey data and experimental evidence to examine the prevalence, dynamics, and effects of cross-cutting political discourse. Using data from the 1992 to 2000 National Election Studies and social network surveys, Mutz measures the frequency and impact of political disagreement within personal networks. She employs regression analyses to assess how exposure to opposing viewpoints influences political tolerance and

participation. Additionally, Mutz conducts controlled experiments to test causal relationships between cross-cutting discourse and attitudes toward opposing views. These methods allow her to triangulate findings and provide robust evidence for the book's central claims.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Cross-cutting political discourse increases political tolerance by exposing individuals to diverse perspectives.
- Cross-cutting discourse reduces political participation by fostering ambivalence and conflict avoidance.
- The prevalence of cross-cutting discourse varies by social network structure, with workplace interactions fostering more disagreement than family or close friendship networks.

These hypotheses were confirmed, illustrating the dual-edged nature of cross-cutting political interactions.

**10. Main findings:** Mutz demonstrates that exposure to cross-cutting political discourse promotes tolerance by increasing awareness of opposing rationales and fostering respect for differing perspectives. However, such discourse also reduces political participation by creating ambivalence and diminishing the certainty required for activism. The findings show that cross-cutting interactions are more likely in workplace settings than in intimate or homogenous networks, highlighting the influence of social context on political behavior. Mutz concludes that while cross-cutting discourse advances the ideals of deliberative democracy, it simultaneously undermines participatory democracy, presenting a trade-off that challenges democratic theorists.

#### 11. Key definitions:

- *Cross-cutting discourse*: Political discussions involving individuals with opposing views, which promote tolerance but reduce participation.
- *Deliberative democracy*: A model of democracy emphasizing the importance of reasoned discussion and exposure to diverse perspectives.
- *Participatory democracy*: A model of democracy focused on active engagement in political processes and decision-making.
- *Conflict avoidance*: A psychological tendency to steer clear of contentious discussions, often exacerbated by cross-cutting interactions.

### 2.10.8 Talking About Politics: Informal Groups and Social Identity in American Life

Walsh, K. C. (2010, March). *Talking about Politics: Informal Groups and Social Identity in American Life*. University of Chicago Press

1. Citation key: `walsh_talking_2010`

2. Author(s): Katherine Cramer Walsh

3. Year: 2010

4. Publication: Talking About Politics: Informal Groups and Social Identity in American Life (University of Chicago Press)

5. Keywords: political discussion, social identity, informal groups, political behavior, ethnography

6. Summary: Walsh examines the role of informal social groups in shaping political discussion and identity. Using an ethnographic approach, she highlights how everyday conversations within these groups influence political perceptions and reinforce social identities. Focusing on "Old Timers" in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Walsh demonstrates that political discussions in informal settings often serve to sustain group boundaries, reinforcing existing biases rather than fostering open deliberation. Her findings challenge assumptions about the democratic benefits of informal political talk.

7. Theory: Walsh theorizes that informal group discussions about politics are pivotal in the development and reinforcement of social identities, which in turn shape political attitudes. These conversations occur within social contexts that privilege in-group solidarity, often at the expense of open-mindedness or tolerance for out-groups. She argues that these interactions are not merely reflective of pre-existing political views but are instrumental in constructing and maintaining group identity through processes like "oppositional processing," where individuals define their positions in contrast to others. Walsh emphasizes that while such discussions might connect private lives to public concerns, they also risk fostering exclusivity and intolerance. Her theory integrates insights from political psychology, social identity theory, and ethnographic traditions, offering a nuanced perspective on how political talk operates within social structures. Walsh also critiques the overly optimistic expectations of deliberative democracy theorists, arguing that the ideal of rational, inclusive political discussion rarely aligns with the realities of informal group dynamics.

8. Methods: Employing a long-term ethnographic approach, Walsh observed and recorded discussions within informal social groups in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Her primary focus was on a group of middle-aged to elderly white men known as the "Old Timers." For comparative analysis, she also examined a women's craft guild and interactions among racially diverse groups at the same location. Walsh supplemented her ethnographic work with data from the 1990 Citizen Participation Study, conducting regression analyses to explore relationships between political talk and social identity. This mixed-methods approach allowed her to investigate both the micro-dynamics of informal discussions and broader patterns of political behavior.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Informal political discussions primarily reinforce social identities and group boundaries.
- Cross-cutting interactions are rare within informal groups, as participants prefer to engage with like-minded individuals.

- Political talk in informal settings connects private experiences to public issues but does not necessarily promote democratic norms like tolerance or deliberation.

Walsh's findings affirm these hypotheses, showing that political discussions in informal groups often serve to solidify in-group solidarity and reinforce existing biases.

**10. Main findings:** Walsh concludes that informal political discussions are deeply intertwined with social identity, with participants using these conversations to define and maintain their group affiliations. While such discussions can help individuals relate personal experiences to broader political concerns, they often discourage open engagement with opposing viewpoints. The "Old Timers," for instance, relied on their shared identity to interpret political events in ways that excluded out-groups, illustrating how informal talk can perpetuate social divisions. Walsh also identifies a process she terms "circumventing," where participants reinterpret media messages through their own group-specific perspectives, further reinforcing group norms. Ultimately, Walsh argues that while informal political discussions can enhance individual engagement, they do not necessarily support the deliberative ideals of inclusivity and tolerance.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Oppositional processing*: The process by which individuals define their political positions by contrasting their social identity with that of others.
- *Circumventing*: The reinterpretation of media messages through group-specific lenses, reinforcing shared perspectives and norms.
- *Social identity*: A person's sense of who they are based on their group memberships, which influences political attitudes and behavior.
- *In-group solidarity*: The cohesion and mutual support within a social group, often reinforced through shared political discussions.

#### 2.10.9 Partisanship in a Social Setting

Klar, S. (2014). Partisanship in a Social Setting [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12087>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(3), 687–704. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12087>

**1. Citation key:** klar\_partisanship\_2014

**2. Author(s):** Samara Klar

**3. Year:** 2014

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** partisanship, social settings, motivated reasoning, political behavior, heterogeneous groups

**6. Summary:** Klar examines how social settings influence the degree to which individuals rely on partisanship when forming political preferences. Using an experimental design, the study explores the effects of both homogeneous (like-minded) and heterogeneous (mixed-partisan) social environments. Klar finds that homogeneous settings intensify partisan-motivated reasoning, while heterogeneous settings mitigate it, encouraging more balanced evaluations. These findings highlight the critical role of social context in shaping the way individuals process political information.

**7. Theory:** Klar posits that social settings fundamentally alter how individuals apply partisan identification in political reasoning. Building on theories of motivated reasoning and social identity, the study suggests that homogeneous groups amplify partisan bias by reinforcing shared perspectives and providing social affirmation. Conversely, heterogeneous groups disrupt this bias by introducing dissenting views and promoting deliberation. This framework extends prior research by integrating the social dimensions of political preference formation, proposing that the interplay between partisanship and social context can either reinforce or diminish partisan-motivated reasoning. Klar emphasizes that while partisanship is a stable and pervasive influence, its effects are contingent upon the ideological composition of one's social environment. This perspective challenges the assumption that partisanship operates uniformly across contexts, instead highlighting the variability introduced by social interactions.

**8. Methods:** Klar employs a controlled experimental design involving undergraduate students from a large Midwestern university. Participants were assigned to one of six conditions based on two treatments: partisan ambivalence (univalent vs. ambivalent partisans) and social setting (homogeneous, heterogeneous, or nonsocial). Participants read information on two policy issues—energy and health care—and engaged in discussions (or completed surveys in isolation) before reporting their policy preferences and perceptions. The study uses a mix of quantitative measures, including 7-point scales for policy preference and perceived policy effectiveness. Statistical analyses assess the effects of the experimental manipulations on partisan-motivated reasoning.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Univalent partisans engage in more partisan-motivated reasoning than ambivalent partisans, favoring their party's policies and dismissing the opposition.
- Homogeneous groups amplify partisan-motivated reasoning, leading to stronger preferences for in-party policies and negative evaluations of out-party policies.
- Heterogeneous groups reduce partisan-motivated reasoning, resulting in more balanced evaluations of both in-party and out-party policies.

Klar's findings confirm all hypotheses, showing that social settings exert a significant influence on the degree of partisan-motivated reasoning.

**10. Main findings:** Klar demonstrates that social context shapes partisan-motivated reasoning in predictable ways. Homogeneous groups strengthen partisan biases, with participants favoring their party's policies more strongly and

rating opposing policies as less effective. Heterogeneous groups, in contrast, foster greater openness to opposing viewpoints, reducing partisan biases and encouraging more nuanced evaluations. These effects hold across both univalent and ambivalent partisans, underscoring the moderating role of social settings. Klar concludes that the impact of partisanship cannot be fully understood without accounting for the social environments in which individuals form their preferences.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “The central implication of these findings is that, going forward, we cannot fully explore how citizens apply their partisanship in evaluating political information without also accounting for the social settings in which individuals find themselves” (p. 687).
- “Homogeneous settings will polarize opinion, regardless of partisan ambivalence” (p. 689).
- “Motivated reasoning is therefore dependent on at least one additional factor that scholars have acknowledged in theory but neglected in practice for over half a century: the social environment” (p. 700).

#### 2.10.10 Through the Grapevine: Informational Consequences of Interpersonal Political Communication

Carlson, T. N. (2019). Through the Grapevine: Informational Consequences of Interpersonal Political Communication. *American Political Science Review*, 113(2), 325–339. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305541900008X>

1. Citation key: carlson\_through\_2019

2. Author(s): Taylor N. Carlson

3. Year: 2019

4. Publication: American Political Science Review

5. Keywords: social communication, political information, media, partisanship, learning

6. Summary: Carlson investigates how political information changes as it moves through social networks and compares its effects on learning and evaluations to information acquired directly from the media. Using experimental data, the study reveals that socially transmitted information tends to be shorter, less detailed, and more biased than news articles. However, information from “ideal informants”—individuals who are knowledgeable and share the recipient’s partisanship—can facilitate similar levels of learning as the media. The study underscores the informational trade-offs involved in relying on social networks versus traditional news sources.

7. Theory: Carlson posits that socially transmitted political information is systematically different from information delivered by the media due to the inherent biases and processing involved in interpersonal communication. Rooted in the two-step flow of communication theory, this framework acknowledges that while social information may serve as a cognitive shortcut for politically disinterested individuals, it is more susceptible to distortion through processes like filtering, personalization, and partisan bias. Furthermore, Carlson theorizes that the effectiveness of social information hinges on the characteristics of the informant, suggesting that shared partisanship and higher knowledge levels enhance the reliability and utility of socially transmitted information. This dynamic challenges the assumption that social networks inherently undermine political knowledge, emphasizing instead the conditional role of informant quality in shaping informational outcomes.

8. Methods: Carlson employs a two-part experimental design. Study 1 uses a “telephone game” experiment to track how information about U.S. economic performance changes as it moves from official reports to media articles and then to interpersonal messages. Study 2 involves a nationally representative sample where participants are randomly assigned to receive information from a news article or a social message generated in Study 1. Key outcomes include participants’ factual recall (learning) and subjective evaluations of the economy and presidential performance. Statistical analyses assess differences in the quantity, quality, and impact of information across sources.

9. Hypotheses:

- Socially transmitted information contains less detail and is more biased than media-delivered information.
- Information from “ideal informants” (knowledgeable copartisans) facilitates similar levels of learning as information from the media.
- Exposure to partisan-biased social messages affects subjective evaluations differently than neutral media articles.

The hypotheses are confirmed, with results demonstrating that while socially transmitted information is generally less informative, ideal informants can rival media in their effectiveness, albeit with distinct effects on subjective attitudes.

10. Main findings: Carlson finds that socially transmitted information differs significantly from media-delivered information, containing fewer factual units and reflecting greater bias. However, individuals exposed to ideal informants learned as much as those who received information from the media. Social information also influenced subjective evaluations: individuals exposed to partisan-biased messages adjusted their perceptions of the president but not their evaluations of the economy. These results highlight the dual role of social networks in both facilitating and distorting political learning, contingent upon the characteristics of the information source.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Socially supplied messages contain less information that is less similar to the original report than news articles” (p. 326).
- “Ideal informants can help facilitate how much individuals know about the news in the absence of information from the media, but this comes at the cost of exposure to biased information” (p. 328).
- “Receiving information from ideal informants could serve as a valid information alternative to the media, just as previous research has theorized” (p. 336).

### 2.10.11 The Social Consequences of Political Anger

Webster, S. W., Connors, E. C., & Sinclair, B. (2022). The Social Consequences of Political Anger [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 84(3), 1292–1305. <https://doi.org/10.1086/718979>

1. **Citation key:** webster\_social\_2022
2. **Author(s):** Steven W. Webster, Elizabeth C. Connors, and Betsy Sinclair
3. **Year:** 2022
4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** political anger, social polarization, partisanship, interpersonal relationships, affective polarization
6. **Summary:** Webster, Connors, and Sinclair explore how political anger affects social relationships, contributing to the growing phenomenon of social polarization in American politics. Through a survey experiment with nearly 3,500 participants, the authors find that anger at opposing partisans leads individuals to sever social ties across various domains. The study highlights anger as a potent driver of partisan animosity, with implications for the functioning of democracy, as it undermines cross-party interactions and fosters polarization beyond the political arena.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that political anger exacerbates social polarization by encouraging behaviors that distance individuals from opposing partisans. Drawing on the psychology of emotions, they emphasize anger's unique capacity to provoke action-oriented responses aimed at alleviating frustration or punishing the source of anger. Unlike other negative emotions, anger fosters judgments and behaviors driven by heuristic-based evaluations, making it a potent force in reinforcing partisan divides. The theory suggests that political anger spills over into social domains, causing partisans to make decisions about friendships, familial relations, and social interactions based on political identity. This framework challenges traditional views of polarization as confined to the political realm, illustrating how emotions can permeate broader social contexts and deepen divisions.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a survey experiment conducted via the Lucid Fulcrum Academic platform, targeting self-identified partisans. Participants were randomly assigned to an anger treatment or control group. In the treatment group, respondents engaged in an “emotional recall” task, describing a time they felt anger toward the opposing political party, while the control group described a neutral event. Post-treatment, participants answered questions about their willingness to engage with out-partisans in various social scenarios. The authors used measures like emotional recall paragraphs, sentiment analysis, and self-monitoring traits to ensure the validity of their findings. Statistical models, including instrumental variable regressions, were used to isolate the causal impact of anger on social polarization.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Political anger increases social polarization by reducing willingness to engage with out-partisans in apolitical social contexts.
  - The effect of anger extends across both low-cost actions (e.g., talking to neighbors) and high-cost actions (e.g., ending friendships or family ties).
  - The impact of political anger on social polarization is not moderated significantly by gender or racial identity in most cases.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with results showing that anger consistently drives partisan-based social distancing.

10. **Main findings:** The study reveals that political anger significantly reduces individuals' willingness to interact with out-partisans in various social settings. Anger leads to avoidance of out-partisan neighbors, rejection of invitations to social gatherings, and disapproval of cross-partisan marriages. These effects are robust across low- and high-cost scenarios, highlighting anger's pervasive influence on social polarization. Sentiment analysis confirms that the treatment successfully elicited anger, and instrumental variable regressions show that the intensity of anger correlates with stronger social polarization. The findings suggest that political anger disrupts social cohesion and reinforces partisan divisions, with detrimental implications for democracy.

11. **Key quotations:**

- “Political anger causes individuals to take a series of actions across a multitude of domains that, as a whole, will serve to increase social polarization between Democrats and Republicans” (p. 1295).
- “Anger causes individuals to socially distance themselves from out-partisans in both ‘easy’ and ‘hard’ cases, highlighting its broad role in shaping partisan divisions” (p. 1303).
- “These findings suggest that American democracy may be in a worrying state, as anger-fueled politics weaken the heterogeneous discussion networks essential for democratic functioning” (p. 1304).

### 2.10.12 Social Desirability and Affective Polarization

Connors, E. C. [Elizabeth C]. (2023). Social Desirability and Affective Polarization. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 87(4), 911–934. <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfad053>

1. **Citation key:** connors\_social\_2023
2. **Author(s):** Elizabeth C. Connors
3. **Year:** 2023
4. **Publication:** Public Opinion Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** social desirability, affective polarization, partisanship, political behavior, self-monitoring
6. **Summary:** Connors explores the role of social desirability in shaping expressions of affective polarization among partisans. Through four original studies, the article examines whether partisanship-driven polarization is perceived as

socially desirable and whether such perceptions influence self-reported polarization. The findings reveal that polarization is often seen as desirable within partisan groups and that self-presentation motives influence reported attitudes and behaviors. However, responses to polarization appear relatively stable, indicating limited effects of experimental manipulations on entrenched partisan attitudes.

**7. Theory:** Connors posits that affective polarization, characterized by strong in-group preference and out-group disdain, is not just a political phenomenon but also a social one, shaped by perceptions of social norms. The theory suggests that media narratives and partisan identity reinforce the desirability of polarization, motivating individuals to align their reported attitudes with socially approved norms. This alignment is further influenced by self-monitoring tendencies, with high self-monitors being more likely to conform to perceived social expectations. The theory highlights the dual nature of polarization as both an intrinsic attitude and a socially driven expression, shaped by the interaction of identity, social context, and normative pressures. It also addresses the stability of such attitudes, proposing that while social desirability can modify behavior, entrenched partisan polarization limits the scope of change through subtle contextual shifts.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a multi-method approach, including survey experiments and observational analysis. Key methods include:

- Study 1: A “fake good, fake bad” experiment to test whether polarization is socially desirable by asking participants to report polarization levels as if they were trying to impress or disappoint fellow partisans.
- Study 2: A recall task in which participants described situations where polarization was socially desirable or undesirable, followed by self-reported attitudes and behaviors.
- Studies 3 and 4: Manipulations of perceived survey privacy to test whether privacy cues alter polarization responses, with variations in framing (public versus private conditions) and measures of self-monitoring.

Statistical analyses, including interaction models and robustness checks, are used to isolate the effects of social desirability and self-monitoring on reported polarization.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- **Hypothesis 1:** Partisans perceive affective polarization as socially desirable.
- **Hypothesis 2:** Social desirability influences polarization expressions, moderated by self-monitoring tendencies.
- **Hypotheses 3a and 3b:** Perceived survey privacy can (3a) or cannot (3b) shape polarization responses, depending on self-monitoring.

Results confirm Hypotheses 1 and 2, with partial support for Hypotheses 3a and 3b, indicating that social desirability exerts influence primarily in high-pressure or public contexts.

**10. Main findings:** The study demonstrates that partisanship-driven polarization is perceived as socially desirable, with implications for self-reported attitudes and behaviors. High self-monitors are more likely to adjust their responses based on social desirability cues, particularly in contexts emphasizing public accountability. However, deeply ingrained partisan identities limit the extent to which polarization expressions are altered by experimental treatments, such as privacy reminders or recall tasks. The findings suggest that while social desirability is a significant factor in polarization expressions, it interacts with the stability of underlying partisan attitudes, producing nuanced and context-dependent effects.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Partisans view the rhetoric and actions of polarization as both acceptable and appropriate, reinforcing the social desirability of polarization within in-groups” (p. 913).
- “When reminded of privacy, high self-monitors significantly tempered their reported polarization levels, indicating the influence of social desirability in public expressions of partisanship” (p. 926).
- “Social desirability can shape partisan polarization, but its effects are constrained by entrenched attitudes and the limited impact of subtle experimental manipulations” (p. 927).

## 2.11 Political Geography

### 2.11.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Research on political geography has evolved to address the spatial dimensions of political behavior and contextual influences on attitudes and participation. Topics range from the implications of geographic context for political mobilization to the dynamics of spatial polarization and urban-rural divides. Foundational studies introduced challenges such as the Modifiable Areal Unit Problem (MAUP) and the Uncertain Geographic Context Problem (UGCoP), which highlight methodological difficulties in defining and measuring political contexts. Recent advances integrate geolocation technologies and dynamic contextual measures, providing new insights into how spatial environments shape political phenomena.
- **Uncertain Geographic Context Problem (UGCoP):** Mei-Po Kwan (2012) introduced the concept of UGCoP, emphasizing the misalignment between static geographic units and the actual areas influencing individual behavior. UGCoP complicates spatial research by introducing inferential errors due to static and administratively defined areas, such as census tracts, failing to capture the dynamic nature of individual experiences. Kwan argues for methodological innovations, such as activity spaces and real-time data collection, to align contextual measures with individuals' lived realities, thus addressing the spatial and temporal mismatches inherent in traditional approaches.
- **Contextual Perceptions and Racial Threat:** Wong et al. (2012) critique reliance on administrative boundaries, demonstrating that individuals' subjective perceptions often diverge from official geographic data. Using a map-drawing

methodology, the study highlights how perceptions of racial and economic contexts mediate political attitudes, suggesting that lived experiences rather than static units better capture relevant contextual influences. This approach integrates psychological theories to emphasize how perceptions shape political behavior.

- **Spatial Effects and Media Mobilization:** Crabtree, Darmofal, and Kern (2015) examined the role of West German television (WGTB) in the East German revolution, employing a natural experiment leveraging geographic variation in signal reception. Contrary to assumptions that foreign media facilitated protest mobilization, the study found no significant relationship between WGTB access and protest events, emphasizing the role of interpersonal networks over mass media in collective action.
- **Dynamic Measures of Racial Context:** Moore and Reeves (2020) leveraged GPS data to critique static measures of racial and ethnic context, revealing systematic misrepresentation of lived experiences. Dynamic measures aligned more closely with daily movements, highlighting the limitations of static geographic units like census tracts. The study demonstrates the need for geolocation-based methods to accurately capture the influence of racial contexts on political behavior.
- **Urban-Rural Divides and Political Ideology:** Gimpel and Reeves (2024) explored how residential satisfaction mediates ideological divides between urban and rural residents. Their findings suggest that urban dissatisfaction correlates with progressive policy preferences, while rural contentment aligns with conservatism. The study emphasizes the role of subjective attachment to place in shaping ideological orientations, challenging demographic explanations of the urban-rural divide.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Key debates in political geography include the methodological challenges of defining contextual units, the implications of geographic clustering for polarization, and the intersection of spatial context with identity politics. Advances in dynamic spatial analysis, integration of geolocation data, and refined measures of individual perceptions are expected to drive future research, addressing both theoretical and empirical challenges in understanding the spatial dimensions of political behavior.

### 2.11.2 The Uncertain Geographic Context Problem

Kwan, M.-P. (2012). The Uncertain Geographic Context Problem. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 102(5), 958–968. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2012.687349>

1. **Citation key:** kwan\_uncertain\_2012
2. **Author(s):** Mei-Po Kwan
3. **Year:** 2012
4. **Publication:** Annals of the Association of American Geographers
5. **Keywords:** uncertain geographic context problem, contextual uncertainty, neighborhood effects, environmental health, spatial analysis
6. **Summary:** Kwan introduces the Uncertain Geographic Context Problem (UGCoP), a methodological challenge in spatial research where analytical results are affected by the geographic delineation of contextual units. The article explores how these uncertainties, both spatial and temporal, impact studies involving area-based attributes, such as environmental health and neighborhood effects. By highlighting the differences between UGCoP and the Modifiable Areal Unit Problem (MAUP), Kwan emphasizes the need for innovative approaches to mitigate UGCoP's impact on inferential validity in geographic research.
7. **Theory:** The article posits that geographic context influences individual behaviors and outcomes, but the exact boundaries of such contexts often remain uncertain. Unlike the MAUP, which pertains to scale and zoning issues, UGCoP concerns the misalignment of contextual units with the true causally relevant geographic areas. Kwan argues that static and administratively defined areas, such as census tracts, often fail to capture the dynamic and individualized nature of contextual influences. Furthermore, spatial and temporal mismatches in the data collection process exacerbate the problem, leading to potential inferential errors. By incorporating concepts like activity spaces and dynamic modeling, Kwan challenges the traditional reliance on fixed boundaries, advocating for methods that align more closely with individuals' lived experiences.
8. **Methods:** Kwan reviews methodological approaches to demonstrate UGCoP's implications. Key examples include sensitivity analyses that assess the effects of different contextual delineations on research outcomes and the use of activity space measures derived from geographic information systems (GIS) and GPS data. The article critiques conventional neighborhood-based analyses and highlights the potential of personalized contextual units, which account for individuals' movement patterns, social interactions, and daily activities. Kwan also discusses the integration of real-time data, such as ecological momentary assessment (EMA), to refine exposure measurements.
9. **Hypotheses:** Kwan hypothesizes that traditional static contextual units often misrepresent the true geographic context, leading to:
  - False positives: Spurious associations between contextual variables and outcomes due to misaligned contextual boundaries.
  - False negatives: Failure to detect true associations because the relevant geographic or temporal contexts are not captured accurately.
 These hypotheses are supported by case studies demonstrating the sensitivity of contextual variables and findings to unit delineation.
10. **Main findings:** Kwan concludes that UGCoP is a significant and distinct methodological issue that undermines the

reliability of spatial analyses. The review demonstrates that both contextual variables and research findings are highly sensitive to the choice of geographic delineation. Moreover, dynamic, individualized measures of geographic context—such as activity spaces derived from GPS data—offer a promising avenue to address UGCoP. However, Kwan also acknowledges the limitations of these methods, including high costs, data privacy concerns, and the computational challenges of analyzing complex spatiotemporal datasets.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “The uncertain geographic context problem arises because of the spatial uncertainty in the actual areas that exert contextual influences on the individuals being studied and the temporal uncertainty in the timing and duration in which individuals experienced these contextual influences” (p. 959).
- “The UGCoP is a problem as fundamental as the MAUP, but it is a different kind of problem because it is not due to the use of different zonal schemes or spatial scales for area-based variables” (p. 959).
- “Studies on the effects of contextual influences on health thus need to consider where and how much time people spend while engaged in their daily activities in relation to the spatiotemporal patterns of relevant contextual influences” (p. 966).

#### 2.11.3 Bringing the Person Back In: Boundaries, Perceptions, and the Measurement of Racial Context

Wong, C., Bowers, J., Williams, T., & Simmons, K. D. (2012). Bringing the Person Back In: Boundaries, Perceptions, and the Measurement of Racial Context [Publisher: Cambridge University PressNew York, USA]. *The Journal of Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381612000552>

1. **Citation key:** wong Bringing\_2012
2. **Author(s):** Cara Wong, Jake Bowers, Tarah Williams, and Katherine Drake Simmons
3. **Year:** 2012
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** contextual effects, racial threat, pseudoenvironments, subjective perceptions, geographic units
6. **Summary:** Wong and colleagues critique the reliance on administratively defined geographic units to study contextual effects, arguing that such units often fail to capture individuals' lived experiences and perceptions. Drawing from psychological theories and employing a novel map-drawing methodology, the authors demonstrate that individuals define their local communities differently from official boundaries and perceive their environments in ways that diverge significantly from census-reported data. The study aims to integrate subjective perceptions into contextual analysis, bridging psychological and sociological perspectives on the influence of geographic context.
7. **Theory:** The authors build their theory on the premise that geographic context impacts political attitudes and behaviors, but traditional measures using administrative units (e.g., census tracts) overlook subjective and individualized perceptions of context. Drawing on Walter Lippmann's concept of "pseudoenvironments" and Parsons and Shils' framework of the "situation of action," the study emphasizes the gap between objective data and individuals' mental maps of their surroundings. The authors argue that contextual effects are mediated by individuals' subjective perceptions, which are shaped by personal experiences, media narratives, and social interactions. These perceptions influence how individuals interpret racial, economic, and partisan dynamics in their communities. The theory challenges researchers to move beyond static and generalized units of analysis, advocating for methodologies that capture the fluid and personalized nature of context.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a mixed-methods approach, including a pilot survey of 62 participants in a Midwestern county. Participants were asked to draw their perceived community boundaries on maps and describe the demographic and political characteristics of their self-defined contexts. These subjective perceptions were compared against census data and administrative units to assess alignment and divergence. Statistical analyses examined misperceptions at multiple geographic scales—block group, community, and national levels—and across dimensions of race, partisanship, and socioeconomic status. The study highlights the limitations of existing methods, such as the Modifiable Areal Unit Problem (MAUP), and illustrates the potential of individualized mapping techniques to address these issues.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Individuals' perceptions of their local context differ significantly from census-reported data and administrative boundaries.
  - Misperceptions are more pronounced at larger geographic scales (e.g., national level) compared to smaller, localized scales.
  - Subjective perceptions of context mediate the relationship between demographic realities and political attitudes.
 These hypotheses are supported by the empirical findings, which reveal substantial variation in how individuals perceive and define their communities.
10. **Main findings:** Wong and colleagues find that individuals' perceptions of their local communities often deviate from census-reported demographic data and administrative boundaries. Respondents overestimate racial diversity, particularly the proportion of Black residents, and underestimate economic and partisan heterogeneity. Misperceptions are most pronounced at larger geographic scales, such as the national level. The study highlights the inadequacy of traditional geographic units for capturing subjective perceptions of context and demonstrates the importance of integrating individuals' lived experiences into the study of contextual effects. The findings suggest that subjective perceptions are a critical mechanism through which geographic context influences political attitudes, emphasizing the

need for methodologies that align with individuals' mental representations of their environments.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "By 'bringing the person back in' to the measurement of context, we are able to marry psychological theories of information processing with sociological theories of racial threat" (p. 1153).
- "The evidence is clear: 'pictures in our heads' do not resemble governmental administrative units in shape or content" (p. 1153).
- "The results help deepen and extend our knowledge about how context matters in politics, showing that governmental administrative units do not define the environments relevant to individuals, and that people do not 'see' what the Census 'sees'" (p. 1154).

#### 2.11.4 A Spatial Analysis of the Impact of West German Television on Protest Mobilization During the East German Revolution

Crabtree, C., Darmofal, D., & Kern, H. L. (2015). A spatial analysis of the impact of West German television on protest mobilization during the East German revolution [Publisher: SAGE Publications Ltd]. *Journal of Peace Research*, 52(3), 269–284. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343314554245>

1. **Citation key:** crabtree\_spatial\_2015
2. **Author(s):** Charles Crabtree, David Darmofal, and Holger L. Kern
3. **Year:** 2015
4. **Publication:** Journal of Peace Research
5. **Keywords:** authoritarian regimes, collective action, mass media, natural experiment, East Germany
6. **Summary:** Crabtree, Darmofal, and Kern examine whether West German television (WGT) influenced protest mobilization during the 1989 East German revolution. Employing a natural experiment based on geographic variation in WGT signal reception across East Germany, they test whether access to foreign mass media served as a coordination device for anti-regime protests. Contrary to widely held beliefs, the study finds no robust evidence that WGT facilitated protest activity, challenging dominant narratives about the role of foreign media in transitions to democracy.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on theories of revolutionary collective action, particularly models of informational cascades, which posit that access to credible information can overcome collective action problems by altering individuals' perceptions of political opportunities. In authoritarian regimes, foreign media are often viewed as vital channels for disseminating information about regime vulnerability and protest success. This theoretical perspective suggests that WGT, by broadcasting news of anti-regime protests, could have provided East Germans with critical informational cues to coordinate collective action. The study questions this assumption by proposing that the mobilizing effects of mass media may be contingent on additional factors, such as interpersonal networks or the salience of local grievances, which may supersede the influence of media alone.
8. **Methods:** The study leverages a natural experiment created by geographic and topographic variation in WGT signal reception. Using a detailed dataset of 2,734 protest events during the East German revolution, the authors employ Cox proportional hazards models to estimate the likelihood of protest events at the county level. Covariates include socioeconomic indicators, historical patterns of collective action, and relative deprivation measures. Spatial and temporal dependencies are accounted for through the inclusion of spatial lag variables and repeated-events modeling. Signal strength data from WGT transmission towers were used to classify counties as having or lacking WGT access, ensuring robust identification of treatment effects.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize:
  - Counties with WGT access are more likely to experience protests due to increased awareness of anti-regime activities.
  - The effect of WGT access diminishes over time as local media become more independent and able to report on protests.
- Neither hypothesis is supported. WGT access shows no significant effect on protest likelihood, even during the early stages of the revolution.
10. **Main findings:** The analysis reveals no statistically significant relationship between WGT access and the likelihood or timing of protest events. Even when accounting for spatial diffusion processes and temporal heterogeneity, WGT's effect remains negligible. The findings suggest that interpersonal networks, rather than mass media, were likely the primary mechanisms of protest mobilization. The results challenge the assumption that foreign mass media play a decisive role in fostering revolutionary collective action, particularly in authoritarian contexts.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The evidence presented here does not support the widely accepted 'fact' that West German television served as a coordination device for antiregime protests during the East German revolution" (p. 270).
  - "Our finding that WGT had no discernible impact on protests during the East German revolution raises the question of how protest was mobilized and spread so swiftly across East Germany" (p. 281).
  - "In many respects, WGT in East Germany was a 'most likely' case for the impact of foreign media on anti-regime collective action in authoritarian regimes. Yet given our inability to find empirical support for this claim, we are somewhat wary of broad claims that communication technology can facilitate collective action in other cases" (p. 281).

### 2.11.5 Assessing Contextual Measurement Strategies

Velez, Y. R., & Wong, G. (2017). Assessing Contextual Measurement Strategies [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(3), 1084–1089. <https://doi.org/10.1086/691281>

1. **Citation key:** velez\_assessing\_2017
2. **Author(s):** Yamil Ricardo Velez and Grace Wong
3. **Year:** 2017
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** contextual effects, personalized measures, racial attitudes, census-based measures, subjective context
6. **Summary:** Velez and Wong investigate the efficacy of personalized contextual measures in capturing perceptions of local area demographics compared to traditional census-based measures. Using two novel personalized measurement strategies, the authors assess whether subjective perceptions of racial and demographic composition align more closely with user-defined boundaries or traditional administrative units like zip codes and counties. Their findings challenge the assumption that personalized measures are inherently superior, demonstrating that census-based measures often outperform personalized approaches in explaining subjective perceptions.
7. **Theory:** The authors frame their study within the broader literature on contextual effects, which examines how environmental factors shape individual political attitudes and behaviors. They argue that perceptions of context are critical mediators of contextual effects, with accurate measurement being essential for understanding these processes. Building on theories of social interaction and environmental determinism, the authors propose that personalized measures—such as user-drawn boundaries or frequently visited locations—may provide a more nuanced representation of individuals' lived experiences. However, they hypothesize that personalized measures may also introduce measurement error due to subjective biases and variability in how individuals perceive and define their environments. The study interrogates the trade-offs between the theoretical appeal of personalized measures and their empirical robustness, highlighting the potential for census-based measures to capture systematic patterns of demographic perception more effectively.
8. **Methods:** The study uses data from two surveys conducted on Amazon's Mechanical Turk in 2015 and 2016, with a combined sample of 1,700 respondents. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two personalized measurement tasks: a community-drawing task where respondents delineated the boundaries of their local community, or a location-based task where respondents identified frequently visited locations. Both tasks collected demographic data on racial composition, socioeconomic status, and other variables within the specified areas. These personalized measures were compared to census-based measures aggregated at the county and zip code tabulation area (ZCTA) levels. Standardized regression models were employed to evaluate the alignment between subjective perceptions and both personalized and census-based measures, with additional robustness checks using beta regression and random-intercept models.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize:
  - Personalized measures will align more closely with subjective perceptions of local demographics compared to census-based measures.
  - Census-based measures, despite their limitations, will still capture substantial variation in subjective perceptions due to their ability to aggregate broader patterns of demographic composition.
 The hypotheses are partially rejected, as census-based measures consistently outperform personalized measures in predicting subjective perceptions of racial and ethnic composition.
10. **Main findings:** Velez and Wong find that census-based measures generally outperform personalized measures in explaining subjective perceptions of local area demographics. While personalized measures offer high face validity, they exhibit significant variability and often fail to track perceptions as accurately as ZCTA or county-level data. The study reveals that subjective perceptions are influenced by factors beyond physical proximity, such as media consumption and social networks, which census-based measures may inadvertently capture. These results suggest that the contextual literature should remain cautious about privileging personalized measures without addressing their inherent limitations, such as heterogeneity in individual perceptions and the potential for measurement error.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Our findings indicate that census-based measures are often superior to personalized measures in capturing subjective perceptions of local area demographics, despite the intuitive appeal of user-defined contexts" (p. 1087).
  - "The results underscore the importance of integrating structured measures into studies of contextual effects, as purely personalized approaches may omit critical information about individuals' social environments" (p. 1088).
  - "This study highlights a fundamental tension in contextual research: the trade-off between capturing personalized experiences and maintaining empirical reliability through standardized measures" (p. 1089).

### 2.11.6 Demography, Politics, and Partisan Polarization in the United States, 1828 - 2016

Darmofal, D., & Strickler, R. (2019, January). *Demography, Politics, and Partisan Polarization in the United States, 1828–2016* [Google-Books-ID: PCKEDwAAQBAJ]. Springer

1. **Citation key:** darmofal\_demography\_2019
2. **Author(s):** David Darmofal and Ryan Strickler
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** Springer, Cham, Switzerland

5. **Keywords:** spatial demography, partisan polarization, electoral geography, Moran's I, spatial econometrics
6. **Summary:** Darmofal and Strickler examine the historical evolution of partisan polarization in the United States, focusing on spatial patterns in electoral geography from 1828 to 2016. The book employs advanced spatial analytic techniques to assess the clustering and polarization of voting behaviors across U.S. counties. By integrating historical data and spatial econometric methods, the authors investigate the interplay between demographic factors and political outcomes over nearly two centuries. They emphasize that spatial polarization has long historical roots, reflecting demographic, economic, and cultural divides that continue to shape contemporary electoral dynamics.
7. **Theory:** The book's central theoretical premise is that spatial polarization in voting patterns reflects broader demographic and socioeconomic divides. Building on theories of spatial diffusion and environmental determinism, the authors argue that geographic clustering of partisan preferences arises from both historical patterns of settlement and contemporary demographic shifts. They highlight the enduring significance of race, migration, and urbanization in shaping these patterns. The authors contend that partisan polarization is not merely a contemporary phenomenon but a long-term process influenced by structural factors such as economic inequality and cultural cleavages. They also challenge deterministic views by suggesting that political institutions and campaign strategies play mediating roles in reinforcing or attenuating spatial divides.
8. **Methods:** Darmofal and Strickler use a variety of spatial analytic tools, including Moran's I and Anselin's LISA, to quantify spatial clustering in presidential election outcomes. The analysis spans all U.S. presidential elections from 1828 to 2016, leveraging county-level voting data. Spatial econometric models are employed to test hypotheses about the influence of demographic variables, including racial composition, foreign-born populations, and population density, on partisan clustering. The book also incorporates historical narrative and cartographic analysis to contextualize quantitative findings. Data visualization, including maps and statistical graphs, is used to illustrate spatial patterns and trends, though some limitations in map presentation are noted (e.g., lack of color differentiation).
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize:
  - Spatial polarization in partisan voting is shaped by demographic factors, with greater clustering in regions characterized by racial and ethnic homogeneity.
  - Urban-rural divides have intensified over time, contributing to greater spatial polarization in recent decades.
  - Spatial diffusion processes historically facilitated partisan clustering but have become less significant, with spatial error playing a larger role in recent elections.

The findings partially support these hypotheses, showing strong demographic influences on spatial polarization but highlighting variability across different historical periods.
10. **Main findings:** The analysis reveals that spatial polarization in U.S. presidential voting patterns has fluctuated significantly over time, with notable increases in recent decades driven by demographic and economic changes. Key trends include the intensification of urban-rural divides and the persistent influence of race on voting patterns. The authors find that African American population density and foreign-born populations are significant predictors of partisan clustering in most historical periods. However, their results also suggest that spatial diffusion processes have declined in importance, replaced by more localized drivers of polarization. The authors conclude that while spatial polarization is not a novel phenomenon, its recent manifestations reflect heightened demographic segmentation and political sorting.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Spatial polarization:* The geographic clustering of partisan preferences, where regions become increasingly homogeneous in their support for a particular political party.
  - *Moran's I:* A measure of spatial autocorrelation that quantifies the degree of clustering in spatial data.
  - *Spatial diffusion:* The process by which political attitudes or behaviors spread geographically through interpersonal networks or shared media environments.
  - *Spatial econometrics:* A set of statistical techniques used to analyze spatial data, accounting for spatial dependence and heterogeneity.
  - *Urban-rural divide:* The political and cultural differences between urban and rural areas, often reflected in voting patterns and policy preferences.

#### 2.11.7 Race and Poverty Matters: Black and Latino Linked Fate, Neighborhood Effects, and Political Participation

Shaw, T. C., Foster, K. A., & Combs, B. H. (2019). Race and poverty matters: Black and Latino linked fate, neighborhood effects, and political participation. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 7(3), 663–672. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2019.1638800>

1. **Citation key:** shaw\_race\_2019
2. **Author(s):** Todd C. Shaw, Kirk A. Foster, and Barbara Harris Combs
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** Politics, Groups, and Identities
5. **Keywords:** linked fate, neighborhood effects, poverty, political participation, racial and ethnic identity
6. **Summary:** Shaw, Foster, and Combs investigate how race, poverty, and neighborhood social ties influence political participation among Black and Latino communities. Using data from the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Study (CMPS), the authors examine the roles of linked fate and contextual poverty in shaping civic engagement. They find that while neighborhood poverty significantly depresses Latino political participation, it has no significant impact

on Black participation. Additionally, linked fate emerges as a strong motivator for both groups, while frequent face-to-face neighbor interactions also foster engagement.

**7. Theory:** The authors draw on Michael Dawson's "Black Utility Heuristic" and Cathy Cohen and Michael Dawson's work on neighborhood poverty to theorize that political participation is shaped by both broad group consciousness and localized contextual factors. Linked fate—the perception that individual well-being is tied to the group's status—is theorized to motivate political participation by fostering a sense of shared purpose among racial and ethnic communities. However, the authors also posit that high levels of neighborhood poverty can inhibit political engagement by diminishing residents' political efficacy and access to resources. They further argue that social networks and face-to-face neighbor interactions may counteract the demobilizing effects of poverty by providing interpersonal encouragement and a sense of community.

**8. Methods:** The study uses the Black ( $n = 3,102$ ) and Latino ( $n = 3,003$ ) subsamples of the 2016 CMPS dataset. The dependent variable is a composite measure of political participation, including voting, contacting officials, attending community meetings, donating to campaigns, and discussing politics. Key independent variables include measures of linked fate, neighborhood poverty (categorized into three levels: 11–20%, 21–30%, and 31%+ poverty), and social ties (frequency of talking to neighbors). The authors apply ordinary least squares (OLS) regression and interaction models to test the relationships between these variables while controlling for demographics, income, and education.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- H1: Neighborhood poverty is negatively associated with political participation for Black and Latino respondents.
- H2: Linked fate is positively associated with political participation for Black and Latino respondents.
- H3: Frequent neighbor interactions positively influence political participation for both groups.
- H4: The interaction between linked fate and high neighborhood poverty negatively impacts political participation.

Findings partially confirm these hypotheses, with significant variation between Black and Latino experiences.

**10. Main findings:** The study reveals that neighborhood poverty significantly depresses Latino political participation but has no significant effect on Black participation. This divergence is attributed to differing historical and structural contexts, including Latino communities' heightened experiences of economic segregation. Linked fate is a strong positive predictor of political engagement for both groups, reinforcing the idea that group consciousness motivates civic action. Frequent interactions with neighbors also emerge as significant, suggesting that localized social networks play a crucial role in mobilization. However, the interaction between linked fate and high neighborhood poverty is significant only for Latinos, where it sharply decreases participation. This suggests that poverty undermines the mobilizing potential of linked fate for Latino respondents more than for Black respondents.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Linked fate has positive and statistically significant effects upon Black and Latino/a political participation, which reinforces Dawson's [1994] previous findings" (p. 663).
- "Neighborhood poverty has strong and negative effects for Latinos, but it does not for African Americans. These are the first indications that the contemporary participation effects of concentrated poverty vary (and conceivably greatly vary) for these two groups" (p. 666).
- "We conclude that as race and poverty continue to matter in shaping the quality of Black and Latino civic and citizen engagement it is critically important to think about both the global and neighborhood-level resources available to challenging racial and economic barriers" (p. 670).

### 2.11.8 Defining Racial and Ethnic Context with Geolocation Data

Moore, R. T., & Reeves, A. (2020). Defining racial and ethnic context with geolocation data. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 8(4), 780–794. <https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2020.10>

1. **Citation key:** moore\_defining\_2020
2. **Author(s):** Ryan T. Moore and Andrew Reeves
3. **Year:** 2020
4. **Publication:** Political Science Research and Methods
5. **Keywords:** contextual effects, geolocation data, racial and ethnic context, static measures, dynamic measures
6. **Summary:** Moore and Reeves examine the limitations of traditional static measures of racial and ethnic context, which rely on predefined geographic containers such as census tracts or counties, and propose dynamic geolocation data as an alternative. Using a dataset of over 2.6 million GPS records from 446 individuals, they demonstrate how static measures systematically misrepresent individual experiences of racial and ethnic environments. The study highlights the potential of geolocation data to improve the precision of contextual analysis, particularly in understanding how racial and ethnic milieus shape political behaviors and attitudes.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that racial and ethnic contexts are better understood as dynamic experiences rather than static attributes tied to a fixed geographic unit. Static measures, such as county or census tract averages, often fail to capture the daily movements and interactions that define an individual's lived context. Drawing on theories of spatial segregation and social interaction, they suggest that traditional methods overstate the homogeneity or heterogeneity of racial contexts by assuming uniform exposure within geographic boundaries. The authors emphasize that dynamic measures, derived from GPS data, align more closely with the fluid nature of individual experiences and provide a more accurate framework for analyzing the relationship between racial context and political outcomes.

**8. Methods:** The study uses GPS data collected from 446 participants via the OpenPaths mobile application, covering an average of 364.4 days per individual. These data are matched with census block demographics to calculate population-weighted averages of the racial and ethnic composition of areas participants traversed. Dynamic measures of context are compared to traditional static measures at various geographic levels, including census blocks, tracts, and counties. Statistical analyses focus on the divergence between static and dynamic measures, using regression models to quantify the bias introduced by static measures.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- H1: Static geographic measures systematically misrepresent the racial and ethnic contexts individuals experience.
- H2: Dynamic measures derived from geolocation data provide a more accurate representation of individuals' racial and ethnic milieus.
- H3: Differences between static and dynamic measures vary across geographic levels, with higher misrepresentation at larger scales (e.g., county level).

The findings support these hypotheses, revealing significant discrepancies between static and dynamic measures, particularly at broader geographic scales.

**10. Main findings:** Moore and Reeves find that static measures consistently misrepresent the racial and ethnic contexts experienced by individuals, often exaggerating the extremes of homogeneity or diversity. Dynamic measures derived from GPS data capture a more nuanced picture of contextual experiences, highlighting substantial within-unit heterogeneity even at the census block level. The analysis shows that static measures tend to underestimate diversity in predominantly homogeneous areas and overstate it in diverse regions. These findings underscore the importance of adopting dynamic geolocation-based methods in contextual research to better align empirical measures with theoretical concepts of milieu.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Static geographic measures are poor proxies for individuals' dynamic experiences, systematically misrepresenting their exposure to racial and ethnic diversity" (p. 787).
- "Our findings demonstrate that even the lowest level of static geography, the census block, fails to capture the heterogeneity of experiences individuals have as they move through space" (p. 789).
- "By leveraging geolocation data, we provide a more precise and theoretically grounded measure of context, offering new insights into how racial and ethnic environments influence political behavior" (p. 790).

### 2.11.9 Measuring the Rural Continuum in Political Science

Nemerever, Z., & Rogers, M. (2021). Measuring the Rural Continuum in Political Science. *Political Analysis*, 29(3), 267–286. <https://doi.org/10.1017/pan.2020.47>

**1. Citation key:** nemerever\_measuring\_2021

**2. Author(s):** Zoe Nemerever and Melissa Rogers

**3. Year:** 2021

**4. Publication:** Political Analysis

**5. Keywords:** measurement validity, rurality, political geography, MAUP, urban-rural divide

**6. Summary:** Nemerever and Rogers examine the conceptual and empirical challenges of defining and measuring rurality in political science research. They highlight the limitations of static geographic indicators and propose strategies for improving the construct validity of rural measures. By introducing a dataset on urban-rural classifications for U.S. state legislative districts, the authors demonstrate how variations in measurement approaches can influence substantive findings. Their work underscores the importance of methodological rigor in analyzing rural contexts to enhance our understanding of political behavior and geographic divides.

**7. Theory:** The authors argue that rurality is a complex construct that cannot be adequately captured by traditional static geographic measures, such as counties or census tracts, which often oversimplify or misrepresent the lived experiences of rural populations. They emphasize the importance of aligning the measurement unit with the theoretical concept of rurality, whether it pertains to population density, economic structure, or cultural identity. Additionally, they discuss the modifiable areal unit problem (MAUP), which highlights how geographic boundaries and scales affect measurement precision. The authors contend that failing to consider these nuances can lead to misleading conclusions about rural politics and exacerbate misconceptions about urban-rural divides.

**8. Methods:** The study introduces a dataset of rural-urban commuting area (RUCA) codes assigned to state legislative districts, employing three classification methods: probabilistic assignment, population-weighted averages, and plurality-based assignment. The dataset is applied to replicate two prior studies: Flavin and Franko (2020) on economic segregation and policy responsiveness and Mummolo and Nall (2017) on rural identity. Through these applications, the authors illustrate the sensitivity of empirical findings to different rural measurement strategies. They also provide robustness checks using alternative geographic classifications, such as counties, ZIP code tabulation areas (ZCTAs), and census tracts.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- H1: Traditional static measures of rurality fail to capture the heterogeneity of rural experiences.
- H2: The choice of geographic unit and classification scheme significantly influences empirical results in rural politics research.
- H3: Self-identified rurality differs substantially from objective geographic classifications.

These hypotheses are supported by the replication analyses and comparisons across measurement strategies.

10. **Main findings:** Nemerever and Rogers demonstrate that traditional geographic measures, such as counties or metropolitan classifications, mask significant variation in rural experiences and fail to align with theoretical concepts of rurality. The dataset they introduce improves measurement precision, revealing the limitations of earlier studies. For example, they show that Flavin and Franko's (2020) findings on rural representation are highly sensitive to the choice of rural classification, with key results becoming statistically insignificant when more refined measures are used. Similarly, their analysis of Mumolo and Nall (2017) highlights the discrepancy between self-identified rurality and objective geographic classifications, emphasizing the need for tailored measurement approaches in studying rural identity.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "The modifiable areal unit problem (MAUP) underscores the importance of choosing measurement units that align with theoretical concepts, as geographic boundaries and scales can distort findings" (p. 270).
- "Static geographic measures are poor proxies for individuals' dynamic experiences, systematically misrepresenting their exposure to rurality" (p. 272).
- "Our analysis reveals that self-identified rurality often diverges from geographic classifications, challenging assumptions about the relationship between place and political identity" (p. 282).

#### 2.11.10 The Urban-Rural Divide and Residential Contentment as Antecedents of Political Ideology

Gimpel, J. G., & Reeves, A. (2024). The urban-rural divide and residential contentment as antecedents of political ideology. *Cities*, 146, 104720. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2023.104720>

1. **Citation key:** gimpel\_urban-rural\_2024
2. **Author(s):** James G. Gimpel and Andrew Reeves
3. **Year:** 2024
4. **Publication:** Cities
5. **Keywords:** urban-rural divide, place attachment, political ideology, contentment, grievance, partisan polarization
6. **Summary:** Gimpel and Reeves investigate how variations in residential contentment and place attachment contribute to ideological differences between urban and rural areas. Drawing on survey data spanning over a decade, they argue that dissatisfaction with one's locale predicts progressive policy preferences, while satisfaction aligns with conservatism. The study sheds light on the urban-rural divide in political attitudes, emphasizing the role of subjective attachment to place as a mediator of ideological orientation.
7. **Theory:** The authors posit that place attachment—a measure of contentment, satisfaction, and identification with one's residence—is a key determinant of political ideology. They argue that urban residents, who report lower levels of place attachment, are more likely to support progressive policies and parties advocating government intervention to address grievances like housing affordability, safety, and infrastructure. Conversely, rural residents, who exhibit higher levels of contentment, favor conservative policies aimed at preserving the status quo. The theory integrates sociological perspectives on alienation and discontent, suggesting that the higher density and heterogeneity of urban areas amplify grievances, leading to greater demands for political and policy change. This framework challenges simplistic demographic explanations of the urban-rural divide, emphasizing the importance of subjective perceptions of place.
8. **Methods:** The study utilizes data from seven waves of the Cooperative Election Study (CES) conducted between 2006 and 2020, supplemented by ZIP-code-level contextual data. Place attachment is measured using a six-item scale capturing respondents' satisfaction and connection to their residential environment. The authors employ ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to assess the relationship between place attachment and political ideology, controlling for demographic and socioeconomic covariates, including race, age, income, education, homeownership, and religious attendance. Contextual variables such as population density, proximity to metropolitan areas, and local economic conditions are also included to account for environmental influences.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - H1: Place attachment is inversely related to support for progressive policies and liberal ideology.
  - H2: Urban residents exhibit lower levels of place attachment compared to rural residents.
  - H3: The relationship between place attachment and political ideology persists after controlling for demographic and socioeconomic factors.

The hypotheses are confirmed, with the findings demonstrating robust associations between place attachment, urban-rural residence, and political ideology.

10. **Main findings:** The analysis reveals that place attachment significantly predicts political ideology, with lower attachment correlating with more liberal views. Urban residents report lower levels of place attachment due to factors like density, diversity, and socioeconomic challenges, driving greater support for progressive policies. In contrast, rural residents, who are more content with their surroundings, favor conservative approaches emphasizing stability and limited government intervention. The authors find that while demographic and economic factors partially explain these patterns, the subjective experience of place attachment provides additional explanatory power. The study underscores the role of geographic and emotional context in shaping political preferences, highlighting the persistence of the urban-rural divide across diverse settings.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Discontent with one’s place of residence fuels demands for political change... contentment, on the other hand, is predictive of politically conservative viewpoints” (p. 2).
- “Place attachment is a measure of contentment with the current situation at the location of residence... grievances that surface in policy demands are likely to originate well outside one’s control” (p. 6).
- “Rural and small-town residents are happier with the places they live, consistently more so than those living in densely packed cities. We should not be surprised that they want to keep things as they are rather than demand change” (p. 11).

### 2.11.11 Are Rural Attitudes Just Republican?

Lin, J., & Trujillo, K. L. (2024). Are rural attitudes just Republican? *Political Science Research and Methods*, 12(3), 675–684. <https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2023.48>

- 1. Citation key:** lin\_are\_2024
- 2. Author(s):** Jennifer Lin and Kristin Lunz Trujillo
- 3. Year:** 2024
- 4. Publication:** Political Science Research and Methods
- 5. Keywords:** urban-rural divide, partisanship, political attitudes, rural Democrats, ideological polarization
- 6. Summary:** Lin and Trujillo investigate whether rural political attitudes reflect unique geographic interests or simply mirror partisan divides. Using data from the 2020 American National Election Study (ANES), the authors examine issue stances across 22 national policy questions. Their findings reveal that most urban-rural differences in attitudes are partisan, with rural Democrats and urban Republicans closely resembling their respective partisan counterparts. However, rural Democrats display more conservative tendencies on specific issues such as immigration, transgender military service, and income inequality, indicating that rurality may amplify certain conservative attitudes within the Democratic coalition.
- 7. Theory:** The authors propose that political attitudes are increasingly nationalized, with partisanship overshadowing geographic context in shaping issue stances. Drawing on theories of partisan identity and geographic sorting, they argue that the urban-rural divide is less about place-based interests and more about the spatial distribution of partisanship. However, they also acknowledge that rurality may exert unique contextual influences, particularly on issues like immigration and income inequality, where local economic and cultural dynamics play a role. The study challenges the assumption that rural attitudes are inherently Republican, highlighting the significant presence of rural Democrats whose positions often align with urban Democrats, except on issues tied to rural-specific experiences and values.
- 8. Methods:** The study analyzes data from the 2020 ANES, a nationally representative survey of 8,280 respondents. Participants were categorized by self-reported place of residence (urban, suburban, small town, or rural) and partisanship (Democrat or Republican). Place of residence was dichotomized into urban and rural categories for analysis, and partisanship was divided into four groups: Urban Democrats, Rural Democrats, Urban Republicans, and Rural Republicans. The authors conducted descriptive and regression analyses, controlling for demographic variables such as age, gender, education, income, racial resentment, and church attendance. They focused on 22 policy issues to assess urban-rural differences within each partisan group.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - H1: Rural Democrats will be significantly more conservative than urban Democrats on political issue stances, controlling for other factors.
  - H2: Urban Republicans will be significantly more liberal than rural Republicans on political issue stances, controlling for other factors.
  - H3: The majority of urban-rural differences in issue stances are driven by partisanship rather than geographic context.

The results partially confirm these hypotheses, with limited but notable exceptions for rural Democrats on certain issues.
- 10. Main findings:** Lin and Trujillo find that urban-rural differences in issue stances are primarily partisan, with minimal divergence within each party across geographic contexts. For most issues, rural Democrats align closely with urban Democrats, and rural Republicans mirror urban Republicans. However, rural Democrats exhibit more conservative attitudes on immigration, transgender military service, and income inequality, suggesting that rural-specific economic and cultural factors influence these positions. Urban Republicans show no significant deviations from rural Republicans on any issue. The findings challenge the stereotype of rural America as uniformly Republican, emphasizing the diversity of political attitudes within rural areas.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “Rural issue attitudes are therefore not necessarily Republican attitudes; rather, rural issue attitudes tend to be partisan attitudes” (p. 676).
  - “These results imply that, for national policy stances, rural attitudes are not necessarily Republican attitudes...the broader public should not underestimate the prevalence of rural Democrats and urban Republicans” (p. 678).
  - “The exceptions to our main finding are attitudes toward immigration, income equality, and transgender rights, where rural Democrats are more conservative than their urban counterparts” (p. 682).

### 2.11.12 Feeling Out of Place: Who Are the Non-Rural Rural Identifiers, and Are They Unique Politically?

Lunz Trujillo, K. (2024). Feeling Out of Place: Who Are the Non-Rural Rural Identifiers, and Are They Unique Politically? *Political Behavior*, 46(4), 2215–2239. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-024-09915-z>

1. Citation key: lunz\_trujillo\_feeling\_2024
2. Author(s): Kristin Lunz Trujillo
3. Year: 2024
4. Publication: Political Behavior
5. Keywords: rural identity, social identity theory, urban-rural divide, group-based affect, political behavior
6. Summary: This study explores the phenomenon of non-rural rural identifiers, individuals who identify with rural values and lifestyles despite living in non-rural areas. Using data from the 2020 American National Election Study (ANES), 2019 ANES, and original YouGov surveys, the author demonstrates that rural identity is not strictly tied to residence but stems from shared group-based affect and perceived values. The findings reveal that these identifiers exhibit similar political and attitudinal tendencies as rural residents, emphasizing the significance of identity-based explanations for political behavior.
7. Theory: Grounded in Social Identity Theory (SIT), the study proposes that group identification is a psychological process where individuals adopt norms and affective ties associated with a group, even in the absence of formal membership. Rural identity, defined as an emotional and value-based affiliation with rural areas, can emerge from either direct socialization in rural areas or alignment with rural norms and lifestyles. This identification fosters positive in-group affect and negative out-group affect, particularly against urban areas. The theory challenges conventional notions that political attitudes are purely shaped by geography, suggesting instead that identity-driven attachments play a critical role. It further argues that the urban-rural divide in political attitudes may be more reflective of perceived identity than physical residence.
8. Methods: The analysis employs three datasets: the 2020 ANES, the 2019 ANES, and a three-wave YouGov survey. Rural identity is operationalized through binary and scaled measures of self-reported rural identification and its importance. The study uses descriptive statistics, OLS, and logistic regressions to examine how rural identity correlates with affective, values-based, and political variables. Controls include demographic factors such as age, race, income, gender, education, and regional residence. Interaction terms are tested to assess whether rural identity's effects vary by rural residency.
9. Hypotheses:
  - H1: Rural identity is more prevalent among individuals currently living in or socialized in rural areas than those without such experiences.
  - H2: Rural identifiers exhibit higher levels of rural group-based affect and values, regardless of residency.
  - H3: Rural identifiers demonstrate consistent right-leaning political tendencies across various measures, irrespective of location.
 All hypotheses are supported, confirming the significance of rural identity in shaping political attitudes beyond geographic boundaries.
10. Main findings: Rural identity strongly predicts conservative attitudes, rural resentment, and traditional moral values, with little variation between rural and non-rural residents who identify as rural. Non-rural rural identifiers are demographically similar to their rural counterparts, though slightly younger and more likely to reside in the South or West. These identifiers exhibit greater in-group affect and heightened resentment toward urban areas. The study also finds that rural identity correlates with lower support for multiculturalism and higher levels of racial resentment. These results suggest that rural identity functions as a significant determinant of political attitudes, independent of geographic residence.
11. Key quotations:
  - "Rural identifiers, regardless of where they live, share similar political tendencies and group-based affect, demonstrating that rural identity transcends physical geography" (p. 2225).
  - "Non-rural rural identifiers likely emerge from two paths: either socialization in rural areas or psychological affiliation with rural norms and values" (p. 2226).
  - "These findings challenge the idea that rural identity is strictly place-based, revealing its broader relevance to political behavior and identity politics" (p. 2234).

## 2.12 The Media

### 2.12.1 Subject Area Summary

- Overview: Research on the interplay between the media and political behavior emphasizes the media's powerful role in shaping public opinion, political evaluations, and democratic engagement. Foundational works have examined agenda-setting, priming, framing, and impersonal influence to reveal how mass communication not only reflects but also constructs political reality. Advances in media studies highlight the complex relationships between elite media narratives, grassroots public opinion, and interpersonal discussions, with attention to the evolving nature of media consumption in a fragmented and partisan environment.
- Agenda-Setting and Priming: Iyengar and Kinder's *News That Matters* (1987) demonstrated how television news shapes public concern through agenda-setting and primes evaluative standards for political leaders. Their experimental studies reveal that media emphasize certain issues, elevating their salience, and influence the criteria used to assess

political actors. Findings confirm that politically uninvolved individuals are most susceptible to agenda-setting, while priming aligns with partisan predispositions. These effects underscore television news as a force structuring political perceptions and evaluations.

- **Media and Political Discussion:** Mondak's (1995) analysis of the 1992 Pittsburgh newspaper strike highlights how the absence of local media disrupts political discussion, reducing voter engagement and increasing reliance on interpersonal cues. His study challenges the binary framing of media and discussion as substitutes, demonstrating their complementary roles in information dissemination. Media provide the topics that animate discourse, while interpersonal discussion supplements media coverage in contexts where access is limited.
- **Elite Media and Public Deliberation:** Page's *Who Deliberates?* (1996) critiques elite-dominated media as both a forum for public debate and a tool of elite influence. Using case studies of the Persian Gulf War and the Zoe Baird nomination, Page illustrates the dual role of the media in reflecting elite preferences while occasionally responding to grassroots pressures. He argues that public opinion can challenge media narratives when deeply held values are at stake, revealing a dynamic interaction between media and democratic deliberation.
- **Impersonal Influence:** Diana Mutz (1998) theorized impersonal influence as a distinct mechanism where individuals form political judgments based on perceptions of collective experiences or opinions conveyed through media. Mutz's findings suggest that media portrayals of aggregate trends often outweigh personal experiences in shaping attitudes, highlighting the role of mediated communication in broadening individuals' perspectives. However, the effects of impersonal influence are moderated by political sophistication and media literacy.
- **Televised Discourse and Polarization:** Mutz's (2007) research on "in-your-face" televised political discourse examines how incivility and close-up perspectives intensify polarization by reducing the perceived legitimacy of opposition. Experimental studies reveal that while uncivil debates heighten awareness of oppositional arguments, they undermine mutual respect essential for democratic deliberation. The findings underscore the double-edged nature of media in educating the public while exacerbating divisions.
- **Campaign Dynamics and Media Interdependence:** Box-Steffensmeier et al. (2009) propose that campaigns are dynamic systems where elites, media, and citizens influence one another in real time. Time-series analysis of the 2000 U.S. presidential campaign shows reciprocal effects, with media shaping voter preferences and responding to elite activity. These findings challenge unidirectional models of media influence, highlighting the interdependent nature of campaign dynamics.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Current research addresses the implications of digital media, partisan news, and media fragmentation for political behavior. Studies explore how sustained exposure to out-party media reduces polarization, while partisan media consumption reinforces ideological divides. Emerging questions focus on the effects of algorithm-driven content, the resilience of cross-cutting discourse, and strategies to foster democratic deliberation in polarized media environments. Future research will likely deepen our understanding of media's evolving role in shaping political cognition, behavior, and institutional trust.

### 2.12.2 News That Matters: Television and American Opinion

Iyengar, S., & Kinder, D. R. (1987). *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion* [Google-Books-ID: mvRM9mEDkn0C]. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** iyengar\_news\_1987
2. **Author(s):** Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder
3. **Year:** 1987
4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press
5. **Keywords:** agenda-setting, priming, television news, public opinion, media effects
6. **Summary:** In *News That Matters*, Iyengar and Kinder argue that television news significantly influences public opinion by shaping the public's political agenda and the criteria for political evaluations. They employ the concepts of agenda-setting, where media coverage determines the issues deemed important by the public, and priming, which alters the standards people use to evaluate political actors. The authors draw on 14 field experiments to support their claims, offering strong evidence of media effects on political perceptions and behavior.
7. **Theory:** Iyengar and Kinder propose that television news exerts a pervasive influence on public opinion through agenda-setting and priming. Agenda-setting occurs as media coverage elevates the perceived importance of certain issues, making them central to public concern. Priming extends this effect by reshaping the evaluative criteria used to assess political leaders, emphasizing the issues highlighted in news coverage. The authors argue that these effects are largely unintentional consequences of the news production process, where decisions about coverage inherently privilege certain topics over others. This perspective challenges the "minimal effects" paradigm, which long dominated media research, by demonstrating how selective coverage by television news actively constructs political reality for viewers. Furthermore, they posit that these media effects vary by audience characteristics, such as political awareness and party identification, highlighting the interplay between media content and individual predispositions.
8. **Methods:** Iyengar and Kinder conducted 14 controlled experiments in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and New Haven, Connecticut, using edited news broadcasts to manipulate the emphasis placed on specific topics like defense, unemployment, or inflation. In sequential experiments, participants viewed consecutive broadcasts with recurring coverage of a targeted issue, while in assemblage experiments, they watched collections of stories featuring a single theme. Participants completed surveys before and after viewing the broadcasts to measure changes in their perceptions of issue importance and evaluations of political leaders. The authors supplemented these experiments with correlational time-

series analyses, enhancing the generalizability of their findings. They explicitly designed their experiments to mimic real-world conditions, recruiting adult participants and using actual network news footage.

**9. Hypotheses:** Iyengar and Kinder hypothesize that:

- Agenda-setting occurs as increased media coverage of an issue elevates its perceived importance among viewers.
- Priming effects alter the evaluative criteria for political judgments based on the issues emphasized in news coverage.

Both hypotheses were confirmed, with experimental results showing significant shifts in participants' issue salience and evaluative standards consistent with media emphasis.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find robust evidence that television news influences public perceptions of issue importance and shapes political evaluations. For example, participants exposed to broadcasts emphasizing defense were significantly more likely to rate it as a critical national issue. Similarly, priming effects were observed as participants adjusted their assessments of presidential performance based on the topics highlighted in news coverage. These effects were most pronounced among politically uninvolved individuals for agenda-setting, whereas priming effects aligned with partisan predispositions, with Democrats and Republicans responding to different issue emphases. The study underscores television news as a powerful force in structuring political cognition and behavior.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Agenda-setting*: The process by which media coverage influences the perceived importance of issues, elevating their salience in the public consciousness.
- *Priming*: A media effect where emphasis on specific issues in news coverage alters the standards viewers use to evaluate political leaders and issues.
- *Issue salience*: The degree to which a particular topic or problem is viewed as important by the public, often shaped by media emphasis.
- *Political evaluations*: Judgments of political leaders or institutions, influenced by the criteria emphasized in media coverage.
- *Media effects*: The influence of media content on public opinion, attitudes, or behaviors, often through mechanisms like agenda-setting and priming.

### 2.12.3 Media Exposure and Political Discussion in U.S. Elections

Mondak, J. J. [Jeffrey J.]. (1995). Media Exposure and Political Discussion in U.S. Elections [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 57(1), 62–85. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2960271>

**1. Citation key:** mondak\_media\_1995

**2. Author(s):** Jeffrey J. Mondak

**3. Year:** 1995

**4. Publication:** Journal of Politics

**5. Keywords:** media exposure, political discussion, interpersonal influence, newspaper strike, electoral behavior

**6. Summary:** Mondak investigates the relationship between media exposure and political discussion by leveraging the unique quasi-experimental context of the 1992 Pittsburgh newspaper strike. The study explores how the absence of local newspapers influenced political discussion and its effects on voter behavior during the general election. The findings reveal that media exposure complements political discussion by providing the raw material for discourse, though it can also limit the influence of interpersonal discussions on electoral decisions when media access is robust.

**7. Theory:** Mondak posits that news media and interpersonal discussion are intertwined elements of the electoral information environment. Media exposure provides voters with critical information, which becomes the substance of political discourse. In a media-rich context, voters rely less on social networks for political cues, as they can access information directly from media sources. Conversely, in media-poor contexts, interpersonal discussions gain prominence as voters turn to discussants for guidance. The theory underscores a complementary relationship between media and discussion in terms of information exposure but highlights a potentially conflicting dynamic in their influence on vote choice. This nuanced view challenges the binary framing of media and discussion as either substitutes or independent influences in electoral decision-making.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a quasi-experimental design, comparing voter behavior and political discussion in Pittsburgh, where the 1992 newspaper strike disrupted local media access, to Cleveland, where newspapers remained available. Mondak conducted telephone surveys with 635 respondents across six congressional districts in these metropolitan areas. The survey included questions on media usage, political discussion, voter demographics, and electoral choices. Statistical analysis included t-tests and logistic regression to assess differences in media exposure, discussion frequency, and the effects of discussant partisanship on vote choice. The quasi-experimental manipulation—absence of local newspapers in Pittsburgh—served as a natural experiment to isolate the role of media in shaping political discussion and its electoral implications.

**9. Hypotheses:** Mondak hypothesizes:

- Media exposure fuels political discussion by providing content for interpersonal discourse.
- In media-poor contexts, the influence of political discussion on electoral decisions is greater than in media-rich contexts.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with results showing decreased discussion and greater discussant influence in Pittsburgh compared to Cleveland.

**10. Main findings:** The study reveals that media exposure and political discussion have a complementary relationship in terms of information dissemination, as newspapers provide the topics that animate political conversations. However, in Pittsburgh, where local newspapers were unavailable, voters discussed local congressional elections less frequently, underscoring the media's role in fueling political discourse. Despite reduced discussion, the absence of robust media coverage in Pittsburgh increased the influence of interpersonal discussions on vote choice, particularly in local House races. These findings suggest that media and discussion act as competing sources of electoral influence, with social cues gaining prominence in the absence of accessible media information.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Media exposure fuels political discussion, but that discussant effects on electoral choice are not influenced by the specific content of interpersonal discussion" (p. 62).
- "The lengthy Pittsburgh newspaper strike presents a unique opportunity for examination of the role of news media in U.S. elections" (p. 63).
- "News media and political discussion are neither mutually exclusive nor interchangeable. Instead, media coverage provides some of the subject matter for interpersonal political discourse" (p. 83).

#### 2.12.4 Who Deliberates? Mass Media in Modern Democracy

Page, B. I. (1996, June). *Who Deliberates?: Mass Media in Modern Democracy* [Google-Books-ID: 8l5vEdmtzL8C]. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** page\_who\_1996

2. **Author(s):** Benjamin I. Page

3. **Year:** 1996

4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press

5. **Keywords:** media deliberation, elite press, public opinion, policy debates, democratic participation

6. **Summary:** Page examines the dynamics of media influence on public deliberation and democratic decision-making, using case studies of major political events to illustrate how elite press outlets shape public discourse. Focusing on the Persian Gulf War, the Los Angeles riots, and Zoe Baird's failed attorney general nomination, he argues that while the press often reflects elite interests, the public can exert agency when core values are at stake. Page highlights the dual role of media as a forum for elite deliberation and as a mechanism through which public opinion can challenge elite narratives.

7. **Theory:** Page theorizes that media serve as a critical arena for public policy debates, where professional communicators—journalists, public officials, and experts—dominate. He contends that the elite press plays a dual role: it reflects and reinforces elite preferences while occasionally responding to grassroots public opinion. This framework challenges assumptions that media either manipulate or simply mirror public views, positing instead a dynamic interaction between elite narratives and public agency. Page's analysis underscores the media's role in constructing political reality, emphasizing how framing and agenda-setting shape the boundaries of public debate. Additionally, he argues that public opinion has the potential to override elite narratives in moments of significant value conflict.

8. **Methods:** The book employs qualitative content analysis of elite media coverage in three case studies: the Persian Gulf War, the Los Angeles riots, and Zoe Baird's nomination. Page analyzes editorials, op-eds, and other media content from major outlets like the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Washington Post*. He supplements this analysis with accounts of public reaction, particularly focusing on how grassroots discourse—such as talk radio—intersects with and challenges elite media narratives.

9. **Hypotheses:** Page hypothesizes:

- Elite media primarily reflect the preferences and frameworks of professional communicators.
- Public opinion can challenge and reshape media narratives when deeply held values are at stake.

These hypotheses are supported by evidence from the case studies, particularly the Zoe Baird case, where public outrage contradicted elite media narratives.

10. **Main findings:** Page concludes that elite media play a central role in framing public policy debates, often privileging perspectives aligned with elite interests. However, public opinion can serve as a corrective force, particularly in cases involving core values or moral conflicts. For instance, during the Persian Gulf War, media coverage largely mirrored official policy, while in the Zoe Baird case, grassroots opinion shaped the outcome. The analysis highlights the complex interplay between elite narratives and public agency, illustrating both the power and the limitations of media in democratic deliberation.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Elite press:* Major media outlets that shape national and international political discourse, often reflecting the interests of political and economic elites.
- *Deliberation:* The process of public debate and reasoning about policy issues, influenced by media narratives and framing.
- *Framing:* The presentation and interpretation of issues in media coverage, which shapes public perceptions and sets the boundaries of debate.
- *Grassroots opinion:* Public perspectives and reactions that emerge outside elite-controlled forums, often expressed through alternative channels like talk radio.
- *Professional communicators:* Individuals who dominate media discourse, including journalists, government offi-

cials, and policy experts.

#### 2.12.5 Impersonal Influence: How Perceptions of Mass Collectives Affect Political Attitudes

Mutz, D. C. (1998, November). *Impersonal Influence: How Perceptions of Mass Collectives Affect Political Attitudes* [Google-Books-ID: 9W3dJk4eYfoC]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** mutz\_impersonal\_1998
2. **Author(s):** Diana C. Mutz
3. **Year:** 1998
4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press
5. **Keywords:** impersonal influence, media effects, mass collectives, political attitudes, public opinion
6. **Summary:** In *Impersonal Influence*, Diana Mutz explores how perceptions of mass collectives—gathered largely through media—shape individual political attitudes and behavior. She examines how media portrayals of collective experiences and opinions influence personal judgments about political issues, public policies, and leaders. Mutz argues that while interpersonal interactions remain vital, media-facilitated impersonal influence has become increasingly central to modern political life, affecting perceptions of accountability and public evaluation of political figures.
7. **Theory:** Mutz's theory posits that the increasing reliance on mediated communication introduces a distinct form of influence: impersonal influence. This type of influence occurs when individuals form political judgments based not on personal experience or interpersonal interactions but on their perceptions of mass collective experiences and opinions. Mutz argues that impersonal influence operates through two mechanisms: perceptions of collective experience (e.g., the state of the economy) and perceptions of collective opinion (e.g., polling data or public sentiment). These perceptions often lead individuals to align their views with perceived societal norms or to reconsider their own positions. The theory emphasizes the media's role in shaping these perceptions, as mass communication frequently highlights aggregate statistics and collective narratives that individuals cannot observe firsthand.
8. **Methods:** Mutz employs a combination of experimental, quasi-experimental, and survey-based methodologies to examine the effects of impersonal influence. Her research includes analysis of media content trends, such as the increasing focus on collective experiences over individual stories, and experiments designed to test how exposure to aggregate information (e.g., polling data or news about national trends) affects individual attitudes. The book integrates findings from diverse empirical studies, including experiments assessing cognitive elaboration—where individuals process and evaluate impersonal information—and observational data on the relationship between media exposure and public perceptions of societal trends.
9. **Hypotheses:** Mutz hypothesizes:
  - Perceptions of collective experience, shaped largely by media, have a stronger influence on political attitudes than personal experiences.
  - Exposure to media portrayals of collective opinions leads individuals to engage in cognitive elaboration, affecting their own political beliefs and judgments.
 Both hypotheses are supported, demonstrating the significant role of media in shaping perceptions of societal norms and collective realities.
10. **Main findings:** Mutz finds that impersonal influence is a pervasive and powerful mechanism in modern democratic societies. Media portrayals of collective experiences, such as national unemployment rates, often outweigh personal experiences in shaping political evaluations. Similarly, perceptions of collective opinion—gathered from polling data or generalized media coverage—encourage individuals to reflect on broader societal trends and adjust their attitudes accordingly. However, she also highlights limitations, noting that political sophistication and media literacy moderate the effects of impersonal influence, with more politically engaged individuals better able to contextualize and critique media messages. Mutz concludes that while impersonal influence introduces challenges to accountability and informed citizenship, it also plays a critical role in broadening individuals' perspectives beyond their immediate environments.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Impersonal influence:* A form of influence derived from perceptions of mass collectives' experiences or opinions, primarily mediated through mass communication rather than direct interpersonal interactions.
  - *Perceptions of collective experience:* Judgments formed about societal trends or aggregate conditions, such as national economic performance, often based on media coverage.
  - *Perceptions of collective opinion:* Understanding of public sentiment or societal norms, typically informed by polling data or generalized media narratives.
  - *Cognitive elaboration:* The process through which individuals evaluate and integrate new information, particularly regarding collective trends or opinions, into their existing attitudes and beliefs.
  - *Media effects:* The influence of media content on individual perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, particularly in shaping impersonal influence.

#### 2.12.6 News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Politically Knowledgeable Citizens Are Guided by a Trusted Source

Miller, J. M., & Krosnick, J. A. (2000). News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Politically Knowledgeable Citizens Are Guided by a Trusted Source [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American*

*Journal of Political Science*, 44(2), 301–315. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2669312>

1. **Citation key:** miller\_news\_2000
2. **Author(s):** Joanne M. Miller and Jon A. Krosnick
3. **Year:** 2000
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** news media, priming, political knowledge, media trust, agenda setting
6. **Summary:** Miller and Krosnick examine how news media influence presidential evaluations by shaping the importance citizens assign to specific issues. They challenge traditional notions of media priming by demonstrating that political knowledge and trust in media are critical moderators of priming effects. Their findings suggest that media effects are more deliberative than automatic, as politically knowledgeable and trusting citizens consciously rely on media cues to evaluate the president's performance.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that priming occurs when media coverage of an issue increases its perceived national importance, influencing how citizens evaluate presidential performance. Unlike previous research, which attributes priming to automatic accessibility of issue-related information, Miller and Krosnick argue that priming results from inferences drawn by politically knowledgeable individuals who trust media. They contend that citizens use trusted media as a heuristic to identify nationally important issues, leading to a more conscious weighting of those issues in presidential evaluations. This theory repositions priming from an automatic cognitive process to a deliberative one moderated by trust and knowledge.
8. **Methods:** The study employs two experiments. In the first, participants were exposed to media stories on issues like drugs and immigration, with subsequent surveys assessing national importance, presidential evaluations, media trust, and political knowledge. The second experiment introduced additional issues (crime, pollution, and unemployment) and measured reaction times to evaluate the accessibility of issue-related information. Multivariate regression analyses tested the mediation of priming by national importance judgments and accessibility, as well as the moderating effects of political knowledge and trust.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Media priming is mediated by perceived national importance rather than accessibility of information.
  - Priming effects are strongest among individuals high in both political knowledge and media trust.

These hypotheses were largely supported, with evidence indicating that trust and knowledge significantly moderate priming, and that national importance judgments—not accessibility—mediate the effect.
10. **Main findings:** The study reveals that priming is not an automatic process driven by accessibility but rather a deliberative one influenced by political knowledge and trust in media. Media coverage increases the perceived national importance of issues, which in turn enhances their weight in presidential evaluations. However, priming effects are most pronounced among politically knowledgeable citizens who trust the media, suggesting that these individuals actively rely on media cues. Accessibility of information was not found to mediate priming, contradicting earlier assumptions.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Media trust plays a central role in regulating the magnitude of priming, highlighting the deliberate nature of this process among knowledgeable and trusting citizens" (p. 311).
  - "Priming and agenda setting are fundamentally linked, with agenda setting occurring first and sometimes leading to priming when national importance judgments are heightened by media coverage" (p. 312).
  - "Our results suggest that priming reflects choices made knowingly by the most competent, responsible citizens rather than manipulation of the most vulnerable segments of the electorate" (p. 313).

#### 2.12.7 Effects of "In-Your-Face" Television Discourse on Perceptions of a Legitimate Opposition

Mutz, D. C. (2007). Effects of "In-Your-Face" Television Discourse on Perceptions of a Legitimate Opposition. *American Political Science Review*, 101(4), 621–635. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305540707044X>

1. **Citation key:** mutz\_effects\_2007
2. **Author(s):** Diana C. Mutz
3. **Year:** 2007
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** televised discourse, incivility, legitimacy of opposition, polarization, emotional arousal
6. **Summary:** Mutz investigates how the incivility and close-up perspectives in televised political discourse influence public perceptions of the legitimacy of opposing political views. Through experimental studies, she demonstrates that while such discourse can increase awareness of oppositional arguments, it simultaneously intensifies polarization by reducing the perceived legitimacy of opposing perspectives. This "in-your-face" format of political engagement, common in television, underscores the double-edged role of media in fostering political awareness while also exacerbating divisiveness.
7. **Theory:** The study theorizes that televised political discourse has a dual impact: it enhances awareness of opposing views through exposure but undermines their legitimacy when delivered in a confrontational and intimate format. Incivility, combined with the visual closeness of participants, increases emotional arousal among viewers, which amplifies negative affect toward those with opposing views. Drawing on psychological theories of arousal and personal space, Mutz suggests that close-up, uncivil interactions mimic face-to-face confrontations, making viewers more hos-

tile to opposition. This hostility is compounded by the violation of norms of civility, which viewers expect in public discourse.

**8. Methods:** Mutz conducted three experiments. In the first, a Latin-square design exposed participants to televised political discussions that varied by civility (civil vs. uncivil) and camera perspective (close-up vs. medium shot). Physiological arousal was measured via skin conductance levels (SCL). The second experiment employed a larger sample and used post-test surveys to assess recall and perceived legitimacy of arguments. A control group watched nonpolitical content to establish a baseline. The third experiment tested the reproducibility of findings by exposing participants to civil and uncivil close-up conditions with new content. Measures included recall of arguments and feeling thermometer ratings of candidates.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Incivility and close-up perspectives increase viewers' emotional arousal.
- Emotional arousal enhances awareness of opposing arguments but reduces perceived legitimacy of oppositional perspectives, especially in uncivil conditions.
- Close-up perspectives amplify the effects of civility or incivility on perceptions of legitimacy.

All hypotheses were confirmed, indicating that while exposure to televised debates increased knowledge, the "in-your-face" format undermined the legitimacy of opposition in uncivil conditions.

**10. Main findings:** The experiments reveal that incivility and close-up camera perspectives significantly heighten emotional arousal, drawing attention to political discourse. However, this heightened arousal negatively impacts perceptions of the legitimacy of opposing views when discourse is uncivil. Civil discussions presented in close-up enhanced the perceived legitimacy of oppositional arguments, while uncivil discussions diminished it. Mutz concludes that televised political discourse is a double-edged sword: it educates viewers about oppositional arguments but, when uncivil and intimate, it fosters polarization and undermines mutual respect essential for democratic stability.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Television may play an important role in educating the public on the views of people outside their immediate environments, but the emotional intensity of 'in-your-face' discourse undermines its capacity to foster democratic legitimacy" (p. 630).
- "When disagreeable issue positions are espoused by a civil person in close-up, they are viewed as more legitimate. When espoused by an uncivil person, they are viewed as even less legitimate than without any viewing" (p. 630).
- "Incivility alone does not dampen enthusiasm for political advocates nor the arguments they make. However, when uncivil discourse and close-up camera perspectives combine, the intimacy discourages mutual respect for opposing views" (p. 632).

### 2.12.8 The Aggregate Dynamics of Campaigns

Box-Steffensmeier, J. M., Darmofal, D., & Farrell, C. A. (2009). The Aggregate Dynamics of Campaigns [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 71(1), 309–323. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381608090208>

**1. Citation key:** box-steffensmeier\_aggregate\_2009

**2. Author(s):** Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, David Darmofal, and Christian A. Farrell

**3. Year:** 2009

**4. Publication:** *Journal of Politics*

**5. Keywords:** campaign dynamics, endogeneity, media effects, voter preferences, election outcomes

**6. Summary:** Box-Steffensmeier, Darmofal, and Farrell develop a dynamic theory of campaign interactions that accounts for reciprocal influences between partisan elites, the media, and citizens during election campaigns. Analyzing daily data from the 2000 U.S. presidential election, the authors find evidence that campaigns are highly interdependent, with elites, the media, and citizens each playing critical roles in shaping election outcomes. Their findings challenge top-down models of campaign effects, highlighting the importance of dynamic responsiveness and interdependence.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose that campaigns are not unidirectional processes where influence flows only from elites through the media to voters. Instead, they argue that campaigns are dynamic systems in which elites, the media, and citizens influence one another in real time. This reciprocal responsiveness occurs because all three actors have both the resources and the incentives to react promptly to one another's actions. For example, candidates respond to shifts in public opinion by adjusting expenditures, media narratives are shaped by both elite activity and voter preferences, and citizens use campaign information to form or adjust their preferences. The theory reframes endogeneity—often treated as a methodological problem—as a substantive feature central to understanding campaign dynamics.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a time-series analysis of daily data on voter preferences, campaign expenditures, and media coverage during the 2000 U.S. presidential campaign. Data sources include the National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES), Federal Election Commission (FEC) records, and content analysis of *New York Times* front-page stories. The authors use vector autoregression (VAR) models to analyze the interdependent relationships among the three actors, testing for Granger causality to identify reciprocal influences. They also employ fractional integration techniques to account for the persistence of campaign effects over time.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Campaign expenditures, media coverage, and voter preferences exhibit reciprocal influences over the course of a campaign.
- Media coverage plays an independent role in shaping voter preferences, beyond reflecting elite discourse.

- Campaign expenditures are responsive to shifts in both voter preferences and media narratives.
- The results confirm all hypotheses, showing significant and sustained reciprocal influences between elites, the media, and citizens.
- 10. Main findings:** The analysis demonstrates that campaigns are dynamic systems characterized by reciprocal influences between elites, the media, and citizens. Campaign expenditures respond to both voter preferences and media narratives, while media coverage independently shapes voter preferences and reflects voter opinion trends. For example, the Gore campaign's delayed responsiveness to Bush's expenditures and its failure to reinforce positive media coverage of Gore were identified as strategic missteps that likely influenced the election outcome. The findings underscore the importance of real-time interactions and suggest that election outcomes are not predetermined but shaped by the day-to-day interplay among these three actors.
- 11. Key quotations:**
- "Campaigns matter as instruments for popular sovereignty precisely because elites, the media, and citizens seek to influence each other and the outcomes of elections" (p. 310).
  - "Presidential elections are highly interdependent affairs in which campaign dynamics and levels of voter support on election day are produced by the daily interactions of elites, the media, and citizens" (p. 318).
  - "Had any of the three actors significantly altered their behavior in 2000, the outcome in such a close contest likely would have been quite different" (p. 321).

### 2.12.9 Media Coverage and Public Approval of the U.S. Supreme Court

Hitt, M. P., & Searles, K. (2018). Media Coverage and Public Approval of the U.S. Supreme Court [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2018.1467517>]. *Political Communication*, 35(4), 566–586. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2018.1467517>

1. **Citation key:** hitt\_media\_2018
2. **Author(s):** Matthew P. Hitt and Kathleen Searles
3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** supreme court, public opinion, game frame, television media, politicization
6. **Summary:** Hitt and Searles explore how televised coverage of the U.S. Supreme Court influences public approval of the institution. They argue that media portrayals emphasizing strategy and political competition, known as game framing, reduce specific public support for the Court's decisions. Using a combination of content analysis and experimental methods, they demonstrate that the prevalence of game-frame coverage has increased over time and that such coverage negatively affects citizens' agreement with and acceptance of Court decisions.
7. **Theory:** The authors theorize that the type of language and framing used in televised coverage of Supreme Court decisions impacts public perceptions of the Court. Specifically, game-frame coverage, which interprets decisions through the lens of winners and losers or political strategies, undermines the Court's image as a principled and apolitical institution. By focusing on conflict and competition, game-frame narratives erode specific support for Court decisions, contributing to broader declines in public confidence in the judiciary. The theory integrates insights from judicial politics and political communication, highlighting how journalistic norms and media market incentives increasingly politicize coverage of the Court.
8. **Methods:** The study uses a mixed-methods approach. First, the authors conduct a content analysis of 1,063 television news transcripts about Supreme Court decisions between 1990 and 2010. They develop a custom dictionary to measure game-frame language and analyze its prevalence over time. Second, they run a survey experiment on Mechanical Turk (MTurk) participants, exposing them to either game-framed or principled news clips about the Citizens United v. FEC decision. The experiment measures changes in participants' agreement with and acceptance of the decision as proxies for specific support for the Court.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Game-frame coverage of Supreme Court decisions has increased over time (E1).
  - Exposure to game-frame coverage reduces individuals' agreement with Court decisions (H1).
  - Exposure to game-frame coverage reduces individuals' acceptance of Court decisions (H2).

All hypotheses were confirmed. Game-frame coverage has become more prevalent over time and has measurable negative effects on public perceptions of the Court.
10. **Main findings:** The content analysis shows a steady rise in game-frame language in televised coverage of Supreme Court decisions, reflecting shifts in media norms and market pressures. The survey experiment reveals that game-framed coverage significantly lowers both agreement with and acceptance of Court decisions compared to principled coverage. These effects are immediate but do not persist over the long term. The findings suggest that the increasing politicization of media narratives undermines the public's perception of the Court's legitimacy as an impartial arbiter of justice.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Presenting the Court in terms of partisan wins, losses, and competition may rob it of its veneer of sincerity and principle" (p. 579).
  - "Television news media utilizes game frames regularly when discussing the Court, and the volume of this coverage is on the rise" (p. 580).

- “Exposure to game-frame coverage of judicial decisions causes arguably deleterious effects, if a citizenry that views the judiciary as legitimate and supports the rule of law is considered normatively desirable” (p. 580).

### 2.12.10 Partisan Media Effects Beyond One-Shot Experimental Designs

Searles, K., Darr, J. P. [Joshua P.], Sui, M., Kalmoe, N., Pingree, R., & Watson, B. (2022). Partisan media effects beyond one-shot experimental designs. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 10(1), 206–214. <https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2021.21>

- 1. Citation key:** searles\_partisan\_2022
- 2. Author(s):** Kathleen Searles, Joshua P. Darr, Mingxiao Sui, Nathan Kalmoe, Raymond Pingree, and Brian Watson
- 3. Year:** 2022
- 4. Publication:** Political Science Research and Methods
- 5. Keywords:** partisan media, news portal, media effects, experimental design, public opinion
- 6. Summary:** Searles and colleagues examine the effects of sustained exposure to partisan media in an online environment, challenging traditional one-shot experimental designs. They created a custom online news portal to simulate daily news consumption, manipulating the balance of in-party and out-party news sources. Their findings indicate that sustained exposure to out-party media can reduce negative perceptions among Democrats but has asymmetric effects for Republicans. The study advances the understanding of partisan media effects in real-world contexts.
- 7. Theory:** The authors argue that traditional one-shot experimental designs fail to capture the dynamics of real-world media consumption, where individuals are repeatedly exposed to partisan news. They posit that sustained exposure to out-party media may reduce negative biases by increasing familiarity, while repeated exposure to in-party media could lead to heightened criticism due to perceived ideological inconsistencies. The study draws on theories of social identity and media trust, suggesting that pre-existing biases and media consumption patterns influence how individuals perceive media fairness. This approach shifts the focus from short-term exposure effects to the cumulative impact of prolonged engagement with partisan news outlets.
- 8. Methods:** The study employs a novel experimental design, recruiting participants to use a custom news portal for a week. Participants were randomly assigned to news feeds with varying balances of partisan content: no partisan news, Fox News stories, or MSNBC stories. Pre- and post-test surveys measured perceptions of media fairness and partisanship. The sample included a mix of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. Panel regression models assessed the effects of treatment conditions, controlling for demographic variables and portal usage patterns.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - Partisans in a non-partisan news feed condition will maintain negative perceptions of out-party media (H1).
  - Repeated exposure to out-party media will improve perceptions of its fairness (H2).
  - Repeated exposure to in-party media will reduce perceptions of its fairness (H3).
- All hypotheses were partially confirmed. Exposure to out-party media improved Democratic perceptions of Fox News but had no effect on Republican perceptions of MSNBC. Repeated exposure to in-party media decreased Republican perceptions of Fox News but did not affect Democratic perceptions of MSNBC.
- 10. Main findings:** The study reveals that partisan media effects are asymmetric. While Democrats exposed to Fox News rated it as more fair, Republicans exposed to MSNBC showed no similar shift in perception. Furthermore, repeated exposure to in-party media led Republicans to rate Fox News as less fair, suggesting that familiarity with partisan content can breed skepticism. These results highlight the complexity of partisan media effects, which are mediated by ideological predispositions and the unique characteristics of individual outlets.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “Our results demonstrate that sustained exposure to partisan media can reduce negative perceptions of out-party outlets, but these effects are not uniform across partisan groups” (p. 207).
  - “Repeated exposure to in-party media may heighten partisans’ awareness of ideological inconsistencies, leading to diminished perceptions of fairness” (p. 211).
  - “This study underscores the importance of ecological validity in media effects research, offering insights that extend beyond the limitations of one-shot experimental designs” (p. 213).

### 2.13 Political Communication

#### 2.13.1 Subject Area Summary

- Overview:** Political communication research has increasingly focused on the influence of media on public opinion, democratic engagement, and electoral behavior. Foundational studies have explored media’s agenda-setting, framing, and priming effects, while recent advancements examine partisan media dynamics, the role of local news, and the implications of mobile and digital media for political learning. This evolving field highlights the dual-edged role of media as both a tool for democratic empowerment and a driver of polarization, with particular attention to methodological innovations that address the complexities of modern information environments.
- Partisan Media Effects:** Contemporary research emphasizes the asymmetric effects of sustained partisan media exposure. One study revealed that repeated exposure to out-party media can reduce negative biases among Democrats but has little effect among Republicans, while in-party media exposure heightens skepticism through awareness of ideological inconsistencies. These findings underscore the importance of prolonged engagement with media content in shaping partisan perceptions and highlight ideological predispositions as mediators of media influence.

- **Local News and Polarization:** The decline of local newspapers has been linked to increased polarization and reduced split-ticket voting. Studies using genetic matching methods demonstrate that newspaper closures result in a significant shift toward reliance on partisan cues from national media, reducing exposure to locally relevant, nonpartisan information. This shift exacerbates political polarization and diminishes political accountability, particularly in communities most reliant on local journalism for political information.
- **Innovations in Political Communication Methods:** Advances in methodology have deepened the field's capacity to understand complex media effects. Techniques such as dynamic process tracing, conjoint analysis, and linking survey data to social media activity allow researchers to capture nuanced relationships between media consumption and political behavior. Physiological measures, including eye-tracking and heart rate variability, provide insights into attention and emotional engagement, addressing limitations of traditional approaches and enhancing external validity in experimental designs.
- **Digital and Mobile Media Dynamics:** Mobile devices have transformed news consumption, expanding physical access to political information while introducing cognitive challenges that impair comprehension and retention. Research combining psychophysiological experiments and web-tracking data reveals that smaller screen sizes and increased scrolling demands reduce attention and learning, particularly among younger and less-educated individuals. These findings raise concerns about inequalities in political knowledge and the implications of mobile technology for an informed citizenry.
- **Entertainment Media and Economic Beliefs:** Entertainment media's role in shaping public perceptions of economic mobility has garnered attention. Rags-to-riches narratives, particularly in reality television, reinforce beliefs in meritocracy and the American Dream while diminishing structural explanations for economic inequality. Experimental and survey data indicate that exposure to these narratives increases optimism about upward mobility, particularly among Republican audiences and individuals with high system justification tendencies.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Current debates focus on the media's role in fostering or mitigating polarization, the effects of algorithm-driven content on democratic engagement, and the interplay between partisan and local media in shaping public opinion. Future research is expected to further explore digital media's implications for inequality in political knowledge and participation, refine methodological approaches to capture fragmented media environments, and investigate the normative consequences of media consolidation and algorithmic personalization for democratic processes.

### 2.13.2 The Mass Media and the Dynamics of American Racial Attitudes

Kellstedt, P. M. (2003, August). *The Mass Media and the Dynamics of American Racial Attitudes* [Google-Books-ID: w2iwKOLLXyMC]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** kellstedt\_mass\_2003
2. **Author(s):** Paul M. Kellstedt
3. **Year:** 2003
4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press
5. **Keywords:** mass media, racial attitudes, public opinion, media framing, egalitarianism, individualism
6. **Summary:** Kellstedt examines the influence of mass media framing on the dynamics of American racial attitudes from 1950 to 1994. The book challenges the assumption that racial attitudes are stable by demonstrating their evolution over time in response to media coverage emphasizing either egalitarian or individualist values. Using *Newsweek* as a primary source, Kellstedt shows that shifts in racial policy preferences correlate with changes in media narratives. These shifts also lead to a convergence of attitudes on race and welfare policies, highlighting the media's role in shaping public opinion.
7. **Theory:** The central argument is that racial attitudes in America are not fixed but fluctuate based on media framing of two core, contradictory values: egalitarianism and individualism. Egalitarian media cues encourage liberal racial policy preferences by emphasizing social justice and equity, whereas individualist cues foster conservative preferences by promoting self-reliance and meritocracy. Media framing not only influences individual attitudes but also forges connections between racial and welfare policies. This theory underscores the media's role as a powerful socializing agent that resolves or exacerbates value conflicts within the public mind, particularly regarding race.
8. **Methods:** Kellstedt employs a longitudinal analysis of media content and public opinion data spanning nearly five decades. He codes *Newsweek* stories for references to egalitarianism, individualism, and Black poverty. Additionally, he develops a measure of racial policy preferences using James Stimson's policy mood methodology. Regression models are applied to test the relationship between media framing and shifts in public opinion, controlling for factors such as generational replacement and policy feedback. The analysis also explores the convergence of racial and welfare attitudes, linking them to media narratives emphasizing Black poverty.
9. **Hypotheses:** Kellstedt hypothesizes that:
  - Increases in egalitarian media cues lead to more liberal racial policy preferences.
  - Increases in individualist media cues lead to more conservative racial policy preferences.
  - Media emphasis on Black poverty fosters a closer association between racial and welfare policy preferences.
 The findings support these hypotheses, particularly the liberalizing effect of egalitarian cues and the role of Black poverty framing in linking race and welfare policies.
10. **Main findings:** The book finds that shifts in racial policy preferences are significantly influenced by media framing.

Egalitarian cues result in more liberal attitudes, while individualist cues have a weaker conservative effect. Media coverage connecting race and poverty drives the convergence of racial and welfare policy preferences. Kellstedt also highlights the importance of generational replacement and policy feedback in shaping attitudes. While the media's role in fostering liberal views is well-supported, the conservative influence of individualist cues is less robust, suggesting that egalitarian narratives may have a stronger resonance with the public.

### 11. Key definitions:

- *Egalitarianism*: The belief in equal rights and opportunities for all individuals, often emphasizing social justice and equity.
- *Individualism*: The belief in self-reliance and personal responsibility, often associated with meritocratic principles.
- *Media framing*: The process by which the media emphasize certain aspects of an issue to influence public perception and attitudes.
- *Policy mood*: A measure of public support for government action in various policy domains, reflecting overall ideological trends.
- *Generational replacement*: The process by which societal attitudes evolve as older generations are replaced by younger ones with different values and experiences.

#### 2.13.3 Newspaper Closures Polarize Voting Behavior

Darr, J. P. [Joshua P], Hitt, M. P., & Dunaway, J. L. (2018). Newspaper Closures Polarize Voting Behavior. *Journal of Communication*, 68(6), 1007–1028. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqy051>

1. Citation key: darr\_newspaper\_2018

2. Author(s): Joshua P. Darr, Matthew P. Hitt, and Johanna L. Dunaway

3. Year: 2018

4. Publication: Journal of Communication

5. Keywords: newspapers, political polarization, local media, split-ticket voting, partisanship

6. Summary: Darr, Hitt, and Dunaway investigate how the closure of local newspapers influences voting behavior, particularly focusing on its impact on political polarization. The authors argue that as local newspapers disappear, voters increasingly rely on partisan heuristics and national media, resulting in decreased split-ticket voting. Using genetic matching, the study examines statistically similar counties with and without newspaper closures to measure changes in voting behavior in presidential and senatorial elections, finding a significant causal reduction in split-ticket voting in counties that experienced closures.

7. Theory: The authors posit that local newspapers play a critical role in maintaining political accountability and reducing polarization by providing voters with locally-relevant, less-partisan information. When newspapers close, voters lose access to this information and turn to national news sources, which are characterized by heightened partisanship and polarized messaging. This reliance on national media leads to increased reliance on party cues, thereby exacerbating polarization. Local newspapers are seen as essential for fostering diverse considerations and reducing the dominance of national partisan narratives in voters' decision-making processes.

8. Methods: The study employs a genetic matching methodology to compare counties that experienced newspaper closures between 2009 and 2012 with those that did not, ensuring balance on key covariates such as demographic composition, median income, and prior partisan voting levels. The dependent variable is split-ticket voting, defined as the absolute difference in support for presidential and senatorial candidates from the same party. Robustness checks include sensitivity analyses and placebo tests, which confirm the causal relationship between newspaper closures and reduced split-ticket voting.

9. Hypotheses:

- Newspaper closures will result in a decrease in split-ticket voting due to increased reliance on partisan cues.
- The effect of newspaper closures on voting behavior is driven by substitution to national media rather than a general loss of political information.

Both hypotheses are supported by the findings, which show a 1.9% decline in split-ticket voting and no significant increase in ballot runoff, indicating a shift to national media consumption.

10. Main findings: The authors demonstrate that the closure of local newspapers leads to a measurable decrease in split-ticket voting, driven by voters substituting local news with partisan national media. This change signifies a shift towards more polarized voting patterns in communities without local newspapers. Sensitivity analyses suggest that the observed effects are robust to potential selection biases, and placebo tests confirm the temporal relationship between newspaper closures and voting behavior. The findings highlight the critical role of local newspapers in mitigating polarization by providing non-partisan, locally-relevant information to voters.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "We identify a small but significant causal decrease in split-ticket voting in presidential and senatorial elections in these matched communities: in areas where a newspaper closed, split-ticket voting decreased by 1.9%" (p. 1008).
- "Losing a local newspaper may encourage reliance on partisan heuristics when voting and, possibly, a turn to readily-available national media... which is rife with partisan rancor and intense cues from polarized elites" (p. 1008).
- "National news outlets focus on the president and national governmental institutions... A relative reduction of local news in the media marketplace may result in less exposure to local news and more regular exposure to

national media, with significant effects on engagement and partisan voting" (p. 1010).

#### 2.13.4 New Approaches to Method and Measurement in the Study of Political Communication Effects

Krupnikov, Y., & Searles, K. (2019). New Approaches to Method and Measurement in the Study of Political Communication Effects [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2018.1526239>]. *Political Communication*, 36(2), 209–213. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2018.1526239>

1. **Citation key:** krupnikov\_new\_2019
2. **Author(s):** Yanna Krupnikov and Kathleen Searles
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** methodology, political communication, measurement, media effects, political behavior
6. **Summary:** Krupnikov and Searles explore advancements in methodologies and measurements used to analyze political communication effects. Building on earlier critiques of minimal effects theories, they emphasize the need for innovative approaches to address the complexities of a fragmented media environment. The authors argue that methodological innovation is crucial to understanding how political messages interact with individual responses and broader societal outcomes. By highlighting recent innovations, they underscore the evolving role of communication technologies in shaping political behavior.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that methodological advancements are essential for capturing the dynamic interactions between media messages and political behavior in an increasingly complex information environment. They critique past reliance on static paradigms, advocating for approaches that incorporate the fragmented and evolving nature of media consumption. Central to their argument is the belief that measurement quality determines the validity of inferences about political communication's effects. They position method and measurement as foundational, not merely supplementary, to understanding political dynamics, asserting that capturing the nuance of media exposure and engagement requires leveraging new technologies and experimental designs.
8. **Methods:** Krupnikov and Searles discuss multiple methodological innovations, including physiological measures of media response, linking survey data to social media activity, and employing multiwave field experiments to balance causality and external validity. They highlight conjoint designs for studying media trust and selective exposure, as well as advanced text analysis techniques using manually validated dictionaries. These methods aim to address issues of endogeneity and provide more precise measures of the relationship between political communication and voter behavior in diverse contexts.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Improved measurement techniques will reveal previously undetected effects of political communication.
  - Innovative methodologies will better capture the fragmented nature of modern media consumption and its impact on political behavior.

The discussion supports these hypotheses by showcasing how new approaches yield deeper insights into media effects, particularly in environments characterized by information overload and selective exposure.
10. **Main findings:** The authors emphasize that methodological advancements have significantly expanded the scope of political communication research. Innovations like physiological measures and social media-linked surveys provide new insights into how media shapes attitudes and behavior. Experimental designs, such as conjoint analysis and dynamic process tracing, have proven effective in disentangling causal relationships in complex communication environments. These approaches collectively highlight the evolving influence of media technologies on political engagement and the necessity of continually refining methods to match the complexity of the media landscape.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "To argue that method is pivotal is not to deny the importance of theory. Rather, it is to suggest that the inferences we make are often a function of the methods we have chosen" (p. 210).
  - "These changes have produced a need to 'rethink what kinds of effects we want to measure and how we might go about measuring them'" (p. 211).
  - "At a political moment when questions of power and truths are debated worldwide, we hope this symposium underscores that questions of methods are not merely academic but are of critical importance to understanding how information spreads and when messages persuade" (p. 213).

#### 2.13.5 Who Leads? Who Follows? Measuring Issue Attention and Agenda Setting by Legislators and the Mass Public Using Social Media Data

Barberá, P., Casas, A., Nagler, J., Egan, P. J., Bonneau, R., Jost, J. T., & Tucker, J. A. (2019). Who Leads? Who Follows? Measuring Issue Attention and Agenda Setting by Legislators and the Mass Public Using Social Media Data. *American Political Science Review*, 113(4), 883–901. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055419000352>

1. **Citation key:** barbera\_who\_2019
2. **Author(s):** Pablo Barberá, Andreu Casas, Jonathan Nagler, Patrick J. Egan, Richard Bonneau, John T. Jost, and Joshua A. Tucker
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** agenda setting, social media, issue attention, legislative responsiveness, mass public

6. **Summary:** Barberá et al. investigate whether legislators or the public lead in setting the political agenda, focusing on issue attention dynamics during the 113th U.S. Congress (2013–2014). By analyzing over 650,000 tweets from legislators and comparing them with public and media tweets, the study employs unsupervised topic modeling and vector autoregression (VAR) to trace patterns of issue salience. They find that legislators are more likely to follow public priorities rather than lead them, but their responsiveness is skewed toward party supporters rather than the general public.
7. **Theory:** The study builds on agenda-setting theory, positing that issue salience drives policy responsiveness. Barberá et al. propose that legislators respond to the public's issue priorities as a means of electoral accountability but prioritize signals from party supporters over the general electorate. This asymmetry reflects a model of "conditional responsiveness," where legislators are guided by attentive subgroups rather than broad public sentiment. The authors argue that social media platforms like Twitter provide a high-frequency lens to capture these dynamic relationships, offering a unique window into real-time agenda-setting processes. They posit that the media's agenda plays a mediating role, amplifying partisan divides and reinforcing inequalities in responsiveness.
8. **Methods:** Using Twitter data from members of Congress, media outlets, and multiple public subgroups, the authors classify tweets into 46 political issue categories through Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA). VAR models are applied to analyze temporal relationships between public, media, and legislative agendas. The study distinguishes among subgroups of the public, including partisan supporters, politically attentive citizens, and a random sample of Twitter users. These distinctions allow the authors to test competing models of responsiveness: the Downsian model (general public leads), the Attentive model (engaged citizens lead), and the Supporter model (party supporters lead).

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Legislators are more likely to follow than lead shifts in public issue attention.
- Responsiveness will be stronger toward party supporters and attentive publics than the general public.
- Media coverage amplifies the agenda-setting effect of partisan groups over other subgroups.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with legislators responding more to shifts in attention by partisan supporters and attentive publics than the general electorate.

10. **Main findings:** The results reveal a clear asymmetry in political responsiveness. Legislators are significantly more likely to follow issue salience changes initiated by their own party supporters than by the general public. Attentive citizens also exert agenda-setting influence, but to a lesser extent. The general public's ability to lead legislative agendas is minimal, even during election cycles. Media coverage often serves as a conduit, reflecting and amplifying partisan-driven attention dynamics. These findings underscore the conditional nature of legislative responsiveness and the role of social media in reshaping agenda-setting processes.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Our findings show definitively that members of Congress are more likely to follow the issue priorities of the public than to lead them. However, this responsiveness is limited in ways that reinforce polarization and inequality" (p. 884).
- "Mass media are more likely to cover those issues that are of interest to partisans, and they often lead the political agenda" (p. 885).
- "Politicians are more likely to follow changes in issue attention distribution by their own party supporters than attentive voters, and they rarely follow the issue priorities of the general public" (p. 893).

#### 2.13.6 How Does Local TV News Change Viewers' Attitudes? The Case of Sinclair Broadcasting

Levendusky, M. S. (2022). How Does Local TV News Change Viewers' Attitudes? The Case of Sinclair Broadcasting [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2021.1901807>. *Political Communication*, 39(1), 23–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2021.1901807>

1. **Citation key:** levendusky\_how\_2022
2. **Author(s):** Matthew S. Levendusky
3. **Year:** 2022
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** local TV news, partisan media, media effects, Sinclair Broadcasting, political attitudes, nationalization of news
6. **Summary:** Levendusky examines the impact of Sinclair Broadcasting's local TV news coverage on viewers' attitudes toward national politics. He argues that Sinclair's focus on nationalized, right-leaning news alters public opinion by reducing approval of Democratic leaders and discouraging votes for Democratic candidates. Using data on Sinclair's acquisition of TV stations between 2008 and 2018, combined with Gallup and CCES survey data, the study reveals that Sinclair's broadcasts persuade viewers, albeit modestly, to adopt more conservative attitudes on national issues.
7. **Theory:** Levendusky posits that Sinclair's programming influences public attitudes through a combination of increased nationalization and partisan slant in local news broadcasts. Traditional local news outlets typically focus on nonpartisan, localized issues, but Sinclair's programming mirrors the partisan framing of cable news, with emphasis on right-wing topics and anti-Democratic narratives. This "cable newsification" of local TV shapes viewers' evaluations of national political figures and issues by embedding partisan biases into widely trusted local news. As local newspapers decline, Sinclair's programming fills an informational void, amplifying its effects on political attitudes and reducing trust in media objectivity.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a quasi-experimental design, analyzing Gallup and CCES survey data linked to zip-code-level information about Sinclair station availability. The dependent variables include partisan identification, liberal-conservative self-identification, presidential approval, and vote choice. Levendusky uses a difference-in-differences approach with fixed effects to estimate the effect of Sinclair ownership on these outcomes, controlling for demographic and geographic factors. To verify robustness, he incorporates multiple datasets, such as CCES vote data and aggregate presidential vote shares.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Sinclair-owned TV stations reduce approval of Democratic presidents, such as Barack Obama.
- Sinclair ownership decreases the likelihood of voting for Democratic presidential candidates.
- Sinclair's focus on national issues and partisan framing amplifies these effects relative to other local news outlets.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with evidence indicating Sinclair ownership persuades about 6% of its audience to disapprove of President Obama or vote Republican.

**10. Main findings:** Levendusky finds that Sinclair-owned TV stations significantly reduce approval of President Obama by 0.9% to 1.1%, with a corresponding decline in Democratic vote share. The effects are concentrated at the presidential level, with no significant impact on partisanship or down-ballot races. The study identifies Sinclair's nationalization and partisan slant as drivers of these effects, with a persuasion rate comparable to newspaper endorsements and half the effect size of Fox News. Sinclair's influence is particularly pronounced among less-educated and lower-income viewers, highlighting the broader implications of media consolidation for political polarization and trust in journalism.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Living in a zip code where Sinclair owns a local TV station changes viewers' attitudes, persuading roughly 6% of its audience to disapprove of President Obama, a modest but real effect on viewers' political beliefs" (p. 34).
- "The effects of local news depend on what local news chooses to cover, and how it does that. Sinclair prioritizes national topics over local ones, likely lowering political knowledge of local topics, with important consequences for local political accountability" (p. 36).
- "Sinclair-owned TV stations change respondents' evaluations of President Obama: those who live in areas where Sinclair owns a TV station are less likely to approve of President Obama, and they are also less likely to vote for him" (p. 35).

### 2.13.7 The Great and Powerful Dr. Oz? Alternative Health Media Consumption and Vaccine Views in the United States

Stecula, D. A., Motta, M., Kuru, O., & Jamieson, K. H. (2022). The Great and Powerful Dr. Oz? Alternative Health Media Consumption and Vaccine Views in the United States. *Journal of Communication*, 72(3), 374–400. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jjac011>

1. **Citation key:** stecula\_great\_2022
2. **Author(s):** Dominik A. Stecula, Matthew Motta, Ozan Kuru, and Kathleen Hall Jamieson
3. **Year:** 2022
4. **Publication:** Journal of Communication
5. **Keywords:** alternative health media, misinformation, vaccine attitudes, media effects, Dr. Oz
6. **Summary:** Stecula et al. examine the role of alternative health media (AHM), specifically focusing on Dr. Oz's programming, in shaping vaccine attitudes in the United States. Using a longitudinal, probability-based national survey, the study explores patterns of AHM consumption, its demographic predictors, and its effects on vaccine beliefs. The findings reveal that while AHM often disseminates misinformation, trusted opinion leaders like Dr. Oz can positively influence their audiences when aligning with scientific consensus. The study underscores the dual-edged nature of AHM in public health communication.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that AHM creates a unique media ecosystem that mixes credible medical information with unverified or pseudoscientific claims, leading to both the dissemination of misinformation and the potential for corrective influence. AHM appeals to audiences through relatable opinion leaders who provide parasocial relationships, which are particularly effective among low-knowledge and low-trust viewers. Stecula et al. contend that the persuasive power of AHM depends on the alignment of its messaging with scientific norms, as demonstrated by Dr. Oz's endorsement of vaccines during a measles outbreak. The study integrates media-system dependency theory, highlighting how individuals turn to trusted media during periods of uncertainty, amplifying the effects of such opinion leaders on public health attitudes.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a six-wave panel survey conducted through NORC's AmeriSpeak platform, sampling 3,005 U.S. adults. Data collection spans September 2018 to March 2019, including measures of vaccine knowledge, AHM consumption, and vaccine-related attitudes. The authors apply probit and OLS regression analyses to examine predictors of AHM consumption and its associations with misinformation and perceived vaccine risks. A quasi-experimental difference-in-difference approach assesses changes in MMR and flu vaccine attitudes following Dr. Oz's public endorsement of the MMR vaccine, comparing regular AHM viewers to non-viewers.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - H1: AHM consumers with low vaccine knowledge are more likely to hold misinformation and perceive vaccines as risky.
  - H2: Regular viewers of Dr. Oz's program with low vaccine knowledge will become more likely to view MMR and flu vaccines as safe following his endorsement episode.

Both hypotheses are confirmed, showing that low-knowledge viewers of Dr. Oz became significantly more likely to accept vaccine safety, while AHM consumption is broadly associated with heightened misinformation among its audience.

**10. Main findings:** The study identifies a substantial minority of Americans (26%) as regular AHM consumers, primarily women, individuals with lower education and income, and those with low trust in medical experts. AHM consumption correlates with increased misinformation and heightened vaccine risk perceptions, especially among low-knowledge individuals. However, Dr. Oz's endorsement of the MMR vaccine significantly improved vaccine perceptions among his low-knowledge audience, demonstrating the potential for trusted AHM figures to align public attitudes with scientific consensus under specific conditions.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Our findings show that AHM plays a dual role: while it amplifies misinformation, it also has the capacity to correct misconceptions when trusted sources align with scientific consensus" (p. 377).
- "Low-knowledge, regular viewers of Dr. Oz became significantly more likely to perceive both MMR and flu vaccines as safe following his endorsement, highlighting the power of opinion leadership in AHM" (p. 389).
- "AHM provides a parasocial relationship that compensates for gaps in trust in traditional medical experts, making it a double-edged sword in public health communication" (p. 393).

#### 2.13.8 News and Democratic Citizens in the Mobile Era

Dunaway, J., & Searles, K. (2023). *News and Democratic Citizens in the Mobile Era* [Google-Books-ID: tCyWEAAAQBAJ]. Oxford University Press

**1. Citation key:** dunaway\_news\_2023

**2. Author(s):** Johanna Dunaway and Kathleen Searles

**3. Year:** 2023

**4. Publication:** Oxford University Press

**5. Keywords:** mobile news, political learning, media effects, cognitive effort, psychophysiological methods

**6. Summary:** Dunaway and Searles examine how mobile devices affect the consumption and comprehension of political news. The book distinguishes between physical access to news (ease of reaching information) and cognitive access (ability to process and retain information). They argue that while mobile devices expand physical access to news, they simultaneously increase cognitive demands, reducing attention and recall. Employing experimental methods, including eye-tracking and psychophysiological measures, the authors show that mobile device users exhibit lower levels of engagement, attention, and learning compared to users of larger screens, raising concerns about the implications for an informed citizenry.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose a Physical and Cognitive Access (PCA) framework to explain how mobile devices influence political information processing. They argue that mobile technology enhances physical access by reaching broader audiences but impairs cognitive access due to smaller screens and increased scrolling demands, which strain cognitive resources. This trade-off challenges the assumption that greater accessibility to information automatically enhances democratic engagement. The authors also introduce a model for post-exposure processing (PEP), emphasizing how technological features shape the retention and understanding of news. The book underscores the normative implications of these findings, suggesting that mobile technology may hinder informed democratic participation despite its widespread adoption.

**8. Methods:** The authors utilize a mixed-methods approach combining experimental designs, surveys, and web-tracking data. They conduct psychophysiological experiments using eye-tracking, pupil dilation, skin conductance, and heart rate variability to measure attention, arousal, and cognitive effort. Data from Pew Research Center and Comscore are used to assess patterns of mobile news consumption. Quasi-experimental designs with Mechanical Turk participants complement these methods, allowing for tests of recall and learning under different device conditions. The results are triangulated across methods to ensure robustness and address concerns about external validity.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- H1: Mobile devices expand physical access to news but reduce attention and recall due to increased cognitive demands.
- H2: Screen size negatively affects emotional arousal and engagement, especially for complex or negative news content.
- H3: Mobile device users exhibit greater cognitive effort but lower information retention compared to computer users.

These hypotheses are supported, with experimental and observational data showing consistent patterns of reduced attention and recall among mobile users.

**10. Main findings:** The study reveals that while mobile devices enable greater reach, they impair political learning by increasing cognitive effort and reducing attention. Mobile users spend less time engaging with news content, exhibit lower levels of arousal and focus, and retain less information compared to computer users. The findings are particularly concerning for populations heavily reliant on mobile devices, such as younger, less-educated, and lower-income individuals, as this reliance exacerbates inequalities in news consumption and learning. These results suggest that mobile technology, despite its potential for broadening access, undermines its capacity to foster an informed citizenry.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Physical access*: The ability to reach and interact with political news through technological platforms, particularly mobile devices.
- *Cognitive access*: The capacity to process, understand, and retain political information post-exposure.
- *Post-exposure processing (PEP)*: The cognitive effort required to analyze and internalize information after initial exposure.
- *Psychophysiological measures*: Tools such as eye-tracking, pupil dilation, and skin conductance used to assess attention, arousal, and cognitive effort in media consumption.

### 2.13.9 Entertaining Beliefs in Economic Mobility

Kim, E. (2023). Entertaining Beliefs in Economic Mobility. *American Journal of Political Science*, 67(1), 39–54. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12702>

1. **Citation key:** kim\_entertaining\_2023
2. **Author(s):** Eunji Kim
3. **Year:** 2023
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** economic mobility, media effects, American Dream, entertainment media, rags-to-riches narratives
6. **Summary:** Kim explores the role of entertainment media in shaping Americans' beliefs in economic mobility, despite rising inequality and declining intergenerational mobility. The study focuses on rags-to-riches narratives, particularly reality TV programs that emphasize meritocracy. Through experiments and national surveys, Kim demonstrates that these narratives reinforce beliefs in the American Dream, promoting internal attributions for success over structural explanations. This work contributes to understanding how nonpolitical media influences public opinion about economic inequality and redistributive preferences.
7. **Theory:** The author theorizes that entertainment media, particularly rags-to-riches programs, fosters optimism about economic mobility by presenting vivid, relatable success stories that emphasize hard work and merit. These narratives counteract negative information from news media about rising inequality. Drawing on cultivation theory, Kim argues that repeated exposure to such media exemplars creates cognitive biases, making these narratives more accessible and persuasive. The study situates these dynamics within broader political communication literature, highlighting entertainment media's unique role in sustaining myths of the American Dream and justifying economic disparities.
8. **Methods:** The research combines content analysis, experiments, and survey data. Content analysis of Nielsen ratings and entertainment programming identifies trends in rags-to-riches narratives. Experimental designs, including online and lab-in-the-field methods, expose participants to such narratives and measure changes in beliefs about economic mobility. A national survey further examines media consumption patterns and their correlations with perceptions of mobility and attributions of success. Statistical techniques, including OLS regression, are used to analyze experimental and observational data, controlling for demographic and contextual factors.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - H1: Exposure to rags-to-riches media increases beliefs in economic mobility.
  - H2: Such exposure promotes internal attributions for economic success (e.g., hard work, talent) over external attributions (e.g., structural factors).
  - H3: The effects are more pronounced among Republicans and individuals with high system justification tendencies.

All hypotheses are supported, with significant effects observed in both experimental and observational data.
10. **Main findings:** Kim finds that rags-to-riches narratives significantly boost beliefs in the American Dream and internal attributions for economic success, especially among frequent viewers and Republicans. The experimental data reveal that even brief exposure to these programs can shift perceptions, while the survey confirms these effects at the population level. Frequent viewers of rags-to-riches programs are 4 percentage points more likely to believe in upward mobility than nonviewers, a gap comparable to the influence of having immigrant parents. These findings suggest that entertainment media can sustain optimism about economic mobility, even in the face of structural economic challenges, by offering emotionally compelling narratives that resonate with viewers.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "When millions of Americans sit down every evening and watch these programs, they continue to see evidence that economic mobility—the American Dream—is alive and well" (p. 41).
  - "The meritocratic narrative in rags-to-riches TV programs promotes the idea that rich people have more because of their hard work, dampens public support for redistribution, and increases tolerance of income inequality" (p. 46).
  - "Regularly watching six or more TV programs, like America's Got Talent, is as powerful as having immigrant parents in shaping beliefs in upward mobility" (p. 49).

### 2.14 Political Trust

#### 2.14.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Research on political trust examines its critical role in democratic governance, public opinion, and policy attitudes. Foundational works explore how trust influences evaluations of incumbents, institutions, and policies, while

recent studies expand on its reciprocal nature and contextual variability. Political trust is increasingly understood as both a determinant and a consequence of political behavior, shaped by ideological orientations, media dynamics, and policy contexts. This evolving literature highlights the interplay between individual attitudes, systemic factors, and institutional designs in shaping trust and its implications for democratic stability.

- **Evaluations of Incumbents and Institutions:** Citrin's (1974) critique of Arthur Miller's framework highlights the distinction between dissatisfaction with incumbents and systemic disaffection. Using American National Election Studies (ANES) data, Citrin demonstrates that declining trust often reflects dissatisfaction with specific policies or leaders rather than a wholesale rejection of the political system. His findings underscore that public cynicism can coexist with diffuse support for institutional frameworks, challenging assumptions that declining trust inherently signals systemic alienation.
- **The Role of Media in Shaping Trust:** Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (1998) investigate how modern media amplify emotional negativity toward Congress without fundamentally altering cognitive evaluations. Their analysis reveals that television and radio sensationalism provoke anger and disgust, particularly among less politically knowledgeable individuals, while print media has weaker effects. These findings emphasize the media's role in fostering emotional discontent and its implications for public trust in legislative bodies.
- **Trust and Ideological Moderation:** Rudolph and Evans (2005) explore how political trust moderates ideological divides in support for government spending. Their study demonstrates that trust significantly influences conservatives' attitudes toward redistributive policies, mitigating ideological resistance to government intervention. By emphasizing the interaction between trust and ideological sacrifice, this work highlights trust's capacity to bridge partisan divides and shape policy preferences.
- **Local Political Trust and Institutional Design:** Rahn and Rudolph (2005) analyze the determinants of local political trust using a multilevel framework. Their findings indicate that trust is higher in cities with council-manager systems and mixed representation structures, while income inequality, racial diversity, and ideological polarization undermine trust. The study highlights the importance of institutional efficiency and community characteristics in fostering public confidence at the local level.
- **Distinguishing Skepticism and Distrust:** Cook and Gronke (2005) critique conventional trust measures, arguing that they conflate skepticism with distrust, leading to exaggerated perceptions of public cynicism. Their multidimensional framework distinguishes between skepticism, rooted in cautious evaluation, and distrust, which implies beliefs in government incompetence or malevolence. This nuanced approach reveals that Americans are more skeptical than distrustful, challenging narratives of pervasive political alienation.
- **Trust in Contentious Policy Contexts:** Ryan et al. (2022) examine the role of trust in shaping public attitudes toward gun control policies. Their analysis reveals that trust mitigates fears of policy escalation among conservatives, fostering support for moderate measures. However, trust's effects diminish for highly restrictive policies, highlighting its conditional influence in polarized policy contexts. These findings underscore the critical interplay between trust, ideology, and policy framing in contentious political debates.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Current debates in political trust research focus on its implications for democratic resilience, its role in mitigating polarization, and its intersection with media consumption. Future research is expected to explore trust's impact on public support for institutional reforms, the effects of algorithmic media environments on trust dynamics, and the relationship between trust and political efficacy in diverse governance systems. This evolving literature continues to address fundamental questions about trust's role in sustaining democratic stability and fostering effective governance.

#### 2.14.2 Comment: The Political Relevance of Trust in Government

Citrin, J. (1974). Comment: The Political Relevance of Trust in Government [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 68(3), 973–988. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1959141>

1. **Citation key:** citrin\_comment\_1974
2. **Author(s):** Jack Citrin
3. **Year:** 1974
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** political trust, political cynicism, policy satisfaction, political disaffection, American politics
6. **Summary:** In this article, Citrin critiques and expands upon Arthur Miller's analysis of declining political trust in the United States during the 1960s and early 1970s. Citrin examines the relationship between political trust and public dissatisfaction with government policies, suggesting that Miller's findings overemphasize the connection between generalized mistrust and systemic disaffection. Instead, Citrin argues that much of the observed cynicism stems from dissatisfaction with incumbent officials and specific policies, rather than a wholesale rejection of the political system.
7. **Theory:** Citrin builds on Miller's assertion that political trust reflects satisfaction with government performance but argues that this trust is more nuanced than Miller's framework suggests. While Citrin agrees that ideological orientation and policy preferences influence political trust, he emphasizes the distinction between dissatisfaction with incumbents and systemic disaffection. Citrin asserts that public trust in government does not necessarily signal allegiance to the regime but may indicate satisfaction with current leadership or policies. He challenges the assumption that declining trust inherently reflects a rejection of foundational political norms, positing that political trust and dissatisfaction exist on a spectrum influenced by immediate political contexts, social identity, and perceptions of incumbents.

8. **Methods:** Citrin employs data from the 1964, 1968, 1970, and 1972 American National Election Studies (ANES). He re-analyzes Miller's metrics for political trust, focusing on the Trust in Government scale, policy dissatisfaction measures, and their relationship with behavioral attitudes such as participation in protests and electoral activity. Citrin examines correlations between trust levels and evaluations of political incumbents, ideological preferences, and attitudes toward political change, emphasizing the contextual variability of trust measures across political environments.
9. **Hypotheses:** Citrin hypothesizes that political cynicism often reflects dissatisfaction with incumbent leadership rather than systemic alienation. He also hypothesizes that trust and dissatisfaction vary with partisan context, with cynicism more likely directed toward the party in power. His findings confirm that:
  - Political trust correlates strongly with approval of incumbent policies and leaders.
  - Cynicism does not necessarily lead to withdrawal from political activity and can coexist with systemic support.
  - Discontent with policies is a sufficient but not necessary condition for political cynicism.
10. **Main findings:** Citrin's analysis suggests that declining trust in government during the 1960s and 1970s primarily reflects dissatisfaction with incumbent leaders and their policies, rather than systemic disillusionment. He finds that public cynicism often targets specific authorities while maintaining diffuse support for the political regime. For example, he demonstrates that respondents expressing low trust in government often simultaneously express pride in the political system's institutional framework. He also identifies weak and inconsistent relationships between political cynicism and unconventional protest behaviors, suggesting that dissatisfaction with policies, rather than mistrust of government, drives activist responses.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "A diffuse sense of pride in and support for the ongoing 'form of government' can coexist with widespread public cynicism about 'the government in Washington' and the people 'running' it" (p. 975).
  - "The close connection between disapproval of the incumbent president and cynical scores on the Trust in Government scale does not establish definitively that the 'object' of this attitude measure is the current administration rather than the overall political system" (p. 976).
  - "Feelings of political mistrust or alienation intervene between a sense of discontent and 'oppositionist' actions only when mistrust of government has an independent effect on behavior, which this analysis finds limited" (p. 981).

#### 2.14.3 The Political Relevance of Political Trust

Hetherington, M. J. (1998). The Political Relevance of Political Trust [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 92(4), 791–808. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2586304>

1. **Citation key:** hetherington\_political\_1998
2. **Author(s):** Marc J. Hetherington
3. **Year:** 1998
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** political trust, diffuse support, incumbents, institutional legitimacy, public opinion
6. **Summary:** Hetherington examines the declining levels of political trust in the United States since the 1960s and its implications for the political system. The study challenges the conventional understanding that political trust is solely a dependent variable influenced by evaluations of incumbents and institutions. Hetherington argues that trust has a reciprocal relationship with support for institutions and incumbents, and its decline has significant repercussions for governance and public approval.
7. **Theory:** Hetherington theorizes that political trust functions as a critical evaluative orientation towards the government and is integral to both specific and diffuse political support. Trust is not merely a byproduct of satisfaction with incumbents or institutions but actively shapes public attitudes toward them. When political trust declines, it creates an environment where dissatisfaction with leaders and institutional inefficacy becomes more pronounced, leading to a vicious cycle of eroding legitimacy and support. Hetherington highlights the distinction between specific support (evaluations of incumbents and government outputs) and diffuse support (allegiance to the regime's principles). His analysis underscores the importance of trust in maintaining institutional stability and facilitating effective governance, especially in a polarized political environment.
8. **Methods:** Hetherington uses data from the 1988 and 1996 American National Election Studies (ANES) to construct a simultaneous equation model examining the relationships between political trust, presidential approval, and congressional approval. The model includes endogenous variables for trust and institutional evaluations, as well as exogenous variables like economic evaluations, media consumption, and demographic factors. The analysis emphasizes direct and indirect effects, providing insights into the systemic impact of political trust on public attitudes.
9. **Hypotheses:** Hetherington hypothesizes that:
  - Political trust influences and is influenced by evaluations of incumbents and institutions, with stronger effects on the latter.
  - Declining political trust contributes to more negative evaluations of incumbents and institutions, reinforcing its own decline.
  - Media consumption, particularly television news, negatively impacts trust, while institutional effectiveness and economic performance positively affect it.

All hypotheses are supported, highlighting trust's reciprocal effects on political attitudes and its vulnerability to media

framing and economic perceptions.

- 10. Main findings:** Hetherington finds that political trust significantly shapes public evaluations of political institutions and incumbents. Trust exerts a stronger effect on institutional evaluations than on individual leaders, reflecting its diffuse nature. Economic performance and perceptions of government effectiveness are key determinants of trust, while media consumption has a predominantly negative impact. Hetherington also demonstrates that low trust creates a feedback loop, diminishing institutional support and complicating governance. For instance, the study estimates that restoring trust to 1964 levels would substantially increase public approval of the president and Congress, underscoring trust's critical role in political stability.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Rather than simply reflecting dissatisfaction with incumbents and institutions, declining political trust contributes to this dissatisfaction, creating an environment in which it is difficult for those in government to succeed" (p. 792).
- "Distrust breeds conditions for the creation of further distrust. As problems go unsolved over a series of administrations, citizens may begin to question the regime itself" (p. 793).
- "When diffuse support wanes, the public may be more inclined to favor alternatives that bypass institutions, such as direct democracy. The Founding Fathers, however, created representative institutions because they feared this impulse" (p. 795).

#### 2.14.4 The Media's Role in Public Negativity Toward Congress: Distinguishing Emotional Reactions and Cognitive Evaluations

Hibbing, J. R., & Theiss-Morse, E. (1998). The Media's Role in Public Negativity Toward Congress: Distinguishing Emotional Reactions and Cognitive Evaluations [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 42(2), 475–498. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2991767>

1. **Citation key:** hibbing\_media\_1998
2. **Author(s):** John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse
3. **Year:** 1998
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** media effects, political trust, Congress, emotional reactions, public opinion, cognitive evaluations
6. **Summary:** Hibbing and Theiss-Morse investigate the influence of mass media on public attitudes toward Congress, differentiating between emotional reactions and cognitive evaluations. Using data from a 1992 national survey, they argue that media exposure, particularly through electronic media like television and radio, exacerbates negative emotional reactions toward Congress without significantly altering cognitive evaluations. Their findings suggest that while media coverage affects public sentiment, it does not fundamentally change the public's cognitive assessments of Congress's performance.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that modern media, particularly television and radio, uniquely shape emotional responses due to their vivid and dramatic presentation of information. This contrasts with print media, which may foster a more deliberative, cognitive evaluation process. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse posit that emotional reactions are more susceptible to media influence because they arise instinctively, often bypassing deeper cognitive processing. They argue that this distinction helps explain the pervasive negativity toward Congress in the public sphere: media sensationalism amplifies emotional discontent but leaves stable cognitive evaluations largely unchanged. The theory underscores the importance of considering both the medium and the nature of public reactions when analyzing media effects on political trust.
8. **Methods:** The study employs data from a 1992 national survey of 1,430 respondents, focusing on attitudes toward Congress. The authors use regression analysis to evaluate the effects of different media types (television, radio, newspapers) and overall media exposure on two dependent variables: cognitive evaluations (approval of Congress) and emotional reactions (feelings of anger, unease, fear, and disgust toward Congress). Independent variables include demographic factors, political knowledge, and media consumption habits. They further test interaction effects between media exposure and political knowledge to assess whether media influence varies by audience sophistication.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Media exposure, particularly through electronic media, is strongly associated with negative emotional reactions to Congress but not with cognitive evaluations.
  - Print media will have weaker effects on emotional responses compared to electronic media.
  - Political novices are more susceptible to media-induced emotional reactions than politically knowledgeable individuals.

These hypotheses are supported, demonstrating a significant divergence between emotional and cognitive responses.

- 10. Main findings:** Hibbing and Theiss-Morse find that exposure to television and radio news significantly increases negative emotional reactions toward Congress, such as anger and disgust, whereas print media has a weaker effect. Cognitive evaluations of Congress, measured through approval ratings, are largely unaffected by media exposure. Notably, emotional reactions are more pronounced among individuals with lower political knowledge, indicating that novices are particularly vulnerable to media influence. These findings suggest that media sensationalism exacerbates public discontent with Congress, not by altering evaluations of its performance but by intensifying emotional negativity.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The modern media, we argue, are generally only weakly connected to the kind of information a person uses to form evaluations of politics, and are likely merely to reinforce existing positive or negative inclinations" (p. 481).
- "Our results suggest that media exposure is clearly related to negative emotional reactions. A reliance on electronic media for news, especially radio, produces more in the way of negative emotions toward Congress than a reliance on print media" (p. 492).
- "Preexisting, stable cognitive evaluations of Congress are largely unaffected by media use, whereas the provocative and often sensational media coverage of a 'scandal-ridden' Congress arouses strong negative emotions against members of Congress" (p. 492).

**2.14.5 Political Trust, Ideology, and Public Support for Government Spending**

Rudolph, T. J., & Evans, J. (2005). Political Trust, Ideology, and Public Support for Government Spending [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2005.00148.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(3), 660–671. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2005.00148.x>

- 1. Citation key:** rudolph\_political\_2005
- 2. Author(s):** Thomas J. Rudolph and Jillian Evans
- 3. Year:** 2005
- 4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
- 5. Keywords:** political trust, ideology, government spending, distributive policies, redistributive policies
- 6. Summary:** Rudolph and Evans examine how political trust and ideology interact to shape public support for government spending on distributive and redistributive policies. Using both aggregate- and individual-level analyses, they argue that political trust has a greater impact on conservatives' attitudes toward government spending because of the ideological sacrifice associated with such policies. Their findings highlight the broader consequences of political trust, demonstrating its influence across a wide range of policy areas and its role in mitigating ideological divides.
- 7. Theory:** The authors expand on existing theories of political trust by positing that its influence is activated in contexts requiring ideological or material sacrifice. While previous research suggested trust primarily affects attitudes toward redistributive policies, Rudolph and Evans argue that the concept of sacrifice must also include ideological considerations. Conservatives, who value limited government, incur higher ideological costs when supporting increased government spending, making their policy preferences more susceptible to trust dynamics. This framework broadens the scope of political trust's relevance, emphasizing its capacity to narrow ideological divides and influence both redistributive and distributive policy attitudes.
- 8. Methods:** The study utilizes data from the 2000 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES), employing both aggregate-level time-series analysis and individual-level ordered probit models. The dependent variables include public support for government spending on eight policies—four distributive (e.g., Social Security, Medicare) and four redistributive (e.g., Medicaid, aid to mothers with children). Key independent variables are political trust, ideological self-identification, and their interaction. Control variables include demographic factors, party identification, and membership in policy beneficiary groups. Time-series analyses assess the temporal relationships between trust and policy attitudes, while cross-sectional models estimate the conditional effects of ideology.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Political trust has a greater effect on public support for redistributive policies than distributive policies.
  - The impact of political trust on policy attitudes is moderated by ideology, with stronger effects observed among conservatives than liberals.
  - Ideological sacrifice intensifies the activation of political trust, influencing attitudes toward both redistributive and distributive spending.
 Their findings support these hypotheses, demonstrating significant interaction effects between political trust and conservatism.
- 10. Main findings:** Rudolph and Evans find that political trust significantly affects public attitudes toward government spending, with its influence more pronounced among conservatives. The study reveals that trust increases support for redistributive spending across all measured policies and for distributive spending in specific contexts. For conservatives, high trust levels can bridge ideological divides, aligning their preferences with those of liberals on certain spending issues. The authors also show that trust influences support for policies requiring both material and ideological sacrifices, underscoring its broader policy implications. These dynamics suggest that fluctuations in political trust have the potential to moderate ideological polarization and shape the public's policy preferences.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - "Requests for increased federal spending impose greater ideological costs on conservatives, making the political trust heuristic more likely to be activated among them than among liberals" (p. 662).
  - "The effects of political trust are not limited to redistributive spending but extend to distributive spending when ideological sacrifices are at stake, demonstrating trust's broad policy relevance" (p. 668).
  - "Our findings suggest that political trust plays a crucial role in narrowing ideological divisions, particularly among conservatives, who are typically less supportive of government spending" (p. 669).

### 2.14.6 A Tale of Political Trust in American Cities

Rahn, W. M., & Rudolph, T. J. (2005). A Tale of Political Trust in American Cities. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 69(4), 530–560. <https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfi056>

1. **Citation key:** rahn\_tale\_2005
2. **Author(s):** Wendy M. Rahn and Thomas J. Rudolph
3. **Year:** 2005
4. **Publication:** Public Opinion Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** political trust, local government, multilevel analysis, income inequality, racial diversity, institutional design
6. **Summary:** Rahn and Rudolph analyze the sources of political trust in local governments through a multilevel framework, examining individual and city-level factors. Using data from 55 U.S. cities, they explore how characteristics such as income inequality, racial diversity, ideological polarization, and institutional design influence trust. The study highlights significant contextual effects, showing that political trust is shaped not only by individual attitudes but also by broader community characteristics and political institutions.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose an integrated model of political trust, emphasizing four primary determinants: policy outcomes, policy congruence, procedural considerations, and the attributes of officeholders. They argue that trust is higher when governments produce effective policy outcomes, align with citizens' preferences, operate through fair and transparent procedures, and are staffed by competent and trustworthy officials. Contextual factors like income inequality, racial diversity, and institutional structure influence trust by shaping perceptions of these determinants. For instance, income inequality undermines perceptions of fairness, while racial diversity affects views of policy congruence. The model posits that institutional designs promoting efficiency and representation, such as council-manager systems, foster higher trust levels.
8. **Methods:** The study uses data from the Social Capital Benchmark Survey (SCBS) and various city-level sources. The authors employ hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to account for the nested structure of the data, with individuals nested within cities. The dependent variable is trust in local government, measured on a four-point scale. Independent variables include individual factors (e.g., political efficacy, perceived quality of life, race, ideology) and city-level factors (e.g., income inequality, racial diversity, political institutions). Interaction terms assess how institutional designs moderate the effects of race on trust.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Political trust is positively associated with council-manager forms of government and mixed systems of representation.
  - Income inequality, ideological polarization, and racial diversity negatively affect local political trust.
  - The presence of a Black mayor increases trust among Black residents.
  - Institutional factors condition the relationship between race and trust, with Black residents expressing lower trust in cities with at-large representation systems.

These hypotheses are supported, with significant findings for institutional effects and contextual diversity.

10. **Main findings:** Rahn and Rudolph find that political trust is significantly influenced by both individual- and city-level factors. Council-manager systems and mixed representation systems are associated with higher trust, while racial diversity, income inequality, and ideological polarization negatively impact trust. The presence of a Black mayor increases trust among Black residents, and institutional arrangements moderate the racial gap in trust. Cities with higher education levels exhibit greater trust, while larger populations and higher income inequality exacerbate distrust. These findings highlight the complex interplay between institutional design, community diversity, and individual perceptions in shaping trust.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Cities with council-manager systems have higher levels of trust, suggesting that institutional efficiency fosters public confidence in local government" (p. 548).
- "The presence of a Black mayor reduces racial disparities in political trust, particularly in cities with ward-based systems of representation" (p. 549).
- "Income inequality and racial diversity undermine political trust by weakening perceptions of fairness and policy congruence" (p. 551).

### 2.14.7 The Skeptical American: Revisiting the Meanings of Trust in Government and Confidence in Institutions

Cook, T. E., & Gronke, P. (2005). The Skeptical American: Revisiting the Meanings of Trust in Government and Confidence in Institutions [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 67(3), 784–803. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2005.00339.x>

1. **Citation key:** cook\_skeptical\_2005
2. **Author(s):** Timothy E. Cook and Paul Gronke
3. **Year:** 2005
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** political trust, distrust, public opinion, survey methods, confidence in institutions
6. **Summary:** Cook and Gronke critically examine the conceptual and empirical foundations of trust in government and

confidence in institutions. They argue that conventional measures used in surveys, such as those in the National Election Studies (NES) and General Social Survey (GSS), fail to capture the complexity of trust, conflating skepticism with distrust. Introducing a new active trust-distrust scale, they demonstrate the limitations of existing measures, which overstate public cynicism. Their findings suggest that Americans are more skeptical than distrustful, challenging the prevailing narrative of pervasive political alienation.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose a multidimensional framework for understanding political trust that distinguishes between active trust, skepticism, and active distrust. Skepticism reflects a cautious, evidence-based stance toward government, while distrust implies a belief in government malevolence or incompetence. They posit that conventional survey measures obscure these distinctions, leading to exaggerated perceptions of alienation. The theory emphasizes that trust in government and confidence in institutions are shaped by both enduring predispositions (e.g., socialization) and evaluations of current political and economic conditions. By disaggregating these components, Cook and Gronke aim to clarify the nuanced relationship between public attitudes and political legitimacy.

**8. Methods:** The study is based on a 2002 national telephone survey, specifically designed to address limitations in existing trust measures. The survey included the NES trust battery, the GSS confidence battery, and a new active trust-distrust scale. Using descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and multivariate regression, the authors compare the distributions and predictors of these measures. Independent variables include interpersonal trust, political engagement, economic evaluations, and demographic factors. They employ seemingly unrelated regression (SUR) models to test the distinctiveness of the measures and assess their underlying determinants.

**9. Hypotheses:** Cook and Gronke hypothesize that:

- Conventional trust measures fail to distinguish between skepticism and distrust, conflating them into a single category of "low trust."
- Active trust-distrust is more strongly associated with enduring social and political predispositions, while NES and GSS measures are more influenced by transient political and economic evaluations.
- Americans exhibit more skepticism than active distrust, challenging narratives of deep political alienation.

These hypotheses are confirmed, revealing significant differences in the conceptual underpinnings and predictors of trust measures.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find that conventional NES and GSS trust measures are disproportionately sensitive to short-term political evaluations, such as approval of Congress and economic conditions. In contrast, the active trust-distrust scale captures more stable, deeply rooted orientations toward government. Their analysis shows that a majority of Americans express skepticism rather than active distrust, highlighting the need for more nuanced measures of political trust. The study underscores the importance of methodological rigor in interpreting public opinion data, demonstrating that perceptions of widespread political alienation may be overstated.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The NES trust-in-government measure is unusually sensitive to contemporary political and especially personal economic circumstances, considerably more so than measures of generalized confidence or active trust-distrust" (p. 795).
- "The results from our new measure of active trust-distrust clearly show that the cynicism of the American population has been greatly exaggerated" (p. 799).
- "A distinction between skepticism and cynicism is rarely ventured in empirical studies, but our findings suggest that this separation is critical to understanding Americans' attitudes toward their government" (p. 800).

#### 2.14.8 When Trust Matters: The Case of Gun Control

Ryan, J. B., Andrews, T. M., Goodwin, T., & Krupnikov, Y. (2022). When Trust Matters: The Case of Gun Control. *Political Behavior*, 44(2), 725–748. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-020-09633-2>

**1. Citation key:** ryan\_when\_2022

**2. Author(s):** John Barry Ryan, Talbot M. Andrews, Tracy Goodwin, Yanna Krupnikov

**3. Year:** 2022

**4. Publication:** Political Behavior

**5. Keywords:** trust in government, gun control, public opinion, polarization, slippery slope

**6. Summary:** Ryan et al. examine the interplay between trust in government, partisan polarization, and support for gun control policies. They argue that trust moderates the fear of a "slippery slope," where individuals view incremental policy changes as precursors to extreme ideological shifts. Using data from the ANES and the American Panel Survey, the authors demonstrate that trust in government increases support for moderate gun control policies among conservatives but has diminishing effects for highly restrictive policies.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose that trust in government mitigates fears of policy escalation, or the "slippery slope." In polarized contexts, individuals distrustful of government are more likely to oppose even moderate policies, fearing they will lead to extreme, undesired changes. Trust, by contrast, reduces these fears, particularly among those ideologically distant from the proposed policy. The theory suggests that trust shapes the willingness of individuals to bear ideological or material costs, contingent on the policy's restrictiveness and the clarity of partisan divides. Importantly, the authors emphasize that these dynamics are conditioned by the unidimensional nature of gun control policies, where incremental changes align along a continuum of restrictiveness.

**8. Methods:** The study employs two primary data sources: the American National Election Studies (ANES) and the

American Panel Survey (TAPS). The ANES data, spanning presidential elections from 2000 to 2016, assesses general attitudes toward stricter gun control laws. TAPS includes responses to five specific gun control policies ordered along a restrictiveness continuum. The authors use logistic regression models and hierarchical interactions to test the role of trust, ideology, and policy restrictiveness. Key independent variables include trust in government, political ideology, and an interaction term between these measures, while controls account for partisanship, racial attitudes, and demographic factors.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Trust in government increases support for gun control policies, particularly among conservatives facing ideological costs.
- The effect of trust is moderated by policy restrictiveness, with stronger effects for moderate policies and diminished effects for highly restrictive policies.
- Polarization enhances the conditional role of trust, amplifying its effects in recent years.

These hypotheses are supported, with evidence that trust plays a significant role in alleviating slippery slope fears and that its effects vary by policy type and partisan context.

**10. Main findings:** Ryan et al. find that trust in government significantly increases support for moderate gun control policies among conservatives but has limited impact for the most restrictive policies. Among liberals and moderates, trust also enhances support for restrictive policies, though ceiling effects often limit its role for less controversial measures. The analysis highlights how elite polarization intensifies fears of policy escalation, particularly among distrustful conservatives, thereby shaping the conditions under which trust influences policy preferences. These findings underscore the critical interplay between trust, ideology, and the partisan environment in determining public attitudes toward contentious policies.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Trust in government facilitates the compromises necessary to put in place policies confronting large societal problems" (p. 726).
- "In contexts of elite polarization, distrustful citizens are more likely to perceive incremental policy changes as the first step toward extreme and unacceptable outcomes—a dynamic akin to the slippery slope" (p. 727).
- "Our findings suggest that trust in government mitigates conservative fears of policy escalation, allowing for greater support of moderate gun control measures" (p. 744).

## 2.15 Macro Politics

### 2.15.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of public opinion in American politics investigates the dynamic relationship between individual preferences, aggregate trends, and their influence on policy-making and electoral outcomes. Scholars explore how public opinion is shaped by media, elite framing, and social context, emphasizing its role as both a product and determinant of democratic responsiveness. Foundational theories highlight rational public behavior, while recent contributions examine the effects of information, political sophistication, and systemic biases, revealing the nuanced mechanisms underlying opinion formation and its implications for representation.
- **Media and Elite Influence:** Early studies, such as Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey (1987), underscore the importance of credible information in shaping public opinion. They argue that elite commentary and expert analysis significantly impact policy preferences, while interest groups, often perceived as self-serving, fail to persuade and may provoke negative reactions. The mediated nature of public opinion highlights the centrality of elite discourse in guiding public attitudes, particularly in contexts where information accessibility and framing vary widely.
- **Thermostatic and Cyclical Models of Opinion:** Wlezien (1995) introduces the thermostatic model, proposing that public preferences respond inversely to policy outputs, reflecting a dynamic feedback mechanism central to democratic accountability. Similarly, Stimson (1999) posits that public opinion cycles between liberalism and conservatism in response to societal changes and policy outcomes, with aggregate trends serving as a stabilizing force in governance. Both models emphasize the public's capacity to provide coherent signals for policy adjustment, challenging assumptions of static or uninformed opinion.
- **The Role of Political Knowledge and Ignorance:** Scholars like Bartels (1996) and Gilens (2001) examine the effects of political ignorance on voting behavior and policy preferences. Bartels finds that uninformed voters deviate significantly from hypothetical fully informed outcomes, often favoring incumbents and Democratic candidates. Gilens highlights the disproportionate influence of policy-specific ignorance, demonstrating that accurate information can realign public preferences with enlightened judgments. These studies reveal the critical role of information dissemination in mitigating biases and enhancing democratic representation.
- **Preference Falsification and Social Dynamics:** Kuran (1998) explores how social pressures lead individuals to misrepresent their private beliefs, sustaining undesired institutions and occasionally triggering abrupt social revolutions. His dual preference model illustrates the systemic ignorance created by preference falsification, with implications for understanding both stability and transformative change in public opinion. Historical cases, such as the collapse of Soviet communism, demonstrate the latent power of hidden dissent in reshaping societal norms.
- **Survey Bias and Political Inequality:** Studies by Berinsky (2002) and Althaus (2003) address biases in public opinion measurement, highlighting how survey nonresponse and unequal distributions of political knowledge distort collective preferences. Berinsky argues that economically disadvantaged individuals are systematically excluded from

surveys, leading to a conservative bias in aggregate opinions on social welfare policies. Althaus introduces the concept of "information effects," showing how knowledge disparities amplify inequalities in public sentiment, particularly on complex or less salient issues.

- **Macro-Level Dynamics of Opinion and Policy:** Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson (2002) provide a comprehensive analysis of the macro polity, emphasizing the interconnectedness of public opinion, electoral behavior, and policy-making. Their work demonstrates that aggregate opinion, captured through measures like policy mood, functions as a coherent guide for democratic governance, shaping and responding to government actions in a dynamic feedback loop. This perspective underscores the utility of macro-level analyses in understanding the stability and responsiveness of political systems.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Contemporary research continues to explore the implications of political ignorance, media influence, and information effects on public opinion and representation. Key debates focus on the extent to which public opinion reflects rational preferences versus elite manipulation, the role of social and demographic inequalities in shaping collective sentiment, and the potential for digital media to alter traditional dynamics of opinion formation. Future studies are likely to expand on these themes, integrating insights from cognitive psychology, behavioral economics, and computational social science to address emerging challenges in measuring and understanding public opinion in an evolving political landscape.

### 2.15.2 What Moves Public Opinion?

Page, B. I., Shapiro, R. Y., & Dempsey, G. R. (1987). What Moves Public Opinion? [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 81(1), 23–43. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1960777>

- 1. Citation key:** page\_what\_1987
- 2. Author(s):** Benjamin I. Page, Robert Y. Shapiro, and Glenn R. Dempsey
- 3. Year:** 1987
- 4. Publication:** American Political Science Review
- 5. Keywords:** public opinion, mass media, policy preferences, political communication, elite influence
- 6. Summary:** Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey explore the influences that shape public opinion, particularly focusing on the role of television news. Using a dataset of repeated public opinion survey questions paired with coded television news content, the authors assess how different sources—including presidents, experts, and commentators—impact shifts in policy preferences. Their findings reveal that credible news sources significantly influence public opinion, while those perceived as less credible, such as interest groups, often fail to persuade or even provoke negative reactions.
- 7. Theory:** The authors propose that public opinion changes when individuals receive new, credible information that aligns with specific conditions: the information must be received, understood, relevant, discrepant from prior beliefs, and credible. Drawing on rational choice theory, they suggest that citizens evaluate policy alternatives instrumentally, based on expected costs and benefits influenced by new information. Television news plays a critical role as a primary information source due to its accessibility and ability to simplify complex topics. However, the influence of news content varies widely depending on the credibility of its sources. The authors argue that elite-driven commentary and expertise are particularly impactful because they carry perceived legitimacy, while self-serving interest groups and less credible actors struggle to sway public opinion. This dynamic highlights the mediated nature of public opinion formation, shaped significantly by elite discourse rather than direct exposure to events.
- 8. Methods:** The study utilizes a quasi-experimental design that combines survey data from 80 pairs of repeated policy preference questions with content analysis of television news broadcasts aired between survey waves. The dependent variable is public opinion at the time of the second survey, and independent variables include coded measures of news content, such as directional thrust (pro or con), source credibility, and relevance to policy issues. The authors conduct ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses to estimate the effects of different news sources on public opinion, controlling for prior opinion levels and distinguishing between pre-survey and inter-survey media content. This approach allows them to isolate the influence of various actors, including presidents, commentators, and experts, while accounting for discrepancies and lags in media effects.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - New information from credible sources such as experts and commentators significantly impacts public opinion.
  - Popular presidents are more effective at influencing public opinion than unpopular ones.
  - Interest groups, perceived as self-serving, have limited or even negative effects on public opinion.
 These hypotheses are largely confirmed, with credible sources driving substantial opinion changes and less credible actors failing to achieve similar influence.
- 10. Main findings:** The study finds that public opinion is heavily influenced by elite communication, particularly from credible sources such as news commentators and experts. News commentary has the strongest per-unit effect, often shaping public opinion through its perceived alignment with elite or media consensus. Expert testimony also exerts substantial influence, especially on technical or complex policy issues. Presidents impact public opinion positively only when they are popular, underscoring the importance of credibility. Conversely, interest groups often provoke negative reactions, moving public opinion in the opposite direction of their advocated positions. The authors highlight the importance of distinguishing between news sources and emphasize that aggregated media content obscures the differential effects of individual actors.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “News commentary... is estimated to have the most dramatic impact. A single ‘probably pro’ commentary is associated with more than four percentage points of opinion change!” (p. 30).
- “The marked distinctions among types of news fits well with our idea that information from different sources has different degrees of credibility” (p. 37).
- “Rational citizens accept information and analysis only from those they trust. In contrast, news sources with low credibility, such as unpopular presidents or groups perceived to represent narrow interests, generally have no effect, or even a negative impact, on public opinion” (p. 39).

#### 2.15.3 The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending

Wlezien, C. (1995). The Public as Thermostat: Dynamics of Preferences for Spending [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 39(4), 981–1000. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111666>

1. **Citation key:** wlezien\_public\_1995
2. **Author(s):** Christopher Wlezien
3. **Year:** 1995
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** public opinion, thermostatic model, spending preferences, democratic accountability, policy feedback
6. **Summary:** Wlezien examines how public preferences for government spending respond to changes in policy outputs, proposing a “thermostatic” model in which the public adjusts its demand for “more” or “less” policy based on the level of government activity in a specific domain. The study uses time-series data on U.S. public opinion and federal appropriations for defense and social spending from 1973 to 1991. The findings demonstrate that public opinion reacts negatively to policy changes: increases in appropriations lead to reduced public demand for additional spending and vice versa. This responsiveness underpins the public’s role in democratic accountability.
7. **Theory:** The thermostatic model suggests that public opinion functions as a feedback mechanism in a democratic system. When policy deviates from the public’s preferred level, citizens send signals—demanding adjustments to align policy with preferences. Wlezien’s framework builds on Easton’s political system model and Deutsch’s control theory, emphasizing that the public is informed enough to recognize shifts in policy outputs and adjust their preferences accordingly. However, this responsiveness depends on the availability and salience of information about specific policy domains. For example, defense spending generates more immediate feedback due to its clear definition and higher salience in public discourse, whereas social spending often involves less specific or widely available information. This theory challenges traditional conceptions of public opinion as static or uninformed, positing instead that citizens are capable of dynamic, rational responses to policy changes.
8. **Methods:** Wlezien uses time-series regression analysis to test the thermostatic model, combining annual survey data on public spending preferences with federal appropriations data. He constructs measures of public opinion by calculating net support for spending (the percentage favoring increased spending minus those favoring reductions) across six categories: defense, big cities, education, health, welfare, and the environment. Appropriations data, adjusted for inflation, capture the government’s policy outputs in each category. The analysis focuses on how changes in appropriations influence year-to-year variations in net public support, controlling for external factors such as economic conditions (e.g., business expectations) and perceived external threats (e.g., U.S.-Soviet relations).
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Public preferences for spending adjust inversely to changes in appropriations.
  - This responsiveness is stronger in domains with clearer and more salient policy information (e.g., defense) than in less defined domains (e.g., social programs).
  - Public responsiveness reflects both short-term adjustments to policy changes and long-term shifts in preferences driven by external conditions (e.g., economic optimism or perceived threats).

These hypotheses are supported, with the thermostatic model explaining significant portions of public opinion dynamics.
10. **Main findings:** Wlezien’s analysis confirms that public opinion behaves thermostatically, with preferences for more or less spending adjusting inversely to changes in appropriations. For defense spending, the relationship is robust and immediate, reflecting high salience and public awareness of defense policies. Social spending preferences also respond to appropriations but in a more generalized manner, as citizens lack detailed knowledge of individual program budgets. The study highlights a “guns versus butter” trade-off, where increased defense spending reduces support for social spending. These findings demonstrate that democratic accountability is maintained through this feedback loop, with policymakers indirectly guided by public signals to align their decisions with evolving public preferences.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “The public behaves like a thermostat, adjusting its preferences for more spending downward when appropriations increase, and vice versa” (p. 982).
  - “Public preferences for defense and social spending are inversely related, reflecting a guns-butter trade-off in the public’s priorities” (p. 997).
  - “Ultimately, the thermostatic model illustrates that public opinion provides meaningful guidance to policymakers, ensuring democratic accountability even in complex policy environments” (p. 999).

#### 2.15.4 Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections

Bartels, L. M. (1996). Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 40(1), 194–230. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111700>

1. **Citation key:** bartels\_uninformed\_1996
2. **Author(s):** Larry M. Bartels
3. **Year:** 1996
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** political ignorance, information shortcuts, voter behavior, presidential elections, probit analysis
6. **Summary:** Bartels investigates the impact of political ignorance on voting behavior in U.S. presidential elections, testing whether uninformed voters use cues or information shortcuts to mimic fully informed behavior. Utilizing National Election Study data from six presidential elections, Bartels compares actual voting behavior with hypothetical outcomes projected for a fully informed electorate. He finds that uninformed voters do not act as though they are fully informed, and deviations in their behavior have significant aggregate consequences, favoring incumbents and Democratic candidates.
7. **Theory:** Bartels challenges optimistic theories that suggest uninformed voters make decisions similar to informed ones through cues, heuristics, or statistical aggregation. He argues that these mechanisms fail to replicate informed decision-making reliably, as uninformed voters lack the cognitive tools and contextual knowledge required for effective judgment. Bartels also critiques the Condorcet Jury Theorem's application to mass electorates, suggesting that correlated errors in voter judgment undermine the theorem's assumption that random errors cancel out in aggregate. His framework emphasizes the systematic biases introduced by political ignorance, such as favoring incumbents due to default tendencies or a lack of comparative information.
8. **Methods:** Bartels uses a probit model to estimate the effects of political information on voting behavior. He imputes hypothetical "fully informed" vote choices based on observed correlations between voter characteristics (e.g., education, income, race) and political knowledge. National Election Study survey data from 1972 to 1992 provide the basis for comparing actual and fully informed voting outcomes. Bartels examines individual-level deviations from informed behavior and assesses aggregate-level biases in election results, applying jackknife resampling to evaluate the robustness of his findings.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Uninformed voters fail to mimic the behavior of fully informed voters, deviating significantly in their vote probabilities.
  - Aggregate election outcomes differ from hypothetical fully informed outcomes, systematically favoring incumbents and Democratic candidates.
  - Political information conditions the impact of demographic characteristics on vote choice, with well-informed voters exhibiting distinct patterns from their less-informed counterparts.
- These hypotheses are confirmed, revealing both individual and systemic effects of political ignorance.
10. **Main findings:** Bartels finds that the average individual deviation from fully informed voting behavior is approximately 10 percentage points, with aggregate deviations in election outcomes ranging from 2.7 to 5.6 percentage points. These biases consistently favor incumbents and Democrats. He attributes these effects to the "default" nature of incumbent support and the persistence of partisan attachments among uninformed voters. Demographic analyses show that information levels condition the effects of race, gender, and religion on voting behavior. For example, uninformed Catholics lean Democratic, while well-informed Catholics show a Republican preference, highlighting the role of political knowledge in shaping group-specific electoral behavior.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Uninformed voters fail to act as though they are fully informed, both individually and in aggregate, with politically significant consequences for election outcomes" (p. 209).
  - "Systematic biases in favor of incumbents and Democrats underscore the political consequences of voter ignorance, which cannot be mitigated simply by statistical aggregation" (p. 220).
  - "Political ignorance affects not only the variability but also the central tendencies of voter preferences, conditioning the impact of demographic characteristics in predictable yet consequential ways" (p. 211).

#### 2.15.5 Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification

Kuran, T. (1998, June). *Private Truths, Public Lies: The Social Consequences of Preference Falsification* [Google-Books-ID: ADPED-wAAQBAJ]. Harvard University Press

1. **Citation key:** kuran\_private\_1998
2. **Author(s):** Timur Kuran
3. **Year:** 1998
4. **Publication:** Harvard University Press
5. **Keywords:** preference falsification, public opinion, social change, revolutions, collective conservatism
6. **Summary:** Kuran explores the phenomenon of preference falsification, where individuals misrepresent their private beliefs under social pressure. The book examines how this dynamic affects public opinion, perpetuates undesired social systems, and occasionally leads to abrupt and unforeseen social revolutions. Kuran's analysis provides a framework for understanding both the stability of oppressive regimes and the suddenness of their collapse, grounded in his

dual preference model that distinguishes between public and private preferences.

**7. Theory:** Kuran's dual preference model posits that individuals often publicly express views that differ from their private beliefs due to social pressures and incentives to conform. This divergence creates systemic ignorance about true public opinion, perpetuating social outcomes that may be widely despised privately. The model explains how this discrepancy leads to collective conservatism—where undesirable institutions persist due to misaligned public preferences—and sudden social revolutions when hidden dissent reaches a tipping point. Kuran also emphasizes the self-reinforcing nature of preference falsification, as individuals' public lies reinforce others' reluctance to reveal their private truths. The theory accounts for phenomena like the collapse of Soviet communism, shifts in affirmative action support, and the persistence of the caste system, highlighting how small acts of dissent can eventually unravel widespread falsification, sparking rapid societal changes.

**8. Methods:** The book combines theoretical modeling with historical case studies to illustrate the dynamics of preference falsification and its societal consequences. Kuran analyzes diverse examples, including the downfall of communism in Eastern Europe, the weakening of the Hindu caste system, and shifts in U.S. racial politics. He also draws on historical records and sociological research to trace how public and private preferences interact in these contexts, linking preference falsification to social stability and abrupt upheaval. The empirical analysis is supplemented with thought experiments that reveal the thresholds at which private dissent becomes public resistance, triggering change.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Preference falsification sustains undesirable social systems by creating a false consensus around public opinion.
- Social revolutions occur suddenly when private dissent reaches a tipping point, exposing the hidden opposition suppressed by falsification.
- Self-reinforcing processes of preference falsification result in collective ignorance, obscuring true public sentiment until conditions for change align.

These hypotheses are supported through theoretical analysis and historical examples, demonstrating the model's explanatory power across varied contexts.

**10. Main findings:** Kuran finds that preference falsification plays a pivotal role in sustaining repressive regimes and outdated social institutions by obscuring the true distribution of private opinions. The public expression of false preferences creates collective ignorance, where individuals are unaware of widespread private dissent. This ignorance perpetuates social inertia and prevents incremental change. However, when conditions shift—such as through small acts of dissent or external shocks—hidden opposition can rapidly surface, leading to sudden and transformative societal changes. Kuran's analysis explains historical cases like the collapse of Soviet communism, which appeared stable until preference falsification unraveled under the pressure of growing dissent. Similarly, he demonstrates how preference falsification underpins collective conservatism, maintaining systems like the Hindu caste hierarchy or entrenched racial inequalities, until tipping points trigger abrupt change.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Preference falsification:* The act of misrepresenting one's private beliefs to align with perceived social pressures.
- *Collective conservatism:* The phenomenon where societies maintain existing institutions and norms due to widespread preference falsification.
- *Knowledge falsification:* A consequence of preference falsification, where collective ignorance about private beliefs perpetuates social inertia.
- *Tipping point:* The critical threshold at which hidden dissent becomes visible, catalyzing rapid social change.
- *Dual preference model:* A framework distinguishing between private and public preferences, central to explaining preference falsification.

### 2.15.6 Public Opinion in America: Moods, Cycles, and Swings

Stimson, J. A. (1999, January). *Public Opinion In America: Moods, Cycles, And Swings, Second Edition* [Google-Books-ID: gcAd-TAEACAAJ]. Avalon Publishing

**1. Citation key:** stimson\_public\_1999

**2. Author(s):** James A. Stimson

**3. Year:** 1999

**4. Publication:** Westview Press

**5. Keywords:** public opinion, policy mood, liberalism, conservatism, policy responsiveness

**6. Summary:** Stimson investigates the dynamics of public opinion in the United States, introducing the concept of "policy mood" to capture aggregate shifts in public preferences toward liberal or conservative policies. Drawing on decades of survey data, the book examines how these moods influence, and are influenced by, policy decisions, electoral outcomes, and historical events. Stimson's work provides a nuanced understanding of the interplay between public opinion and government responsiveness.

**7. Theory:** Stimson's theory centers on the concept of policy mood, a composite measure of public preferences aggregated across various policy domains. He argues that public opinion is not static but follows cycles of liberalism and conservatism, shaped by societal events, policy outputs, and political leadership. The public acts as a thermostat, adjusting its policy demands in response to government actions. For instance, periods of expansive liberal policy, such as the Great Society, may prompt shifts toward conservative preferences as citizens seek balance. This cyclical nature of public opinion challenges traditional views that voters consistently adhere to ideological labels, emphasizing instead

the role of dynamic, issue-based preferences. Stimson also underscores the role of politicians as rational actors who respond to these shifts, aligning their actions with prevailing moods to secure electoral advantage.

**8. Methods:** The book employs a recursive scaling method to aggregate survey data from over 50 years of public opinion polls, creating a single index of policy mood. Stimson analyzes time-series data to trace mood fluctuations and their relationship to policy outcomes and electoral results. By standardizing survey marginals and addressing issues of missing data, he ensures robustness in measuring aggregate opinion trends. His methodological transparency, including visualizations of raw and processed data, allows readers to evaluate the validity of his findings.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Public opinion shifts cyclically between liberalism and conservatism in response to policy outputs and societal changes.
- Policy mood predicts electoral outcomes and influences government policy over time.
- Politicians adjust their strategies to align with changes in public opinion to maintain electoral support.

These hypotheses are supported through empirical analyses, highlighting the predictive power of policy mood in explaining political dynamics.

**10. Main findings:** Stimson finds that policy mood is a powerful predictor of political and policy changes. Periods of liberal policymaking, such as during the Johnson administration, often lead to conservative shifts in mood, as observed in the rise of Reagan-era conservatism. Conversely, conservative retrenchment prompts a resurgence of liberal preferences. This dynamic reflects the public's tendency to seek balance in governance. Mood shifts are shown to precede changes in electoral outcomes, indicating that public opinion leads political realignments rather than merely reflecting them. Stimson's analysis also demonstrates that while policy mood is predominantly unidimensional, issues like abortion or crime may diverge from broader trends, highlighting the complexity of public preferences.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Policy mood*: An aggregate measure of public preferences across policy domains, reflecting shifts toward liberalism or conservatism.
- *Thermostatic model*: A metaphor describing how public opinion adjusts to policy outputs, seeking equilibrium.
- *Electoral responsiveness*: The tendency of political leaders to align their behavior with shifts in public opinion to secure electoral success.
- *Liberalism and conservatism*: Ideological orientations representing preferences for expansive government action versus limited government intervention, respectively.

### 2.15.7 Macropartisanship and Macroideology in the Sophisticated Electorate

Box-Steffensmeier, J. M., & De Boef, S. (2001). Macropartisanship and Macroideology in the Sophisticated Electorate [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 63(1), 232–248. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-3816.00066>

**1. Citation key:** box-steffensmeier\_macropartisanship\_2001

**2. Author(s):** Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier and Suzanna De Boef

**3. Year:** 2001

**4. Publication:** Journal of Politics

**5. Keywords:** macropartisanship, macroideology, political sophistication, public opinion, time-series analysis

**6. Summary:** This study investigates the relationship between macropartisanship and macroideology in the American electorate, focusing on the politically sophisticated segment of the public. Using data from CBS News and New York Times surveys, Box-Steffensmeier and De Boef argue that ideological and partisan preferences are interconnected for politically sophisticated voters, who are more likely to link ideology with party affiliation. The findings emphasize the role of political sophistication in shaping public opinion and the implications for democratic representation.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose that macropartisanship and macroideology are distinct yet interconnected concepts that vary across levels of political sophistication. Politically sophisticated individuals, defined by their cognitive complexity and exposure to political information, are more likely to perceive and act upon the connection between ideological trends and partisan preferences. The study builds on the literature on ideological constraint and partisan alignment, asserting that less sophisticated individuals respond more to symbolic or issue-specific cues, while sophisticated individuals integrate ideological and partisan signals over time. The theory highlights how elite cues, policy debates, and major political events reinforce these connections among the politically sophisticated, influencing the broader electorate's trends in macropartisanship and macroideology.

**8. Methods:** The authors analyze quarterly survey data from 1977 to 1995, using fractional integration methods and time-series analysis to examine the dynamics of macropartisanship and macroideology. Political sophistication is measured through educational attainment, a proxy for cognitive complexity and political awareness. The analysis includes Haugh-Pierce Granger causality tests to evaluate temporal relationships between partisan and ideological trends, distinguishing among education subgroups to isolate the effects of political sophistication.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Macropartisanship and macroideology are positively correlated among politically sophisticated individuals but independent among less sophisticated individuals.
- Changes in macroideology precede shifts in macropartisanship for the sophisticated segment of the electorate.
- The relationship between macropartisanship and macroideology is mutually reinforcing among the politically sophisticated.

These hypotheses are supported by the analysis, revealing significant relationships between ideology and partisanship for the most educated segments of the electorate.

**10. Main findings:** The results demonstrate that macropartisanship and macroideology are connected primarily among politically sophisticated voters, who exhibit stronger coherence between their partisan and ideological identities. For these individuals, changes in ideological preferences (e.g., shifts toward liberalism or conservatism) align with corresponding shifts in partisan identification (e.g., Democratic or Republican affiliation). Less sophisticated voters, by contrast, show little to no correlation between these trends. The study also finds evidence of a reciprocal relationship between macroideology and macropartisanship: ideological changes influence partisanship over time, and partisan shifts reinforce ideological alignment. These findings suggest that politically sophisticated voters serve as a critical link between elite discourse and aggregate public opinion, shaping the broader dynamics of political representation and policy responsiveness.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “The politically sophisticated segment of the electorate connects macropartisanship and macroideology over time, whereas less sophisticated voters do not exhibit this connection” (p. 235).
- “Elite ideological appeals are most likely to resonate with the sophisticated electorate, as these individuals are more attuned to the language of liberalism and conservatism” (p. 237).
- “The findings highlight a democratic paradox: while the politically sophisticated are best represented in ideological and partisan terms, the less sophisticated are largely excluded from this representational dynamic” (p. 245).

### 2.15.8 Political Ignorance and Collective Policy Preferences

Gilens, M. (2001). Political Ignorance and Collective Policy Preferences. *American Political Science Review*, 95(2), 379–396.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055401002222>

1. **Citation key:** gilens\_political\_2001

2. **Author(s):** Martin Gilens

3. **Year:** 2001

4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review

5. **Keywords:** political ignorance, policy preferences, general knowledge, policy-specific information, public opinion

6. **Summary:** Gilens investigates the role of political ignorance in shaping collective policy preferences, distinguishing between general political knowledge and policy-specific information. Using survey data and randomized experiments, he demonstrates that while general knowledge affects political preferences, policy-specific ignorance has an even greater impact. His findings suggest that correcting misinformation about specific policies could significantly alter public opinion, particularly for individuals with high levels of general knowledge.

7. **Theory:** The author challenges the assumption that general political knowledge alone shapes enlightened policy preferences. Gilens argues that specific, policy-relevant information is crucial in forming accurate political judgments, even among well-informed individuals. He posits that general knowledge, while indicative of cognitive ability and political interest, often fails to capture the nuances of policy-specific facts that directly influence preferences. By integrating general knowledge and policy-specific information, Gilens offers a more comprehensive framework for understanding public opinion dynamics. This theory underscores the importance of accurate information dissemination in democratic decision-making, as misinformation can lead to significant deviations from what preferences would be in a well-informed electorate.

8. **Methods:** The study employs both traditional survey methods and experimental designs to assess the effects of political ignorance. Gilens uses data from the 1988 American National Election Study (NES) and the 1998 Multi-Investigator Survey (MIS) to analyze correlations between policy-specific information and collective preferences. Randomized experiments were conducted to isolate the causal effects of providing accurate information on policy judgments, such as crime rates and foreign aid spending. Logistic regression models with interaction terms were used to evaluate the differential effects of general and specific knowledge on policy preferences, controlling for demographic and partisan variables.

9. **Hypotheses:**

- General political knowledge influences policy preferences but does not fully account for variations caused by policy-specific information.
- Ignorance of policy-specific facts has a significant impact on political judgments, particularly among highly knowledgeable individuals.
- Providing accurate policy-specific information alters public preferences, narrowing the gap between observed and “fully informed” judgments.

These hypotheses are supported, demonstrating the pivotal role of policy-specific information in shaping public opinion.

**10. Main findings:** Gilens finds that policy-specific ignorance often outweighs the effects of general political knowledge in shaping public preferences. For example, correcting misinformation about crime rates and foreign aid spending led to significant changes in support for related policies. Among individuals with high levels of general knowledge, policy-specific information had an even greater influence, suggesting that these individuals are better equipped to integrate new facts into their judgments. The study also highlights the limitations of relying solely on general knowledge scales

to assess public opinion, as they fail to capture the substantive effects of specific information. Gilens concludes that addressing misinformation can enhance democratic representation by aligning collective preferences more closely with informed judgments.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Ignorance of policy-specific facts appears to have a greater influence on political preferences than the lack of general political knowledge as measured by political information scales" (p. 380).
- "Policy-specific information has a stronger influence on respondents who display higher levels of general political knowledge" (p. 383).
- "By addressing gaps in policy-specific information, we can better approximate the enlightened preferences that a fully educated and engaged citizenry would hold" (p. 387).

#### 2.15.9 Silent Voices: Social Welfare Policy Opinions and Political Equality in America

Berinsky, A. J. (2002). Silent Voices: Social Welfare Policy Opinions and Political Equality in America [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(2), 276–287. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3088376>

1. Citation key: berinsky\_silent\_2002

2. Author(s): Adam J. Berinsky

3. Year: 2002

4. Publication: American Journal of Political Science

5. Keywords: social welfare policy, political inequality, public opinion, survey bias, political participation

6. Summary: Berinsky examines the systematic exclusion bias in public opinion surveys on social welfare policy in the United States. He argues that survey nonresponse disproportionately silences economically disadvantaged individuals and those supportive of welfare state expansion. This exclusion bias leads to a distorted representation of public opinion, favoring conservative policy preferences and mirroring inequalities found in traditional forms of political participation.

7. Theory: The central theory presented by Berinsky is that public opinion surveys, often perceived as egalitarian tools, replicate patterns of inequality inherent in traditional political participation. He posits that individuals with limited access to resources—such as education, income, and time—are less likely to form and express coherent policy opinions in surveys. This systematic nonresponse aligns with broader societal inequalities, as economically disadvantaged individuals and proponents of redistributive policies are underrepresented in aggregate public opinion measures. The theory also incorporates cognitive psychology insights, suggesting that survey nonresponse results from ambivalence and uncertainty rather than apathy. Berinsky highlights how this bias reflects structural tensions in American political culture, particularly between democratic egalitarianism and capitalist individualism.

8. Methods: The study uses data from the 1996 National Election Studies (NES) to analyze opinion responses on social welfare policies, such as job guarantees, income redistribution, and government services. Berinsky applies logistic regression and Heckman selection models to distinguish between the decision to express an opinion and the direction of that opinion. He incorporates variables such as education, income, employment status, and ideological values to assess their influence on survey nonresponse and opinion formation. The analysis estimates the potential bias introduced by nonresponse and evaluates its impact on the aggregate representation of public opinion.

9. Hypotheses:

- Survey nonresponse on social welfare policy disproportionately excludes individuals supportive of welfare state expansion.
- Exclusion bias in surveys aligns with structural inequalities, favoring conservative policy preferences.
- Correcting for exclusion bias would reveal greater public support for liberal social welfare policies.

These hypotheses are supported by the findings, which demonstrate significant exclusion bias in survey responses on social welfare issues.

10. Main findings: Berinsky finds that survey nonresponse systematically excludes economically disadvantaged individuals and liberals who face greater value conflicts when forming policy opinions. This exclusion leads to a conservative bias in aggregate public opinion on social welfare policies. For instance, nonrespondents were consistently more liberal than respondents on issues like job guarantees and income redistribution. Correcting for this bias revealed a larger base of liberal support than survey results initially indicated. The findings also show that opinion distortion mirrors broader patterns of inequality in political participation, challenging the notion that surveys are inherently egalitarian tools for gauging public sentiment.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Public opinion on social welfare policy controversies gives disproportionate weight to respondents opposed to expanding the government's role in the economy" (p. 276).
- "Opinion polls may therefore reinforce, not correct, the inegalitarian shortcomings of traditional forms of political participation" (p. 276).
- "The 'voice' of those who abstain from the social welfare policy questions is different from those who respond to such items" (p. 277).

### 2.15.10 The Macro Polity

Erikson, R. S., MacKuen, M., & Stimson, J. A. (2002, January). *The Macro Polity* [Google-Books-ID: RYxYV87j6DIC]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** erikson\_macro\_2002
2. **Author(s):** Robert S. Erikson, Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson
3. **Year:** 2002
4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press
5. **Keywords:** macro polity, aggregate public opinion, dynamic representation, policy mood, partisanship
6. **Summary:** This book provides a comprehensive analysis of the dynamics of the American political system, focusing on the interaction between public opinion, electoral behavior, and government policy. Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson argue that aggregate public opinion—captured through measures like policy mood—functions as a stabilizing force in representative democracy. They explore how shifts in public sentiment influence policy-making and how government actions, in turn, shape public opinion, creating a dynamic feedback loop that underpins democratic responsiveness.
7. **Theory:** The authors theorize that the macro polity operates as a dynamic system in which public opinion, electoral outcomes, and government policy are interconnected. Policy mood, as an aggregate measure of public preferences, reflects the electorate's response to government performance and economic conditions. The authors propose that elections serve as a mechanism for translating public preferences into policy change, while government responsiveness is constrained by institutional inertia and political competition. This theory challenges the view that individual-level political ignorance undermines democracy, suggesting instead that aggregate opinion provides a coherent signal that guides policymaking. Furthermore, the authors emphasize the reciprocal nature of this relationship, with public sentiment influencing elite behavior and vice versa.
8. **Methods:** The authors employ longitudinal data spanning 50 years to analyze trends in public opinion, partisanship, and policy outputs. They use sophisticated statistical techniques, including time-series analysis and equilibrium models, to study the feedback mechanisms between public preferences and government actions. Their methodological approach integrates individual-level survey data with aggregate-level indicators, allowing for a detailed examination of the macro polity's dynamic behavior.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Policy mood influences government policy decisions, creating a feedback loop that aligns policy outputs with public preferences over time.
  - Aggregate partisanship varies systematically in response to economic performance and government actions.
  - Elections function as a corrective mechanism, enabling voters to realign government policies with shifting public preferences.

These hypotheses are validated through extensive empirical analyses, demonstrating the interconnectedness of public opinion, partisanship, and policy-making.
10. **Main findings:** Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson find that aggregate public opinion serves as a coherent and influential guide for democratic governance. Policy mood strongly predicts shifts in government policy, with changes in public preferences leading to subsequent adjustments in policy outputs. The authors also show that macropartisanship responds to economic conditions, with public support for political parties shifting in response to perceptions of economic performance. Elections emerge as a critical mechanism for aligning government actions with public sentiment, though institutional and partisan constraints moderate this responsiveness. Importantly, the study reveals that aggregate measures, such as policy mood, capture systematic and meaningful trends that are obscured at the individual level, highlighting the utility of a macro perspective in political analysis.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Policy mood:* An aggregate measure of public preferences for more or less government activity, reflecting shifts toward liberalism or conservatism.
  - *Macropartisanship:* The aggregate-level fluctuation of partisan identification within the electorate over time.
  - *Dynamic representation:* The process through which public opinion influences government policy, creating a feedback loop of responsiveness.
  - *Equilibrium model:* A statistical approach used to analyze the stability and responsiveness of the macro polity over time.

### 2.15.11 Collective Preferences in Democratic Politics: Opinion Surveys and the Will of the People

Althaus, S. L. (2003, September). *Collective Preferences in Democratic Politics: Opinion Surveys and the Will of the People* [Google-Books-ID: 1j8JRNIlikzgC]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** althaus\_collective\_2003
2. **Author(s):** Scott L. Althaus
3. **Year:** 2003
4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press
5. **Keywords:** public opinion, information effects, political knowledge, opinion surveys, democratic representation
6. **Summary:** Althaus examines the biases in public opinion surveys caused by unequal distributions of political knowledge. He introduces the concept of “information effects,” which occur when differences in knowledge across so-

cial groups distort collective preferences. Using data from the American National Election Studies (ANES), Althaus demonstrates how information effects systematically bias survey results, underrepresenting the views of less informed groups and challenging the notion that opinion polls reliably reflect the public's will.

**7. Theory:** Althaus theorizes that public opinion surveys, often regarded as egalitarian tools, fail to represent collective preferences accurately due to the uneven distribution of political knowledge. He identifies two key mechanisms: *group depletion*, where less informed individuals disproportionately provide "don't know" responses, and *convergence*, where the least informed tend to provide more uniform responses, skewing results. Althaus argues that aggregation does not eliminate these biases, as assumed in classical theories of collective rationality. Instead, systematic inequalities in political knowledge lead to a misrepresentation of public preferences, with the voices of disadvantaged groups—such as the poor, minorities, and less educated individuals—effectively silenced. This theory underscores the critical role of political knowledge in ensuring democratic representation and highlights the limitations of opinion surveys as tools for gauging the public's will.

**8. Methods:** Althaus uses data from the ANES (1988, 1992, 1996) to analyze the effects of political knowledge on survey responses. Employing statistical simulations, he compares actual survey distributions to hypothetical "fully informed" distributions, where less informed respondents are assigned the preferences of their more informed counterparts. This approach allows him to estimate the magnitude of information effects across various policy issues. Althaus supplements these simulations with logistic regression models to examine the demographic and contextual factors influencing information effects, such as education, media exposure, and issue salience.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Information effects significantly distort public opinion surveys, underrepresenting the preferences of less informed groups.
- Group depletion and convergence are primary mechanisms driving these distortions, with depletion reducing representation and convergence amplifying the influence of less informed opinions.
- Correcting for information effects reveals substantial shifts in collective preferences, often increasing support for redistributive policies and other liberal positions.

These hypotheses are supported, demonstrating the pervasive impact of information effects on public opinion measurement.

**10. Main findings:** Althaus finds that information effects systematically bias public opinion surveys, with less informed individuals underrepresented and their preferences disproportionately influencing aggregate results. His analysis reveals that "fully informed" distributions differ significantly from observed survey outcomes, particularly on issues like abortion, social welfare, and racial policies. These biases disproportionately silence disadvantaged groups, leading to a conservative skew in collective preferences. Althaus also highlights the importance of issue salience, showing that information effects are more pronounced on complex or less salient topics. He concludes that addressing these biases requires integrating political knowledge measures into survey methodologies and interpreting survey results with greater caution.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Information effects:* Bias in collective opinion caused by the uneven distribution of political knowledge across social groups.
- *Group depletion:* The underrepresentation of less informed individuals in survey results due to their higher likelihood of providing "don't know" responses.
- *Convergence:* The tendency of less informed individuals to provide more uniform responses, amplifying their influence on aggregate opinion.
- *Fully informed distribution:* A hypothetical measure of public opinion based on the preferences of well-informed respondents.
- *Political knowledge:* The level of factual information an individual possesses about politics and public affairs, influencing their ability to form coherent opinions.

### 2.15.12 The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences

Page, B. I., & Shapiro, R. Y. (2010, May). *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences* [Google-Books-ID: 3R9XFfX4bfcC]. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** page\_rational\_2010
2. **Author(s):** Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro
3. **Year:** 2010
4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press
5. **Keywords:** public opinion, policy preferences, stability, rationality, media influence
6. **Summary:** Page and Shapiro analyze trends in American public opinion over five decades, drawing on a comprehensive database of over 1,000 survey questions. They argue that, despite critiques of public opinion as inconsistent or uninformed, collective opinion is both stable and rational. Their findings reveal that public preferences respond logically to changing circumstances and information, challenging theories of public irrationality and underscoring the importance of media and elite influence on opinion formation.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that collective public opinion operates as a rational and coherent system, even if individual opinions are occasionally inconsistent or uninformed. They posit that stability in aggregate opinion arises from the

law of large numbers, which smooths out individual-level randomness and amplifies systematic, informed responses to policy and societal changes. Page and Shapiro also emphasize the role of the media and elites in shaping public opinion by selectively framing issues and providing interpretive cues. They argue that opinion changes occur when new information aligns with existing values or when transformative events, such as wars or economic crises, reshape public priorities. This framework positions public opinion as a meaningful guide for democratic governance, capable of influencing policy outcomes and electoral dynamics.

**8. Methods:** The book relies on a longitudinal analysis of survey data collected between 1935 and 1990. The authors use only identically worded questions from repeated surveys to ensure comparability over time. They apply descriptive and inferential statistics to trace trends in policy preferences across domains such as foreign policy, civil rights, and social welfare. Case studies of specific events—like the Gulf of Tonkin incident and the rise of anti-inflation policies—illustrate how public opinion responds to elite cues and media framing. The authors also analyze subgroup differences by race, income, and education to explore the dynamics of opinion convergence and divergence.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Collective public opinion is stable and rational, reflecting logical responses to changing circumstances and new information.
- Opinion shifts are more pronounced in foreign policy than domestic policy due to the immediacy and visibility of international events.
- Media and elite framing significantly influence public opinion, particularly during periods of uncertainty or crisis.

These hypotheses are supported by the data, highlighting the rationality and responsiveness of the aggregate public.

**10. Main findings:** Page and Shapiro demonstrate that public opinion trends are stable over time, with abrupt changes typically tied to significant events or shifts in elite framing. For example, public support for anti-communist policies surged during McCarthyism but declined as the perceived threat diminished. In domestic policy, preferences for social spending exhibit gradual shifts aligned with economic conditions and partisan narratives. Subgroup analyses reveal parallel movements across demographic groups, suggesting that shifts in public opinion are broadly shared rather than confined to specific constituencies. The study also finds that elite and media influence plays a central role in shaping opinion trends, with examples like the decline in support for national health insurance following anti-“socialized medicine” campaigns.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Collective public opinion*: The aggregation of individual preferences into a coherent and stable pattern of public sentiment over time.
- *Policy responsiveness*: The alignment of government actions with the preferences expressed by the public.
- *Elite framing*: The process by which political and media elites influence public perception of issues through selective emphasis and interpretation.
- *Rationality*: The logical and consistent response of collective public opinion to new information and changing circumstances.
- *Subgroup convergence*: The phenomenon where different demographic groups exhibit similar trends in public opinion over time.

### 2.15.13 Uninformed Votes? Reappraising Information Effects and Presidential Preferences

Pierce, D. R. (2015). Uninformed Votes? Reappraising Information Effects and Presidential Preferences. *Political Behavior*, 37(3), 537–565. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-014-9281-5>

1. **Citation key:** pierce\_uninformed\_2015
2. **Author(s):** Douglas R. Pierce
3. **Year:** 2015
4. **Publication:** Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** political knowledge, voting behavior, public opinion, statistical imputation, information effects
6. **Summary:** Pierce critiques the use of statistical imputation to estimate the effects of political ignorance on presidential preferences. By examining data from the 1992–2008 National Election Studies (NES), he challenges the validity of previous conclusions that political ignorance significantly alters voting behavior. He suggests that the observed shifts in preferences attributed to information are confounded by psychological traits and value-based differences among respondents.
7. **Theory:** The article questions the traditional assumption that political preferences are directly influenced by the level of information voters possess. Pierce argues that preferences are often rooted in affective, non-cognitive processes and shaped by psychological predispositions, values, and personality traits. He posits that statistical imputation methods fail to account for these deeper determinants, misrepresenting the true relationship between information and preferences. The theory emphasizes that political knowledge may function more as a tool for rationalizing preexisting attitudes than as a determinant of preference formation. Furthermore, the impact of information varies based on individual motivations, cognitive biases, and value orientations, making it challenging to isolate its effects empirically.
8. **Methods:** Using NES data spanning five election cycles (1992–2008), Pierce applies statistical imputation techniques to estimate the hypothetical “fully informed” voting preferences of respondents. He employs both subjective interviewer ratings and objective measures of political knowledge to compare models. The study also incorporates extensive de-

mographic interactions to explore how information effects differ across groups. Pierce tests the robustness of these models by analyzing their predictive validity, stability over time, and alignment with theoretical expectations regarding the role of information in stabilizing or polarizing preferences.

**9. Hypotheses:**

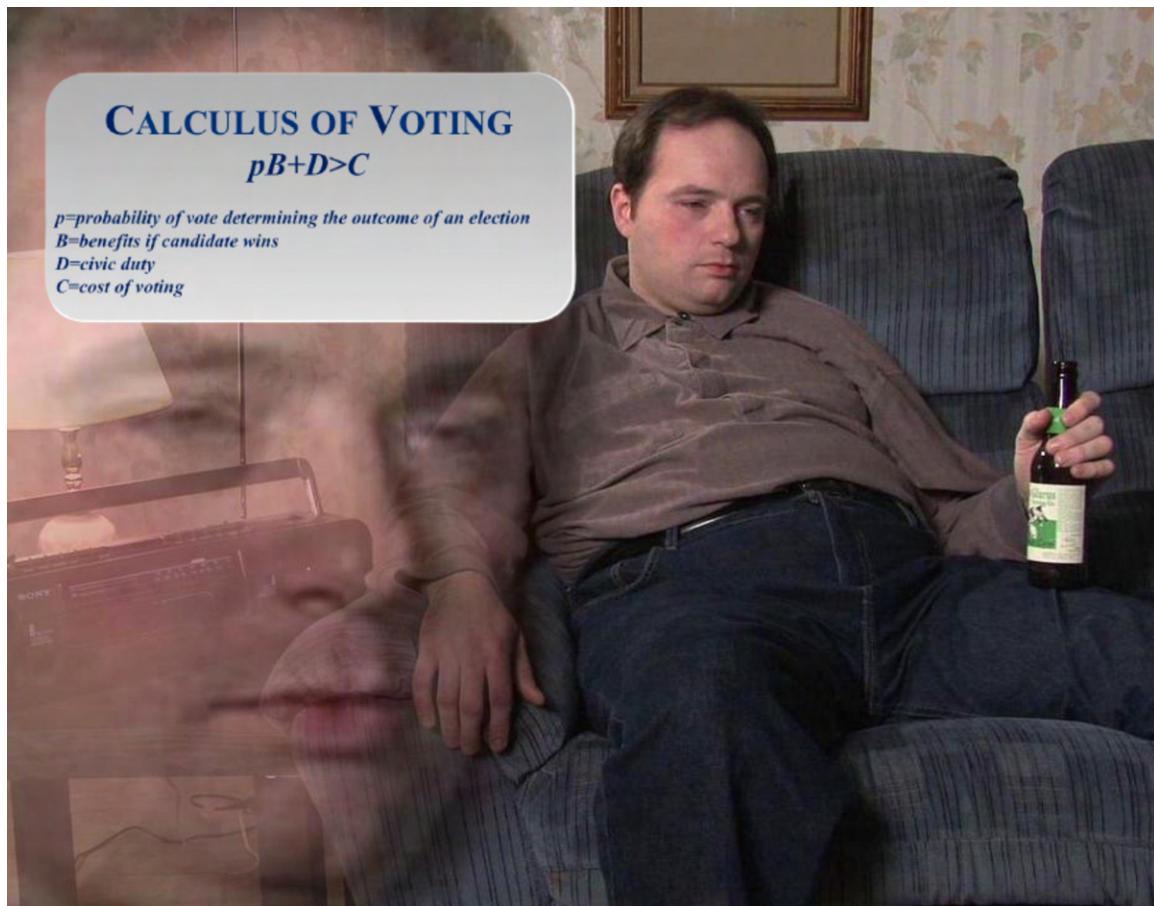
- Higher levels of political knowledge will lead to more stable and consistent voting preferences over time.
- Fully informed voters will exhibit preferences aligned with their demographic and ideological interests.
- Statistical imputation will overestimate the effects of information due to confounding with values and psychological traits.

These hypotheses are partially supported. While statistical imputation generates significant changes in preferences, the results often fail to align with theoretical expectations or reflect true information effects.

**10. Main findings:** Pierce finds that statistical imputation models do not reliably estimate the effects of political knowledge on preferences. Instead, the observed shifts in preferences appear to reflect confounding influences, such as psychological traits and value-based differences, rather than genuine information effects. The analysis reveals that more informed voters are not always more consistent or polarized in their preferences, contrary to expectations. The results also show significant discrepancies between subjective and objective measures of political knowledge, further complicating the interpretation of imputed preferences. Overall, the study casts doubt on the validity of prior claims that political ignorance systematically biases election outcomes.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The primary conclusion of my analysis is that previous estimates of the effects of voter ignorance on vote choices are incorrect; my results also imply that other projections of fully informed opinions based on statistical imputation may be invalid as well" (p. 538).
- "By failing to account for fundamental differences in the values, cognitive traits, and personalities among the most and least informed, the imputation model introduces an omitted variable bias" (p. 541).
- "The failure of the imputation method to produce fully informed preferences consistent with a number of hypothesized information effects raises the possibility that the results generated by the method are not valid estimates of the impact of political ignorance on collective opinion" (p. 554).



## CALCULUS OF VOTING

$$pB+D>C$$

*p=probability of vote determining the outcome of an election*

*B=benefits if candidate wins*

*D=civic duty*

*C=cost of voting*

Figure 2.1: Vibes pt. II



### **3 Political Parties**

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3.1	Introduction . . . . .	307
3.2	Foundations of American Political Parties . . . . .	308
3.2.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	308
3.2.2	Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: A Commentary . . . . .	308
3.2.3	More Than Red and Blue: Political Parties and American Democracy . . . . .	309
3.3	Spatial Models of Parties and Voting . . . . .	309
3.3.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	309
3.3.2	A Directional Theory of Issue Voting . . . . .	310
3.3.3	Ideology and the Theory of Political Choice . . . . .	311
3.3.4	Downsian Voting and the Separation of Powers . . . . .	312
3.3.5	Political Parties and Electoral Landscapes . . . . .	313
3.3.6	No Evidence on Directional vs. Proximity Voting . . . . .	314
3.3.7	The Statistical Analysis of Roll Call Data . . . . .	314
3.3.8	A Model of Farsighted Voting . . . . .	315
3.3.9	Spatial Voting in the 2004 Presidential Election . . . . .	316
3.3.10	Are Moderates Better Representatives than Extremists? . . . . .	317
3.4	Parties as Organizations . . . . .	317
3.4.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	317
3.4.2	Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877–1920 . . . . .	318
3.4.3	Political Parties and Electoral Mobilization: Political Structure, Social Structure, and the Party Canvass . . . . .	319
3.4.4	The American Political Nation, 1838–1893 . . . . .	320
3.4.5	Party Organizational Strength and Public Support for Parties . . . . .	321
3.4.6	The American Ballot Box in the Mid-Nineteenth Century . . . . .	321
3.4.7	Patronage Regimes and American Party Development from ‘The Age of Jackson’ to the Progressive Era . . . . .	322
3.4.8	Gendered Recruitment without Trying: How Local Party Recruiters Affect Women’s Representation . . . . .	323
3.4.9	Placing Parties in American Politics: Organization, Electoral Settings, and Government Activity in the Twentieth Century . . . . .	324
3.5	Party Activism and Party Polarization . . . . .	325
3.5.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	325
3.5.2	A Downsian Spatial Model with Party Activism . . . . .	326
3.5.3	Advocacy Politics in Presidential Parties . . . . .	327
3.5.4	Explaining Party Activism: The Case of the British Conservative Party . . . . .	327
3.5.5	Why Do Party Activists Convert? An Analysis of Individual-Level Change on the Abortion Issue . . . . .	328
3.5.6	Prospecting for Participants: Rational Expectations and the Recruitment of Political Activists . . . . .	329
3.5.7	Heeding the Call: An Assessment of Mobilization into H. Ross Perot’s 1992 Presidential Campaign . . . . .	330

3.5.8	A Dynamic Model of Political Change Among Party Activists . . . . .	331
3.5.9	Explaining Women's Rights Realignment: Convention Delegates, 1972–1992 . . . . .	332
3.5.10	Elections and Activist Coalitions in the United States . . . . .	332
3.5.11	Polarization in the American Public: Misconceptions and Misreadings . . . . .	333
3.5.12	Is Polarization a Myth? . . . . .	334
3.5.13	Deliberate with the Enemy? Polarization, Social Identity, and Attitudes Toward Disagreement . . . . .	335
3.6	Partisan Identification . . . . .	336
3.6.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	336
3.6.2	The Changing American Voter . . . . .	337
3.6.3	Reciprocal Effects of Policy Preferences, Party Loyalties, and the Vote . . . . .	337
3.6.4	Retrospective Voting in American National Elections . . . . .	338
3.6.5	The Decline of Electoral Participation in America . . . . .	339
3.6.6	Party Identification and Party Images: A Comparison of Britain, Canada, Australia, and the United States . . . . .	340
3.6.7	The Dynamics of Party Identification . . . . .	341
3.6.8	Partisanship, Independence, and No Preference: Another Look at the Measurement of Party Identification . . . . .	342
3.6.9	The Unchanging American Voter . . . . .	342
3.6.10	Measurement and the Dynamics of Party Identification . . . . .	343
3.6.11	Third Parties in America: Citizen Response to Major Party Failure . . . . .	344
3.6.12	Rational Learning and Partisan Attitudes . . . . .	345
3.6.13	Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952–1996 . . . . .	346
3.6.14	Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization . . . . .	347
3.6.15	Of Time and the Development of Partisan Polarization . . . . .	347
3.6.16	A New Partisan Voter . . . . .	348
3.6.17	The Heritability of Partisan Attachment . . . . .	349
3.6.18	Voter Migration and the Geographic Sorting of the American Electorate . . . . .	350
3.6.19	Independent Politics: How American Disdain for Parties Leads to Political Inaction . . . . .	351
3.6.20	The Rise of Negative Partisanship and the Nationalization of U.S. Elections in the 21st Century . . . . .	352
3.6.21	Symbolic versus Material Concerns of Rural Consciousness in the United States . . . . .	352
3.7	Macro-Level Partisanship . . . . .	353
3.7.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	353
3.7.2	Macropartisanship . . . . .	354
3.7.3	Macropartisanship: An Empirical Reassessment . . . . .	355
3.7.4	Question Wording and Macropartisanship . . . . .	356
3.7.5	A Normal Vote Approach to Electoral Change: Presidential Elections, 1828–1984 . . . . .	357
3.7.6	The Dynamic Structure of Congressional Elections . . . . .	357
3.7.7	The Dynamics of Aggregate Partisanship . . . . .	358
3.7.8	Macropartisanship: A Replication and Critique . . . . .	359
3.7.9	What Moves Macropartisanship? A Response to Green, Palmquist, and Schickler . . . . .	360
3.7.10	The Interplay of Macropartisanship and Macroideology: A Time Series Analysis . . . . .	361
3.8	Partisan Realignment . . . . .	362
3.8.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	362
3.8.2	A Theory of Critical Elections . . . . .	362
3.8.3	Secular Realignment and the Party System . . . . .	363
3.8.4	The Changing Shape of the American Political Universe . . . . .	364

3.8.5	Theory and Voting Research: Some Reflections on Converse's "Change in the American Electorate" . . . . .	365
3.8.6	The Creation of a Democratic Majority, 1928–1936 . . . . .	366
3.8.7	The 1928–1936 Partisan Realignment: The Case for the Conversion Hypothesis . . . . .	367
3.8.8	Estimating the Degree of Mobilization and Conversion in the 1890s: An Inquiry into the Nature of Electoral Change . . . . .	368
3.8.9	Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States . . . . .	368
3.8.10	A Reevaluation of Realignments in American Politics: Evidence from the House of Representatives . . . . .	369
3.8.11	On the Structure and Sequence of Issue Evolution . . . . .	370
3.8.12	The Concept of a Critical Realignment, Electoral Behavior, and Political Change . . . . .	371
3.8.13	Activists and Partisan Realignment in the United States . . . . .	372
3.8.14	Popular Efficacy in the Democratic Era: A Reexamination of Electoral Accountability in the United States, 1828–2000 . . . . .	373
3.8.15	The Dynamics of Critical Realignments: An Analysis Across Time and Space . . . . .	374
3.9	Political Parties, Psychology, and Information Processing . . . . .	375
3.9.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	375
3.9.2	Evaluative Bias and Issue Proximity . . . . .	375
3.9.3	A Partisan Schema for Political Information Processing . . . . .	376
3.9.4	Information, Values, and Opinion . . . . .	377
3.9.5	The Role of Partisan Stereotypes in Information Processing about Political Candidates . . . . .	378
3.9.6	Beyond the Running Tally: Partisan Bias in Political Perceptions . . . . .	379
3.9.7	Same Facts, Different Interpretations: Partisan Motivation and Opinion on Iraq . . . . .	380
3.9.8	Red Media, Blue Media: Evidence of Ideological Selectivity in Media Use . . . . .	381
3.9.9	Party Foul: The Effectiveness of Political Value Rhetoric is Constrained by Party Ownership	382
3.10	Parties and Representation . . . . .	382
3.10.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	382
3.10.2	Constituency Influence in Congress . . . . .	383
3.10.3	Collective vs. Dyadic Representation in Congress . . . . .	384
3.10.4	Spirals of Trust? The Effect of Descriptive Representation on the Relationship between Citizens and Their Government . . . . .	385
3.10.5	Democrats, Republicans, and the Politics of Women's Place . . . . .	386
3.10.6	Separate Nations: Two Attitudinal Dimensions of Black Nationalism . . . . .	387
3.10.7	The Political Legacy of American Slavery . . . . .	388
3.10.8	Social Exclusion and Political Identity: The Case of Asian American Partisanship . . . . .	389
3.10.9	Straying from the Flock? A Look at How Americans' Gender and Religious Identities Cross-Pressure Partisanship . . . . .	390
3.10.10	Is the Bridge Broken? Increasing Ethnic Attachments and Declining Party Influence among Latino Voters . . . . .	391
3.10.11	Polarization, Abstention, and the Median Voter Theorem . . . . .	392
3.10.12	The Femin[ist] Mystique: How Group Perceptions Shape Affect and Identity . . . . .	393
3.10.13	The Surprising Stability of Asian Americans' and Latinos' Partisan Identities in the Early Trump Era . . . . .	394
3.11	Parties in Legislatures . . . . .	395
3.11.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	395
3.11.2	The Decline of Party in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1887–1968 . . . . .	395
3.11.3	Structure-Induced Equilibrium and Legislative Choice . . . . .	396
3.11.4	The Constituency Service Basis of the Personal Vote for U.S. Representatives and British Members of Parliament . . . . .	397

3.11.5 Universalism and the Parties in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1921–80 . . . . .	398
3.11.6 Where's the Party? . . . . .	399
3.11.7 Bonding, Structure, and the Stability of Political Parties: Party Government in the House . . . . .	399
3.11.8 The Gains from Exchange Hypothesis of Legislative Organization . . . . .	400
3.11.9 Parties and Committees in the House: Member Motivations, Issues, and Institutional Arrangements . . . . .	401
3.11.10 The Partisan Basis of Procedural Choice: Allocating Parliamentary Rights in the House, 1789–1990 . . . . .	402
3.11.11 The Transition to Republican Rule in the House: Implications for Theories of Congressional Politics . . . . .	403
3.11.12 Toward a Theory of Legislative Rules Changes: Assessing Schickler and Rich's Evidence . . . . .	404
3.11.13 Controlling the Floor: Parties as Procedural Coalitions in the House . . . . .	405
3.11.14 Party Government in the House Reconsidered: A Response to Cox and McCubbins . . . . .	406
3.11.15 Examining the Bonding Effects of Party: A Comparative Analysis of Roll-Call Voting in the U.S. and Confederate Houses . . . . .	406
3.11.16 Uncovering the Hidden Effect of Party . . . . .	407
3.11.17 Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting . . . . .	408
3.11.18 Institutional Change in the House of Representatives, 1867–1998 . . . . .	409
3.11.19 Estimating Party Influence in Congressional Roll-Call Voting . . . . .	410
3.11.20 Estimating Party Influence on Roll Call Voting: Regression Coefficients versus Classification Success . . . . .	411
3.11.21 The Hunt for Party Discipline in Congress . . . . .	412
3.11.22 On Measuring Partisanship in Roll-Call Voting: The U.S. House of Representatives, 1877–1999 . . . . .	412
3.11.23 Strategic Party Government: Party Influence in Congress, 1789–2000 . . . . .	413
3.12 Parties and Policymaking . . . . .	414
3.12.1 Subject Area Summary . . . . .	414
3.12.2 Political Parties and the Public Interest . . . . .	415
3.12.3 Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State . . . . .	416
3.12.4 Unified Government, Divided Government, and Party Responsiveness . . . . .	417
3.12.5 Adverse Selection, Political Parties, and Policy Delegation in the American Federal System	418
3.12.6 Who Learns from What in Policy Diffusion Processes? . . . . .	419
3.12.7 Federalism, Government Liberalism, and Union Weakness in America . . . . .	420
3.12.8 Compliance with Public Health Orders: The Role of Trust, Representation, and Expertise .	421

### 3.1 Introduction

The study of American political parties occupies a central position in the discipline of political science, serving as a foundational inquiry into the nature of democratic governance, political behavior, and institutional design. This chapter explores the complexities of party politics in the United States, examining their function, organization, and impact on representation and policymaking. Political parties structure electoral competition, aggregate interests, and influence legislative behavior, yet they are often contested as agents of democratic accountability. By engaging with a broad literature that spans classic theoretical debates to contemporary empirical analyses, this chapter provides a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted roles that parties play within the American political system.

At the heart of this chapter is an investigation of how parties function within the electoral process. Beginning with an exploration of foundational theories of party competition, the discussion moves to the central question of whether American political parties fulfill the normative expectations of democratic governance. This includes an engagement with the concept of a “responsible party system” and critiques of whether such a model is attainable within the constraints of American institutions. The tensions between party discipline and individual legislative autonomy feature prominently, reflecting the structural limitations imposed by the separation of powers and federalism. The chapter also considers the extent to which parties serve as vehicles of voter mobilization and policy coordination, while simultaneously acting as mechanisms of elite control.

A significant portion of the chapter is devoted to the spatial modeling of party competition and voter behavior. Spatial models offer formalized explanations for how parties position themselves ideologically to maximize electoral success. From Downsian proximity theory to alternative frameworks emphasizing directional voting and policy expectations, this chapter provides an overview of competing models and their implications for party strategy. Empirical studies assessing the predictive power of these models shed light on the conditions under which candidates and parties adopt moderate versus polarized positions. Additionally, discussions of adaptive party behavior illustrate how electoral landscapes shape strategic decisions over time, influencing the emergence of partisan cleavages and shifts in voter alignment.

Beyond elections, parties function as enduring organizations with internal structures that shape their capacity to mobilize voters, recruit candidates, and structure legislative agendas. The organizational strength of American parties has varied considerably across historical periods, with shifting patterns of patronage, grassroots mobilization, and elite coordination. The chapter explores key moments of party development, including the expansion of national administrative capacities, the evolution of party canvassing strategies, and the role of political machines in shaping electoral dynamics. Case studies of historical and contemporary party organization reveal the trade-offs between centralized coordination and decentralized activism, providing insights into how institutional and sociopolitical factors influence party evolution.

The relationship between party activism and polarization constitutes another major theme of this chapter. Scholars have long debated the causes and consequences of ideological polarization within the electorate and among party elites. While some perspectives emphasize the increasing alignment of ideological preferences with partisan identities, others point to the role of activist networks in driving intra-party differentiation. This chapter presents a synthesis of research on the mechanisms of polarization, examining the roles of activist recruitment, issue alignment, and elite cueing in shaping partisan divisions. The empirical evidence on the extent and sources of polarization is critically evaluated, with particular attention given to whether increasing ideological divergence reflects genuine shifts in mass attitudes or elite-driven strategic realignments.

Partisan identification remains one of the most enduring predictors of political behavior, influencing voting decisions, policy preferences, and attitudes toward government institutions. This chapter reviews the literature on the formation and stability of partisan identities, tracing their historical evolution and contemporary manifestations. The role of social identity, retrospective evaluations, and affective polarization in reinforcing partisan attachments is examined, highlighting both stability and volatility in mass partisanship. Comparative perspectives on partisan identification further illuminate the distinctiveness of the American party system, particularly in relation to voter alignment patterns observed in other democracies.

Moving beyond individual-level dynamics, the chapter also addresses macro-level trends in partisanship and their implications for electoral outcomes and governance. Fluctuations in aggregate partisan preferences over time offer insights into the responsiveness of the party system to economic conditions, demographic changes, and institutional reforms. The concept of macropartisanship, which tracks shifts in partisan balance at the national level, is explored alongside its methodological challenges. Additionally, the role of partisan realignment in shaping long-term electoral coalitions is critically assessed, with discussions of critical elections and secular trends in voter behavior providing a historical lens for understanding contemporary partisan transformations.

Finally, the chapter examines the broader implications of party politics for democratic representation and policymaking. Parties serve as intermediaries between citizens and government, structuring legislative deliberation and influencing policy outputs. However, their effectiveness in fulfilling representative functions varies across institutional settings and political contexts. The chapter engages with debates on collective versus dyadic representation, the responsiveness of parties to public opinion, and the extent to which electoral incentives shape policy decisions. It also considers how partisan competition

affects legislative gridlock, coalition-building, and governance capacity. The influence of party control on policy innovation and diffusion is explored, with case studies highlighting how partisan dynamics shape legislative priorities and policy outcomes across different levels of government.

Taken together, the topics covered in this chapter provide a thorough account of the role of political parties in American democracy. Through theoretical frameworks, empirical studies, and historical analyses, the discussion highlights both the strengths and limitations of parties as agents of democratic representation and governance. The selected texts within this chapter underscore the importance of understanding party dynamics as a means of interpreting broader patterns of political behavior and institutional development.

## 3.2 Foundations of American Political Parties

### 3.2.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** This section includes two key texts either presenting or responding to reports from APSA. I would encourage the reader to simply review the memos presented below, or to refer to past chapters for the majority of foundational party-related texts.

### 3.2.2 Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System: A Commentary

Ranney, A. (1951). Toward A More Responsible Two-Party System: A Commentary [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 45(2), 488–499. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1951475>

1. **Citation key:** ranney\_toward\_1951
2. **Author(s):** Austin Ranney
3. **Year:** 1951
4. **Publication:** The American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** responsible party system, intraparty democracy, majority rule, minority rights, American political system
6. **Summary:** In this commentary, Ranney critically examines the American Political Science Association's report advocating for a more responsible two-party system. He addresses the report's emphasis on intraparty democracy, the structural weaknesses of American political parties, and the challenges of achieving responsible party governance in the context of the U.S. constitutional system. Ranney explores the conceptual underpinnings of "responsibility" in parties and critiques the assumptions about the feasibility of aligning American parties with the model of responsible governance seen in parliamentary systems.
7. **Theory:** Ranney builds on the APSA report's arguments while challenging its underlying assumptions. He posits that the idea of "intraparty democracy" must be clarified to address who constitutes party membership and how accountability can be institutionalized. Ranney questions whether responsible party governance is feasible in the U.S., given the anti-majoritarian nature of the constitutional system. He engages with E.E. Schattschneider's argument that parties, as private associations, do not require external laws to remain responsive to voters. Ranney suggests that the American system's emphasis on protecting minority rights over majority rule inherently limits the development of disciplined, unified parties. He also critiques the report for failing to acknowledge the deep historical continuity of the party system's decentralized and fragmented nature.
8. **Methods:** This commentary is qualitative and argumentative, analyzing the APSA report through a conceptual lens. Ranney juxtaposes the report's recommendations with the existing scholarly literature on party systems, including works by Schattschneider, Robert Michels, and A. Lawrence Lowell. By referencing historical critiques and political science theories, he identifies gaps in the report's diagnosis and prescriptions. Ranney emphasizes the historical persistence of decentralized party structures, drawing on past analyses to challenge the feasibility of the proposed reforms.
9. **Hypotheses:** Ranney implicitly critiques the APSA report's hypotheses by interrogating two core assumptions:
  - Increasing intraparty democracy will strengthen party unity and external accountability. Ranney finds this questionable, noting that attempts to enforce internal consensus may promote factionalism.
  - Responsible party systems are attainable within the American constitutional framework. Ranney disputes this, arguing that the system's anti-majoritarian design inhibits the development of unified, disciplined parties.
10. **Main findings:** Ranney concludes that the APSA report's vision of a responsible two-party system is incompatible with the American political structure and culture. He argues that the anti-majoritarian constitutional design prioritizes minority rights over majority rule, which fundamentally shapes party behavior and organization. Efforts to impose a parliamentary-style party system in the U.S. are unlikely to succeed without broader cultural and institutional shifts. Ranney also critiques the report's ambiguity regarding intraparty democracy, emphasizing the challenges of defining party membership and enforcing accountability in a fragmented system.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The Report deserves the serious attention of a far wider audience than one exclusively of specialists in political parties for it takes the position that a responsible party system is the only possible institutional mechanism for providing us with effective and democratic government" (p. 488).
  - "The reader cannot be certain, however, just what the Committee regards as the requirements and obligations (if any) of party membership and how those requirements and obligations should be enforced" (p. 491).

- “The same popular beliefs about government which sustain our present anti-majoritarian constitutional system will continue to sustain (as they have for a very long time) our anti-majoritarian party system” (p. 499).

### 3.2.3 More Than Red and Blue: Political Parties and American Democracy

Allen, J. (2023, July). More than Red and Blue: Political Parties and American Democracy. Retrieved August 20, 2024, from <https://protectdemocracy.org/work/more-than-red-and-blue/>

- 1. Citation key:** allen\_more\_2023
- 2. Author(s):** APSA Presidential Task Force on Political Parties
- 3. Year:** 2023
- 4. Publication:** American Political Science Association and Protect Democracy
- 5. Keywords:** political parties, American democracy, polarization, democratic norms, party reform
- 6. Summary:** This report, authored by the APSA Presidential Task Force on Political Parties, examines the current state of American political parties and their role in supporting or undermining democratic governance. The report highlights the challenges posed by increased polarization, erosion of institutional norms such as forbearance and mutual toleration, and structural changes in party organization. It also explores avenues for reform aimed at making parties more effective promoters of democracy.
- 7. Theory:** The report contends that political parties are essential to democratic governance, performing functions such as mobilizing voters, organizing political ideas, and coordinating policy-making. However, it argues that American parties often fail to adhere to responsible norms, particularly mutual toleration and institutional forbearance, which undermines their capacity to sustain democracy. The task force critiques the anti-party sentiments rooted in American political culture, suggesting that skepticism towards parties can only be productive if coupled with mechanisms to ensure accountability and democratic behavior. Drawing on comparative politics and historical analysis, the report emphasizes the need for institutional changes to counteract incentives for irresponsible party behavior, such as reforms in electoral systems and party primaries.
- 8. Methods:** The report synthesizes existing political science literature, drawing on comparative and historical analyses of party systems, surveys of public trust in institutions, and case studies of party behavior in the United States and other democracies. It incorporates insights from both qualitative and quantitative studies, referencing works on democratic backsliding, party capture, and the role of social movements in shaping party dynamics. Chapters authored by leading scholars use diverse approaches, including historical institutionalism, survey data analysis, and normative theorizing, to explore different facets of party behavior.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The report suggests the following hypotheses about political parties and democracy:
  - Parties that fail to exercise institutional forbearance and mutual toleration contribute to democratic backsliding. This is supported by evidence of increased polarization and norm violations.
  - Electoral system reforms, such as ranked-choice voting and proportional representation, can reduce incentives for extreme partisanship and promote broader accountability.
  - Social movements and factions within parties have the potential to either exacerbate polarization or drive positive change, depending on their interaction with institutional structures.
- 10. Main findings:** The task force concludes that the failures of American political parties to uphold democratic norms have left the political system vulnerable to authoritarian tendencies. Polarization and weakened party organizations have diminished parties' ability to constrain anti-democratic behavior. The report identifies structural reforms, such as changes to electoral systems and campaign finance rules, as necessary steps to realign party incentives toward more responsible governance. It also emphasizes the importance of fostering inter-party cooperation and reducing voter animosity through institutional and cultural changes.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “Political parties are an essential feature of nearly all large democracies, yet in the United States, they have become a point of vulnerability in the system rather than a bulwark of democracy” (p. 7).
  - “The norm of institutional forbearance holds that politicians should refrain from using the full breadth and scope of their politically allocated power, when doing so would undermine the democratic system” (p. 13).
  - “American democracy needs informed and rapid action from those who are working to defend it, starting with an understanding of the partisan roots of democratic threats” (p. 23).

## 3.3 Spatial Models of Parties and Voting

### 3.3.1 Subject Area Summary

- Overview:** The substantive area of spatial models of parties and voting focuses on how voters and political parties interact in a policy space, where positions are represented along ideological or issue dimensions. These models aim to understand voter behavior, candidate positioning, and the resulting policy outcomes. Spatial models have evolved from foundational proximity theories, which emphasize voters' preference for candidates closest to their own positions, to more dynamic approaches that incorporate factors such as voter misperceptions, ideological cues, and adaptive party strategies. Central debates include the relative explanatory power of proximity versus directional models, the role of voter cognition and perception, and the adaptive behaviors of political parties in response to shifting electoral landscapes.
- Proximity and Directional Theories:** The proximity model, originating from Anthony Downs's *An Economic Theory of Politics*

*Democracy*, posits that voters choose candidates whose policy positions are closest to their own in an ideological space. In contrast, Rabinowitz and Macdonald's *Directional Theory of Issue Voting* (1989) emphasizes voters' preferences for the general direction and intensity of policy-making, challenging the proximity model's assumptions. Their findings, based on National Election Study data, reveal that voters respond more strongly to candidates whose positions align directionally with their preferences, particularly when those candidates advocate strongly for those positions. While the proximity model assumes voter behavior is driven by objective calculations, the directional theory accounts for symbolic and emotional factors that resonate with mass publics.

- **The Role of Ideology:** Hinich and Munger's *Ideology and the Theory of Political Choice* (1996) redefined spatial models by emphasizing the centrality of ideology as a simplifying mechanism in voter decision-making. Ideology reduces cognitive complexity by providing a consistent framework for interpreting political issues and aligning voter preferences with broader values. Unlike traditional spatial models that focus narrowly on specific policy positions, Hinich and Munger argue that ideology functions as a map, enabling voters to make informed choices even with limited information about candidates' specific platforms. Their framework highlights the role of psychological and emotional factors in shaping voter behavior.
- **Adaptive Party Strategies:** Kollman, Miller, and Page's (1998) exploration of adaptive party behavior demonstrated how political parties adjust their platforms in response to changing voter preferences and competitive dynamics. Using computational models, they showed that party strategies are shaped by the ruggedness and slope of the electoral landscape, with centrist voter distributions facilitating faster platform convergence. This adaptive approach highlights the limitations of static spatial models and underscores the importance of understanding how parties search for optimal positions in multidimensional issue spaces.
- **Accounting for Institutional Context:** Lacy and Paolino's *Downsian Voting and the Separation of Powers* (1998) extended spatial models to incorporate institutional factors, particularly the interaction between the executive and legislative branches. They argued that voters evaluate candidates not only based on proximity to their stated platforms but also on expected policy outcomes under divided or unified government. This approach aligns with Fiorina's theory of divided government, suggesting that voters strategically balance power across branches to moderate policy outcomes.
- **Methodological Innovations:** Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers's (2004) work on roll call data introduced Bayesian methods to estimate legislators' ideological positions while accounting for uncertainty and multidimensional issue spaces. Their framework addressed limitations in traditional approaches, such as NOMINATE, by incorporating prior knowledge and probabilistic modeling. This innovation has broad implications for understanding legislative behavior and the interplay between ideology and strategic decision-making.
- **Farsighted Voting:** Penn's (2009) model of farsighted voting introduced a dynamic perspective, where voters consider the long-term consequences of their choices. This approach captures the interdependencies of sequential decisions in legislative and coalition settings, demonstrating that actors sometimes prioritize long-term gains over short-term benefits. Farsighted stability helps explain persistent patterns in coalition formation and policy outcomes, challenging traditional myopic voting models.
- **Challenges and Future Directions:** Despite decades of research, debates persist regarding the relative importance of proximity and directional voting models, the role of voter perception biases, and the influence of institutional structures on spatial dynamics. Emerging areas of interest include the effects of polarization on spatial competition, the integration of non-policy factors such as candidate traits, and the impact of new technologies on voter-party interactions. Future research is likely to focus on developing more robust models that account for the complex interaction of ideological, institutional, and behavioral factors in shaping electoral outcomes.

### 3.3.2 A Directional Theory of Issue Voting

Rabinowitz, G., & Macdonald, S. E. (1989). A Directional Theory of Issue Voting [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 83(1), 93–121. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1956436>

1. **Citation key:** rabinowitz\_directional\_1989
2. **Author(s):** George Rabinowitz and Stuart Elaine Macdonald
3. **Year:** 1989
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** issue voting, directional theory, proximity model, political behavior, electoral preferences
6. **Summary:** Rabinowitz and Macdonald present a directional theory of issue voting that challenges the proximity model as the dominant paradigm in electoral studies. They argue that voters do not make political decisions solely based on the proximity of candidates' policy positions to their own. Instead, voters are influenced by the direction and intensity of their preferences on policy issues. Using National Election Study data, the authors test their directional theory against the proximity model and find stronger empirical support for their framework.
7. **Theory:** The directional theory posits that voters are motivated by their general preferences for the direction of policy-making and the intensity of their feelings about these issues. Unlike the proximity model, which assumes voters choose the candidate whose policy position is closest to their own in an ordered issue space, the directional model emphasizes the symbolic and emotional resonance of issues. Candidates are evaluated based on whether their positions align directionally with the voter and on the intensity of their policy advocacy. Rabinowitz and Macdonald incorporate concepts from symbolic politics, highlighting that emotional and diffuse responses to issues often drive voter preferences. This theory accounts for the observed behavior of mass publics, which tend to operate with low

information and rely on symbolic cues rather than precise policy positions.

8. **Methods:** The authors analyze data from multiple U.S. presidential elections using National Election Study surveys. They operationalize the proximity model by calculating Euclidean distances between voters' and candidates' positions on seven-point issue scales. For the directional model, they compute scalar products that account for the direction and intensity of voter and candidate preferences. Regression analyses compare the predictive power of these measures in explaining candidate evaluations. The authors also develop a mixed model to test the relative contributions of directional and proximity components.

9. **Hypotheses:** Rabinowitz and Macdonald propose the following:

- The directional model will better predict candidate evaluations than the proximity model, as it accounts for both direction and intensity of voter preferences.
- Candidates who adopt more extreme positions within the bounds of acceptability will receive stronger voter support than centrist candidates, particularly in electorates with clear directional preferences.

These hypotheses are supported by the data, which show that directional measures consistently outperform proximity measures in predicting voter behavior.

10. **Main findings:** The analysis demonstrates that the directional model provides a superior explanation for voter evaluations of candidates compared to the proximity model. In nearly all tested elections, the scalar product measure (representing the directional model) explains more variance in candidate evaluations than the Euclidean distance measure (representing the proximity model). The findings suggest that voters are more responsive to the direction and intensity of candidates' issue stances than to their proximity in policy space. Additionally, candidates with extreme positions that align directionally with voters' preferences often perform better than centrist candidates, provided they remain within a "region of acceptability." The results challenge the conventional wisdom that centrist positions are universally advantageous in elections.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Based on the ideas of symbolic politics, the directional theory assumes that most people have a diffuse preference for a certain direction of policy-making and that people vary in the intensity with which they hold those preferences" (p. 93).
- "The key tenet of symbolic politics is that for issues (or other political cues) to have impact, they must evoke emotions and sentiments rather than simple objective appraisal of information" (p. 95).
- "Candidates competing in the same election are frequently judged by quite different criteria... The directional model is more consonant with empirical analyses, which suggest that candidates actively try to manipulate the criteria used to evaluate themselves and their opponents" (p. 99).

### 3.3.3 Ideology and the Theory of Political Choice

Hinich, M. J., & Munger, M. C. (1996, September). *Ideology and the Theory of Political Choice* [Google-Books-ID: JjXGeqnHx-WoC]. University of Michigan Press

1. **Citation key:** hinich\_ideology\_1996
2. **Author(s):** Melvin J. Hinich and Michael C. Munger
3. **Year:** 1996
4. **Publication:** University of Michigan Press
5. **Keywords:** ideology, spatial model, political choice, voter behavior, campaign strategies
6. **Summary:** Hinich and Munger's book provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how ideology shapes political choices. They argue that ideology serves as a simplifying mechanism, reducing the complexity of political decision-making for voters and providing structure to political competition. By integrating insights from spatial models of voting and formal political theory, the authors propose that ideology allows individuals to navigate political decisions more effectively by aligning them with broader values and beliefs.
7. **Theory:** The authors posit that ideology is a central organizing principle in political life, guiding both voter behavior and the strategies of political candidates. Unlike traditional spatial models that assume voters choose candidates based on proximity to their policy preferences, Hinich and Munger emphasize that ideology reduces information costs by offering a consistent set of beliefs that predict responses to various issues. They argue that ideology functions as a map of the political landscape, allowing voters to make choices even with limited information about specific policy positions. The book introduces the idea that ideologies are not just collections of opinions but frameworks that shape how political issues are perceived and debated. Hinich and Munger incorporate psychological insights into their model, suggesting that the limited cognitive capacities of voters necessitate reliance on ideological cues rather than detailed policy evaluation. This approach challenges models that view voter behavior as purely rational and information-driven, instead highlighting the role of symbolic and emotional factors.
8. **Methods:** Hinich and Munger apply a formal theoretical approach, grounded in rational choice theory, to develop their model of ideology. They build on spatial modeling techniques, adapting them to account for the ways in which ideology constrains and organizes political preferences. Empirical examples, drawn from U.S. electoral politics, illustrate how ideological positions influence voter choices and candidate behavior. The authors also critique existing models that fail to adequately incorporate the role of ideology, presenting their approach as a refinement of traditional spatial theories. They include formal mathematical models to demonstrate how ideological constraints affect political competition and issue alignment.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors advance several key hypotheses:

- Ideology simplifies political choice by reducing the dimensionality of political competition, enabling voters to make decisions based on overarching principles rather than detailed policy analysis.
- Political parties and candidates adopt ideological positions to differentiate themselves and align with the preferences of their constituencies.
- Changes in ideological dimensions—such as the introduction of new issues—can realign political competition and reshape voter coalitions.

These hypotheses are tested through theoretical modeling and supported by examples from U.S. political history.

**10. Main findings:** Hinich and Munger conclude that ideology plays a critical role in structuring political choice, both for voters and political elites. They argue that ideology provides a stable foundation for political competition by offering a limited number of dimensions within which most political conflicts are situated. This helps explain the persistence of certain political alignments and the difficulty of introducing entirely new issues into the political discourse. The authors also highlight the importance of ideology in campaign strategies, noting that candidates use ideological cues to communicate their positions and differentiate themselves from their opponents.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Ideology:* An internally consistent set of beliefs that make prescriptive and proscriptive demands on human behavior, shaping how individuals perceive and respond to political issues.
- *Spatial model:* A theoretical framework that represents political choices as positions in a multidimensional issue space, where ideology serves as a mechanism for reducing the complexity of these choices.
- *Political choice:* The process by which individuals make decisions about which candidates or policies to support, influenced by ideological considerations and the perceived alignment of candidates with their values.
- *Campaign strategy:* The methods used by political candidates to communicate their positions to voters, often relying on ideological signals to simplify complex policy choices.

### 3.3.4 Downsian Voting and the Separation of Powers

Lacy, D., & Paolino, P. (1998). Downsian Voting and the Separation of Powers [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 42(4), 1180–1199. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2991854>

**1. Citation key:** lacy\_downsian\_1998

**2. Author(s):** Dean Lacy and Philip Paolino

**3. Year:** 1998

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** Downsian voting, separation of powers, spatial voting, policy outcomes, presidential elections

**6. Summary:** Lacy and Paolino explore how voters account for the separation of powers when choosing presidential candidates, challenging traditional spatial voting models that focus solely on candidate proximity to voter preferences. They argue that voters base their decisions on expected policy outcomes under each candidate rather than candidates' stated platforms. Using survey data from the 1996 U.S. presidential election, the authors demonstrate that voters adjust their choices based on anticipated interactions between the president and Congress.

**7. Theory:** The authors draw on Anthony Downs's seminal work to propose a revised theory of spatial voting that incorporates the separation of powers. They argue that rational voters consider not only the policy platforms of candidates but also the likely policy outcomes resulting from the interaction between the executive and legislative branches. Lacy and Paolino contend that traditional models, which assume voters evaluate candidates in isolation, overlook the systemic constraints imposed by divided government. They posit that voters act instrumentally, aiming to achieve preferred policy outcomes by factoring in Congress's composition and its role in shaping governance. Their framework aligns with Fiorina's theory of divided government, suggesting that voters may deliberately choose candidates who will balance the partisan control of different branches, thereby moderating policy outcomes.

**8. Methods:** The study analyzes data from a Texas survey conducted during the 1996 presidential election. Respondents were asked to place the ideological positions of candidates (Bill Clinton and Bob Dole) and the expected policy outcomes under their respective administrations on a seven-point ideological scale. The authors use ordered probit models to compare the influence of candidate proximity versus expected policy outcomes on voter decisions. Independent variables include voter trust in candidates, party identification, and expectations about congressional control.

**9. Hypotheses:** Lacy and Paolino test two primary hypotheses:

- Voters are more influenced by the ideological distance between their preferences and expected policy outcomes under each candidate than by the distance between their preferences and the candidates' platforms.
- Voters' perceptions of expected policy outcomes are shaped by their expectations about congressional control and the separation of powers.

Both hypotheses are confirmed, with results showing that expected policy outcomes significantly outweigh candidate platforms in influencing voter behavior.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find that voters account for the separation of powers when evaluating presidential candidates. The study shows that voters perceive distinct differences between candidates' personal policy positions and the likely outcomes of their administrations. For example, many respondents viewed Bill Clinton's government as more conservative than his personal platform, reflecting expectations of Republican congressional control. Statistical analyses reveal that voters' proximity to expected policy outcomes has a stronger influence on their vote choice than

their proximity to candidates' platforms. This effect is particularly pronounced among Independents and nonpartisan voters, who tend to prioritize policy outcomes over partisan loyalties.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Voters' support for presidential candidates is more strongly related to their proximity to the policy outcomes they expect from each candidate's election than to their proximity to the candidate's policy position" (p. 1180).
- "The differences in voter perceptions of the candidates and a government led by the candidates depend, among other things, upon voters' expectations about which party would control Congress" (p. 1183).
- "Using a measure of anticipated policy output under each candidate contributes explanatory power to a model of the presidential vote independent of the traditional measure of each candidate's policy position" (p. 1197).

#### 3.3.5 Political Parties and Electoral Landscapes

Kollman, K. (1998). *Outside Lobbying: Public Opinion and Interest Group Strategies*. Princeton University Press

1. **Citation key:** kollman\_outside\_1998
2. **Author(s):** Ken Kollman, John H. Miller, and Scott E. Page
3. **Year:** 1998
4. **Publication:** British Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** political parties, electoral landscapes, spatial models, adaptive behavior, voter preferences
6. **Summary:** Kollman, Miller, and Page explore the relationship between voter preferences and the development of party platforms in two-party systems. Using a formal model, they examine how changes in voter preference distributions affect the electoral landscape and, subsequently, party behavior. The study highlights the role of adaptive parties, which search locally for optimal platforms in response to voter preferences and the strategies of opposing parties.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose a theory where political parties adapt their platforms based on local information and electoral landscapes shaped by voter preferences and the opposition's strategies. They challenge traditional spatial models, which assume fully rational and informed parties that instantly identify optimal platforms. Instead, they argue that parties operate with bounded rationality, relying on incremental adjustments influenced by ruggedness and slope within the electoral landscape. The theory underscores the importance of voter preference distributions, particularly how ideological consistency and issue salience affect party platform evolution. The authors integrate ideas from adaptive agent models to illustrate that electoral outcomes emerge from dynamic interactions between parties and voters rather than fixed equilibrium states.
8. **Methods:** Kollman, Miller, and Page employ computational modeling using adaptive agent simulations to analyze party behavior across various voter preference distributions. The model assumes multi-dimensional issue spaces where voters have ideal points and strengths assigned to issues. Parties adapt their platforms using three adaptive search techniques: random search, hill-climbing, and genetic algorithms. The authors measure electoral landscapes by their ruggedness and slope, assessing how these characteristics influence party convergence and platform separation. Simulations are run under different configurations of voter preferences, including centrist, extremist, and ideologically consistent distributions, to evaluate how these factors shape party strategies over multiple election cycles.
9. **Hypotheses:** The study tests the following hypotheses:
  - Adaptive parties will tend to move toward moderate platforms, but the degree of convergence depends on the ruggedness and slope of the electoral landscape.
  - Landscapes formed by centrist voter preferences will lead to faster platform convergence and less spatial separation between parties compared to landscapes shaped by extremist or independent preferences.
  - Party adaptation will be slower and less efficient on rugged landscapes, with parties more likely to become trapped in local optima.

These hypotheses are supported through simulation results, which show clear patterns of adaptation based on landscape characteristics.

10. **Main findings:** The authors find that adaptive parties generally move toward moderate platforms, but the speed and degree of convergence are influenced by voter preference distributions and landscape characteristics. Centrist preferences create smoother landscapes, facilitating faster adaptation and closer platform alignment between parties. Conversely, extremist or independent preferences generate rugged landscapes with more local optima, slowing adaptation and increasing platform separation. The results highlight the limitations of traditional spatial models in accounting for party behavior in multi-dimensional issue spaces and demonstrate the utility of adaptive modeling in explaining electoral dynamics. The study also reveals that incumbency advantages emerge naturally in rugged landscapes, where challenging parties struggle to locate winning platforms.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "In the model, preferences of voters and the opposition party's platform determine an electoral landscape on which the challenging party must adaptively search for votes" (p. 140).
- "We find that locally adapting parties converge to moderate platforms regardless of the landscape's ruggedness. Greater ruggedness, however, tempers a party's ability to find such platforms" (p. 141).
- "The electoral landscapes formed by extremist preferences or consistent ideologies may explain some reluctance by contemporary American parties to budge from platform positions" (p. 156).

### 3.3.6 No Evidence on Directional vs. Proximity Voting

Lewis, J. B., & King, G. (1999). No Evidence on Directional vs. Proximity Voting. *Political Analysis*, 8(1), 21–33. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.pan.a029803>

1. **Citation key:** lewis\_no\_1999
2. **Author(s):** Jeffrey B. Lewis and Gary King
3. **Year:** 1999
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** voter behavior, directional voting, proximity voting, spatial models, statistical analysis
6. **Summary:** Lewis and King critically examine the empirical basis for distinguishing between directional and proximity voting models, arguing that existing studies fail to provide conclusive evidence favoring one model over the other. Using statistical methods, they assess prior claims and propose an alternative framework for evaluating these competing theories of voter behavior in spatial models.
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the theoretical and empirical foundations of the directional and proximity voting models, asserting that methodological flaws in prior research have prevented definitive conclusions. They argue that both models rely on similar assumptions about voter preferences and political competition but differ in their predictions about how voters evaluate candidates' positions. The proximity model suggests voters choose candidates closest to their own ideological position in an issue space, while the directional model emphasizes the direction and intensity of candidates' positions relative to voters. Lewis and King highlight the need for more robust statistical techniques to disentangle these effects, suggesting that observed differences in outcomes may be due to measurement error or model misspecification rather than fundamental differences in voter behavior.
8. **Methods:** Lewis and King reanalyze data from previous studies using improved statistical techniques, including maximum likelihood estimation and simulations, to address issues of bias and inconsistency in prior analyses. They test both directional and proximity models on a range of datasets, evaluating their predictive accuracy and goodness of fit. The authors also critique the operationalization of key variables in prior research, focusing on the measurement of voter preferences and candidate positions.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors test the following hypotheses:
  - Neither the directional nor the proximity model provides consistently better predictions of voter behavior across datasets and elections.
  - Methodological issues in prior studies, such as omitted variable bias and incorrect model specifications, have contributed to the perceived superiority of one model over the other.
10. **Main findings:** Lewis and King conclude that there is no clear empirical evidence to support the dominance of either the directional or proximity voting model. Their analysis shows that both models perform similarly when tested under robust statistical conditions, suggesting that previous claims of one model's superiority may be artifacts of flawed research designs. The authors emphasize the need for future studies to adopt more rigorous methods and address the underlying assumptions of spatial voting theories. They also call for greater attention to measurement and specification issues in empirical research on voter behavior.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Our findings suggest that much of the apparent evidence for directional and proximity models of voting behavior is better explained by flaws in statistical modeling and measurement." (p. 30)
  - "Despite decades of research, we remain unable to distinguish convincingly between these two models, a fact that underscores the limitations of current methodologies." (p. 34)
  - "The choice between directional and proximity voting models may not be a matter of theoretical superiority but rather one of context-specific application and empirical adequacy." (p. 36)

### 3.3.7 The Statistical Analysis of Roll Call Data

Clinton, J., Jackman, S., & Rivers, D. (2004). The Statistical Analysis of Roll Call Data. *American Political Science Review*, 98(2), 355–370. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055404001194>

1. **Citation key:** clinton\_statistical\_2004
2. **Author(s):** Joshua D. Clinton, Simon Jackman, and Douglas Rivers
3. **Year:** 2004
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** roll call voting, ideal point estimation, Bayesian methods, legislative behavior, spatial models
6. **Summary:** Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers present a statistical framework for analyzing roll call data, focusing on the estimation of legislators' ideal points in a spatial voting model. The authors advance the use of Bayesian methods to estimate the ideological positions of legislators while accounting for uncertainty and incorporating prior information. This work provides significant methodological innovations and has broad implications for the study of legislative behavior.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that legislative behavior can be effectively modeled using spatial voting theories, where legislators' choices on roll call votes are driven by their ideological preferences and the spatial proximity of policy alternatives. They critique traditional estimation methods, such as NOMINATE, for their inability to incorporate

uncertainty and prior knowledge. Instead, Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers propose a Bayesian estimation approach that captures the probabilistic nature of voting decisions and allows for a more nuanced understanding of ideological positions. Their model treats voting as a probabilistic process influenced by legislators' latent ideal points and the characteristics of roll call proposals, emphasizing the interplay between ideology and strategic behavior in legislative settings.

**8. Methods:** The study develops a Bayesian ideal point estimation model, implemented via Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) methods. The authors apply this model to roll call data from the U.S. Congress, estimating legislators' ideal points and comparing these estimates with those derived from other methods. Key features of their approach include:

- Accounting for uncertainty in ideal point estimates by generating posterior distributions.
- Incorporating prior information about legislators or the policy environment.
- Allowing for multidimensional issue spaces to capture complex legislative behavior.

The authors also validate their model by examining its predictive accuracy and robustness to alternative specifications.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors test the following hypotheses:

- Bayesian methods provide more precise and interpretable estimates of legislators' ideal points compared to traditional methods like NOMINATE.
- Incorporating prior information and uncertainty improves the explanatory power of spatial models in roll call analysis.

These hypotheses are supported by the results, which demonstrate the advantages of their Bayesian framework.

**10. Main findings:** Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers find that their Bayesian ideal point estimation model outperforms traditional methods in terms of precision, interpretability, and flexibility. By incorporating uncertainty, the model produces more nuanced estimates of legislators' ideological positions, enabling researchers to analyze legislative behavior with greater accuracy. The authors also demonstrate that the model captures multidimensional policy spaces, revealing patterns of ideological alignment and divergence that are not apparent in simpler models. Their approach highlights the importance of accounting for uncertainty and prior knowledge in the analysis of roll call data, providing a robust tool for studying legislative dynamics.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Our Bayesian approach allows researchers to quantify uncertainty in ideal point estimates and incorporate prior information about legislators and the legislative environment." (p. 359)
- "The flexibility of the Bayesian framework enables the analysis of multidimensional issue spaces, offering insights into complex patterns of legislative behavior." (p. 362)
- "By modeling roll call voting as a probabilistic process, we provide a richer understanding of how ideology and strategic considerations shape legislative choices." (p. 368)

### 3.3.8 A Model of Farsighted Voting

Penn, E. M. (2009). A Model of Farsighted Voting [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00356.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(1), 36–54. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00356.x>

**1. Citation key:** penn\_model1\_2009

**2. Author(s):** Elizabeth Maggie Penn

**3. Year:** 2009

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** farsighted voting, legislative bargaining, coalition formation, dynamic modeling, game theory

**6. Summary:** Penn introduces a formal model of farsighted voting in collective decision-making contexts, emphasizing how individuals account for the long-term consequences of their voting behavior. The model incorporates the dynamics of legislative bargaining and coalition formation, showing how farsighted considerations influence equilibrium outcomes. This framework departs from traditional static models by capturing the strategic interdependencies of sequential decisions.

**7. Theory:** The model builds on the concept of farsighted stability, where voters anticipate the chain of events that their actions may trigger. Penn argues that in legislative and coalition settings, actors make choices not only based on immediate payoffs but also by anticipating future reconfigurations of power and policy. Unlike myopic voting models, which assume actors focus only on the current stage, the farsighted framework integrates the concept of dynamic consistency. Penn highlights the implications of farsightedness for bargaining power, stability of coalitions, and policy persistence. The theory emphasizes that farsighted actors will sometimes choose suboptimal short-term strategies to secure better long-term outcomes, thus influencing the overall equilibrium.

**8. Methods:** Penn employs a dynamic game-theoretic approach to model farsighted voting behavior in legislative bargaining scenarios. The analysis uses equilibrium concepts such as the farsighted stable set, which defines outcomes that remain stable under farsighted expectations. Simulations and illustrative examples explore how farsighted stability differs from traditional stability concepts, such as the core or stationary equilibrium, particularly in multi-player coalition games. The model's predictions are tested against historical and hypothetical bargaining scenarios.

**9. Hypotheses:** The study tests several key hypotheses:

- Farsighted voting leads to different equilibrium outcomes compared to static models, particularly in environments with shifting coalitions and multi-stage decisions.
- Coalitions formed under farsighted conditions are more durable and less likely to experience frequent realignment.

ment, as members anticipate the downstream effects of their choices.

- Legislative bargaining processes that include farsighted actors result in policy stability and reduced volatility in equilibrium outcomes.

The analysis supports these hypotheses, demonstrating how farsightedness alters bargaining dynamics and decision-making.

10. **Main findings:** Penn finds that farsighted voting fundamentally changes the predictions of legislative bargaining models by introducing stability in outcomes that might otherwise appear unstable under static models. Actors considering long-term effects are less likely to participate in transient coalitions or support proposals with immediate benefits but negative future implications. The results suggest that farsighted stability provides a better explanation for observed patterns of coalition formation and policy outcomes in legislative bodies. For example, Penn highlights cases where seemingly counterintuitive short-term decisions are rationalized by their long-term strategic benefits.

11. **Key quotations:**

- "Farsighted voting assumes that actors can anticipate the downstream consequences of their choices, fundamentally altering the stability and dynamics of coalition formation." (p. 39)
- "The farsighted stable set offers a refinement of traditional equilibrium concepts, capturing the long-term interdependencies of sequential decision-making." (p. 43)
- "In legislative contexts, the incorporation of farsightedness helps explain the persistence of coalitions and policy choices that are otherwise inexplicable under static models." (p. 50)

### 3.3.9 Spatial Voting in the 2004 Presidential Election

Jessee, S. A. (2009). Spatial Voting in the 2004 Presidential Election. *American Political Science Review*, 103(1), 59–81. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305540909008X>

1. **Citation key:** jessee\_spatial\_2009

2. **Author(s):** Stephen A. Jessee

3. **Year:** 2009

4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

5. **Keywords:** spatial voting, presidential elections, voter ideology, candidate positioning, proximity model

6. **Summary:** Jessee investigates spatial voting behavior during the 2004 U.S. presidential election, focusing on how voters' ideological positions and perceptions of candidates' stances influence their choices. Using survey data and a Bayesian statistical framework, he examines the extent to which voter decisions align with predictions of the proximity voting model. Jessee's findings highlight the impact of ideological alignment and misperceptions of candidate positions on voting behavior.

7. **Theory:** The spatial voting theory posits that voters evaluate candidates based on ideological proximity, preferring those whose positions are closer to their own in a multidimensional policy space. Jessee argues that while proximity voting provides a useful framework, voter misperceptions about candidate positions and issue salience complicate its predictive accuracy. He builds on the traditional proximity model by incorporating the role of perceptual biases, suggesting that voters may systematically misjudge candidates' ideological stances due to factors such as partisan heuristics or campaign strategies. The theory emphasizes that understanding voter behavior requires accounting for both the actual and perceived ideological distances between voters and candidates.

8. **Methods:** Jessee employs a Bayesian hierarchical model to estimate voters' ideological positions and their perceptions of candidate positions using survey data from the 2004 American National Election Studies (ANES). The analysis incorporates self-reported voter preferences, perceptions of candidate ideologies, and actual policy positions to model proximity effects. Jessee also tests the robustness of proximity voting by comparing the predictive accuracy of his model against alternative frameworks, such as directional voting.

9. **Hypotheses:** Jessee tests several key hypotheses:

- Voters are more likely to support candidates ideologically closer to them in the policy space, consistent with the proximity voting model.
- Perceptions of candidate positions, rather than actual positions, play a dominant role in shaping voter preferences.
- Systematic biases in voter perceptions are influenced by partisanship and other contextual factors, distorting proximity calculations.

These hypotheses are supported by the empirical analysis, which demonstrates that perceptual biases significantly influence voting behavior.

10. **Main findings:** Jessee finds strong evidence for spatial voting in the 2004 presidential election, with voter preferences closely aligned with perceived ideological distances. However, the study also reveals significant perceptual biases, particularly among partisans, who consistently misjudge the positions of opposing candidates. These biases weaken the explanatory power of the proximity model, as voters often base decisions on inaccurate ideological assessments. The findings suggest that while spatial proximity is a key determinant of voting behavior, its effects are mediated by the accuracy of voter perceptions and the salience of ideological issues in the election.

11. **Key quotations:**

- "The results show that spatial voting models perform well in explaining voter behavior, but perceptions of candidate positions—rather than their actual positions—are the driving force." (p. 55)

- “Partisan biases systematically distort voters’ perceptions of candidates, undermining the precision of ideological proximity as a predictor of vote choice.” (p. 58)
- “These findings suggest that while proximity voting remains a powerful explanatory framework, its application must account for the cognitive and perceptual limitations of voters.” (p. 60)

### 3.3.10 Are Moderates Better Representatives than Extremists?

Patty, J. W., & Penn, E. M. (2019). Are Moderates Better Representatives than Extremists? A Theory of Indirect Representation. *American Political Science Review*, 113(3), 743–761. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055419000261>

- 1. Citation key:** patty\_are\_2019
- 2. Author(s):** John W. Patty and Elizabeth Maggie Penn
- 3. Year:** 2019
- 4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
- 5. Keywords:** representation, moderates, extremists, policy preferences, legislative behavior, voter satisfaction
- 6. Summary:** Patty and Penn investigate whether moderate legislators serve as better representatives than their extremist counterparts, focusing on the alignment between voter preferences and policy outcomes. Using formal models, they analyze the trade-offs between moderation and extremism in representative democracy, concluding that the effectiveness of moderates as representatives depends on the distribution of voter preferences and the institutional context.
- 7. Theory:** The authors propose a theoretical framework to evaluate the quality of representation provided by moderates versus extremists. They argue that moderation does not inherently lead to better representation; rather, the effectiveness of a representative depends on their ability to translate diverse voter preferences into policy outcomes. Moderates are traditionally viewed as better representatives because their policy stances are presumed to align more closely with the median voter. However, Patty and Penn challenge this assumption, suggesting that moderates may fail to provide effective representation when voter preferences are polarized or when policy issues involve multidimensional trade-offs. The theory emphasizes the dynamic interplay between the ideological positions of representatives, the distribution of voter preferences, and institutional constraints such as party leadership and agenda control.
- 8. Methods:** The authors develop a formal model of legislative representation, incorporating assumptions about voter preferences, ideological distributions, and institutional structures. The model evaluates the relationship between the ideological positions of representatives and the outcomes they achieve for their constituents. Patty and Penn also use simulations to test how varying levels of polarization, heterogeneity, and institutional constraints affect the quality of representation. They assess these outcomes using metrics of voter satisfaction and policy congruence.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The authors test the following hypotheses:
  - Moderates provide better representation when voter preferences are clustered around the ideological center but may underperform in polarized contexts.
  - Extremist representatives can achieve high-quality representation in cases where their positions align with a majority of their constituency or when voter preferences are bimodal.
  - Institutional factors, such as party discipline and agenda-setting power, mediate the relationship between representative ideology and policy outcomes.
- These hypotheses are supported by the model and simulation results, which highlight the contingent nature of effective representation.
- 10. Main findings:** Patty and Penn find that moderates are not universally better representatives than extremists. The effectiveness of representation depends on the distribution of voter preferences and the institutional context in which representatives operate. In polarized electorates, moderates may struggle to balance competing demands, while extremists can sometimes deliver higher voter satisfaction by focusing on a clear subset of the electorate. The study also underscores the importance of institutional constraints, noting that party leadership and agenda control can either enhance or undermine a representative’s ability to align policy outcomes with voter preferences.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “Moderates are often lauded as the ideal representatives, but their effectiveness depends critically on the ideological distribution of their constituents.” (p. 321)
  - “Our model demonstrates that extremists can sometimes represent their constituencies better than moderates, particularly in contexts where voter preferences are bimodal or highly polarized.” (p. 324)
  - “The quality of representation is not merely a function of a representative’s ideology but also of the institutional constraints and strategic choices that shape legislative outcomes.” (p. 330)

## 3.4 Parties as Organizations

### 3.4.1 Subject Area Summary

- Overview:** The literature on political parties as organizations focuses on their structural evolution, functions, and roles in democratic systems. Political parties are central to electoral mobilization, candidate recruitment, policy formation, and governance. Early research emphasized their role in aggregating interests and mediating between the state and society, while contemporary studies investigate how institutional changes, societal dynamics, and organizational strategies influence party behavior and effectiveness. This body of work examines the ways parties adapt to political, cultural, and economic shifts, revealing their dual nature as both agents of change and products of institutional

contexts.

- **Organizational Structure and Adaptation:** A major theme in this literature is how parties structure themselves to remain competitive and effective over time. David Mayhew's *Placing Parties in American Politics* (2014) highlights the significance of Traditional Party Organizations (TPOs) in the twentieth century, characterized by hierarchical structures, material incentives, and autonomy from external entities. Mayhew demonstrates that these organizations adapted to varying regional and institutional conditions, shaping state-level politics through patronage systems and issue suppression. As reforms and technological changes diminished TPOs, candidate-centered and capital-intensive politics emerged, reducing parties' dominance in electoral processes but not their overall significance in shaping governance.
- **Mobilization and Electoral Strategies:** The role of parties in mobilizing voters and structuring electoral competition is another key focus. Huckfeldt and Sprague's *Political Parties and Electoral Mobilization* (1992) explore how local social and political structures influence canvassing strategies. They show that party efforts are context-dependent, with success contingent on alignment between social networks and partisan dynamics. Similarly, Joel Silbey's *The American Political Nation, 1838–1893* (1994) emphasizes the period's intense partisanship, highlighting how parties mobilized diverse constituencies through mass participation and ideological framing. These studies underscore the importance of both direct and indirect mechanisms of voter engagement, revealing how parties foster partisan loyalty while shaping the broader political environment.
- **Patronage and Party Development:** Historical analyses of party development often emphasize the importance of patronage systems in maintaining organizational strength. Scott James's *Patronage Regimes and American Party Development* (2006) identifies two distinct patronage regimes: the distributive antebellum spoils system and the strategic, machine-like structures of the post-Reconstruction period. James argues that the transformation of patronage practices was driven by electoral competition, institutional constraints, and evolving voter demands. These findings highlight the dynamic nature of party organizations as they responded to shifting political contexts and pressures.
- **Recruitment and Representation:** Melody Crowder-Meyer's *Gendered Recruitment without Trying* (2013) examines how party recruitment practices influence gender representation in politics. She finds that insular recruitment networks often disadvantage women, while broader and more inclusive strategies foster female candidacies. The study highlights the critical role of party leaders in shaping candidate pools, particularly through their strategic choices and network engagement. These findings connect organizational practices to broader issues of representation and diversity within political institutions.
- **Contemporary Challenges and Future Directions:** Contemporary scholarship on parties as organizations addresses their responses to challenges such as declining trust in political institutions, increasing polarization, and changes in campaign technologies. Research highlights the adaptive capacity of parties to navigate these challenges, but also their limitations in addressing systemic discontent. Future studies are likely to explore the role of digital technologies in reshaping organizational practices, the impact of social movements on party strategies, and the evolving relationship between parties and other political actors. This body of work underscores the continued relevance of parties as organizational entities in modern democracies, even as they adapt to an ever-changing political landscape.

#### 3.4.2 Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877–1920

Skowronek, S. (1982, June). *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877–1920* [Google-Books-ID: W37zSNcybaEC]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** skowronek\_building\_1982
2. **Author(s):** Stephen Skowronek
3. **Year:** 1982
4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press
5. **Keywords:** state-building, bureaucracy, administrative reform, Progressive Era, political institutions
6. **Summary:** Skowronek examines the transformation of American administrative capacities between 1877 and 1920, emphasizing the development of bureaucratic institutions amidst the challenges posed by entrenched systems of courts and patronage-based political parties. Through case studies on civil service reform, military reorganization, and railroad regulation, he argues that state-building in the U.S. was driven not just by functional demands of modernization but also by political struggles shaped by existing institutional arrangements. The resulting state was distinctively American, characterized by persistent institutional conflicts and fragmented authority rather than a centralized bureaucratic model.
7. **Theory:** Skowronek's work builds on political sociology and comparative politics to challenge conventional functionalist explanations of administrative development. He theorizes that the American state's evolution cannot be understood without accounting for the interplay of institutional conflicts and political mediation. He argues that, unlike European models of state-building, the U.S. experience reflects the constraints imposed by its eighteenth-century constitutional framework and the dominance of courts and political parties in the nineteenth century. Skowronek conceptualizes this period as a shift from a "state of courts and parties" to a more bureaucratic system, albeit one marked by continued fragmentation and political bargaining. By highlighting the role of political actors and coalitions in navigating these constraints, Skowronek underscores the contingent and uneven nature of U.S. state-building.
8. **Methods:** Skowronek employs a historical-institutional approach, analyzing primary sources such as public documents and periodicals alongside secondary historical scholarship. His methodology is rooted in comparative historical analysis, focusing on three case studies: the reform of the civil service, the reorganization of the military, and the regulation of railroads. Through these cases, he traces the political struggles and institutional negotiations that

defined state-building during this era. The study integrates insights from political sociology, drawing on theoretical frameworks by Tocqueville, Hegel, and Marx, to contextualize the American experience within broader debates on the nature of the state.

**9. Hypotheses:** Skowronek hypothesizes that institutional arrangements at the federal level, rooted in nineteenth-century constitutional and political traditions, shaped the trajectory of state-building in the U.S. Specifically:

- The entrenched dominance of courts and political parties hindered the early development of a centralized administrative state.
- State-building efforts were driven by political coalitions that leveraged existing institutional structures rather than dismantling them.
- The resulting bureaucratic institutions reflected compromises between reformers and vested interests, leading to persistent fragmentation and ambiguity in governance.

These hypotheses are supported by evidence from the case studies, which reveal the complex dynamics of institutional conflict and adaptation.

**10. Main findings:** Skowronek's analysis demonstrates that the U.S. state-building process was shaped by a unique interplay of political, institutional, and historical factors. While the Progressive Era marked significant advancements in bureaucratic capacities, these reforms were constrained by preexisting institutional arrangements and political resistance. The resulting administrative state was characterized by a patchwork of reforms that addressed immediate challenges but failed to establish a cohesive or integrated bureaucratic structure. Skowronek concludes that American exceptionalism in state-building lies in the fragmented and decentralized nature of its governance, which continues to influence its political and administrative systems.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *State of courts and parties*: A term used by Skowronek to describe the dominance of judicial and partisan institutions in shaping governance during the nineteenth century, prior to the emergence of a modern bureaucratic state.
- *Bureaucratic politics*: The process by which institutional actors and political coalitions negotiate and shape policy outcomes within a fragmented administrative framework.
- *American exceptionalism*: The idea that the U.S. state-building experience diverged from European models due to its constitutional and institutional constraints, resulting in a distinctive form of governance.

### 3.4.3 Political Parties and Electoral Mobilization: Political Structure, Social Structure, and the Party Canvass

Huckfeldt, R., & Sprague, J. (1992). Political Parties and Electoral Mobilization: Political Structure, Social Structure, and the Party Canvass [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 86(1), 70–86. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1964016>

1. **Citation key:** huckfeldt\_political\_1992
2. **Author(s):** Robert Huckfeldt and John Sprague
3. **Year:** 1992
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** electoral mobilization, political parties, social structure, party canvassing, voter turnout
6. **Summary:** Huckfeldt and Sprague explore the role of political parties in mobilizing the electorate through canvassing and other outreach strategies. Using the case study of South Bend, Indiana, during the 1984 election, they analyze how party mobilization efforts are shaped by institutional and social structures, the partisan balance of a locale, and the strategic decisions of party organizations. They argue that party contacts serve not only as direct tools for voter turnout but also as catalysts for broader political mobilization through social networks.
7. **Theory:** The authors theorize that party mobilization efforts are environmentally contingent, shaped by local political and social structures. They assert that electoral canvassing is both a direct and an indirect mechanism of voter mobilization, with party contacts stimulating cascading social influence within communities. Huckfeldt and Sprague argue that the effectiveness of party mobilization depends on how well parties can navigate local partisan balances and institutional constraints, such as voter registration rules and primary systems. They emphasize the importance of aggregate social and political structures, suggesting that party mobilization strategies not only reflect but also shape these structures. This duality highlights the interactive nature of party activity and social context, where party actions influence and are influenced by community dynamics.
8. **Methods:** The study uses a three-wave panel survey conducted in South Bend, Indiana, in 1984, supplemented by public record data on voter registration and primary participation. Approximately 1,500 respondents were surveyed, with equal distribution across 16 neighborhoods to capture variations in social status and political activity. The authors analyze both individual-level and neighborhood-level patterns of party contact, employing logit models to assess the factors influencing party mobilization efforts. They also examine the effectiveness of these efforts by linking party contact data to voter turnout and electoral preferences, controlling for individual partisanship and educational attainment.
9. **Hypotheses:** Huckfeldt and Sprague hypothesize that:
  - Party mobilization efforts are environmentally contingent, varying based on local political and institutional contexts.
  - The effectiveness of party contacts depends on the alignment between social and political structures.

- Party contacts serve as catalysts for broader mobilization through social diffusion, with effects extending beyond the immediate point of contact.

These hypotheses are supported, with evidence showing that party mobilization efforts are influenced by neighborhood partisanship, social status, and prior voter behavior.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find that party mobilization efforts are most effective in communities with clear partisan alignments and cohesive social structures. Republicans demonstrate greater efficiency in targeting their supporters compared to Democrats, whose efforts are hindered by ambiguities in identifying loyal voters. While direct party contacts have limited effects on turnout among politically disengaged individuals, they play a significant role in reinforcing partisan loyalties and influencing vote choice in competitive local and state contests. Party activity also creates a distinct political structure within the electorate, shaping social interactions and perceptions of political norms.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Party efforts at electoral mobilization inevitably depend upon a process of social diffusion and informal persuasion, so that the party canvass serves as a catalyst aimed at stimulating a cascading mobilization process" (p. 70).
- "Political structure, as well as social structure, is a significant element in political affairs. Political outcomes cannot be explained wholly in terms of class and status; they must also be explained in terms of party" (p. 74).
- "The seemingly ordinary act of putting up a yard sign sends a message to others who are exposed to the sign. But the yard sign is only one part of a more complex, highly structured process of political mobilization" (p. 83).

#### 3.4.4 The American Political Nation, 1838–1893

Silbey, J. (1994, July). *The American Political Nation, 1838–1893*. Stanford University Press

**1. Citation key:** silbey\_american\_1994

**2. Author(s):** Joel H. Silbey

**3. Year:** 1994

**4. Publication:** Stanford University Press

**5. Keywords:** political parties, nineteenth-century politics, voter behavior, party mobilization, partisan loyalty

**6. Summary:** Silbey investigates the critical role political parties played in shaping the American political system from 1838 to 1893. He identifies this era as a unique period of intense partisanship and high voter turnout, where parties acted as essential mediators of social and political conflicts. By uniting the Second and Third Party Systems into a cohesive "party period," Silbey argues that parties were the dominant organizational structures driving political participation, ideological coherence, and governance during this time.

**7. Theory:** Silbey posits that nineteenth-century American politics were defined by an unprecedented degree of party-centered organization and activity. He contends that political parties were the primary vehicles for integrating a fragmented and pluralist society into the political system. This integration was achieved through partisan loyalty, mobilization strategies, and the development of ideologies that framed political debates and voter choices. Silbey's conceptual framework emphasizes the interplay between mass participation and elite leadership within a highly structured partisan environment. He argues that parties not only reflected but actively shaped societal conflicts, such as class, ethnicity, and regional tensions, making them indispensable to the governance and stability of the American political nation.

**8. Methods:** Silbey employs a synthesis of quantitative, behavioral, and historical methodologies, drawing on extensive secondary research and primary sources, including speeches, newspapers, and voter turnout data. His analysis integrates behavioral studies of voting patterns with institutional and ideological perspectives, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the political dynamics of the period. Silbey also incorporates comparative insights to highlight the distinctive features of the American party system, particularly its ability to sustain mass participation and adapt to social and economic changes.

**9. Hypotheses:** Silbey hypothesizes that:

- The Second and Third Party Systems shared a fundamental unity based on their reliance on intense partisanship and mass mobilization.
- Political parties acted as mediators of societal conflicts, transforming disparate social interests into coherent political platforms.
- High voter turnout and partisan loyalty were sustained through the active engagement of voters in a structured and participatory political environment.

These hypotheses are confirmed through Silbey's detailed examination of party behavior, voter participation, and political leadership during the era.

**10. Main findings:** Silbey concludes that the period from 1838 to 1893 represents a distinct "party era" characterized by the dominance of political parties in shaping electoral politics and governance. Parties provided the organizational framework for political engagement, leveraging tools like mass rallies, partisan presses, and frequent elections to sustain voter participation. Silbey highlights the role of ideological coherence in fostering partisan loyalty and argues that parties mediated societal conflicts, ensuring political stability despite significant social and economic tensions. However, he also acknowledges the limitations of the party system, noting its failure to address critical issues like sectional divisions and industrial transformation effectively.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Party era*: A period in American political history marked by the dominance of political parties in organizing electoral and governance activities.
- *Partisan loyalty*: The strong and consistent alignment of voters with a specific political party, often rooted in ideological or social affiliations.
- *Political mobilization*: The processes and strategies employed by parties to engage and activate voters, including rallies, canvassing, and media campaigns.

### 3.4.5 Party Organizational Strength and Public Support for Parties

Coleman, J. J. (1996). Party Organizational Strength and Public Support for Parties [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 40(3), 805–824. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111796>

1. **Citation key:** coleman\_party\_1996
2. **Author(s):** John J. Coleman
3. **Year:** 1996
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** party organizations, public support, political parties, antipartyism, party strength
6. **Summary:** Coleman examines the relationship between the strength of party organizations and public support for political parties as institutions. Using data from the 1980 National Election Studies (NES) and the Party Transformation Study, he explores whether strong party organizations can counteract public skepticism and antiparty attitudes. His findings suggest that party strength can positively influence public support, particularly when party competition is balanced, but also highlights limitations in how far organizational strength can mitigate broader discontent with parties.
7. **Theory:** Coleman's theory challenges the conventional assumption that party decline in the electorate is inevitable and irreversible. He posits that robust party organizations can counteract declines in public support by enhancing perceptions of party legitimacy, responsiveness, and differentiation. However, he argues that this effect is contingent on the balance of organizational strength between parties; an imbalance can foster skepticism and perceptions of concentrated power. Coleman situates his argument within a broader critique of Progressive-era concerns about centralized power and modern debates on the role of parties in democratic governance. By integrating insights from institutional theory and behavioral research, he underscores the potential for party organizations to shape attitudes through their visibility, activity, and performance.
8. **Methods:** Coleman employs a mixed-methods approach, combining survey data from the NES with county-level measures of party organizational strength from the Party Transformation Study. He uses ordinary least squares (OLS) regression and logistic regression to test three models: total party strength, strength gap (difference between parties), and a combined model incorporating both variables. His dependent variables include measures of generalized public support for parties, such as the antipartyism index and attitudes toward party responsiveness and differences. Coleman controls for individual-level variables like education, income, ideology, and party identification, as well as regional and demographic factors.
9. **Hypotheses:** Coleman hypothesizes:
  - Stronger party organizations lead to greater public support for parties as institutions.
  - An imbalance in party strength between two major parties reduces public support for parties due to perceptions of concentrated power.
  - A competitive balance between party organizations fosters more positive public attitudes toward parties.
 These hypotheses are supported by the findings, particularly the significance of the strength gap in shaping antiparty attitudes and perceptions of party responsiveness.
10. **Main findings:** Coleman's results indicate that strong and competitive party organizations can mitigate antiparty attitudes and enhance public support for parties. The strength gap between parties emerges as a critical factor; as the gap widens, public skepticism about parties increases, reducing perceptions of party responsiveness and differentiation. While total party strength alone has limited effects, balanced party competition significantly improves public attitudes. Coleman notes, however, that party organizations face inherent limitations in addressing deep-seated public discontent with the party system, suggesting that broader systemic reforms may be necessary to rebuild trust in political institutions.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Strong, competitive party organizations contribute to generalized support for parties, particularly when strength is not exercised by one party alone" (p. 820).
  - "Americans are more approving of parties as institutions when their experience is with competitive party organizations" (p. 815).
  - "Party strength can help build supportive partisan attitudes, but their ability to change these perceptions is limited" (p. 821).

### 3.4.6 The American Ballot Box in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

Bensel, R. F. (2004, April). *The American Ballot Box in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* [Google-Books-ID: hMLVyCkLbg4C]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** bensel\_american\_2004

2. **Author(s):** Richard Franklin Bensel
3. **Year:** 2004
4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press
5. **Keywords:** voting behavior, polling places, nineteenth-century politics, political culture, party agents
6. **Summary:** Bensel investigates the sociopolitical and cultural dynamics of the polling place in mid-nineteenth-century America, analyzing how party agents, community norms, and political identities shaped the practice of voting. Drawing on testimonies from contested congressional election hearings between 1850 and 1868, he examines the localized and highly interactive nature of electoral processes. Bensel emphasizes the role of party agents in shaping voter behavior and constructing political loyalties, highlighting the intersection of communal identities and electoral politics during a pivotal period in American democracy.
7. **Theory:** Bensel argues that the mid-nineteenth-century polling place was a critical site for the formation and reinforcement of communal and political identities. He posits that voting was not merely an individual act of preference aggregation but a collective process mediated by party agents and embedded within local social structures. This theory challenges the notion that nineteenth-century voting behavior can be fully understood through rational-choice models or policy-based preferences. Instead, Bensel highlights the interplay between localized cultural norms and the broader institutional frameworks of party competition, emphasizing how the polling place served as a stage for negotiating political allegiances and community boundaries.
8. **Methods:** The study uses a qualitative analysis of 48 contested congressional election hearings, incorporating testimonies from party workers and voters across urban, rural, and frontier districts. Bensel categorizes the testimonies to identify patterns of behavior, focusing on regional and demographic variations in electoral practices. He supplements this with historical context, exploring the institutional and social forces that shaped the polling place, such as party organization, voter intimidation, and the influence of Civil War-era federal interventions. While the dataset excludes certain regions, such as the Deep South and New England, it provides a rich account of electoral dynamics in areas like the Midwest and Middle Atlantic.
9. **Hypotheses:** Bensel hypothesizes:
  - Communal identities were actively constructed and reinforced at the polling place through interactions between party agents and voters.
  - Party agents played a decisive role in shaping voter behavior and ensuring party loyalty, especially in urban settings marked by ethnic and religious diversity.
  - The polling place mediated the relationship between individual voting behavior and broader political structures, influencing both policy outcomes and community dynamics.

These hypotheses are supported, particularly through examples of party manipulation, such as ballot tampering and voter intimidation, which illustrate the active role of agents in managing electoral outcomes.
10. **Main findings:** Bensel finds that the polling place was a microcosm of the broader social and political conflicts of the mid-nineteenth century. Party agents wielded significant influence over electoral outcomes, using strategies such as distributing pre-printed ballots, challenging voter eligibility, and engaging in coercive tactics. Urban polling places, in particular, reflected the ethnocultural divisions of their communities, with party agents leveraging stereotypes to identify and mobilize voters. The study highlights how these practices shaped political culture, fostering a sense of communal identity and partisan loyalty even as they undermined the procedural integrity of elections. Bensel concludes that the polling place was central to the functioning of American democracy during this period, serving as both a site of conflict and a mechanism for integrating diverse populations into the political system.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Party agents:* Individuals who represented political parties at polling places, tasked with distributing ballots, monitoring voter behavior, and ensuring loyalty to their party.
  - *Communal identity:* A shared sense of belonging and political affiliation shaped by local social, cultural, and religious dynamics.
  - *Polling place culture:* The set of norms, practices, and interactions that defined the voting experience, including the influence of party agents and community relationships.

### 3.4.7 Patronage Regimes and American Party Development from 'The Age of Jackson' to the Progressive Era

James, S. C. (2006). Patronage Regimes and American Party Development from 'The Age of Jackson' to the Progressive Era. *British Journal of Political Science*, 36(1), 39–60. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123406000032>

1. **Citation key:** james\_patronage\_2006
2. **Author(s):** Scott C. James
3. **Year:** 2006
4. **Publication:** British Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** patronage, political parties, machine politics, party development, Progressive Era
6. **Summary:** James analyzes the evolution of American patronage systems from the Jacksonian Era to the Progressive Era, proposing a dynamic model of patronage party development. He identifies two distinct patronage regimes: the antebellum spoils system, characterized by distributive politics, and a post-Reconstruction regime, grounded in machine rationality and electoral discipline. The study highlights the interplay between party elites, electoral incentives, and institutional changes, using a dataset of 49,000 presidential patronage appointments from 1829 to 1917.

**7. Theory:** James introduces the concept of patronage regimes to understand how party organizations adapted to shifting political and electoral environments. He posits that in the antebellum period, patronage was primarily distributive, designed to legitimize party organizations in an anti-party culture and to democratize access to government. However, post-Reconstruction patronage regimes embraced machine rationality, employing patronage strategically to enhance cadre discipline and electoral performance. This transition, he argues, was driven by increasing electoral competition, the integration of third-party movements, and the evolving institutional framework of the American state. James's framework challenges static portrayals of patronage parties, emphasizing their capacity for strategic adaptation.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a quantitative analysis of presidential patronage appointments, drawing on data from the Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the Senate. James uses logistic regression to model the probability of patronage removals across four historical periods: the Jacksonian Era, Civil War and Reconstruction, Gilded Age, and Progressive Era. Independent variables include state electoral vote share, presidential margin of victory, voter turnout volatility, and third-party voting volatility. Control variables capture party rotation in the presidency, sectional dynamics, and partisan affiliations. The study combines comparative statics with temporal dynamics, using moving-window regression to analyze regime transformations.

**9. Hypotheses:** James hypothesizes:

- Antebellum patronage practices prioritized distributive politics to broaden party support and legitimize partisan organizations.
- Post-Reconstruction patronage emphasized electoral discipline, with removal rates influenced by electoral competitiveness, turnout volatility, and third-party pressures.
- The transition between regimes was catalyzed by the Civil War and subsequent electoral vulnerabilities faced by the Republican Party.

These hypotheses are supported by the analysis, revealing distinct patterns in patronage practices across the historical periods.

**10. Main findings:** James finds that antebellum patronage was distributive, with frequent rotation in office to maximize partisan inclusion and legitimacy. Post-Reconstruction, patronage became more disciplined and strategic, reflecting machine-like efficiency. Removal rates were significantly higher in electorally competitive states and areas with volatile turnout or strong third-party presence. The study highlights the influence of the Civil War and Reconstruction in transforming patronage practices, as the Republican Party adapted to maintain power in a reunified nation. By the Gilded Age, patronage practices exemplified machine rationality, but these patterns diminished during the Progressive Era as civil service reforms gained traction.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Antebellum spoils politics was fundamentally distributive in nature, its purpose being to spread the fruits of party victory as widely as possible" (p. 41).
- "Postbellum machine politics manifested a decidedly more managerial or regulatory dimension... akin to the business enterprise or military organization" (p. 42).
- "Party rotation in office proceeded apace, albeit in somewhat altered form, as parties were forced to maintain at least an initial posture of political neutrality towards current officeholders until their term of office expired" (p. 48).

#### 3.4.8 Gendered Recruitment without Trying: How Local Party Recruiters Affect Women's Representation

Crowder-Meyer, M. (2013). Gendered Recruitment without Trying: How Local Party Recruiters Affect Women's Representation. [Publisher: Cambridge University Press]. *Politics & Gender*, 9(4), 390–413. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X13000391>

**1. Citation key:** crowder-meyer\_gendered\_2013

**2. Author(s):** Melody Crowder-Meyer

**3. Year:** 2013

**4. Publication:** Politics & Gender

**5. Keywords:** gender representation, candidate recruitment, political parties, local elections, party networks

**6. Summary:** Crowder-Meyer examines the role of local party organizations in influencing gender disparities in political candidacy. Through a nationwide survey of county party leaders and supplemental interviews, the article highlights the significant impact of recruitment networks and party leader characteristics on the recruitment of female candidates. While recruitment can increase women's representation under specific circumstances, traditional and insular recruitment practices often hinder female candidacies.

**7. Theory:** The article posits that local political recruitment processes are crucial in shaping gender disparities in political candidacy, as recruitment plays a vital role in addressing women's lower political ambition. Crowder-Meyer argues that the effects of recruitment on women's candidacies depend heavily on the networks and strategies employed by party leaders. Traditional, insular recruitment networks—dominated by party members, officeholders, and financial donors—tend to disadvantage women. Conversely, broader and more inclusive recruitment networks that engage sub-county officeholders and education or child-related organizations are more likely to identify and encourage female candidates. The sex of the party recruiter also matters, as female party leaders are more likely to recruit women than male leaders. Additionally, Democratic party leaders are more likely than Republicans to use recruitment networks that foster women's representation, reflecting ideological and demographic differences between the parties.

**8. Methods:** Crowder-Meyer utilizes a 2008 survey of 5,111 Democratic and Republican county party leaders, achieving

a 45.5

**9. Hypotheses:** Crowder-Meyer tests several hypotheses:

- Recruitment through insular networks (e.g., party members, officeholders, business organizations) reduces the likelihood of recruiting female candidates.
- Broader recruitment networks, such as those involving sub-county officeholders or education-related groups, increase female recruitment.
- Female party leaders are more likely than male leaders to recruit women as candidates.
- Democratic party leaders recruit more women than Republican leaders, reflecting ideological and demographic differences.

These hypotheses are supported, with findings revealing the nuanced impact of recruitment networks and leader characteristics on women's representation.

**10. Main findings:** Crowder-Meyer finds that local party recruitment significantly shapes women's representation, but its effects vary by recruitment strategy and party leader characteristics. Insular recruitment networks discourage female candidacies, while broader networks positively influence women's recruitment. Female party leaders are more effective than male leaders in recruiting women, and Democrats recruit more women than Republicans due to ideological and demographic factors. The findings suggest that local party recruitment practices are critical to addressing gender disparities in political representation but also highlight the structural barriers posed by traditional recruitment methods and male-dominated party leadership.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Party leaders who use a traditional, insular recruitment network focused on people already active within the party are less likely to recruit female candidates" (p. 391).
- "Recruitment from broader social networks, sub-county officeholders, and education or child-related organizations will result in the recruitment of more female candidates" (p. 393).
- "Female recruiters are more likely to recruit female candidates than male recruiters, and among men, Democratic chairs recruit more women than do Republican chairs" (p. 407).

### 3.4.9 Placing Parties in American Politics: Organization, Electoral Settings, and Government Activity in the Twentieth Century

Mayhew, D. R. (2014, July). *Placing Parties in American Politics: Organization, Electoral Settings, and Government Activity in the Twentieth Century* [Google-Books-ID: BL2QoAEACAAJ]. Princeton University Press

**1. Citation key:** mayhew\_placing\_2014

**2. Author(s):** David R. Mayhew

**3. Year:** 2014

**4. Publication:** Princeton University Press

**5. Keywords:** traditional party organizations, political parties, American politics, electoral settings, public policy

**6. Summary:** Mayhew's book investigates the nature, evolution, and significance of Traditional Party Organizations (TPOs) in American politics during the twentieth century. He explores their structure, function, and regional variations, as well as their influence on electoral politics and governmental activity. The book provides a state-by-state analysis of party organization strength in the 1960s, linking it to broader political and institutional developments.

**7. Theory:** Mayhew theorizes that the internal structure of political parties, particularly TPOs, plays a decisive role in shaping electoral and governmental outcomes. TPOs are defined by their autonomy from external entities, hierarchical organization, reliance on material incentives, and ability to control candidate nominations. Mayhew argues that these structures historically enabled TPOs to wield significant influence over political processes, especially in regions where they thrived. He posits that the decline of TPOs in the mid-twentieth century coincided with a shift toward candidate-centered and capital-intensive politics. This decline was influenced by institutional reforms, such as primary elections, and changes in communication technologies. Nevertheless, Mayhew emphasizes the persistence of regional and historical variations, suggesting that the legacy of TPOs continues to shape contemporary American politics.

**8. Methods:** The book employs a mixed-methods approach, combining extensive archival research with quantitative analysis. The first part of the book provides a detailed state-by-state examination of TPO strength, drawing on secondary sources, unpublished dissertations, and historical documents. Each state is assigned a score based on the prevalence and strength of TPOs during the late 1960s. In the second part, Mayhew conducts a quantitative analysis of the relationship between TPO strength and variables such as public policy outputs, campaign issue salience, and interest group activity. His methodological rigor includes regression models to explore the influence of TPOs on political and governmental outcomes.

**9. Hypotheses:** Mayhew hypothesizes that:

- TPOs are more likely to exist in states with limited public economies and low issue salience in campaigns.
- States with strong TPOs exhibit distinctive patterns of governmental activity, characterized by a focus on material incentives rather than ideological commitments.

Both hypotheses are supported, highlighting the significance of TPOs in shaping state-level political and policy outcomes.

**10. Main findings:** Mayhew finds that TPOs were concentrated in thirteen states during the late 1960s, primarily in the

Northeast and Midwest. These organizations were associated with lower levels of issue-oriented campaigning and greater reliance on patronage systems. States with strong TPOs tended to have smaller public economies and less pronounced interest group activity. Mayhew argues that the historical development of TPOs was rooted in regional political cultures and institutional contexts, with their decline reflecting broader changes in American political life. The book also underscores the enduring influence of TPOs on contemporary political structures, despite their diminished role in the late twentieth century.

### 11. Key definitions:

- *Traditional Party Organization (TPO)*: A political organization defined by its autonomy from external entities such as corporations or unions, a hierarchical internal structure, a life span of decades, the capacity to nominate candidates for a variety of offices, and a reliance on material rather than ideological incentives to mobilize support.
- *Material incentives*: Benefits or rewards, such as jobs or contracts, provided by political organizations to party workers or supporters in exchange for loyalty and participation.
- *Candidate-centered politics*: A form of electoral politics that focuses on individual candidates rather than party organizations, often characterized by personalized campaigns, capital-intensive strategies, and reduced reliance on traditional party structures.
- *Patronage system*: A political practice in which public jobs or favors are distributed by a political organization as a reward for political support or loyalty.
- *Public economy*: The size and scope of government activity within a state, often measured by public spending or the presence of government programs.
- *Regional political culture*: The shared attitudes, values, and practices related to politics and governance that vary geographically and influence the development of political organizations and behaviors.

## 3.5 Party Activism and Party Polarization

### 3.5.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The literature on party activism and party polarization examines how party activists shape party strategies, ideologies, and electoral outcomes, as well as how these dynamics contribute to the growing ideological divisions within party systems. Early theoretical models emphasized the role of activists in amplifying party cleavages, highlighting their influence on candidate positioning and policy preferences. Subsequent studies expanded these models to incorporate factors such as rational choice, social identity, and institutional contexts, providing a nuanced understanding of how activists operate within party systems. These works collectively underscore the complex interactions between activists, party elites, and the electorate in driving polarization, with significant implications for democratic governance and political representation.
- **Spatial Models and Activist Dynamics:** John H. Aldrich's seminal work (1983) integrated party activism into Downsian spatial models, demonstrating how activists influence party positions and electoral outcomes. Aldrich argued that activists are driven by a "calculus of participation," balancing policy-related benefits and intrinsic rewards. His model showed that activist preferences shape party strategies, creating stable distributions of activists that reflect enduring ideological cleavages. These findings were foundational in understanding how party polarization emerges from the spatial alignment of activist preferences.
- **Advocacy and Presidential Parties:** Bruce, Clark, and Kessel (1991) explored advocacy politics within presidential parties, focusing on the role of "true believers" who prioritize ideological commitments over electoral pragmatism. Their analysis of county-level party leaders revealed that advocacy politics fosters ideological cohesion within parties while contributing to polarization between them. This dynamic is driven by issue coalitions and the prioritization of policy advocacy over vote-maximization strategies, reshaping the role of presidential parties in the American political landscape.
- **Motivations for Activism:** Whiteley et al. (1994) examined party activism in the British Conservative Party, challenging rational actor models by incorporating selective and expressive incentives. Their findings highlighted the role of emotional attachment and social norms in motivating activism, particularly at the local level. These insights broadened the theoretical framework for understanding activism by emphasizing non-material rewards and perceptions of efficacy as critical factors in participation decisions.
- **Conversion and Polarization:** Layman and Carsey (1998) and Carsey and Layman (1999) introduced dynamic models of partisan change, focusing on the interplay between activist replacement and conversion. These studies demonstrated that conversion among continuing activists accelerates partisan polarization by aligning activist preferences with evolving party stances. Their findings underscored the importance of both individual-level ideological shifts and aggregate patterns of partisan realignment in sustaining long-term changes within party coalitions.
- **Recruitment and Stratification:** Brady, Schlozman, and Verba (1999) analyzed the recruitment of political activists, emphasizing the role of rational prospecting in targeting individuals with high participation potential. Their study revealed that recruitment processes reinforce participatory stratification, as recruiters disproportionately engage individuals with greater political resources and civic skills. This work highlighted the structural biases embedded in recruitment strategies and their implications for political inequality.
- **Valence and Non-Convergence:** Schofield and Miller (2007) incorporated party valence into spatial models to explain non-convergence in two-party systems. Their model demonstrated that the trade-offs between activist support and centrist voter appeal create equilibrium positions that sustain ideological divergence. This theoretical framework

offered insights into the mechanisms underlying persistent polarization in party systems, particularly in the context of activist-driven dynamics.

- **Public Sorting and Polarization:** Fiorina et al. (2008) and Abramowitz and Saunders (2008) engaged in a debate on the nature of polarization in the American public. Fiorina argued that partisan sorting, rather than ideological polarization, characterizes the electorate, attributing changes to elite-driven dynamics. In contrast, Abramowitz and Saunders provided evidence of mass-level polarization, particularly among politically engaged citizens. Together, these studies highlighted the varying impacts of elite and activist behavior on public opinion and partisan alignment.
- **Social Identity and Deliberation:** Strickler (2018) examined the role of social identity polarization in shaping attitudes toward political disagreement. His findings revealed that strong social partisan identities undermine deliberative norms, fostering ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias. This work emphasized the broader implications of polarization for democratic discourse, particularly in terms of diminishing reciprocity and mutual respect in public debate.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Current research continues to explore the drivers and consequences of party activism and polarization, with a focus on the role of social identity, ideological alignment, and institutional factors. Future studies are likely to examine the impact of digital platforms and social media on activist mobilization, the implications of shifting issue salience, and the potential for reforms to mitigate polarization. These efforts aim to deepen our understanding of the structural and behavioral dynamics that shape contemporary party systems.

### 3.5.2 A Downsian Spatial Model with Party Activism

Aldrich, J. H. (1983). A Downsian Spatial Model with Party Activism [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 77(4), 974–990. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1957570>

1. **Citation key:** aldrich\_downsian\_1983
2. **Author(s):** John H. Aldrich
3. **Year:** 1983
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** spatial model, party activism, rational choice, political participation, party cleavages
6. **Summary:** Aldrich introduces a novel Downsian spatial model that incorporates party activism into the analysis of political competition. The model examines the decisions of individuals on whether to become activists in a two-party system, addressing the distribution and stability of activists across parties. Unlike traditional spatial voting models, which focus on candidate positioning and voter decisions, this model investigates the dynamics of activism and its implications for party cohesion, divergence, and electoral outcomes.
7. **Theory:** Aldrich's theory extends the Downsian framework to include party activists as key actors in the political process. The model assumes that individuals' decisions to engage in activism are driven by a "calculus of participation," which parallels the Riker-Ordeshook calculus of voting. Activists are motivated by both policy-related benefits and intrinsic rewards, such as solidarity and contributing to a worthwhile cause. The model posits that activists' preferences shape party positions, creating stable distributions of activists that reflect enduring party cleavages. This dynamic suggests that party cleavages arise naturally from the spatial distribution of activists' preferences, which in turn influence candidate strategies and policy outcomes.
8. **Methods:** Aldrich develops a formal spatial model using assumptions about individual utility functions and aggregate activism probabilities. He constructs a probabilistic framework to analyze activism decisions and equilibrium distributions of activists. The model incorporates variables such as net costs of activism, perceived benefits of party goals, and the spatial alignment between individuals' ideal points and party positions. Mathematical proofs and propositions explore conditions for equilibrium, divergence, and stability, with additional focus on unimodal and bimodal preference distributions.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Individuals are more likely to become activists in the party closest to their ideal policy position.
  - Party activist distributions will be cohesive within each party and distinctive between parties.
  - Equilibrium distributions of activists exist and are influenced by the spatial distribution of individual preferences.
  - Unimodal preference distributions lead to less divergence between parties compared to bimodal distributions.

These hypotheses are supported by the model's formal propositions and proofs.
10. **Main findings:** Aldrich finds that the spatial model of party activism produces stable equilibria where activists in each party are relatively cohesive and distinctive from those in the opposing party. This distribution aligns with historical observations of partisan cleavages in the United States, such as those rooted in the New Deal. The model demonstrates that activists influence party positions, and their distribution depends on the broader spatial distribution of preferences in the electorate. Furthermore, the degree of divergence between parties is shaped by the nature of abstention—whether driven by indifference or alienation. In cases of bimodal preference distributions, party cleavages are sharper, reflecting the dominance of activists at ideological extremes.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The principal conclusions I will reach here are that the distribution of activists in the two parties will be relatively cohesive within each party, relatively divergent between parties, and generally in stable equilibrium" (p. 974).
  - "In effect, I answer in this article the question of why partisan activists might be distributed as these authors assumed them to be" (p. 975).

- “The calculus of participation follows as closely as possible the Riker-Ordeshook calculus of voting in a Downsian framework” (p. 978).

### 3.5.3 Advocacy Politics in Presidential Parties

Bruce, J. M., Clark, J. A., & Kessel, J. H. (1991). Advocacy Politics in Presidential Parties [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 85(4), 1089–1105. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1963937>

- 1. Citation key:** bruce\_advocacy\_1991
- 2. Author(s):** John M. Bruce, John A. Clark, and John H. Kessel
- 3. Year:** 1991
- 4. Publication:** American Political Science Review
- 5. Keywords:** advocacy politics, presidential parties, party cohesion, true believers, issue coalitions
- 6. Summary:** This article investigates the role of advocacy politics in shaping presidential party dynamics in the United States. Using data from a 1988 survey of county-level leaders in the Bush-Quayle and Dukakis-Bentsen campaign organizations, the authors argue that presidential parties function primarily as advocacy entities rather than vote-maximizing or purely representative bodies. They find that party activists are motivated by deeply held policy preferences and are willing to prioritize those preferences even at the expense of electoral success. The study further examines the distribution of issue groups within each party and the formation of coalitions based on shared policy goals.
- 7. Theory:** The authors propose a framework in which presidential parties are characterized by advocacy politics, emphasizing the role of “true believers” who prioritize ideological commitments over pragmatic electoral considerations. These activists see themselves as representatives of party principles rather than voters. Drawing on the concept of purposive incentives, the authors argue that advocacy parties emerge when activists are driven by intrinsic motivations, such as ideological purity or specific policy outcomes. This framework contrasts with traditional models of political parties as either representative bodies that aggregate voter preferences or vote-maximizing entities that adopt centrist policies to win elections. Instead, the authors suggest that advocacy politics creates a more polarized and ideologically distinct party landscape, with activists shaping party platforms and coalition strategies.
- 8. Methods:** The study relies on survey data collected during the 1988 presidential campaign from 230 Bush activists and 140 Dukakis activists, with response rates of 80% and 77%, respectively. Respondents were identified through a top-down nomination process, ensuring their integration into the national campaign networks. The authors use statistical analyses to compare activists’ self-perceptions (e.g., as representatives, vote maximizers, or true believers) and measure intra- and inter-party issue cohesion. Cluster analysis is employed to identify distinct issue groups within each party, while median scores on policy dimensions such as international involvement, social welfare, and civil liberties are used to assess the ideological positions of these groups and their coalitions.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - Party activists are more likely to identify as true believers than as representatives or vote maximizers.
  - Advocacy politics will result in distinct and cohesive issue groups within each party.
  - Coalition formation among issue groups will reinforce ideological polarization between parties.

These hypotheses are confirmed by the findings, which show that advocacy politics dominates both Republican and Democratic presidential parties.
- 10. Main findings:** The authors find that advocacy politics is the prevailing mode in presidential parties, with most activists identifying as true believers. In both parties, activists prioritize policies they believe in, even at the expense of electoral appeal. Issue groups within the parties are cohesive and ideologically distinct, with coalitions forming along shared policy preferences. The Republican dominant coalition is slightly more conservative than the party median, while the Democratic dominant coalition is slightly more liberal. Over time, these dynamics contribute to increased polarization between the two parties, as evident in comparisons with similar data from 1972. The study also highlights the role of county leaders in shaping campaign strategies and the vertical integration of presidential party organizations.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “The preponderant view was that the county leaders spoke for their parties (or, equivalently, their campaign organizations) and that parties ought to advocate policies in which they believed regardless of the electoral consequences” (p. 1092).
  - “The coalition process resulted in shifts toward an ideologically more extreme position—never the reverse” (p. 1097).
  - “These advocates are not fighting for the right to represent the voters. They are contending for the privilege of imposing their own policy preferences on the public agenda” (p. 1102).

### 3.5.4 Explaining Party Activism: The Case of the British Conservative Party

Whiteley, P. F., Seyd, P., Richardson, J., & Bissell, P. (1994). Explaining Party Activism: The Case of the British Conservative Party [Publisher: Cambridge University Press]. *British Journal of Political Science*, 24(1), 79–94. Retrieved January 27, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/194186>

- 1. Citation key:** whiteley\_explaining\_1994

2. **Author(s):** Paul F. Whiteley, Patrick Seyd, Jeremy Richardson, and Paul Bissell
3. **Year:** 1994
4. **Publication:** British Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** party activism, rational choice, selective incentives, British politics, paradox of participation
6. **Summary:** This study investigates the motivations behind party activism within the British Conservative Party, focusing on the incentives driving individuals to participate despite the high costs associated with such activities. The authors develop and test models that extend the classic Olson framework of collective action by incorporating additional motives such as altruism, social norms, and expressive concerns. Using survey data from a national random sample of Conservative Party members, the study evaluates competing models of participation and provides insights into the broader implications of activism for political participation theories.
7. **Theory:** The authors theorize that party activism is shaped by a combination of rational, selective, and expressive incentives, along with perceptions of efficacy. While the classic Olson model suggests that individuals are unlikely to engage in activism due to the low probability of influencing collective outcomes, the authors argue that selective incentives (e.g., career advancement, process enjoyment) and expressive motivations (e.g., emotional attachment to the party) can mitigate the “paradox of participation.” Additionally, activists may perceive their contributions as more influential at the local level, where outcomes are less “lumpy” than in national politics. This perspective challenges the purely economic interpretation of political participation by integrating psychological and social factors.
8. **Methods:** The research employs data from a two-stage random sample survey of Conservative Party members conducted in 1992, with a final sample size of 2,467 respondents and a response rate of 62.9%. Respondents answered questions about their activism levels, motivations, and perceptions of efficacy. Key variables include collective benefits, personal influence, perceived costs, and selective incentives. Regression models test the predictive power of the simple cost-benefit model, the Olson model, and the authors’ general incentives model, which incorporates expressive and altruistic motives alongside traditional factors.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Party activism is influenced by perceptions of efficacy and selective incentives.
  - Altruistic, expressive, and social norms-based motivations independently predict activism levels.
  - Local-level efficacy has a stronger impact on activism than national-level efficacy due to the tangible nature of local collective goods.

These hypotheses are supported, particularly by the general incentives model, which outperforms the purely rational actor framework.
10. **Main findings:** The results show that activism in the British Conservative Party is driven by a mix of selective, expressive, and altruistic motives. Expressive evaluations, reflecting emotional attachment to the party, emerge as the second-strongest predictor of activism after collective benefits. While selective incentives like career ambitions and process enjoyment also play significant roles, altruistic and social norm-based motives have less influence. The findings challenge the rational actor model, as activists often report a sense of efficacy and attachment that cannot be fully explained by cost-benefit calculations. Local-level activism appears particularly important, highlighting the decentralized nature of British party politics.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Activists are more likely to enjoy the political process for its own sake and are more politically ambitious than inactive members” (p. 90).
  - “The expressive motivations for activism play an important and independent role in explaining activism; in fact, they have the second strongest impact on activism after the collective benefits variable” (p. 91).
  - “Purely rational actor models provide an incomplete account of political participation, and by implication this could be true of these models in other areas of political science as well” (p. 93).

### 3.5.5 Why Do Party Activists Convert? An Analysis of Individual-Level Change on the Abortion Issue

Layman, G. C., & Carsey, T. M. (1998). Why Do Party Activists Convert? An Analysis of Individual-Level Change on the Abortion Issue [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 51(3), 723–749. <https://doi.org/10.1177/106591299805100308>

1. **Citation key:** layman\_why\_1998
2. **Author(s):** Geoffrey C. Layman and Thomas M. Carsey
3. **Year:** 1998
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** party activism, issue conversion, abortion, polarization, intraparty conflict
6. **Summary:** Layman and Carsey explore the phenomenon of ideological conversion among continuing party activists, focusing on the abortion issue as a case study. Using panel data from the 1984 and 1988 Convention Delegate Studies, the authors identify factors influencing whether activists shift their policy positions in response to changes in their party’s aggregate stance. The analysis highlights the role of individual motivations, ideological orientations, candidate preferences, and social and political contexts in shaping patterns of conversion.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that activist conversion is a key driver of partisan polarization, complementing the replacement of activists with divergent views. They argue that conversion is influenced by various pressures, including the changing positions of party leaders, peer activists, and the broader state-level political environment. While some

activists resist conversion due to strong purposive motivations or entrenched ideological views, others succumb to these pressures to align with the dominant party position. This dynamic is mediated by activists' candidate preferences, the incentives driving their political engagement, and their membership in reinforcing social or religious groups. The theory suggests that conversion is most likely among activists whose views are misaligned with the prevailing party stance, particularly in competitive or ideologically polarized contexts.

**8. Methods:** The study uses panel data from the 1984 and 1988 Convention Delegate Studies, focusing on activists who participated in both presidential campaigns. The authors operationalize abortion attitudes using a four-point scale and model conversion as the extent of change on this scale between 1984 and 1988. Independent variables include candidate preferences, ideological identification, political incentives, state political context, and membership in reinforcing social groups. Regression analyses test the effects of these factors on conversion, controlling for prior abortion attitudes to account for constraints on attitudinal change.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Activists who support candidates with extreme positions on abortion are more likely to convert in line with those positions.
- Purposive incentives reduce the likelihood of conversion, particularly for activists whose initial views align with their ideological principles.
- State-level political contexts influence conversion, with activists in conservative (or liberal) environments more likely to adopt pro-life (or pro-choice) stances.
- Membership in reinforcing social or religious groups increases the likelihood of conversion toward the dominant party stance.

These hypotheses are largely confirmed, with variations in conversion explained by a combination of individual and contextual factors.

**10. Main findings:** Layman and Carsey find that activist conversion on abortion is shaped by a mix of personal, political, and contextual influences. Activists who supported extreme candidates, such as Jack Kemp on the Republican side, were more likely to shift their abortion attitudes to align with those candidates. Purposive incentives reduced conversion rates, particularly among activists whose initial views were strongly ideological. State political contexts played a significant role, with activists in conservative Republican states or liberal Democratic states showing greater alignment with their party's dominant stance. Religious affiliation and participation also mattered, as Catholic and evangelical Protestant activists were more likely to become pro-life, while decreased church attendance correlated with pro-choice shifts. The study highlights the interaction between activists' prior attitudes and their motivations, showing that purposive activists are more resistant to conversion when their initial views conflict with the party's evolving position.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Conversion effects are in the same ideological direction as replacement effects, leading to more rapid aggregate change than if only replacement were at work" (p. 724).
- "Activists motivated by purposive goals are less likely than those motivated by solidary or material incentives to convert on abortion as their parties' positions change" (p. 732).
- "Religious affiliation and state political context shape the pressures on activists, influencing whether they align their views with the ascendant positions in their parties" (p. 738).

### 3.5.6 Prospecting for Participants: Rational Expectations and the Recruitment of Political Activists

Brady, H. E., Schlozman, K. L., & Verba, S. (1999). Prospecting for Participants: Rational Expectations and the Recruitment of Political Activists [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 93(1), 153–168. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2585767>

1. **Citation key:** brady\_prospecting\_1999
2. **Author(s):** Henry E. Brady, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Sidney Verba
3. **Year:** 1999
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** political participation, recruitment, rational expectations, civic voluntarism, participatory stratification
6. **Summary:** Brady, Schlozman, and Verba investigate the recruitment of political activists, conceptualizing recruitment as a two-stage process: identifying potential participants and obtaining their acquiescence. Using data from the Citizen Participation Study, the authors demonstrate how recruiters engage in "rational prospecting," selecting individuals with high participation potential. The study finds that recruitment tends to reinforce existing patterns of political inequality, as recruiters often target individuals who already possess resources and predispositions conducive to activism.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that recruitment operates through rational prospecting, where recruiters seek individuals with characteristics that maximize the likelihood of participation. Recruiters rely on visible indicators such as education and income, as well as less visible traits like political engagement and civic skills. Relationships between recruiters and recruits play a crucial role, as close ties provide information about a target's potential and enhance leverage for securing participation. The theory emphasizes that recruitment does not mobilize marginalized groups but instead amplifies participatory stratification by targeting those already predisposed to engage in politics. This approach builds on the Civic Voluntarism Model and highlights the systematic biases embedded in recruitment processes.

**8. Methods:** The analysis is based on data from the Citizen Participation Study, a two-stage survey involving over 15,000 telephone interviews and 2,517 in-person follow-ups. Respondents reported on their experiences with recruitment and political participation over the previous year. The study employs regression models to examine the predictors of recruitment attempts and assent to participation requests. Key independent variables include demographic characteristics, political resources (e.g., education, income), civic skills, and political engagement. The analysis also considers the role of relationships between recruiters and targets, including personal ties and shared demographic traits.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Recruiters select targets based on visible and less visible characteristics that predict political participation.
- Close relationships between recruiters and recruits increase the likelihood of both targeting and assent.
- Recruitment reinforces participatory stratification by disproportionately targeting individuals with higher resources and political engagement.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with findings indicating that recruitment mirrors and exacerbates existing inequalities in political participation.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that recruitment is concentrated among individuals with high levels of education, income, and political engagement, as these traits signal participation potential. Recruiters leverage close relationships to obtain information about and influence over potential participants. Visible traits, such as education, are more predictive of recruitment by strangers, while less visible characteristics, like civic skills, are more relevant in recruitment by acquaintances. The process of recruitment does not mobilize new or marginalized groups but instead reinforces patterns of participatory stratification. This is particularly evident in financial contributions, where affluent individuals are disproportionately targeted and contribute significantly more than others.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Recruiters do follow rational strategies for fostering political participation. They also find that, when taken as a whole, political recruitment does not usually mobilize excluded constituencies to politics" (p. 154).
- "Recruiters seem to use a set of selection criteria quite similar to the factors that predict participation by targeting those who are politically engaged-interested, informed, and efficacious" (p. 156).
- "The net result of the recruitment process for political activity, in general—and for financial contributions, in particular—is to exacerbate participatory stratification" (p. 162).

### 3.5.7 Heeding the Call: An Assessment of Mobilization into H. Ross Perot's 1992 Presidential Campaign

McCann, J. A., Rapoport, R. B., & Stone, W. J. (1999). Heeding the Call: An Assessment of Mobilization into H. Ross Perot's 1992 Presidential Campaign [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 43(1), 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2991783>

**1. Citation key:** mccann\_heeding\_1999

**2. Author(s):** James A. McCann, Ronald B. Rapoport, and Walter J. Stone

**3. Year:** 1999

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** third-party candidates, political participation, mobilization, Ross Perot, campaign activism

**6. Summary:** McCann, Rapoport, and Stone analyze the factors that mobilized activists into Ross Perot's 1992 presidential campaign. Using a unique dataset of potential volunteers who contacted Perot's "volunteer hotline," they examine the push and pull dynamics that motivated engagement with Perot's campaign. Their findings show that initial involvement was largely driven by dissatisfaction with the major parties, but sustained activism required positive evaluations of Perot as a candidate.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose that mobilization into third-party campaigns like Perot's is driven by both negative "push" factors and positive "pull" factors. Push factors include widespread cynicism about the two major parties, dissatisfaction with their candidates, and a sense of alienation from traditional political institutions. Pull factors involve positive evaluations of the third-party candidate, agreement with their issue positions, and campaign contact strategies. They argue that while negative attitudes drive initial interest in third-party movements, sustained activism depends on positive motivations, such as alignment with the candidate's message and active outreach efforts.

**8. Methods:** The study utilizes data from two waves of a survey of individuals who called Perot's volunteer hotline in 1992. The first wave, conducted in September, assessed respondents' demographics, attitudes, and pre-convention activism. The second wave, conducted after the election, examined fall campaign activity and defection to major-party campaigns. Data from the 1992 American National Election Study (ANES) provided a baseline comparison for potential Perot activists. Logistic regression models were used to analyze initial contact with Perot's campaign, while ordinary least squares (OLS) models assessed the extent of pre-convention and general election activism.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Dissatisfaction with major-party candidates and institutions motivates initial engagement with Perot's campaign.
- Positive evaluations of Perot and agreement with his issue positions increase the likelihood of sustained activism.
- Prior political experience and campaign contact efforts are key predictors of activism levels.
- Activists are more likely to defect to major-party campaigns in the fall if they perceive Perot as nonviable or develop stronger preferences for a major-party candidate.

These hypotheses are largely confirmed, with significant findings supporting both push and pull dynamics.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that dissatisfaction with the two-party system and negative evaluations of major-party

candidates drove initial interest in Perot's campaign. However, sustained activism depended on positive factors such as agreement with Perot's issue positions, campaign contact, and prior political experience. Activists who supported Perot during the pre-convention period were more likely to remain active in the fall, although defections to major-party campaigns occurred among those who doubted Perot's viability or strongly preferred another candidate. Despite these defections, Perot's campaign demonstrated significant mobilization potential, particularly through targeted outreach efforts.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "The initial surge for Perot expressed by contacting his campaign fits nicely into this larger third-party historical mold, with consistent evidence of negative 'push' factors such as cynicism and dissatisfaction" (p. 8).
- "Positive attraction to Perot as a candidate, rather than mere discontent with the major parties, was critical for sustained activism during the spring and summer" (p. 14).
- "The decision to remain active in Perot's campaign during the fall was shaped by strategic calculations about his viability and competing evaluations of major-party candidates" (p. 22).

#### 3.5.8 A Dynamic Model of Political Change Among Party Activists

Carsey, T. M., & Layman, G. C. (1999). A Dynamic Model of Political Change Among Party Activists. *Political Behavior*, 21(1), 17–41. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1023344412661>

1. **Citation key:** carsey\_dynamic\_1999
2. **Author(s):** Thomas M. Carsey and Geoffrey C. Layman
3. **Year:** 1999
4. **Publication:** Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** party activists, partisan change, polarization, abortion, dynamic models
6. **Summary:** Carsey and Layman propose a dynamic model to explain aggregate attitudinal change among party activists in the United States, focusing on the interplay of conversion and replacement processes. Using longitudinal data from national convention delegates between 1972 and 1992, the authors analyze partisan polarization on the abortion issue. They argue that while replacement of activists is significant, conversion among continuing activists plays a critical role in accelerating and sustaining long-term partisan change.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on theories of partisan realignment and issue evolution, suggesting that aggregate change among party activists is driven by both replacement and conversion. Replacement occurs when old activists exit and are replaced by newcomers with different views, while conversion involves attitudinal shifts among continuing activists. The model highlights the role of activists as opinion leaders and key agents of partisan polarization. Conversion, they argue, is essential for sustaining change because continuing activists are more likely to remain politically engaged, influencing the party's ideological trajectory over multiple election cycles. The theory challenges earlier models that focus solely on replacement by demonstrating how conversion interacts with replacement to shape long-term changes in party coalitions.
8. **Methods:** The study uses data from the Convention Delegate Studies (CDS), which surveyed national party convention delegates from 1972 to 1992. The authors incorporate panel data to estimate rates of conversion and replacement on the abortion issue. Using a dynamic mathematical model, they calculate the contributions of conversion and replacement to aggregate change over successive election cycles. Parameters include rates of activist dropout, recruitment, and conversion, as well as the initial distribution of abortion attitudes among activists. The model also predicts equilibrium distributions of pro-life and pro-choice activists for both major parties.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Conversion among continuing activists accelerates aggregate partisan change and sustains polarization over time.
  - Replacement alone cannot account for the observed speed and magnitude of partisan change.
  - The role of conversion increases as parties approach equilibrium on divisive issues.

These hypotheses are confirmed by the model's predictions and empirical findings.
10. **Main findings:** The results indicate that conversion is a significant driver of aggregate partisan change, contributing more than 60% of the change in abortion attitudes among activists during the early stages of polarization. Replacement remains important but diminishes over time as the parties approach equilibrium. The model predicts that partisan polarization on abortion will stabilize with approximately 65% of Republican activists identifying as pro-life and 80% of Democratic activists identifying as pro-choice. Conversion is shown to sustain change by maintaining ideological cohesion among continuing activists, who are more likely than newcomers to influence party strategy over multiple cycles. The study concludes that both conversion and replacement are necessary for understanding the dynamics of long-term partisan change.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Conversion among continuing activists contributes in a substantial way to aggregate change among party activists by influencing the level of change, accelerating the change process, and sustaining change over time" (p. 17).
  - "The continuation and persistence of partisan change depends upon conversion among Stayers, who are more likely than Newcomers to remain active from one election to the next" (p. 28).
  - "Using spatial models that assume fixed ideological preferences may underestimate both the rate at which partisan change takes place and its ultimate magnitude" (p. 33).

### 3.5.9 Explaining Women's Rights Realignment: Convention Delegates, 1972–1992

Wolbrecht, C. (2002). Explaining Women's Rights Realignment: Convention Delegates, 1972–1992. *Political Behavior*, 24(3), 237–282. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1021872508054>

1. **Citation key:** wolbrecht\_explaining\_2002
2. **Author(s):** Christina Wolbrecht
3. **Year:** 2002
4. **Publication:** Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** women's rights, political parties, realignment, party platforms, feminism
6. **Summary:** Wolbrecht analyzes the realignment of the Democratic and Republican parties on women's rights issues from 1972 to 1992, focusing on the mechanisms of replacement and conversion among party elites. She argues that party positions on women's rights are shaped by strategic considerations regarding coalition expansion and issue salience. Using data from the Convention Delegate Studies (CDS), Wolbrecht identifies how changes in coalition composition and issue definition have contributed to the partisan polarization on women's rights.
7. **Theory:** Wolbrecht's theory builds on the premise that parties adopt issue positions based on their strategic value in expanding and maintaining electoral coalitions. She posits that changes in coalition composition—such as the rise of social conservatives within the Republican Party—and shifts in how issues are defined—such as the association of women's rights with broader liberal causes like civil rights—drive partisan realignment. The theory suggests that both replacement, where new delegates with differing attitudes enter the party, and conversion, where existing delegates change their views, are critical mechanisms for understanding how parties polarize on issues like women's rights.
8. **Methods:** Wolbrecht utilizes data from the Convention Delegate Studies (CDS), a series of surveys conducted from 1972 to 1992 that capture the attitudes and demographic characteristics of national convention delegates from the Democratic and Republican parties. She employs longitudinal analysis to track changes in delegates' positions on key women's rights issues, including the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), abortion, and general attitudes toward feminism. The study examines the relative contributions of replacement and conversion to aggregate shifts in party positions, using measures such as feeling thermometers, issue-specific survey items, and panel data from the 1980 CDS.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - The rise of social conservatism within the Republican Party contributed to its shift away from support for women's rights.
  - Changes in the way women's rights were defined—particularly their association with liberal causes—strengthened Democratic Party support.
  - Both replacement and conversion among convention delegates drive aggregate changes in party positions on women's rights.
- These hypotheses are confirmed by the analysis, which highlights the interplay of coalition change and issue redefinition.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that the Republican Party's shift away from women's rights was driven by the rise of social conservatism, which redefined party priorities and marginalized feminist perspectives. At the same time, the Democratic Party became more closely associated with feminist causes due to shifts in coalition composition and the alignment of women's rights with liberal issues like civil rights. Wolbrecht demonstrates that both replacement and conversion played significant roles in driving these changes, with replacement being more prominent in the Republican Party and conversion more critical for Democrats. The study also finds that polarization between the parties on women's rights issues, such as the ERA and abortion, became institutionalized by the 1980s, with little change in positions thereafter.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Party positions are determined by the perceived utility of specific issue positions for maintaining and expanding the party's coalition of electoral support" (p. 239).
  - "Changes in the way women's rights were defined—particularly their association with other liberal causes—made feminist positions more appealing to Democratic Party elites and activists" (p. 258).
  - "The rise of social conservatives within the Republican Party coalition contributed to the GOP's shift in an increasingly antiwomen's rights direction" (p. 263).

### 3.5.10 Elections and Activist Coalitions in the United States

Schofield, N., & Miller, G. (2007). Elections and Activist Coalitions in the United States [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00265.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(3), 518–531. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00265.x>

1. **Citation key:** schofield\_elections\_2007
2. **Author(s):** Norman Schofield and Gary Miller
3. **Year:** 2007
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** party activists, spatial models, valence, electoral equilibrium, coalition dynamics
6. **Summary:** Schofield and Miller propose a spatial electoral model incorporating party valence and activist coalitions to explain nonconvergence in two-party systems like the United States. The authors argue that party positions are

shaped by the trade-offs between centrist voter appeal and activist support, with valence—a measure of a party's perceived quality—playing a pivotal role. Using formal modeling, they show how equilibrium positions arise when parties balance these competing influences.

**7. Theory:** The authors integrate the concept of valence into spatial models of party competition, distinguishing between exogenous valence (a fixed perception of a party's competence) and activist valence (support derived from party activists). They theorize that activist valence depends on party positions, which incentivize parties to move away from the electoral center to maximize activist support. However, such shifts risk alienating centrist voters, creating a trade-off. The theory posits that equilibrium occurs when a party's gains from activist contributions are balanced against electoral losses among centrists. The model highlights how asymmetries in valence across parties lead to divergent equilibrium positions and sustain ideological polarization over time.

**8. Methods:** Schofield and Miller develop a stochastic model of party competition, incorporating both exogenous and activist valence. The model's formal structure evaluates conditions under which Nash equilibria emerge in a multi-dimensional policy space. Key parameters include voter ideal points, valence coefficients, and the spatial distance between voter preferences and party positions. Using theoretical proofs and illustrative examples, the authors demonstrate the model's application to U.S. party dynamics, including shifts since the 1960s.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Parties with lower exogenous valence are more likely to move away from the electoral center to maximize activist support.
- Electoral equilibrium positions are determined by the trade-off between activist valence and voter appeal at the center.
- Changes in issue salience or valence asymmetries can destabilize equilibria, leading to new partisan alignments.

These hypotheses are supported by the formal model and historical analysis of U.S. party coalitions.

**10. Main findings:** The model explains why U.S. parties do not converge to the electoral center despite the predictions of traditional spatial models. Activist support, critical to party success, pulls party positions away from the median voter, while valence asymmetries reinforce divergence. For example, the rise of social conservatives within the Republican coalition has shifted the party's position further to the right, while the Democratic Party has moved leftward to attract socially liberal but economically conservative cosmopolitan voters. The authors also show that shifts in issue salience—such as civil rights in the 1960s or immigration and stem cell research in the 2000s—can realign party coalitions and equilibrium positions.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The focus of this article is the apparent paradox that actual political systems display neither chaos nor convergence" (p. 518).
- "Activists are likely to be more extreme than the typical voter. By choosing a policy position to maximize activist support, the party will lose centrist voters" (p. 519).
- "Party success requires the formation of coalitions among actors who have conflicting policy preferences over at least one dimension of policy. A successful party coalition is a 'coalition of enemies'" (p. 530).

### 3.5.11 Polarization in the American Public: Misconceptions and Misreadings

Fiorina, M. P., Abrams, S. A., & Pope, J. C. (2008). Polarization in the American Public: Misconceptions and Misreadings [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 70(2), 556–560. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002238160808050X>

1. **Citation key:** fiorina\_polarization\_2008
2. **Author(s):** Morris P. Fiorina, Samuel J. Abrams, and Jeremy C. Pope
3. **Year:** 2008
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** political polarization, moderation, party sorting, elite behavior, public opinion
6. **Summary:** Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope challenge the argument that the American public has become ideologically polarized. Instead, they argue that the public remains largely moderate, while party sorting—a process through which party elites and identifiers become more ideologically consistent—has deepened. Using data from the American National Election Studies (ANES), the General Social Survey (GSS), and other sources, the authors contend that much of the perceived polarization in public opinion is the result of elite-driven changes rather than mass-level shifts.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that what appears to be polarization among the mass public is better understood as sorting. They argue that while party elites have become more distinct, the public has remained ideologically stable, with most Americans occupying centrist positions. The increase in partisan alignment among voters reflects a greater congruence between their policy preferences and party identification, driven by elite polarization rather than shifts in mass attitudes. Fiorina et al. emphasize the role of institutional changes and elite strategies in fostering this alignment, while maintaining that the public is more pragmatic and less ideological than political elites.
8. **Methods:** The authors analyze longitudinal data from surveys such as the ANES and the GSS, focusing on measures of ideological self-identification, issue preferences, and partisan alignment. They evaluate trends in public opinion on key policy issues, including abortion, government spending, and racial equality, over several decades. Using cross-tabulations and regression models, they compare the distribution of attitudes across time and assess the extent of polarization versus sorting. The analysis also examines geographic and demographic patterns to assess claims of

red-blue state polarization.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- The American public has not become more ideologically polarized over time but remains largely moderate.
- Increased partisan alignment among voters reflects sorting rather than genuine polarization.
- Public opinion on key policy issues has shifted incrementally, but these changes are insufficient to suggest widespread polarization.

These hypotheses are supported by the data, which show little evidence of mass polarization but significant evidence of party sorting.

**10. Main findings:** Fiorina et al. find that the distribution of public opinion has remained largely stable, with most Americans identifying as moderates. On specific policy issues, shifts in public attitudes have been incremental and inconsistent with claims of polarization. For instance, while some issues show movement toward one side (e.g., increased support for government health insurance), others show little change or even reduced extremity. The authors argue that the growing ideological alignment between voters and parties is a result of elite-driven changes, such as the polarization of party platforms and candidates. Geographic polarization, often cited as evidence of a deeply divided electorate, is also found to be overstated. Overall, the findings reinforce the conclusion that polarization is primarily an elite phenomenon, while the public remains relatively moderate and pragmatic.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "The politically engaged segment of the American electorate is not as polarized in its attitudes as some have argued, but rather reflects a pattern of increased sorting" (p. 557).
- "Public opinion has remained remarkably stable over time, with little evidence of movement toward ideological extremes in the mass electorate" (p. 558).
- "The differences between red and blue states are often exaggerated, as most Americans hold similar views on many policy issues regardless of geography" (p. 559).

### 3.5.12 Is Polarization a Myth?

Abramowitz, A. I., & Saunders, K. L. (2008). Is Polarization a Myth? [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 70(2), 542–555. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381608080493>

1. Citation key: abramowitz\_is\_2008

2. Author(s): Alan I. Abramowitz and Kyle L. Saunders

3. Year: 2008

4. Publication: The Journal of Politics

5. Keywords: political polarization, public opinion, ideological divisions, elite behavior, voter engagement

6. Summary: Abramowitz and Saunders challenge the claim by Morris Fiorina that ideological polarization in the United States is primarily an elite phenomenon with little resonance among the public. Using data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) and national exit polls, they argue that polarization has increased significantly among the mass public since the 1970s. Their findings indicate that partisan and ideological divisions are now deeper and more widespread, particularly among politically engaged citizens, and that this polarization has energized, rather than alienated, the electorate.

7. Theory: The authors theorize that ideological polarization among the mass public has been driven by changes in education, the growing ideological alignment of elites, and increased political engagement. They suggest that polarization is most pronounced among highly engaged and informed citizens, who are more likely to develop coherent and consistent ideological positions. Furthermore, they argue that the increasing salience of cultural and social issues has deepened partisan divisions, creating stark differences between groups such as red-state and blue-state voters, and religious and secular voters. Contrary to Fiorina's claim, Abramowitz and Saunders posit that polarization energizes voter engagement by raising the stakes of political contests, fostering greater turnout and activism.

8. Methods: The study employs data from the ANES and national exit polls, spanning several decades, to test Fiorina's claims about moderation, partisan and geographical polarization, social cleavages, and voter engagement. The authors analyze trends in ideological consistency, partisan alignment, and voter turnout using measures such as correlations between party identification and liberal-conservative ideology, cross-tabulations of issue positions, and logistic regression models. Their analysis includes both aggregate trends and subgroup differences, such as variations by education, political knowledge, and religious observance.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Ideological polarization has increased among the mass public since the 1970s, particularly among highly engaged and informed citizens.
- Partisan divisions on cultural and social issues are as significant as, or more significant than, traditional economic cleavages.
- Polarization energizes voter engagement, leading to higher turnout and activism rather than alienation.

These hypotheses are supported by the evidence, which shows significant growth in ideological and partisan polarization over time and a strong link between polarization and voter engagement.

**10. Main findings:** Abramowitz and Saunders find that ideological polarization has increased markedly among the mass public, particularly among voters with higher levels of education, political knowledge, and engagement. The correlation between party identification and ideological orientation has risen sharply since the 1970s, with a corresponding

increase in partisan differences on cultural and social issues such as abortion, gay marriage, and government spending. Contrary to Fiorina's claim, the authors show that polarization energizes voter participation, as evidenced by record-high turnout and activism levels in the 2004 presidential election. The study also highlights the growing geographical polarization between red and blue states, with significant differences in social characteristics and political attitudes.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Our evidence indicates that since the 1970s, ideological polarization has increased dramatically among the mass public in the United States as well as among political elites" (p. 542).
- "The politically engaged segment of the American electorate is in fact quite polarized in its political attitudes. We would expect political elites to be much more concerned about the views of the politically engaged than about the views of the politically disengaged" (p. 545).
- "Rather than turning off voters, these data suggest that the intense polarization of the American electorate over George W. Bush increased public engagement and stimulated participation in the 2004 election" (p. 553).

#### 3.5.13 Deliberate with the Enemy? Polarization, Social Identity, and Attitudes Toward Disagreement

Strickler, R. (2018). Deliberate with the Enemy? Polarization, Social Identity, and Attitudes toward Disagreement [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 71(1), 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912917721371>

1. Citation key: strickler\_deliberate\_2018

2. Author(s): Ryan Strickler

3. Year: 2018

4. Publication: Political Research Quarterly

5. Keywords: polarization, deliberative democracy, social identity, partisanship, public opinion

6. Summary: Strickler investigates how social and ideological dimensions of partisanship affect attitudes toward political disagreement. Using online and telephone survey experiments, the paper examines the conditions under which reciprocity—a deliberative norm central to democratic discourse—is undermined by mass polarization. Strickler finds that strong social partisan identities erode reciprocal attitudes toward outparty arguments, whereas ideological partisanship has a limited and inconsistent effect. This study highlights the role of social identity polarization in shaping deliberative democratic ideals.

7. Theory: The author posits that mass polarization affects deliberative discourse primarily through social identity mechanisms. Drawing on social identity theory, Strickler argues that partisan attachment involves both social and ideological dimensions, with the former exerting a stronger influence on attitudes toward disagreement. Reciprocity, defined as the willingness to engage in good-faith argumentation, is conditioned by these partisan attachments. Strong social identity salience fosters ingroup favoritism and outgroup bias, undermining the deliberative ideal of mutual respect. The study expands existing polarization literature by emphasizing the distinction between ideological and social identity polarization, suggesting that the latter drives antideliberative tendencies. Furthermore, Strickler situates these findings within a deliberative systems framework, underscoring the broader implications for democratic decision-making and public discourse.

8. Methods: Strickler employs two survey experiments to test his hypotheses. The first is an online survey conducted via Amazon MTurk (n=1,619), which includes vignette-based questions designed to measure attitudes toward disagreement. Respondents are randomly assigned to scenarios where counterarguments are attributed to inparty, outparty, or neutral sources. The second experiment, conducted via telephone (n=802), replicates key aspects of the online study using a representative sample of South Carolina residents. The primary variables of interest are partisan social identity salience and ideological partisanship, operationalized through survey questions and confirmatory factor analysis. Dependent variables include respondents' assessments of the reasonableness and worth of counterarguments. The analysis relies on ordered logistic regression, with interaction terms used to test treatment effect heterogeneity across subgroups.

9. Hypotheses:

- Respondents with high partisan social identity salience will exhibit less reciprocal attitudes toward outparty arguments and more reciprocal attitudes toward inparty arguments, compared to those with lower social identity salience.
- Ideological partisanship will have a weaker and more inconsistent effect on reciprocity, with limited differentiation across issue domains.

Both hypotheses are confirmed for social identity salience but not consistently supported for ideological partisanship.

10. Main findings: Strickler's findings demonstrate that partisan social identity salience significantly shapes attitudes toward political disagreement. Social partisans are more likely to evaluate outparty arguments as unreasonable and unworthy of consideration, while favoring inparty arguments. This pattern holds across issue domains and survey methods, suggesting robust effects. Ideological partisanship, by contrast, exhibits weak and inconsistent effects on reciprocity. These results highlight the deleterious impact of social polarization on deliberative norms, with potential implications for the broader democratic system. Strickler argues that this antideliberative bias undermines the epistemic quality of public discourse and reinforces partisan divisions, complicating efforts to achieve mutual respect and understanding in democratic governance.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Strong social attachments to one's party consistently drive antideliberative attitudes toward disagreement; ide-

- ological partisan attachment, however, does not have this effect" (p. 3).
- "Social polarization is making good faith discussion and honest engagement with divergent perspectives more difficult. Instead, open-mindedness and mutual respect is increasingly only offered within partisan enclaves" (p. 15).
  - "If deliberative democracy is of value, and if discursive norms apply not just to elites but to the public as well, these results are potentially troubling" (p. 16).

### 3.6 Partisan Identification

#### 3.6.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of partisan identification explores the extent to which individuals develop and maintain psychological attachments to political parties. Initially, partisanship was viewed as a stable, long-term allegiance shaped by early socialization processes, as exemplified by *The American Voter* (1960). However, this perspective evolved with research highlighting the fluidity of partisan attachments and their responsiveness to contextual political factors, such as elite polarization and issue salience. Key works, including those by Nie, Verba, and Petrocik (1976), and Bartels (2000), emphasize how ideological polarization, generational turnover, and voter sophistication have transformed partisanship in modern American politics. The integration of new theoretical perspectives, including biological predispositions and geographic sorting, has further enriched this field, revealing the multifaceted nature of partisan identification as both a social and political phenomenon.
- **Stability and Change in Partisanship:** Foundational studies treated party identification as a durable, exogenous variable. Franklin and Jackson's (1983) work on *The Dynamics of Party Identification* challenged this notion, introducing a dynamic model where partisanship evolves in response to changing political evaluations. Fiorina (1981) further reconceptualized party identification as a cumulative judgment, shaped by voters' retrospective evaluations of government performance. These findings align with Franklin's (1992) conclusion that partisanship is influenced by issue evaluations, contradicting earlier assumptions of immutability. Abramson and Aldrich (1982) highlight the weakening of party identification as a driver of declining voter turnout, suggesting that attitudinal shifts, rather than structural factors, explain changes in electoral participation. Together, these works emphasize the interplay between stability and responsiveness in shaping partisan behavior.
- **Elite Polarization and Ideological Sorting:** The increasing polarization of political elites has significantly influenced mass partisanship. Hetherington (2001) argues that elite polarization clarifies ideological distinctions between parties, increasing the salience of partisan attachments among voters. Bafumi and Shapiro (2009) expand on this by linking elite polarization to ideological sorting, showing that voters increasingly align their partisanship with ideological self-identification. Stoker and Jennings (2008) add a generational dimension, demonstrating that younger cohorts are more responsive to partisan cleavages, particularly those shaped by cultural and social issues. Bartels (2000) and Hetherington (2001) also document the resurgence of partisan voting in recent decades, highlighting the role of elite cues in shaping mass-level partisan alignment.
- **Heritability and Biological Perspectives:** A groundbreaking perspective on partisanship emerges from Settle, Dawes, and Fowler's (2009) work on the heritability of partisan attachment. Their study reveals that genetic factors account for nearly half the variance in the strength of partisanship, while environmental influences primarily determine the direction of partisan preference. These findings suggest that partisanship is rooted in fundamental social behaviors, such as group attachment, which are shaped by both biological predispositions and external contexts. This perspective provides a novel explanation for the intergenerational stability of partisan identities.
- **Geographic Sorting and Partisan Homogeneity:** The phenomenon of geographic sorting, as explored by Tam Cho, Gimpel, and Hui (2013), reveals how migration patterns reinforce partisan homogeneity. Their analysis of voter registration data shows that individuals tend to relocate to communities that align with their political preferences, fostering ideological enclaves. This sorting process is particularly pronounced among Republicans and contributes to the entrenchment of partisan divides. The authors argue that geographic sorting diminishes exposure to diverse viewpoints, exacerbating polarization and reshaping the political landscape over time.
- **Independent Identification and Partisan Disengagement:** Klar and Krupnikov (2016) challenge traditional notions of independent voters, arguing that many self-identified independents are "undercover partisans." These individuals conceal their partisan preferences due to the negative social stigma associated with partisanship. This misrepresentation leads to lower political engagement and complicates efforts to measure the true extent of partisanship in the electorate. The authors highlight the tension between public disdain for partisanship and its enduring influence on voter behavior.
- **Retrospective and Rational Evaluations:** Fiorina's (1981) theory of retrospective voting emphasizes the role of past performance in shaping voter evaluations of parties. This model suggests that partisanship is not a static attachment but evolves based on voters' judgments of government performance. Gerber and Green (1998) extend this framework through a Bayesian learning model, demonstrating how voters rationally update their partisan attitudes in response to new information. These studies underscore the importance of dynamic evaluations in shaping partisan identities over time.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** The study of partisan identification continues to grapple with questions about the stability versus fluidity of partisanship, the role of elite polarization in structuring voter behavior, and the influence of demographic and geographic factors on partisan alignment. Emerging areas of inquiry include the impact of digital media on partisan sorting, the role of social identity in shaping political preferences, and the implications

of declining party saliency for democratic engagement. Future research may also explore the intersection of biology, socialization, and political context in shaping partisan behavior, offering deeper insights into the evolving dynamics of American partisanship.

### 3.6.2 The Changing American Voter

Nie, N. H., Verba, S., & Petrocik, J. R. (1976). *The Changing American Voter* [Google-Books-ID: L7IoAQAAQAAJ]. Harvard University Press

1. **Citation key:** nie\_changing\_1976
2. **Author(s):** Norman H. Nie, Sidney Verba, and John R. Petrocik
3. **Year:** 1976
4. **Publication:** Harvard University Press
5. **Keywords:** American electorate, issue voting, political sophistication, party realignment, ideological polarization
6. **Summary:** This book analyzes shifts in the American electorate between 1952 and 1972, challenging the previously dominant perspective offered by *The American Voter*. The authors argue that the rise of issue voting, growing ideological polarization, and demographic realignments have fundamentally reshaped electoral behavior. Using data from the Michigan Survey Research Center, they explore how voters' decision-making has become more ideologically consistent and issue-driven, reflecting broader changes in American politics.
7. **Theory:** Nie, Verba, and Petrocik propose that political behavior in the United States has evolved from a party-centered model of voting to one increasingly shaped by issue-based decision-making. This shift, they argue, is influenced by two primary factors: (1) changes in the political stimuli presented by candidates, reflecting a more polarized political landscape, and (2) generational replacement, with new voters entering the electorate with different ideological and issue orientations. These dynamics suggest that electoral preferences are increasingly shaped by ideology and issue salience, as opposed to partisan loyalty or social group affiliations. The authors highlight that these changes correspond to broader sociopolitical trends, including rising political sophistication and increased voter engagement with policy debates. However, they also caution that these developments have been accompanied by growing disillusionment with the political process.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a longitudinal analysis using national survey data from 1952 to 1972, primarily from the Michigan Survey Research Center. The authors use statistical techniques such as principal components analysis to measure changes in voters' ideological consistency across multiple issue domains. They also examine shifts in party identification, issue salience, and sociodemographic factors to understand broader trends in the electorate. By reconstructing partisan composition and voting patterns during key historical periods, including the New Deal era, the authors identify patterns of generational replacement and their impact on party coalitions.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Voters have become more ideologically consistent in their issue preferences.
  - Issue voting has increased in salience, surpassing traditional partisan cues.
  - Generational replacement, rather than conversion, drives major shifts in party coalitions.
 These hypotheses are confirmed, with evidence demonstrating increased ideological polarization and a stronger role for issue-based decision-making.
10. **Main findings:** Nie, Verba, and Petrocik find that the American electorate has undergone significant changes in the postwar period. Partisan identification has declined, while ideological polarization has risen. Voters increasingly base their decisions on policy issues rather than party loyalty, with issue voting becoming a central feature of electoral behavior. The authors also document significant demographic shifts, including declining Democratic support in the South and increased polarization among party activists. These trends reflect the broader realignment of party coalitions and the growing role of ideology in structuring political preferences.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Partisanship:* A long-term psychological attachment to a political party, which influences voter preferences and behavior.
  - *Political sophistication:* The degree to which voters conceptualize politics in ideological terms and evaluate candidates based on coherent issue positions.
  - *Issue voting:* A form of electoral decision-making where voters prioritize specific policy issues over party loyalty or candidate characteristics.
  - *Generational replacement:* The process by which older voters with established political identities exit the electorate and are replaced by younger, less partisan cohorts.
  - *Realignment:* A significant and lasting shift in the bases of political party support, often resulting from changes in the composition of the electorate.

### 3.6.3 Reciprocal Effects of Policy Preferences, Party Loyalties, and the Vote

Page, B. I., & Jones, C. C. (1979). Reciprocal Effects of Policy Preferences, Party Loyalties and the Vote [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 73(4), 1071–1089. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1953990>

1. **Citation key:** page\_reciprocal\_1979
2. **Author(s):** Benjamin I. Page and Calvin C. Jones

3. **Year:** 1979
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** policy voting, partisanship, candidate evaluation, simultaneous equation models, reciprocal causation
6. **Summary:** Page and Jones analyze how policy preferences, party loyalties, and candidate evaluations influence voting behavior through reciprocal causal relationships. Employing a non-recursive simultaneous equation model, they examine the interplay among these variables using data from the 1972 and 1976 U.S. presidential elections. The authors argue that previous recursive models underestimate the complexity of electoral behavior, emphasizing that policy preferences and party attachments influence, and are influenced by, voting decisions.
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the assumption that causation in voting behavior flows in one direction. They propose that policy preferences, party loyalties, and candidate evaluations form a reciprocal causal network, where each variable simultaneously acts as both cause and effect. This framework acknowledges that voters' perceptions of candidates' policy stances may be shaped by their overall evaluations of the candidates, and that party identification is not an immutable influence but can be affected by campaign stimuli. The authors draw on theories of projection and selective perception, suggesting that voters rationalize their preferences by aligning their policy perceptions with their preferred candidate or party. This bidirectional causation complicates the traditional understanding of voting behavior, underscoring the need for models that account for mutual influences.
8. **Methods:** Page and Jones employ data from the 1972 and 1976 presidential elections, collected by the University of Michigan's Center for Political Studies. They specify a simultaneous equation model that includes comparative candidate evaluations, policy distances, and party attachments as endogenous variables. Exogenous variables, such as parental partisanship and demographic characteristics, are used to identify the model. The authors apply two-stage and three-stage least squares regression techniques to estimate the causal paths, comparing their results with those derived from simpler recursive models.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Policy preferences influence vote choice but are also shaped by voters' evaluations of candidates.
  - Party identification affects voting decisions but is itself influenced by campaign dynamics and candidate evaluations.
  - Candidate evaluations mediate the relationship between policy preferences and voting behavior.

These hypotheses are supported by the findings, which reveal significant reciprocal effects among the key variables.
10. **Main findings:** The authors find that policy preferences play a central role in voting decisions, with comparative policy distances from candidates being a strong predictor of vote choice. Candidate evaluations also exert substantial influence, often mediating the impact of policy preferences. Party attachments, while significant, are less dominant than traditionally assumed and are themselves influenced by voters' evaluations of candidates and policy positions. The study highlights the limitations of recursive models, showing that they fail to capture the bidirectional nature of these relationships. For example, voters' perceptions of policy distances are not static but are shaped by their overall feelings toward the candidates. The findings underscore the complexity of electoral behavior and the importance of accounting for mutual causation.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Policy preferences appear to have much more influence on voting decisions, and party attachments much less, than was previously thought" (p. 1071).
  - "Clearly, citizens may tend to vote for the candidate to whom they feel closest on matters of public policy. Yet it seems to us quite possible—in fact likely—that citizens whose initial vote intentions may be formulated on non-policy grounds, can and do convince themselves that the candidates they prefer stand closer to them on the important policy issues" (p. 1078).
  - "The clearest implications of our findings concern errors inherent in recursive voting models. Researchers who rely on single-equation techniques simply fail to reproduce faithfully the underlying complexity of the electoral decision process" (p. 1087).

#### 3.6.4 Retrospective Voting in American National Elections

Fiorina, M. P. (1981). *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* [Google-Books-ID: \_aejQgAACAAJ]. Yale University Press

1. **Citation key:** fiorina\_retrospective\_1981
2. **Author(s):** Morris P. Fiorina
3. **Year:** 1981
4. **Publication:** Yale University Press
5. **Keywords:** retrospective voting, electoral accountability, voter behavior, rational choice, party identification
6. **Summary:** Fiorina's book advances the theory of retrospective voting, positing that voters primarily evaluate candidates based on past performance rather than prospective promises. Drawing on data from the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center, the book explores how voters use a "reward-punishment" criterion to assess the incumbent government. Fiorina develops a dynamic model of vote choice that integrates party identification, retrospective evaluations, and policy considerations, offering a systematic critique of prior theories rooted in prospective voting and social-psychological models.
7. **Theory:** Fiorina builds on V.O. Key's theory that voters are rational actors who hold governments accountable through

retrospective evaluations. He argues that voters focus on tangible outcomes—such as economic performance or governance success—when casting their ballots. Fiorina challenges the static view of party identification as immutable, instead conceptualizing it as a cumulative judgment formed through repeated retrospective assessments. He posits that this dynamic party identification mediates the influence of retrospective evaluations on vote choice. Additionally, Fiorina distinguishes between "simple" retrospective evaluations (e.g., personal economic conditions) and "mediated" evaluations (e.g., judgments about government policy performance), emphasizing the complexity of voter decision-making. His theoretical framework underscores the interplay of rational choice and partisan dynamics, suggesting that voter behavior is both contextually adaptive and informed by prior experiences.

**8. Methods:** Fiorina employs survey data spanning 1952 to 1976, including presidential and congressional elections, to test his dynamic model of electoral choice. He uses probit analysis to model vote decisions, incorporating variables such as party identification, retrospective evaluations of government performance, and policy preferences. His methodology combines multivariate statistical techniques with conceptual innovations, including the reconceptualization of party identification as both a cause and an effect of voter behavior. Fiorina further contrasts retrospective and prospective voting patterns, using CPS survey items to assess the relative weight of these considerations in shaping electoral outcomes.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Voters use retrospective evaluations of government performance as a primary determinant of their vote choices.
- Party identification is dynamic, evolving in response to retrospective evaluations over time.
- Retrospective voting varies across demographic and political contexts, reflecting differences in voters' access to and interpretation of information.

These hypotheses are largely supported, with Fiorina demonstrating that retrospective evaluations significantly influence vote choice, while party identification functions as both a mediating and cumulative factor.

**10. Main findings:** Fiorina concludes that retrospective evaluations are central to voter behavior, with voters relying on their perceptions of government performance to make electoral decisions. His analysis reveals that party identification is not fixed but evolves as a summary judgment of past experiences, challenging traditional conceptualizations of partisanship. Additionally, Fiorina finds that future expectations, while important, are shaped by retrospective evaluations. The study highlights the limitations of prospective voting theories and emphasizes the role of accountability in democratic elections. Fiorina's findings suggest that retrospective evaluations provide a mechanism for electoral accountability, enabling voters to reward or punish incumbents based on past performance.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Retrospective voting*: A voting behavior model where individuals evaluate candidates based on past performance, particularly in terms of economic or governance outcomes, rather than future promises.
- *Party identification*: A dynamic and cumulative judgment formed through retrospective evaluations of party performance, rather than a static, lifelong allegiance.
- *Simple retrospective evaluations*: Voter judgments based on directly experienced outcomes, such as personal economic conditions or local government services.
- *Mediated retrospective evaluations*: Evaluations of government performance influenced by perceptions of policy, media narratives, or partisan biases, rather than direct experiences.
- *Rational choice theory*: A theoretical framework suggesting that voters make decisions by weighing costs and benefits, often based on retrospective evaluations of incumbent performance.
- *Probit analysis*: A statistical technique used to model binary outcomes, such as vote choice, by examining the relationship between explanatory variables and a dependent dichotomous variable.

### 3.6.5 The Decline of Electoral Participation in America

Abramson, P. R., & Aldrich, J. H. (1982). The Decline of Electoral Participation in America [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 76(3), 502–521. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1963728>

1. **Citation key:** abramson\_decline\_1982
2. **Author(s):** Paul R. Abramson and John H. Aldrich
3. **Year:** 1982
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** voter turnout, party identification, political efficacy, electoral participation, American politics
6. **Summary:** Abramson and Aldrich analyze the decline in electoral participation in the United States from 1960 to 1980. They argue that this decline, observed in both presidential and congressional elections, stems primarily from two attitudinal trends: the weakening of party identification and declining beliefs in government responsiveness, also known as lowered feelings of "external" political efficacy. Using data from multiple presidential and congressional election surveys, the authors find that these trends collectively explain a significant portion of the reduction in voter turnout.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that the decline in electoral participation is linked to broader shifts in political attitudes. They argue that strong party identification enhances psychological involvement in politics and reduces the information costs of voting, while external political efficacy influences individuals' perceptions of whether their participation can affect government action. Over time, the weakening of partisan loyalties and declining efficacy diminished voters'

motivation to engage in elections. This theory challenges structural explanations, emphasizing that changes in political attitudes rather than demographic or procedural factors account for most of the observed decline in turnout.

**8. Methods:** The study employs data from the Survey Research Center and Center for Political Studies (SRC-CPS) surveys conducted between 1952 and 1980 for presidential elections and between 1958 and 1978 for congressional elections. The authors use algebraic correction techniques and probit regression models to estimate the impact of declining party identification and political efficacy on voter turnout. Turnout is analyzed within subgroups defined by levels of partisanship and external efficacy, and the combined effects of these attitudes are assessed across multiple election years. The analysis accounts for overreporting of turnout in surveys by comparing trends with validated voting records.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Declining party identification contributes to reduced voter turnout in both presidential and congressional elections.
- Declining external political efficacy also contributes significantly to the decline in turnout.
- The combined effect of these two trends explains a substantial portion of the overall decline in electoral participation.

The hypotheses are confirmed, with the results indicating that the erosion of partisanship and political efficacy accounts for much of the observed decline in voter turnout.

**10. Main findings:** Abramson and Aldrich find that the decline in voter turnout between 1960 and 1980 is attributable to both the weakening of party identification and declining feelings of external political efficacy. Approximately 25–30% of the decline in presidential turnout and even more of the decline in congressional turnout can be explained by reduced partisanship. Declining political efficacy accounts for roughly half of the decline in turnout during the same period. Combined, these trends explain 70–75% of the decline in presidential turnout. The authors also highlight that the impact of these attitudinal changes has grown over time, with significant implications for American democracy.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Since 1960 turnout has declined in presidential elections, and since 1966 it has declined in off-year congressional elections. These declines occurred despite several major trends that could have increased electoral participation" (p. 502).
- "The weakening of party loyalties among the American electorate and declining beliefs about government responsiveness... appear to account for a substantial part of the decline in voter turnout" (p. 503).
- "The erosion of partisanship in the electorate can explain between 25 and 30 percent of the decline in participation in presidential elections and even more of the decline in off-year congressional elections" (p. 510).

### 3.6.6 Party Identification and Party Images: A Comparison of Britain, Canada, Australia, and the United States

Wattenberg, M. P. (1982). Party Identification and Party Images: A Comparison of Britain, Canada, Australia, and the United States [Publisher: Comparative Politics, Ph.D. Programs in Political Science, City University of New York]. *Comparative Politics*, 15(1), 23–40. <https://doi.org/10.2307/421577>

**1. Citation key:** wattenberg\_party\_1982

**2. Author(s):** Martin P. Wattenberg

**3. Year:** 1982

**4. Publication:** Comparative Politics

**5. Keywords:** party identification, political systems, two-party systems, multiparty systems, voter attitudes

**6. Summary:** Wattenberg examines the concept of party identification across four Anglo-American democracies: the United States, Great Britain, Canada, and Australia. By comparing voter attitudes in two-party and multiparty systems, the article investigates whether party identification represents a positive attachment to a preferred party or merely a rejection of alternatives. The analysis highlights how systemic differences influence the nature and role of party identification, with implications for political stability and voter behavior.

**7. Theory:** The central argument posits that party identification is shaped by the structure of the political system. In two-party systems, such as the United States and Great Britain, party identification often arises from a lack of alternatives, leading to higher levels of negative identification compared to multiparty systems. Conversely, multiparty systems encourage voters to positively identify with their chosen party due to the broader array of viable options. Wattenberg builds on earlier theories by Converse and Dupeux, who argued that strong party identification stabilizes political systems by reducing susceptibility to demagogic appeals. However, Wattenberg contends that the evaluative nature of party identification—whether driven by positive or negative attitudes—significantly affects its stabilizing potential.

**8. Methods:** The study uses data from the Political Action survey, an eight-nation study on mass participation in Western democracies, and additional election studies conducted in the four countries between 1964 and 1980. Wattenberg analyzes responses to open-ended questions on likes and dislikes about major political parties, categorizing respondents as positive, neutral, or negative toward each party. These classifications are then combined to create six categories of voter attitudes. The analysis compares these patterns across countries and examines temporal trends in party identification, particularly in relation to significant political events.

**9. Hypotheses:** Wattenberg hypothesizes that:

- In two-party systems, party identification is more likely to reflect negative attitudes toward alternatives than positive attachments.

- Multiparty systems exhibit a higher proportion of positive identification due to the broader range of choices.
- The nature of party identification influences system stability, with negative identification contributing to volatility in two-party systems.

These hypotheses are supported, as the findings reveal significant differences in the evaluative patterns of party identification between two-party and multiparty systems.

**10. Main findings:** Wattenberg finds that in two-party systems, such as the United States and Great Britain, a substantial proportion of voters express negative identification, with more dislikes than likes about their own party. This pattern contrasts with multiparty systems, where positive identification is more common. For example, in two-party systems, approximately 14% of identifiers express negative attitudes toward their own party, compared to only 6% in multiparty systems. The study also demonstrates that systemic factors, such as the number of viable political alternatives, shape the nature of party identification and its implications for political stability. Notably, in Britain, despite a decline in strong party identification, attitudes toward major parties have become increasingly polarized, reflecting deeper divisions within the electorate.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "In multiparty systems, where there are numerous alternatives, an expressed party identification is more likely to be the result of the voter canvassing all of the possibilities and choosing the one that he or she feels most positive about" (p. 24).
- "The fact that party images are an expression of both long- and short-term forces... there are always likely to be short-term events in every society that cause partisans to hold a negative opinion of their own party" (p. 25).
- "In Britain it is far more plausible than in the United States to argue that partisan decomposition has been a result of specific political events rather than due to long-term processes of change" (p. 34).

### 3.6.7 The Dynamics of Party Identification

Franklin, C. H., & Jackson, J. E. (1983). The Dynamics of Party Identification [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 77(4), 957–973. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1957569>

**1. Citation key:** franklin\_dynamics\_1983

**2. Author(s):** Charles H. Franklin and John E. Jackson

**3. Year:** 1983

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** party identification, electoral behavior, rational choice, political socialization, political stability

**6. Summary:** Franklin and Jackson propose a dynamic model of party identification, contrasting it with traditional views that treat party identification as exogenous and largely stable. They argue that party identification is influenced by both historical allegiance and contemporary evaluations of political parties' proximity to voters' preferences. Using longitudinal and cross-sectional data from U.S. elections between 1956 and 1980, the authors estimate the effects of past identifications, electoral evaluations, and age on the evolution of partisan preferences.

**7. Theory:** The authors challenge static models of party identification derived from *The American Voter*, arguing instead for a dynamic approach. They posit that party identification is neither wholly stable nor purely reactive but evolves through interactions between past allegiance and current political evaluations. Older voters exhibit more stability in partisan identification due to accumulated political experiences, while younger voters are more influenced by issue-based evaluations of parties. This dynamic conception integrates elements of rational choice theory, suggesting that party identification reflects an adaptive process shaped by changing political circumstances and personal evaluations.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a combination of true and simulated panel data from U.S. National Election Studies (NES) conducted between 1956 and 1980. Franklin and Jackson use two-stage probit regression to model the simultaneity of party identification and issue evaluations. The independent variables include lagged party identification, age, past vote, and issue proximity measures. The authors also introduce age-interaction terms to capture differential effects across demographic groups. Pre- and post-election panel data allow them to disentangle the causal relationships between party identification, voting behavior, and issue evaluations.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Party identification is influenced by both past identification and current evaluations of party proximity to individual preferences.
- Younger voters' party identification is more susceptible to change than that of older voters.
- Voting decisions, while correlated with party identification, exert limited direct influence on subsequent partisan allegiance.

Their hypotheses are largely confirmed, with results demonstrating both the stability and responsiveness of party identification.

**10. Main findings:** Franklin and Jackson find that party identification is a dynamic variable influenced by both historical allegiance and current political evaluations. The weight of past party identification increases with age, leading to greater stability among older voters. Current evaluations of party positions relative to personal preferences significantly shape younger voters' partisanship. The authors also find minimal direct effects of voting decisions on subsequent identification, suggesting that issue evaluations drive both vote choice and partisan allegiance. Overall, the findings highlight the evolving nature of party identification as a function of individual and contextual factors.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Younger voters might exhibit greater sensitivity to current evaluations, whereas older individuals will exhibit more stability in the face of evaluations that run counter to previous partisanship" (p. 960).
- "The most significant implication of our analysis is that party identification is not the fixed, exogenous force organizing other political behavior that we thought at one time" (p. 968).
- "Party identifications are subject to change as individual preferences change, assuming fixed party positions, or as a consequence of shifts in the party positions, if individual preferences are stable, or both" (p. 969).

### 3.6.8 Partisanship, Independence, and No Preference: Another Look at the Measurement of Party Identification

Craig, S. C. (1985). Partisanship, Independence, and No Preference: Another Look at the Measurement of Party Identification [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 29(2), 274–290. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111167>

1. **Citation key:** craig\_partisanship\_1985
2. **Author(s):** Stephen C. Craig
3. **Year:** 1985
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** party identification, political independence, nonpartisanship, voter behavior, measurement theory
6. **Summary:** Craig critically reexamines the measurement of party identification in the United States, addressing discrepancies in the traditional seven-point scale used by the SRC/CPS surveys. He contrasts no-preference nonpartisans (NPNs) with self-identified Independents, arguing that these groups differ more in their orientations toward partisan independence than in their evaluations of political parties. Using data from CPS national election studies between 1968 and 1980, Craig evaluates the saliency hypothesis proposed by Miller and Wattenberg, which attributes declining partisanship to the diminished relevance of political parties.
7. **Theory:** Craig builds on the framework of party identification as both an attitudinal and behavioral construct but critiques the interpretation of declining partisanship as merely a product of reduced party saliency. He argues that the rise in no-preference nonpartisanship reflects broader trends in political indifference rather than hostility toward parties. While Independents may express dissatisfaction with party performance, NPNs exhibit low saliency and a lack of engagement with the political process. Craig's theoretical contribution highlights the importance of distinguishing between attitudinal neutrality and behavioral disengagement in understanding party dealignment.
8. **Methods:** The study employs CPS national election study data from 1968, 1976, and 1980, focusing on open-ended and closed-ended survey questions about attitudes toward political parties and independence. Craig uses statistical analyses, including ANOVA and tests of proportions, to evaluate differences in attitudes and behaviors across categories of partisanship and nonpartisanship. Key variables include party support indices, feeling thermometer ratings, and measures of political saliency and efficacy. The analysis contrasts traditional CPS coding schemes with Miller and Wattenberg's proposed categories of nonpartisanship.
9. **Hypotheses:** Craig tests the following hypotheses:
  - No-preference nonpartisans (NPNs) exhibit lower levels of political saliency than self-identified Independents.
  - Differences between NPNs and Independents reflect variations in attitudes toward independence rather than attitudes toward political parties.
  - The CPS seven-point scale remains an appropriate measure for distinguishing partisan and nonpartisan orientations.
 The findings support the hypotheses, demonstrating that NPNs differ significantly from Independents in their political saliency and involvement but not in their evaluations of parties.
10. **Main findings:** Craig finds that no-preference nonpartisans are less politically engaged and less opinionated than Independents but do not differ markedly in their evaluations of the Democratic and Republican parties. The rise of NPNs since the late 1960s corresponds to increasing political indifference rather than heightened dissatisfaction with parties. The results challenge the saliency hypothesis by showing that declining partisanship involves both reduced party saliency and increased detachment from political activity. Craig concludes that the traditional CPS seven-point scale remains a robust tool for measuring party identification, despite its limitations.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "No-preference nonpartisans... are less likely than Independents to think of themselves as 'political independents' or to express a positive evaluation of political independents on the CPS feeling thermometer" (p. 275).
  - "The decline of partisan loyalties is almost entirely attributable to an increase in the proportion of no-preference nonpartisans in the electorate, rather than a rise in dissatisfaction with party performance" (p. 276).
  - "'Perceived party saliency is lower among those who favor neither party, regardless of whether they are no-preference or Independent... yet both groups exhibit greater indifference than active hostility toward the party system'" (p. 287).

### 3.6.9 The Unchanging American Voter

Smith, E. R. A. N. (1989, October). *The Unchanging American Voter* [Google-Books-ID: maIwDwAAQBAJ]. University of California Press

1. **Citation key:** smith\_unchanging\_1989
2. **Author(s):** Eric R. A. N. Smith

3. **Year:** 1989
4. **Publication:** University of California Press
5. **Keywords:** political sophistication, voter behavior, survey research, political stability, American electorate
6. **Summary:** Smith challenges the assumption that the American electorate has become more politically sophisticated over time. Building on the legacy of *The American Voter* (1960) and addressing claims made in *The Changing American Voter* (1976), the book argues that evidence for increasing political sophistication is methodologically flawed. Smith concludes that the electorate's political knowledge and ideological reasoning have remained stagnant despite higher levels of education and expanded access to political information.
7. **Theory:** The book critiques the optimism of prior studies regarding the political evolution of American voters. Smith argues that political sophistication is better understood as a stable trait influenced minimally by changes in the political environment or educational access. He rejects the notion that electoral volatility or ideological polarization corresponds to increasing voter sophistication, emphasizing that such conclusions are often artifacts of flawed methodologies. Instead, he suggests that the American voter remains largely disengaged from substantive political reasoning, challenging the efficacy of democratic participation as theorized in classic democratic ideals. His theoretical framework integrates Converse's belief system model with critiques of survey research methods, asserting that external forces such as media and education have limited impact on long-term voter competence.
8. **Methods:** Smith employs a thorough reanalysis of survey data from the American National Election Studies (ANES), focusing on longitudinal measures of conceptualization and attitude consistency. He critiques the levels-of-conceptualization framework and issue correlation metrics used in earlier studies, highlighting how these measures are sensitive to temporal, contextual, and methodological biases. Alternative indicators, including political knowledge (e.g., ability to define liberal and conservative), media usage, and party identification, are used to test his hypotheses. The book uses regression analyses and other statistical techniques to demonstrate the persistence of low sophistication levels among the electorate between the 1950s and 1980s.
9. **Hypotheses:** Smith advances and tests the following hypotheses:
  - Political sophistication among American voters has not increased over time.
  - Changes in political environments (e.g., polarized campaigns) do not result in significant long-term changes in voter sophistication.
  - Methodological flaws in previous studies exaggerate perceptions of rising political engagement and competence.
 These hypotheses are confirmed, as Smith demonstrates the stability of low sophistication levels across decades.
10. **Main findings:** Smith finds no evidence of a significant increase in political sophistication among American voters. His analysis reveals that apparent trends in rising conceptualization or attitude consistency are attributable to methodological artifacts, such as question wording and changing political contexts. For example, shifts observed in the 1960s were primarily due to changes in survey design rather than genuine growth in voter competence. Despite advances in education and media access, the American electorate remains predominantly uninformed and disengaged, with minimal improvements in their ability to connect political attitudes to ideological principles or policy knowledge. Smith's findings cast doubt on the capacity of voters to fulfill the demands of participatory democracy.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Political sophistication:* The ability of voters to understand, organize, and articulate political attitudes based on ideological principles.
  - *Conceptualization:* A measure of voters' use of ideological or policy-based reasoning to evaluate political candidates and parties.
  - *Attitude consistency:* The coherence of voters' political attitudes across related policy dimensions, reflecting the structured nature of their belief systems.
  - *External efficacy:* Voters' belief in their ability to influence the political process.

### 3.6.10 Measurement and the Dynamics of Party Identification

Franklin, C. H. (1992). Measurement and the Dynamics of Party Identification [Publisher: Springer]. *Political Behavior*, 14(3), 297–309. Retrieved January 27, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/586231>

1. **Citation key:** franklin\_measurement\_1992
2. **Author(s):** Charles H. Franklin
3. **Year:** 1992
4. **Publication:** Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** party identification, measurement error, political behavior, revisionist model, partisanship
6. **Summary:** Franklin evaluates the revisionist model of party identification, which emphasizes the responsiveness of partisanship to political evaluations, by addressing critiques of measurement validity. He tests whether findings of responsiveness are artifacts of flawed measurement, particularly focusing on differences in question wording and scale construction. Using multiple panel studies and alternative measures of party identification, Franklin finds that the revisionist conclusions are robust, countering claims that measurement errors invalidate these findings.
7. **Theory:** The revisionist model challenges the traditional view of party identification as a stable, exogenous trait, arguing instead that partisanship responds to political evaluations and events. Franklin builds on this framework, hypothesizing that party identification is influenced by both past allegiance and issue-based evaluations of parties' positions. He critiques arguments suggesting that responsiveness findings arise from conflating partisanship strength

with identification, proposing that both reflect the same underlying dimension. This theoretical stance posits that changes in issue preferences can systematically reshape partisanship, rather than being random or inconsequential.

**8. Methods:** Franklin reanalyzes data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) panel surveys for 1956–1960 and 1972–1976, applying dynamic models of party identification. He uses three measures of party identification: the traditional seven-point scale, a simplified three-point scale focusing on basic identification, and a five-point scale incorporating independents and leaners. Ordered probit models are employed to test the responsiveness of party identification to issue evaluations, controlling for lagged partisanship and age. A two-stage estimation process addresses the simultaneity of party identification and issue evaluations, ensuring consistent parameter estimates.

**9. Hypotheses:** Franklin tests the following hypotheses:

- Party identification responds to changes in issue evaluations, supporting the revisionist model.
- The responsiveness of party identification is not an artifact of conflating partisanship strength with identification.
- Alternative measures of party identification, such as three-point and five-point scales, yield results consistent with the traditional seven-point measure.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with all measures showing significant responsiveness of party identification to issue evaluations.

**10. Main findings:** Franklin demonstrates that party identification is influenced by issue evaluations across all measures, including the three-point scale that excludes strength distinctions. This finding refutes critiques suggesting that responsiveness is a methodological artifact. He also finds that age moderates the influence of past partisanship, with older voters exhibiting greater stability. Additionally, his analysis shows that the thresholds between categories in the seven-point scale affect apparent stability, with independents and leaners appearing less stable due to narrower thresholds. Overall, Franklin reaffirms the revisionist view, emphasizing the dynamic nature of party identification.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The results strongly support the original revisionist conclusions. The findings of responsiveness of party identification to evaluations of party issue positions are quite robust in the face of alternative measures of party identification" (p. 297).
- "This hypothesized measurement model also has consequences for evaluating Miller's claims concerning the distinction between identification and strength. In his view, these are distinct concepts... In contrast, my model assumes that these are not separate dimensions at all, but simply distinct segments of the same underlying dimension" (p. 300).
- "The empirical results in this article reaffirm the revisionist view of party identification and show that such findings are not affected by at least three plausible alternative methods of measuring party identification" (p. 308).

### 3.6.11 Third Parties in America: Citizen Response to Major Party Failure

Rosenstone, S. J., Behr, R. L., & Lazarus, E. H. (1996). *Third Parties in America: Citizen Response to Major Party Failure* [Google-Books-ID: LKFeDwAAQBAJ]. Princeton University Press

**1. Citation key:** rosenstone\_third\_1996

**2. Author(s):** Steven J. Rosenstone, Roy L. Behr, and Edward H. Lazarus

**3. Year:** 1996

**4. Publication:** Princeton University Press

**5. Keywords:** third parties, American politics, electoral systems, political discontent, voter behavior

**6. Summary:** Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus analyze the causes, consequences, and dynamics of third-party activity in American politics. They argue that third-party voting reflects dissatisfaction with the two major parties, which often fail to address critical issues or meet public expectations. Drawing on historical analysis, statistical modeling, and survey data from 1840 to 1980, the authors identify key factors influencing third-party success, such as major-party failure, candidate prestige, and structural barriers like the single-member district system.

**7. Theory:** The authors argue that third parties emerge as responses to major-party deficiencies, which they define as the inability of the Republican and Democratic parties to provide responsive policies, effective leadership, or solutions to pressing social and economic issues. Third parties serve as vehicles for political discontent, pushing major parties to address neglected issues and broadening the political discourse. However, institutional barriers—including the plurality voting system, ballot access restrictions, and campaign finance laws—restrict third-party viability, leading to their limited success. The authors also posit that the decline of stable, issue-driven minor parties in favor of candidate-centered movements reflects broader trends in American politics, such as increased voter independence and declining party loyalty.

**8. Methods:** The book uses a mixed-methods approach, including historical analysis, aggregate-level data, and individual-level survey data. The authors analyze time-series data on presidential elections from 1840 to 1980 and survey data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) between 1952 and 1980. Statistical techniques, including multiple regression and probit analysis, are used to identify factors driving third-party voting and candidate emergence. Key variables include economic performance, major-party vote shares, candidate prestige, and voter demographics. The authors also employ case studies to illustrate the historical evolution of third-party movements.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors propose three central hypotheses:

- Third-party voting increases when the major parties fail to provide effective leadership, address key issues, or

maintain voter trust.

- The presence of nationally prestigious candidates significantly boosts third-party success.
- Structural and institutional barriers, such as the single-member district system, suppress third-party viability despite voter discontent with the major parties.

These hypotheses are supported by the authors' findings, which demonstrate strong correlations between third-party activity and major-party failures, as well as the decisive role of institutional constraints.

**10. Main findings:** Rosenstone, Behr, and Lazarus find that third-party activity in the United States is driven by a combination of major-party failure, candidate prestige, and voter dissatisfaction. The authors show that significant third-party movements arise during periods of economic instability, social unrest, or major-party factionalism. Nationally prestigious candidates, such as Theodore Roosevelt and George Wallace, play a critical role in mobilizing third-party support. However, structural barriers—including the plurality voting system, restrictive ballot access laws, and limited media coverage—severely constrain third-party success. The authors conclude that while third parties rarely win elections, they perform essential functions by raising neglected issues, pressuring major parties to adapt, and providing voters with alternative political choices.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Third-party voting:* Casting a vote for a candidate outside the two major political parties, often as a form of protest or expression of dissatisfaction with the major parties.
- *Candidate-centered politics:* A form of political organization focused on the appeal of individual candidates rather than party platforms or ideologies.
- *Major-party failure:* The inability of the Republican and Democratic parties to address critical issues, maintain voter trust, or provide effective governance.
- *Nationally prestigious candidate:* A third-party candidate with significant political or public recognition, often due to previous roles in government or high-profile campaigns.

### 3.6.12 Rational Learning and Partisan Attitudes

Gerber, A., & Green, D. P. [Donald P.]. (1998). Rational Learning and Partisan Attitudes [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 42(3), 794–818. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2991730>

1. **Citation key:** gerber\_rational\_1998

2. **Author(s):** Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green

3. **Year:** 1998

4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

5. **Keywords:** party identification, Bayesian updating, voter learning, partisanship, political attitudes

6. **Summary:** Gerber and Green examine the dynamics of party identification through the lens of rational Bayesian learning. They critique Christopher Achen's static model of party identification, proposing a generalized Bayesian framework using the Kalman filter. This revised model accounts for the influence of new information on partisan attitudes over time and allows for varying levels of party benefits. The authors explore the implications of this model for understanding how voters update their partisan attitudes and demonstrate its empirical advantages.

7. **Theory:** The authors argue that voters update their partisan attitudes rationally based on new political information, using Bayesian principles. Achen's earlier model assumed that party benefit levels remain constant over time, leading to stable partisanship among adults. Gerber and Green extend this theory, allowing for dynamic changes in party benefit levels. They contend that voter learning reflects a balance between the influence of prior beliefs and the incorporation of new evidence about party performance. This approach explains both the stability of partisanship over time and the potential for significant change under certain conditions, such as dramatic shifts in party leadership or economic performance. Their model highlights the importance of the signal-to-noise ratio in determining how voters weigh new versus historical information.

8. **Methods:** Gerber and Green develop a general Bayesian learning model using the Kalman filter, which encompasses Achen's model as a special case. The Kalman filter optimally combines prior beliefs and new observations, accounting for noise in observed data and the dynamic nature of party benefit differentials. The authors test their model using data from the 1990–1992 and 1992–1994 American National Election Studies (NES) panels. They measure partisan attitudes, prospective evaluations of party performance, and stability of party identification, employing statistical techniques such as polychoric correlation and time-series analysis.

9. **Hypotheses:**

- Voter learning about party benefits is rational and incorporates both prior beliefs and new information.
- Older voters place less weight on new information due to accumulated prior knowledge, but dynamic party changes can still influence their partisanship.
- Stability of party identification varies with age and the signal-to-noise ratio of political information.

These hypotheses are supported by empirical evidence demonstrating that partisanship is more stable among older voters and that new information affects evaluations even among experienced voters.

**10. Main findings:** Gerber and Green find that voter learning about party identification is dynamic, with new information influencing partisan attitudes at all ages. However, the weight placed on new observations decreases over time, stabilizing at a positive level. Their analysis shows that partisanship is more stable than prospective performance evaluations, consistent with the Kalman filter model. They also demonstrate that party identification is affected by the

signal-to-noise ratio, with significant changes occurring when party differentials vary substantially over time. These findings highlight the limitations of static models and underscore the importance of incorporating dynamic elements into theories of partisan learning.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Party identification functions as ballast in an electoral system, stabilizing party competition amid shifting political currents" (p. 795).
- "The Kalman filter model suggests that even among experienced voters, new information about party performance continues to play a significant role in shaping partisan attitudes" (p. 803).
- "The stability of partisanship, in other words, may reflect the persistence of citizens' images of Democrats and Republicans" (p. 815).

#### 3.6.13 Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996

Bartels, L. M. (2000). Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996 [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 44(1), 35–50. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2669291>

1. Citation key: bartels\_partisanship\_2000

2. Author(s): Larry M. Bartels

3. Year: 2000

4. Publication: American Journal of Political Science

5. Keywords: partisanship, voting behavior, party identification, political alignment, elite polarization

6. Summary: Bartels revisits the thesis of partisan decline in American politics, critically evaluating its relevance from 1952 to 1996. He argues that contrary to prevailing views, partisanship has strengthened in presidential and congressional elections since the 1970s. Using National Election Study (NES) data, Bartels demonstrates that partisan voting has rebounded, especially among voters, reflecting a growing impact of party identification on electoral choices. The paper offers a nuanced view of how elite polarization and shifts in party alignment have contributed to this revival.

7. Theory: Bartels challenges the notion that American voters have become less partisan over time. He proposes that the resurgence of partisan voting is closely linked to elite-level political polarization and realignment, particularly in the South. He suggests that as parties became more ideologically distinct and cohesive, voters increasingly relied on partisan cues to guide their electoral decisions. This dynamic is particularly evident in presidential elections, where partisan loyalty has reached levels higher than during the supposed "golden age" of the 1950s. Bartels emphasizes the role of national political trends, such as the civil rights movement and the emergence of the Religious Right, in reshaping party attachments and voter behavior across demographic groups.

8. Methods: Bartels employs probit models to estimate the impact of party identification on voting behavior in presidential and congressional elections. He uses NES panel data from 1952 to 1996 to analyze trends in partisan voting, measuring the influence of "strong," "weak," and "leaning" partisan identifiers. The analysis accounts for changes in the distribution of party identification and the electoral relevance of each level of attachment. Bartels supplements this with visualizations, including time-series graphs, to illustrate the revival of partisan voting and its consistency across different voter subgroups.

9. Hypotheses:

- Partisan attachments among voters have strengthened since the 1970s, reversing the decline observed in the 1960s.
- The impact of partisanship on presidential voting behavior has surpassed levels recorded during the 1950s.
- Changes in elite polarization and party realignment are primary drivers of the revival of partisan voting.

These hypotheses are confirmed through empirical evidence, showing that partisanship significantly shapes voter behavior, with a notable increase in its impact over the studied period.

10. Main findings: Bartels finds that partisan voting has increased dramatically since the 1970s, particularly in presidential elections, where its impact in 1996 was 77% higher than in 1972. This resurgence is evident across demographic groups, including younger and better-educated voters. In congressional elections, partisan voting also rebounded after a decline during the 1960s and 1970s, although its levels remain below those observed in presidential contests. Bartels attributes these trends to elite polarization, regional realignment, and increasing voter awareness of ideological differences between parties. He concludes that the "decline of parties" thesis is outdated, as partisanship remains a central determinant of electoral behavior.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "The impact of partisan loyalties on voting behavior has increased in each of the last six presidential elections, reaching a level in 1996 almost 80 percent higher than in 1972—and significantly higher than in any presidential election in at least 50 years" (p. 35).
- "The revival of partisan voting at the presidential level largely reflects the gradual reequilibration of presidential votes and more general partisan attachments among white southerners in the wake of a regional partisan realignment" (p. 41).
- "In the current political environment, as much or more than at any other time in the past half-century, 'the strength and direction of party identification are facts of central importance' in accounting for the voting behavior of the American electorate" (p. 44).

### 3.6.14 Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization

Hetherington, M. J. (2001). Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization. *American Political Science Review*, 95(3), 619–631. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055401003045>

1. **Citation key:** hetherington\_resurgent\_2001
2. **Author(s):** Marc J. Hetherington
3. **Year:** 2001
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** partisanship, elite polarization, voting behavior, party resurgence, public opinion
6. **Summary:** Hetherington examines the apparent resurgence of partisan strength among the American electorate, challenging the conventional wisdom of party decline. He attributes this resurgence to increasing elite polarization in Congress, which has clarified ideological differences between the major parties for the public. Using data from the National Election Study (NES) and measures of elite polarization, Hetherington demonstrates that this polarization has enhanced the salience of party identification among voters, reversing trends of detachment observed in prior decades.
7. **Theory:** Hetherington's theory rests on the premise that elite behavior significantly shapes mass-level political attitudes. He posits that as elites in Congress became more polarized along ideological lines, the clarity of party positions increased, making partisan distinctions more meaningful to voters. This shift has reinvigorated mass partisanship by enabling voters to align their political preferences more closely with party ideology. Hetherington emphasizes the role of information environments created by elites, arguing that polarization enhances the perception of parties as offering distinct policy choices. He further asserts that this clarity prompts stronger partisan attitudes and increased partisan voting behavior, particularly in contexts where ideological differences are highly visible.
8. **Methods:** Hetherington employs a combination of survey and contextual data from the NES (1960–1996) and congressional DW-NOMINATE scores to test his hypotheses. He uses logistic regression and ordinary least squares (OLS) models to evaluate the impact of elite polarization on three key dependent variables: perceptions of party differences, ideological placement of parties, and perceived ideological distance between parties. The analysis incorporates controls for strength of ideology, education, race, gender, and contextual factors like divided government and off-year elections. By lagging measures of elite polarization, Hetherington accounts for the temporal dynamics of how elite behavior influences public opinion.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Elite polarization increases the public's ability to perceive ideological differences between the major parties.
  - Greater ideological clarity at the elite level strengthens partisan attachments among voters.
  - Elite polarization indirectly influences mass partisanship by increasing the perceived ideological distance between parties.
10. **Main findings:** Hetherington demonstrates that elite polarization has had a substantial and statistically significant effect on mass partisanship. Between 1980 and 1996, the proportion of voters perceiving important differences between the parties rose from 50% to 63%. Similarly, the percentage of respondents correctly placing the parties on an ideological spectrum increased from 50% to 63% over the same period. Measures of elite polarization, such as the ideological distance between congressional party caucuses, correlate strongly with these trends. Hetherington also finds that education moderates the effects of elite polarization, with more educated voters better able to perceive and respond to partisan cues. Overall, he concludes that the ideological clarity fostered by elite polarization has revitalized partisan identities and voting patterns, reversing decades of perceived party decline.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Greater partisan polarization in Congress has clarified the parties' ideological positions for ordinary Americans, which in turn has increased party importance and salience on the mass level" (p. 619).
  - "When people perceive that who wins and loses will lead to distinct futures, they should develop more partisan feelings and become more inclined to organize politics in partisan terms" (p. 624).
  - "Elite polarization has clarified public perceptions of the parties' ideological positions, which has produced a more partisan electorate" (p. 628).

### 3.6.15 Of Time and the Development of Partisan Polarization

Stoker, L., & Jennings, M. K. (2008). Of Time and the Development of Partisan Polarization [Leprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00333.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(3), 619–635. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00333.x>

1. **Citation key:** stoker\_time\_2008
2. **Author(s):** Laura Stoker and M. Kent Jennings
3. **Year:** 2008
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** partisan polarization, cohort replacement, political socialization, partisan cleavages, ideological sorting
6. **Summary:** Stoker and Jennings explore the increasing polarization in the American electorate, analyzing how both individual-level political development and cohort replacement contribute to this trend. They employ longitudinal data and simulations to evaluate the interplay of age-related political learning and cohort-specific responsiveness

to partisan polarization over time. Their study reveals that increasing ideological clarity among political elites has reinforced partisan identities across generations.

**7. Theory:** The authors argue that partisan polarization in the electorate results from a combination of age-related attitudinal stability and responsiveness to the political environment during formative years. They posit that younger cohorts are particularly responsive to new partisan cleavages, while older individuals exhibit greater stability in their political identities. These dynamics, they claim, interact with shifts in elite polarization to produce increasing partisan sorting over time. Drawing on Converse's concept of political learning, the authors suggest that age-related resistance to change and the crystallization of attitudes contribute to the enduring influence of early political experiences. They extend this framework to explain how shifts in elite-level partisan cleavages manifest differently across cohorts.

**8. Methods:** The authors utilize data from the Political Socialization Panel Study (ICPSR studies #4023 and #9553), which includes surveys of high school seniors and their parents beginning in 1965, with follow-ups in 1973, 1982, and 1997. They analyze attitudinal continuity and the development of partisan constraint over time. To complement these longitudinal analyses, they use simulations to model the interaction of life-cycle effects and changes in elite polarization. They also incorporate cohort analysis using National Election Studies (NES) data from 1972 to 2004, examining partisan polarization on issues including race, gender, and cultural values.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Partisan polarization increases as individuals age due to greater attitudinal crystallization and exposure to elite cues.
- Younger cohorts are more responsive to emerging partisan cleavages than older cohorts.
- The magnitude of partisan constraint grows more rapidly for cohorts that come of age during periods of pronounced elite polarization.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with results showing significant generational and life-cycle patterns in partisan sorting.

**10. Main findings:** Stoker and Jennings find that partisan polarization is driven by both individual development and cohort replacement, with younger generations showing higher initial levels of partisan alignment on emerging issues compared to older cohorts. They observe that polarization on longstanding issues like social welfare continues to grow across cohorts, while newer cleavages, such as those involving race and cultural values, become more salient for recent generations. Their findings underscore the importance of elite-level polarization in structuring public opinion, as well as the enduring influence of early political experiences on later partisan behavior. The interaction between cohort replacement and life-cycle learning amplifies the aggregate-level effects of partisan polarization.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Partisan polarization in the electorate is primarily elite-driven in origins, reflecting the increasing ideological distinctiveness of the major parties over time" (p. 620).
- "Younger cohorts, socialized in an era of heightened partisan polarization, exhibit greater party-issue alignment than their predecessors" (p. 625).
- "The rise of mass partisan polarization in the U.S. electorate is the product of both generational replacement and the cumulative effects of individual-level political learning over the life cycle" (p. 630).

### 3.6.16 A New Partisan Voter

Bafumi, J., & Shapiro, R. Y. (2009). A New Partisan Voter [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 71(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381608090014>

**1. Citation key:** bafumi\_new\_2009

**2. Author(s):** Joseph Bafumi and Robert Y. Shapiro

**3. Year:** 2009

**4. Publication:** The Journal of Politics

**5. Keywords:** partisan polarization, ideological sorting, voting behavior, political realignment, mass partisanship

**6. Summary:** Bafumi and Shapiro examine the resurgence of partisan and ideological polarization in the American electorate. They trace how partisan alignment has shifted from the ideologically modest patterns of the 1950s to a modern electorate strongly sorted along liberal-conservative lines. The authors explore the relationship between ideological self-identification and partisan loyalty, showing how elite polarization has translated into mass-level divisions across economic, social, and cultural issues.

**7. Theory:** The authors argue that the current era of partisan polarization represents a significant departure from the mid-20th century, when party alignment was less ideologically structured. They propose that elite-level ideological polarization—particularly since the 1980s—has strongly influenced mass partisan alignment, making party identification increasingly linked to ideological beliefs. They posit that this development reflects a feedback loop where elite polarization reshapes the public's partisan identities, which in turn reinforce elite division. This dynamic is particularly evident in the context of racial, social, and religious values, which have come to dominate partisan cleavages. Bafumi and Shapiro argue that the electorate's ideological sorting has made partisanship a stronger predictor of voting behavior than at any time since the 1950s, transforming the American political landscape.

**8. Methods:** The study utilizes data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) cumulative file, analyzing trends in partisan identification, ideological self-placement, and voting behavior from 1952 to 2004. The authors employ logistic regression and linear models to assess the impact of partisanship and ideology on vote choice and party

alignment. They also examine the divergence in attitudes across key issues, such as social welfare, race, and cultural values, using both ANES and General Social Survey (GSS) data. Their analyses include visualizations of trends in ideological and partisan polarization, as well as assessments of the relationship between elite and mass-level polarization.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Partisan and ideological polarization among the electorate has increased since the 1980s, driven by elite-level divisions.
- Partisanship and ideological self-placement have become stronger predictors of vote choice and issue alignment.
- Social, racial, and religious values issues now play a greater role in structuring partisan divisions compared to earlier periods.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with findings demonstrating substantial increases in partisan sorting and ideological alignment over time.

**10. Main findings:** Bafumi and Shapiro find that partisan polarization has returned to levels comparable to the 1950s, but with a distinctly ideological dimension. The relationship between party identification and liberal-conservative self-placement has strengthened significantly, driven by elite-level polarization and reinforced by mass responses to social and cultural issues. Their results show that party identification alone explains most of the variation in voting behavior, surpassing other demographic and attitudinal predictors. Moreover, partisan divisions are increasingly shaped by attitudes on social and racial issues, with Democrats and Republicans exhibiting sharper ideological contrasts. These trends suggest a more ideologically coherent and polarized electorate than in past decades.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The strength of party identification in predicting the vote has grown comparable to, if it has not exceeded, what it was in the era of party voting, the 1950s" (p. 3).
- "The issues that emerged from the 1960s and 1970s increasingly divided the two major parties, as voters sorted themselves anew" (p. 8).
- "Partisanship has taken on a new importance in predicting the vote in recent years, and the data indicate that ideology has increasingly informed this partisanship" (p. 10).

### 3.6.17 The Heritability of Partisan Attachment

Settle, J. E., Dawes, C. T., & Fowler, J. H. (2009). The Heritability of Partisan Attachment [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 62(3), 601–613. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912908327607>

**1. Citation key:** settle\_heritability\_2009

**2. Author(s):** Jaime E. Settle, Christopher T. Dawes, and James H. Fowler

**3. Year:** 2009

**4. Publication:** Political Research Quarterly

**5. Keywords:** heritability, partisanship, political behavior, twin studies, genetic predisposition

**6. Summary:** Settle, Dawes, and Fowler explore the role of genetics in shaping the strength of partisan attachment. Building on the broader literature of political behavior and biology, the authors utilize twin studies to investigate whether heritable factors contribute to the intensity of partisan identification. They find that genetic predispositions explain a significant portion of the variance in partisan attachment, though the specific direction of partisanship is predominantly shaped by environmental influences.

**7. Theory:** The authors argue that partisan attachment is influenced by both genetic and environmental factors, challenging the conventional understanding that familial socialization alone explains the transmission of political partisanship. Drawing on the literature on political socialization and psychological predispositions, they posit that heritability contributes to a general tendency toward group attachment, which manifests in partisan strength. This framework is informed by analogous findings in related fields, such as the heritability of religiosity and trust, which highlight the genetic underpinnings of social behaviors. The authors further suggest that while genetic predispositions influence the intensity of attachment, the specific direction of partisanship is determined by environmental exposures, such as family influence and societal context. Their theory situates partisanship within the intersection of biology and environment, emphasizing the stability of genetic factors over the life course.

**8. Methods:** The study employs data from the Twins Days Festival in Twinsburg, Ohio, encompassing responses from 353 pairs of same-sex adult twins, including monozygotic (MZ) twins who share all their genes and dizygotic (DZ) twins who share half. Partisan attachment was measured using a 7-point scale folded into a 4-point directionless scale to capture intensity rather than party alignment. The authors applied the ACE model, a variance decomposition method, to partition the observed variance in partisan attachment into additive genetic factors (A), shared environmental factors (C), and unshared environmental factors (E). Polychoric correlations between MZ and DZ twins were compared to assess heritability, and the ACE model was fitted using the MX software to quantify genetic and environmental contributions to partisan intensity.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Genes contribute to the variation in strength of partisan attachment, explaining a significant proportion of its variance.
- The direction of partisan attachment is primarily influenced by environmental rather than genetic factors.
- Strength of partisanship is analogous to group attachment behaviors observed in other social contexts, such as religiosity.

The results confirm these hypotheses, with genetic factors accounting for a substantial portion of partisan strength, while direction is shaped by environmental influences.

10. **Main findings:** The study reveals that genetic predispositions explain approximately 46% of the variance in partisan strength, with unshared environmental factors accounting for the remainder. Shared environmental influences appear negligible in shaping partisan intensity. The findings indicate that genetic factors do not significantly influence the direction of partisanship, aligning with previous research on the heritability of political attitudes and behaviors. These results suggest a genetic predisposition toward group attachment, providing new insights into the stability of partisan identification over time. The study underscores the importance of integrating biological perspectives into the study of political behavior, offering a novel explanation for the intergenerational transmission of partisanship.

11. **Key quotations:**

- "Our results show that heritability accounts for almost half of the variance in strength of partisan attachment, suggesting we should pay closer attention to the role of biology in the expression of important political behaviors" (p. 601).
- "Variation in the decision to identify with any political party appears to be strongly influenced by genetic factors" (p. 607).
- "Strength of attachment to a group, such as strength of partisanship or religiosity, has a strong heritable component, perhaps because of its relationship to fundamental processes in early human history" (p. 609).

### 3.6.18 Voter Migration and the Geographic Sorting of the American Electorate

Tam Cho, W. K., Gimpel, J. G., & Hui, I. S. (2013). Voter Migration and the Geographic Sorting of the American Electorate [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2012.720229>]. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 103(4), 856–870. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2012.720229>

1. **Citation key:** tam\_cho\_voter\_2013
2. **Author(s):** Wendy K. Tam Cho, James G. Gimpel, and Iris S. Hui
3. **Year:** 2013
4. **Publication:** Annals of the Association of American Geographers
5. **Keywords:** migration, political polarization, geographic sorting, residential mobility, partisanship
6. **Summary:** Tam Cho, Gimpel, and Hui investigate the phenomenon of geographic sorting in the American electorate, examining whether internal migration patterns contribute to the clustering of partisan affiliations in distinct neighborhoods. Using individual-level voter data across seven states, they find evidence that partisans tend to relocate to areas populated by copartisans, reinforcing political homogeneity. The study highlights the interplay between socioeconomic factors and partisan preferences in shaping residential choices, with implications for the increasing polarization of the U.S. electorate.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that geographic sorting results from a combination of political, socioeconomic, and demographic factors, with partisanship influencing destination preferences. Drawing on theories of homophily and social networks, they argue that individuals are drawn to neighborhoods where residents share similar political values, even if this preference is not explicitly acknowledged. The study also highlights how partisan sorting amplifies polarization, as politically homogeneous communities diminish exposure to opposing viewpoints and foster ideological entrenchment. Importantly, the authors suggest that partisan sorting operates alongside other migration determinants, such as income, racial composition, and population density, creating a multifaceted process where political preferences subtly shape residential mobility. Their framework emphasizes that even weak partisan preferences can, over time, produce significant geographic divides, reshaping the political landscape.
8. **Methods:** The study uses voter registration data from 2004 to 2008 in seven states (California, Oregon, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, and Delaware) to track migration flows and assess changes in partisan distribution. Migrants were identified by matching names, birthdates, and voter registration details to measure movement between ZIP codes. The authors employed hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to analyze the factors influencing partisan relocation, including changes in partisan composition, racial demographics, and socioeconomic variables at origin and destination locations. Migration distances were categorized into four ranges (<10 miles, 10–50 miles, 50–150 miles, >150 miles) to explore how relocation patterns vary by distance.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Partisanship influences migration decisions, with Republicans and Democrats preferring areas dominated by their respective copartisans.
  - Geographic sorting intensifies with longer migration distances, as movers seek destinations that align more closely with their partisan preferences.
  - Socioeconomic and demographic factors, such as income and racial composition, mediate the relationship between partisanship and residential mobility.

These hypotheses are supported, with evidence showing that Republicans exhibit stronger sorting tendencies than Democrats, particularly over longer distances.
10. **Main findings:** The authors find that partisanship significantly influences migration patterns, with both Democrats and Republicans relocating to neighborhoods that reinforce political homogeneity. This effect is more pronounced among Republicans, who show a stronger preference for areas with higher Republican voter concentrations. Socioeconomic factors, including income, racial composition, and population density, also play a role in shaping migration

decisions, but partisanship remains a consistent predictor even when controlling for these variables. The study reveals that migration contributes to the entrenchment of partisan divides, with long-term implications for political polarization and democratic engagement. The authors also observe that local movers are more influenced by upward mobility considerations, whereas long-distance movers prioritize ideological alignment.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Even if individuals do not consciously contemplate partisan factors, we might observe some type of partisan geographic sorting if the principal determinants of destination decisions are correlated with partisanship" (p. 860).
- "Republican migrants show a preference for moving to areas that are even more Republican, and this tendency increases monotonically as the distance of the move increases" (p. 865).
- "Politics matters for residential choices, both directly and indirectly. If this effect persists over a long enough period of time, it could not only change the political landscape but also create new environments for the socialization of citizens" (p. 867).

### 3.6.19 Independent Politics: How American Disdain for Parties Leads to Political Inaction

Klar, S., & Krupnikov, Y. (2016, January). *Independent Politics* [Google-Books-ID: KNA9CwAAQBAJ]. Cambridge University Press

1. Citation key: klar\_independent\_2016

2. Author(s): Samara Klar and Yanna Krupnikov

3. Year: 2016

4. Publication: Cambridge University Press

5. Keywords: partisanship, independents, political inaction, self-monitoring, partisan polarization

6. Summary: Klar and Krupnikov examine the phenomenon of self-identified independents in the American electorate, challenging the perception that they are free from partisan bias. The authors argue that many independents are "undercover partisans" who conceal their partisan preferences due to the negative social and political connotations associated with partisanship. Using experimental and survey data, they show that this concealment leads to political inaction, undermining democratic engagement and complicating the functioning of political parties.

7. Theory: The authors propose that self-identified independents often have partisan preferences but choose to misrepresent them as a form of impression management. This behavior arises from a desire to avoid the social stigma associated with partisanship, particularly in contexts of high partisan conflict. Individuals who are high in self-monitoring are especially prone to concealing their partisanship. Klar and Krupnikov argue that this phenomenon reflects a broader disdain for the bickering and gridlock associated with political parties, which leads to a reluctance to engage in overtly partisan behaviors. Despite their hidden partisanship, these individuals often expect political parties to fight for their interests without personally engaging in the political process, creating a paradox of disengaged demands for partisan leadership.

8. Methods: The book employs a mix of experimental and observational methods. Klar and Krupnikov conduct vignette experiments, social media behavior studies, and field experiments to test their hypotheses. For example, they manipulate exposure to partisan disagreement and measure its effects on self-reported partisanship and willingness to engage in partisan activities, such as displaying political stickers or persuading others to vote. Observational data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) further supports their findings by linking self-monitoring tendencies to partisan identification and behavior over time. The experiments are complemented by replications using distinct samples and methodological approaches, enhancing the robustness of their conclusions.

9. Hypotheses:

- Individuals exposed to negative portrayals of partisan conflict are more likely to self-identify as independents.
- High self-monitors are less likely to display overt partisan behavior, particularly when reminded of partisan disagreement.
- Concealing partisanship leads to decreased political engagement, such as campaign participation or opinion sharing.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with experiments and observational data showing strong support for their theoretical claims.

10. Main findings: Klar and Krupnikov find that many self-identified independents are, in reality, partisan leaners who conceal their preferences to avoid the negative connotations associated with partisanship. High self-monitors are particularly sensitive to partisan conflict, which leads them to disengage from overt political activities, such as campaigning or advocating for a candidate. This inaction has significant implications for democracy, as it reduces the visibility of partisan engagement and undermines the participatory nature of democratic systems. The authors also demonstrate that while independents claim to value compromise, they often react negatively when their preferred party makes concessions, revealing a tension between their private preferences and public behavior.

### 11. Key definitions:

- *Undercover partisans*: Individuals who hold clear partisan preferences but self-identify as independents to avoid social stigma.
- *Self-monitoring*: A psychological trait describing individuals' tendency to adjust their behavior to create favorable impressions on others.

- *Partisan inaction*: The reluctance to engage in overtly partisan behaviors, such as campaign participation or political advocacy, despite holding strong partisan preferences.
- *Partisan stigma*: The negative social and cultural perceptions associated with overt partisanship, particularly in highly polarized environments.

### 3.6.20 The Rise of Negative Partisanship and the Nationalization of U.S. Elections in the 21st Century

Abramowitz, A. I., & Webster, S. (2016). The rise of negative partisanship and the nationalization of U.S. elections in the 21st century. *Electoral Studies*, 41, 12–22. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2015.11.001>

- 1. Citation key:** abramowitz\_rise\_2016
- 2. Author(s):** Alan I. Abramowitz and Steven Webster
- 3. Year:** 2016
- 4. Publication:** Electoral Studies
- 5. Keywords:** negative partisanship, party loyalty, nationalization, straight-ticket voting, U.S. elections
- 6. Summary:** Abramowitz and Webster argue that the rise of negative partisanship—the growing disdain for the opposing party—has reshaped the dynamics of electoral competition in the United States. This phenomenon has resulted in increased party loyalty, straight-ticket voting, and the nationalization of elections across all levels of government. Using data from the American National Election Studies (ANES), the authors demonstrate how negative feelings toward opposing parties drive voter behavior, diminishing the role of incumbency and intensifying partisan polarization.
- 7. Theory:** The authors propose that negative partisanship has become a defining feature of the U.S. electorate. Unlike traditional measures of partisanship, which emphasize positive attachments to one's party, negative partisanship is driven by hostile perceptions of the opposing party. This shift is rooted in the alignment of partisan identities with social, cultural, and ideological divisions, such as race and religion. As these divisions deepen, individuals increasingly view opposing partisans as fundamentally different, fostering heightened polarization. Exposure to partisan media further reinforces negative attitudes, solidifying partisan loyalties. The authors argue that negative partisanship undermines the personal advantage of incumbents and contributes to the nationalization of elections, as voters prioritize partisan considerations over local factors when making electoral decisions.
- 8. Methods:** The study uses ANES survey data from 1980 to 2012 to examine trends in party loyalty, straight-ticket voting, and negative affect toward opposing parties. The authors analyze feeling thermometer ratings to measure the intensity of partisan attitudes, comparing ratings of one's own party to ratings of the opposing party. They also conduct logistic regression analyses to assess the impact of negative partisanship on voter loyalty, controlling for factors such as strength of party identification and incumbency. Additional regression models evaluate the relationship between presidential vote shares and outcomes in House, Senate, and state legislative elections, demonstrating the increasing nationalization of electoral outcomes over time.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - Negative feelings toward the opposing party are stronger predictors of voter loyalty than positive feelings toward one's own party.
  - Negative partisanship contributes to higher rates of party loyalty and straight-ticket voting.
  - The rise of negative partisanship leads to the nationalization of elections, with outcomes in House, Senate, and state legislative races increasingly mirroring presidential election results.

All hypotheses are supported by the authors' analyses, which reveal significant correlations between negative partisanship and voting behavior.
- 10. Main findings:** Abramowitz and Webster find that negative partisanship has fundamentally transformed the U.S. electoral landscape. Voter loyalty to political parties has reached record levels, with 91% of partisans and leaners voting for their party's presidential candidate in 2012. Negative ratings of the opposing party are the strongest predictors of loyalty, outweighing the influence of positive ratings of one's own party. The study also highlights the nationalization of elections, as demonstrated by the growing correlation between presidential vote shares and congressional and state legislative outcomes. This trend diminishes the personal advantage of incumbency, as voters increasingly prioritize partisan affiliation over individual candidate qualities. The authors conclude that negative partisanship has intensified polarization, eroded cross-party cooperation, and entrenched partisan divisions across all levels of government.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - "One of the most important trends in American politics over the past several decades has been the rise of negative partisanship in the electorate" (p. 13).
  - "The results indicate that for all elections between 1980 and 2012, negative ratings of the opposing party were more strongly related to loyalty than either positive ratings of one's own party or strength of party identification" (p. 16).
  - "The rise of negative partisanship has also changed the representation of constituent preferences in both the House and the Senate. Representation today means almost exclusively partisan representation" (p. 22).

### 3.6.21 Symbolic versus Material Concerns of Rural Consciousness in the United States

Trujillo, K. L., & Crowley, Z. (2022). Symbolic versus material concerns of rural consciousness in the United States. *Political Geography*, 96, 102658. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2022.102658>

- 1. Citation key:** trujillo\_symbolic\_2022

2. **Author(s):** Kristin Lunz Trujillo and Zack Crowley
3. **Year:** 2022
4. **Publication:** Political Geography
5. **Keywords:** rural consciousness, symbolic concerns, material concerns, rural identity, traditionalism, Trump support
6. **Summary:** Trujillo and Crowley explore the concept of rural consciousness, distinguishing between its symbolic and material dimensions. Using data from three surveys conducted between 2018 and 2019, they evaluate the extent to which rural consciousness predicts political attitudes and support for Donald Trump, focusing on three subdimensions: *Representation*, *Way of Life*, and *Resources*. They find that symbolic dimensions, particularly the *Way of Life* and *Representation* subdimensions, are significantly associated with Trump support, whereas the material dimension (*Resources*) has a weaker or even negative relationship with political outcomes.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on Kathy Cramer's theory of rural consciousness, emphasizing three subdimensions: a sense of underrepresentation (*Representation*), perceived disrespect for rural lifestyles (*Way of Life*), and material grievances about inadequate resources (*Resources*). They argue that symbolic dimensions of rural consciousness, rooted in identity-based grievances, are more predictive of contemporary political outcomes than material concerns. Social Identity Theory (SIT) provides a framework for understanding how symbolic identification with rural values and resentment toward urban areas drive political preferences. This theory suggests that identity-based grievances, such as perceived disrespect for rural lifestyles, can outweigh material concerns in shaping political attitudes. The authors also consider moral traditionalism as a competing explanation for rural political behavior, hypothesizing that traditionalist values may underlie symbolic grievances.
8. **Methods:** The study uses three national online surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019, with oversamples of rural residents to ensure representation. A total of 14 survey items were developed to measure rural consciousness, capturing the three subdimensions. Principal components analysis and oblique rotation were applied to refine the scale, which demonstrated high internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.83). Logistic and OLS regressions were used to predict 2016 Trump vote choice, feelings toward Trump, and broader political attitudes, including partisanship and ideological alignment. Models controlled for demographic variables such as race, income, education, and moral traditionalism. The analysis also compared rural and non-rural respondents to assess whether the effects of rural consciousness are unique to rural residents.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Rural consciousness, particularly its symbolic dimensions (*Way of Life* and *Representation*), predicts Trump support, conservative ideology, and Republican partisanship.
  - Material grievances (*Resources*) are less predictive of political outcomes than symbolic dimensions of rural consciousness.
  - Moral traditionalism moderates the relationship between symbolic dimensions of rural consciousness and political outcomes, potentially diminishing their effects.
10. **Main findings:** The findings reveal that symbolic dimensions of rural consciousness, especially the *Way of Life* and *Representation* subdimensions, are significant predictors of Trump support and conservative ideology. These dimensions reflect identity-based grievances rooted in perceived disrespect and underrepresentation. In contrast, the material dimension (*Resources*) is negatively associated with Trump support and fails to predict broader political attitudes. Moral traditionalism further explains the symbolic dimensions, reducing the explanatory power of *Way of Life* and *Representation* in some models. The results suggest that rural consciousness primarily operates through symbolic concerns, aligning with recent research on the role of identity in political behavior.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Only the symbolic subdimensions of rural consciousness positively and significantly correlate with Trump support, while the material subdimension either negatively correlates with Trump support or is not statistically significant" (p. 1).
  - "The results indicate that symbolic concerns may matter more for recent anti-establishment political support, as opposed to standard left-right measures" (p. 3).
  - "Rural consciousness may be more attuned to an anti-establishment dimension of American politics, rather than the traditional left-right spectrum" (p. 9).

### 3.7 Macro-Level Partisanship

#### 3.7.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The concept of macro-level partisanship provides a lens to study aggregate trends in party identification and partisan balance in the American political system. It examines how macropartisanship fluctuates in response to political and economic factors, challenging traditional views of party identification as a stable attachment. This area of study emphasizes systematic medium-term shifts in partisanship driven by economic evaluations, presidential approval, and long-term structural factors. Scholars have explored how measurement differences, political shocks, and regional dynamics shape partisan trends, revealing a dynamic system that integrates both stability and responsiveness to political contexts.
- **The Dynamics of Macropartisanship:** Foundational work by MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson (1989) introduced macropartisanship as a dynamic variable, influenced by aggregate evaluations of political and economic conditions. Their study revealed that party identification at the national level exhibits systematic fluctuations rather than remain-

ing static, with economic evaluations and presidential approval serving as key drivers of partisan balance. They demonstrated that macropartisanship captures meaningful variations that have implications for electoral outcomes and the broader party system. Subsequent studies critiqued and refined this framework, investigating the methodological and contextual factors affecting partisan trends.

- **Critiques of Measurement and Variability:** Abramson and Ostrom (1991) challenged the findings of MacKuen et al., arguing that variability in macropartisanship is overstated due to differences in survey question wording and methodology. Their analysis highlighted significant differences between Gallup and SRC measures of party identification, emphasizing the need for consistency in survey instruments when studying macropartisanship. The authors found that measures framed with a short-term focus showed greater volatility, while those with long-term framing revealed more stability in partisan identification.
- **Long-Term Partisan Trends and Regional Dynamics:** Nardulli (1994) expanded the analysis of macropartisanship to include regional-level electoral patterns, introducing the concept of the “normal vote” as a measure of long-term partisan attachments. His findings demonstrated that regional variations in voting behavior are more dynamic than national aggregations suggest, with critical realignments and short-term electoral forces disrupting stable patterns. Nardulli’s work underscored the importance of considering spatial and temporal dimensions in the study of macropartisanship.
- **Fractional Integration and Persistence:** Box-Steffensmeier and Smith (1996) introduced fractional integration models to study the persistence of macropartisanship, finding that partisan shocks persist over years rather than months or decades. Their work reconciled the long-term stability of aggregate partisanship with its responsiveness to political shocks, offering a nuanced understanding of how partisan trends evolve over time. They argued that macropartisanship is neither stationary nor characterized by unit root processes, but rather occupies an intermediate state of gradual persistence.
- **Methodological Refinements and Theoretical Debates:** Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (1998) critiqued earlier studies for overestimating the impact of political and economic variables on macropartisanship, emphasizing the role of rigorous model specifications in time-series analysis. In response, Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson (1998) defended their original framework, arguing that macropartisanship reflects the cumulative and enduring effects of political and economic shocks. These debates have advanced the theoretical understanding of macropartisanship as a dynamic system shaped by both short-term innovations and long-term equilibria.
- **Macropartisanship and Macroideology:** The relationship between macropartisanship and macroideology was explored by Box-Steffensmeier, Knight, and Sigelman (1998), who found no evidence of a causal link between the two at the aggregate level. Their findings highlighted the independence of partisan and ideological dynamics, suggesting that shifts in macropartisanship are not necessarily reflective of ideological realignments.
- **Ongoing Debates and Implications:** As of the turn of the 21st century, the study of macro-level partisanship continues to explore the stability and variability of aggregate partisan trends, with a focus on methodological rigor and theoretical refinement. Questions about the relative influence of political and economic variables, the role of survey design, and the persistence of partisan shocks remain central to this area of research. As scholars delve deeper into the dynamic nature of macropartisanship, the field continues to provide critical insights into the evolving patterns of American political behavior and electoral change.

### 3.7.2 Macropartisanship

MacKuen, M. B., Erikson, R. S., & Stimson, J. A. (1989). Macropartisanship [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 83(4), 1125–1142. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1961661>

1. **Citation key:** mackuen\_macropartisanship\_1989
2. **Author(s):** Michael B. MacKuen, Robert S. Erikson, and James A. Stimson
3. **Year:** 1989
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** macropartisanship, party identification, economic evaluations, presidential approval, partisan dynamics
6. **Summary:** MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson challenge the assumption that party identification at the aggregate level is largely static, arguing instead that macropartisanship—the national partisan balance—exhibits systematic, medium-term fluctuations influenced by economic evaluations and presidential approval. These shifts, though not indicative of epochal realignments, are consequential for electoral outcomes and the broader dynamics of the U.S. party system. The authors demonstrate that macropartisanship moves in response to short-term political and economic conditions, challenging traditional views on the stability of party identification.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that macropartisanship is not fixed but fluctuates systematically over time in response to citizens’ aggregated experiences of political and economic conditions. Drawing on Fiorina’s theory of cumulative updating, they posit that individuals evaluate their political environments and adjust their partisan loyalties accordingly. These adjustments reflect changes in the public’s perception of the incumbent administration’s performance, particularly regarding the economy. While party systems theory often focuses on stability punctuated by rare realignments, the authors suggest that medium-term shifts in partisan balance are more common and arise from routine political and economic factors rather than crises or major demographic shifts.
8. **Methods:** The study analyzes quarterly data on party identification from 1945 to 1987, derived from Gallup surveys. The authors employ time-series analysis to model macropartisanship as a function of presidential approval and the Index of Consumer Sentiment (ICS), which captures public evaluations of economic conditions. They apply Granger-

Sims exogeneity tests to establish causal relationships and account for autoregressive patterns in the data. Additionally, the authors incorporate historical event variables and administration-specific dummies to control for unique political contexts and assess their influence on partisan dynamics.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that macropartisanship responds systematically to changes in presidential approval and economic evaluations. These relationships are confirmed:

- Presidential approval has an immediate but transitory effect on macropartisanship, reflecting short-term political dynamics.
- Economic evaluations exert a gradual but more enduring influence, shaping partisan balance over multiple quarters.

**10. Main findings:** The study reveals that macropartisanship is neither as stable as previously assumed nor subject solely to rare realignment events. Instead, it fluctuates systematically in response to economic conditions and presidential performance. Presidential approval exerts an immediate but short-lived effect, while economic evaluations have a slower, more persistent impact. These findings highlight the dynamic nature of partisan alignment and its susceptibility to routine political and economic changes. The authors' model accounts for 84% of the variance in macropartisanship, demonstrating the significant role of these factors in shaping partisan trends.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Macropartisanship, we argue, is a variable like others, subject to routine ebb and flow as citizens in the aggregate reflect their experiences of politics onto the parties" (p. 1125).
- "In the short run, the impact of politics appears more important, but in the medium and long run, the cumulative impact of previous economic perceptions becomes decisive" (p. 1137).
- "The dynamics of macropartisanship indicate that medium-term partisan shifts arise from the routine success and failure of ordinary politics, requiring neither miracles nor catastrophes" (p. 1138).

### 3.7.3 Macropartisanship: An Empirical Reassessment

Abramson, P. R., & Ostrom, C. W. (1991). Macropartisanship: An Empirical Reassessment [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 85(1), 181–192. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1962884>

**1. Citation key:** abramson\_macropartisanship\_1991

**2. Author(s):** Paul R. Abramson and Charles W. Ostrom, Jr.

**3. Year:** 1991

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** macropartisanship, party identification, survey methodology, political behavior, partisanship stability

**6. Summary:** Abramson and Ostrom reassess the findings of MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson's (1989) influential study on macropartisanship, focusing on the stability and measurement of party identification over time. Using data from the Michigan Survey Research Center (SRC) and General Social Surveys (GSS), they evaluate whether the observed volatility in party identification from Gallup surveys reflects actual changes in partisan loyalty or differences in survey methodology. Their analysis reveals significant differences in variability between Gallup's measure of party affiliation and SRC's measure of party identification, challenging the generalizability of MacKuen et al.'s conclusions.

**7. Theory:** Abramson and Ostrom posit that the volatility in macropartisanship reported by MacKuen et al. is a product of methodological differences between the Gallup and SRC measures of partisanship. They argue that the wording of survey questions and the timeframes referenced (e.g., "as of today" versus "generally speaking") significantly influence respondents' answers, with Gallup's measure exhibiting greater short-term variability due to its immediate framing. The authors contend that partisanship, when measured using SRC's longer-term framing, shows far less fluctuation, suggesting that partisan identification is more stable over time than MacKuen et al. claimed. This theory underscores the importance of measurement consistency in studying political behavior and calls for caution in generalizing findings across different survey instruments.

**8. Methods:** Abramson and Ostrom compare quarterly Gallup survey data from 1952 to 1987 with biennial SRC National Election Studies (NES) and GSS data over similar periods. They analyze the variance in partisan identification across these datasets, examining how each measure correlates with short-term political and economic conditions. Their methodology includes time-series analysis and regression models to assess the responsiveness of partisanship measures to variables such as presidential approval and the Index of Consumer Sentiment (ICS). By focusing on differences in question wording and temporal references, they provide a detailed evaluation of the methodological underpinnings of macropartisanship.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- The Gallup measure of party affiliation will exhibit significantly greater variability than the SRC measure of party identification.
- Variability in Gallup's measure is more closely tied to short-term economic and political evaluations, whereas SRC's measure reflects longer-term partisan stability.

Both hypotheses are supported, with findings indicating that differences in survey methodology lead to divergent conclusions about the nature of partisan identification.

**10. Main findings:** Abramson and Ostrom demonstrate that the volatility observed in Gallup's measure of partisanship is not replicated in the SRC or GSS data, which show far less variability. Their analysis suggests that Gallup's "as of to-

day" framing elicits responses influenced by immediate political conditions, whereas the SRC measure captures more stable, long-term partisan loyalties. The authors also find that the relationship between partisanship and short-term economic and political variables is weaker when using the SRC measure, challenging the generalizability of MacKuen et al.'s conclusions. They caution scholars against treating different measures of partisanship as interchangeable and highlight the need for careful consideration of survey methodology in political research.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "MacKuen and his colleagues exaggerated the extent of variability in partisanship during the mid-to-late 1980s, but they have on balance provided a careful analysis of the correlates of partisanship as measured by the Gallup surveys" (p. 190).
- "The Michigan SRC measure has different properties than the Gallup measure. At the very least, the Gallup and the SRC measures are not interchangeable; and scholars should exercise considerable caution in generalizing findings based upon analyses of the Gallup measure to studies of party identification that have relied upon the Michigan SRC questions" (p. 191).
- "Their claims that the Gallup measure is highly variable, that changes in Gallup partisanship correlate with election results, and that Gallup partisanship appears to be driven by short-term economic and political evaluations are supported by our analyses" (p. 192).

#### 3.7.4 Question Wording and Macropartisanship

MacKuen, M. B., Erikson, R. S., Stimson, J. A., Abramson, P. R., & Ostrom, C. W. (1992). Question Wording and Macropartisanship [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 86(2), 475–486. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1964235>

1. **Citation key:** mackuen\_question\_1992

2. **Author(s):** Michael B. MacKuen, Robert S. Erikson, James A. Stimson, Paul R. Abramson, and Charles W. Ostrom, Jr.

3. **Year:** 1992

4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review

5. **Keywords:** macropartisanship, party identification, survey methodology, question wording, political behavior

6. **Summary:** This article addresses the methodological debate surrounding macropartisanship, particularly the impact of question wording on measures of partisan stability and responsiveness. The authors engage with critiques of their prior work, specifically Abramson and Ostrom's (1991) argument that the volatility observed in macropartisanship using Gallup surveys is overstated due to the short-term focus of its question wording. They analyze alternative datasets from CBS News and New York Times surveys and reassert that macropartisanship exhibits meaningful variation linked to political and economic conditions, regardless of survey question framing.

7. **Theory:** The authors argue that macropartisanship, defined as the aggregate division of party identifiers, is influenced by political and economic factors. They contend that while question wording affects the degree of observed variability in partisan responses, the underlying dynamics of macropartisanship remain robust across different survey instruments. This theory challenges the traditional view of party identification as a stable and long-term attachment by demonstrating that partisan balance shifts systematically in response to presidential approval and consumer sentiment. Furthermore, the authors emphasize that methodological differences, such as the phrasing of survey questions, do not invalidate the substantive importance of macropartisanship as a predictive and explanatory variable in American politics.

8. **Methods:** The authors compare data from Gallup, NES, GSS, and CBS News/New York Times surveys to evaluate the impact of question wording on macropartisanship. They employ time-series analysis to model partisan trends, focusing on the relationship between party identification and independent variables like presidential approval and consumer sentiment. Statistical tests, including regression analysis and correlation measures, are used to assess the consistency of findings across datasets. Additionally, the authors address critiques of data sparsity in NES and GSS series by supplementing their analysis with higher-frequency data from CBS/NYT surveys, which use question phrasing similar to that of the NES.

9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Variations in macropartisanship are consistent across datasets, regardless of question wording differences.
- Question wording influences the magnitude of observed partisan shifts but not the direction or underlying relationships with political and economic variables.

These hypotheses are largely confirmed, with results indicating that while question framing affects variability, macropartisanship remains a meaningful construct.

10. **Main findings:** The study demonstrates that macropartisanship trends observed in Gallup data are replicated in CBS/NYT data, despite differences in question wording. Although the Gallup measure shows greater variability due to its immediate framing ("as of today"), CBS/NYT results align closely with Gallup trends, capturing similar partisan dynamics. The authors find that both measures respond predictably to political factors like presidential approval and economic conditions. These results reinforce the argument that macropartisanship is a reliable indicator of political change and electoral outcomes, unaffected by minor methodological differences in survey design.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Macropartisanship, as we originally defined it, captures meaningful variation in aggregate party identification that responds to political forces of the moment and predicts national election results" (p. 475).

- “The suggestion that question wording completely undermines the concept of macropartisanship is unfounded; while differences exist, the broader trends remain consistent across datasets” (p. 478).
- “Our findings indicate that macropartisanship responds systematically to presidential approval and consumer sentiment, regardless of whether the question emphasizes short-term or long-term perspectives” (p. 485).

### 3.7.5 A Normal Vote Approach to Electoral Change: Presidential Elections, 1828-1984

Nardulli, P. F. (1994). A Normal Vote Approach to Electoral Change: Presidential Elections, 1828-1984 [Publisher: Springer]. *Political Behavior*, 16(4), 467–503. Retrieved January 27, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/586470>

- 1. Citation key:** nardulli\_normal\_1994
- 2. Author(s):** Peter F. Nardulli
- 3. Year:** 1994
- 4. Publication:** Political Behavior
- 5. Keywords:** normal vote, electoral change, macropartisanship, critical realignments, interrupted time-series
- 6. Summary:** Nardulli develops a macro-level approach to studying electoral change, focusing on the concept of the “normal vote” and critical realignments. Using interrupted time-series analysis, he identifies long-term voting trends and short-term fluctuations across electorally homogeneous political regions within states. By analyzing presidential elections from 1828 to 1984, Nardulli demonstrates that regional-level analyses reveal a dynamic and volatile electorate that is obscured by national-level aggregations.
- 7. Theory:** The central theory of this article is that long-term electoral patterns, defined by the normal vote, provide structure to voting behavior, while deviations from this pattern are caused by short-term factors, such as issues, candidates, or scandals. Nardulli argues that enduring partisan attachments, shaped by demographic, cultural, and political factors, underpin the normal vote within specific regions. These attachments can be reassessed and reformed over time, but they remain essential for understanding macro-level electoral change. Critical realignments, triggered by shifts in the relationships among these factors, interrupt long-term patterns and redefine partisan loyalty. Nardulli emphasizes the importance of both temporal and spatial dimensions in electoral analysis, arguing that failure to consider these dimensions can lead to serious misinterpretations of electoral change.
- 8. Methods:** Nardulli employs interrupted time-series analysis to differentiate long-term voting trends (the normal vote) from short-term fluctuations. He analyzes presidential election data from 1828 to 1984 across 215 electorally homogeneous regions, defined using cluster analysis to group geographically contiguous units with similar voting patterns. The analysis identifies critical realignments and short-term electoral deviations while accounting for outliers, such as the elections of 1912, 1916, and 1964. The study also includes regression analyses to smooth the data and ensure the reliability of the normal vote estimates.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The article posits that:
  - Long-term partisan attachments provide structure to electoral outcomes and can be measured through the normal vote.
  - National-level analyses obscure regional variation in electoral patterns, underestimating both short-term volatility and long-term trends.
  - Critical realignments disrupt normal voting patterns, reflecting significant shifts in partisan allegiance within regions.
 These hypotheses are confirmed, with findings highlighting the utility of the normal vote approach in capturing the complexity of electoral change.
- 10. Main findings:** Nardulli’s analysis reveals that regional variations in voting behavior are more dynamic and volatile than national-level data suggest. The normal vote provides a stable measure of long-term partisan attachments, while deviations reflect short-term electoral forces. Critical realignments are identified as region-specific phenomena rather than national events, with significant implications for understanding the evolution of the American political system. The study underscores the limitations of survey-based approaches to electoral change, arguing that archival data offer unique insights into the historical and regional dimensions of voting behavior.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “Efforts to understand macro-level electoral change, and the forces that drive it, must focus on the structure of long-term electoral patterns” (p. 468).
  - “The normal vote approach is premised on the existence of cultural, social, economic, and political forces that operate within specific locales: electorally homogeneous regions” (p. 470).
  - “Our data suggest that a national-level focus masks a highly volatile, dynamic picture at the subnational level” (p. 482).

### 3.7.6 The Dynamic Structure of Congressional Elections

De Boef, S., & Stimson, J. A. (1995). The Dynamic Structure of Congressional Elections [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 57(3), 630–648. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2960186>

- 1. Citation key:** de\_boef\_dynamic\_1995
- 2. Author(s):** Suzanna De Boef and James A. Stimson
- 3. Year:** 1995
- 4. Publication:** The Journal of Politics

5. **Keywords:** congressional elections, incumbency, macropartisanship, public opinion, election dynamics
6. **Summary:** De Boef and Stimson investigate the dynamic structure of U.S. congressional elections, focusing on the interplay between incumbency, macropartisanship, and public opinion. They argue that congressional elections are part of a dynamic system where incumbency not only affects immediate electoral outcomes but also introduces lasting effects into future contests. Using pooled state-level data from 1956 to 1990, the authors examine how public opinion, economic factors, and incumbency cumulatively shape the partisan composition of the U.S. House of Representatives.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that congressional elections operate as a dynamic system, where incumbency acts as both a buffer against and a transmitter of electoral change. Public opinion and macropartisanship exert both immediate and lagged effects on election outcomes, as incumbents elected in one cycle carry the influence of past partisan and public opinion trends into future contests. This dynamic system challenges the static view of electoral determinants by highlighting how prior electoral conditions persist through incumbency advantages. The theory underscores the dual role of incumbency in shaping election dynamics: it dampens the immediate impact of exogenous shocks (e.g., public opinion shifts) but also extends the influence of these shocks over time, thereby amplifying their cumulative effect on congressional composition.
8. **Methods:** The study employs pooled cross-sectional time-series data from 1956 to 1990, analyzing the Democratic percentage of the two-party vote in House elections aggregated at the state level. Key independent variables include macropartisanship (measured through nationally aggregated party identification), public opinion (Stimson's policy mood indicator), economic conditions (real disposable income), and incumbency advantage. The authors use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression with state fixed effects, as well as error components models, to isolate dynamic effects and account for both cross-sectional and temporal variation. They also model the cumulative influence of past election outcomes to demonstrate how incumbency transmits prior electoral conditions into future contests.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize:
  - Public opinion and macropartisanship directly influence congressional election outcomes, with shifts in liberal or conservative mood translating into increased support for Democrats or Republicans, respectively.
  - Incumbency introduces dynamic effects by transmitting the influence of prior election conditions into subsequent cycles, thereby magnifying their long-term impact.
  - Economic conditions have a more immediate but less persistent effect on election outcomes compared to public opinion and macropartisanship.

These hypotheses are supported by their findings, which highlight the dynamic interplay between these variables.

10. **Main findings:** The authors find that incumbency amplifies the cumulative effects of macropartisanship and public opinion on congressional composition. Public opinion shifts exert both immediate and lagged effects, with incumbents elected during liberal or conservative periods maintaining their partisan alignment over multiple election cycles. While economic conditions influence short-term outcomes, their impact is less persistent due to the insulating effects of incumbency. The study demonstrates that congressional elections are responsive to changes in public preferences, even in the face of high incumbent reelection rates. By incorporating dynamics into their analysis, the authors reveal that incumbency transforms short-term shocks into long-lasting electoral trends.

11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Incumbency tends to compound the current effects of macropartisanship and public opinion and to dampen the effect of disposable income—or any other variable that fluctuates a good deal in the short term" (p. 643).
  - "When public preferences change, that change is reflected in House membership. This is so even in the face of impressive incumbent success rates" (p. 646).
  - "Turnover is often small, but so too is the typical change of preferences. In the atypical cases of large preference changes so too is turnover large" (p. 646).

### 3.7.7 The Dynamics of Aggregate Partisanship

Box-Steffensmeier, J. M., & Smith, R. M. (1996). The Dynamics of Aggregate Partisanship [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 90(3), 567–580. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2082609>

1. **Citation key:** box-steffensmeier\_dynamics\_1996
2. **Author(s):** Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier and Renée M. Smith
3. **Year:** 1996
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** aggregate partisanship, fractional integration, persistence, time series, macropartisanship
6. **Summary:** Box-Steffensmeier and Smith examine the temporal dynamics of aggregate partisanship in the United States. They introduce fractional integration as a statistical approach to understanding the persistence of macropartisanship, analyzing how shocks to aggregate partisanship evolve over time. Using time series data from 1953 to 1992, the authors challenge conventional views that aggregate partisanship is either stationary or characterized by a unit root, arguing instead for a more nuanced perspective of persistence over years rather than months or decades.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that aggregate partisanship is shaped by a dynamic interplay between individual-level stability and broader political factors. Traditional theories posit that party identification is largely stable and unresponsive to short-term political influences, while revisionist perspectives suggest that individual-level partisanship can shift based on political events and evaluations. Box-Steffensmeier and Smith incorporate these perspectives into a

unified framework, proposing that aggregate partisanship exhibits characteristics of fractional integration—a form of persistence that decays slowly over time. This perspective reconciles the observed long-term stability of partisanship with its responsiveness to political shocks, offering a middle ground between theories of permanent partisanship and transient shifts.

**8. Methods:** The study employs advanced time series methods, including fractional integration models, to analyze Gallup Poll data on party identification spanning 1953–1992. Using diagnostic tests such as Dickey-Fuller and variance ratio tests, as well as maximum likelihood estimation, the authors estimate the degree of persistence in macropartisanship. They analyze three measures of partisanship: the percentage of Republican identifiers, Democratic identifiers, and the Democratic share of major-party identifiers (macropartisanship). These methods enable them to assess the extent and duration of shocks to aggregate partisanship while accounting for measurement error and bounded data.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize:

- Aggregate partisanship exhibits fractional integration, with shocks to partisanship persisting over years rather than months or decades.
- The dynamics of partisanship are influenced by both individual-level heterogeneity and persistent exogenous political factors, such as economic evaluations or presidential approval.
- Measures of macropartisanship are neither purely stationary nor unit root processes but occupy an intermediate state of fractional integration.

These hypotheses are supported by empirical findings.

**10. Main findings:** Box-Steffensmeier and Smith find strong evidence that aggregate partisanship is fractionally integrated, meaning that shocks to partisanship persist for years before gradually dissipating. Their analysis rejects the stationarity and unit root hypotheses, demonstrating that macropartisanship is highly persistent but not permanent. For example, the effects of a shock to macropartisanship are found to decay by roughly half over four years and persist significantly for a decade. The findings challenge prior assumptions about the stability of partisanship and highlight the importance of fractional integration as a tool for understanding electoral dynamics.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Our evidence that the effects of a shock to aggregate partisanship last for years—not months or decades—challenges previous work by party systems theorists and students of ‘macropartisanship’” (p. 567).
- “The empirical evidence shows that aggregate levels of partisanship are fractionally integrated...providing a conceptually richer and more precise basis for theories of issue evolution or endogenous preferences” (p. 568).
- “More than one-half the effects of any shock to aggregate partisanship persist for as long as a four-year presidential term, and more than one-quarter remain after eight years” (p. 575).

### 3.7.8 Macropartisanship: A Replication and Critique

Green, D., Palmquist, B., & Schickler, E. (1998). Macropartisanship: A Replication and Critique [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 92(4), 883–899. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2586310>

1. **Citation key:** green\_macropartisanship\_1998
2. **Author(s):** Donald Green, Bradley Palmquist, and Eric Schickler
3. **Year:** 1998
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** macropartisanship, party identification, presidential approval, consumer sentiment, replication study
6. **Summary:** Green, Palmquist, and Schickler reexamine the influential work of MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson on macropartisanship, replicating and critiquing their findings with a more comprehensive dataset. The authors find that the effects of political and economic variables, such as consumer sentiment and presidential approval, on aggregate partisanship are substantially smaller than originally reported. They argue that prior analyses overstate macropartisanship's responsiveness to short-term shocks and emphasize the importance of rigorous model specifications in time-series research.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose a theoretical model of macropartisanship as a slowly evolving process influenced by long-term generational and historical factors rather than transient political and economic shocks. They critique the findings of MacKuen et al., which suggest high volatility in party identification, arguing instead for a more stable and gradual process of partisan change. Their theoretical framework challenges the notion that short-term shifts in consumer sentiment or presidential approval lead to large, lasting adjustments in party identification. Instead, they emphasize the autoregressive nature of macropartisanship, where current partisan balances are heavily influenced by past values. This perspective aligns more closely with traditional views of party identification as a stable component of individual political behavior, adjusted only incrementally by exogenous forces.
8. **Methods:** The study replicates and extends the analyses of MacKuen et al. using a more comprehensive dataset of Gallup and CBS/New York Times surveys from 1953 to 1996. The authors employ various time-series techniques, including ARMA models, fractional integration, and error correction models, to test the robustness of prior findings. They carefully evaluate the impact of model specifications, such as the inclusion of dummy variables for presidential administrations and events, and assess the sensitivity of results to different modeling assumptions. Their approach provides a rigorous test of the hypothesis that macropartisanship is significantly influenced by political and economic variables.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Macropartisanship is a highly persistent series, with current values strongly influenced by past values.
- The effects of consumer sentiment and presidential approval on macropartisanship are small and transient, contrary to the findings of MacKuen et al.
- Model specification choices, such as the inclusion of administration and event variables, significantly influence estimates of macropartisanship's responsiveness to short-term shocks.

These hypotheses are supported by the replication study's findings.

**10. Main findings:** Green, Palmquist, and Schickler find that macropartisanship is much less volatile than previously reported. Their analysis shows that the effects of consumer sentiment and presidential approval are limited and often statistically insignificant, with short-term shocks explaining only a small fraction of aggregate partisan change. They demonstrate that much of the apparent volatility in the original analyses by MacKuen et al. was due to overfitting and the inclusion of theoretically questionable control variables. Their results underscore the importance of properly specifying time-series models and avoiding the inclusion of unnecessary predictors.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Macropartisanship adjusts to short-term shocks in a limited and gradual fashion, consistent with traditional views of partisan realignment" (p. 883).
- "Our replication indicates that the effects of consumer sentiment and presidential approval on macropartisanship are much smaller than those reported by MacKuen et al." (p. 888).
- "By focusing solely on the Reagan era, the MacKuen et al. analysis not only encounters problems of small sample size but also loses the broad historical scope that makes their 1989 study so attractive" (p. 893).

**3.7.9 What Moves Macropartisanship? A Response to Green, Palmquist, and Schickler**

Erikson, R. S., Mackuen, M. B., & Stimson, J. A. (1998). What Moves Macropartisanship? A Response to Green, Palmquist, and Schickler [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 92(4), 901–912. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2586311>

**1. Citation key:** erikson\_what\_1998

**2. Author(s):** Robert S. Erikson, Michael B. MacKuen, and James A. Stimson

**3. Year:** 1998

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** macropartisanship, presidential approval, consumer sentiment, economic shocks, party identification

**6. Summary:** Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson defend and refine their earlier model of macropartisanship, responding to critiques by Green, Palmquist, and Schickler. They argue that macropartisanship is influenced by cumulative political and economic shocks, with presidential approval and consumer sentiment as key drivers. Their analysis highlights the enduring effects of such shocks, challenging the critique that macropartisanship changes are transient and primarily noise-driven.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose that macropartisanship is a dynamic system shaped by cumulative and permanent effects of political and economic shocks. These shocks influence presidential approval and consumer sentiment, which in turn affect aggregate partisanship. Unlike the critique that macropartisanship is a stationary series fluctuating around a mean, Erikson et al. argue that it represents a memory of cumulative past events, with shocks having long-lasting impacts. Their framework reconciles microlevel stability of individual party identification with macrolevel changes in partisanship, presenting a model where macrolevel trends emerge from small, persistent changes at the individual level.

**8. Methods:** The study employs an error correction model (ECM) to analyze the relationship between macropartisanship, presidential approval, and consumer sentiment. The authors use quarterly data from Gallup and other surveys spanning 1953–1996, modeling macropartisanship as a function of both short-term innovations (political and economic shocks) and a long-term equilibrium value. They extend their model by decomposing innovations in consumer sentiment and approval to isolate their political and economic components. This methodology allows them to differentiate between transient deviations and enduring changes in macropartisanship.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize:

- Macropartisanship is primarily influenced by the cumulative effects of political and economic shocks, as represented by innovations in presidential approval and consumer sentiment.
- These effects are permanent rather than transient, contributing to a long-term equilibrium level of macropartisanship.
- Short-term fluctuations around this equilibrium are minor compared to the persistent changes induced by cumulative shocks.

The hypotheses are confirmed, with evidence supporting the enduring impact of political and economic forces on macropartisanship.

**10. Main findings:** The authors demonstrate that macropartisanship is a long-memory process, with political and economic shocks exerting cumulative and permanent effects. Innovations in presidential approval and consumer sentiment account for significant shifts in macropartisanship over time. The error correction model shows that deviations from equilibrium are corrected gradually, with approximately 20% of the gap corrected each quarter. The findings highlight that macropartisanship's equilibrium is shaped by aggregated political and economic experiences rather

than short-term fluctuations, refuting the critique that macropartisanship is merely a stationary series dominated by random noise.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “Macropartisanship responds to the political and economic forces represented by presidential approval and consumer sentiment. To see this, one must know where to look” (p. 910).
- “Macropartisanship incorporates not only the political and economic news of the present but also the cumulation of news from the past” (p. 911).
- “The key to understanding the macropartisanship series is its long memory. The response of macropartisanship to new economic and political inputs may be imperceptibly small at the time of occurrence, but it will be long-lasting” (p. 912).

#### 3.7.10 The Interplay of Macropartisanship and Macroideology: A Time Series Analysis

Box-Steffensmeier, J. M., Knight, K., & Sigelman, L. (1998). The Interplay of Macropartisanship and Macroideology: A Time Series Analysis [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 60(4), 1031–1049. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2647729>

1. **Citation key:** box-steffensmeier\_interplay\_1998
2. **Author(s):** Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Kathleen Knight, and Lee Sigelman
3. **Year:** 1998
4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** macropartisanship, macroideology, fractional integration, time series, Granger causality
6. **Summary:** This article investigates the relationship between macropartisanship (aggregate trends in party identification) and macroideology (aggregate trends in ideological self-identification). The authors use advanced time series methodologies to analyze whether shifts in macropartisanship are linked to shifts in macroideology and explore the short- and long-term dynamics of these series. Contrary to expectations that these trends might be interconnected, they find no evidence of a causal relationship between the two at the aggregate level.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose four theoretical perspectives on the relationship between macropartisanship and macroideology: (1) shifts in macroideology precede shifts in macropartisanship, with ideological currents driving partisan realignments; (2) shifts in macropartisanship precede shifts in macroideology, with changing partisan loyalties influencing ideological commitments; (3) the two series are jointly determined by common environmental factors, leading them to move in tandem; or (4) macropartisanship and macroideology are independent of one another, with distinct dynamics. They argue that the American party system's lack of ideological coherence and the low salience of ideological labels for much of the electorate make the fourth scenario—the independence of the two series—the most plausible. This theory aligns with prior research suggesting that aggregate partisan and ideological trends may reflect different sources of influence, such as economic or political shocks, rather than a unified causal mechanism.
8. **Methods:** The study employs fractional integration and Granger causality tests to analyze quarterly data on macropartisanship and macroideology from 1973 to 1992. Macropartisanship is measured as the Democratic share of partisan identifiers, while macroideology is measured as the liberal share of ideological identifiers. The authors estimate the persistence of each series using fractional integration models, which provide a flexible approach to assessing the degree of memory in time series data. They also use error correction models (ECMs) to examine potential short- and long-term relationships between the two series. These methodologies enable the authors to test for causal linkages and evaluate the dynamic properties of each series.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Changes in macroideology precede and cause changes in macropartisanship.
  - Changes in macropartisanship precede and cause changes in macroideology.
  - Macropartisanship and macroideology are jointly determined by common external factors and move together.
  - Macropartisanship and macroideology are independent of one another.

The results support the fourth hypothesis, indicating that macropartisanship and macroideology are unrelated at the aggregate level.
10. **Main findings:** The authors find that macropartisanship is more persistent than macroideology, with shocks to macropartisanship having long-lasting effects. By contrast, macroideology exhibits lower persistence, with shocks dissipating more quickly. Granger causality tests reveal no evidence of a causal relationship between the two series, either in the short or long term. Error correction models confirm that changes in macropartisanship and macroideology are independent, with no evidence of a systematic relationship. These findings challenge the view that aggregate partisan trends reflect ideological realignments or mandates, emphasizing the independence of partisan and ideological dynamics in the American context.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Macropartisanship clearly has longer memory than macroideology, consistent with the idea that partisanship is transmitted in the home, while ideology often lacks a consistent meaning” (p. 1042).
  - “Shifts in one partisan direction or the other cannot plausibly be interpreted as ideological mandates at the aggregate level” (p. 1044).
  - “Our findings suggest that macropartisanship and macroideology are independent, with distinct dynamics that reflect the centrist and pragmatic nature of American politics” (p. 1045).

### 3.8 Partisan Realignment

#### 3.8.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of partisan realignment examines the conditions and processes through which significant, enduring changes occur in party systems and voter coalitions. This subject area has been shaped by foundational works on critical elections and secular realignment, highlighting both abrupt shifts in partisan alignments during pivotal elections and the gradual evolution of coalitions over time. Scholars such as V. O. Key and Walter Dean Burnham have been central to defining these phenomena, linking realignments to societal transformations, electoral dynamics, and elite strategies. While critical elections underscore sudden, decisive shifts, secular realignments reveal how slow-moving changes in demographics, socioeconomic structures, and political institutions reshape the partisan landscape.
- **Critical Elections and Their Impact:** V. O. Key's seminal work on critical elections introduced the idea that certain elections produce sharp and durable changes in voter alignments. Key argued that these elections are characterized by high voter turnout, intense partisan cleavages, and enduring coalitional shifts. For example, the 1896 election, often cited as a critical realignment, marked the rise of the Republican Party's dominance through its appeal to industrial and rural constituencies. Later works, such as those by Burnham, expanded on this concept by connecting critical elections to broader patterns of voter turnout and institutional change, emphasizing their role in redefining the American political universe.
- **Secular Realignment and Gradual Change:** Key also differentiated between abrupt critical elections and the slower process of secular realignment. His 1959 work explored how long-term changes in demographic, social, and economic conditions drive shifts in party coalitions. Examples include the gradual increase in Democratic support in industrial towns during the early 20th century, driven by the influx of immigrant populations. Scholars have highlighted that while secular realignment lacks the drama of critical elections, its cumulative impact on party systems can be equally transformative.
- **Regional Variations and Subnational Phenomena:** Recent scholarship has emphasized the regional nature of partisan realignments. Peter Nardulli argued that critical realignments are not uniformly national but are better understood as subnational phenomena driven by localized electoral dynamics. For instance, the New Deal realignment had varying effects across regions, with urban industrial areas experiencing significant Democratic gains while rural areas showed more modest changes. These insights challenge the notion of uniform, sweeping realignments and underscore the importance of geographic and temporal variation.
- **Behavioral and Institutional Perspectives:** Partisan realignment research integrates both behavioral and institutional approaches. Scholars like Gary Miller and Norman Schofield have explored the role of ideological party activists and their strategic interactions with candidates in shaping realignments. Their work highlights the multidimensional nature of political competition, where suppressed policy dimensions can emerge as focal points for new coalitions. Similarly, institutional analyses, such as David Brady's study of realignments in the U.S. House of Representatives, reveal how structural changes, such as shifts in the votes-to-seats ratio, amplify the effects of realignments on governance and policymaking.
- **Issue Evolution and the Role of Elites:** Edward Carmines and James Stimson's theory of issue evolution provides a framework for understanding how new political issues, such as racial desegregation, transform partisan alignments. They argued that elite polarization on emerging issues precedes mass alignment, with the interaction of elite signals and voter perceptions driving long-term changes in party coalitions. This dynamic was evident in the realignment of the Democratic Party during the Civil Rights era, as it became increasingly associated with liberal positions on race, while the Republican Party shifted toward conservatism. Such elite-driven processes underscore the importance of leadership and strategic framing in partisan realignment.
- **Activists and Multidimensional Politics:** Gary Miller and Norman Schofield's 2003 work introduced a two-dimensional model of political competition, emphasizing the role of party activists in driving realignments. They argued that realignments occur as candidates exploit previously suppressed issue dimensions to form new coalitions, responding to the demands of disaffected activists. For instance, the Civil Rights era saw a shift from economic to social cleavages, with Democrats embracing social liberalism and Republicans adopting socially conservative stances. This multidimensional approach highlights the strategic interactions between candidates and activists in reshaping party systems.
- **Contemporary Challenges and Future Directions:** The study of partisan realignment continues to address modern phenomena, such as increased political polarization, declining voter turnout, and the rise of independent voters. Scholars have noted that the weakening of traditional party linkages and the influence of digital communication present new challenges for understanding the dynamics of partisan alignment. Future research is likely to focus on the effects of demographic shifts, globalization, and the emergence of identity politics on party systems. Additionally, the integration of behavioral, institutional, and geographic perspectives promises to yield deeper insights into the complexities of potential partisan realignments in the 21st century.

#### 3.8.2 A Theory of Critical Elections

Key, V. O. [V. O.]. (1955). A Theory of Critical Elections [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 17(1), 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2126401>

1. **Citation key:** key\_theory\_1955

2. **Author(s):** V. O. Key, Jr.

3. **Year:** 1955
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** critical elections, electoral realignment, political behavior, party systems, voter behavior
6. **Summary:** Key develops the concept of critical elections, defined as elections marked by sharp and durable shifts in the electorate's party alignments. Using historical analyses of U.S. elections, he illustrates how such elections serve as pivotal moments in which political parties gain or lose dominance. Key argues that understanding these realignments is crucial to analyzing broader patterns in American political development and voter behavior.
7. **Theory:** Key posits that elections are not uniform in their effects on the political landscape; instead, certain elections can be classified as "critical" due to their capacity to fundamentally reshape the partisan alignment of the electorate. He suggests that critical elections are characterized by high voter involvement, intense partisan cleavages, and durable changes in political coalitions. These realignments, often driven by socioeconomic and cultural factors, reflect shifts in public opinion and party strength that persist over multiple election cycles. Key also notes that external events, such as economic crises or major political controversies, frequently precipitate critical elections. By contrasting critical elections with more routine elections, Key underscores their distinct role in solidifying or transforming the balance of power in American politics.
8. **Methods:** The study employs historical election data to identify and analyze patterns of electoral realignment in key U.S. elections. Key uses aggregate-level data, such as changes in vote shares for political parties, and compares these shifts across geographic and demographic groups. For example, he examines voting trends in Massachusetts and other New England states during the 1928 and 1896 elections, highlighting the long-term effects of these pivotal contests on party strength. Key also employs graphical analyses, such as time series of Democratic vote percentages, to demonstrate the durability of realignments and their varying impacts on urban, rural, and ethnic voter groups.
9. **Hypotheses:** Key hypothesizes that critical elections result in significant, enduring shifts in voter alignments and that these shifts can be identified through their long-term effects on party strength. He also posits that such elections are often driven by external shocks, such as economic downturns, and involve heightened voter engagement.
  - Critical elections create new partisan divisions that persist over multiple election cycles. This hypothesis is supported by the analysis of the 1928 presidential election, which led to a durable alignment of urban, Catholic, and low-income voters with the Democratic Party.
  - The degree of electoral realignment varies based on demographic and geographic factors, as shown by the differing impacts of the 1896 election on urban and rural voters in New England.
10. **Main findings:** Key finds that critical elections, such as those in 1896 and 1928, significantly restructured the American party system by creating new, durable coalitions of voters. For example, the 1928 election in New England demonstrated a profound realignment, with urban, Catholic, and low-income voters moving decisively to the Democratic Party, a shift that persisted for decades. In contrast, other elections, like 1932, involved short-term shifts that did not result in lasting realignments. Key concludes that critical elections are infrequent but pivotal events that fundamentally alter the trajectory of party competition and voter behavior.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "A systematic comparative approach, with a focus on variations in the nature of elections, would doubtless be fruitful in advancing understanding of the democratic governing process" (p. 3).
  - "The realignment made manifest in the voting in such elections seems to persist for several succeeding elections" (p. 4).
  - "Whatever the mechanism of its maintenance, the durability of the realignment is impressive" (p. 7).

### 3.8.3 Secular Realignment and the Party System

Key, V. O. [V. O.]. (1959). Secular Realignment and the Party System [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 21(2), 198–210. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2127162>

1. **Citation key:** key\_secular\_1959
2. **Author(s):** V. O. Key, Jr.
3. **Year:** 1959
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** secular realignment, party system, voter behavior, electoral trends, political sociology
6. **Summary:** In this article, Key examines the concept of secular realignment, a gradual and long-term shift in the partisan attachments of population groups. He contrasts secular realignment with critical elections, arguing that while critical elections represent abrupt realignments, secular realignment reflects a slow evolution in party coalitions driven by demographic, economic, and social changes. By analyzing historical voting patterns in New England, Key identifies enduring trends that reshape the party system over decades.
7. **Theory:** Key argues that secular realignments arise from long-term changes in the social, economic, and demographic conditions of population groups. Unlike critical elections, which involve sudden, dramatic shifts in partisan alignment, secular realignment reflects a gradual evolution in group affiliations that persists across multiple election cycles. Key contends that these shifts are often driven by external factors, such as the rise of new industries or waves of immigration, which alter the political relevance and preferences of specific groups. Political leadership and major events, such as economic depressions, can accelerate these changes, but they occur within a broader context of enduring social transformations. Key emphasizes the dual forces of inertia and gradual change, noting that while existing party

- loyalties create resistance to immediate shifts, long-term processes inevitably reshape the political landscape.
- 8. Methods:** The study relies on historical electoral data from New England states, particularly focusing on industrial towns and rural areas in New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont. Key employs a combination of aggregate-level analysis and graphical representations to illustrate long-term trends in partisan alignment. For example, he tracks changes in the Democratic share of the vote over a 50-year period, showing a gradual increase in Democratic support in industrial towns compared to rural areas. The analysis also examines shifts in voter composition, such as the impact of French-Canadian and Irish immigration on urban voting patterns. Additionally, Key identifies deviations from secular trends during specific elections, demonstrating how events like the Great Depression or the Al Smith candidacy in 1928 temporarily accelerated or slowed long-term realignments.
- 9. Hypotheses:** Key hypothesizes that secular realignment is a continuous process influenced by structural social changes and that these changes create new partisan coalitions over time.
- Secular realignment reflects a long-term shift in group partisan homogeneity driven by changes in social and economic conditions. This is supported by the gradual divergence in urban and rural voting patterns in New Hampshire from 1900 to 1956.
  - External shocks, such as economic crises or major political events, can accelerate or decelerate the pace of secular realignment. For instance, the Great Depression reinforced the alignment of industrial workers with the Democratic Party.
- 10. Main findings:** Key finds that secular realignment is a gradual but powerful force that reshapes the American party system over time. His analysis of New England voting patterns reveals a persistent trend toward increased Democratic support in industrial towns, driven by demographic changes and economic shifts. For example, the influx of French-Canadian and Irish immigrants into urban areas contributed to the growth of Democratic strength. However, Key also highlights the role of short-term deviations, such as the backlash against Al Smith in 1928 or the Republican resurgence during World War I, which temporarily disrupted these trends. Ultimately, he concludes that secular realignment, while slower and less dramatic than critical elections, plays a critical role in the evolution of the party system by gradually altering the composition and preferences of the electorate.
- 11. Key quotations:**
- "The rise and fall of parties may to some degree be the consequence of trends that perhaps persist over decades, and elections may mark only steps in a more or less continuous creation of new loyalties and decay of old" (p. 198).
  - "Beginning about 1900, the lines of party division in the two sorts of population gradually diverge. Over the entire period, a secular trend seems to have been in motion beneath the cyclical and short-term variations in the division of the vote between the parties" (p. 200).
  - "The slowness of group mobilization and the long periods of time required for the fulfillment of the political consequences of objective change in group status present a problem whose solution must rest in large measure on surmise" (p. 204).

### 3.8.4 The Changing Shape of the American Political Universe

Burnham, W. D. (1965). The Changing Shape of the American Political Universe [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 59(1), 7–28. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1976117>

1. **Citation key:** burnham\_changing\_1965
2. **Author(s):** Walter Dean Burnham
3. **Year:** 1965
4. **Publication:** The American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** political realignment, voter turnout, party systems, voter behavior, electoral trends
6. **Summary:** Burnham explores how shifts in voter participation and the structure of the electorate have reshaped the American political universe over time. He identifies declining voter turnout, increasing voter peripherality, and shifts in party competition as key trends that emerged in the wake of critical realignments, such as the election of 1896. The study links these changes to broader sociopolitical transformations and explores their implications for understanding American democracy.
7. **Theory:** Burnham theorizes that the evolution of the American political system reflects long-term changes in voter participation, party alignment, and electoral behavior. He highlights the role of critical elections, particularly the 1896 realignment, in initiating shifts in the size and composition of the active electorate. These changes include declining turnout rates, increasing levels of voter peripherality, and the erosion of strong party linkages. Burnham attributes these trends to structural changes in American society, including industrialization, urbanization, and changes in political institutions. He argues that these dynamics have weakened the traditional bonds between voters and political parties, creating a more fragmented and less engaged electorate. Burnham also emphasizes the importance of analyzing both aggregate voting data and individual-level survey data to understand the interplay of historical and contemporary political trends.
8. **Methods:** The article employs a historical and comparative analysis of voting data across states, focusing on turnout, drop-off, roll-off, split-ticket voting, and partisan swing from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century. Burnham uses time-series data to identify trends in voter behavior and correlates these trends with major political events, such as the

1896 realignment and the New Deal era. The study includes detailed examinations of states like Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, comparing their voting patterns and levels of party competition. Burnham also considers structural factors, such as the impact of voter registration laws, the transition from party ballots to office-block ballots, and the changing role of political parties in mobilizing voters.

**9. Hypotheses:** Burnham hypothesizes that political realignments, particularly the 1896 election, resulted in long-term declines in voter turnout and the strength of party linkages. He also posits that these declines are accompanied by increases in voter peripherality and fragmentation.

- Political realignments, such as the 1896 election, initiated a decline in voter turnout and party competition that persisted for decades.
- Increasing voter peripherality is associated with declines in turnout, roll-off, and split-ticket voting, reflecting weaker connections between voters and political parties.

**10. Main findings:** Burnham demonstrates that the American political universe underwent profound changes beginning with the 1896 realignment. Voter turnout declined significantly, particularly in off-year elections, and indicators of voter peripherality, such as roll-off and split-ticket voting, increased. These trends were most pronounced in states like Michigan and Pennsylvania, where strong party competition gave way to one-party dominance. Burnham also finds that the New Deal realignment partially reversed these trends in some regions, restoring two-party competition and increasing turnout. However, the broader patterns of declining turnout and weakening party linkages persisted, reflecting deeper structural changes in American society and politics.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The primary objective here is the preliminary exploration of the scope of changes since the mid-19th century in turnout and other criteria of voting participation, and the possible substantive implications of such changes" (p. 8).
- "The political realignment of the 1930s, while it restored two-party competition to many states outside the South, did not stimulate turnout to return in most areas to 19th-century levels" (p. 12).
- "Declines in turnout were accompanied by substantial, continuous increases in the indices of party and voter peripherality among those elements of the adult population which remained in the political universe at all" (p. 14).

### 3.8.5 Theory and Voting Research: Some Reflections on Converse's "Change in the American Electorate"

Burnham, W. D. (1974). Theory and Voting Research: Some Reflections on Converse's "Change in the American Electorate" [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 68(3), 1002–1023. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1959143>

**1. Citation key:** burnham\_theory\_1974

**2. Author(s):** Walter Dean Burnham

**3. Year:** 1974

**4. Publication:** The American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** critical elections, voting behavior, voter turnout, personal registration, political alienation

**6. Summary:** In this article, Burnham revisits his theory of critical elections in response to Converse's critique of American electoral change, focusing on the decline in voter turnout after the 19th century and the structural changes in the political system. He assesses the role of legal and institutional developments, such as personal registration laws and women's suffrage, in shaping voter behavior, as well as the implications of these shifts for understanding political participation and alienation.

**7. Theory:** Burnham argues that structural and legal changes in the American electoral system fundamentally transformed political participation after the critical realignment of 1896. He emphasizes the tension between industrial-capitalist dominance and democratic participation, suggesting that the political system became increasingly exclusionary. This shift was mediated through institutional mechanisms, such as personal registration laws, which disproportionately affected urban and immigrant populations. Burnham challenges the behavioralist paradigm of survey research, asserting that historical and sociological contexts play a more significant role in shaping political behavior than previously recognized. He further contends that voter alienation and declining turnout are symptomatic of deeper systemic transformations rather than individual-level apathy, highlighting the importance of historical inquiry to uncover the mechanisms underlying these changes.

**8. Methods:** Burnham employs historical-comparative analysis, drawing on longitudinal voting data from Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, and Missouri to examine the effects of personal registration laws and other institutional changes on turnout between 1890 and 1916. He uses regression analysis to estimate the contribution of structural factors to turnout decline, controlling for non-registration counties as a baseline for behavioral change. His analysis also incorporates cross-sectional comparisons of urban and rural voting patterns, enabling an assessment of how institutional reforms impacted different demographic groups over time.

**9. Hypotheses:** The article posits that:

- The introduction of personal registration laws significantly reduced voter turnout, particularly in urban areas.
- Political alienation, rather than institutional barriers alone, drove much of the decline in voter participation after 1896.
- The critical realignment of 1896 redefined the agenda of American politics, contributing to long-term declines in

electoral engagement.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with findings demonstrating that while personal registration laws played a role in turnout decline, broader behavioral and systemic changes were more significant drivers of voter disengagement.

**10. Main findings:** Burnham's analysis reveals that personal registration laws accounted for 20–33% of the decline in voter turnout in states like Pennsylvania and Ohio, but much of the decline was attributable to behavioral changes linked to political alienation. His findings underscore the role of critical realignments, such as the 1896 election, in reshaping the electorate and weakening party competition in many states. He also highlights the failure of reforms, such as women's suffrage, to reverse these trends, arguing that the structural and systemic barriers introduced during this period had enduring consequences for American democracy.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The erosion of the mass base of American politics was a consequence of the tension between capitalism and democracy, and of the ascendancy of capitalism" (p. 1002).
- "The decline in turnout among middle-class 'independent' wards from 1890 through 1930 was vastly heavier than in the lower-class wards which the machine controlled" (p. 1007).
- "Something in the redefined agenda of politics after 1896 drove large masses of voters away from active participation in electoral politics" (p. 1012).

### 3.8.6 The Creation of a Democratic Majority, 1928–1936

Andersen, K. (1979). *The Creation of a Democratic Majority, 1928–1936* [Google-Books-ID: 19KKQgAACAAJ]. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** andersen\_creation\_1979

2. **Author(s):** Kristi Andersen

3. **Year:** 1979

4. **Publication:** The University of Chicago Press

5. **Keywords:** Democratic realignment, mobilization, voter behavior, New Deal coalition, party systems

6. **Summary:** Andersen examines the emergence of the Democratic Party as the majority party during the 1930s, focusing on the role of voter mobilization rather than partisan conversion. Her analysis emphasizes the critical role played by previously nonparticipating groups, including newly enfranchised women, immigrants, and younger voters, in creating a lasting Democratic coalition during the New Deal era. This book challenges conventional theories of electoral realignment by offering a novel focus on political mobilization.

7. **Theory:** Andersen theorizes that the Democratic majority of the 1930s was not the result of widespread partisan conversion among traditional Republican voters but rather the mobilization of previously disengaged groups. She identifies structural factors, such as socioeconomic changes and the introduction of women into the electorate, as crucial to understanding this transformation. Additionally, she emphasizes the political significance of "nonimmunized" voters, who had weak or no prior partisan affiliations. Andersen argues that these groups were drawn into the Democratic fold by the party's effective mobilization strategies and the appeal of leaders such as Al Smith and Franklin D. Roosevelt. This mobilization model contrasts with the conventional conversion hypothesis, which assumes a direct shift in partisan allegiance among existing voters.

8. **Methods:** Andersen employs a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, utilizing aggregate voting data, voter registration records, and survey data from the 1950s to reconstruct partisan identification patterns from the 1920s to the 1940s. By analyzing the partisan preferences of voters and their parents, she identifies trends in political engagement and affiliation. Andersen also reexamines historical voting turnout and registration data to highlight changes in participation among previously nonengaged groups, such as immigrants, women, and young voters.

9. **Hypotheses:** The book posits that:

- The Democratic gains during the New Deal era were driven by the mobilization of "nonimmunized" voters, not by partisan conversion.
- Socioeconomic and structural changes facilitated the mobilization of previously disengaged groups into the Democratic Party.
- The New Deal coalition's formation depended heavily on the inclusion of urban working-class voters, women, and immigrants.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with Andersen's findings showing that over 75% of the Democratic gains during this period were attributable to mobilization rather than conversion.

**10. Main findings:** Andersen finds that the creation of the Democratic majority during the 1930s was largely the result of mobilizing previously disengaged segments of the electorate, including women, immigrants, and younger voters. Her analysis indicates that the Democratic Party's success was due to its ability to appeal to these groups through policies and candidates that resonated with their interests and experiences. Andersen also demonstrates that structural and demographic shifts, such as increased urbanization and the enfranchisement of women, created opportunities for mobilization that the Democrats exploited effectively. The data reveal that only a small fraction of Democratic gains during this period resulted from partisan conversion, contradicting earlier theories focused on the importance of ideological shifts among existing voters.

**11. Key definitions:**

- **Nonimmunized voters:** Individuals who were previously disengaged from or indifferent to the political system,

often lacking strong partisan affiliations.

- **Mobilization:** The process by which political parties or movements activate previously inactive or indifferent segments of the electorate to participate in elections.
- **New Deal coalition:** The political alliance that emerged in the 1930s, bringing together urban working-class voters, immigrants, African Americans, and Southern whites under the Democratic Party.
- **Partisan conversion:** A shift in political allegiance from one party to another, often attributed to changes in ideology or policy preferences.

### 3.8.7 The 1928-1936 Partisan Realignment: The Case for the Conversion Hypothesis

Erikson, R. S., & Tedin, K. L. (1981). The 1928-1936 Partisan Realignment: The Case for the Conversion Hypothesis [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 75(4), 951-962. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1962295>

1. **Citation key:** erikson\_1928-1936\_1981
2. **Author(s):** Robert S. Erikson and Kent L. Tedin
3. **Year:** 1981
4. **Publication:** The American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** partisan realignment, conversion hypothesis, voting behavior, Literary Digest, New Deal realignment
6. **Summary:** Erikson and Tedin explore the mechanisms behind the Democratic realignment of 1928–1936, contrasting the conversion hypothesis with the mobilization hypothesis. They argue that the Democratic surge during this period resulted primarily from established Republican voters switching to the Democratic Party rather than from the mobilization of previously disengaged or non-voting segments of the electorate. Using data from the Literary Digest straw polls and Gallup surveys, they conclude that partisan conversion was the dominant driver of the realignment.
7. **Theory:** The authors advance the conversion hypothesis, which posits that partisan realignment during the New Deal era resulted from substantial shifts in voter allegiances among established voters rather than the mobilization of new voters. Erikson and Tedin challenge the mobilization thesis by demonstrating that new voters were only marginally more likely to support Democratic candidates than established voters. The authors argue that the economic dislocation and policy realignments of the Great Depression fundamentally reshaped voter loyalties, leading to a widespread partisan conversion. They emphasize the importance of analyzing individual-level data to assess these dynamics, critiquing earlier studies for relying too heavily on aggregate-level patterns that potentially misattribute mobilization effects.
8. **Methods:** The study analyzes data from the Literary Digest straw polls (1928, 1932, and 1936) and early Gallup surveys, focusing on both new and established voters' partisan preferences. Erikson and Tedin use cross-tabulations to examine vote-switching patterns and test the relative contributions of conversion and mobilization. The authors adjust for the biases inherent in the Literary Digest sampling, which overrepresented middle-class voters, and use voter recall data to assess changes in partisan identification over time. They also incorporate turnout and vote-share data to estimate the impact of new voters and established voter conversions on the Democratic gains during the New Deal realignment.
9. **Hypotheses:** The article posits that:
  - The Democratic gains during the New Deal realignment were primarily driven by conversions among established Republican voters.
  - New voters entering the electorate between 1928 and 1936 were only slightly more Democratic than established voters.
  - The realignment involved a significant and rapid crystallization of partisan identification among voters by 1936.
 These hypotheses are confirmed, with the analysis showing that conversion accounted for the majority of Democratic gains, while mobilization played a minor role.
10. **Main findings:** Erikson and Tedin demonstrate that partisan conversion among established voters was the primary driver of the New Deal realignment. Their analysis of Literary Digest data shows that vote-switching accounted for significant Democratic gains in both urban and rural areas. Contrary to the mobilization hypothesis, new voters were only marginally more Democratic than established voters, and their contribution to the overall Democratic surge was minimal. The authors also find that by 1936, partisan identification had largely aligned with voting behavior, indicating a rapid consolidation of the New Deal coalition. These findings underscore the importance of analyzing individual-level data to understand the dynamics of partisan realignment.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The major Democratic increase of 1932 came mainly from the conversion of established voters rather than the mobilization of new voters" (p. 956).
  - "By 1937, the electorate had become predominantly Democratic-of that there can be no doubt" (p. 962).
  - "What seems to have happened is that following the early years of the New Deal, party attachments crystallized in response to presidential vote decisions" (p. 962).

### 3.8.8 Estimating the Degree of Mobilization and Conversion in the 1890s: An Inquiry into the Nature of Electoral Change

Wanat, J., & Burke, K. (1982). Estimating the Degree of Mobilization and Conversion in the 1890s: An Inquiry into the Nature of Electoral Change [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 76(2), 360–370. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1961115>

1. **Citation key:** wanat\_estimating\_1982
2. **Author(s):** John Wanat and Karen Burke
3. **Year:** 1982
4. **Publication:** The American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** critical elections, mobilization, conversion, voter behavior, 1896 election
6. **Summary:** Wanat and Burke challenge the dominant narrative of the 1896 critical election as primarily driven by voter conversion by examining the extent to which voter mobilization contributed to the Republican victory. Using computational modeling and aggregate data, they highlight regional variations in the mechanisms of electoral change, showing that mobilization played a significant role in the Midwest, while conversion dominated in the Northeast. Their work underscores the need for nuanced approaches to understanding electoral dynamics.
7. **Theory:** The authors posit that critical elections involve a mixture of voter conversion and mobilization, with their relative importance varying by region. Conversion is understood as a shift in partisan allegiance among existing voters, while mobilization entails the activation of previously disengaged or newly eligible voters. Wanat and Burke argue that the literature has historically overemphasized conversion at the expense of mobilization, particularly in studies of the 1896 election. They assert that mobilization dynamics introduce new political actors into the system, potentially altering party strategies and the rules of electoral competition. By examining the Midwest and Northeast, the authors aim to disentangle these dynamics and demonstrate that mobilization can be as transformative as conversion in shaping electoral outcomes.
8. **Methods:** Wanat and Burke formalize the problem of voter behavior in the 1896 election using cross-tabulations of aggregate data. They construct 4x3 tables to represent voter transitions from 1892 to 1896, categorizing voters into Democrats, Republicans, Populists, and a “pool” of non-voters. To estimate the relative contributions of mobilization and conversion, they apply computational techniques to generate all possible scenarios consistent with observed voting patterns. These scenarios are then analyzed to identify patterns of voter behavior across 16 states in the Midwest and Northeast. The authors incorporate demographic data, such as migration and mortality rates, to adjust their models and ensure robustness.
9. **Hypotheses:** The article posits that:
  - Mobilization played a significant role in the 1896 election, particularly in the Midwest.
  - Conversion was the dominant mechanism of voter change in the Northeast.
  - Regional variations in electoral dynamics reflect differences in party strategies and demographic patterns.
 These hypotheses are confirmed, with findings indicating that mobilization outweighed conversion in several Midwestern states, while conversion remained the primary dynamic in the Northeast.
10. **Main findings:** Wanat and Burke’s analysis reveals significant regional variations in the mechanisms of voter change during the 1896 election. In the Midwest, mobilization accounted for the majority of new Republican support, with over 25% of the electorate in some states consisting of newly mobilized voters. In contrast, conversion dominated in the Northeast, where the Republican gains were primarily due to defections from the Democratic Party. The authors also demonstrate that the magnitude of mobilization in the Midwest far exceeded that observed in prior elections, suggesting that party strategies were particularly effective in activating new voters. Their findings challenge the conventional focus on conversion as the defining feature of critical elections, highlighting the transformative potential of mobilization.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “The findings illustrate the importance of mobilization as an explanation of large-scale electoral change” (p. 360).
  - “Mobilization, on the other hand, suggests broadening the scope of conflict. New players suggest the possibility of rule changes, and if the mobilization is of great magnitude and the new voters determine the winner, we should expect to see the winning party forced into more pluralistic efforts” (p. 361).
  - “In the Midwest, the critical nature of the election marking Republican ascendancy lay not so much in the shift of allegiance on the part of one-time Democrats but more from the mobilization of new voters” (p. 370).

### 3.8.9 Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States

Sundquist, J. L. (1983). *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States* [Google-Books-ID: tAw1GiHjQwgC]. Brookings Institution Press

1. **Citation key:** sundquist\_dynamics\_1983
2. **Author(s):** James L. Sundquist
3. **Year:** 1983
4. **Publication:** The Brookings Institution
5. **Keywords:** party realignment, political parties, critical elections, electoral change, American politics
6. **Summary:** Sundquist’s work provides a comprehensive analysis of the historical patterns and processes underlying party alignments and realignments in American politics. The book investigates three key episodes of realignment—the

1850s, the 1890s, and the 1930s—while exploring the dynamics and conditions that lead to shifts in party systems. Sundquist's study is marked by its integration of historical case studies and theoretical frameworks, contributing significantly to the understanding of critical elections and long-term party changes.

**7. Theory:** Sundquist theorizes that party realignments occur when major societal changes create new political cleavages, leading to the restructuring of party coalitions. He identifies several conditions necessary for realignment, including the emergence of divisive issues, the failure of existing parties to address these issues effectively, and the availability of a political alternative capable of capitalizing on voter discontent. Sundquist argues that realignments are not merely cyclical but are driven by structural transformations in the political and social fabric, such as economic crises, demographic shifts, and technological changes. His framework incorporates both macropolitical and institutional perspectives, emphasizing the role of party elites in shaping realignment outcomes. Sundquist also critiques the notion of cyclical predictability in realignments, arguing that such events are contingent on historical and contextual factors, rather than following fixed temporal patterns.

**8. Methods:** The book employs a historical-comparative approach, using case studies of the 1850s, 1890s, and 1930s realignments as its primary empirical focus. Sundquist integrates quantitative analyses, such as voting returns and turnout data, with qualitative assessments of party strategies, issue salience, and elite behavior. By blending institutional and behavioral approaches, he captures both aggregate patterns of change and the individual-level dynamics that contribute to realignment. Additionally, Sundquist formulates five hypothetical scenarios to explore potential mechanisms of realignment, linking historical evidence with theoretical predictions.

**9. Hypotheses:** The book posits that:

- Realignments are triggered by new political issues that polarize the electorate and disrupt existing party coalitions.
- Successful realignments depend on the emergence of viable alternatives that effectively mobilize discontented voters.
- Party systems stabilize after realignment as new coalitions consolidate, though cross-cutting issues may persist.

These hypotheses are supported by Sundquist's historical case studies, which demonstrate the interplay between issue salience, voter behavior, and institutional change in shaping realignment processes.

**10. Main findings:** Sundquist concludes that realignments are pivotal moments in American political history, reshaping the structure and function of the party system. He finds that critical elections often serve as the culmination of longer-term trends, such as demographic shifts or economic crises, rather than isolated events. The case studies reveal that party elites play a crucial role in framing issues and mobilizing voters, while broader societal transformations create the conditions necessary for realignment. Sundquist also notes the limitations of cyclical theories, emphasizing the importance of historical contingency and structural change in understanding party realignments. His analysis of the 1970s political landscape suggests that while voter independence and split-ticket voting were on the rise, a major realignment was unlikely in the near term due to the absence of sufficiently polarizing issues.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Party realignment:* A significant and lasting shift in the partisan preferences of the electorate, resulting in a new party system or coalition.
- *Critical elections:* Elections that mark the culmination of realignment processes, characterized by high voter turnout and significant shifts in partisan support.
- *Cross-cutting issues:* Political issues that divide existing party coalitions, creating opportunities for realignment.
- *Viable alternatives:* Political parties or movements capable of mobilizing discontented voters and presenting a credible challenge to existing parties.

### 3.8.10 A Reevaluation of Realignments in American Politics: Evidence from the House of Representatives

Brady, D. W. (1985). A Reevaluation of Realignments in American Politics: Evidence from the House of Representatives [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 79(1), 28–49. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1956117>

**1. Citation key:** brady\_reevaluation\_1985

**2. Author(s):** David W. Brady

**3. Year:** 1985

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** realignments, U.S. House of Representatives, party coalitions, policy change, political leadership

**6. Summary:** Brady examines the impact of electoral realignments on policy change in the U.S. House of Representatives, proposing that structural electoral features, rather than mass voter shifts, were pivotal in creating strong congressional majorities during major realignments such as the Civil War, the 1890s, and the New Deal eras. He argues that these realignments enabled significant policy shifts by fostering unified majority parties and overcoming the traditional obstacles of localism, committee stability, and incrementalism within the House.

**7. Theory:** Brady posits that realignments fundamentally alter the policymaking capacity of the House of Representatives by producing cohesive majority parties capable of enacting major legislative changes. He challenges the dominant view that realignments primarily result from shifts in mass voter behavior, instead emphasizing the structural and institutional effects of realigning elections. Brady argues that these elections reduce the influence of localism by nationalizing electoral issues, enabling the majority party to overcome the limitations imposed by the committee sys-

tem and the House's traditional predisposition toward incrementalism. This theory highlights the role of partisan polarization on cross-cutting issues, such as slavery in the 1850s and economic policy during the New Deal, in reshaping party coalitions and consolidating majority control of Congress. Brady's analysis integrates electoral dynamics with institutional change, offering a comprehensive framework for understanding the interaction between elections, party systems, and legislative outcomes.

**8. Methods:** Brady employs a historical-comparative methodology, analyzing electoral and legislative data from the Civil War, 1890s, and New Deal realignments. He measures partisan polarization on cross-cutting issues through content analysis of party platforms and examines vote swings and variance to distinguish between national and local electoral factors. To assess the impact of realignments on legislative outcomes, Brady analyzes changes in party cohesion, committee turnover, and policy output during these periods. He also tests the "cube law" to evaluate the distortion in votes-to-seats ratios that amplified the effects of relatively small voter shifts in these realignments.

**9. Hypotheses:** The article posits that:

- Realignments are driven by cross-cutting national issues that polarize the electorate and disrupt existing party coalitions.
- Electoral outcomes in realignments produce cohesive majority parties that dominate policymaking for extended periods.
- Structural electoral distortions, such as the votes-to-seats ratio, amplify the effects of realignments, enabling significant policy changes even with modest shifts in voter preferences.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with findings demonstrating the nationalization of electoral issues, the creation of unified majority parties, and significant policy shifts during realignment periods.

**10. Main findings:** Brady finds that realignments significantly enhance the policymaking capacity of the House by producing cohesive majority parties that dominate Congress for extended periods. His analysis reveals that the Civil War and 1890s realignments were characterized by structural electoral distortions that amplified the effects of relatively small voter shifts, enabling Republicans to achieve long-term dominance. In contrast, the New Deal realignment involved a more substantial voter shift toward the Democrats, resulting in a broad-based, across-the-board realignment. Brady also highlights the importance of party cohesion and committee turnover in facilitating policy innovation during these periods, emphasizing the interaction between electoral dynamics and institutional change.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "In each of the realignments, the effect of the realigning elections was to create a unified majority party capable of enacting major policy shifts" (p. 29).
- "Realigning elections are not just mass voter shifts but institutional transformations that enable Congress to overcome its localist tendencies and enact significant policy changes" (p. 30).
- "The Civil War and 1890s realignments were more the result of structural factors than massive electoral shifts, with votes-to-seats distortions playing a key role in creating Republican majorities" (p. 31).

### 3.8.11 On the Structure and Sequence of Issue Evolution

Carmines, E. G., & Stimson, J. A. (1986). On the Structure and Sequence of Issue Evolution [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 80(3), 901–920. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1960544>

**1. Citation key:** carmunes\_structure\_1986

**2. Author(s):** Edward G. Carmines and James A. Stimson

**3. Year:** 1986

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** issue evolution, party polarization, racial desegregation, elite-mass dynamics, political realignment

**6. Summary:** Carmines and Stimson introduce the concept of "issue evolution," a dynamic process in which emerging political issues transform partisan alignments by reshaping the relationship between political elites and the mass electorate. They explore this concept by examining the issue of racial desegregation, providing a theoretical model that explains how elite-driven polarization eventually leads to mass alignment along new issue dimensions. Their findings suggest that the interaction between elite polarization and mass emotional response drives long-term changes in party coalitions and voter behavior.

**7. Theory:** The theory of issue evolution posits that political issues become partisan through a sequential process initiated by elites and followed by mass alignment. Carmines and Stimson argue that elite actors, particularly members of Congress, define partisan positions on emerging issues, which are then communicated to the mass electorate. For issue evolution to occur, mass perceptions of partisan differences on the issue must increase, accompanied by polarized emotional responses toward the parties. These processes, over time, realign partisan coalitions, leading to a new cleavage in the party system. The authors contend that this dynamic explains the persistence and salience of certain issues, such as racial desegregation, in American political history. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of time ordering in this process: elite reorientation precedes mass alignment, but the mass response introduces a feedback loop that solidifies elite polarization and further reshapes party coalitions.

**8. Methods:** Carmines and Stimson use a mixed-method approach, combining time-series analysis of congressional roll-call votes, survey data from the University of Michigan's National Election Studies (NES), and qualitative historical interpretation. They construct indices of party polarization on racial issues from roll-call data spanning 1945–1980

and analyze changes in public perceptions of party positions on racial desegregation. Additionally, they use transfer function models to evaluate the causal relationships between elite behavior, mass perceptions, and voter alignment. This method allows them to trace the temporal sequence of changes and identify the lagged effects of elite polarization on mass alignment.

**9. Hypotheses:** The article posits that:

- Elite polarization on emerging issues precedes and causes shifts in mass perceptions of party differences.
- Mass emotional responses to party positions are necessary intermediaries in the process of issue evolution.
- Issue evolution leads to long-term realignment of party coalitions as voter preferences shift along new issue dimensions.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with findings indicating a clear temporal sequence linking elite polarization, mass perception, and partisan realignment on the issue of racial desegregation.

**10. Main findings:** Carmines and Stimson find strong empirical support for the theory of issue evolution, demonstrating that elite polarization on racial desegregation in the late 1950s and 1960s led to increasing clarity in mass perceptions of party positions. This clarity, in turn, produced polarized emotional responses among racial liberals and conservatives, which drove long-term changes in partisan coalitions. Their analysis shows that while Democrats were initially divided on the issue of race, they became increasingly associated with liberal positions, whereas Republicans shifted toward conservative stances. This realignment process, driven by elite cues and mediated by mass emotional responses, fundamentally redefined the racial issue cleavage in American politics.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We develop a theory and model of issue evolution, illustrating both by examining the dynamic evolution of the issue of racial desegregation" (p. 901).
- "Changes in elite partisan behavior do not lead directly to mass partisan response. Rather, two intervening steps are necessary to link elite policy shift to mass issue realignment" (p. 902).
- "Issue evolution produces representation as a by-product. But unlike the demand-compliance notions that dominate thinking about representative processes, this representation is inadvertent" (p. 915).

### 3.8.12 The Concept of a Critical Realignment, Electoral Behavior, and Political Change

Nardulli, P. F. (1995). The Concept of a Critical Realignment, Electoral Behavior, and Political Change [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 89(1), 10–22. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2083071>

**1. Citation key:** nardulli\_concept\_1995

**2. Author(s):** Peter F. Nardulli

**3. Year:** 1995

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** critical realignment, electoral behavior, subnational analysis, political change, normal vote

**6. Summary:** Nardulli revisits the concept of critical realignment and critiques its prior treatment in political science. He argues that, while the critical realignment perspective has suffered from definitional vagueness and empirical inconsistencies, it remains a valuable concept when properly defined and operationalized. Using presidential election data from 1828 to 1984, Nardulli demonstrates that critical realignments are significant subnational phenomena, characterized by abrupt, large, and enduring changes in electoral patterns that differ markedly across time and geographic space.

**7. Theory:** Nardulli challenges the prevailing notion that critical realignments are grand, national movements, instead proposing that they are regionally concentrated electoral phenomena. He argues that critical realignments are triggered by external stimuli—political, economic, or social disruptions—that catalyze abrupt and enduring changes in voting patterns. These changes are most discernible through shifts in the normal vote, which captures the baseline partisan balance in a region. Unlike earlier scholars who emphasized national-level analysis, Nardulli emphasizes the importance of subnational regions as the units of analysis, arguing that geopolitical diversity leads to variation in the timing and magnitude of realignments. This reconceptualization underscores the role of regional context in structuring political change, offering a more nuanced understanding of electoral realignments as temporally and geographically bounded phenomena.

**8. Methods:** Nardulli employs a methodological framework centered on interrupted time-series analysis and the normal vote approach. He analyzes presidential election results from 3,136 counties and cities in the continental United States, grouped into 215 substate regions based on the similarity of their voting patterns over time. Using normal vote estimates, he identifies and measures critical realignments as statistically significant, enduring interruptions in long-term electoral trends. His analysis incorporates both temporal and spatial dimensions, allowing him to map the distribution of critical realignments across different regions and assess their cumulative electoral impact at the regional and national levels.

**9. Hypotheses:** The article posits that:

- Critical realignments are subnational phenomena that vary in timing, magnitude, and geographic scope.
- Critical realignments produce marked and enduring shifts in regional electoral patterns, rather than national movements.
- The normal vote approach provides a precise framework for detecting and measuring critical realignments over

time.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with findings demonstrating that critical realignments occur as geographically concentrated disruptions that reshape regional partisan balances, with varying degrees of national impact.

**10. Main findings:** Nardulli's findings underscore the importance of a subnational approach to understanding critical realignments. He identifies multiple realignment eras, including the Whig realignment, the Republican industrial realignment, and the New Deal realignment, each characterized by distinctive geographic and temporal patterns. His analysis reveals that no critical realignment has ever been truly national in scope, with even the New Deal realignment affecting less than half of the nation. Furthermore, he demonstrates that realignments vary in their electoral impact, with some producing immediate but short-lived effects (e.g., the Democratic populist realignment) and others exhibiting enduring influence over decades (e.g., the Jim Crow realignment). These findings highlight the utility of the normal vote approach in capturing the complexity of electoral change and provide a more defensible foundation for the study of political realignments.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The concept of a critical realignment can be a powerful tool in the study of electoral behavior and an important component of a broader theory of political change" (p. 10).
- "Critical realignments are important electoral phenomena that are subnational in nature and vary considerably in form, not the majestic national movements some believed them to be" (p. 10).
- "The normal vote approach permits a precise specification of whether a critical realignment occurred, as well as when and where it occurred" (p. 11).

### 3.8.13 Activists and Partisan Realignment in the United States

Miller, G., & Schofield, N. (2003). Activists and Partisan Realignment in the United States. *American Political Science Review*, 97(2), 245–260. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055403000650>

**1. Citation key:** miller\_activists\_2003

**2. Author(s):** Gary Miller and Norman Schofield

**3. Year:** 2003

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** activists, partisan realignment, two-dimensional politics, candidate strategy, political equilibrium

**6. Summary:** Miller and Schofield argue that partisan realignments in the United States occur due to the strategic interactions between candidates and ideological party activists within a two-dimensional policy space. They challenge the traditional one-dimensional models of politics, presenting a dynamic theory of party strategy where candidates balance vote maximization with the demands of ideologically motivated activists. Over time, this dynamic contributes to significant transformations in party positions, realigning party coalitions and reversing ideological cleavages along economic and social dimensions.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose a two-dimensional model of political competition to explain partisan realignments. They argue that political dimensions—typically economic and social—are organized by parties to maximize electoral advantage, with one dimension actively differentiating the parties while the other remains suppressed. Over time, disaffected activists emerge around the suppressed dimension, pushing candidates to adopt new coalitions by making "flanking moves" that realign party strategies. The theory posits that such moves lead to dynamic equilibria where shifts in activist preferences and candidate strategies produce long-term changes in party positions. Historical evidence is provided to demonstrate that realignments are not the result of exogenous shocks alone but stem from the interplay of candidate ambition and activist preferences within this multidimensional space.

**8. Methods:** The authors use a combination of historical analysis and formal modeling. They draw on key historical realignments—such as those of 1896, 1932, and 1964—to illustrate the shifting salience of economic and social dimensions. They develop a formal model incorporating activist contributions and candidate strategies, where candidates balance voter preferences with the demands of ideological activists. The model highlights the role of activist-driven "dynamic equilibrium" in shaping public perceptions of party positions and the conditions under which candidates pursue flanking strategies to form new coalitions.

**9. Hypotheses:** The article posits that:

- Partisan realignments are driven by the interplay between candidates' vote-maximizing strategies and activists' ideological commitments.
- Realignments occur as candidates exploit disaffected activist coalitions along previously suppressed policy dimensions.
- Over time, shifts in activist preferences and candidate coalitions reverse the ideological positions of the two major parties.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with findings demonstrating that multidimensional political competition and activist dynamics are central to understanding partisan realignment in the United States.

**10. Main findings:** Miller and Schofield's analysis shows that party realignments are the product of long-term strategic interactions between vote-maximizing candidates and ideological activists. The authors identify two full ideological reversals in American party systems from 1896 to 2000, where economic and social dimensions alternated in salience. Their findings highlight the importance of activist-driven equilibrium in stabilizing party positions, even as candidates periodically disrupt these equilibria to form new coalitions. For instance, the shift from economic to social cleavages

during the Civil Rights era led to the Democratic Party's transformation into the party of social liberalism, while Republicans adopted socially conservative positions. These dynamics explain the enduring instability of multidimensional politics and the cyclical nature of partisan realignments.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Party realignments cannot be understood without understanding the tension existing between vote-maximizing candidates and policy-specialized party activists, operating in a two-dimensional strategy space" (p. 245).
- "At any time, politics will appear largely one-dimensional because the existing party activist equilibrium will define party differences along the dimension that distinguishes them" (p. 252).
- "Partisan realignments of the past century have been fundamentally linked to the multidimensionality of the potential policy space... Rather than fighting toe-to-toe for the moderates in the exact center of the space, candidates have tried to appeal to disaffected voters in the dimension that has recently not distinguished the two parties" (p. 254).

#### 3.8.14 Popular Efficacy in the Democratic Era: A Reexamination of Electoral Accountability in the United States, 1828–2000

Nardulli, P. F. (2005). *Popular Efficacy in the Democratic Era: A Reexamination of Electoral Accountability in the United States, 1828-2000* [Google-Books-ID: eeIDAQAAQBAJ]. Princeton University Press

1. **Citation key:** nardulli\_popular\_2005

2. **Author(s):** Peter F. Nardulli

3. **Year:** 2005

4. **Publication:** Princeton University Press

5. **Keywords:** electoral accountability, voter behavior, normal vote, aggregate analysis, democratic theory

6. **Summary:** Nardulli explores the mechanisms underlying electoral accountability in the United States over nearly two centuries, from 1828 to 2000. Through an analysis of deviations from the normal vote, he challenges traditional conceptions of voters as uninformed and disengaged, instead presenting evidence of significant voter responsiveness to external factors like economic conditions. Nardulli argues that this responsiveness ensures a degree of accountability in American democracy, despite the influence of elite-driven strategies.

7. **Theory:** Nardulli develops a theory of electoral accountability rooted in the interplay between exogenous forces—such as economic crises and wars—and voter behavior. He argues that while traditional accounts depict voters as cognitively limited or habitually partisan, his framework reveals that voters are capable of consequential electoral decisions when their core concerns are impacted by external events. The concept of the normal vote serves as the analytical foundation, capturing the baseline partisan balance in an electoral unit and highlighting deviations as evidence of responsiveness. Nardulli further posits that these deviations compel political elites to adapt their strategies, reinforcing the feedback loop between voters and policymakers. His theory suggests that electoral accountability is embedded in the dynamics of American democracy, even in periods of political alienation or elite dominance.

8. **Methods:** The book employs aggregate analysis of presidential election data, combining local- and state-level results with demographic, economic, and political variables. Nardulli calculates multilevel moving averages to estimate the normal vote for over 3,000 counties and cities, using these estimates to identify deviations caused by exogenous events. His methodology incorporates time-series analysis to track patterns of accountability over 44 presidential election cycles and evaluates the influence of factors like economic conditions, war, and crime rates on voting behavior. The integration of spatial and temporal dimensions enables Nardulli to uncover regional variations in electoral responsiveness.

9. **Hypotheses:** The book posits that:

- Voters respond to exogenous forces, such as economic downturns or wars, by deviating from normal voting patterns.
- Electoral accountability operates at the subnational level, with significant regional variation in responsiveness.
- Political elites adapt their strategies in response to voter behavior, maintaining a degree of democratic accountability.

These hypotheses are confirmed, with findings demonstrating that deviations from the normal vote often correspond to major external events, compelling elites to address voter concerns.

10. **Main findings:** Nardulli's analysis reveals that voter behavior is more responsive and consequential than traditional accounts suggest. His findings highlight the prevalence of deviations from normal voting patterns during periods of economic disruption, war, and other exogenous shocks. For example, he identifies the 1932 and 1952 elections as turning points where voter responsiveness realigned political coalitions. Nardulli also demonstrates that normal elections—characterized by adherence to long-term partisan patterns—were more common before the Progressive era but have since become less frequent. His work underscores the resilience of electoral accountability in the face of elite manipulation, showing that voters can and do influence political outcomes when their core interests are at stake.

### 11. Key definitions:

- *Electoral accountability:* The ability of voters to influence political outcomes by holding elected officials responsible for their performance on key issues.
- *Normal vote:* The baseline partisan balance in an electoral unit, derived from historical voting patterns, against which deviations can be measured.

- *Deviating elections:* Elections in which voter behavior departs significantly from the normal vote due to exogenous influences.
- *Exogenous forces:* External events, such as economic crises or wars, that disrupt normal voting patterns and drive electoral change.

### 3.8.15 The Dynamics of Critical Realignments: An Analysis Across Time and Space

Darmofal, D., & Nardulli, P. F. (2010). The Dynamics of Critical Realignments: An Analysis Across Time and Space. *Political Behavior*, 32(2), 255–283. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-009-9103-3>

- 1. Citation key:** darmofal\_dynamics\_2010
- 2. Author(s):** David Darmofal and Peter F. Nardulli
- 3. Year:** 2010
- 4. Publication:** Political Behavior
- 5. Keywords:** critical realignments, electoral dynamics, voting behavior, conversion, mobilization, demobilization
- 6. Summary:** Darmofal and Nardulli investigate the behavioral dynamics underlying critical electoral realignments in American history. Their study focuses on three processes—conversion, mobilization, and demobilization—and their contributions to enduring electoral change. Using city- and county-level data from 1828 to 2000, they develop a theoretical framework grounded in the Michigan model of voting to explore how changes in voter behavior reflect elite accountability and shape democratic governance.
- 7. Theory:** The authors argue that critical realignments are fundamentally behavioral phenomena, as voters reject habitual loyalties to hold political elites accountable during periods of political or economic crisis. They frame their analysis within the Michigan model of voting, which emphasizes the habitual nature of voting behavior but acknowledges that exogenous shocks can disrupt these patterns, leading to sharp and enduring changes. Conversion is viewed as the most efficient realignment dynamic, as it involves voters switching party allegiances, thereby simultaneously subtracting from one party and adding to another. Mobilization occurs when non-voters are drawn into the electorate, while demobilization entails the differential abstention of partisans. Darmofal and Nardulli highlight the importance of local context in shaping these dynamics, arguing that factors such as party strength, demographic changes, and social networks condition the nature and extent of electoral change.
- 8. Methods:** The study employs a multi-election average approach to estimate normal vote patterns at the city and county levels, identifying critical realignments as abrupt, enduring breaks in these patterns. The authors analyze 3,836 critical elections from 1828 to 2000, using difference patterns in core voting populations to estimate the relative contributions of conversion, mobilization, and demobilization. The analysis incorporates demographic, political, and social variables, including changes in immigrant and African American populations, urban-rural distinctions, and party dominance at the state and local levels. Regression analyses are used to examine the determinants of each realignment dynamic.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The article posits that:
  - Conversion will dominate as the primary driver of critical realignments due to its efficiency in generating electoral change.
  - Mobilization will play an increasing role in the 20th century, reflecting the decline in habitual voting and the rise of non-voter pools.
  - Demobilization will account for minimal change, except in unique contexts such as the Jim Crow Era.
 These hypotheses are confirmed, with findings indicating that conversion accounted for 70% of enduring electoral change, mobilization for 29%, and demobilization for only 1%. The relative importance of these dynamics varied across eras, with mobilization playing a larger role in the New Deal and Civil Rights realignments.
- 10. Main findings:** Darmofal and Nardulli find that conversion has been the dominant dynamic in critical realignments, driving 70% of enduring electoral change across American history. Mobilization became more significant in the 20th century, particularly during the New Deal and Civil Rights eras, when large pools of non-voters were activated. Demobilization played a minor role overall, with its most notable impact occurring during the Jim Crow Era due to voter suppression. The analysis also highlights the importance of local context, with factors such as immigrant population growth, rural versus urban settings, and party dominance shaping the dynamics of realignment. The findings underscore the capacity of American voters to hold elites accountable through their behavior, demonstrating the resilience of democratic processes even during periods of profound upheaval.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - "We find that the conversion of active partisans has produced most of the enduring change in voting behavior in the United States, with the relative contribution of different dynamics varying both across time and space" (p. 256).
  - "Critical realignments have been highly structured, both temporally and spatially, and they have been large enough to upset existing electoral equilibria at the national level" (p. 275).
  - "Seventy percent of all critical electoral change has been produced by the conversion of active voters... This analysis provides another key insight: the dominant role of conversion in the generation of critical realignments" (p. 276).

### 3.9 Political Parties, Psychology, and Information Processing

#### 3.9.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Much of this substantive area relies on texts already covered in this guide. Please refer to sections within chapters 1 and 2. The following overview merely covers some of the remaining texts. That said, research on political parties, psychology, and information processing integrates theoretical perspectives from cognitive psychology with the empirical study of partisan behavior and voter decision-making. This subject area explores how individuals process political information through cognitive schemas, partisan heuristics, and evaluative biases, emphasizing the psychological mechanisms that underlie partisanship and political cognition. Foundational studies in this field have established that partisanship is not merely an expression of political alignment but a deeply ingrained psychological framework that influences perception, memory, and decision-making. More recent contributions have extended these findings to address the role of affect, elite cues, and motivated reasoning in shaping political judgments, particularly in polarized environments. Collectively, this body of research sheds light on the cognitive and affective processes that drive partisan behavior and the implications for democratic accountability and public opinion formation.
- **Evaluative Bias and Cognitive Heuristics:** The foundational work by Sniderman et al. (1982) on evaluative biases highlights positivity and negativity as distinct cognitive phenomena that shape voters' perceptions of issue proximity. Positivity fosters assimilation effects, whereby voters perceive political candidates as closer to their views, while negativity exaggerates perceived differences, promoting disillusionment. Similarly, Lodge and Hamill's (1986) application of schema theory demonstrates that partisan schematics rely on well-developed cognitive structures to process and recall political information, albeit with a consistency bias that reinforces pre-existing views. These studies underscore the dual role of cognitive heuristics as tools for efficient information processing and sources of distortion in political judgment.
- **Partisan Bias and Motivated Reasoning:** Bartels (2002) and Gaines et al. (2007) provide compelling evidence that partisanship acts as a filter through which political events and factual conditions are interpreted. Bartels critiques the rational choice view of partisanship as a "running tally," instead framing it as a causal force that perpetuates polarization by shaping both subjective evaluations and perceptions of objective realities. Gaines et al. extend this argument by demonstrating that partisans interpret identical factual information differently to align with their pre-existing preferences, a process they term "meaning avoidance." These findings emphasize the psychological underpinnings of partisan-motivated reasoning and its implications for opinion polarization.
- **Selective Exposure and Media Consumption:** Iyengar and Hahn's (2009) research on ideological selectivity in media consumption reveals that partisans gravitate toward news sources that reinforce their ideological beliefs, intensifying polarization. Their experimental findings show that conservatives overwhelmingly prefer Fox News, while liberals favor CNN and NPR, particularly for politically salient topics. This selective exposure, driven by cognitive dissonance and the need for ideological consistency, highlights the role of media in shaping partisan identities and deepening ideological divides.
- **Role of Partisan Stereotypes:** Rahn (1993) explores the function of partisan stereotypes as cognitive shortcuts in candidate evaluations. Her experimental study finds that voters rely heavily on party labels to form judgments, even when presented with stereotype-inconsistent information. This reliance on theory-driven processing demonstrates the resilience of partisan stereotypes in shaping political perceptions, particularly in low-information environments. Rahn's findings illustrate the tension between the efficiency of heuristic processing and its potential to distort voter evaluations.
- **Public Opinion and Elite Cues:** Zaller's (1991) reception-acceptance model situates public opinion formation within the interplay of elite cues, political awareness, and individual values. His analysis of the Vietnam War demonstrates that politically aware individuals exhibit greater polarization in response to elite disagreement, while less aware individuals are more susceptible to the loudest message. Zaller's work underscores the dynamic relationship between media intensity, elite polarization, and public opinion, providing a nuanced framework for understanding opinion change.
- **Contemporary Applications:** Connors (2024) examines the constraints of political value rhetoric through the concept of "value trespassing," where candidates evoke values typically associated with the opposing party. Her findings reveal asymmetric reactions, with in-party politicians punished for value trespassing and out-party politicians rewarded, reflecting the interplay of partisan identity, value ownership, and affective polarization. This research highlights the limitations of rhetorical strategies aimed at broadening appeal in a polarized political landscape.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Current debates in this field address the psychological foundations of partisan polarization, the role of media in reinforcing cognitive biases, and the potential for elite-driven opinion change to bridge ideological divides. Future research is likely to explore the effects of digital media, the role of affect in political cognition, and strategies for mitigating the negative consequences of partisan bias on democratic accountability. Advances in experimental and computational methods offer promising avenues for disentangling the complex interplay of cognitive, affective, and contextual factors in political information processing.

#### 3.9.2 Evaluative Bias and Issue Proximity

Sniderman, P. M., Brody, R. A., Siegel, J. W., & Tannenbaum, P. H. (1982). Evaluative Bias and Issue Proximity [Publisher: Springer]. *Political Behavior*, 4(2), 115–131. Retrieved January 27, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/586321>

1. Citation key: sniderman\_evaluative\_1982

2. **Author(s):** Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody, Jonathan W. Siegel, and Percy H. Tannenbaum
3. **Year:** 1982
4. **Publication:** Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** evaluative bias, positivity, negativity, issue proximity, political perception
6. **Summary:** This study examines evaluative biases in political perception, specifically focusing on positivity and negativity as forms of bias distinct from partisanship. Using data from the American National Election Studies (NES), the authors investigate how these biases influence voters' perceptions of issue proximity and their electoral decisions. Positivity is characterized as a tendency to favorably evaluate political figures and parties, whereas negativity represents an unfavorable evaluation of both. The authors find that evaluative biases can significantly shape perceptions of issue proximity, influencing whether voters view candidates and parties as closer to or farther from their own policy positions.
7. **Theory:** The authors theorize that evaluative biases, particularly positivity and negativity, play a crucial role in shaping political perceptions. Positivity, defined as a predisposition to evaluate political objects favorably, is hypothesized to lead to an assimilation effect, where voters perceive candidates or parties as closer to their own positions. Conversely, negativity is expected to produce a contrast effect, exaggerating perceived differences. These biases operate within the broader partisan context, where voters are already inclined to see their party as aligned with their views and the opposing party as divergent. The authors argue that positivity fosters tolerance and engagement by encouraging favorable evaluations, whereas negativity reflects disillusionment and detachment. These biases are not merely cognitive errors but are tied to fundamental psychological processes that influence how voters interpret political stimuli and make decisions.
8. **Methods:** The study utilizes NES data from 1952 to 1976, focusing on open-ended questions about voters' likes and dislikes regarding political parties and candidates. Positivity and negativity are operationalized as net favorable or unfavorable evaluations of both major parties or their presidential candidates. Secondary measures include feeling thermometers, which capture respondents' warmth toward political objects. The authors analyze the effects of these biases on perceptions of issue proximity by calculating mean square issue distances across multiple elections. Demographic correlates and levels of political knowledge are also examined to contextualize the presence and influence of evaluative biases.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors propose that:
  - Positivity leads to an exaggeration of issue similarity, particularly in perceptions of the opposing party.
  - Negativity results in an exaggeration of issue dissimilarity, primarily in perceptions of one's own party.
 These hypotheses are largely supported, with evidence indicating that positivity and negativity selectively shape voters' perceptions of issue distance.
10. **Main findings:** Sniderman et al. find that evaluative biases are relatively rare but impactful. Positivity, though infrequent, fosters assimilation effects, where voters perceive opposing candidates or parties as closer to their views. Negativity, which has become more common over time, promotes contrast effects, exaggerating perceived differences with one's own party. The analysis also reveals demographic patterns, with negatives being better educated and more politically knowledgeable than positives or indifferents. These findings suggest that evaluative biases significantly condition perceptions of issue proximity, influencing how voters align themselves with political alternatives. The authors also challenge previous research on positivity, arguing that it is neither as pervasive nor as enduring as earlier studies suggest.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Positivity is 'a predominance of positive evaluations'... a relatively stable and systematic predisposition to respond favorably to a range of political leaders and groups" (p. 117).
  - "Positivity bias should encourage assimilation in the perception of the other side... Conversely, negativity should favor contrast in the perception of our side" (p. 118).
  - "'Evaluative bias, then, has a selective effect on the estimation of issue distance... studying positivity and negativity helps specify basic processes of political perception" (p. 129).

### 3.9.3 A Partisan Schema for Political Information Processing

Lodge, M., & Hamill, R. (1986). A Partisan Schema for Political Information Processing [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 80(2), 505–519. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1958271>

1. **Citation key:** lodge\_partisan\_1986
2. **Author(s):** Milton Lodge and Ruth Hamill
3. **Year:** 1986
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** partisan schema, political cognition, information processing, political sophistication, memory bias
6. **Summary:** Lodge and Hamill explore the application of schema theory to political information processing, focusing on how partisan schematics (politically knowledgeable individuals) and aschematics (less knowledgeable individuals) differ in their ability to process and recall partisan information. Through an experimental study, they assess how partisan sophistication influences the categorization and recall of policy information. Their findings reveal that partisan schematics are more accurate in categorizing and recalling schema-consistent information but are also prone to biases,

such as over-reliance on schema-consistent recall.

7. **Theory:** The authors argue that political cognition operates within schema theory, where individuals rely on cognitive structures to process, categorize, and recall information. Political schematics possess a well-developed schema about partisan differences, enabling them to accurately categorize and recall political information. However, this reliance on schemas introduces biases, as schematics tend to prioritize schema-consistent information over inconsistent information. This “consistency bias” reflects a liability in political information processing, where prior knowledge shapes not only comprehension but also memory distortion. Conversely, aschematics, lacking elaborate schemas, perform at chance levels in recognizing and recalling political information, illustrating the importance of domain-specific knowledge. The authors highlight that partisan sophistication enhances information processing but also results in a selective and sometimes distorted memory of political content.
8. **Methods:** The authors conducted an experimental study with 603 participants from Long Island, New York. Participants were classified into three groups—schematics, middle group, and aschematics—based on their scores on a composite index of political interest and knowledge. The experiment consisted of four stages: (1) a questionnaire measuring partisan knowledge and interest, (2) an evaluation task where participants categorized policy statements as Republican or Democratic, (3) a distractor task involving a vocabulary test, and (4) a recognition task assessing recall accuracy for “old” (previously seen) and “new” (unseen) policy statements. The study analyzed participants’ accuracy in categorizing schema-consistent and inconsistent information and their recall of both types of policy statements.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesized:
  - Partisan schematics would categorize policy statements more accurately than aschematics.
  - Schematics would recall more schema-consistent information than inconsistent information, exhibiting a consistency bias.
  - Aschematics would perform at chance levels for all types of information, due to their lack of a developed partisan schema.

These hypotheses were confirmed by the results.

10. **Main findings:** The study found that partisan schematics outperformed aschematics in categorizing and recalling schema-consistent political information. Schematics demonstrated greater accuracy in recognizing schema-consistent policies but showed clear evidence of a consistency bias, recalling fewer schema-inconsistent policies. Aschematics, by contrast, performed near chance levels across all tasks, reflecting their lack of a robust cognitive framework for processing political information. The results underscore the dual role of schemas in facilitating information processing while introducing biases. The findings also highlight that while verbal ability contributes to accuracy, partisan sophistication remains the primary determinant of performance.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Partisan schematics will more accurately categorize party-relevant information than will aschematics” (p. 507).
- “Partisan schematics systematically distort the congressman’s stance on the issues by imposing more schematic order on his policy positions than was actually present in the campaign message” (p. 517).
- “The ‘simple act’ of labeling a congressman as a Republican or Democrat systematically affects what information about the candidate will be stored in memory and what information will later be available for informing one’s evaluations” (p. 518).

#### 3.9.4 Information, Values, and Opinion

Zaller, J. (1991). Information, Values, and Opinion [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 85(4), 1215–1237. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1963943>

1. **Citation key:** zaller\_information\_1991
2. **Author(s):** John Zaller
3. **Year:** 1991
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** information flows, public opinion, Vietnam War, political awareness, elite cues
6. **Summary:** Zaller explores the interaction between political information, individual values, and public opinion. Through the lens of the Vietnam War (1964–1970), he proposes a two-message model of persuasion where competing pro- and antiwar messages are received and evaluated by individuals with varying levels of political awareness. Zaller demonstrates how elite communications shape public opinion by interacting with individual predispositions and political awareness, providing a nuanced explanation for opinion polarization and change over time.
7. **Theory:** Zaller develops a theoretical framework rooted in the reception-acceptance model, where public opinion emerges from an interplay of media messages, elite cues, and individual characteristics like political awareness and values. He posits that individuals at different levels of political awareness respond distinctively to elite messages. Politically aware individuals are more likely to interpret information in light of their preexisting values, leading to polarization in periods of elite disagreement. Conversely, less politically aware individuals are more susceptible to the loudest message, regardless of consistency with their values. This model helps explain how variations in the intensity and direction of media coverage, coupled with elite polarization, shape public opinion. Zaller also extends schema theory by emphasizing the importance of elite-supplied cues in helping citizens align new information with their values. The theory highlights that values act as predispositions to resist persuasion but require sufficient awareness of contextual cues to function effectively.

**8. Methods:** The study analyzes data from four Center for Political Studies (CPS) surveys conducted during the Vietnam War. Zaller measures public opinion on Vietnam policy using questions about support for withdrawal, maintaining current policy, or escalating the war. Political awareness is operationalized through scales based on respondents' knowledge of political facts and figures, while predispositions are measured using ideological ratings (liberal-conservative thermometer scores) and instrumental variables for hawk-dove attitudes. Zaller employs a multinomial logistic regression model to estimate the effects of awareness, values, and information intensity on opinion formation. The analysis includes over 5,000 respondents and examines trends in prowar, antiwar, and no-opinion responses, using both direct and indirect measures of media content to validate his claims about information flows.

**9. Hypotheses:** Zaller hypothesizes that:

- Politically aware individuals are more likely to integrate elite cues into their opinions, resulting in value-based polarization during periods of elite disagreement.
- Less politically aware individuals rely on the loudest media message, regardless of value alignment.
- Increased media intensity over time leads to greater polarization and a reduction in "no-opinion" responses.

These hypotheses are confirmed through the analysis.

**10. Main findings:** Zaller finds that public opinion during the Vietnam War was shaped by elite polarization and the intensity of competing media messages. Early in the war, elite consensus led to widespread prowar sentiment, with political awareness positively correlated with support for the war. As elite disagreement increased after 1966, opinion polarization emerged: liberals and conservatives diverged sharply in their levels of war support, with the most politically aware individuals exhibiting the greatest polarization. Less aware individuals, while influenced by message intensity, were more likely to lapse into no-opinion responses when exposed to conflicting messages. Zaller's two-message model successfully predicts these patterns, offering a dynamic view of opinion formation as an interaction between information flows, values, and awareness.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Every opinion is a marriage of information and values—information to generate a mental picture of what is at stake and values to make a judgment about it" (p. 1215).
- "The effects of media messages depend on a two-step process involving (1) exposure to, and reception of, communications and (2) acceptance or rejection of these communications, where political awareness affects both probabilities" (p. 1216).
- "'Opinion change in response to persuasive information is captured as an overtime difference between equilibrium points, where changing equilibria depend on shifts in the competing information flows'" (p. 1220).

### 3.9.5 The Role of Partisan Stereotypes in Information Processing about Political Candidates

Rahn, W. M. (1993). The Role of Partisan Stereotypes in Information Processing about Political Candidates [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 37(2), 472–496. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111381>

**1. Citation key:** rahn\_role\_1993

**2. Author(s):** Wendy M. Rahn

**3. Year:** 1993

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** partisan stereotypes, information processing, dual-process models, political heuristics, candidate evaluation

**6. Summary:** Rahn examines the influence of partisan stereotypes on how voters process information about political candidates. Drawing on dual-process models of cognition, the study explores whether individuals rely on stereotypes or individuating information when forming impressions, making inferences, and evaluating candidates. Through an experimental design involving videotaped candidate presentations, Rahn finds that partisan stereotypes act as strong cognitive shortcuts, heavily shaping voter perceptions and evaluations, even in the presence of inconsistent information.

**7. Theory:** Rahn proposes that partisan stereotypes function as cognitive heuristics that simplify the complex task of evaluating political candidates. Based on dual-process models, she differentiates between "theory-driven" processing, where stereotypes dominate evaluations, and "data-driven" processing, where individuating information is prioritized. The theory posits that voters prefer theory-driven strategies under most conditions, as stereotypes provide efficient and readily accessible frameworks for judgment. However, data-driven processing may occur when stereotype-inconsistent information is salient, motivational factors are high, or processing demands warrant the effort. Rahn emphasizes that partisan stereotypes are robust cognitive structures containing citizens' knowledge, beliefs, and expectations about political parties, enabling voters to fill gaps in their knowledge by relying on party labels as cues. This reliance, while efficient, risks misjudgments when individuating information contradicts stereotypes, as voters may selectively interpret or ignore such inconsistencies to preserve schema coherence.

**8. Methods:** Rahn's study employs an experimental design featuring videotaped presentations of two fictional candidates, "Ron" and "Larry," crafted to represent Republican and Democratic stereotypes. Participants were exposed to conditions where partisan stereotypes were either consistent or inconsistent with candidates' policy positions. The study manipulated two variables: (1) the presence or absence of explicit party labels and (2) the degree of consistency between candidates' stated positions and partisan stereotypes (consistent, mildly inconsistent, and extremely inconsis-

tent). Participants were tasked with evaluating candidates, inferring their policy positions, and recalling information. Measures included seven-point scales for candidate evaluations, policy similarity scores, and inferred issue positions. Data were analyzed using regression models to test the relative influence of party stereotypes and individuating information across conditions.

**9. Hypotheses:** Rahn hypothesizes that:

- Voters will rely on partisan stereotypes for candidate evaluations and inferences when explicit party labels are present.
- Mild stereotype-inconsistent information will not disrupt heuristic processing, but extreme inconsistency may prompt data-driven evaluations.
- Stereotypes will influence perceptions of candidates' unstated positions on issues and ideology.

These hypotheses are largely supported, with some caveats regarding the conditions under which data-driven processing occurs.

**10. Main findings:** Rahn's findings indicate that partisan stereotypes strongly influence voters' candidate evaluations, inferences, and perceptions. When party labels were present, evaluations were overwhelmingly theory-driven, with stereotypes dominating even when policy information was inconsistent. Mild inconsistency had little effect on heuristic reliance, but extreme inconsistency led to limited data-driven adjustments, suggesting that stereotypes are difficult to override. Voters inferred candidates' positions on unstated issues (e.g., environmental policy) based on party stereotypes, particularly when party labels were available. Overall, the study demonstrates the resilience of partisan stereotypes as cognitive shortcuts, highlighting their utility in low-information settings but also their potential to distort judgments in complex or ambiguous contexts.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Partisan stereotypes have considerable influence in political information processing, suggesting that the political parties continue to play an important role in voters' decision-making processes" (p. 472).
- "The results in Table 2 do suggest that voters, absent highly motivating conditions, display a strong theory-driven orientation to candidate evaluations" (p. 487).
- "Even when individuating policy information is made available in conjunction with stereotypes, it is ignored and even distorted" (p. 493).

### 3.9.6 Beyond the Running Tally: Partisan Bias in Political Perceptions

Bartels, L. M. (2002). Beyond the Running Tally: Partisan Bias in Political Perceptions. *Political Behavior*, 24(2), 117–150. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1021226224601>

**1. Citation key:** bartels\_beyond\_2002

**2. Author(s):** Larry M. Bartels

**3. Year:** 2002

**4. Publication:** Political Behavior

**5. Keywords:** partisan bias, political perceptions, Bayesian learning, partisanship, political behavior

**6. Summary:** Bartels critiques the concept of party identification as "running tally" of political experiences and argues that partisanship exerts a dynamic and pervasive influence on political perceptions. Through panel data analysis, Bartels demonstrates that partisan bias significantly shapes citizens' evaluations of political figures and events, perpetuating polarization between Democrats and Republicans. He situates this finding within the broader literature, contrasting the Michigan model with rational choice theories and assessing the Bayesian learning framework.

**7. Theory:** Bartels develops a theory that combines the psychological foundations of the Michigan model with the Bayesian framework of information processing. He argues that partisan loyalties act as filters through which citizens interpret political events, leading to systematic biases in perception. Contrary to the rational choice perspective that treats partisanship as a mere summary of retrospective evaluations, Bartels posits that partisanship is a causal force that influences not only evaluations of political actors and events but also interpretations of factual conditions. This theory emphasizes the interplay between prior beliefs and new information, where Bayesian updating occurs in a way that reinforces preexisting partisan orientations. Bartels also explores the idea that partisanship inhibits convergence in political opinions by shaping individuals' interpretations of shared political experiences. He frames partisanship as a heuristic device that simplifies political information but at the cost of accuracy, particularly in environments with conflicting or ambiguous evidence.

**8. Methods:** Bartels employs panel data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) for multiple election cycles, focusing on opinion changes over time. He constructs a Bayesian learning model to compare partisan differences in the reception and assimilation of new information. His analyses use regression models where evaluations of political events (e.g., economic performance under George H.W. Bush) are regressed on prior evaluations, partisanship, and interaction terms. Bartels supplements these analyses with descriptive statistics and visualizations, such as comparisons of opinion trajectories for Republicans and Democrats. To address concerns about subjective interpretations, he also examines perceptions of objective conditions, such as changes in inflation and unemployment rates, using factual survey items.

**9. Hypotheses:** Bartels hypothesizes that:

- Partisan bias influences both subjective evaluations of political figures and events as well as perceptions of objective conditions.

- Bayesian updating in the context of partisanship results in systematic divergence or inhibits convergence in opinions between Democrats and Republicans.
- Partisan differences in evaluations are consistent across varying levels of political information.

These hypotheses are confirmed by the results.

- 10. Main findings:** Bartels demonstrates that partisan bias is both pervasive and significant in shaping political perceptions. His analysis reveals that Democrats and Republicans systematically diverge in their evaluations of political events, even in response to shared experiences. For example, perceptions of George H.W. Bush's economic performance during the early 1990s showed parallel opinion shifts that were offset by partisan differences, resulting in persistent polarization. Bartels also identifies strong evidence of partisan bias in perceptions of objective conditions, such as unemployment and inflation rates, where Democrats and Republicans often disagreed on factual realities. These findings challenge the view of party identification as a passive summary of experiences, highlighting its active role in perpetuating polarization.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - "Partisan bias in political perceptions plays a crucial role in perpetuating and reinforcing sharp differences in opinion between Democrats and Republicans" (p. 117).
  - "Far from being a mere summary of more specific political opinions, partisanship is a powerful and pervasive influence on perceptions of political events" (p. 120).
  - "The evidence presented here suggests that partisan loyalties have pervasive effects on perceptions of the political world, inhibiting the tendency toward convergence in opinions in response to shared political experiences" (p. 138).

### 3.9.7 Same Facts, Different Interpretations: Partisan Motivation and Opinion on Iraq

Gaines, B. J., Kuklinski, J. H., Quirk, P. J., Peyton, B., & Verkuilen, J. (2007). Same Facts, Different Interpretations: Partisan Motivation and Opinion on Iraq [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 69(4), 957–974. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2007.00601.x>

- 1. Citation key:** gaines\_same\_2007
- 2. Author(s):** Brian J. Gaines, James H. Kuklinski, Paul J. Quirk, Buddy Peyton, and Jay Verkuilen
- 3. Year:** 2007
- 4. Publication:** Journal of Politics
- 5. Keywords:** partisan bias, opinion formation, motivated reasoning, Iraq War, political perceptions
- 6. Summary:** Gaines et al. examine how partisanship influences the interpretation of factual information about the Iraq War, focusing on casualties and the failure to find weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Using panel data collected from university students during the Iraq War, the authors explore how Democrats and Republicans updated their factual beliefs and how these beliefs translated into partisan-motivated interpretations and opinions. They find that factual beliefs about casualties were relatively accurate across partisan groups, but interpretations of these facts and the resulting opinions varied significantly along partisan lines.
- 7. Theory:** The authors propose that partisan-motivated reasoning mediates the relationship between factual beliefs and political opinions. While citizens can accurately perceive factual information, their interpretations of these facts are often biased by partisan allegiances, which serve to rationalize pre-existing opinions. They outline four models of cognitive updating: (a) complete updating, where beliefs, interpretations, and opinions align with reality; (b) fact avoidance, where citizens ignore or distort factual beliefs; (c) meaning avoidance, where citizens retain factual beliefs but resist updating their interpretations; and (d) opinion disconnect, where factual beliefs and interpretations are updated, but opinions remain static. The authors hypothesize that partisanship drives meaning avoidance, where Democrats and Republicans interpret identical facts about casualties and WMD differently to align with their partisan preferences.
- 8. Methods:** The study employs four panel surveys conducted over 19 months (2003–2005) with university students as respondents. Each panel included three waves, where participants were surveyed on their beliefs about casualty levels, interpretations of these casualties, and their opinions on President George W. Bush's handling of the Iraq War. The surveys also included questions on WMD, asking participants why they believed WMD had not been found. Using ordered probit models and cumulative probability plots, the authors analyze how factual beliefs about casualties influenced interpretations and how interpretations shaped opinions across five partisan groups (strong and weak Democrats, independents, and weak and strong Republicans).
- 9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Partisanship biases the interpretation of factual beliefs, even when those beliefs are accurate.
  - Strong partisans will resist opinion change by interpreting facts in a way that supports their pre-existing positions.
  - Independents and weak partisans will be more likely to adjust their interpretations and opinions in response to new information.

These hypotheses are supported, with strong partisans demonstrating consistent bias in their interpretations of casualties and WMD-related facts.

- 10. Main findings:** Gaines et al. find that factual beliefs about casualties were relatively accurate across all partisan groups, but interpretations and opinions diverged significantly. Democrats were more likely to interpret casualty levels as large or very large, while Republicans often viewed the same levels as small or moderate. Similarly, most

Democrats interpreted the lack of WMD as evidence that Iraq never possessed them, whereas Republicans rationalized the absence of WMD as evidence of concealment or destruction by Iraq. These partisan interpretations mediated the relationship between factual beliefs and opinions, with strong partisans on both sides using interpretations to rationalize pre-existing opinions. Independents and weak Republicans, however, showed more flexibility, with weak Republicans shifting from support to disapproval of the war over time as their interpretations evolved.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Interpretations afford individuals leeway to align factual beliefs with undeniable realities and yet continue to justify partisan preferences” (p. 959).
- “Democrats concluded that the WMDs had not existed, while Republicans opted for interpretations that maintained rationales for the invasion” (p. 965).
- “Partisan-motivated interpretations can intercede between even accurate factual beliefs and policy opinions” (p. 971).

#### 3.9.8 Red Media, Blue Media: Evidence of Ideological Selectivity in Media Use

Iyengar, S., & Hahn, K. S. (2009). Red Media, Blue Media: Evidence of Ideological Selectivity in Media Use [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.01402.x>]. *Journal of Communication*, 59(1), 19–39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.01402.x>

1. Citation key: iyengar\_red\_2009

2. Author(s): Shanto Iyengar and Kyu S. Hahn

3. Year: 2009

4. Publication: Journal of Communication

5. Keywords: selective exposure, partisan media, ideological polarization, Fox News, media consumption

6. Summary: Iyengar and Hahn examine the role of partisan preferences in shaping media consumption. Through an experimental study, they assess whether ideological affinity influences individuals' choices of news sources. Their findings suggest that conservatives and Republicans disproportionately favor Fox News while avoiding outlets like CNN and NPR, and liberals and Democrats display the reverse behavior. The study demonstrates how the proliferation of ideologically aligned media exacerbates polarization in the American news audience.

7. Theory: Iyengar and Hahn's study builds on theories of selective exposure and cognitive consistency, positing that individuals prefer information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs and avoid information that challenges them. They argue that this behavior, rooted in cognitive dissonance theory, has been intensified by the modern media environment, which offers an abundance of ideologically diverse sources. The authors hypothesize that partisan selectivity is driven by both perceived biases of media outlets and the psychological need to reinforce ideological identity. Furthermore, they theorize that selective exposure is more pronounced among politically engaged partisans, as these individuals are more aware of media slant and more invested in consuming ideologically congruent content.

8. Methods: The authors conducted an online experiment using a nationally representative sample of 1,023 registered voters. Participants were shown real-time headlines attributed to different news organizations (Fox News, CNN, NPR, and BBC) across six topics: three “hard” news topics (politics, Iraq, and race relations) and three “soft” topics (crime, travel, and sports). A control group viewed the same headlines without source attribution. Participants were asked to select which stories they would like to read. The authors employed conditional logit models to analyze how source labels influenced selection, with a focus on the interaction between political ideology and news source preferences.

9. Hypotheses: Iyengar and Hahn hypothesize that:

- Conservatives and Republicans will prefer Fox News while avoiding CNN and NPR.
- Liberals and Democrats will prefer CNN and NPR while avoiding Fox News.
- Selective exposure will be stronger for politically salient topics (e.g., politics, Iraq) than for non-political topics (e.g., travel, sports).
- Politically engaged partisans will display stronger patterns of selective exposure compared to less engaged individuals.

All hypotheses were supported by the results.

10. Main findings: The study reveals significant partisan selectivity in media consumption. Republicans and conservatives overwhelmingly preferred Fox News, particularly for political and controversial topics, while Democrats and liberals avoided Fox News and gravitated toward CNN and NPR. Selective exposure was weaker for non-political topics but remained evident, as Republicans still showed a slight preference for Fox even in stories about travel and sports. The findings also confirm that selective exposure intensifies among politically engaged individuals, with more engaged partisans displaying stronger preferences for ideologically aligned sources. These patterns suggest that the modern media environment reinforces ideological divides, contributing to political polarization.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Conservatives and Republicans preferred to read news reports attributed to Fox News and to avoid news from CNN and NPR. Democrats and liberals exhibited exactly the opposite syndrome” (p. 19).
- “The emergence of Fox News as the cable ratings leader suggests that in a competitive market, politically slanted news programming allows a news organization to create a niche for itself” (p. 33).
- “Our results are consistent with the argument that Internet technology will, in practice, narrow rather than widen users' political horizons” (p. 34).

### 3.9.9 Party Foul: The Effectiveness of Political Value Rhetoric is Constrained by Party Ownership

Connors, E. C. [Elizabeth C.]. (2024). Party Foul: The Effectiveness of Political Value Rhetoric is Constrained by Party Ownership. *Political Behavior*, 46(2), 707–726. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-022-09821-2>

1. **Citation key:** connors\_party\_2024
2. **Author(s):** Elizabeth C. Connors
3. **Year:** 2024
4. **Publication:** Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** political values, party ownership, political rhetoric, polarization, partisan behavior
6. **Summary:** Connors examines the effectiveness of political value rhetoric—specifically, the practice of "political value trespassing," where politicians evoke values typically associated with the opposing party. Through survey experiments, she explores how politicians are evaluated based on their value rhetoric and whether they are in-party or out-party candidates. The findings reveal that in-party politicians are punished for using opposing party values, while out-party politicians are rewarded for the same behavior. The study highlights the interplay between partisan identity, value ownership, and affective polarization in shaping public evaluations of political rhetoric.
7. **Theory:** Connors builds on theories of partisan identity, issue ownership, and affective polarization to argue that the effectiveness of political value rhetoric is mediated by partisan alignment. Political values are understood as social signals tied to party identity, with parties "owning" certain values (e.g., equality for Democrats, self-reliance for Republicans). She hypothesizes that this ownership influences public evaluations of candidates based on whether their rhetoric aligns with or deviates from these associations. Connors posits three hypotheses: (1) Expectancy Violations Hypothesis, which predicts punishment for value trespassing; (2) Polarization Hypothesis, which suggests in-party politicians are always rated higher; and (3) Differential Effects Hypothesis, which predicts asymmetric reactions—rewarding out-party trespassers while punishing in-party ones. The study situates political rhetoric as a tool constrained by partisan expectations and social identity dynamics, particularly in the context of heightened polarization.
8. **Methods:** Connors conducts a survey experiment using a sample of U.S. adults recruited via Dynata in June 2018 ( $N = 998$ ) and replicates the study with a separate sample in January 2019 ( $N = 839$ ). Respondents are randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions: Democratic and Republican candidates evoking either an owned or trespassed value (e.g., equality for Democrats, self-reliance for Republicans). Candidate favorability is measured using a seven-item index assessing traits like competence, integrity, and leadership. Key moderating variables include party-congruent value endorsements, affective polarization (measured via feeling thermometers), and ideological extremity. Analyses use interaction models to explore differential reactions across these conditions and robustness checks to validate findings.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - **Expectancy Violations Hypothesis:** Politicians will be rewarded for using their party's values but punished for trespassing on opposing party values.
  - **Polarization Hypothesis:** In-party politicians will be rated higher than out-party politicians regardless of the values they endorse.
  - **Differential Effects Hypothesis:** In-party politicians will be rewarded for using their party's values and punished for trespassing, while out-party politicians will be rewarded for trespassing and punished for using their party's values.

Hypotheses 1 and 3 are supported, while Hypothesis 2 receives partial support.

10. **Main findings:** Connors finds that value trespassing has asymmetric effects depending on partisanship. In-party politicians are rated higher when endorsing their party's values than when trespassing (e.g., Democrats endorsing equality), whereas out-party politicians are rated higher when trespassing than when using their own party's values. For instance, a Republican candidate evoking equality (trespassing) is evaluated more favorably by Democrats than a Democrat doing the same. The analysis also shows that these patterns are moderated by affective polarization and party-congruent value endorsements. Highly polarized individuals and those with strong party-congruent value commitments show the strongest reactions to value trespassing. These results underscore how political value rhetoric is constrained by party ownership and affective partisan dynamics, with limited potential for broadening appeal through value trespassing.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "In-party politicians are punished for signaling party betrayal, while out-party politicians are rewarded for it" (p. 709).
  - "These findings suggest that negative out-party evaluations are more about the party itself than about specific actors within the party" (p. 722).
  - "Given the low likelihood of party switching, politicians should care more about pleasing their base than about pleasing out-partisans—and my results show that political value trespassing does only the latter" (p. 723).

### 3.10 Parties and Representation

#### 3.10.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Scholarship on parties and representation examines the relationship between political parties, elected officials, and their constituents, exploring how well parties and legislators align with public preferences and represent

diverse societal interests. Foundational studies address the extent of constituency control over legislators, variations in representational models, and the influence of descriptive and partisan representation. Over time, research has expanded to consider the collective role of parties in shaping national policy outcomes and the dynamic interplay between individual-level and institutional-level representation. This body of literature emphasizes the tensions between delegate and trustee models of representation and the challenges posed by polarized party systems.

- **Constituency Influence:** Miller and Stokes' seminal study (1963) introduced the idea that legislators balance constituency preferences with personal policy views across issue domains. They found that representatives act as delegates on salient issues like civil rights, but rely more on personal judgment in less salient areas like foreign policy. The study highlighted the importance of issue-specific voter clarity and legislator perception in shaping legislative behavior. Their findings underscore the heterogeneity of constituency influence, mediated by both policy salience and party affiliation.
- **Collective Representation:** Robert Weissberg (1978) argued for a broader framework of collective representation, positing that Congress as an institution better represents national interests than individual legislators representing their districts. By emphasizing aggregate legislative outcomes, Weissberg demonstrated that collective representation mitigates misrepresentation at the dyadic level. His work introduced a probabilistic approach to representation, showing that random deviations in individual legislators' alignment with their constituencies could still produce outcomes reflective of public opinion at the national level.
- **Descriptive Representation and Trust:** Claudine Gay (2002) explored the effects of descriptive representation on trust in legislators and institutions. Using survey data, Gay found that racial congruence between legislators and constituents enhances trust and perceived accessibility, particularly for white constituents. However, her findings also revealed that descriptive representation's impact on institutional evaluations is limited, highlighting the distinction between dyadic and institutional trust. Gay's work emphasizes the symbolic and relational dimensions of representation.
- **Party Framing of Social Issues:** Sanbonmatsu (2002) examined how political parties frame gender issues to align with electoral incentives. She demonstrated that while abortion remains a polarizing issue, other gender-related policies, such as child care and workplace equality, are framed more moderately to appeal to broader electorates. Her analysis of party platforms and public opinion data reveals how parties strategically navigate ambivalence in public attitudes toward gender equality, balancing progressive commitments with traditional values.
- **Historical Persistence of Representational Patterns:** Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen (2016) analyzed the enduring influence of historical institutions like slavery on modern political attitudes and representation. They showed that counties with a higher prevalence of slavery exhibit stronger racial conservatism and Republican identification among whites today. Their findings illuminate the intergenerational persistence of attitudes shaped by historical economic and social structures, which continue to influence representational dynamics in the contemporary South.
- **Cross-Pressures and Identity-Based Representation:** Recent research, such as Cassese's (2020) study on gender and religious identities, highlights how intersecting social identities create cross-pressures that moderate partisan attachments and legislative evaluations. Cassese's analysis of evangelical Republican women revealed strong partisan loyalty despite gender-based controversies, while secular Republican women exhibited weaker attachments. This work underscores the complexity of identity-based representation and its implications for partisan behavior.
- **Ongoing Debates:** Key debates in the literature include the trade-offs between dyadic and collective representation, the role of parties in mitigating or exacerbating inequality, and the potential of descriptive representation to enhance trust and legitimacy. Scholars continue to investigate how polarized party systems shape representational outcomes, the impact of identity-based politics on partisan alignment, and the evolving relationship between parties and policy responsiveness. Future research is poised to explore the implications of digital mobilization and demographic shifts for representational effectiveness.

### 3.10.2 Constituency Influence in Congress

Miller, W. E., & Stokes, D. E. (1963). Constituency Influence in Congress [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 57(1), 45–56. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1952717>

1. **Citation key:** miller\_constituency\_1963
2. **Author(s):** Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes
3. **Year:** 1963
4. **Publication:** The American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** representation, constituency influence, legislative behavior, congressional roll call votes, political accountability
6. **Summary:** Miller and Stokes examine the relationship between congressional representatives and their constituencies, focusing on how well representatives' policy positions align with the preferences of their voters. Using survey data and roll call votes, they investigate whether legislators act as delegates, trustees, or party representatives in different issue domains. The study highlights varying levels of constituency influence across three policy areas: social welfare, civil rights, and foreign involvement. Their findings suggest that constituency control over representatives varies by issue domain and is mediated by legislators' perceptions of voter preferences and their own policy positions.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that constituency influence in Congress operates through two primary mechanisms: representatives' intrinsic alignment with constituent preferences and their responsiveness to perceived electoral pressures. These mechanisms reflect broader theories of representation, such as the instructed-delegate model, where represen-

tatives act according to constituents' preferences, and the trustee model, where they exercise independent judgment. Miller and Stokes argue that the strength of constituency control is contingent on the salience of issues and the clarity of voter preferences. For instance, in domains like civil rights, where public opinion is often polarized and visible, representatives may align more closely with voter preferences. However, in areas like foreign policy, legislators may rely more on elite cues or their own judgment, reflecting Burkean ideals of representation. They further assert that party affiliation can serve as a heuristic for constituents to infer policy positions, particularly on highly partisan issues like social welfare.

**8. Methods:** The study employs data from a large-scale survey conducted by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center, which included interviews with representatives, their opponents, and constituents in 116 congressional districts following the 1958 election. Constituents' policy preferences were measured across three domains: social welfare, civil rights, and foreign involvement. Roll call votes were used to assess representatives' legislative behavior. The authors utilized cumulative scaling techniques to rank constituencies, candidates, and legislators on each policy domain. Correlations between constituency preferences, representatives' perceptions of these preferences, and roll call votes were analyzed to identify pathways of influence.

**9. Hypotheses:** Miller and Stokes hypothesize that:

- Constituency influence is stronger in domains where voter preferences are clear and salient, such as civil rights.
- Representatives' own policy attitudes mediate their responsiveness to voter preferences.
- Party identification plays a significant role in shaping the alignment between constituency preferences and legislative behavior.

Their findings confirm that constituency influence varies by policy domain, with the strongest alignment in civil rights and weaker correlations in foreign policy.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find substantial variation in constituency influence across policy domains. In civil rights, the correlation between constituency preferences and roll call votes is approximately 0.6, reflecting strong alignment. In social welfare, the correlation is weaker but still positive (around 0.3), indicating moderate alignment influenced by party identification. In foreign involvement, constituency influence is negligible, with correlations near zero. They conclude that representatives' roll call behavior is shaped by a combination of their personal policy attitudes and their perceptions of voter preferences. However, the electorate's limited political awareness constrains its ability to effectively monitor and influence legislative behavior, reducing the overall impact of constituency control.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Control by the local constituency is at one pole of both the great normative controversies about representation that have arisen in modern times" (p. 45).
- "The conditions of constituency influence that presuppose effective communication between Congressman and district are much less well met. The Representative has very imperfect information about the issue preferences of his constituency, and the constituency's awareness of the policy stands of the Representative ordinarily is slight" (p. 56).
- "The findings of this analysis heavily underscore the fact that no single tradition of representation fully accords with the realities of American legislative politics" (p. 56).

### 3.10.3 Collective vs. Dyadic Representation in Congress

Weissberg, R. (1978). Collective vs. Dyadic Representation in Congress [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 72(2), 535–547. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1954109>

**1. Citation key:** weissberg\_collective\_1978

**2. Author(s):** Robert Weissberg

**3. Year:** 1978

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** representation, collective representation, dyadic representation, legislative behavior, congressional politics

**6. Summary:** Weissberg introduces the concept of collective representation as an alternative to the dominant dyadic model of representation in Congress. While the dyadic approach examines the relationship between individual legislators and their constituencies, the collective model focuses on Congress as an institution and its ability to represent the interests of the American public as a whole. Weissberg argues that collective representation provides a more complete and nuanced understanding of legislative responsiveness and can address some of the shortcomings of the dyadic perspective.

**7. Theory:** Weissberg contends that representation in Congress should not be confined to the dyadic framework, which assesses alignment between a single legislator and their constituency. Instead, he argues for a broader view of collective representation, which considers Congress as an institution representing national public opinion. This concept aligns with historical traditions that see legislatures as reflections of the whole society, rather than mere aggregates of individual districts. Weissberg highlights that collective representation may lead to better policy outcomes even if individual legislators fail to represent their constituencies accurately. He further posits that mechanisms such as random legislative voting or the balancing of extreme positions across districts can enhance collective representation. Weissberg emphasizes that electoral control, while important, is not the sole determinant of accurate representation. Instead, institutional arrangements and the aggregation of diverse perspectives within Congress play a crucial role in ensuring that national interests are represented effectively.

**8. Methods:** The study employs theoretical analysis and illustrative examples drawn from previous empirical studies, including data from the Miller and Stokes (1963) study. Weissberg uses probability theory to model the effects of random legislative voting and the aggregation of misrepresentation across districts. He also compares dyadic and collective representation by analyzing discrepancies between individual legislators' voting records and aggregate legislative outcomes. These comparisons highlight the potential for collective representation to mitigate the effects of dyadic misrepresentation. Weissberg uses hypothetical scenarios and statistical techniques to demonstrate how deviations from constituency preferences at the individual level can still result in accurate representation at the collective level.

**9. Hypotheses:** Weissberg hypothesizes that:

- Collective representation is at least as accurate as, and often better than, dyadic representation.
- Random legislative voting or balancing of extreme preferences can enhance collective representation.
- Electoral control is not a prerequisite for effective representation of public opinion.

These hypotheses are supported by theoretical arguments and data-driven illustrations.

**10. Main findings:** Weissberg's analysis reveals that collective representation often surpasses dyadic representation in its accuracy and inclusivity. He demonstrates that institutional arrangements, such as the aggregation of diverse legislative perspectives, can produce outcomes that better reflect national public opinion than the voting behavior of individual legislators. Random legislative voting, for instance, ensures that national majorities are represented approximately 50% of the time, even under the "worst conditions" of misrepresentation. Furthermore, Weissberg finds that the distribution of misrepresentation is more important than its magnitude; balanced deviations across districts can result in accurate aggregate representation. Finally, he argues that citizens' political apathy and indifference to legislative elections are rational responses to the effectiveness of collective representation, which ensures that public interests are represented even without active electoral engagement.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Representation of an opinion within an institution can occur independently of an electoral relationship between opinion-holder and legislator" (p. 535).
- "Collective representation will never be worse than dyadic representation. If individual legislators are 'free' to deviate from district opinion, it is likely that deviations will approach normality, and the institution as a whole will be more representative of national opinion" (p. 542).
- "If one's constitutional goal were simply the best institutional representation of mass opinions, the optimal solution is clearly a random sample of about 1,500 citizens" (p. 544).

### 3.10.4 Spirals of Trust? The Effect of Descriptive Representation on the Relationship between Citizens and Their Government

Gay, C. (2002). Spirals of Trust? The Effect of Descriptive Representation on the Relationship between Citizens and Their Government [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(4), 717–732. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3088429>

1. **Citation key:** gay\_spirals\_2002

2. **Author(s):** Claudine Gay

3. **Year:** 2002

4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

5. **Keywords:** descriptive representation, trust, racial identity, member-constituent relationship, public opinion

6. **Summary:** Gay examines the effects of descriptive representation on citizens' trust in their legislators and Congress as an institution. Using 18 years of survey data from the American National Election Studies (ANES), the study evaluates whether constituents' ability to identify racially with their member of Congress affects their perceptions of that legislator and of Congress. The results show that descriptive representation strengthens member-constituent relationships, particularly for white constituents, while having limited effects on evaluations of Congress as an institution. Gay explores how race, ideology, and extrapolicy considerations influence these dynamics.

7. **Theory:** The study builds on the premise that descriptive representation fosters trust between legislators and constituents by enabling racial identification, which can serve as a heuristic for shared values and policy priorities. Gay argues that descriptive representation offers "intangible goods," such as feelings of inclusion and trust, which can enhance the perceived legitimacy of democratic institutions. While black constituents are primarily influenced by ideological compatibility, white constituents demonstrate a stronger preference for same-race legislators, suggesting that extrapolicy concerns and racial identity play a more pronounced role for them. The theory posits that these effects are mediated by perceptions of legislators' accessibility and effectiveness, as well as by broader social dynamics, such as racial group consciousness and prejudice. Gay also highlights the potential for descriptive representation to facilitate vertical communication, improving contact between constituents and legislators.

8. **Methods:** The study analyzes pooled data from 10 biennial ANES surveys conducted between 1980 and 1998, incorporating responses from over 15,000 constituents, including nearly 2,000 black respondents. Gay uses multivariate regression models with multiple imputation to address missing data. The analysis examines four key dependent variables related to member-constituent relationships: trust in legislators, approval of job performance, likelihood of contact, and evaluations of helpfulness. Additional models assess the impact of descriptive representation on Congressional approval. Key independent variables include the race of the legislator, the constituent's party affiliation,

ideology, political knowledge, and demographic characteristics. Ideological scores for legislators are measured using inflation-adjusted ADA ratings.

**9. Hypotheses:** Gay hypothesizes:

- Descriptive representation enhances trust and satisfaction in the member-constituent relationship.
- Racial identification is more salient for white constituents than for black constituents.
- Descriptive representation has limited effects on perceptions of Congress as an institution.

These hypotheses are supported by evidence showing that descriptive representation improves trust and contact rates but does not significantly influence Congressional approval.

**10. Main findings:** Gay finds that descriptive representation positively affects the relationship between legislators and their constituents, with white constituents showing greater trust, favorability, and willingness to contact same-race legislators. Black constituents, however, evaluate legislators primarily based on ideological compatibility rather than racial identity, although they are more likely to contact black legislators. The study also reveals that white constituents evaluate black legislators less favorably, reflecting persistent racial biases. Descriptive representation does not significantly alter perceptions of Congress as an institution, suggesting that its effects are confined to the dyadic level. These findings underscore the importance of racial identity in shaping member-constituent relationships and highlight disparities in the way descriptive representation is valued by different racial groups.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Descriptive representation can 'forge bonds of trust' between legislator and constituent, enhancing the 'feeling of inclusion,' which, in turn, makes 'the polity democratically more legitimate in one's eyes'" (p. 718).
- "Descriptive representation consistently is associated with higher approval ratings, greater familiarity with a legislator's record of service to the district, and more confidence in the quality of a legislator's constituency service" (p. 726).
- "The preference for same-race elected officials—particularly among whites, less so among blacks—is clear; however, the reasons behind this preference are less transparent" (p. 731).

### 3.10.5 Democrats, Republicans, and the Politics of Women's Place

Sanbonmatsu, K. (2002). *Democrats, Republicans, and the Politics of Women's Place* [Google-Books-ID: Ra60AAAAIAAJ]. University of Michigan Press

**1. Citation key:** sanbonmatsu\_democrats\_2002

**2. Author(s):** Kira Sanbonmatsu

**3. Year:** 2002

**4. Publication:** University of Michigan Press

**5. Keywords:** gender politics, party polarization, women's issues, descriptive representation, political parties

**6. Summary:** In this book, Sanbonmatsu examines how the Democratic and Republican parties have addressed gender-related public policy issues from 1968 to 2000. She evaluates the strategies both parties have employed to engage with women's issues, particularly the ways in which they have framed these issues to appeal to voters and interest groups. By analyzing public opinion data, party platforms, presidential speeches, and interviews with party officials, Sanbonmatsu highlights how abortion has become a polarizing gender issue while other women's issues have been treated more moderately.

**7. Theory:** Sanbonmatsu posits that political parties shape public discourse on gender issues not only by reflecting public opinion but also by actively framing issues to fit their electoral strategies. The Democratic Party has historically aligned itself with feminist organizations, while the Republican Party has courted conservative groups opposing feminist policies. Sanbonmatsu argues that party elites strategically emphasize or downplay gender issues depending on electoral incentives and public opinion trends. For instance, abortion has remained a highly polarizing issue due to its ability to mobilize single-issue voters, while other women's issues, such as child care or workplace equality, have been addressed more moderately to appeal to broader electorates. She introduces the concept of ambivalence in public opinion, noting that while Americans increasingly support gender equality, many remain conflicted due to concerns about traditional family roles. This ambivalence shapes party strategies, with both parties seeking to balance support for gender equality with maintaining traditional constituencies.

**8. Methods:** Sanbonmatsu employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data. She analyzes public opinion surveys from the National Election Studies (NES) and the General Social Surveys (GSS) to trace trends in gender attitudes. Additionally, she conducts content analyses of party platforms, presidential acceptance speeches, and State of the Union addresses to examine the framing of women's issues. Interviews with party officials, strategists, and convention delegates provide qualitative insights into party decision-making processes. The book also includes a case study of the 1996 presidential election, where the Democratic and Republican parties adopted distinct strategies to appeal to women voters.

**9. Hypotheses:** Sanbonmatsu hypothesizes:

- Abortion remains the most polarizing gender issue, driven by strong interest group incentives and partisan alignment.
- Both parties adopt moderate stances on other gender issues to appeal to swing voters.
- Gender issues are framed by party elites in ways that reflect broader electoral and strategic considerations.

Her findings confirm these hypotheses, revealing how the intersection of public opinion, interest group pressures, and

electoral strategy shapes the politics of women's issues.

- 10. Main findings:** Sanbonmatsu demonstrates that while abortion is the most visible and polarizing gender issue, both parties have adopted moderate stances on other women's issues, such as workplace equality and child care. The Democratic Party has consistently been more supportive of feminist policies, but party leaders have avoided emphasizing gender issues in campaigns to prevent alienating certain voter blocs. The Republican Party, while emphasizing traditional family values, has similarly avoided strong stances on gender issues beyond abortion. The book highlights that gender issues often play a secondary role in party platforms, with both parties seeking to maintain broad coalitions rather than risking polarization on issues other than abortion. Public opinion remains ambivalent, with strong support for gender equality in principle but concerns about its implications for traditional family roles. This ambivalence has led parties to adopt cautious strategies in framing gender issues, focusing on broad appeal rather than polarizing debates.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Gender ambivalence*: A state where individuals express support for gender equality but are conflicted about its implications for traditional family roles and societal norms.
- *Party framing*: The strategic emphasis or downplaying of particular issues by political parties to align with electoral incentives and voter preferences.
- *Descriptive representation*: The extent to which elected officials physically resemble the demographics (e.g., gender, race) of the population they represent, used as a heuristic for shared values and interests.

### 3.10.6 Separate Nations: Two Attitudinal Dimensions of Black Nationalism

Brown, R. A., & Shaw, T. C. (2002). Separate Nations: Two Attitudinal Dimensions of Black Nationalism [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 64(1), 22–44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2508.00116>

1. **Citation key:** brown\_separate\_2002
2. **Author(s):** Robert A. Brown and Todd C. Shaw
3. **Year:** 2002
4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** Black Nationalism, community nationalism, separatist nationalism, racial attitudes, African-American politics
6. **Summary:** Brown and Shaw investigate the complexity of Black Nationalist ideology, arguing that it is not a singular concept but encompasses two distinct dimensions: community nationalism and separatist nationalism. Using survey data from the 1993 National Black Politics Study, the authors identify differing patterns of support for these dimensions among African-American subgroups, revealing nuanced variations based on class, age, and gender. Their findings highlight the ideological diversity within Black Nationalism and its implications for understanding African-American political attitudes.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that Black Nationalism is best understood as a multidimensional ideology rather than a uniform set of beliefs. They distinguish between community nationalism, which emphasizes black autonomy within the American political system, and separatist nationalism, which advocates for sovereignty and independence from white America. Community nationalism aligns with a pluralist approach, focusing on black control of local institutions and strategic coalitions with other groups, while separatist nationalism seeks a more radical break, envisioning a distinct black nation-state. The authors argue that these dimensions reflect varying conceptions of racial identity and strategies for achieving black advancement. They emphasize that community nationalists are more optimistic about integration into the American system, while separatist nationalists often view systemic reform as unattainable. This ideological diversity, the authors suggest, has significant implications for political mobilization and group solidarity within the African-American community.
8. **Methods:** The study utilizes data from the 1993 National Black Politics Study, a telephone survey of 1,206 African-American adults. Using factor analysis, the authors identify two dimensions of Black Nationalism: community nationalism and separatist nationalism. The survey included questions on attitudes toward black control of local government and economy, support for black political parties, and the idea of a separate black nation. The authors then conducted regression analyses to examine the demographic and attitudinal predictors of support for each dimension, focusing on variables such as age, gender, income, education, linked fate, and membership in black organizations.
9. **Hypotheses:** Brown and Shaw hypothesize:
  - Community nationalism will attract support from affluent, liberal, and organized African Americans who value strategic coalitions and local empowerment.
  - Separatist nationalism will resonate more with younger, less affluent, and male African Americans who are more likely to reject integration and advocate for sovereignty.
  - Both dimensions will share core tenets of Black Nationalism, such as skepticism toward white intentions and a sense of connectedness to Africa, but will differ in their emphasis on coalition-building and optimism about racial equality.
10. **Main findings:** Their findings confirm these hypotheses, demonstrating significant variation in support across demographic and ideological lines.
11. **Main findings:** The study reveals that community nationalism enjoys broader support among African Americans, particularly those with higher income, education, and membership in black organizations. It emphasizes local em-

powerment and aligns with pluralist ideals. Separatist nationalism, in contrast, is favored by younger, less affluent, and male respondents, reflecting a more radical vision of black sovereignty. Both dimensions share core beliefs in black autonomy and skepticism toward white intentions but diverge on their approach to achieving racial equality. Notably, the study highlights the paradox that community nationalists, despite their focus on working within the American system, are less optimistic about achieving racial equality than separatist nationalists, who advocate for a separate nation.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Black Nationalism, not the various black liberal ideologies, is the most important ideological determinant of black public opinion” (p. 22).
- “Community nationalism seeks black self-determination within existing social and political arrangements, whereas separatist nationalism seeks autonomy external to these very arrangements” (p. 27).
- “We contend that in some way each of these points of agreement speaks to a common desire for autonomy and group independence, which are the core ideals of a Black Nationalist worldview” (p. 40).

#### 3.10.7 The Political Legacy of American Slavery

Acharya, A., Blackwell, M., & Sen, M. (2016). The Political Legacy of American Slavery [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 78(3), 621–641. <https://doi.org/10.1086/686631>

1. **Citation key:** acharya\_political\_2016

2. **Author(s):** Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen

3. **Year:** 2016

4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics

5. **Keywords:** slavery, historical persistence, political attitudes, racial resentment, Southern politics

6. **Summary:** Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen examine the enduring political and racial attitudes in the American South stemming from the prevalence of slavery over 150 years ago. They find that Southern whites residing in counties with a higher prevalence of slavery in 1860 are more likely today to identify as Republican, oppose affirmative action, and exhibit racial resentment. Their study posits that these contemporary differences arise due to the historical persistence of attitudes shaped during the Reconstruction era and passed down intergenerationally. The authors reject alternative explanations, such as racial threat or modern demographic factors, and provide a robust empirical framework to support their claims.

7. **Theory:** The authors propose that the legacy of slavery shapes modern political attitudes through a mechanism of historical persistence. They argue that after the Civil War, white elites in heavily slave-dependent counties had strong incentives to maintain political and economic dominance over newly freed African Americans. These incentives fostered racially conservative attitudes and policies, which were institutionalized through violence, voter suppression, and economic exploitation. Over time, these attitudes became culturally embedded and were passed down through generations via socialization and local norms. The authors contend that this historical persistence, rather than contemporary factors like racial threat or geographic sorting, explains why attitudes in former slaveholding areas remain distinct. They further theorize that areas where economic reliance on black labor declined earlier, due to agricultural mechanization, saw a weakening of these attitudes.

8. **Methods:** The study uses county-level data on slavery prevalence from the 1860 U.S. Census and contemporary survey data, including the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) and the American National Election Studies (ANES). The authors analyze three key outcome variables: party identification, support for affirmative action, and racial resentment. They employ weighted least squares regression with robust covariates, including 1860 economic indicators and state fixed effects, to estimate the causal impact of slavery on contemporary attitudes. To address endogeneity concerns, they instrument slavery prevalence with geographic suitability for cotton cultivation. Additionally, the authors conduct robustness checks against alternative theories, such as racial threat and geographic sorting, and explore historical patterns of violence and voting behavior to contextualize their findings.

9. **Hypotheses:** Acharya, Blackwell, and Sen hypothesize:

- Counties with higher slavery prevalence in 1860 will exhibit more racially conservative attitudes and stronger support for Republican identification today.
- Contemporary attitudes in these counties persist due to historical mechanisms, not contemporary racial threat or geographic sorting.
- Regions with earlier reductions in reliance on black labor will show attenuated effects of slavery on political attitudes.

Their hypotheses are supported, with evidence showing that slavery prevalence predicts modern attitudes independently of contemporary racial demographics or income inequality.

10. **Main findings:** The authors find that a one-standard-deviation increase in the proportion of slaves in 1860 correlates with a 4.6 percentage point decrease in white Democratic identification, a 3 percentage point decrease in support for affirmative action, and higher racial resentment scores. Instrumental variable estimates further confirm the causal impact of slavery on these outcomes. Importantly, these effects are not explained by modern racial threat, geographic sorting, or income inequality. The study also highlights historical mechanisms such as postbellum violence, Jim Crow laws, and intergenerational socialization as key drivers of the persistence of racially conservative attitudes in former slaveholding areas. Mechanization of Southern agriculture weakened these attitudes in some regions, supporting the

authors' theory of historical persistence.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Whites who currently live in Southern counties that had high shares of slaves in 1860 are more likely to identify as a Republican, oppose affirmative action, and express racial resentment and colder feelings toward blacks" (p. 621).
- "The prevalence of slavery, coupled with the shock of its removal, created strong incentives for Black Belt whites to try to preserve both their political and economic power by promoting racially targeted violence, anti-black norms, and, to the extent legally possible, racist institutions" (p. 633).
- "Our evidence, therefore, supports the theory that political attitudes have persisted historically in the US South, rather than the view that attitudes are driven exclusively by contemporaneous forces" (p. 622).

#### 3.10.8 Social Exclusion and Political Identity: The Case of Asian American Partisanship

Kuo, A., Malhotra, N., & Mo, C. H. (2017). Social Exclusion and Political Identity: The Case of Asian American Partisanship [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(1), 17–32. <https://doi.org/10.1086/687570>

1. Citation key: kuo\_social\_2017

2. Author(s): Alexander Kuo, Neil Malhotra, and Cecilia Hyunjung Mo

3. Year: 2017

4. Publication: Journal of Politics

5. Keywords: social exclusion, political identity, partisanship, Asian Americans, racial microaggressions

6. Summary: Kuo, Malhotra, and Mo investigate the impact of social exclusion on political identity formation, focusing on Asian Americans. They argue that exclusionary experiences based on racial or ethnic identity significantly shape partisan alignment, specifically increasing Democratic affiliation. By combining observational data and a laboratory experiment, the authors demonstrate that perceptions of exclusion correlate with stronger identification with the Democratic Party, as it is seen as less exclusionary than the Republican Party. Their findings provide an identity-driven explanation of partisan affiliation among Asian Americans, a growing and politically significant demographic.

7. Theory: The authors build their theoretical framework on sociological research on the group basis of partisanship and psychological theories of social identity. They argue that experiences of exclusion due to racial or ethnic group membership heighten the salience of group identity and foster alignment with political parties perceived as more inclusive. Social exclusion activates emotional and psychological responses, which are linked to perceptions of group interests. For Asian Americans, exclusion from the social fabric—manifested through microaggressions or broader societal attitudes—leads to stronger alignment with the Democratic Party, which is associated with policies perceived as inclusive toward minority groups. The authors emphasize that this dynamic operates independently of traditional socioeconomic explanations for partisanship, highlighting the role of identity politics in shaping Asian American political behavior.

8. Methods: The study employs a mixed-methods approach. First, observational data from the 2008 National Asian American Survey (NAAS) is analyzed to identify correlations between racial victimization (a proxy for social exclusion) and Democratic affiliation. The authors use OLS regression models with robust controls for demographic variables, including education, income, and time spent in the United States. Second, a laboratory experiment is conducted with Asian and white participants, where a racial microaggression is randomly administered to the treatment group. The microaggression involves questioning participants' citizenship status in a seemingly innocuous manner. Post-treatment political attitudes are measured using feeling thermometers, party identification scales, and behavioral measures, such as listing likes and dislikes about political parties. The experimental design allows for causal identification of the impact of social exclusion on partisan alignment.

9. Hypotheses: The authors hypothesize:

- Asian Americans who experience social exclusion are more likely to identify with the Democratic Party.
- The effect of social exclusion on partisanship operates independently of traditional socioeconomic factors, such as income and education.
- Experimental induction of social exclusion will increase positive views of the Democratic Party and negative views of the Republican Party among Asian participants.

The hypotheses are supported by both observational and experimental findings.

10. Main findings: Observational analysis shows that Asian Americans who report experiencing racial victimization are 3 to 4 percentage points more likely to identify as Democrats. Experimental results reveal that Asians exposed to a racial microaggression are significantly more likely to exhibit negative attitudes toward the Republican Party and stronger alignment with the Democratic Party. The treatment increased perceptions of Republicans as closed-minded and ignorant, reduced perceptions of the Republican Party as representing their interests, and heightened Democratic identification. Importantly, these effects persisted across income brackets and were not moderated by country of origin, underscoring the broad applicability of the findings. The study highlights the central role of social exclusion in shaping partisan preferences among Asian Americans.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Our findings partly explain why Asian Americans are overwhelmingly likely to identify as Democrats and advance an identity-oriented explanation of partisanship in American electoral politics" (p. 18).
- "The simple intervention of making an Asian subject feel excluded with respect to 'Americanness' and being

suspected of not being a US citizen increased negative dispositions toward the Republican Party and increased positive views of the Democratic Party" (p. 28).

- "Social exclusion activates latent associations respondents had between the Republican Party and negative traits associated with racial discrimination" (p. 29).

### 3.10.9 Straying from the Flock? A Look at How Americans' Gender and Religious Identities Cross-Pressure Partisanship

Cassese, E. C. (2020). Straying from the Flock? A Look at How Americans' Gender and Religious Identities Cross-Pressure Partisanship [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 73(1), 169–183. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912919889681>

1. **Citation key:** cassese\_straying\_2020

2. **Author(s):** Erin C. Cassese

3. **Year:** 2020

4. **Publication:** Political Research Quarterly

5. **Keywords:** gender identity, religious identity, partisanship, social sorting, polarization, hostile sexism, evangelicals

6. **Summary:** Cassese explores the intersection of gender and religious identities within the context of partisanship, particularly among white Americans during the 2016 presidential election. Using data from the 2016 American National Election Study (ANES), the article examines how cross-cutting identities affect attitudes on gender, partisan attachments, and candidate evaluations. The study finds that while evangelical Republican women showed strong partisan loyalty, secular Republican women and evangelical Democrats experienced significant cross-pressures, leading to less polarized attitudes and higher rates of cross-party voting. The findings underscore the contingent role of social identities in shaping political behavior.

7. **Theory:** The article draws on theories of social sorting and cross-cutting identities, positing that the alignment or misalignment of gender, religious, and partisan identities shapes political attitudes and behaviors. Social sorting processes have increasingly aligned gender and religious identities with partisanship, but incomplete sorting creates cross-pressures that moderate political thinking. For example, evangelical identity aligns strongly with Republican partisanship, while gender often serves as a cross-pressure for women, particularly when gender norms conflict with party norms. Cassese theorizes that evangelical women adopt traditional gender norms, which reinforce Republican partisanship, while secular Republican women experience tension between their gender identity and the Republican Party's platform, leading to weaker partisan attachments and less polarized attitudes.

8. **Methods:** The study employs quantitative analysis of the 2016 ANES, focusing on white, non-Hispanic respondents ( $n = 3,038$ ). Key measures include hostile sexism, feminist and anti-feminist identification, reactions to the Access Hollywood tape, and affective polarization between candidates and parties. Respondents were categorized into three religious groups: evangelical Christians, other Christians, and those with no religious affiliation. Multivariate regression models were used to evaluate interactions between gender, religious identity, and partisanship, with controls for demographic characteristics, ideology, and religiosity. Predicted values were plotted to visualize group differences, and Wald tests assessed statistical significance.

9. **Hypotheses:**

- Gender and religious identities create within-party gender gaps on hostile sexism, feminist identification, and reactions to the Access Hollywood tape.
- Evangelical identification moderates gender differences, with evangelical women displaying stronger alignment with traditional gender norms and weaker liberal cross-pressures than secular women.
- Cross-cutting identities reduce partisan intensity and affective polarization, particularly among secular Republicans and evangelical Democrats.

These hypotheses were largely supported, with notable exceptions in the interaction of evangelical identity and gender.

10. **Main findings:** The analysis reveals significant cross-pressures among secular Republican women and evangelical Democrats. Secular Republican women exhibited weaker partisan intensity and less polarized affective evaluations of the parties, and they were more likely to vote for Hillary Clinton compared to evangelical Republican women. Evangelical Democrats experienced higher levels of hostile sexism and less polarized candidate evaluations, resembling Republicans more closely than secular Democrats. However, evangelical Republican women showed no evidence of cross-pressure and maintained strong partisan loyalty, even when confronted with gendered controversies like the Access Hollywood tape. These findings suggest that evangelical identity reinforces partisanship, while secular identity introduces cross-pressures that weaken party attachments.

11. **Key quotations:**

- "White evangelical Republican women are not ambivalent partisans. Contrary to expectations about how cross-cutting identities would operate in 2016, Republican women reacted to the Access Hollywood tape the same way that men did, regardless of their religious identification" (p. 178).
- "The results highlight the need to look beyond a singular expression of gender identity (i.e., the notion that gender is always a liberal cross-pressure) and echo past work outlining the distinctive political profiles of conservative women" (p. 178).
- "Secular Republican women have weaker partisan intensity scores and less polarized party affect compared with Republican women who identify as Christians. These differences among Republican women suggest that evan-

gelical identity reinforces party identification, while the absence of a religious identity creates a cross-pressure" (p. 179).

### 3.10.10 Is the Bridge Broken? Increasing Ethnic Attachments and Declining Party Influence among Latino Voters

Morín, J. L., Macías Mejía, Y., & Sanchez, G. R. (2021). Is the Bridge Broken? Increasing Ethnic Attachments and Declining Party Influence among Latino Voters [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 74(1), 182–198. <https://doi.org/10.1177/106591291988577>

1. **Citation key:** morin\_is\_2021
2. **Author(s):** Jason L. Morín, Yoshira Macías Mejía, and Gabriel R. Sanchez
3. **Year:** 2021
4. **Publication:** Political Research Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** Latino politics, linked fate, ethnic identity, party identification, voting behavior, Democratic Party, Republican Party
6. **Summary:** Morín, Macías Mejía, and Sanchez explore the role of ethnic identity—specifically linked fate—in shaping party identification and voting behavior among Latino voters in the United States. The authors argue that increasing ethnic attachments have begun to compete with traditional partisan loyalties, particularly as anti-immigrant sentiment has risen. Through analysis of survey data spanning four presidential elections (2004-2016), the study demonstrates that linked fate strongly predicts Democratic affiliation and that ethnic identity increasingly competes with partisanship as a heuristic for political decision-making.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on social identity theory and the concept of linked fate to argue that growing ethnic attachments influence Latino political behavior. Linked fate refers to the belief that individual well-being is tied to the fate of the ethnic group. Historically applied to African American political behavior, the concept is extended to Latinos, who face shared challenges such as anti-immigrant sentiment and policy hostility. The authors posit that as political parties fail to meet Latino voters' expectations—particularly regarding immigration—ethnic identity becomes a more salient heuristic than partisan identity. Linked fate, shaped by experiences of discrimination and group solidarity, encourages voting behavior that prioritizes the perceived well-being of the Latino community over partisan allegiance. This dynamic suggests a weakening of traditional party loyalties, especially among younger and foreign-born Latinos.
8. **Methods:** The study employs survey data from the Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Surveys (2008, 2012, 2016) and the Latino National Survey (2006), which include measures of linked fate, party identification, and voting behavior. The dependent variables are party identification (Republican, Democrat, Independent) and vote choice (Democratic or Republican presidential candidate). The primary independent variable, linked fate, is measured through respondents' perceptions of whether Latino group outcomes influence their individual outcomes. Multinomial logistic regression and logistic regression models analyze the effects of linked fate, controlling for demographic factors, experiences of discrimination, political interest, ideology, and national origin. Marginal effects are calculated to illustrate the relative influence of ethnic and partisan cues on political behavior across election years.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - **Party Hypothesis:** Latinos with a heightened sense of linked fate are more likely to identify with the Democratic Party.
  - **Vote Choice Hypothesis:** Latinos with a heightened sense of linked fate are more likely to vote for Democratic candidates.
  - **Ethnic Attachment Hypothesis:** Over time, the effect of linked fate on partisanship and voting behavior will increase.
  - **Partisan Detachment Hypothesis:** Over time, the influence of partisan identity on voting behavior will decrease.

The findings generally confirm these hypotheses, though the effects vary by election context and candidate dynamics.
10. **Main findings:** The analysis reveals that linked fate is a consistent predictor of Democratic Party affiliation across all election years studied. However, its influence on vote choice is more pronounced in recent elections (2012 and 2016), suggesting that ethnic identity increasingly competes with partisan identity. While Democratic identification remains strong among Latinos, the findings highlight dissatisfaction with both parties due to unfulfilled campaign promises and mixed signals on immigration policy. Republicans' anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies have driven Latino voters toward the Democratic Party, but many Latinos report voting based on support for the Latino community rather than partisan loyalty. Notably, ethnic attachments have led some Latino Republicans to defect from their party in presidential elections, demonstrating the growing salience of ethnic identity as a heuristic.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Perceptions of Latino linked fate consistently, but to varying degrees, predict Democratic partisan affiliation. Moreover, in more recent elections, ethnic cues have become a significant predictor of Latino vote choice with perceptions of linked fate increasingly competing with partisan cues at the polls" (p. 183).
  - "Although ethnic attachments compete with—not supersede—partisan cues, the findings suggest that group cues remain a competitive heuristic for Latino partisans, particularly when race and identity are salient issues" (p. 193).
  - "Latino's preference for the Democratic Party in regard to vote choice may mask Latino's dissatisfaction with both parties, as reflected by the high percentage of Latino voters who say they are voting to support the Latino community" (p. 194).

### 3.10.11 Polarization, Abstention, and the Median Voter Theorem

Jones, M. I., Sirianni, A. D., & Fu, F. (2022). Polarization, abstention, and the median voter theorem [Publisher: Palgrave]. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 9(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01056-0>

1. **Citation key:** jones\_polarization\_2022
2. **Author(s):** Matthew I. Jones, Antonio D. Sirianni, and Feng Fu
3. **Year:** 2022
4. **Publication:** Humanities and Social Sciences Communications
5. **Keywords:** polarization, median voter theorem, voter abstention, strategic candidate positioning, third-party candidates
6. **Summary:** Jones, Sirianni, and Fu investigate how polarization, voter abstention, and third-party candidacies influence candidate positioning in elections, particularly in contexts where the assumptions of the classic median voter theorem break down. The authors develop a formal model in which voters may abstain from voting due to indifference, select a strategically motivated major-party candidate, or support a fixed-position third-party alternative. They argue that when these mechanisms are introduced, rational candidates often fail to converge to the ideological center, deviating from the predictions of the median voter theorem and sometimes becoming even more polarized than their electorate.
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the classical median voter theorem by introducing key complications that better reflect contemporary electoral dynamics. The traditional model assumes that vote-maximizing candidates will move toward the ideological center, yet Jones et al. argue that real-world elections exhibit conditions that disrupt this tendency. They propose three primary mechanisms that influence strategic candidate positioning: (1) the presence of ideologically extreme third-party candidates who siphon votes from the major parties' bases, (2) the costs of voting, which lead some individuals—particularly those indifferent to both major candidates—to abstain, and (3) a bimodal ideological distribution of voters that incentivizes candidates to appeal to distinct ideological clusters rather than the overall median. By incorporating these factors, the authors present an alternative framework in which polarization can emerge endogenously from the rational incentives of strategic candidates rather than being solely a function of elite-driven discourse or voter socialization. Their findings suggest that when abstention and third-party competition reach certain thresholds, candidates may be drawn away from the center, amplifying ideological divergence between parties.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a formal model of voter behavior in a two-party system, integrating a probabilistic voting framework to account for voter abstention and third-party competition. The authors define a one-dimensional ideological spectrum ranging from 0 (left) to 1 (right) and assume that voters are distributed along this axis according to a bimodal Gaussian function, where peaks represent ideological clusters rather than a unimodal distribution centered at the median. The model includes a utility-based voter choice function, in which voters weigh three competing factors: (1) the pragmatism of voting for a major-party candidate, (2) the relative cost of voting, and (3) the appeal of third-party alternatives. The probability of a voter selecting a given candidate is determined by their ideological proximity to each option, modulated by the parameters of the model. To analyze candidate positioning, Jones et al. implement an optimization process in which two strategically motivated candidates adjust their ideological positions to maximize their expected vote share. The authors define a set of differential equations that describe how candidates dynamically shift their positions in response to voter behavior. This adaptive dynamic modeling approach allows them to simulate equilibrium outcomes under different electoral conditions. They systematically vary key parameters, such as the ideological distribution of the electorate, the intensity of third-party competition, and the cost of abstention, to identify when candidates converge toward the median and when they polarize. The model is tested using two empirically observed ideological distributions: (1) a voter distribution from Pew Research Center's 2017 Political Landscape Survey and (2) an ideological dataset from Twitter users' expressed political opinions. These real-world distributions allow the authors to compare theoretical predictions with actual ideological landscapes in the contemporary United States. They analyze how candidates position themselves in response to these distributions, revealing that in cases where voter ideology is highly polarized and third-party appeal is substantial, candidates diverge significantly from the median, often selecting positions that are more extreme than those of the average voter.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that under conditions of significant voter abstention and strong third-party alternatives, candidates will not converge to the median but instead adopt more polarized positions. Their findings confirm that:
  - When voters are concentrated in two ideological clusters rather than around a single median, candidates deviate from the center to maximize support.
  - High costs of voting and strong third-party appeal create incentives for candidates to appeal to their bases rather than moderate voters.
  - In some conditions, candidates may become more polarized than the electorate itself, as they seek to prevent base defection to third-party challengers.
10. **Main findings:** Jones et al. demonstrate that the median voter theorem fails under realistic conditions of polarization, abstention, and third-party competition. When voters are clustered into two ideological peaks, rather than a single unimodal distribution, candidates strategically position themselves closer to these clusters rather than the median voter. Furthermore, the presence of third-party alternatives pulls candidates away from the center, as they attempt to shore up support from their ideological base rather than appealing to moderates who may abstain. Their simulations reveal that under certain conditions, candidates can become even more polarized than the electorate itself, exacerbating ideological divergence. The study also finds that candidate behavior depends critically on the underlying distribution

of voter ideology—when voters are tightly clustered around the median, candidates are more likely to converge, but when polarization increases, major-party candidates adopt more extreme positions.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “These anti-polar results, however, largely depend on the ‘single-peakedness’ of voter preferences, an assumption that is rapidly losing relevance in the age of polarization” (p. 1).
- “When voters choose the most ideologically proximate of the two competing candidates, both positions converge on the ideology of the median voter. Our model shows how this result does not necessarily hold when voters might choose to abstain or select a third party” (p. 4).
- “The polarized political climate in the United States (and elsewhere) remains a serious problem, and continued reconsideration of rational choice voting models with more contemporary assumptions may provide the theoretical material necessary to develop pragmatic solutions for ending what is being referred to by some as a ‘cold civil war’” (p. 11).

### 3.10.12 The Femin[ist] Mystique: How Group Perceptions Shape Affect and Identity

Connors, E. C. [Elizabeth C], & Stauffer, K. E. (2023). Research Note: The Femin[ist] Mystique: How Group Perceptions Shape Affect and Identity. *Working Paper*

1. Citation key: connors\_research\_2023

2. Author(s): Elizabeth C. Connors and Katelyn E. Stauffer

3. Year: 2023

4. Publication: Research Note

5. Keywords: feminist identity, group perceptions, political behavior, gender politics, polarization, stereotypes

6. Summary: Connors and Stauffer investigate why some individuals identify as feminists while others do not, despite broad support for gender equality in the United States. Using survey data and experimental evidence, they argue that perceptions of feminists as “vocal” shape attitudes toward the group and individuals’ willingness to adopt the feminist label. They find that countering stereotypes of feminists as overly assertive can improve attitudes toward feminists and increase feminist identification, particularly among Republicans, highlighting the role of group stereotypes in shaping political identities.

7. Theory: The authors draw on theories of group identity and stereotypes to argue that perceptions of feminists influence both affective reactions and self-identification. They posit that stereotypes of feminists as “vocal” or “aggressive” create negative affect among those who view such traits unfavorably, especially Republicans who associate feminism with liberal politics. This negative affect, in turn, reduces individuals’ willingness to identify as feminist. Connors and Stauffer further theorize that these perceptions are shaped by media portrayals and cultural discourse, which amplify negative stereotypes about feminists’ behavior. They suggest that countering these perceptions—such as by emphasizing feminists who are “quiet” or less vocal—can improve group affect and increase identification. This dynamic highlights the interplay between group perceptions, partisanship, and social identity in shaping political attitudes and behavior.

8. Methods: The study combines observational and experimental data from a nationally representative sample of 1,000 respondents in the 2021 Cooperative Election Study (CES). First, respondents were asked whether they identified as feminist, anti-feminist, or neither, and their open-ended responses about why they chose their identification were analyzed for themes. A survey experiment then randomly assigned participants to one of three conditions: a control group rating “feminists,” a group rating “quiet feminists,” and a group rating “vocal feminists.” Participants provided feeling thermometer scores for feminists and indicated whether their likelihood of identifying as feminist would change if most feminists were quiet or vocal. Regression and mediation analyses assessed how group perceptions influenced affect and identification, with a focus on partisan heterogeneity.

9. Hypotheses:

- Perceptions of feminists as “vocal” decrease affective warmth toward feminists, particularly among Republicans.
- Countering stereotypes of feminists as “vocal” improves affective warmth and increases feminist identification.
- Partisan differences mediate the effects of group perceptions, with Republicans reacting more negatively to vocal feminists and Democrats showing nuanced reactions based on subgroup dynamics.

The findings generally confirm these hypotheses, with notable partisan differences in responses to feminist stereotypes.

10. Main findings: The analysis reveals that stereotypes of feminists as “vocal” or “aggressive” significantly shape affective attitudes and willingness to identify as feminist. Republicans, who generally view feminists negatively, rate vocal feminists much lower than quiet feminists on feeling thermometers and are far less likely to identify as feminist if they perceive feminists as vocal. For Democrats, the results are more complex: Democratic feminists rate quiet feminists negatively for failing to align with perceived group norms, while Democratic non-feminists show more neutral or positive responses to quiet feminists. Mediation analysis confirms that group perceptions influence feminist identification through their effects on affect, with the vocal stereotype reinforcing partisan divides. Importantly, countering the vocal stereotype significantly reduces the partisan gap in affective evaluations of feminists, suggesting a potential pathway for improving perceptions of feminism across party lines.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “Democratic feminists punish quiet feminists because they are not seen as fighting for the cause, while Democratic non-feminists remain ambivalent about both vocal and quiet feminists” (p. 10).

- “While Republicans dislike vocal feminists and assume feminists are vocal, they feel more warmly towards quiet feminists and are subsequently more likely to identify as feminist if most feminists fit this description” (p. 13).
- “Changing perceptions of feminists’ behavior can close the partisan gap in affect towards feminists, demonstrating the power of group stereotypes in shaping political and social identities” (p. 14).

### 3.10.13 The Surprising Stability of Asian Americans’ and Latinos’ Partisan Identities in the Early Trump Era

Hopkins, D. J., Kaiser, C. R., & Pérez, E. O. (2023). The Surprising Stability of Asian Americans’ and Latinos’ Partisan Identities in the Early Trump Era [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 85(4), 1321–1335. <https://doi.org/10.1086/724964>

- 1. Citation key:** hopkins\_surprising\_2023
- 2. Author(s):** Daniel J. Hopkins, Cheryl R. Kaiser, and Efrén O. Pérez
- 3. Year:** 2023
- 4. Publication:** Journal of Politics
- 5. Keywords:** partisan stability, Asian Americans, Latinos, identity threat, panethnic identity, polarization
- 6. Summary:** Hopkins, Kaiser, and Pérez examine the partisan identities of Asian Americans and Latinos during the early Trump era to test whether Donald Trump’s anti-immigrant rhetoric reshaped partisan attachments. Using panel data collected between 2016 and 2018, the authors find that partisan identities among these groups remained remarkably stable despite the heightened identity threats posed by Trump’s rhetoric. The study highlights how partisan polarization has clarified group-party associations, contributing to the persistence of partisan loyalties among these growing demographic groups.
- 7. Theory:** The authors draw on three theoretical frameworks to explain the dynamics of partisan identity among Asian Americans and Latinos. The first posits that these groups possess weak partisan attachments due to limited political socialization and engagement. The second emphasizes the role of identity threats, suggesting that overt hostility toward their panethnic identities might strengthen partisan alignments. The third framework focuses on partisan stability, proposing that polarization has solidified the connection between these groups and the Democratic Party. The authors hypothesize that panethnic identities and partisanship are interlinked, with partisan identity potentially shaping subsequent identity salience. They argue that the Trump era, characterized by explicit anti-immigrant rhetoric, serves as a critical case for testing the durability of partisan attachments in the face of identity threats.
- 8. Methods:** The study employs a three-wave panel survey conducted in English and Spanish, sampling Asian Americans and Latinos during 2016 and 2018. Respondents’ partisan identities, panethnic attachments, and related attitudes were measured through survey questions and experiments. Regression models and cross-lagged analyses were used to assess over-time stability in partisan and panethnic identities, while a randomized video experiment tested the causal impact of Trump’s rhetoric on attitudes and vote choice. Attrition analyses and weighting techniques ensured robustness against sampling biases, such as the exclusion of non-English-speaking Asian Americans.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - Asian Americans and Latinos possess weakly crystallized partisan identities, leading to significant shifts in response to identity threats.
  - Trump’s anti-immigrant rhetoric activates panethnic identities, which strengthen partisan attachments to the Democratic Party.
  - Partisan identities among Asian Americans and Latinos are stable, even during a period of heightened political hostility.

The findings support the third hypothesis, demonstrating the remarkable persistence of partisan identities and the limited impact of identity threats on reshaping party loyalties.
- 10. Main findings:** The analysis reveals that partisan identities among Asian Americans and Latinos remained strikingly stable between 2016 and 2018, despite Trump’s explicit anti-immigrant rhetoric. Cross-lagged models show that partisan identity shapes panethnic attachments, while the reverse relationship is weaker. The video experiment indicates that Trump’s rhetoric had minimal influence on vote choice or partisan identity, though it modestly shifted some party-related attitudes among Latino respondents. Overall, the results highlight the durability of partisan polarization in solidifying group-party associations, suggesting that partisan stability is a defining feature of these groups’ political behavior.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “Trump’s ascendancy poses a critical test for prominent theories of intergroup politics, yet we find that these groups’ partisan identities remain remarkably stable, even in the face of heightened identity threats” (p. 1322).
  - “Partisan identities shaped subsequent attachments to panethnic identities more consistently than the reverse, underscoring the centrality of partisanship in structuring social identities” (p. 1331).
  - “Our findings highlight the crystallization of partisan loyalties among Asian Americans and Latinos as a by-product of sustained partisan polarization, which sends consistent, high-volume signals about party values and positions” (p. 1334).

### 3.11 Parties in Legislatures

#### 3.11.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Research on parties in legislatures emphasizes the institutional role of political parties in shaping legislative behavior, organization, and decision-making. Key contributions address party cohesion, leadership centralization, and the conditions under which parties influence legislative outcomes. While some scholars focus on the stabilizing effects of party rules and caucuses, others highlight the dynamic influence of electoral turnover, ideological polarization, and cross-party coalitions. The field integrates theories of majority rule, party leadership, and legislative organization to explain how parties mediate the legislative process, balance individual and collective incentives, and maintain institutional stability over time.
- **Party Strength and Legislative Behavior:** Studies such as Brady, Cooper, and Hurley (1979) explore the decline of party strength in the U.S. House, attributing it to increased electoral stability, decentralization of leadership, and diminished interparty conflict. They find that external factors like electoral turnover and party homogeneity drive partisan dynamics more than internal leadership structures. Similarly, Jenkins (1999) highlights the role of parties as bonding mechanisms, enhancing legislative predictability and ideological coherence compared to systems without strong party structures, such as the Confederate House during the Civil War.
- **Institutional Design and Stability:** Shepsle and Weingast's (1981) concept of structure-induced equilibrium argues that institutional rules, such as agenda control and proposal restrictions, stabilize decision-making by constraining the outcomes of majority rule. This framework challenges the instability predicted by pure majority-rule theory, emphasizing the stabilizing role of legislative structures. Cox and McCubbins (1994) extend this theory, positing that party caucus rules create extralegislative bonds that enforce party cohesion and stabilize legislative outcomes.
- **Partisan Dynamics and Procedural Control:** Binder (1996) demonstrates that procedural changes in the House are driven by partisan goals rather than collective institutional concerns. Her analysis of minority rights suppression reveals that majority parties strategically alter rules to maintain legislative dominance, with historical procedural arrangements constraining contemporary reforms. In contrast, Schickler and Rich (1997) challenge the majority-party dominance model, showing that cross-party coalitions and ideological alignments often influence procedural outcomes, particularly during periods of low party cohesion.
- **Conditional Party Government:** Aldrich and Rohde (1997) explore how the Republican majority in the 104th Congress implemented centralized reforms under conditions of high intra-party cohesion and inter-party polarization. Their conditional party government theory posits that party leadership becomes more influential when members of the majority party align on policy objectives, enabling leaders to centralize decision-making and enforce discipline.
- **Universalism and Coalition Behavior:** Collie (1988) examines the relationship between partisan conflict and universalistic coalitions, finding an inverse relationship where universalism thrives in periods of declining partisanship. Her study suggests that legislators prefer broad-based agreements when partisan coalitions are unstable, particularly in distributive policymaking contexts.
- **Key Ongoing Debates:** Continued research debates the extent of party influence in legislative organization, the conditions under which parties shape member behavior, and the relative importance of preferences versus partisan incentives. While some scholars argue for the primacy of party-driven models, others emphasize cross-party dynamics and the pivotal role of floor mediators in shaping legislative outcomes. Future studies are likely to further investigate the relationship between party cohesion, ideological polarization, and institutional design in structuring legislative behavior.

#### 3.11.2 The Decline of Party in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1887–1968

Brady, D. W., Cooper, J., & Hurley, P. A. (1979). The Decline of Party in the U. S. House of Representatives, 1887-1968 [Publisher: [Wiley, Comparative Legislative Research Center]]. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 4(3), 381–407. <https://doi.org/10.2307/439581>

1. **Citation key:** brady\_decline\_1979
2. **Author(s):** David W. Brady, Joseph Cooper, and Patricia A. Hurley
3. **Year:** 1979
4. **Publication:** Legislative Studies Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** party strength, partisanship, legislative behavior, U.S. House of Representatives, congressional voting patterns
6. **Summary:** This article examines the decline of party strength in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1887 to 1968. The authors develop a model to explain changes in party cohesion, party conflict, and overall party strength over time. They identify external variables, such as electoral change and presidential partisanship, and internal variables, such as centralized leadership and caucus strength, as key drivers of partisanship. Their analysis shows that external variables, particularly electoral factors, have a greater impact on party strength than internal structural factors, highlighting a long-term decline in partisan voting in the House.
7. **Theory:** Brady, Cooper, and Hurley argue that partisanship in the House is determined by both external and internal factors. External factors include electoral turnover, party homogeneity, presidential partisanship, and interparty conflict. These factors influence the cohesiveness and ideological distinctiveness of congressional parties. Internal factors, such as the strength of centralized leadership and the role of party caucuses, mediate the influence of external variables on party strength. The authors propose that external variables, as products of the broader electoral environment, are

more influential over time. The decline in partisanship is attributed to increased electoral stability, the decentralization of leadership power, and diminished interparty conflict, especially in the post-World War II era.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a time-series analysis of party voting patterns in the U.S. House from 1887 to 1968. The authors use indices of cohesion (intraparty unity), conflict (interparty opposition), and overall party strength (a composite of cohesion and conflict) to measure partisanship. Regression models are used to estimate the effects of external and internal variables on these indices. Key external variables include electoral turnover (percentage of freshmen in Congress), regional homogeneity within parties, presidential partisanship, and interparty conflict. Internal variables, such as the Speaker's prerogatives and caucus strength, are operationalized using dummy variables for three distinct periods of House leadership structure: centralized leadership (1887–1910), partial caucus use (1911–1939), and decentralized leadership (1940–1968).

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Party strength is positively correlated with higher electoral turnover, greater interparty conflict, and the presence of a president from the majority party. These hypotheses were supported, as regression models indicated significant effects for these external variables.
- Centralized leadership and strong caucus structures enhance party cohesion, voting, and strength. This was confirmed, with the centralized leadership period (1887–1910) showing the highest levels of party strength.

**10. Main findings:** The analysis reveals a steady decline in partisanship in the U.S. House of Representatives over time, with party strength peaking during the period of centralized leadership and declining during the decentralized era post-1940. Regression results indicate that external variables, particularly interparty conflict and electoral turnover, have the strongest effects on party strength, while internal variables like leadership structure play a secondary role. The authors note that the decline in partisanship correlates with increased electoral stability, a decline in ideological homogeneity within parties, and the weakening of centralized leadership structures. They emphasize the enduring influence of electoral dynamics in shaping the House's institutional behavior.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The data also indicate an approximately 25-year period when party voting was high (roughly 1890 to 1915) and a roughly 30-year low period (1940 to 1968)" (p. 385).
- "The long-run decline in party strength in the House is clearly related to the increased stability of the membership, a decline in electoral party homogeneity and conflict, and an increasing tendency to have a president of one party and a Congress of the other party" (p. 390).
- "The reemergence of the caucus in 1969... serves not as an instrument for enhancing leadership power and centralized decision making, but rather as another arena for factional conflict" (p. 404).

### 3.11.3 Structure-Induced Equilibrium and Legislative Choice

Shepsle, K. A., & Weingast, B. R. (1981). Structure-Induced Equilibrium and Legislative Choice [Publisher: Springer]. *Public Choice*, 37(3), 503–519. Retrieved January 27, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30023510>

**1. Citation key:** shepsle\_structure-induced\_1981

**2. Author(s):** Kenneth A. Shepsle and Barry R. Weingast

**3. Year:** 1981

**4. Publication:** Public Choice

**5. Keywords:** legislative choice, institutional design, structure-induced equilibrium, majority rule, agenda control

**6. Summary:** Shepsle and Weingast examine how institutional structures in legislatures can induce equilibrium in decision-making processes otherwise plagued by instability under pure majority rule (PMR). They argue that real-world legislative outcomes exhibit more stability than predicted by PMR theory due to constraints imposed by institutional arrangements. The paper introduces the concept of structure-induced equilibrium (SIE), demonstrating how rules restricting proposal power, agenda control, and legislative exchange mitigate instability and cycling in legislative decision-making.

**7. Theory:** The authors challenge the instability results from PMR theory by proposing that institutional arrangements, rather than unstructured majority rule, govern legislative behavior in practice. They argue that real-world legislatures use rules and procedures to constrain the range of feasible proposals, limiting the scope for instability. These constraints can include agenda control, germaneness rules, and amendment restrictions, all of which create a structured decision-making environment. By transforming PMR into a more complex institutional system, legislatures achieve stability by neutralizing the effects of majority-rule win sets, which are otherwise prone to continuous cycling. The authors emphasize that this stability arises not from legislative exchange, such as logrolling, but from the institutional frameworks that structure legislative choice and enforce rules.

**8. Methods:** Shepsle and Weingast use formal modeling to analyze the stability of legislative outcomes under different institutional rules. They develop the concept of SIE, which occurs when institutional constraints prevent proposals capable of defeating the status quo from arising. The analysis includes examples such as amendment control rules, agenda control by committees, and rules requiring the status quo to be voted on last. These examples illustrate how varying degrees of proposal and agenda restrictions can create equilibrium outcomes. The authors also compare these institutional arrangements to the theoretical instability of unrestricted PMR.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Legislative institutions that constrain proposal power and agenda control induce stability in decision-making.

This hypothesis is confirmed through examples of institutional arrangements, such as committee proposal power and amendment restrictions.

- Legislative exchange (e.g., logrolling) is insufficient to produce stability under PMR. This is supported by the authors' analysis showing that logrolling exacerbates instability rather than mitigating it.

**10. Main findings:** The study demonstrates that institutional constraints are critical for achieving stability in legislative decision-making. By restricting the range of feasible proposals, institutions prevent the cycling and instability characteristic of PMR. For instance, rules granting agenda control to committees or requiring the status quo to be voted on last significantly limit the outcomes that can emerge. The authors argue that these institutional rules transform the legislative process, ensuring that equilibrium outcomes can exist even when PMR would predict instability. They also highlight that legislative exchange alone cannot resolve the instability inherent in PMR systems, emphasizing the importance of formal institutional design.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Real-world legislative practices constrain the instability of PMR by restricting the domain and the content of legislative exchange" (p. 504).
- "The number of potential replacements for a given status quo may be restricted... the rules of the legislature may prohibit elements of this set from arising for comparison, thus leaving other points invulnerable" (p. 514).
- "Institutional arrangements place constraints on the completeness of the majority rule relation by restricting social comparisons" (p. 515).

### 3.11.4 The Constituency Service Basis of the Personal Vote for U.S. Representatives and British Members of Parliament

Cain, B. E., Ferejohn, J. A., & Fiorina, M. P. (1984). The Constituency Service Basis of the Personal Vote for U.S. Representatives and British Members of Parliament [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 78(1), 110–125. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1961252>

**1. Citation key:** cain\_constituency\_1984

**2. Author(s):** Bruce E. Cain, John A. Ferejohn, and Morris P. Fiorina

**3. Year:** 1984

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** personal vote, constituency service, incumbency advantage, legislative behavior, comparative politics

**6. Summary:** This article explores the role of constituency service in fostering the personal vote for legislators in the United States and Britain. Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina compare U.S. Representatives and British Members of Parliament (MPs) to evaluate the incumbency advantage and the development of a personal vote. They argue that while the incumbency advantage is more pronounced in the U.S., constituency service plays a significant role in shaping electoral outcomes in both contexts. By examining survey data and elite interviews, the authors show that MPs in Britain are increasingly engaging in constituency service, though its electoral effects remain weaker than in the United States.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose that the personal vote—a portion of electoral support derived from a legislator's personal qualities and constituency service—arises from the incentives created by single-member district systems. In the U.S., the extensive resources available to legislators, such as staff, travel allowances, and franked mail, enable them to cultivate personal votes more effectively than their British counterparts, who have more limited resources. Nevertheless, British MPs are increasingly engaging in constituency service to strengthen their electoral appeal. The authors posit that while the personal vote is shaped by institutional differences, it also reflects broader electoral dynamics, such as declining party identification and increasing voter volatility. They further argue that the personal vote can erode party cohesion by encouraging legislators to prioritize individual re-election efforts over collective party goals.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining survey data from the 1980 National Election Study (NES) in the U.S. and a British Gallup survey conducted after the 1979 general election. These data are complemented by elite interviews with congressional administrative assistants (AAs) in the U.S. and MPs in Britain. The authors use probit regression models to estimate the effects of incumbency, party identification, executive performance ratings, and constituency service on voting behavior. They also analyze casework activity, the frequency of surgeries (constituency meetings), and perceptions of accessibility to assess the impact of constituency service on the personal vote.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Incumbents who engage in constituency service are more likely to secure a personal vote, though its magnitude varies between the U.S. and Britain. This hypothesis is supported, with U.S. incumbents benefiting more significantly from constituency service than British MPs.
- The personal vote is smaller in Britain than in the U.S. due to institutional and resource constraints. This hypothesis is confirmed, as British MPs report fewer resources and a smaller electoral impact of constituency service.

**10. Main findings:** Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina find that constituency service contributes to the personal vote in both the U.S. and Britain, but its effects are more pronounced in the U.S. due to greater institutional support for incumbents. In Britain, the personal vote remains limited by party-centric electoral dynamics and the relatively weak resources available to MPs. However, British MPs have increasingly adopted practices such as surgeries and casework to enhance their electoral appeal. The study highlights the growing importance of constituency service in both systems, noting that it can undermine party cohesion by incentivizing legislators to prioritize individual electoral strategies

over collective party goals.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "The textbook portrait of British politics leaves little room for a personal vote... MPs have very little personal power to procure 'pork' for their districts or provide favors to individual constituents" (p. 114).
- "An incumbent's perceived reputation can have enormous effects... All in all, an MC's reputation for helpfulness appears to have a potential impact as great as that of party identification" (p. 121).
- "The existence, size, and variation in the personal vote for legislative incumbents is of interest not only for the citizen voting decisions it affects but also as an important indicator of the strength and trend of a nation's party system" (p. 123).

#### 3.11.5 Universalism and the Parties in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1921–80

Collie, M. P. (1988). Universalism and the Parties in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1921-80 [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 32(4), 865–883. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111192>

1. Citation key: collie\_universalism\_1988

2. Author(s): Melissa P. Collie

3. Year: 1988

4. Publication: American Journal of Political Science

5. Keywords: universalism, partisan conflict, U.S. House of Representatives, roll call voting, coalition behavior

6. Summary: Collie investigates the relationship between universalistic coalitions and partisan conflict in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1921 to 1980. Universalism refers to legislative coalitions characterized by high levels of consensus, often exceeding minimal winning sizes. The study shows that universalistic voting patterns have varied considerably over time and tend to increase as partisan conflict decreases. Collie's analysis highlights the inverse relationship between universalism and partisanship, with implications for understanding how legislative norms and coalitions evolve under changing political conditions.

7. Theory: Collie argues that universalistic coalitions arise as an alternative to highly partisan legislative alignments, especially in periods of declining partisan conflict. She builds on rational choice theories suggesting that legislators, uncertain about coalition stability, may prefer universalistic arrangements that ensure mutual benefits across party lines. Collie identifies two main drivers of universalism: first, the instability of partisan coalitions in a fragmented legislative environment, which incentivizes broad-based agreement; and second, minority party strategies that prioritize cooperation with the majority on electorally advantageous policies. These dynamics suggest that universalism is both a response to and a cause of declining partisan polarization, as legislators increasingly prioritize individual electoral benefits over party cohesion.

8. Methods: The study employs longitudinal analysis of roll call votes in the U.S. House across 60 years (67th–96th Congresses). Universalistic voting is operationalized as roll calls where at least 90% of members vote in the same direction. Collie examines trends in universalistic and partisan voting, using correlation analysis and descriptive statistics to document their inverse relationship. Additionally, the study incorporates historical analysis of legislative behavior to contextualize shifts in coalition dynamics, particularly during key periods such as the New Deal realignment and post-World War II political fragmentation.

9. Hypotheses:

- Universalistic voting increases as partisan conflict decreases. This hypothesis is confirmed, with an inverse relationship between universalism and partisanship evidenced by statistical analysis (Pearson's  $r = -0.88$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ).
- Universalistic coalitions are more prevalent when legislative coalitions are unstable, leading legislators to prefer certainty in distributive policies. This hypothesis is supported, as universalism is associated with declining partisan polarization.

10. Main findings: Collie demonstrates that universalistic voting has varied significantly over time, with higher levels observed in periods of declining partisan conflict. The results show that universalistic coalitions are especially prevalent in distributive policymaking, where legislators benefit from mutual assurances of resource allocation. The study identifies a strong inverse relationship between partisan conflict and universalism, suggesting that the erosion of party cohesion fosters coalition instability, which in turn promotes universalistic behavior. Collie also highlights the role of minority party strategies in embracing universalistic coalitions as a way to gain electoral advantage, particularly on policies that provide benefits across party lines.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "The incidence of universalistic voting has varied considerably in different Congresses, reaching a low of 7.7 percent in the 73rd House (1933–34) and a peak of 38.1 percent in the 91st House (1969–70)" (p. 870).
- "The results confirm that the decline in universalistic behavior during the late 1920s and its relative infrequency during the 1930s inversely paralleled the growing partisanship associated with the years before and after Franklin Roosevelt's election in 1932" (p. 872).
- "In general, both partisan and universalistic coalitions have characterized recorded voting in each House... roll call votes are not exclusively reserved for the resolution of legislative conflict" (p. 873).

### 3.11.6 Where's the Party?

Krehbiel, K. (1993). Where's the Party? [Publisher: Cambridge University Press]. *British Journal of Political Science*, 23(2), 235–266. Retrieved January 27, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/194249>

1. Citation key: krehbiel\_wheres\_1993
2. Author(s): Keith Krehbiel
3. Year: 1993
4. Publication: British Journal of Political Science
5. Keywords: legislative organization, partisanship, congressional committees, U.S. Congress, spatial theory
6. Summary: Krehbiel examines the extent to which partisanship, independent of legislative preferences, influences legislative organization in the U.S. House of Representatives. Using data from the 99th Congress, the study tests whether partisan factors explain variation in two key processes: the assignment of legislators to standing committees and the selection of conferees for conference committees. Krehbiel concludes that partisanship, while active in legislative processes, rarely functions as an independent determinant of organizational outcomes when individual policy preferences are taken into account.
7. Theory: Krehbiel challenges the prevailing view of partisanship as the dominant force in legislative organization by emphasizing the role of individual preferences. He contends that party effects must be disentangled from preference effects to truly assess the significance of partisanship. The study posits that significant party behavior would require evidence of legislators voting or acting contrary to their individual preferences due to party influence. In contrast, Krehbiel argues that most observed legislative behaviors can be explained by preference-driven spatial models. The theoretical framework underscores the importance of distinguishing between correlates and causes of party influence, asserting that legislative organization may operate effectively without strong partisan intervention.
8. Methods: Krehbiel employs probit regression analysis to test three hypotheses related to committee assignments and one hypothesis on conference committee appointments. Independent variables include party affiliation, individual preferences (measured by jurisdiction-specific interest group ratings), and interaction terms capturing party-preference dynamics. Data on committee assignments are analyzed across eight committees, while conference committee appointments are examined for five policy domains. The analysis evaluates whether majority-party status or preference outliers significantly affect the likelihood of receiving committee assignments or being appointed as a conferee.
9. Hypotheses:
  - Majority-party legislators are more likely to receive committee assignments (majority-party stacking).
  - High-demand legislators are more likely to receive committee assignments regardless of party affiliation (non-partisan high demanders).
  - Partisan dynamics influence committee assignments differently for high-demand and low-demand legislators (partisan counter-stacking).
  - Majority-party legislators are more likely to be selected as conferees (majority-party conference stacking).
 Krehbiel's findings provide mixed support for these hypotheses. Evidence for majority-party stacking is limited and inconsistent, while high-demand legislators frequently gain committee seats irrespective of party affiliation. Partisan counter-stacking is observed in specific cases, but conference stacking shows no significant party effects.
10. Main findings: Krehbiel demonstrates that partisanship is rarely a significant force in legislative organization when controlling for individual preferences. Most committee assignments reflect legislators' policy demands rather than majority-party favoritism. For instance, high-demand preferences improve committee assignment chances in areas like Agriculture and Education, while partisan counter-stacking occurs in limited contexts, such as conservation policies on the Interior Committee. The study also finds no evidence of majority-party advantage in conferee selection. These results suggest that legislative outcomes are better explained by spatial models of preferences than by party-centric theories.
11. Key quotations:
  - "A high level of party activity is not tantamount to partisan committee assignments. Nor can we infer anything about significant party behavior from partisan ratios on committees" (p. 243).
  - "If significant party behavior occurs in committee assignment processes, and if preferences are correlated with party, then the two parties' attempts to stack committees—if they occur at all—tend approximately to cancel out one another in the aggregate" (p. 243).
  - "While parties and party leaders are extremely active in the legislative process, partisanship does not explain much variation in the observed stages of organizing the legislature" (p. 237).

### 3.11.7 Bonding, Structure, and the Stability of Political Parties: Party Government in the House

Cox, G. W., & McCubbins, M. D. (1994). Bonding, Structure, and the Stability of Political Parties: Party Government in the House [Publisher: [Wiley, Comparative Legislative Research Center]]. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 19(2), 215–231. <https://doi.org/10.2307/440425>

1. Citation key: cox\_bonding\_1994
2. Author(s): Gary W. Cox and Mathew D. McCubbins
3. Year: 1994
4. Publication: Legislative Studies Quarterly

5. **Keywords:** political parties, party government, stability, U.S. Congress, legislative institutions
6. **Summary:** Cox and McCubbins investigate how party structures in the U.S. House of Representatives stabilize political outcomes in the face of the inherent instability of majority-rule decision-making. They argue that parties achieve stability through extralegislative mechanisms, such as caucus rules and bonding mechanisms, which create incentives for members to adhere to party decisions on key structural and policy issues. The study highlights the role of majority-party caucuses in mitigating the instability predicted by social choice theory.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that political parties in the U.S. House function as bonding mechanisms that stabilize legislative outcomes by enforcing compliance with party decisions. They argue that the Democratic Caucus rules act as extralegislative constraints, requiring members to support key structural decisions, such as the election of the Speaker, committee assignments, and rule changes. These rules create incentives for members to prioritize party cohesion over individual preferences by imposing costs on defection, such as the loss of committee assignments and party-specific resources. The theory builds on the concept of structure-induced equilibrium but extends it by emphasizing the endogenous role of party institutions in stabilizing legislative structures. This framework underscores how party rules and reputational mechanisms ensure the persistence of stable coalitions, even in the face of potential defection by pivotal minorities.
8. **Methods:** The study employs qualitative analysis of the Democratic Caucus rules in the U.S. House, focusing on their role in stabilizing legislative structures. Cox and McCubbins examine historical instances of caucus enforcement mechanisms, such as expulsion and sanctions, to illustrate how these rules deter defection. They analyze the interaction between caucus rules and legislative decision-making, highlighting how party leaders use reputational incentives to maintain stability. The analysis is grounded in game-theoretic insights, drawing on concepts such as repeated games and transaction costs to explain why caucus rules deter instability.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Party caucus rules bind members to support key structural and procedural decisions, thereby stabilizing legislative outcomes.
  - Defection from party rules incurs significant costs, including the loss of committee assignments and intralegalis- tive resources.
  - Stability in legislative outcomes is achieved through the credible enforcement of caucus rules and the reputational costs of noncompliance.
10. **Main findings:** Cox and McCubbins find that caucus rules in the U.S. House serve as effective mechanisms for stabilizing legislative outcomes. By requiring members to adhere to decisions on structural issues, such as the Speaker's election and committee jurisdiction, these rules create a framework for collective action. The study highlights the importance of extralegislative bonds, such as the loss of party-specific seniority and electoral resources, in deterring defection. The analysis also shows that reputational mechanisms play a critical role in enforcing compliance, as members value the long-term benefits of party cohesion over short-term gains from defection. The findings suggest that party institutions are essential for maintaining stability in legislative decision-making.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The rules of the Democratic Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives dictate that members must support Caucus decisions on the floor on a variety of key structural matters" (p. 216).
  - "Membership in the majority party's caucus is valuable, as it constitutes a bond, the posting of which stabilizes the structure of the House, and hence the policy decisions made in the House" (p. 217).
  - "Without a reputation for toughness, the caucus has little value in stabilizing House structures, hence little value in achieving structure-induced equilibria" (p. 222).

### 3.11.8 The Gains from Exchange Hypothesis of Legislative Organization

Gilligan, T. W., & Krehbiel, K. (1994). The Gains from Exchange Hypothesis of Legislative Organization [Publisher: [Wiley, Comparative Legislative Research Center]]. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 19(2), 181–214. <https://doi.org/10.2307/440424>

1. **Citation key:** gilligan\_gains\_1994
2. **Author(s):** Thomas W. Gilligan and Keith Krehbiel
3. **Year:** 1994
4. **Publication:** Legislative Studies Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** legislative organization, gains from exchange, efficiency, chaos theory, committee system
6. **Summary:** Gilligan and Krehbiel formally investigate the "gains from exchange" hypothesis of legislative organization, which asserts that legislatures allocate influence based on the extremity and intensity of legislators' preferences. This hypothesis claims that such an arrangement stabilizes legislative outcomes and enhances efficiency by assigning decision-making rights to those with the most intense preferences. The authors develop a formal model of this hypothesis and test its implications regarding stability, efficiency, and institutional choice.
7. **Theory:** The authors theorize that the gains from exchange hypothesis stabilizes legislative outcomes by assigning parliamentary rights based on preference intensity and extremity. Legislators exchange these rights to secure benefits in areas of greatest concern to their constituents. This framework challenges the unpredictability of majority rule in multidimensional choice settings, often criticized in chaos theory. However, Gilligan and Krehbiel argue that prior

informal accounts of the hypothesis fail to specify the conditions under which such legislative arrangements would emerge or the efficiency gains they produce. Their formal model posits that parliamentary rights are institutionalized through mechanisms like committee assignments, enabling stable outcomes. The model also differentiates between two forms of exchange: policy outcomes and parliamentary rights. The authors contend that preference-based legislative organization, while often seen as efficiency-enhancing, may arise for reasons unrelated to aggregate welfare, such as individual risk aversion.

**8. Methods:** The study constructs a formal game-theoretic model of legislative decision-making under scarcity, examining three organizational arrangements: majority cloture, unanimous cloture, and party-based recognition. Legislators allocate a fixed resource (money) to maximize utility for their constituencies. The authors analyze equilibrium outcomes under these arrangements, considering factors like risk aversion and efficiency. They extend the model to compare gains from exchange institutions against alternatives, emphasizing the role of institutional choice in legislative stability.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Legislators will adopt unanimous cloture over majority cloture if they are risk-averse, as it ensures equal distribution and stable outcomes.
- Preference-based allocation of parliamentary rights enhances aggregate utility only under specific conditions, such as risk-averse legislators and limited institutional alternatives.
- Party-based recognition will outperform gains from exchange institutions in settings where strong legislative parties dominate institutional arrangements.

The hypotheses are partially supported. While unanimous cloture is preferred under risk aversion, efficiency gains are not consistently achieved. Moreover, party-based recognition dominates in broader institutional contexts, undermining the universal applicability of gains from exchange.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find that gains from exchange institutions stabilize legislative outcomes by addressing the chaos of majority rule. However, efficiency claims are contingent on factors like risk aversion and the institutional environment. Unanimous cloture yields equal distributions and stability but may not maximize aggregate welfare in heterogeneous preference settings. Party-based recognition, which prioritizes majority-party members, often supplants gains from exchange institutions when institutional choice is expanded. These results highlight the fragility of the gains from exchange hypothesis, emphasizing that legislative organization often reflects individual utility maximization rather than collective efficiency.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "When the range of institutional arrangements is expanded only slightly, gains from exchange forms of legislative organization are not chosen and outcomes are inefficient" (p. 181).
- "The gains from exchange hypothesis suggests that legislative influence is allocated in accord with the extremity and intensity of legislators' preferences" (p. 182).
- "Legislators' unanimous preference for unanimous cloture can better be understood by reiterating the ex ante and ex post properties of two procedures between which legislators choose in this game" (p. 202).

### 3.11.9 Parties and Committees in the House: Member Motivations, Issues, and Institutional Arrangements

Rohde, D. W. (1994). Parties and Committees in the House: Member Motivations, Issues, and Institutional Arrangements [Publisher: [Wiley, Comparative Legislative Research Center]]. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 19(3), 341–359. <https://doi.org/10.2307/440136>

**1. Citation key:** rohde\_parties\_1994

**2. Author(s):** David W. Rohde

**3. Year:** 1994

**4. Publication:** Legislative Studies Quarterly

**5. Keywords:** legislative organization, party leadership, congressional committees, member motivations, conditional party government

**6. Summary:** Rohde critiques Keith Krehbiel's (1991) informational theory of legislative organization by highlighting the role of parties in shaping member preferences and institutional outcomes. He argues that the distributive, informational, and partisan perspectives are not mutually exclusive and can coexist as complementary explanations for congressional organization. Drawing on evidence from committee assignments and leadership influence, Rohde demonstrates that partisan mechanisms significantly affect legislative behavior and outcomes, particularly in certain issue domains.

**7. Theory:** Rohde builds on his earlier work on conditional party government to argue that the influence of party leadership in the U.S. House is context-dependent and varies across issues and committees. He proposes that legislators' motivations—such as reelection, policy goals, and institutional power—interact with party structures to shape legislative behavior. Unlike Krehbiel's model, which assumes that preferences are entirely exogenous and shaped solely by electoral considerations, Rohde contends that preferences are endogenous, influenced by party leadership, institutional rules, and strategic considerations within Congress. He further argues that party cohesion is maintained through rewards, such as committee assignments, and sanctions, such as the denial of leadership positions, illustrating how parties mediate between individual member preferences and collective decision-making. This framework emphasizes the dynamic interplay between partisan, informational, and distributive incentives in legislative organization.

**8. Methods:** Rohde employs qualitative analysis, drawing on interviews with legislators, historical accounts of party reforms, and secondary literature on committee assignments and leadership behavior. He critiques Krehbiel's reliance on roll-call data, arguing that such data fail to capture the full complexity of legislative preferences, which are shaped by both external and internal pressures. Rohde supports his argument with case studies of committee assignment processes, particularly within the Democratic Caucus, and the use of restrictive rules by party leaders to shape policy outcomes.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Party leaders influence legislative preferences through incentives such as committee assignments and punishments like denying access to prestigious posts.
- The effects of party leadership are most pronounced in high-stakes committees and on issues that invoke partisan conflict.
- Legislative preferences are not fully exogenous but are shaped by internal institutional dynamics, including party pressure and strategic interactions.

These hypotheses are supported. Rohde provides evidence of party leadership exerting significant control over committee assignments and using restrictive rules to influence legislative outcomes. He also demonstrates that party influence varies systematically across different committees and issue domains.

**10. Main findings:** Rohde finds that party leadership plays a crucial role in legislative organization by shaping member behavior and structuring institutional processes. Party leaders use rewards, such as committee assignments, and sanctions, such as denying access to leadership positions, to enforce party cohesion. While Krehbiel's informational theory provides valuable insights into legislative behavior, Rohde argues that it underestimates the role of parties in influencing member preferences and legislative outcomes. He shows that partisan effects are most evident in high-stakes committees and on contentious policy issues, where party leaders strategically manage the legislative agenda to achieve collective goals. This dynamic underscores the interdependence of partisan, informational, and distributive incentives in congressional organization.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "It is difficult to believe that legislators' induced preferences are completely exogenous, even though basic goals like reelection may be exogenous" (p. 342).
- "The rules of the Democratic Caucus in the U.S. House of Representatives dictate that members must support caucus decisions on the floor on a variety of key structural matters" (p. 348).
- "Rather than seek a single, universal account of congressional politics... we should recognize that all of these considerations operate in varying degrees and that the variation is systematic and predictable" (p. 356).

### 3.11.10 The Partisan Basis of Procedural Choice: Allocating Parliamentary Rights in the House, 1789-1990

Binder, S. A. (1996). The Partisan Basis of Procedural Choice: Allocating Parliamentary Rights in the House, 1789-1990 [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 90(1), 8-20. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2082794>

**1. Citation key:** binder\_partisan\_1996

**2. Author(s):** Sarah A. Binder

**3. Year:** 1996

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** Congress, procedural choice, minority rights, party competition, legislative behavior

**6. Summary:** Binder examines the evolution of parliamentary rights in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1789 to 1990, challenging conventional explanations that attribute the suppression of minority procedural rights to increases in House size and workload. Instead, she argues that partisan goals, rather than collective institutional concerns, drive procedural changes. Using an original dataset of House rules changes, Binder demonstrates that majority parties strategically suppress or extend minority rights to achieve short-term partisan advantages while navigating inherited institutional constraints.

**7. Theory:** Binder introduces a partisan theory of procedural choice, arguing that majority parties in Congress alter procedural rules to secure partisan advantages and advance their legislative agendas. This theory posits that changes in minority rights are not driven by collective needs, such as managing increased workload, but by partisan calculations that reflect the balance of power within the chamber. Majority parties suppress minority rights when facing obstructionism, particularly when they possess the capacity to enforce restrictive rules. Conversely, minority rights are expanded when cross-party coalitions form, often driven by a weakened majority or strengthened minority. Binder highlights that inherited procedural arrangements constrain the scope of contemporary changes, creating a dynamic interplay between past institutional choices and present partisan goals. This framework underscores the importance of partisan incentives and historical legacies in shaping congressional development.

**8. Methods:** Binder compiles a dataset of minority rights in the House and tracks their creation or suppression over two periods: 1789-1894 and 1895-1990. She employs bivariate statistical tests and multivariate logit models to assess the impact of workload, party competition, and partisan factors on procedural change. Independent variables include measures of workload, such as session length and the number of enacted laws, and indicators of partisan capacity, such as party strength and cohesiveness. Binder also examines lagged measures of minority obstructionism, such as dilatory motions and discharge petitions, to evaluate the role of partisan needs in procedural changes.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- The majority party suppresses minority rights when legislative workload increases, necessitating time management in the chamber.
- The majority party is more likely to suppress minority rights when it anticipates retaining control of the House.
- The suppression of minority rights is driven by high levels of minority obstructionism, such as the use of dilatory tactics or discharge petitions.
- Cross-party coalitions are more likely to expand minority rights when the majority party weakens relative to the minority.

Binder's findings support the partisan theory, showing that suppression of minority rights correlates with increased obstructionism and partisan capacity. However, changes in workload and party control are less predictive of procedural change than partisan needs and inherited rules.

**10. Main findings:** Binder finds that procedural changes in the House are driven primarily by short-term partisan calculations rather than collective institutional concerns. Majority parties suppress minority rights to curb obstructionism and maintain legislative dominance, particularly when they are strong and cohesive. Conversely, minority rights are expanded when cross-party coalitions form, often due to a weakened majority or strategic alignment with minority interests. Inherited procedural rules constrain the scope of contemporary changes, as historical choices shape the available strategies for both majority and minority parties. Binder's analysis highlights the importance of partisan incentives in the evolution of congressional rules, challenging conventional narratives that emphasize workload or institutional efficiency as primary drivers of procedural change.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The distribution of parliamentary rights in the House is conditional on the shape of partisan forces in the chamber" (p. 9).
- "Contrary to conventional expectations, increases in workload have virtually no effect on the choice of restrictive rules" (p. 14).
- "Short-term partisan goals of the majority party, rather than longer-term partisan considerations or broader collective concerns, shape procedural choices in the House" (p. 17).

**3.11.11 The Transition to Republican Rule in the House: Implications for Theories of Congressional Politics**

Aldrich, J. H., & Rohde, D. W. (1997). The Transition to Republican Rule in the House: Implications for Theories of Congressional Politics [Publisher: [Academy of Political Science, Wiley]]. *Political Science Quarterly*, 112(4), 541–567. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2657691>

**1. Citation key:** aldrich\_transition\_1997

**2. Author(s):** John H. Aldrich and David W. Rohde

**3. Year:** 1997

**4. Publication:** Political Science Quarterly

**5. Keywords:** Republican Revolution, conditional party government, congressional institutions, party leadership, House of Representatives

**6. Summary:** Aldrich and Rohde analyze the dramatic shift in congressional governance following the Republican victory in the 1994 elections, focusing on the changes implemented by the GOP in the 104th Congress. They use the framework of conditional party government to explore how the new majority reorganized House rules and leadership structures to achieve partisan goals. The authors contrast this perspective with the majoritarian theory, which emphasizes median voter preferences, to demonstrate the impact of party cohesion and leadership strength on legislative outcomes.

**7. Theory:** The authors advance the conditional party government theory, which posits that party leadership in Congress becomes more centralized and influential when intra-party cohesion is high and inter-party divergence is substantial. Under such conditions, members of the majority party are willing to delegate power to their leaders to advance shared policy objectives, even at the expense of individual autonomy. This stands in contrast to the majoritarian theory, which argues that legislative outcomes are primarily determined by the preferences of the median member of the chamber, with limited influence from party structures. The Republican reforms, including the concentration of power in Speaker Newt Gingrich's hands, are examined as a test of these competing theories. The authors highlight the interplay between historical institutional constraints and contemporary partisan motivations, arguing that party-driven reforms reflect a deliberate strategy to shape legislative agendas and outcomes.

**8. Methods:** Aldrich and Rohde use a qualitative analysis of institutional changes in the 104th Congress, including committee reorganization, changes in leadership powers, and the implementation of the Republican "Contract with America." They draw on historical comparisons, congressional records, and secondary sources to evaluate the impact of these reforms on legislative processes. Their analysis focuses on changes to committee structures, the role of task forces, and the centralization of agenda-setting powers in the Speaker's office.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Majority parties with high internal cohesion and clear policy objectives will strengthen party leadership to advance their agenda.
- Institutional reforms will centralize power in the hands of party leaders when inter-party polarization is high.
- The actions of the majority party will reflect collective partisan goals rather than median voter preferences.

The findings support the hypotheses, showing that the Republican majority leveraged their cohesion and polarization from Democrats to implement structural reforms that centralized power in the party leadership, particularly under Speaker Gingrich.

10. **Main findings:** The Republican leadership in the 104th Congress implemented sweeping institutional changes, including reducing the number of committees and subcommittees, limiting chair term lengths, and consolidating control over committee appointments and staff. These reforms concentrated power in the hands of Speaker Gingrich and aligned committee activities with the Republican legislative agenda. The analysis reveals that these changes were not merely administrative but were strategically designed to enhance party discipline and control the legislative agenda. The authors argue that the reforms provide strong empirical support for the conditional party government theory, as they demonstrate how party cohesion and leadership centralization can override the majoritarian logic of the median voter.

11. **Key quotations:**

- "The Republican majority and its leaders chose to invest considerable resources in altering rules and procedures...designed to create a stronger majority-party leadership" (p. 543).
- "Conditional party government roughly requires as its basic condition that the majority party have sufficient agreement on what it wants to achieve to empower its leaders" (p. 547).
- "The changes regarding committees are a central feature of this effort...Gingrich and his allies wanted to reduce the independent power of committees and their chairs, especially as roadblocks to policy change" (p. 559).

### 3.11.12 Toward a Theory of Legislative Rules Changes: Assessing Schickler and Rich's Evidence

Cox, G. W., & McCubbins, M. D. (1997). Toward a Theory of Legislative Rules Changes: Assessing Schickler and Rich's Evidence [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 41(4), 1376–1386. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2960493>

1. **Citation key:** cox\_toward\_1997
2. **Author(s):** Gary W. Cox and Mathew D. McCubbins
3. **Year:** 1997
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** legislative rules, majority party, congressional institutions, rule changes, House of Representatives
6. **Summary:** Cox and McCubbins respond to Schickler and Rich's (1997) critique of the partisan model of legislative organization, defending their theory that majority parties use procedural rules to consolidate power and advance collective goals. They refine the partisan model by emphasizing the role of majority-party cohesion in shaping rule changes and by addressing empirical critiques of their prior work. The authors argue that legislative rule changes occur in response to shifts in majority-party homogeneity and remain consistent with the partisan model, even when outcomes appear mixed or incremental.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that legislative rule changes are shaped by the preferences and cohesion of the majority party, which uses procedural tools to strengthen its institutional dominance. Cox and McCubbins refine their earlier partisan theory by incorporating the concept of incrementalism, arguing that rule changes rarely involve sweeping reforms but instead reflect small adjustments aligned with majority-party goals. They contend that periods of low majority-party homogeneity lead to fewer procedural changes, while high homogeneity facilitates centralization of power in party leadership. The authors highlight that rules do not operate in isolation but are part of a larger framework designed to entrench majority-party advantages, including agenda control and resource allocation. This framework challenges claims that committee government or nonpartisan forces explain procedural outcomes, arguing instead that majority parties maintain control even during periods of apparent decentralization.
8. **Methods:** The study uses a theoretical and empirical critique of Schickler and Rich's evidence on rules changes in the U.S. House from the 1930s to the 1990s. Cox and McCubbins reanalyze historical data on seniority violations, committee power, and discharge petition rules, emphasizing the importance of majority-party cohesion. They also explore case studies, such as the rule changes under Newt Gingrich in 1995, to illustrate how party-driven procedural reforms align with their model.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Majority-party leaders initiate rule changes when intra-party cohesion is high, enabling centralized decision-making.
  - Rule changes occur incrementally and align with shifts in majority-party homogeneity, reflecting strategic adjustments rather than sweeping reforms.
  - Procedural rules are designed to entrench majority-party advantages, even during periods of apparent decentralization.

The hypotheses are supported. The authors demonstrate that rule changes consistently reflect majority-party goals, with high cohesion enabling centralization and low cohesion limiting reforms. Evidence from case studies, including the 1995 Republican reforms, confirms that procedural changes are strategically aligned with party interests.

10. **Main findings:** Cox and McCubbins reaffirm the partisan model of legislative organization, arguing that procedural rule changes are fundamentally shaped by majority-party cohesion and strategic considerations. They show that Schickler and Rich's evidence, while valuable, does not contradict the partisan model but instead illustrates its flexibility in accommodating incremental changes. The authors highlight the role of party leadership in using procedural tools, such as discharge petition rules and seniority violations, to advance collective goals. By emphasizing the in-

terplay between homogeneity and institutional power, Cox and McCubbins provide a nuanced explanation for the evolution of legislative rules, challenging claims that nonpartisan or committee-driven forces dominate procedural outcomes.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "The more homogeneous the preferences of the majority party's members, the more disposed these members will be to delegate substantial institutional powers to their leaders" (p. 1377).
- "A mixed record of rule changes is consistent with the partisan model, given the assumption that centralization of power reflects the homogeneity of the majority party" (p. 1380).
- "Even during periods of apparent decentralization, the majority party retains substantial advantages, as reflected in the structure and allocation of procedural rights" (p. 1385).

#### 3.11.13 Controlling the Floor: Parties as Procedural Coalitions in the House

Schickler, E., & Rich, A. (1997a). Controlling the Floor: Parties as Procedural Coalitions in the House [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 41(4), 1340–1375. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2960492>

1. **Citation key:** schickler\_controlling\_1997
2. **Author(s):** Eric Schickler and Andrew Rich
3. **Year:** 1997
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** House of Representatives, legislative organization, majority party, procedural coalitions, congressional rules
6. **Summary:** Schickler and Rich challenge the majority-party-centered procedural coalition model advanced by Cox and McCubbins. They argue that cross-party coalitions and ideological alignments, rather than partisan control, play a critical role in shaping the House's procedural rules. By examining historical evidence from 1919 to 1994, they illustrate that procedural control varies significantly based on the size and homogeneity of the majority party and the type of issues under consideration.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose an alternative to the Cox and McCubbins model, suggesting that procedural rules in the House are shaped by dynamic coalitions that often cross party lines. They argue that majority parties cannot reliably maintain procedural control unless they are large and cohesive, as punishing defectors is politically risky in closely divided legislatures. Procedural decisions are contingent on the balance of power on the House floor rather than being purely a function of majority-party preferences. Schickler and Rich also highlight the limitations of partisan control in areas such as committee jurisdictions and discharge rules, where cross-party alliances and ideological considerations frequently override party cohesion. They contend that the majority-party procedural dominance observed in recent decades is a historical anomaly rather than a consistent pattern throughout congressional history.
8. **Methods:** The authors analyze House decision-making from 1919 to 1994, focusing on three domains of procedural control: the discharge process, the powers of the Rules Committee, and committee jurisdictions. They use historical records, including the Congressional Record and Congressional Quarterly Almanac, to document procedural changes and instances of majority-party defections. Additionally, they examine the conditions under which majority-party members were sanctioned for procedural disloyalty, using data on seniority violations and committee assignments.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Changes in House rules occur when the balance of power on the floor shifts, even without changes in majority-party preferences.
  - Majority-party leaders are less likely to punish defectors when the party has a narrow majority or lacks cohesion.
  - Cross-party coalitions are more influential in shaping procedural rules than majority-party leaders during periods of low party homogeneity.

The hypotheses are largely supported. The authors demonstrate that procedural changes often reflect the influence of cross-party coalitions and shifting floor majorities, particularly during the mid-20th century. They also show that majority-party leaders were more successful in punishing defectors when their party was cohesive and held a substantial majority.
10. **Main findings:** Schickler and Rich find that majority-party dominance over House procedural rules is not consistent across time. From 1919 to the 1970s, procedural outcomes were frequently shaped by cross-party coalitions, with majority-party leaders unable to enforce party cohesion on key votes. The authors highlight that majority-party control has been more effective in areas such as the election of the Speaker and committee assignments but less so in shaping committee jurisdictions and discharge rules. They argue that the procedural dominance observed in the post-1970s period reflects unique conditions of increased party polarization and homogeneity, which were absent during earlier decades.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Procedural control by the majority party has been a precarious state of affairs, subject to erosion when cross-party coalitions emerge to challenge the party's dominance" (p. 1340).
  - "Our findings indicate that majority-party control of the House's procedural rules varies significantly with the size and homogeneity of the party, as well as with the nature of the issues under consideration" (p. 1342).
  - "Cross-party coalitions and ideological cleavages have consistently disrupted majority-party efforts to consolidate procedural control, particularly in the realm of committee jurisdictions and discharge rules" (p. 1359).

### 3.11.14 Party Government in the House Reconsidered: A Response to Cox and McCubbins

Schickler, E., & Rich, A. (1997b). Party Government in the House Reconsidered: A Response to Cox and McCubbins [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 41(4), 1387–1394. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2960494>

1. **Citation key:** schickler\_party\_1997
2. **Author(s):** Eric Schickler and Andrew Rich
3. **Year:** 1997
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** House of Representatives, party government, legislative institutions, procedural coalitions, congressional rules
6. **Summary:** Schickler and Rich respond to Cox and McCubbins' (1993, 1994) party cartel model by challenging its applicability to historical changes in House rules. They argue that procedural reforms from the 1920s to the 1970s often reflected cross-party coalitions and ideological balances on the House floor, rather than being driven solely by majority-party interests. The authors contend that the party cartel model overstates the dominance of the majority party in shaping House institutions, particularly during periods of internal party divisions and strong minority opposition.
7. **Theory:** The authors critique the party cartel model, which asserts that the majority party controls House rules to protect its institutional dominance and advance collective interests. Schickler and Rich argue that this perspective overlooks the role of cross-party coalitions, ideological cleavages, and floor dynamics in shaping procedural outcomes. They posit that shifts in the ideological balance of forces on the House floor—rather than changes in the majority party's cohesion or median preferences—better explain many rule changes. The authors highlight the limits of party discipline and the importance of broader institutional dynamics, including committee jurisdictions and minority rights, in understanding legislative organization. Their framework emphasizes the interaction between historical institutional constraints and contemporary ideological alignments, suggesting that procedural changes are often driven by factors external to the majority-party caucus.
8. **Methods:** Schickler and Rich analyze procedural changes in the House of Representatives from the 1920s to the 1970s, using historical records, roll-call votes, and data on party cohesion. They examine specific cases of rule changes, including committee jurisdiction disputes and discharge rule liberalization, to test whether these reforms align with majority-party interests. The authors also use Poole and Rosenthal's NOMINATE scores to evaluate ideological shifts on the House floor and assess their relationship with procedural reforms.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Procedural reforms are driven by changes in the ideological balance of forces on the House floor, not solely by majority-party interests.
  - Cross-party coalitions are more influential than majority-party cohesion in shaping key rule changes during periods of low party homogeneity.
  - The majority party's ability to enforce procedural control depends on its size, cohesion, and the broader ideological context.

The hypotheses are supported. Schickler and Rich demonstrate that procedural changes often reflect cross-party coalitions and ideological alignments on the floor, rather than being dictated by majority-party preferences. They show that rule changes opposed by the majority-party median were frequently adopted through bipartisan efforts, particularly during the mid-20th century.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds that majority-party dominance over procedural rule-making is far from universal. From the 1920s to the 1970s, key reforms—such as changes to committee jurisdictions and the liberalization of discharge rules—were often driven by cross-party coalitions and ideological floor dynamics. The authors highlight cases where majority-party cohesion was insufficient to block rule changes, including instances where minority-party members united with dissident majority-party legislators to alter House institutions. They argue that the party cartel model cannot fully explain these outcomes, as it overlooks the importance of broader floor dynamics and historical legacies in shaping procedural decisions.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Our analysis of House rules changes discloses two central features of institutional development... major features of House institutions were shaped far more by cross-party and universalistic coalitions than by party-based coalitions" (p. 1387).
- "House rules respond more to changes in the ideological balance of forces on the floor... than to changes in the preferences of a majority of majority party members" (p. 1388).
- "Cross-party coalitions and ideological cleavages have consistently disrupted majority-party efforts to consolidate procedural control, particularly in the realm of committee jurisdictions and discharge rules" (p. 1393).

### 3.11.15 Examining the Bonding Effects of Party: A Comparative Analysis of Roll-Call Voting in the U.S. and Confederate Houses

Jenkins, J. A. (1999). Examining the Bonding Effects of Party: A Comparative Analysis of Roll-Call Voting in the U.S. and Confederate Houses [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 43(4), 1144–1165. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2991821>

1. **Citation key:** jenkins\_examining\_1999

2. **Author(s):** Jeffery A. Jenkins
3. **Year:** 1999
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** party effects, roll-call voting, legislative behavior, Confederate Congress, U.S. Congress, natural experiment
6. **Summary:** Jenkins evaluates whether political parties act as bonding mechanisms to stabilize legislative roll-call voting by comparing the U.S. House, which had a strong two-party system during the Civil War, to the Confederate House, which lacked formal political parties. Through a natural experiment, Jenkins uses roll-call data and vote-scaling techniques to demonstrate how party structure influenced legislative behavior and predictability. The findings show that political parties significantly affect legislative stability and roll-call predictability, with the U.S. House displaying far greater ideological coherence than the Confederate Congress.
7. **Theory:** Jenkins develops his analysis by contrasting two competing perspectives: the "partisanship" view, which posits that parties structure voting behavior by coordinating legislative action, and the "preference" view, which argues that legislators' preferences alone dictate voting outcomes. Drawing on partisan theory, Jenkins asserts that political parties enhance the predictability of roll-call voting by organizing members around a coherent agenda, bundling diverse preferences into a unified framework. Party leaders enforce discipline and cohesion through incentives like committee assignments and agenda control, which maintain party reputations as reliable electoral brands. In the absence of party structures, as in the Confederate House, legislators lack these organizing mechanisms, leading to fragmented voting patterns and reduced predictability. Jenkins frames his study as a test of whether political parties independently influence roll-call voting, above and beyond individual member preferences.
8. **Methods:** Jenkins conducts a comparative analysis of roll-call voting in the U.S. House and Confederate House during the Civil War, employing Poole and Rosenthal's W-NOMINATE vote-scaling method. He analyzes the dimensionality and predictability of voting behavior using spatial fit metrics, including vote classification percentages, aggregate proportional reductions in error (APRE), and geometric mean probabilities (GMP). To isolate party effects, Jenkins also applies Snyder and Groseclose's method, which distinguishes between "free votes" (where party pressure is minimal) and "close votes" (where party influence is likely). By regressing close-vote scores on free-vote scores and party affiliation, Jenkins tests whether party independently affects vote choice in the U.S. House compared to the Confederate House.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Political parties enhance the predictability of roll-call voting by serving as bonding mechanisms that structure legislative behavior.
  - In the absence of parties, roll-call voting will exhibit lower dimensionality and predictability.
  - Party affiliation independently influences vote choice, beyond individual member preferences.
- Jenkins confirms these hypotheses, demonstrating that the U.S. House exhibited significantly higher roll-call predictability and spatial stability than the Confederate House, with party affiliation serving as a strong independent predictor of voting behavior.
10. **Main findings:** Jenkins finds that roll-call voting in the U.S. House was highly predictable, with classification rates exceeding 83%, compared to 68%-73% in the Confederate House. Spatial fit metrics, including APRE and GMP, similarly favor the U.S. House, underscoring the stabilizing influence of political parties. Snyder and Groseclose's method further reveals that party affiliation significantly shaped voting in the U.S. House, while former party affiliations in the Confederate House had no independent effect. These findings demonstrate that political parties act as bonding mechanisms, structuring legislative behavior and fostering ideological coherence.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Voting in the U.S. House was considerably more predictable than voting in the Confederate House. Moreover, these differences can be attributed to the existence (or nonexistence) of political parties" (p. 1156).
  - "Parties are obviously an important constraining influence on members' vote choices, ensuring stability and coherence in legislative behavior" (p. 1159).
  - "Party affiliation was a significant predictor of vote choice in the U.S. House, while former party labels had no effect on voting in the no-party Confederate House" (p. 1161).

### 3.11.16 Uncovering the Hidden Effect of Party

Binder, S. A., Lawrence, E. D., & Maltzman, F. (1999). Uncovering the Hidden Effect of Party [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 61(3), 815–831. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2647830>

1. **Citation key:** binder\_uncovering\_1999
2. **Author(s):** Sarah A. Binder, Eric D. Lawrence, and Forrest Maltzman
3. **Year:** 1999
4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** party effects, legislative behavior, preferences, majority party, discharge petitions, U.S. House
6. **Summary:** Binder, Lawrence, and Maltzman revisit debates surrounding the influence of parties in legislative behavior, particularly in light of Krehbiel's (1995) claims that preferences, rather than partisanship, drive legislative outcomes. Using the 1994 "A to Z" discharge petition campaign as a case study, they challenge this nonpartisan model by demonstrating that party effects are visible when alternative measures of preferences are considered. They con-

clude that majority-party leaders can exert an independent influence over legislative behavior, contrary to purely preference-based models.

7. **Theory:** The authors propose that while legislators' preferences play a significant role in legislative behavior, the majority party retains independent tools—such as procedural controls and leadership pressures—that allow it to shape outcomes. They argue that party effects are often obscured by collinearity between party affiliation and preference measures, particularly when partisan interest groups heavily influence these measures. By examining alternative preference metrics and incorporating the concept of "pocket voting," the authors highlight how party leaders can prevent defections and ensure outcomes align with majority-party goals. This framework challenges nonpartisan theories by illustrating how parties function as mechanisms for coalition maintenance and legislative control.
8. **Methods:** Binder, Lawrence, and Maltzman replicate and expand upon Krehbiel's analysis of the 1994 "A to Z" discharge petition campaign in the U.S. House. They compare the predictive power of party membership using different preference measures, including National Taxpayers Union (NTU) scores, Concord Coalition ratings, and factor-analytic scores derived from multiple ideological indices. They also analyze roll-call data and party cohesion to assess the independent effects of party affiliation on members' behavior. Probit models with robust standard errors are used to evaluate waffling decisions among cosponsors.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Majority-party membership influences legislative behavior independently of members' policy preferences.
- Party effects are more likely to be observable when alternative preference measures, less influenced by partisan interest groups, are used.
- Party leaders use procedural tools and strategic incentives to maintain cohesion and prevent defections in critical votes.

These hypotheses are confirmed. The authors demonstrate that party membership significantly predicts waffling behavior when alternative preference metrics, such as Concord Coalition scores, are used. Additionally, they find evidence that party leaders successfully leveraged "pocket voting" to defeat the discharge petition, highlighting the strategic role of leadership in legislative outcomes.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds that party effects are evident in the 1994 "A to Z" discharge petition campaign, particularly when nonpartisan preference measures are used. While NTU scores suggest minimal party influence, the substitution of Concord Coalition and factor-analytic scores reveals a significant role for majority-party membership in shaping legislative behavior. The authors also identify strategic use of "pocket voting" by Democratic leaders, who secured commitments from members to withhold signatures until the discharge petition's failure was assured. These findings support the argument that party leaders can influence legislative outcomes independently of member preferences, challenging Krehbiel's preference-based model.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "We argue here that it is premature to reject the hypothesis that majority party leaders can exert an independent effect on the behavior of their caucus members" (p. 816).
- "To the extent that party leadership or party loyalty affects votes that are weighted heavily in the NTU ratings, NTU will explain some of the variance more properly accorded to party" (p. 823).
- "The fate of the A to Z bill suggests that Democratic leaders were successful in diverting the policy outcome away from the preferences of the median voter" (p. 828).

#### 3.11.17 Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting

Poole, K. T., & Rosenthal, H. (2000). *Congress: A Political-economic History of Roll Call Voting* [Google-Books-ID: x9vyGly7hLcC]. Oxford University Press

1. **Citation key:** poole\_congress\_2000
2. **Author(s):** Keith T. Poole and Howard Rosenthal
3. **Year:** 2000
4. **Publication:** Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting (Oxford University Press)
5. **Keywords:** roll call voting, ideology, legislative behavior, Congress, NOMINATE, polarization
6. **Summary:** Poole and Rosenthal analyze over 200 years of congressional roll-call votes to argue that ideological structure, rather than economic or strategic interests, underpins legislative behavior. Using their NOMINATE method to recover legislator positions on a spatial continuum, the authors demonstrate that most roll-call votes can be explained by a one- or two-dimensional model, reflecting a persistent ideological framework over time. The book sheds light on long-term trends, including the rise of polarization, the role of parties, and the emergence of coalition patterns in Congress.
7. **Theory:** The authors posit that ideology is the dominant organizing principle in congressional voting, defined as a stable and predictable framework along which legislators align themselves. Poole and Rosenthal argue that this ideological structure transcends individual roll-call votes and reflects deeper, enduring conflicts, such as economic redistribution and, in certain historical periods, racial issues. They assert that parties play a critical role in maintaining this structure through coalition-building and logrolling, which stabilize legislative behavior. Additionally, they contend that the ideological dimension simplifies complex policy choices into manageable conflicts, thereby fostering legislative predictability and continuity. This framework challenges economic and constituency-based explanations of voting behavior, emphasizing instead the centrality of ideological alignment and party influence.

**8. Methods:** Poole and Rosenthal employ their NOMINATE methodology, a probabilistic spatial modeling approach, to analyze over 11 million individual roll-call decisions across 70,000 votes from 1789 to 1985. Their method estimates legislators' ideological positions in a common policy space, allowing for dynamic comparisons over time. They use a combination of one-dimensional and two-dimensional models to capture voting patterns, assessing the relative importance of ideological versus economic factors. The authors also apply historical case studies to contextualize their quantitative findings, focusing on periods of significant legislative change, such as the Civil War and the New Deal.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Most roll-call votes can be explained by one or two ideological dimensions, with a single dimension dominating in most periods.
- Parties act as stabilizing forces, maintaining ideological coherence and facilitating coalition-building across issues.
- Polarization and party realignments are key drivers of changes in the ideological structure of Congress.

The hypotheses are strongly supported. Poole and Rosenthal show that a one-dimensional model predicts over 80% of roll-call votes, with a second dimension—related to race—becoming significant during the Civil War and civil rights eras. They also highlight the stabilizing role of parties in fostering ideological coherence and managing legislative conflict.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find that congressional roll-call voting has remained remarkably structured over time, with most votes aligning along a single ideological dimension. Party loyalty and coalition-building are shown to be critical in maintaining this structure, particularly during periods of polarization. The two-dimensional model, which incorporates racial issues, is essential for understanding key historical moments, such as the Reconstruction and civil rights movements. Poole and Rosenthal also demonstrate that their NOMINATE scores outperform constituency-based models in explaining legislative behavior, emphasizing the centrality of ideology and party dynamics. They conclude that the increasing polarization of Congress reflects a return to historical patterns, with parties playing an ever-stronger role in shaping ideological divisions.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Ideology*: A stable and predictable framework that organizes legislative preferences across a wide set of issues.
- *NOMINATE*: A spatial modeling method that uses roll-call data to estimate legislators' ideological positions in a common policy space.
- *Polarization*: The growing ideological divergence between political parties, often accompanied by increased party cohesion and reduced cross-party cooperation.

### 3.11.18 Institutional Change in the House of Representatives, 1867-1998

Schickler, E. (2000). Institutional Change in the House of Representatives, 1867-1998: A Test of Partisan and Ideological Power Balance Models [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 94(2), 269–288. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2586012>

**1. Citation key:** schickler\_institutional\_2000

**2. Author(s):** Eric Schickler

**3. Year:** 2000

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** House of Representatives, institutional change, partisan theories, ideological balance, congressional rules

**6. Summary:** Schickler investigates the factors driving institutional changes in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1867 to 1998. His study evaluates three competing theoretical models of rules changes in the House: the majority party cartel model, the conditional party government model, and an ideological power balance model. Using historical data and quantitative measures, Schickler argues that shifts in the ideological balance of power on the House floor, particularly changes in the position of the median legislator, better explain partisan rules changes than either party-based model.

**7. Theory:** The central theory advanced by Schickler posits that the ideological balance of power on the House floor, rather than internal party cohesion or polarization, is the primary determinant of rules changes. He critiques the majority party cartel model, which emphasizes the ability of a unified majority party to dominate institutional design, and the conditional party government model, which links party homogeneity and polarization to institutional change. Instead, Schickler highlights the importance of the median legislator's position, arguing that when the floor median aligns with the majority party, pro-majority rules changes are likely. Conversely, when the median shifts toward the minority party, rules changes favoring the minority become more probable. This approach integrates aspects of Krehbiel's nonpartisan model, emphasizing the floor median's pivotal role while acknowledging the relevance of partisan dynamics.

**8. Methods:** Schickler conducts a systematic analysis of House rules changes with significant partisan implications across 66 Congresses. The study relies on historical sources, debates in the *Congressional Record*, and measures such as DW-NOMINATE scores to capture ideological positions. The dependent variable is coded to reflect whether rules changes advantaged (+1), disadvantaged (-1), or had no net effect (0) on the majority party. Independent variables include changes in the floor median's position, majority party homogeneity, party control, and party polarization. Schickler employs ordered logistic regression to test the explanatory power of each model and to isolate the impact of ideological shifts on partisan rules changes.

**9. Hypotheses:** Schickler tests several hypotheses derived from the three theoretical models:

- **H1:** Rules changes favoring the majority party are more likely as the majority party becomes more ideologically homogeneous.
- **H2:** A change in party control of the House increases the likelihood of partisan rules changes favoring the new majority.
- **H3:** Rules changes favoring the majority party are more likely when the party's relative capacity (unity and size) increases.
- **H4:** As the majority party's share of seats decreases, it is more likely to adopt rules that tighten its agenda control.
- **H5:** Increased polarization between the majority and minority parties leads to more pro-majority rules changes.
- **H6:** Rules changes favoring the majority party are more likely when the floor median shifts closer to the majority party.

Schickler finds strong support for H6, moderate support for H5, and limited or no support for the remaining hypotheses.

- 10. Main findings:** Schickler's analysis demonstrates that changes in the ideological balance of power, specifically the position of the floor median relative to the party medians, significantly influence partisan rules changes in the House. Shifts in majority party homogeneity or party control, as predicted by the majority party cartel and conditional party government models, have little explanatory power. For example, a shift in the floor median toward the majority party substantially increases the likelihood of pro-majority rules changes, while a shift toward the minority has the opposite effect. Schickler's findings challenge the growing emphasis on majority party dominance in recent scholarship, suggesting instead that the floor median's position plays a critical role in shaping institutional change.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The data analysis suggests the preeminent importance of shifts in the ideological balance. Two variables identified by the conditional party government theory, party polarization and party capacity, obtain limited support, but their effect is neither as robust nor as large in magnitude as that of change in the median voter's position" (p. 269).
- "Contrary to the fear that legislative institutions are likely to inherit the potential for 'endless cycling' inherent in a multidimensional policy space... the ideological power balance model suggests that changes in House rules follow a predictable and orderly pattern" (p. 276).
- "The results suggest that change in the ideological balance of power on the floor, as measured by the floor median, offers a better explanation of House rules changes than do the internal characteristics of the majority party" (p. 280).

### 3.11.19 Estimating Party Influence in Congressional Roll-Call Voting

Snyder, J. M., & Groseclose, T. (2000). Estimating Party Influence in Congressional Roll-Call Voting [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 44(2), 193–211. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2669305>

1. **Citation key:** snyder\_estimating\_2000
2. **Author(s):** James M. Snyder, Jr. and Tim Groseclose
3. **Year:** 2000
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** party influence, roll-call voting, congressional voting, party discipline, legislative behavior
6. **Summary:** Snyder and Groseclose develop a method to estimate the influence of political parties on congressional roll-call votes, focusing on how party loyalty affects voting patterns independently of legislators' personal preferences. Their approach combines analysis of lopsided and close roll-call votes from the U.S. Congress (1871–1998), using these data to distinguish between party-driven behavior and individual preferences. Their findings reveal strong evidence of party influence across virtually all Congresses, with significant variations over time and across issue areas.
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the assumption that high correlations between party affiliation and roll-call voting necessarily indicate party influence. They argue that these correlations might instead reflect shared preferences among party members. By isolating situations where party pressure is expected to be minimal (lopsided votes), Snyder and Groseclose seek to identify the extent of party influence as distinct from legislators' intrinsic preferences. They posit that party leaders strategically allocate resources to enforce discipline on key votes, especially those critical to the party's agenda, such as procedural motions and budget-related legislation. The theory incorporates the idea that party labels serve as "brand names," offering voters low-cost signals about policy positions. Furthermore, party discipline ensures coherence in these brand messages, which may involve trading favors, imposing punishments, or leveraging member loyalty.
8. **Methods:** The authors use a two-stage procedure. First, they estimate legislators' intrinsic preferences based on lopsided roll-call votes, where party influence is assumed to be negligible. They employ a linear factor model to derive legislators' ideal points. In the second stage, these preference estimates are incorporated into regressions on close roll-call votes, adding party dummy variables to capture the residual influence of party loyalty. Snyder and Groseclose analyze data from 42nd to 105th Congresses (1871–1998), employing both least-squares (LS) and instrumental variables (IV) techniques to account for measurement error. They also conduct Monte Carlo simulations to validate the robustness of their method under varying conditions, such as collinearity between party membership and preferences.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - **H1:** Party influence is more likely to be observed on close roll-call votes than on lopsided votes, as party leaders

concentrate resources where outcomes are uncertain.

- **H2:** Party influence is higher on procedural votes (e.g., motions to end debate or recommit) than on final passage or amendments.
- **H3:** Party influence varies by issue area, being strongest on "bread-and-butter" issues like taxation and social welfare and weakest on moral issues like abortion or gun control.

Their findings strongly support H1 and H2 while offering nuanced evidence for H3.

**10. Main findings:** Snyder and Groseclose demonstrate that party influence is a significant factor in congressional voting, with an average of 54% of close roll-call votes showing statistically significant party effects in the House. Party influence is particularly strong on procedural votes (e.g., rules and motions to recommit) and on major issues such as budget resolutions, tax policy, and social welfare legislation. Conversely, party effects are minimal on moral issues, such as abortion and school prayer, where legislators are often free to "vote their conscience." Over time, the level of party influence has fluctuated, reflecting changes in party resources and the broader political environment. Importantly, their results suggest that preference similarity among party members explains a substantial portion of party voting, but independent party influence also plays a critical role, particularly in shaping landmark legislation.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The results suggest that party influence appears most frequently on large, bread-and-butter issues that divide the parties—taxation, budget resolutions, social security, and social welfare policy" (p. 194).
- "Interestingly, we find almost no evidence of party influence on 'moral' issues such as abortion, homosexuality, and school prayer. These are often described as issues where members are free to vote their conscience" (p. 194).
- "Our findings indicate that party clearly matters in congressional voting, even after controlling for preferences" (p. 206).

### 3.11.20 Estimating Party Influence on Roll Call Voting: Regression Coefficients versus Classification Success

Jr. J. M. S., & Groseclose, T. (2001). Estimating Party Influence on Roll Call Voting: Regression Coefficients versus Classification Success. *American Political Science Review*, 95(3), 689–698. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055401003070>

1. **Citation key:** jr\_estimating\_2001
2. **Author(s):** James M. Snyder, Jr. and Tim Groseclose
3. **Year:** 2001
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** party influence, roll-call voting, congressional voting, probabilistic voting, classification models
6. **Summary:** Snyder and Groseclose respond to critiques of their earlier work on estimating party influence in congressional roll-call voting, particularly those made by McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal. They defend their methodology, which relies on lopsided roll calls to estimate legislators' ideal points, and argue that their approach produces accurate estimates for moderate legislators. Furthermore, they demonstrate that alternative methods, such as the classification-success model proposed by their critics, systematically underestimate the extent of party influence.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that congressional roll-call voting is best understood as a probabilistic rather than deterministic process. They assert that party influence manifests in legislators' voting behavior and is particularly evident in close roll-call votes. They challenge the classification-success model's assumptions, showing that it fails to detect significant party influence, even when it is present. Their theory emphasizes that party leaders strategically exert influence on legislators to ensure cohesive outcomes, especially on key policy votes. By isolating voting behavior on lopsided votes—where party influence is minimal—they estimate legislators' intrinsic preferences, using these as a baseline to measure the residual influence of party pressure on closer votes. The authors integrate empirical observations with Monte Carlo simulations to validate their theoretical claims.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a multi-stage methodological framework. First, the authors use lopsided roll-call votes to estimate legislators' ideal points, leveraging linear factor models to generate baseline preferences. They compare these estimates with independent data from the National Political Awareness Test (NPAT), confirming their accuracy. Second, they analyze roll-call voting patterns across the 103rd to 105th Congresses using Poole and Rosenthal's DW-NOMINATE scaling model. Finally, Snyder and Groseclose simulate probabilistic voting scenarios to assess the reliability of their estimates and critique the classification-success model proposed by McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal. Key variables include legislators' ideal points, party affiliation, and voting outcomes on close versus lopsided roll calls.
9. **Hypotheses:** Snyder and Groseclose hypothesize that party influence is systematically underestimated by the classification-success model and that their approach, relying on lopsided votes, accurately captures legislators' intrinsic preferences and party influence. They further hypothesize that roll-call voting behavior reflects a probabilistic process rather than deterministic patterns.
10. **Main findings:** The authors demonstrate that their lopsided roll-call method produces robust estimates of legislators' ideal points, which closely align with external measures such as NPAT. They find that party influence is significant and measurable in congressional roll-call voting, contrary to claims by McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal. Their results show that party leaders exert considerable pressure on close votes, moving policy outcomes toward party medians. Additionally, their simulations reveal that the classification-success model systematically fails to detect party influence, even under conditions of strong party discipline. Snyder and Groseclose conclude that probabilistic voting models better capture the nuances of roll-call behavior, highlighting the limitations of deterministic approaches.
11. **Key quotations:**

- “These results show that congressional roll call voting is best described by a probabilistic rather than an errorless voting model” (p. 690).
- “The ideal point estimates obtained using lopsided roll calls are very similar to those obtained using the NPAT survey. In fact, the estimates derived from the NPAT survey are more similar to those based on lopsided roll calls than they are to those based on close votes” (p. 692).
- “Even when party influence is large—large enough to be consistent with one definition of ‘strong party government’—the improvement in classification success often will be as small or even smaller than the 1.5% that McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal find” (p. 696).

### 3.11.21 The Hunt for Party Discipline in Congress

McCarty, N., Poole, K. T., & Rosenthal, H. (2001). The Hunt for Party Discipline in Congress. *American Political Science Review*, 95(3), 673–687. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055401003069>

- 1. Citation key:** mccarty\_hunt\_2001
- 2. Author(s):** Nolan McCarty, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal
- 3. Year:** 2001
- 4. Publication:** American Political Science Review
- 5. Keywords:** party discipline, roll-call voting, congressional voting, spatial voting models, legislative behavior
- 6. Summary:** McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal critically examine the role of party discipline in congressional roll-call voting between 1947 and 1998. They propose an alternative to Snyder and Groseclose’s methodology, which they argue overestimates party influence. Using a spatial model, they demonstrate that party discipline minimally improves classification accuracy and suggest that party effects are primarily reflected in legislators’ ideal points rather than strategic manipulation by party leaders on specific votes.
- 7. Theory:** The authors challenge the view that party discipline is a dominant force in congressional voting. They argue that while voting patterns often align with party lines, this alignment stems from the sorting of member preferences rather than active party pressure. Using a spatial model of voting, they theorize that party pressure could manifest as distinct ideological “cutpoints” for Democrats and Republicans on roll-call votes. However, they contend that such pressures minimally affect legislative outcomes, as voting behavior is more closely tied to legislators’ intrinsic preferences shaped by constituency and ideology. Their framework posits that party discipline is more evident in the ideological shifts of legislators who switch parties rather than in day-to-day roll-call votes.
- 8. Methods:** McCarty and colleagues utilize a nonparametric classification model to test the effect of party discipline on roll-call voting. They analyze data from the U.S. House of Representatives (80th–105th Congresses) and employ both one- and two-cutpoint spatial models to capture the ideological placement of legislators. To assess the impact of party discipline, they compare classification success rates between these models. They also examine the behavior of party switchers to measure the influence of party affiliation on legislators’ ideal points. Their analysis includes Monte Carlo simulations to evaluate the robustness of their critique of the Snyder-Groseclose model.
- 9. Hypotheses:** McCarty et al. hypothesize that:
  - Party discipline does not significantly enhance classification accuracy in spatial voting models.
  - The effect of party discipline is more pronounced in close votes than in lopsided ones.
  - Party affiliation influences legislators’ ideal points, as evidenced by the behavior of party switchers.
- 10. Main findings:** The authors find that incorporating party discipline into spatial models offers minimal improvement in explaining roll-call votes. Their results show that two-cutpoint models provide only marginal gains in classification accuracy, with improvements averaging less than 1% in recent Congresses. They argue that party influence is overstated in regression-based methods, such as Snyder and Groseclose’s model, which cannot disentangle preference-based voting from party pressure. Analysis of party switchers reveals substantial ideological shifts consistent with their new party affiliation, indicating that party influence is more evident in long-term alignment rather than short-term manipulation of roll-call outcomes.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “The effects of party pressures can be represented in a spatial model by allowing each party to have its own cutting line on roll call votes. Adding a second cutting line makes, at best, a marginal improvement over the standard single-line model” (p. 673).
  - “Our empirical analysis involves not only testing the implications of our methodological critique of Snyder and Groseclose but also testing the implications of their model of party discipline with our two-cutpoint model” (p. 676).
  - “Party discipline, we conclude, is manifest in the location of the legislator’s ideal point in the standard spatial model. It is not a strategic variable manipulated by party whips from one roll call to another” (p. 686).

### 3.11.22 On Measuring Partisanship in Roll-Call Voting: The U.S. House of Representatives, 1877-1999

Cox, G. W., & Poole, K. T. (2002). On Measuring Partisanship in Roll-Call Voting: The U.S. House of Representatives, 1877-1999 [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(3), 477–489. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3088393>

- 1. Citation key:** cox\_measuring\_2002
- 2. Author(s):** Gary W. Cox and Keith T. Poole

3. **Year:** 2002
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** partisanship, roll-call voting, spatial models, congressional voting, Rice index
6. **Summary:** Cox and Poole develop a spatial model to evaluate the role of partisanship in roll-call voting in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1877 to 1999. They introduce a new estimator for party influence that addresses methodological challenges in earlier studies. By analyzing data from 59 Congresses, they provide robust evidence of significant and consistent party effects, particularly on procedural, organizational, and label-defining votes. Their findings counter the long-held view that parties play a negligible role in shaping roll-call behavior.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that partisanship influences legislative voting through strategic pressures exerted by party leaders. They argue that party influence should be systematically higher on specific types of votes, such as procedural motions and organizational decisions, which define the party's legislative agenda and brand. Using the Rice index as a measure of interparty voting differences, Cox and Poole test whether observed party dissimilarity exceeds the expected value under a null model of no party influence. Their approach integrates ideal point estimation and spatial modeling to account for member preferences while isolating party effects. This framework challenges previous claims of minimal party influence, offering an alternative perspective that highlights the role of procedural reforms, such as the 1961 Rules Committee changes and the 1973 subcommittee reforms, in shaping partisan dynamics over time.
8. **Methods:** Cox and Poole employ a two-stage methodological approach. First, they estimate legislators' ideal points using Poole's DW-NOMINATE scaling method for roll-call votes, focusing on cutpoints and gap parameters. Second, they compare observed Rice indices for each roll call to the expected indices under a null model of constant party influence, testing whether deviations are statistically significant. Their analysis spans 59 Congresses, examining roll calls across substantive, procedural, and organizational categories. They use both one- and two-dimensional models to ensure robustness and validate their findings through bootstrap simulations. The dependent variable is the difference between the actual and expected Rice indices, with higher values indicating stronger party influence.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Party influence is systematically higher on procedural, organizational, and label-defining votes than on substantive votes.
  - Party influence has increased following key procedural reforms, such as the packing of the Rules Committee in 1961 and the procedural reforms of 1973.
10. **Main findings:** Cox and Poole find significant evidence of party influence in roll-call voting throughout the period studied, with only one Congress (59th) failing to show substantial party effects. Party influence is strongest on procedural and organizational votes, such as those concerning the election of the Speaker or adoption of House rules. Their results indicate a marked increase in party influence after the 1961 Rules Committee reforms and the 1973 subcommittee changes, supporting the procedural cartel theory. The analysis reveals that even modest increases in the Rice index can correspond to substantial shifts in voting patterns, such as 20-40 additional votes influenced by party pressure in high-stakes procedural contexts.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Our results refute the widespread notion that parties in the House have typically had negligible influence on roll-call voting behavior" (p. 477).
  - "We propose our method because we believe the path-breaking Snyder-Groseclose (2000) estimator is biased toward finding party effects, while the McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (2001) article misinterprets the statistical tests they provide" (p. 478).
  - "Party pressure does affect a noticeable number of votes, even controlling for ideal points that themselves impound party pressures" (p. 488).

### 3.11.23 Strategic Party Government: Party Influence in Congress, 1789–2000

Lebo, M. J., McGlynn, A. J., & Koger, G. (2007). Strategic Party Government: Party Influence in Congress, 1789–2000 [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00262.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(3), 464–481. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00262.x>

1. **Citation key:** lebo\_strategic\_2007
2. **Author(s):** Matthew J. Lebo, Adam J. McGlynn, and Gregory Koger
3. **Year:** 2007
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** party government, legislative behavior, electoral competition, party unity, strategic interaction
6. **Summary:** Lebo, McGlynn, and Koger introduce the Strategic Party Government (SPG) model to explain fluctuations in Congressional party influence from 1789 to 2000. Their framework incorporates both electoral incentives and strategic interactions between parties, emphasizing that partisanship balances electoral benefits from legislative victories and electoral costs from high party unity. Using longitudinal data from both the House and Senate, they demonstrate that party unity is shaped by opposition behavior, historical patterns, and institutional changes, with implications for party influence and electoral outcomes.
7. **Theory:** The SPG model posits that legislative parties strategically balance the electoral costs of heightened unity—potential voter backlash from forced cohesion—with the electoral benefits derived from winning legislative

battles. Parties are conceptualized as actors seeking to maximize seat share, delegating power to leaders to set agendas, manage debates, and mobilize votes. This contrasts with Conditional Party Government (CPG) and cartel theories by focusing on interparty dynamics. The model assumes that party unity is influenced by both internal preferences (cohesion and ideological divergence) and external factors (opposition party behavior and electoral incentives). Notably, parties adapt unity levels in response to past performance and opposition strategy, striving to maintain long-term equilibrium. The authors argue that the costs and benefits of party unity vary with institutional and electoral contexts, such as Senate elections transitioning to direct vote in 1913, which increased the electoral risks of partisanship.

**8. Methods:** The authors analyze party behavior in Congress from 1789 to 2000 using fractional time-series analysis and ARFIMA (autoregressive fractionally integrated moving average) models. Their dependent variable, party unity, measures roll-call cohesion. Independent variables include opposition unity, party size, ideological cohesion, and lagged differences in party unity. They test hypotheses about strategic interactions between parties using three-stage least squares regression models for the House and Senate. The authors assess temporal patterns of unity by examining fractional cointegration, allowing them to evaluate long-term equilibrium tendencies in party interactions. Additionally, they analyze the electoral consequences of unity by regressing changes in party seat share on past party unity and legislative success rates.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Opposition party unity is a major determinant of the governing party's unity, as parties adjust cohesiveness based on opposition strength.
- Interparty unity gaps are corrected over time as both parties adapt to achieve equilibrium.
- Party unity imposes electoral costs on individual legislators but provides aggregate electoral benefits through legislative victories.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds strong evidence for strategic interactions between parties. Opposition unity significantly predicts the governing party's unity, with a 1% increase in opposition unity prompting nearly proportional increases in governing party cohesion. Electoral consequences of party unity reveal a double-edged sword: a 1% increase in party unity costs an average of one House seat and 0.6 Senate seats, but legislative victories mitigate these costs by bolstering party reputation. Historical trends highlight a shift toward higher unity over time, particularly post-1970s. The analysis also confirms the CPG model's core predictions, as intraparty cohesion and ideological distance between parties positively influence unity. Lastly, Senate Democrats exhibit faster correction of interparty unity gaps than Republicans, attributed to institutional differences like longer terms.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Legislative victories may also help solidify or expand party coalitions, provide campaign resources to party members and candidates, or reshape electoral rules in the majority party's favor" (p. 466).
- "Opposition unity is the strongest determinant of party unity—of far greater importance than any measure of individual preferences" (p. 473).
- "Our analysis explains a substantial portion of the variance in party unity, demonstrating that strategic party behavior complements preferences as an explanation of variation in party influence" (p. 476).

## 3.12 Parties and Policymaking

### 3.12.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of parties and policymaking examines the extent to which political parties influence legislative agendas, shape policy outcomes, and structure political conflict. Early theoretical contributions conceptualized parties as mechanisms for collective action, organizing legislative behavior and providing electoral accountability. Over time, scholars have debated the conditions under which parties exert substantive control over policy, with models ranging from strong party governance to theories of individualistic policymaking. Key debates include whether unified governments produce systematically different policy outcomes than divided governments, how parties mediate interest group pressures, and the extent to which party influence is constrained by institutional factors such as bicameralism and federalism. Recent scholarship integrates strategic theories of party behavior, emphasizing how parties balance electoral incentives with policy goals and how interparty competition shapes legislative strategies.
- **Theories of Party Influence in Policymaking:** Foundational research on parties and policymaking builds upon the classic party government model, which asserts that partisan control of government leads to coherent policy programs reflecting party ideology. Schattschneider (1952) argued that parties serve as essential instruments for managing conflict and organizing policy debates, providing a structured means for translating electoral mandates into policy outcomes. Building on this, Duverger (1964) distinguished between cadre parties and mass parties, theorizing that party structure influences the degree of ideological cohesion and policymaking efficiency. Later, Conditional Party Government (CPG) theory posited that party influence is strongest when there is high ideological homogeneity within the majority party, allowing leaders to enforce discipline and advance a unified policy agenda. Meanwhile, cartel party theory (Cox and McCubbins, 2005) suggested that legislative parties operate as agenda-setting cartels, controlling the flow of legislation to maintain electoral advantage. Collectively, these theories illustrate the varying degrees of party influence in shaping public policy, contingent on internal cohesion and institutional constraints.
- **Unified vs. Divided Government in Policy Production:** One of the central debates in the literature concerns the impact of unified versus divided government on legislative productivity and policy responsiveness. Coleman (1999) found that unified governments tend to produce more significant legislation, particularly when majoritarian institu-

tions enable cohesive party control. However, his findings also indicated that intraparty divisions and institutional fragmentation can moderate these advantages, suggesting that unified government does not automatically result in higher legislative output. Mayhew (1991) famously challenged this assumption, arguing that divided government does not significantly hinder legislative productivity, as policy breakthroughs often emerge from coalitional bargaining rather than strict partisan control. These competing perspectives underscore the importance of institutional context in determining whether party control translates into policy efficacy.

- **Strategic Party Behavior and Electoral Considerations:** More recent scholarship has explored the strategic calculations underpinning party policymaking. Krause and Bowman (2005) applied principal-agent theory to party behavior, arguing that federal policymakers strategically delegate authority to state governments based on partisan alignment, seeking to mitigate adverse selection risks. Other studies highlight how opposition behavior influences majority party cohesion; for instance, research on strategic party government (SPG) posits that governing parties adjust their level of unity in response to opposition strength, balancing the electoral risks of cohesion with the legislative benefits of party discipline. These studies emphasize that party policymaking is not merely a function of institutional structure but also of electoral and strategic considerations.
- **Partisan Policymaking and Interest Group Influence:** While parties play a dominant role in structuring policy debates, scholars have also examined how parties mediate the influence of interest groups and external actors. Gilens and Page (2014) found that economic elites and organized business interests wield substantial influence over policy outcomes, often independent of mass public preferences, raising concerns about democratic responsiveness. Other studies suggest that parties act as policy gatekeepers, selectively incorporating interest group demands into their platforms based on electoral viability and resource constraints. This research highlights the interdependent relationship between parties, interest groups, and policy outcomes, demonstrating that party policymaking is shaped not only by internal ideological commitments but also by external lobbying and financial incentives.
- **Institutional Constraints on Party Policymaking:** The ability of parties to shape policy is also contingent on institutional constraints, such as federalism, bicameralism, and executive-legislative relations. Darmofal et al. (2019) explored the spatial dimensions of policymaking, showing that party strategies and policy diffusion operate across state boundaries, particularly in labor policy and union strength. Other scholars have emphasized the veto power of institutions, demonstrating how Senate supermajorities, presidential vetoes, and judicial review limit the capacity of legislative parties to enact their agendas. These constraints underscore the structural limitations of party policymaking, suggesting that partisan control alone does not guarantee policy change.
- **Policy Diffusion and Learning in Party Systems:** Recent research has also examined how parties learn from policy diffusion across jurisdictions. Gilardi (2010) introduced a Bayesian learning model to explain how partisan actors adjust their policy positions based on observed outcomes in other countries, with right-leaning governments prioritizing political viability and left-leaning governments focusing on policy efficacy. This work contributes to a growing literature on comparative party policymaking, highlighting how parties operate within broader networks of policy emulation and adaptation.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** The study of parties and policymaking continues to evolve, with ongoing debates about polarization, party responsiveness, and the limits of partisan policymaking. Some scholars argue that increasing ideological polarization has enhanced party discipline while simultaneously reducing opportunities for bipartisan compromise, leading to legislative gridlock. Others contend that party responsiveness remains conditional, influenced by public mood, institutional barriers, and elite interests. Future research is likely to explore the role of digital mobilization and social media in shaping party strategies, the impact of intersectional representation on partisan policymaking, and the extent to which emerging populist movements challenge traditional party governance structures. Additionally, scholars are increasingly considering the ways in which policy feedback mechanisms reinforce partisan advantage, with policies themselves shaping future electoral coalitions and legislative behavior.

### 3.12.2 Political Parties and the Public Interest

Schattschneider, E. (1952). Political Parties and the Public Interest [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 280(1), 18–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162522800104>

1. **Citation key:** schattschneider\_political\_1952
2. **Author(s):** E. E. Schattschneider
3. **Year:** 1952
4. **Publication:** Political Science Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** political parties, public interest, majority rule, conflict, democracy
6. **Summary:** In this article, Schattschneider explores the role of political parties in serving the public interest within democratic systems. He examines the ethical dimensions of party politics and argues that political parties play a crucial role in organizing conflict and creating unity to achieve collective governance. The paper delves into the dynamics of conflict management, the formation of majorities, and the inherent relationship between political parties and the public interest. Schattschneider emphasizes that while political parties are not inherently moral entities, they are instrumental in protecting the public good when designed and utilized effectively.
7. **Theory:** Schattschneider posits that political parties are essential instruments for managing societal conflicts and unifying diverse interests under a collective framework. He argues that conflict is both inevitable and necessary in a democratic society, as it fosters unity within factions and encourages political engagement. The theory centers on the idea that political parties are not merely aggregations of private interests but are mechanisms for articulating and

promoting the public interest. Schattschneider introduces the concept of the "conflict of conflicts," where competing divisions within society limit the proliferation of tensions, enabling effective political organization. Furthermore, he highlights the necessity of majority rule as the foundation of democratic governance and contends that the public interest must guide the formation and actions of political parties. By emphasizing the interplay between conflict, unity, and public policy, Schattschneider underscores the centrality of parties in sustaining democratic institutions.

**8. Methods:** The article employs a theoretical and conceptual analysis of political parties within the broader context of democratic governance. Schattschneider draws on historical examples and contemporary observations of American politics to illustrate the interplay between societal cleavages, party organization, and public policy. He examines how various alignments—such as sectional, class-based, and ideological—have influenced the development and operation of political parties. Through these analyses, he evaluates the effectiveness of parties in mobilizing majorities and addressing the public interest, offering a normative framework for assessing their role in democracy.

**9. Hypotheses:** Schattschneider hypothesizes that political parties are the most effective means for articulating and advancing the public interest in a democracy. He also suggests that:

- Conflicts within society are necessary for fostering unity and political engagement.
- Majorities are formed not by aggregating special interests but through general controversies over the public interest.
- The effectiveness of a democratic system depends on the capacity of political parties to organize around broad public policies.

These hypotheses are supported by theoretical arguments and historical examples demonstrating the central role of political parties in managing conflict and promoting collective governance.

**10. Main findings:** Schattschneider concludes that political parties are indispensable to the functioning of democratic systems, as they provide a framework for organizing societal conflicts, creating unity, and articulating the public interest. He argues that modern political systems require parties capable of mobilizing majorities around general policies rather than narrow special interests. Schattschneider also highlights the limitations of alternative political structures, emphasizing that no other form of organization can effectively compete with parties in addressing national issues and uniting diverse constituencies. He asserts that while parties are not inherently moral, their utility lies in their ability to facilitate collective decision-making and protect the public good.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Every cleavage or alignment necessarily unites people while it divides them, and the unifying aspect of the process is as important as is the dividing aspect" (p. 19).
- "The scramble of private and special interests for concessions and advantages at a time when the whole community is involved in a struggle to continue its existence as a community is reminiscent of what Abraham Lincoln once said about people who try to rent rooms in burning houses" (p. 23).
- "As long as majoritarian politics is pursued in terms of controversies over the public interest, it may be carried on with great vigor without endangering the stability of the regime, because the public interest is best defended when competition for power is conducted on these terms" (p. 25).

### 3.12.3 Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State

Duverger, M. (1964). *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State* [Google-Books-ID: g9YPAQAAJ]. Methuen

**1. Citation key:** duverger\_political\_1964

**2. Author(s):** Maurice Duverger

**3. Year:** 1964

**4. Publication:** Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)

**5. Keywords:** political parties, party systems, democracy, proportional representation, single-party systems

**6. Summary:** Duverger provides a comprehensive analysis of political parties as the essential instruments of modern democracy. This foundational text explores the internal organization of parties, their relationship to political regimes, and their impact on governance and public participation. Using a comparative approach, Duverger examines diverse party systems worldwide, focusing on their structural dynamics and functional roles. The book offers a meticulous evaluation of topics such as proportional representation, single-party systems, party alliances, and the distinctions between right- and left-wing parties.

**7. Theory:** Duverger theorizes that political parties are indispensable to the operation of democratic governance as they provide a structured mechanism for political participation, representation, and policymaking. He distinguishes between mass parties and cadre parties, emphasizing how these organizational differences influence their functioning and societal impact. Duverger highlights the role of party systems in shaping government stability and policy outcomes, arguing that proportional representation fosters multi-party systems while majoritarian electoral systems encourage two-party dominance. The theory also delves into the hierarchical nature of party organizations, where leadership often centralizes decision-making. Duverger's analysis underscores the adaptive nature of parties to their sociopolitical environments, asserting that they are shaped by historical, cultural, and institutional factors. He views the single-party system as a critical area of study, illuminating its capacity to suppress dissent and consolidate power, contrasting sharply with pluralist democracies. Through these theoretical lenses, Duverger aims to reveal the essential functions and potential pitfalls of party systems in maintaining democratic legitimacy.

**8. Methods:** Duverger adopts a comparative and empirical approach, drawing on extensive data from European, American, and other global party systems. He utilizes historical accounts, statistical analyses, and case studies to illustrate the evolution and functioning of political parties. The methodology involves categorizing parties based on their organizational structures, modes of membership, and electoral strategies. Duverger also examines the interplay between parties and institutional frameworks, such as electoral laws and constitutional arrangements, to explain their divergent development across political contexts.

**9. Hypotheses:** Duverger hypothesizes that:

- Proportional representation systems encourage the proliferation of multi-party systems, whereas majoritarian systems lead to two-party dominance.
- The degree of internal democracy within a party correlates with its ideological orientation, with leftist parties tending to exhibit more structured membership and tighter control than rightist parties.
- Single-party systems inherently suppress political competition and dissent, centralizing power to maintain regime stability.

These hypotheses are supported through his comparative analysis of global party systems and their institutional contexts.

**10. Main findings:** Duverger concludes that political parties are vital for organizing democratic participation and ensuring governance continuity. He demonstrates how party systems reflect and influence broader societal cleavages, such as class and ideology. His analysis of proportional representation reveals its propensity to foster multi-party competition, while majoritarian systems are shown to consolidate power among fewer parties. Duverger's exploration of single-party regimes highlights their capacity for authoritarian control, contrasting with the pluralism of multi-party democracies. He underscores the dynamic interplay between parties and institutional frameworks, emphasizing their role in shaping political stability and public policy.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Mass party*: A political organization characterized by broad membership bases, extensive grassroots structures, and a focus on mobilizing public participation.
- *Cadre party*: A party centered around elite leadership and limited membership, often emphasizing professionalized political organization over mass engagement.
- *Proportional representation*: An electoral system that allocates legislative seats based on the proportion of votes received by each party, facilitating multi-party competition.
- *Single-party system*: A political system in which one party dominates governance, often to the exclusion of opposition parties, typically associated with authoritarian regimes.
- *Majoritarian system*: An electoral framework that rewards the majority with governance control, often leading to a two-party system and a focus on broad coalitional support.

### 3.12.4 Unified Government, Divided Government, and Party Responsiveness

Coleman, J. J. (1999). Unified Government, Divided Government, and Party Responsiveness [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 93(4), 821–835. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2586115>

**1. Citation key:** coleman\_unified\_1999

**2. Author(s):** John J. Coleman

**3. Year:** 1999

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** unified government, divided government, party responsiveness, legislative productivity, public policy

**6. Summary:** Coleman revisits the debate on whether unified government produces more significant public policy than divided government. By drawing on theoretical insights from party government literature and employing empirical measures of legislative productivity, Coleman argues that unified government is more effective in producing significant legislation and is more responsive to public opinion. This work challenges revisionist claims that divided and unified governments do not differ substantially in policy outcomes, asserting instead that party alignment across branches of government facilitates legislative responsiveness and productivity.

**7. Theory:** Coleman builds on classic party government theory, which posits that political parties create incentives for cooperation across branches of government under unified control. Unified government reduces the transaction costs inherent in policymaking, enabling a higher production of significant legislation. However, he emphasizes that the institutional features of American politics, such as the separation of powers, Senate supermajorities, and intraparty factionalism, can limit the advantages of unified government. Additionally, Coleman underscores the importance of public mood, arguing that unified governments are better equipped to respond to shifts in public opinion by enacting policies that reflect majoritarian demands. The theory challenges the notion that the American party system is too fragmented to benefit from unified control, instead highlighting the conditions under which unified government enhances legislative productivity.

**8. Methods:** Coleman employs a range of empirical measures to evaluate legislative productivity, including Mayhew's list of significant enactments, Kelly's measure of innovative legislation, and counts of failed significant bills. He uses event count regression models to analyze the relationship between party control and legislative output from 1947 to 1994, incorporating variables such as budget deficits, public mood (measured using Stimson's public liberalism index),

early presidential momentum, Senate supermajorities, and intraparty division. By testing interaction effects between public mood and unified government, Coleman examines whether unified governments are more responsive to public opinion than divided governments.

**9. Hypotheses:** Coleman hypothesizes that:

- Unified government produces more significant legislation than divided government.
- Unified government is more responsive to public mood, enacting legislation in alignment with shifts in public opinion.
- Institutional features such as Senate supermajorities and intraparty factionalism moderate the legislative advantages of unified government.

These hypotheses are supported by empirical analyses that demonstrate greater legislative productivity and responsiveness under unified government.

**10. Main findings:** Coleman finds that unified government produces more significant legislation than divided government, particularly under favorable institutional conditions such as the presence of a Senate supermajority. His analysis also reveals that unified governments are more responsive to shifts in public mood, with increased legislative productivity during periods of high public demand for activism. However, intraparty division, especially within the Democratic Party, reduces the effectiveness of unified government. The findings reaffirm the classic party government argument that unified government enhances legislative productivity by lowering transaction costs and fostering cooperation across branches of government.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Unified government produces greater quantities of significant enactments and is more responsive to the public mood than is divided government" (p. 821).
- "Parties do, as party government theorists maintain, generate incentives to cooperation that help transcend some of the policymaking gaps created by the Constitution" (p. 822).
- "The real question is whether the number [of significant enactments] is higher when the public prefers activism and lower when the public is more quiet. What interests party government theorists, then, is whether unified government is more responsive to the public's policy mood than is divided government" (p. 824).

### 3.12.5 Adverse Selection, Political Parties, and Policy Delegation in the American Federal System

Krause, G. A., & Bowman, A. O. (2005). Adverse Selection, Political Parties, and Policy Delegation in the American Federal System. *The Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, 21(2), 359–387. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jleo/ewi021>

**1. Citation key:** krause\_adverse\_2005

**2. Author(s):** George A. Krause and Ann O'M. Bowman

**3. Year:** 2005

**4. Publication:** Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization

**5. Keywords:** adverse selection, policy delegation, federalism, intergovernmental relations, partisan politics

**6. Summary:** Krause and Bowman examine the conditions under which the U.S. federal government delegates policy-making authority to subnational governments. They argue that vertical partisan relationships between national and state governments significantly influence the balance of power in the federal system. Using data from 459 public laws enacted between 1947 and 1998, they demonstrate that the likelihood of policy delegation depends on the partisan alignment of state and federal institutions, as national leaders aim to mitigate adverse selection problems when devolving power to the states.

**7. Theory:** Krause and Bowman develop a theory grounded in principal-agent dynamics and American federalism. They argue that the national government (the principal) faces adverse selection problems when deciding whether to delegate policymaking authority to state governments (the agents). Partisan alignment between federal and state governments reduces information asymmetry, increasing the likelihood of delegation. The authors contend that Democrats are generally more inclined to centralize policymaking, while Republicans favor decentralization. This framework integrates theories of intergovernmental relations and partisan behavior, highlighting the strategic considerations of national leaders when navigating vertical political pressures. They further propose that institutional factors such as fiscal capacity and public mood interact with partisan dynamics, influencing delegation decisions. Krause and Bowman emphasize the importance of understanding both horizontal (intra-level) and vertical (cross-level) partisan relationships to fully grasp the dynamics of policymaking in the American federal system.

**8. Methods:** The authors employ an ordinal probit regression analysis to model the extent of policy centralization or decentralization in public laws. The dependent variable measures the degree of federal policy centralization, coded from unconstrained decentralization to unconstrained centralization. Independent variables include the partisan composition of national and state governments, the degree of partisan alignment between levels of government, and fiscal conditions at both levels. The dataset spans 459 public laws enacted from 1947 to 1998, coded for their intergovernmental components. To account for temporal and spatial dependencies, the authors use robust standard errors clustered by congressional session and incorporate control variables such as national gridlock intervals and state fiscal conditions.

**9. Hypotheses:** Krause and Bowman hypothesize that:

- National partisan alignment with state governments increases the likelihood of policy delegation.
- Republicans are more likely to favor decentralization, while Democrats prefer centralization.
- Strong fiscal capacity at the state level correlates with increased delegation from the federal government.

These hypotheses are supported by empirical findings, particularly regarding the role of partisan alignment in reducing adverse selection risks.

**10. Main findings:** Krause and Bowman find that partisan alignment between federal and state institutions significantly affects the delegation of policymaking authority. When state governments align with the federal majority party, the likelihood of decentralization increases, as the federal government perceives state actors as more likely to faithfully implement policies. Conversely, misalignment leads to greater centralization to maintain control over policy outcomes. The authors also observe that fiscal constraints at the state level decrease the likelihood of delegation. These findings highlight the interplay of partisan dynamics and institutional capacity in shaping intergovernmental policymaking.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “The national government’s willingness to delegate policymaking authority to subnational entities is contingent upon the partisan composition of state governments” (p. 360).
- “Partisan alignment between levels of government serves as a heuristic to mitigate adverse selection problems, enabling the federal government to make informed delegation decisions” (p. 365).
- “Our results underscore the importance of vertical institutional relationships in understanding the balance of policymaking authority in American federalism” (p. 374).

### 3.12.6 Who Learns from What in Policy Diffusion Processes?

Gilardi, F. (2010). Who Learns from What in Policy Diffusion Processes? [Leprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00452.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 54(3), 650–666. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00452.x>

**1. Citation key:** gilardi\_who\_2010

**2. Author(s):** Fabrizio Gilardi

**3. Year:** 2010

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** policy diffusion, learning, political outcomes, policy outcomes, unemployment benefits, OECD

**6. Summary:** Gilardi examines the mechanisms of policy diffusion by focusing on the role of learning in unemployment benefit retrenchment across 18 OECD countries. He argues that policymakers do not learn uniformly; instead, their learning is shaped by ideological positions and prior beliefs. By distinguishing between learning from policy outcomes (e.g., unemployment reduction) and political outcomes (e.g., electoral success), the study highlights the conditional nature of learning processes in diffusion.

**7. Theory:** Gilardi proposes that learning in policy diffusion is not uniform but conditional on policymakers' ideological preferences and prior beliefs. Using a Bayesian framework, he theorizes that policymakers update their beliefs about policy effectiveness by observing the experiences of other countries. However, the weight they assign to new information depends on their prior convictions. Right-leaning governments, for example, are more likely to prioritize political outcomes (e.g., electoral viability of policy retrenchment), while left-leaning governments are more influenced by policy outcomes (e.g., unemployment reductions). This differentiation in learning helps explain why prior empirical studies have struggled to provide conclusive evidence for the learning hypothesis. Furthermore, Gilardi emphasizes that learning is often mediated by trade-offs between policy and political goals, which different ideological groups resolve differently. This nuanced approach challenges the assumption that all policymakers interpret and act on policy diffusion in a similar manner.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a directed dyadic approach, wherein each country pair is analyzed to determine the likelihood of imitation in unemployment benefits retrenchment. Gilardi uses multilevel logistic regression models to account for the hierarchical structure of the data, which spans 18 OECD countries and includes over 3,000 dyads. The dependent variable is whether a country reduces unemployment replacement rates after another country has already done so. Independent variables include political outcomes (e.g., changes in incumbent vote shares), policy outcomes (e.g., changes in unemployment rates), and the partisan composition of governments. Control variables include regional proximity, baseline replacement rates, and political constraints. Gilardi's analysis also incorporates interaction terms to capture the conditional effects of partisanship on learning from policy and political outcomes.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Right-leaning governments are more likely to imitate policy retrenchments when evidence from other countries shows favorable political outcomes (e.g., reelection of incumbents).
- Left-leaning governments are more likely to imitate policy retrenchments when evidence shows favorable policy outcomes (e.g., reductions in unemployment rates).
- The trade-off between learning from policy and political outcomes varies based on ideological orientation, with right-leaning governments prioritizing political considerations and left-leaning governments focusing on policy effectiveness.

The results support these hypotheses, demonstrating the conditional nature of learning in policy diffusion processes.

**10. Main findings:** Gilardi's analysis reveals that learning from policy and political outcomes is ideologically contingent. Right-leaning governments are more likely to emulate retrenchment policies when these are associated with positive electoral outcomes in other countries, while left-leaning governments are more influenced by evidence of policy success, such as reductions in unemployment rates. The study also identifies a trade-off between policy and political goals, with different ideological groups prioritizing one over the other depending on how the evidence aligns with

their prior beliefs. These findings suggest that the conditional nature of learning may explain why previous studies have found mixed evidence for learning in policy diffusion.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “The results of the analysis show that information on the political and policy consequences of curtailing unemployment benefits is taken into account differently by different governments” (p. 651).
- “Right governments are more likely than left governments to imitate cuts in unemployment benefits if the experience of other countries suggests that they are compatible with reelection” (p. 655).
- “These findings help explain why the literature has not shown convincingly that learning is a significant driver of policy diffusion: learning processes are more complex than usually assumed” (p. 661).

#### 3.12.7 Federalism, Government Liberalism, and Union Weakness in America

Darmofal, D., Kelly, N. J., Witko, C., & Young, S. (2019). Federalism, Government Liberalism, and Union Weakness in America. *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, 19(4), 428–450. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532440019851806>

1. Citation key: darmofal\_federalism\_2019

2. Author(s): David Darmofal, Nathan J. Kelly, Christopher Witko, and Sarah Young

3. Year: 2019

4. Publication: State Politics & Policy Quarterly

5. Keywords: federalism, union strength, spatial analysis, labor policy, government liberalism, economic competition

6. Summary: Darmofal et al. examine the relationship between union weakness and government ideology in the context of American federalism. They argue that because U.S. states control key aspects of labor policy, union decline in one state may have spillover effects that weaken unions in neighboring states. They also assess whether left-leaning state governments can counteract these external pressures. Using spatial econometric models and data from 1983 to 2014, they find that union weakness is contagious across state borders, but that liberal state governments have had little success in stopping union decline during this period.

7. Theory: The authors propose that American federalism creates a competitive dynamic among states that exacerbates union decline. States with weak unions may attract business investment at the expense of states with stronger labor protections, leading to a “race to the bottom” in labor policy. While left-leaning governments theoretically have incentives to protect unions, they face constraints due to economic competition and employer strategies that discourage unionization. The authors argue that union strength is shaped by both political and economic pressures: while partisan control at the national level influences labor policies, state-level liberal governments may be structurally constrained in their ability to counteract union decline. They further posit that spatial dependence—where labor policies and union strength in one state influence those in neighboring states—plays a crucial role in understanding the trajectory of union power in the United States. The authors challenge the notion that state-level policy alone can sustain union strength and instead highlight the significance of economic structure and intergovernmental dynamics.

8. Methods: The study employs a spatial panel data model to examine the diffusion of union weakness across U.S. states from 1983 to 2014. The dependent variable is private-sector union density, measured as the percentage of nonagricultural workers represented by a union. Key independent variables include measures of state government ideology (using Berry et al.’s government liberalism index), economic factors such as unemployment and manufacturing employment, and a spatial lag variable capturing union strength in neighboring states. The authors estimate models using maximum likelihood estimation with fixed state effects to account for unobserved heterogeneity. They also conduct robustness checks using alternative definitions of spatial relationships (e.g., nearest-neighbor versus contiguous-state models) and test for the effects of right-to-work laws.

9. Hypotheses:

- Union weakness in one state is associated with lower union density in neighboring states due to competitive pressures and policy diffusion.
- Liberal state governments may be able to sustain union strength, but their influence is constrained by economic and spatial pressures.
- National-level Democratic control is positively associated with union strength, while state-level government ideology has a weaker effect.

The empirical analysis supports the first and third hypotheses, while finding little evidence that liberal state governments can prevent union decline.

10. Main findings: Darmofal et al. find strong evidence that union weakness diffuses across state borders, reinforcing the idea that competitive pressures among states contribute to labor decline. The presence of weak unions in one state is significantly associated with lower unionization rates in neighboring states. While Democratic control of Congress is positively correlated with union density, liberal state governments appear unable to counteract downward trends in union strength. The authors argue that this reflects the structural limitations of state-level labor policy in a federal system, where economic incentives often override political preferences. They conclude that understanding the dynamics of union decline requires accounting for both spatial dependence and the broader economic environment.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Union weakness in one state is associated with union weakness in nearby states, suggesting that deunionization is not merely a function of local policy choices but also of broader competitive pressures” (p. 429).
- “We observe that Democratic power in Congress is associated with higher unionization rates, but that liberal state

governments have been relatively powerless to stop union decline in this period" (p. 432).

- "These findings highlight the ways in which the politics of union strength in America are similar to other countries and the ways that unusual aspects of America's institutional structure and federalized system of labor relations contribute to 'exceptional' union weakness" (p. 444).

### 3.12.8 Compliance with Public Health Orders: The Role of Trust, Representation, and Expertise

Stauffer, K. E., Miller, S. M., & Keiser, L. R. (2023). Compliance with Public Health Orders: The Role of Trust, Representation, and Expertise [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 76(4), 1888–1905. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129231182375>

- 1. Citation key:** stauffer\_compliance\_2023
- 2. Author(s):** Katelyn E. Stauffer, Susan M. Miller, and Lael R. Keiser
- 3. Year:** 2023
- 4. Publication:** Political Research Quarterly
- 5. Keywords:** public health compliance, trust in government, representative bureaucracy, expertise, COVID-19, partisanship, race and gender identity politics
- 6. Summary:** Stauffer, Miller, and Keiser investigate the factors that influence citizens' willingness to comply with public health mandates, particularly those issued during the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors assess the relative importance of trust in government, expertise, and descriptive representation in shaping compliance behavior. Using a conjoint experiment, they manipulate levels of trust and evaluate whether shared partisanship, race, and gender between citizens and policymakers influence compliance with stay-at-home orders and trust in vaccine guidance. The study finds that shared partisanship and consultation with experts have the largest effects on compliance, while racial identity influences compliance among Black Americans when trust is low.
- 7. Theory:** The authors theorize that compliance with public health orders is shaped by three primary factors: trust in government, descriptive representation, and reliance on expertise. They argue that trust has historically been a key determinant of compliance, but in an era of declining trust in government, other mechanisms—such as shared identity with policymakers and reliance on expert advice—may also play critical roles. Drawing on theories of representative bureaucracy, they posit that individuals may be more willing to comply with mandates issued by officials who share their race, gender, or partisan identity, as this fosters perceptions of shared interests and legitimacy. At the same time, they examine the role of expertise as a counterbalance to politicized decision-making, suggesting that expert consultation may increase public confidence in health directives, especially among citizens who lack partisan alignment with policymakers. The study integrates insights from political behavior research on partisanship as a social identity, highlighting how political affiliation shapes trust in public institutions and responses to health mandates.
- 8. Methods:** The study employs a conjoint experimental design, randomly assigning respondents to vignettes that describe local public health orders issued by mayors of varying racial, gender, and partisan identities. The experiment also manipulates the presence of expert consultation in the policymaking process. The authors first induce (dis)trust in government through a priming experiment and then assess respondents' willingness to comply with stay-at-home orders and their trust in vaccine guidance. The sample consists of 2,360 U.S. adults recruited via the Lucid platform, with an oversample of Black respondents to assess racial identity effects. The authors analyze the data using average marginal component effects (AMCE) models to estimate the causal impact of descriptive representation, partisanship, and expertise on compliance attitudes.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - H1: Among individuals with low trust in government, compliance with public health orders will be higher when the policymaker shares the individual's race, gender, or partisan identity.
  - H2a: Individuals will be more likely to comply with public health orders when officials highlight the role of expert consultation in the decision-making process.
  - H2b: The effect of expert consultation on compliance will be strongest among individuals with low trust in government.

The findings provide strong support for H2a but limited support for H2b, as expertise increases compliance across all trust levels. H1 is partially supported, with racial identity influencing compliance only among Black respondents under low-trust conditions.
- 10. Main findings:** Stauffer et al. find that shared partisanship between citizens and policymakers has the strongest effect on compliance, with individuals more likely to follow mandates issued by co-partisans. Expert consultation also has a substantial positive effect on compliance, countering concerns that public trust in expertise has eroded. However, the effect of expertise is most pronounced when citizens lack partisan alignment with policymakers, suggesting that expert involvement can compensate for the absence of partisan trust. Racial identity influences compliance among Black respondents, but only in low-trust conditions. Contrary to expectations, shared gender identity does not significantly affect compliance. These results underscore the importance of bipartisan communication in public health crises and suggest that expert involvement remains a viable strategy for increasing policy compliance.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - "Shared partisanship and consultation with experts have the largest effects on compliance and trust in vaccine guidance" (p. 1889).
  - "The role of expertise is greatest when respondents and elected officials do not share a party, for both Republicans

and Democrats" (p. 1893).

- "While partisanship appears to dominate citizens' behavioral intentions and attitudes when they share partisan identity with elected officials, the role of experts becomes important when citizens cannot rely on shared partisanship as a cue about the trustworthiness of the information provided" (p. 1899).

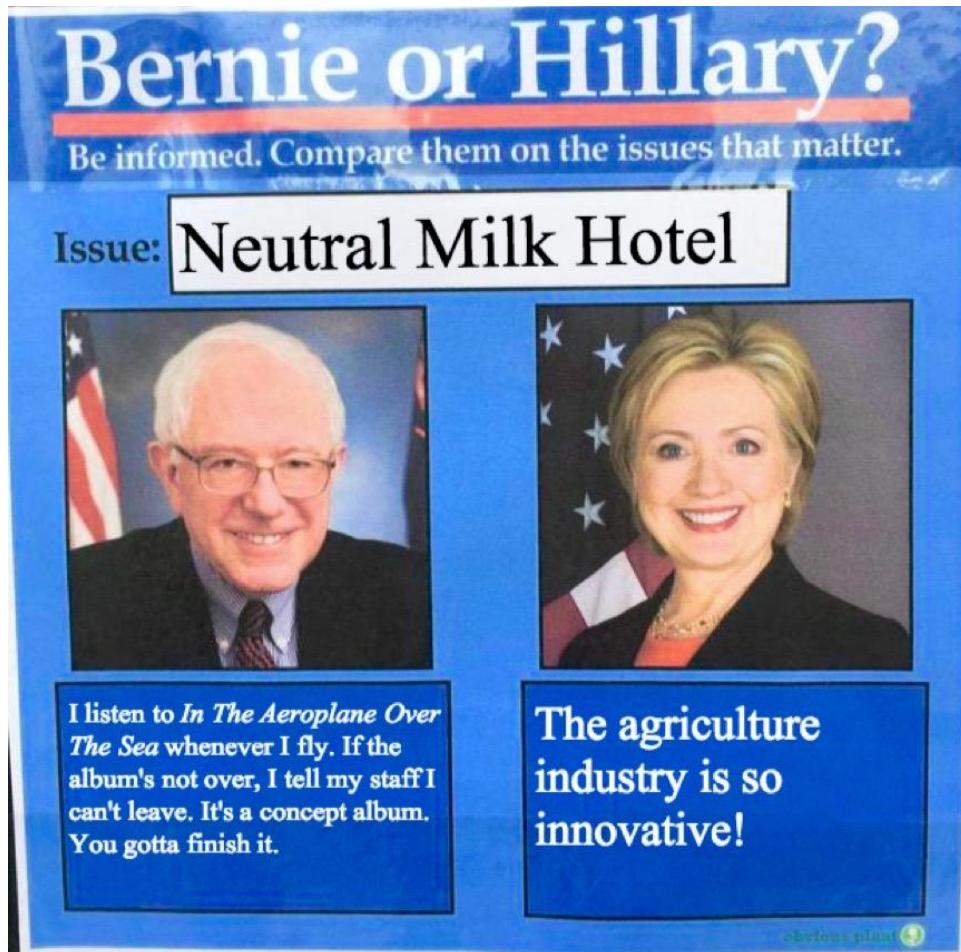


Figure 3.1: Deliberative Democracy



## 4 Political Communication

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4.1	Introduction . . . . .	429
4.2	Foundations of Political Communication . . . . .	429
4.2.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	429
4.2.2	A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies . . . . .	430
4.2.3	The End of Mass Communication? . . . . .	431
4.2.4	The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications . . . . .	432
4.2.5	Political Communication Faces the 21st Century . . . . .	433
4.2.6	Toward a Theory Relating Political Discourse, Media, and Public Opinion . . . . .	434
4.2.7	A New Era of Minimal Effects? The Changing Foundations of Political Communication . . . . .	435
4.2.8	The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns . . . . .	436
4.2.9	Political Communication in Postmodern Democracy: Challenging the Primacy of Politics .	437
4.2.10	Endogenous Beliefs in Models of Politics . . . . .	438
4.2.11	Terms of Choice: Uncertainty, Journalism, and Crisis . . . . .	439
4.2.12	Creating the Hybrid Field of Political Communication: A Five-Decade-Long Evolution of the Concept of Effects . . . . .	440
4.2.13	The Power of Political Communication . . . . .	441
4.2.14	A Call to Contextualize Public Opinion-Based Research in Political Communication . . . . .	442
4.2.15	Never Say Never... Or the Value of Context in Political Communication Research . . . . .	443
4.3	Shifting Foundations of Political Communication . . . . .	444
4.3.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	444
4.3.2	Professionalization: Of What? Since When? By Whom? . . . . .	446
4.3.3	Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of the Mediatization of Politics . . . . .	447
4.3.4	Cultural Appropriations of Technical Capital: Black Women, Weblogs, and the Digital Divide	448
4.3.5	The Matilda Effect—Role Congruity Effects on Scholarly Communication . . . . .	449
4.3.6	Opting Out of Political Discussions . . . . .	450
4.3.7	The Disavowal of Race in Communication Theory . . . . .	451
4.4	Understanding the Market . . . . .	452
4.4.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	452
4.4.2	Corporate Ownership and News Bias: Newspaper Coverage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act . . . . .	452
4.4.3	Consumer Demand for Election News: The Horserace Sells . . . . .	453
4.4.4	A Measure of Media Bias . . . . .	454
4.4.5	Media Bias and Reputation . . . . .	455
4.4.6	All the News That's Fit to Sell: How the Market Transforms Information Into News . . . . .	456
4.4.7	The Other Divide: Polarization and Disengagement in American Politics . . . . .	457
4.5	News Media as an Institution . . . . .	458
4.5.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	458
4.5.2	The News Media as Political Institutions . . . . .	459
4.5.3	When News Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence . . . . .	460
4.5.4	Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics . . . . .	461

4.5.5	The News Media as a Political Institution: Looking Backward and Looking Forward . . . . .	462
4.5.6	A Research Agenda for an Institutional Media . . . . .	463
4.5.7	Markets, Ownership, and the Quality of Campaign News Coverage . . . . .	464
4.5.8	What Drives Media Slant? Evidence From U.S. Daily Newspapers . . . . .	465
4.6	Production of News . . . . .	466
4.6.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	466
4.6.2	Reporting the News: An Organizational Analysis . . . . .	467
4.6.3	Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time . . . . .	468
4.6.4	Whose Views Made the News? Media Coverage and the March to War in Iraq . . . . .	469
4.6.5	The Fringe Effect: Civil Society Organizations and the Evolution of Media Discourse about Islam since the September 11th Attacks . . . . .	470
4.6.6	Making the News: Politics, the Media, and Agenda Setting . . . . .	471
4.6.7	A Decade of Research on Social Media and Journalism: Assumptions, Blind Spots, and a Way Forward . . . . .	472
4.6.8	But Her Emails! How Journalistic Preferences Shaped Election Coverage in 2016 . . . . .	472
4.7	Understanding News Contents . . . . .	473
4.7.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	473
4.7.2	Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States . . . . .	474
4.7.3	When Objectivity is Not Objective: Network Television News Coverage of U.S. Senators and the "Paradox of Objectivity" . . . . .	475
4.7.4	Game-Framing the Issues: Tracking the Strategy Frame in Public Policy News . . . . .	476
4.7.5	Psychology of News Decisions: Factors Behind Journalists' Professional Behavior . . . . .	477
4.7.6	Media Supply, Audience Demand, and the Geography of News Consumption in the United States . . . . .	478
4.7.7	What We Should Really Be Asking About Media Attention to Trump . . . . .	479
4.7.8	U.S. Election Day Coverage of Voting Processes . . . . .	480
4.8	Understanding How Technology Structures Communication and Politics . . . . .	481
4.8.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	481
4.8.2	Social Implications of the Internet . . . . .	482
4.8.3	The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics . . . . .	483
4.8.4	The Consequences of the Internet for Politics . . . . .	484
4.8.5	Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election . . . . .	485
4.8.6	Quantifying the Power and Consequences of Social Media Protest . . . . .	486
4.8.7	The Spread of True and False News Online . . . . .	487
4.8.8	How Sudden Censorship Can Increase Access to Information . . . . .	488
4.8.9	How Many People Live in Political Bubbles on Social Media? Evidence From Linked Survey and Twitter Data . . . . .	489
4.8.10	Less Than You Think: Prevalence and Predictors of Fake News Dissemination on Facebook	490
4.8.11	Fighting Misinformation on Social Media Using Crowdsourced Judgments of News Source Quality . . . . .	491
4.8.12	Political Effects of the Internet and Social Media . . . . .	492
4.8.13	Moto-Taxis, Drivers, Weather, and WhatsApp: Contextualizing New Technology in Rwandan Newsrooms . . . . .	493
4.8.14	The Political Economy of Digital Profiteering: Communication Resource Mobilization by Anti-Vaccination Actors . . . . .	494
4.9	Attention and Information . . . . .	495
4.9.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	495
4.9.2	Do People Watch What They Do Not Trust? Exploring the Association Between News Media Skepticism and Exposure . . . . .	495

4.9.3	What Makes Us Click? Demonstrating Incentives for Angry Discourse with Digital-Age Field Experiments . . . . .	496
4.9.4	Gresham's Law of Political Communication: How Citizens Respond to Conflicting Information . . . . .	497
4.9.5	Emotion, Motivation, and Social Information Seeking About Politics . . . . .	498
4.9.6	Curated Flows: A Framework for Mapping Media Exposure in the Digital Age . . . . .	499
4.9.7	Partisan Provocation: The Role of Partisan News Use and Emotional Responses in Political Information Sharing in Social Media . . . . .	501
4.9.8	Attention as a Valuable Resource . . . . .	502
4.9.9	News Attention in a Mobile Era . . . . .	503
4.9.10	A Model of Attentiveness to Outlying News . . . . .	504
4.9.11	The Ecology of Incidental Exposure to News in Digital Media Environments . . . . .	505
4.10	Understanding Media Effects . . . . .	506
4.10.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	506
4.10.2	The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media . . . . .	507
4.10.3	Where You Live and What You Watch: The Impact of Racial Proximity and Local Television News on Attitudes about Race and Crime . . . . .	508
4.10.4	Sex, Lies, and War: How Soft News Brings Foreign Policy to the Inattentive Public . . . . .	509
4.10.5	Soft News and Political Knowledge: Evidence of Absence or Absence of Evidence? . . . . .	510
4.10.6	Citizens, Knowledge, and the Information Environment . . . . .	510
4.10.7	Priming Effects in Complex Information Environments . . . . .	511
4.10.8	Political Campaigns and Open-Minded Thinking . . . . .	512
4.10.9	Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies . . . . .	514
4.10.10	The Mass Media and the Public's Assessments of Presidential Candidates, 1952–2000 . . . . .	515
4.10.11	Getting Real: The Duration of Framing Effects . . . . .	516
4.10.12	Polarized Political Communication, Oppositional Media Hostility, and Selective Exposure . . . . .	517
4.10.13	On-line and Memory-based: Revisiting the Relationship Between Candidate Evaluation Processing Models . . . . .	518
4.10.14	Expertise and Bias in Political Communication Networks . . . . .	519
4.10.15	Remembering to Forget: A Note on the Duration of Campaign Advertising Effects . . . . .	520
4.10.16	Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire: How Fact-Checking Influences Citizens' Reactions to Negative Advertising . . . . .	521
4.10.17	Winning Faces Vary by Ideology: How Nonverbal Source Cues Influence Election and Communication Success in Politics . . . . .	522
4.10.18	Does Media Coverage of Partisan Polarization Affect Political Attitudes? . . . . .	523
4.10.19	Learning From News on Different Media Platforms: An Eye-Tracking Experiment . . . . .	523
4.10.20	The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States . . . . .	524
4.10.21	Negativity Biases and Political Ideology: A Comparative Test across 17 Countries . . . . .	525
4.10.22	Protest Coverage Matters: How Media Framing and Visual Communication Affects Support for Black Civil Rights Protests . . . . .	526
4.10.23	'I saw it on Facebook:' An Experimental Analysis of Political Learning through Social Media	527
4.11	The Role of Communication in Democracy . . . . .	528
4.11.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	528
4.11.2	"Mediatization" of Politics: A Challenge for Democracy? . . . . .	529
4.11.3	The Media and Democracy: Beyond Myths and Stereotypes . . . . .	530
4.11.4	Polarization and Publicity: Rethinking the Benefits of Deliberative Democracy . . . . .	531
4.11.5	From Liberation to Turmoil: Social Media and Democracy . . . . .	532
4.11.6	Political Communication in a High-Choice Media Environment: A Challenge for Democracy? . . . . .	533

4.11.7 When We Stop Talking Politics: The Maintenance and Closing of Conversation in Contentious Times . . . . .	534
4.11.8 Rethinking Political Communication in a Time of Disrupted Public Spheres . . . . .	535
4.11.9 Complaining and Sharing Personal Concerns as Political Acts . . . . .	536
4.11.10 Theory and/as Normative Assumptions in Political Communication Research . . . . .	537
4.11.11 News Coping and Resistance: An Examination of Entertainment as Self-Care in the Digital Black Press . . . . .	538
4.11.12 Negotiating News: How Cross-Cutting Romantic Partners Select, Consume, and Discuss News Together . . . . .	539
4.12 Governing With the News . . . . .	540
4.12.1 Subject Area Summary . . . . .	540
4.12.2 Congress, the Press, and Political Accountability . . . . .	541
4.12.3 Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution . . . . .	542
4.12.4 Why Do Partisan Media Polarize Viewers? . . . . .	543
4.12.5 The “Nate Silver Effect” on Political Journalism . . . . .	545
4.12.6 Strategic Candidate Entry and Congressional Elections in the Era of Fox News . . . . .	546
4.12.7 The Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing: How Russia’s Internet Research Agency Tweets Appeared in U.S. News as Vox Populi . . . . .	547

## 4.1 Introduction

Political communication as a field of study interrogates the complex relationships between media, political institutions, and public opinion, analyzing how these forces interact to shape democratic engagement, governance, and electoral behavior. This chapter explores foundational debates, theoretical advancements, and empirical findings that have defined the evolution of political communication scholarship, emphasizing the role of media in both facilitating and constraining political discourse. It situates historical developments within contemporary challenges, illustrating the extent to which technological transformations, institutional structures, and shifting patterns of media consumption influence the nature of political information and democratic deliberation.

The chapter begins by establishing key theoretical frameworks in political communication, highlighting the enduring relevance of agenda-setting, framing, and priming theories. These foundational perspectives serve as analytical lenses through which scholars assess the media's capacity to shape public discourse and influence political attitudes. While early studies posited a robust media impact on public opinion, later research problematized these assumptions, emphasizing the conditions under which media effects are constrained by partisan predispositions, cognitive biases, and the fragmentation of audiences. The transformation of mass communication in the digital age raises fundamental questions about the continued applicability of these theories, necessitating new models that account for the diversification of media sources and the increasing agency of media consumers.

This chapter further examines the institutional dimensions of political communication, analyzing how legal and regulatory frameworks structure media environments and constrain journalistic practices. Historical analyses underscore the role of state intervention and market forces in shaping media systems, demonstrating that communication technologies do not develop in a vacuum but rather emerge through complex interactions between political decision-making and economic imperatives. The institutionalist perspective reveals how media regimes vary cross-nationally, with implications for press freedom, political pluralism, and democratic accountability. Comparative analyses illustrate that media structures influence the extent to which news organizations function as independent watchdogs or as instruments of political elites.

I then shift focus to contemporary debates surrounding media fragmentation, selective exposure, and the evolving nature of political persuasion. Scholars contend that traditional mass communication paradigms, characterized by centralized media institutions transmitting uniform messages to broad audiences, have given way to a more decentralized and participatory model of information dissemination. The proliferation of digital media platforms has amplified concerns about ideological echo chambers, misinformation, and declining trust in journalistic institutions. These developments challenge established assumptions about the role of media in democratic societies, necessitating a reassessment of media effects theories in light of audience-driven content selection and algorithmic curation.

The chapter also explores the strategic dimensions of political communication, emphasizing how political actors, campaign organizations, and advocacy groups craft messages to influence public opinion and electoral outcomes. Research on elite communication strategies highlights the increasing professionalization of political messaging, the reliance on data-driven targeting, and the use of persuasive narratives to mobilize supporters and shape issue salience. Campaign effects research interrogates the extent to which electoral messaging conditions voter decision-making, particularly in an era marked by high levels of partisan polarization and the decline of shared information environments. By integrating insights from political psychology and behavioral economics, scholars assess how individuals process political information, respond to persuasive appeals, and navigate a saturated media landscape.

Finally, the chapter situates political communication within broader normative and democratic theories, addressing fundamental questions about the role of media in sustaining democratic engagement and deliberative discourse. Scholars debate whether digital media affordances enhance participatory democracy by facilitating new forms of civic engagement or whether they contribute to democratic erosion by enabling political manipulation, polarization, and the spread of disinformation. Emerging research explores the implications of social media algorithms, artificial intelligence, and digital propaganda for political discourse, raising pressing concerns about the future of democratic governance in an increasingly mediated world.

Through a synthesis of theoretical frameworks, empirical findings, and contemporary debates, this chapter provides a cursory examination of the evolving landscape of political communication. By interrogating the shifting relationships between media, political institutions, and the public, I hope it offers critical insights into the challenges and opportunities that define contemporary political discourse and democratic governance.

## 4.2 Foundations of Political Communication

### 4.2.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of political communication examines how media, political institutions, and public opinion interact to shape democratic engagement, electoral behavior, and governance. Early debates centered on the effects of mass media on political trust and participation, contrasting pessimistic views of "media malaise" with more optimistic perspectives that emphasize media's role in enhancing civic engagement. As media landscapes evolved, scholars turned

to theories of agenda-setting, framing, and priming to explain how media influence public discourse and policy preferences. More recent research has addressed the fragmentation of media audiences, the role of digital platforms, and the decline of traditional mass communication paradigms. Scholars increasingly explore the conditions under which political communication fosters informed citizenry or exacerbates misinformation and polarization, with empirical work spanning comparative media systems, electoral campaigns, and media effects across diverse political contexts.

- **Media Effects and Political Engagement:** The “media malaise” hypothesis, which posits that media exposure erodes political trust and participation, has been challenged by scholars such as Norris (2000), who argue for a “virtuous circle” in which media consumption fosters political knowledge and engagement. This debate has shaped research on media’s influence, highlighting cross-national differences in how media systems interact with institutional trust. Agenda-setting theory, pioneered by McCombs and Shaw, suggests that media do not dictate what people think but rather what they think about, influencing issue salience. Framing and priming theories further elaborate how media shape public attitudes by structuring information presentation and cognitive accessibility. Experimental and longitudinal studies have tested these theories across varying media environments, revealing that political knowledge and engagement depend on media content, institutional context, and individual predispositions.
- **The Transformation of Mass Communication:** The digital era has raised fundamental questions about the continued relevance of traditional mass communication theories. Chaffee and Metzger (2001) argue that the advent of digital and interactive media has led to the “end of mass communication,” replacing centralized, one-way transmission with fragmented, participatory media landscapes. Audience selectivity and media convergence have disrupted earlier assumptions about media influence, necessitating new models that account for decentralized and user-driven media environments. Scholars examining these changes focus on the rise of personalized information consumption, the weakening of traditional gatekeepers, and the implications for agenda-setting and persuasion.
- **Historical Development and Institutional Constraints:** Starr (2004) traces the political origins of modern communication systems, emphasizing the role of legal and institutional frameworks in shaping media development. He argues that early policy choices, such as press subsidies and regulatory decisions, created path-dependent trajectories that influenced media pluralism and press freedom. This institutionalist perspective contrasts with technological determinism, highlighting the interplay between political struggles, market structures, and communication technologies in shaping media systems across different democratic contexts.
- **Contemporary Challenges in Political Communication:** Scholars such as Bennett and Iyengar (2008) argue that contemporary media environments are marked by an era of “minimal effects” due to audience fragmentation and selective exposure. Unlike earlier periods, where mass media provided a shared information commons, today’s media landscape enables individuals to curate ideological content, reducing cross-cutting discourse and increasing partisan polarization. This shift complicates traditional models of media effects, as persuasion becomes increasingly difficult in ideologically insular environments. At the same time, new media affordances allow for greater political mobilization, raising questions about whether digital engagement translates into meaningful political action or deepens societal divides.
- **Elite Communication, Framing, and Public Opinion:** Simon and Jerit (2007) develop a theoretical model linking elite discourse, media framing, and public opinion, demonstrating how strategic linguistic choices influence policy debates and public attitudes. Their findings suggest that media largely follow elite cues rather than acting as an independent arbiter of political information. This dynamic has important implications for issue framing in contentious policy debates, such as abortion or immigration, where elite messaging strategies shape media narratives and public sentiment.
- **Campaign Strategy and Issue Salience:** Vavreck (2009) explores how presidential campaign strategies interact with economic conditions to shape voter decision-making. Her work categorizes campaigns into “clarifying” and “insurgent” strategies, showing that candidates who align their messaging with economic fundamentals tend to have an electoral advantage. This research integrates political communication with political economy models, demonstrating how media amplify certain issue frames to influence electoral outcomes.
- **Mediatization and Political Representation:** Brants and Voltmer (2011) examine the increasing dominance of “media logic” in political communication, arguing that journalistic norms and entertainment-driven formats shape political discourse. They highlight how the professionalization of political communication, through spin doctors and strategic messaging, alters the nature of democratic representation. Their findings underscore tensions between increased media access and the challenges of maintaining substantive political deliberation in an era of soundbites and personalization.
- **The Future of Political Communication Research:** Ongoing debates in the field focus on the consequences of media fragmentation, the role of misinformation, and the effectiveness of political communication in shaping public opinion. Scholars continue to investigate whether digital platforms empower democratic participation or exacerbate polarization, with particular attention to how social media algorithms curate political information. Future research is likely to explore the intersection of artificial intelligence, misinformation, and political persuasion, as well as the regulatory challenges posed by rapidly evolving media landscapes.

#### 4.2.2 A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies

Norris, P. (2000, September). *A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Postindustrial Societies* [Google-Books-ID: Vy7EKh3ap5oC]. Cambridge University Press

1. Citation key: norris\_virtuous\_2000

2. **Author(s):** Pippa Norris
3. **Year:** 2000
4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press
5. **Keywords:** media malaise, political communications, civic engagement, political trust, postmodern campaigns
6. **Summary:** Norris challenges the widely held “media malaise” thesis, which posits that exposure to news media fosters political cynicism, depresses participation, and erodes trust in democratic institutions. Instead, she presents a “virtuous circle” theory, arguing that media consumption is positively associated with political knowledge, engagement, and trust. Using a wealth of cross-national survey data, content analyses, and experimental studies, Norris demonstrates that rather than alienating citizens, the media—particularly news consumption—enhances civic engagement and democratic participation.
7. **Theory:** The book builds on and directly challenges the “media malaise” hypothesis, which claims that modern political communications, especially television news, lead to declining political trust and engagement. Norris argues instead for a “virtuous circle,” where media exposure fosters political learning, which in turn increases civic engagement and strengthens democratic legitimacy. She situates this argument within the broader context of postindustrial societies, where transformations in media technology and campaign strategies have altered the relationship between citizens and political institutions. Rather than being passive consumers, citizens actively interpret and filter media messages through their preexisting attitudes and political predispositions. Moreover, Norris asserts that variations in media effects stem from differences in national media systems, institutional trust, and political cultures, rather than inherent properties of media exposure itself.
8. **Methods:** Norris employs a multi-method empirical approach, integrating individual- and aggregate-level data from multiple sources, including the *European Community Eurobarometer*, *British Election Panel Study*, *Pew Center for the People and the Press*, and the *American National Election Studies* (ANES). She also utilizes longitudinal cross-national comparisons, content analyses of media coverage, and experimental research to assess the causal mechanisms underlying media effects. The study systematically tests the impact of media exposure on key political attitudes and behaviors, controlling for demographic, attitudinal, and contextual factors. Additionally, Norris examines differences in media influence across electoral systems, distinguishing between “candidate-centered” and “party-centered” campaign environments.
9. **Hypotheses:** Norris hypothesizes that:
  - Political engagement, trust, and knowledge increase with media exposure rather than decrease, as the media malaise thesis suggests.
  - Citizens in media-rich environments will exhibit higher levels of political participation than those with less media exposure.
  - The impact of media exposure varies by national context, with greater effects in pluralist, competitive media markets compared to state-controlled media systems.
- Empirical tests confirm that news media consumption is positively correlated with political trust and civic participation across multiple democratic contexts.
10. **Main findings:** Norris finds no support for the media malaise hypothesis. Instead, her results indicate that news media exposure fosters greater political awareness, enhances trust in democratic institutions, and promotes civic engagement. The effects are particularly pronounced among those already politically active, reinforcing a virtuous cycle wherein the politically engaged become more engaged through media consumption. Cross-national comparisons show that differences in media systems shape media effects, with more competitive and pluralistic media environments fostering greater political participation. Moreover, Norris argues that contemporary political campaigns, while increasingly media-driven, have not diminished political engagement, contradicting claims that campaign professionalization alienates voters. While media effects are not uniform across all individuals and contexts, Norris’s findings strongly suggest that news consumption contributes to, rather than erodes, democratic participation.
11. **Key Definitions:**
  - *Media malaise:* The hypothesis that mass media, particularly television news, erodes political engagement, trust, and participation by emphasizing negativity, conflict, and strategic framing in political coverage.
  - *Virtuous circle:* Norris’s alternative model, which posits that media exposure fosters greater political awareness, reinforcing civic participation and trust in democratic institutions.
  - *Postmodern campaigns:* A shift in electoral strategies characterized by professionalized, media-driven campaign techniques, including targeted advertising, polling, and spin doctoring, often contrasted with earlier “party-centered” models of electoral competition.
  - *Political efficacy:* A citizen’s belief in their capacity to influence political processes and government decision-making, often linked to levels of political knowledge and engagement.
  - *Political trust:* The degree to which individuals believe political institutions and leaders are responsive, competent, and legitimate, often measured as confidence in government and elected officials.

#### 4.2.3 The End of Mass Communication?

Chaffee, S. H., & Metzger, M. J. (2001). The End of Mass Communication? [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: [https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0404\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0404_3)]. *Mass Communication and Society*, 4(4), 365–379. [https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0404\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0404_3)

1. **Citation key:** chaffee\_end\_2001
  2. **Author(s):** Steven H. Chaffee and Miriam J. Metzger
  3. **Year:** 2001
  4. **Publication:** Mass Communication & Society
  5. **Keywords:** mass communication, media convergence, digital media, audience fragmentation, new media environment
  6. **Summary:** Chaffee and Metzger examine whether the concept of “mass communication” remains relevant in the contemporary media environment. They argue that technological advancements, particularly the rise of the Internet and digital media, have fundamentally altered traditional mass communication models. As audiences become more fragmented and participatory, the authors suggest that mass communication may be giving way to a more individualized and interactive model of media engagement.
  7. **Theory:** The authors critique the traditional understanding of mass communication, which assumes centralized media institutions transmitting content to large, undifferentiated audiences. They outline three dominant conceptualizations of mass communication: as a set of media institutions, as a societal problem (due to media consolidation and elite control), and as an academic field. With the rise of digital technologies, they argue that these traditional characteristics are eroding. In contrast to earlier models that emphasized passive audiences receiving one-way messages, Chaffee and Metzger suggest that new media technologies enable users to select, modify, and even create content. This transformation challenges conventional media effects theories, particularly those reliant on the assumption of mass audiences receiving uniform messages. Instead, they propose a shift toward studying media as a decentralized, networked environment where individuals exert greater control over their media consumption.
  8. **Methods:** The article presents a conceptual and theoretical analysis rather than an empirical study. The authors review the historical development of mass communication theories and contrast them with emerging trends in media consumption and production. They incorporate existing literature on media convergence, digital communication, and audience fragmentation to support their argument. In doing so, they highlight changes in media structures, audience behaviors, and the implications for mass communication research.
  9. **Hypotheses:** The authors propose that:
    - The traditional concept of mass communication, characterized by centralized control and one-way transmission, is becoming obsolete.
    - Media fragmentation and user interactivity challenge foundational media effects theories, necessitating new frameworks for understanding media influence.
    - The shift from mass to digital media alters the power dynamics of communication, empowering users while diminishing the role of traditional gatekeepers.
- Their analysis supports these hypotheses, arguing that digital media disrupts previous mass communication paradigms.
10. **Main findings:** Chaffee and Metzger argue that the rise of digital media fundamentally alters the landscape of mass communication. Rather than a single, homogeneous mass audience consuming uniform content, contemporary media environments foster niche audiences engaging with personalized content. They identify key differences between traditional and emerging media models: an increase in the number of available communication channels, greater audience autonomy, and a shift from passive consumption to active participation. This “demassification” of media challenges established theories such as agenda-setting, cultivation, and media hegemony, which assumed centralized control over media content. They suggest that new media facilitate a more interactive and decentralized communication structure, raising questions about the continued relevance of traditional mass communication frameworks.
  11. **Key quotations:**
    - “The defining features of mass communication—mass production, lack of individual control, and finite available channels—are not as true today as they once were, and this is due to the emergence of new media for human communication” (p. 369).
    - “More than any other technologies for mass communication, contemporary media allow for a greater quantity of information transmission and retrieval, place more control over both content creation and selection in the hands of their users, and do so with less cost to the average consumer” (p. 370).
    - “As media institutions change and mass production becomes less mass, we may find ourselves asking not what media companies are doing to people, but what people are doing with the media” (p. 372).

#### 4.2.4 The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications

Starr, P. (2004, March). *The Creation Of The Media: Political Origins Of Modern Communications* [Google-Books-ID: 8chhAAAA-MAAJ]. Basic Books

1. **Citation key:** starr\_creation\_2004
2. **Author(s):** Paul Starr
3. **Year:** 2004
4. **Publication:** Basic Books
5. **Keywords:** media history, political development, communication technology, press freedom, institutional path dependence
6. **Summary:** Starr provides a historical analysis of the role of political institutions in shaping the development of media

and communication technologies in the United States from the colonial period to the early twentieth century. He argues that media evolution was not driven solely by technological advancements or market forces but was significantly influenced by political decisions, legal frameworks, and institutional arrangements. By comparing the American experience with that of European nations, Starr highlights the distinctiveness of U.S. media development and its long-term implications for democracy and public discourse.

**7. Theory:** The book advances an institutionalist perspective, arguing that media development is shaped by “constitutive choices,” or foundational political decisions that establish long-term trajectories. Starr rejects technological determinism, instead emphasizing how legal structures, regulatory policies, and political struggles define the contours of media systems. He applies the concept of *path dependence*, showing how early institutional choices—such as postal subsidies for newspapers, anti-monopoly policies, and legal protections for press freedom—structured later developments in the American media landscape. By contrast, European nations, with their more centralized state control over communication infrastructure, developed media systems that were more regulated and less pluralistic. Starr thus frames media history as deeply intertwined with state-building, democratization, and political economy.

**8. Methods:** Starr employs a historical-comparative approach, drawing on archival sources, government records, legal documents, and secondary literature to trace the evolution of media institutions. The book is structured into three chronological sections: (1) the emergence of print media and postal systems in the colonial and early republic period; (2) the rise of telegraph, telephone, and other technological networks in the 19th century; and (3) the development of mass media, including newspapers, radio, and cinema, in the early 20th century. He systematically compares American media policies with those of Britain and France to illustrate the impact of different institutional choices.

**9. Hypotheses:** Starr posits that:

- Early political decisions regarding press subsidies, postal policies, and market structures had enduring effects on the development of American media.
- Media systems in different countries evolved along distinct institutional paths based on regulatory decisions, rather than technological imperatives.
- Political struggles over communication policies were central to state-building and democratic governance in the U.S.

His analysis confirms these hypotheses, showing that media development is deeply embedded in broader political and economic structures.

**10. Main findings:** Starr demonstrates that American media institutions were uniquely shaped by early political choices that prioritized press freedom, decentralization, and competition. He argues that policies such as low-cost newspaper postage, the absence of state licensing for printers, and legal protections against government censorship created an environment conducive to a robust and independent press. By contrast, European nations imposed higher barriers to entry, resulting in less diverse media landscapes. Starr also highlights the role of regulatory decisions in shaping later technological developments, from telegraph monopolies to the commercialization of radio. Ultimately, the book underscores the centrality of media in democratic governance, showing how political struggles over information access, ownership, and regulation have long-lasting consequences.

**11. Key Definitions:**

- *Constitutive choices:* Foundational political decisions that set the long-term trajectory of media institutions and constrain future policy options.
- *Path dependence:* The idea that initial institutional decisions create self-reinforcing mechanisms that shape the development of communication systems over time.
- *Media regime:* The political and legal framework that governs media ownership, regulation, and access in a given society.
- *Telegraph monopoly:* The consolidation of telegraph networks under a single corporate or state-controlled entity, which influenced later developments in telecommunications policy.
- *Press freedom:* The legal and institutional protections that allow independent media to operate without government interference.

#### 4.2.5 Political Communication Faces the 21st Century

Graber, D. A., & Smith, J. M. (2005). Political Communication Faces the 21st Century [Leprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2005.tb02682.x>]. *Journal of Communication*, 55(3), 479–507. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2005.tb02682.x>

**1. Citation key:** graber\_political\_2005

**2. Author(s):** Doris A. Graber, with assistance from James M. Smith

**3. Year:** 2005

**4. Publication:** Journal of Communication

**5. Keywords:** political communication, media effects, political science, electoral politics, digital media

**6. Summary:** Graber assesses the state of political communication research in the early 21st century, arguing that while the field has grown, it remains marginal within both political science and communication studies. The article examines key themes in contemporary research, such as the dominance of electoral politics in political communication scholarship, the impact of digital media, and the role of political communication in civic engagement. Graber calls for a more interdisciplinary approach to studying political messaging, one that integrates psychological, sociological, and

- technological perspectives.
7. **Theory:** The article positions political communication as an interdisciplinary field that has historically been understudied within political science. Gruber contends that the field has been overly focused on electoral politics at the expense of broader considerations, such as media effects, civic learning, and public policy communication. She argues that political communication scholarship must adapt to a changing media landscape characterized by increasing audience fragmentation and declining trust in traditional media institutions. Drawing from agenda-setting theory, framing theory, and information processing research, Gruber suggests that political communication scholars should expand their focus to include the ways in which individuals engage with and interpret political information across different media platforms. She also highlights the need to examine how political elites and interest groups strategically shape communication to influence public opinion and policy outcomes.
  8. **Methods:** Gruber employs a content analysis of political communication scholarship from 2000 to 2003, drawing from leading political science and communication journals. The study identifies dominant research themes, methodological approaches, and publication trends. She also incorporates a historical and comparative analysis, evaluating the evolution of political communication as a field and its treatment within different academic disciplines. By reviewing existing literature, Gruber assesses the strengths and limitations of current research agendas and suggests directions for future inquiry.
  9. **Hypotheses:** Gruber proposes that:
    - Political communication research remains marginal within political science and communication studies, despite its increasing relevance in contemporary politics.
    - The field is disproportionately focused on electoral campaigns, limiting the scope of inquiry into broader political communication processes.
    - Emerging technologies and digital media are reshaping political communication in ways that existing theories and frameworks struggle to capture.
 Her findings support these hypotheses, demonstrating that political communication remains an underdeveloped field despite its interdisciplinary significance.
  10. **Main findings:** Gruber finds that political communication research is largely concentrated on electoral politics, particularly in the context of campaign advertising and media coverage of elections. However, she highlights growing interest in new media technologies, which are altering how political messages are disseminated and received. She identifies a need for more research on non-electoral political communication, including issue advocacy, government messaging, and political information processing by the public. Additionally, she argues that interdisciplinary collaboration is essential for advancing the field, given the complex nature of political messaging and its effects on public opinion and democratic engagement.
  11. **Key quotations:**
    - "The key element is that the message has a significant political effect on the thinking, beliefs, and behaviors of individuals, groups, institutions, and whole societies and the environments in which they exist" (p. 479).
    - "Political communication remains very much a sideline in political science. It fares better in communication, but shares the limelight with many other subdisciplinary specialties. Marginality is common in interdisciplinary fields" (p. 480).
    - "Because election messages are transmitted via various formats of mass media, it has become a popular exercise to study and compare the different roles that various media play in covering candidates and issues and in transmitting other election-related messages" (p. 482).

#### 4.2.6 Toward a Theory Relating Political Discourse, Media, and Public Opinion

Simon, A. F., & Jerit, J. (2007). Toward a Theory Relating Political Discourse, Media, and Public Opinion [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2007.00342.x>]. *Journal of Communication*, 57(2), 254–271. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2007.00342.x>

1. **Citation key:** simon\_toward\_2007
2. **Author(s):** Adam F. Simon and Jennifer Jerit
3. **Year:** 2007
4. **Publication:** Journal of Communication
5. **Keywords:** political discourse, media framing, public opinion, elite influence, abortion debate
6. **Summary:** Simon and Jerit develop a theoretical framework for understanding how political discourse influences media coverage and, subsequently, public opinion. Using the case of the partial-birth abortion (PBA) debate in the United States, they argue that elite political actors strategically employ distinct vocabularies to shape attitudes and that these linguistic choices affect media narratives and public perception. Through a combination of content analysis, time-series analysis, and experimental research, they examine how the use of the terms "baby" versus "fetus" in political and media discourse shaped public support for banning PBA.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on framing theory to argue that political discourse functions as a structured process in which elites embed strategic vocabularies to shape public attitudes. They challenge dominant models of media effects that either portray public opinion as a passive response to elite messages (Zaller 1992) or assume that political leaders react primarily to shifting public sentiment (Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson 1995). Instead, Simon and Jerit propose a dynamic model in which media serve as intermediaries that amplify and transmit elite discourse. Their central the-

oretical innovation lies in the concept of “uptake” and “emergence.” Uptake refers to the process by which exposure to specific terms strengthens mental associations that later influence public attitudes. Emergence describes how individuals exposed to competing frames do not simply average these messages but instead converge on one dominant term—suggesting a form of reasoning independent of sheer message volume. This model highlights the agency of both elites and citizens in shaping public opinion through strategic communication.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a multimethod research design. First, the authors conduct a content analysis of political discourse surrounding the PBA debate, examining congressional records and Supreme Court arguments to identify distinct linguistic choices by opposing elites. Second, they use time-series analysis to track the prevalence of the terms “baby” and “fetus” in *New York Times* coverage of PBA from 1996 to 2000, assessing whether media discourse follows political discourse or vice versa. Finally, they conduct an experimental study in which participants read manipulated news articles that either exclusively used “baby,” “fetus,” or alternated between both terms. The experiment measures how exposure to these variations influences support for banning PBA. The authors also test whether partisan predispositions moderate these effects.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors propose that:

- Political elites employ distinct vocabularies to frame policy debates and shape public attitudes.
- Media coverage reflects elite discourse rather than acting independently as a neutral arbiter.
- Exposure to specific terms (“baby” vs. “fetus”) influences public opinion through uptake, whereby individuals internalize the dominant term they encounter.
- In cases of mixed framing, individuals do not average competing messages but instead converge on a single dominant frame (emergence).

The findings confirm these hypotheses, demonstrating a clear causal relationship between elite discourse, media framing, and public opinion shifts.

**10. Main findings:** Simon and Jerit find strong evidence that political elites shape public discourse by embedding specific frames in their messaging. Their time-series analysis shows that congressional discourse precedes changes in media coverage, indicating that media largely follow political elites rather than leading public debate. The experimental results further confirm that word choice affects attitudes: participants exposed to “baby” were significantly more likely to support banning PBA, while those exposed to “fetus” expressed less support. Importantly, participants exposed to both terms did not average their responses but instead gravitated toward “baby,” lending support to the emergence hypothesis. These findings challenge dominant probabilistic models of survey response by suggesting that individuals do not merely react to message volume but engage in selective uptake of particular frames.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “The defining features of mass communication—mass production, lack of individual control, and finite available channels—are not as true today as they once were, and this is due to the emergence of new media for human communication” (p. 254).
- “In contrast to probabilistic survey response models, these findings support the idea that a kind of public reason can emerge from the interaction of citizens’ judgment processes and elite communication” (p. 255).
- “The rise and fall in media’s proportional usage of ‘baby’ coincided with changes in aggregate levels of support for banning the PBA procedure” (p. 262).

#### 4.2.7 A New Era of Minimal Effects? The Changing Foundations of Political Communication

Bennett, W. L. [W. Lance], & Iyengar, S. (2008). A New Era of Minimal Effects? The Changing Foundations of Political Communication. [Publisher: Oxford University Press / USA]. *Journal of Communication*, 58(4), 707–731. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2008.00410.x>

**1. Citation key:** bennett\_new\_2008

**2. Author(s):** W. Lance Bennett and Shanto Iyengar

**3. Year:** 2008

**4. Publication:** Journal of Communication

**5. Keywords:** minimal effects, media fragmentation, political communication, audience selectivity, agenda-setting

**6. Summary:** Bennett and Iyengar argue that political communication is entering a new era of “minimal effects,” shaped by the fragmentation of mass media, selective exposure, and the growing ability of audiences to curate their own informational environments. They revisit the historical “minimal effects” era of the 1940s and 1950s and contend that, unlike that period, today’s minimal effects stem from an oversaturation of media choices rather than from group-based information filtering. The authors caution that traditional models of media influence—such as agenda-setting, priming, and framing—may need significant revision to account for the changing structure of information consumption and audience segmentation.

**7. Theory:** The authors challenge the prevailing media effects paradigm, which assumes that mass communication significantly shapes public attitudes. They argue that the rise of cable television, digital media, and social networking has resulted in a fundamental restructuring of the political communication landscape. Traditional mass media once provided a shared “information commons” where citizens were passively exposed to a broad range of political content. However, the proliferation of media options now allows individuals to selectively expose themselves to information that reinforces preexisting beliefs, diminishing the likelihood of attitude change. This marks a departure from mid-20th-century minimal effects, where interpersonal networks constrained media influence, toward a new paradigm in

which ideological self-sorting among audiences insulates individuals from counterattitudinal perspectives. Bennett and Iyengar further assert that the increasing partisan polarization of media audiences complicates the study of media effects, as exposure to political information is now more voluntary and ideologically driven than ever before.

**8. Methods:** The study synthesizes existing research on media fragmentation, political polarization, and selective exposure, incorporating empirical data from experimental studies and content analyses. The authors analyze audience behavior trends, comparing historical media consumption patterns with contemporary ones. They also draw on experimental studies that manipulate media sources to examine partisan news consumption. For instance, they cite studies showing that conservatives overwhelmingly prefer Fox News while liberals favor NPR and CNN. Additionally, the authors reference time-series data demonstrating the decline of “inadvertent” news audiences, who in previous decades encountered political information as a byproduct of entertainment consumption.

**9. Hypotheses:** Bennett and Iyengar propose that:

- Media fragmentation leads to greater selective exposure, reducing cross-cutting political discourse.
- Audience polarization results in diminished attitude change, reinforcing ideological divides.
- The decline of shared information environments weakens traditional media effects theories, including agenda-setting and priming.
- Political engagement becomes increasingly stratified, with a small segment of highly engaged citizens consuming substantial political information while the broader public remains disengaged.

The findings largely confirm these hypotheses, suggesting that political communication research must account for the changing technological and social landscape.

**10. Main findings:** Bennett and Iyengar conclude that the proliferation of media choices has fundamentally altered the nature of media effects. While traditional models emphasized the ability of media to set the public agenda and influence attitudes, today's media environment fosters selective exposure and ideological insulation, leading to minimal persuasive effects. They highlight the growing divide between engaged partisans, who actively seek out political information that aligns with their beliefs, and disengaged citizens, who avoid political news altogether. This shift has profound implications for democratic accountability, as it suggests that media influence is now primarily reinforcing rather than persuasive. Furthermore, the authors argue that political campaigns and elites must now contend with fragmented audiences, making broad-based persuasion strategies less effective than targeted appeals to niche groups.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “With the continued detachment of individuals from the group-based society, and the increased capacity of consumers to choose from a multitude of media channels, the effects picture may be changing again” (p. 708).
- “The partisan polarization among some (but not all) segments of the public offers audiences greater choice over what information, whether true or false, to use to ornament their opinions” (p. 720).
- “The increasingly self-selected composition of audiences has important consequences for those who study media effects. Survey researchers, who rely on self-reported measures of news exposure, will find it increasingly difficult to treat exposure as a potential cause of political beliefs or attitudes” (p. 724).

#### 4.2.8 The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns

Vavreck, L. (2009, July). *The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns* [Google-Books-ID: [wmCze2iInXQC](#)]. Princeton University Press

**1. Citation key:** vavreck\_message\_2009

**2. Author(s):** Lynn Vavreck

**3. Year:** 2009

**4. Publication:** Princeton University Press

**5. Keywords:** presidential elections, campaign strategy, economic voting, insurgent campaigns, political messaging

**6. Summary:** Vavreck argues that presidential election outcomes are shaped by the interaction of economic conditions and candidates' strategic choices in campaign messaging. She develops a theory that categorizes campaigns into two types: “clarifying campaigns,” in which candidates advantaged by the economic context emphasize the economy, and “insurgent campaigns,” in which disadvantaged candidates must find alternative issues to shift the focus away from economic performance. Using historical election data, content analysis of campaign communications, and voter survey responses, Vavreck demonstrates that these campaign strategies significantly influence electoral outcomes, particularly by shaping the salience of issues in voters' minds.

**7. Theory:** Vavreck challenges the conventional wisdom that presidential election outcomes are either entirely determined by economic fundamentals or that campaigns play an independent and decisive role. Instead, she integrates these perspectives, arguing that campaigns matter to the extent that they interact with economic conditions. Candidates who benefit from strong economic performance should emphasize the economy in their campaigns, reinforcing voters' natural tendency to reward the incumbent party. Those disadvantaged by economic fundamentals, however, must adopt an insurgent strategy, focusing on alternative issues that are both salient to voters and difficult for their opponents to co-opt. The effectiveness of these strategies, she argues, depends on whether the insurgent candidate successfully primes voters to prioritize non-economic concerns. This approach builds on agenda-setting and issue-ownership theories, emphasizing how campaigns influence voters by structuring the criteria they use to evaluate candidates.

**8. Methods:** Vavreck employs a multi-method empirical approach, combining:

- **Historical case studies:** She analyzes every presidential election from 1952 to 2004, categorizing candidates as clarifiers or insurgents based on economic conditions and campaign messages.
- **Content analysis:** Examining candidates' speeches, advertisements, and media coverage, she tracks how frequently different issues were emphasized and whether they aligned with her theoretical predictions.
- **Survey analysis:** Using National Election Studies (NES) and Gallup data, she measures whether voters' perceptions of campaign issues align with the messaging strategies employed by candidates.
- **Election forecasting models:** She incorporates her campaign typology into traditional economic forecasting models, testing whether accounting for campaign strategies improves predictive accuracy.

Her analysis demonstrates that campaign strategy significantly conditions election outcomes, even in a system largely driven by economic fundamentals.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Candidates benefiting from a strong economy will emphasize economic issues in "clarifying campaigns" and are more likely to win.
- Candidates disadvantaged by economic conditions must adopt "insurgent campaigns," shifting attention to issues where they have a comparative advantage.
- The success of an insurgent campaign depends on whether the alternative issue resonates with voters and is not easily co-opted by the opponent.
- Incorporating campaign strategy into election forecasting models will improve predictive accuracy beyond economic indicators alone.

Her findings confirm these hypotheses, showing that campaigns do not override economic conditions but do influence how voters interpret them.

#### 10. Main findings:

Vavreck finds that economic conditions strongly predict election outcomes, but their effects are mediated by campaign strategy. Candidates who run clarifying campaigns almost always win, unless they fail to emphasize economic conditions (e.g., Al Gore in 2000). Insurgent campaigns, while less reliable, have occasionally succeeded when candidates effectively shifted the focus to other high-salience issues, such as crime (Nixon in 1968) or trust in government (Carter in 1976). Her statistical analysis shows that incorporating campaign messaging into traditional forecasting models significantly improves their predictive accuracy. Moreover, voter survey data indicate that clarifying candidates succeed in making the economy more salient in voters' minds, while successful insurgents manage to elevate their chosen alternative issue. Ultimately, she argues that campaigns do matter—but primarily by influencing which issues voters use to make their electoral choices, rather than by directly persuading them to change their opinions.

#### 11. Key Definitions:

- *Clarifying campaign:* A campaign strategy employed by a candidate who benefits from strong economic conditions, emphasizing economic issues to reinforce their natural electoral advantage.
- *Insurgent campaign:* A strategy used by candidates disadvantaged by economic conditions, in which they attempt to shift focus to non-economic issues where they hold an advantage.
- *Issue priming:* The process by which campaigns influence voters by making certain issues more salient, shaping the criteria they use to evaluate candidates.
- *Issue ownership:* The idea that certain parties or candidates are perceived as being more competent on specific issues, which can be leveraged in campaign messaging.
- *Economic fundamentals:* The objective state of the economy, typically measured by indicators such as GDP growth, unemployment, and inflation, which historically predict election outcomes.

#### 4.2.9 Political Communication in Postmodern Democracy: Challenging the Primacy of Politics

Brants, K., & Voltmer, K. (2011, January). *Political Communication in Postmodern Democracy: Challenging the Primacy of Politics* [Google-Books-ID: QoaDDAAQBAJ]. Springer

1. **Citation key:** brants\_political\_2011
2. **Author(s):** Kees Brants and Katrin Voltmer (eds.)
3. **Year:** 2011
4. **Publication:** Palgrave Macmillan
5. **Keywords:** political communication, mediatisation, citizen participation, postmodern democracy, media logic
6. **Summary:** This edited volume examines how political communication has evolved in postmodern democracies, focusing on the interplay between political institutions, media systems, and citizen engagement. Brants and Voltmer argue that the increasing dominance of "media logic" has reshaped political discourse, with politicians adapting their strategies to suit journalistic norms, public relations pressures, and entertainment-driven news formats. The book explores these dynamics in a comparative context, focusing primarily on the UK and the Netherlands, and highlights both the constraints and opportunities that mediatised politics creates for democratic participation.
7. **Theory:** The book is built around two central theoretical frameworks: *mediatisation* and *decentralisation*. Mediatisation refers to the way political communication is increasingly shaped by media logic rather than traditional political structures. Political actors must conform to journalistic expectations, prioritize soundbites, and engage in strategic news management to maintain visibility. The second framework, decentralisation, describes the shifting relationship between elites and citizens, as individuals gain greater access to political discourse through digital media but also

become more fragmented in their engagement. Brants and Voltmer argue that these processes create a paradox: while political actors have lost control over direct representation due to the increasing autonomy of media institutions, citizens simultaneously experience more opportunities for participation but often struggle to influence political elites effectively. This tension between top-down media influence and bottom-up citizen engagement is a defining characteristic of postmodern democracy.

**8. Methods:** The book employs a combination of theoretical analysis, comparative case studies, and empirical research. The first section establishes a conceptual framework, analyzing the de-institutionalization of politics and the rise of an “audience democracy” where citizens engage with politics primarily as spectators. The second section tests mediatization through content analysis, survey research, and elite interviews, examining media coverage of political campaigns, the role of spin doctors, and the personalization of political leadership. The third section explores decentralisation, analyzing how citizens engage with politics through alternative media, online activism, and reality television. Methodologies include qualitative interviews with politicians and journalists, quantitative content analysis of political news, and statistical analysis of public opinion data.

**9. Hypotheses:** The book advances several key hypotheses:

- Political communication is increasingly shaped by media logic, with politicians adapting their messaging to fit journalistic norms and entertainment-driven formats.
- Mediatization creates a shift from policy-driven political discourse to personalized and strategically managed news coverage.
- Citizen engagement is becoming more decentralized, with individuals using digital media to participate in politics outside traditional party structures.
- Media fragmentation results in greater audience selectivity, reducing the effectiveness of traditional mass communication strategies.

The empirical findings largely support these hypotheses, demonstrating the growing influence of media institutions over political discourse and the simultaneous challenges and opportunities for citizen participation.

**10. Main findings:** The book’s comparative analysis reveals that political actors in both the UK and the Netherlands increasingly rely on strategic communication techniques, such as spin doctors and media consultants, to navigate the changing media landscape. However, while British politics has embraced a more adversarial, personality-driven style, Dutch political communication remains more consensus-oriented. The findings suggest that media effects vary depending on national political cultures and institutional contexts. Additionally, the book highlights how digital technologies have empowered citizens to engage in new forms of political activism, but also notes that these developments have contributed to audience fragmentation and the decline of shared public spheres. Ultimately, Brants and Voltmer argue that postmodern democracy is characterized by a contradictory dynamic: while politicians face growing challenges in directly communicating with the public, citizens have more tools for engagement but struggle to translate participation into tangible political influence.

**11. Key Definitions:**

- *Mediatisation*: The process by which political communication becomes increasingly shaped by media logic, with journalists and media organizations acting as primary gatekeepers of political discourse.
- *Decentralisation*: The shift in political engagement from traditional hierarchical structures to more fragmented and individualized forms of participation, facilitated by digital media.
- *Audience democracy*: A political system in which citizens primarily engage with politics as spectators rather than active participants, with political representation increasingly mediated through mass communication.
- *Political personalization*: The tendency for media coverage to focus on individual political figures rather than parties, institutions, or policies.
- *Media logic*: The professional norms, routines, and commercial pressures that shape how news is produced, influencing the selection and framing of political information.

#### 4.2.10 Endogenous Beliefs in Models of Politics

Minozzi, W. (2013). Endogenous Beliefs in Models of Politics [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12021>. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(3), 566–581. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12021>

1. **Citation key:** minozzi\_endogenous\_2013

2. **Author(s):** William Minozzi

3. **Year:** 2013

4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

5. **Keywords:** rational choice, endogenous beliefs, political decision-making, strategic behavior, game theory

6. **Summary:** Minozzi challenges the standard rational choice model’s assumption that beliefs are exogenously given and perfectly aligned with objective probabilities. He introduces an *Endogenous Beliefs Model* (EBM) that allows beliefs to be shaped by both preferences and anticipatory emotions. The model is applied to voter turnout, taxation and collective choice, and crisis bargaining, illustrating how standard rational choice assumptions can be too restrictive and exclude plausible explanations of political behavior. The article provides a theoretical framework for understanding how beliefs evolve within strategic settings and demonstrates how relaxing the assumption of objective beliefs enhances formal political analysis.

7. **Theory:** The standard rational choice model assumes that actors’ beliefs correspond to objective probabilities, pre-

cluding biases, optimism, or preference-driven belief formation. However, empirical research suggests that beliefs are often overly optimistic, preference-motivated, and shaped by prior information rather than purely logical inference. Minozzi builds on behavioral economics and psychology to propose a model in which beliefs are formed endogenously, shaped by both anticipatory utility and strategic considerations. The key insight is that belief formation itself is a decision-making process influenced by preferences. He argues that rigid adherence to objective belief assumptions limits the explanatory power of formal models, particularly in cases where belief distortions shape political choices. By integrating endogenous belief formation into political models, he provides a framework that better aligns with empirical findings on human cognition and decision-making.

**8. Methods:** Minozzi develops a formal model of endogenous beliefs and applies it to three classic political science problems: voter turnout, taxation and redistribution, and crisis bargaining. Using game-theoretic analysis, he demonstrates how standard rational choice predictions change when beliefs are allowed to be subjective rather than objectively fixed. He incorporates elements of behavioral economics, such as anticipatory utility, which accounts for the emotional and psychological benefits of optimism in decision-making. The equilibrium outcomes in these models show that endogenous beliefs can explain empirical patterns—such as overestimation of pivotality in voting or mutual optimism in international conflicts—that standard rational choice models struggle to accommodate.

**9. Hypotheses:** Minozzi hypothesizes that political decision-making is better understood when beliefs are treated as endogenous rather than exogenously imposed. He tests this through three key applications:

- Voter turnout is influenced by overly optimistic beliefs about pivotality, even when objective probabilities suggest an individual's vote is unlikely to be decisive.
- Taxation and redistribution preferences are shaped by endogenous expectations of future economic mobility, leading some lower-income individuals to oppose high tax rates due to optimistic beliefs about their future wealth.
- Crisis bargaining outcomes are affected by mutual optimism, wherein states engage in conflict due to overly optimistic beliefs about their probability of winning, rather than purely strategic miscalculations based on private information.

His findings confirm that endogenous beliefs significantly alter political decision-making, generating predictions that align more closely with empirical observations.

**10. Main findings:** Minozzi demonstrates that allowing for endogenous belief formation resolves several paradoxes in political science. In the voter turnout model, individuals form optimistic beliefs about their impact on elections, explaining why turnout remains relatively high despite the minuscule probability of being pivotal. In the taxation model, optimistic expectations of upward mobility reduce support for redistribution among lower-income individuals, providing a mechanism for why some poor voters oppose progressive tax policies. In crisis bargaining, mutual optimism leads to war even when objective calculations should discourage it, addressing an empirical puzzle in international relations. The results show that endogenous beliefs introduce systematic biases that traditional rational choice models overlook, thereby offering a more psychologically realistic approach to modeling political behavior.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Empirically, beliefs tend to be overly optimistic rather than realistic, to be motivated by desires rather than independent of them, to be automatic rather than conscious, and to depend on prior information more than logic would allow" (p. 567).
- "Voters in the EBM have beliefs about being pivotal that are overly optimistic yet are rational in the sense that their choices maximize expected utility based on those beliefs" (p. 572).
- "The standard assumptions of exogenous, objective beliefs and Bayesian updating quash the mutual optimism that is allowed in the EBM, despite our everyday experience with cognitive biases like the above average effect" (p. 576).

#### 4.2.11 Terms of Choice: Uncertainty, Journalism, and Crisis

Zelizer, B. (2015). Terms of Choice: Uncertainty, Journalism, and Crisis [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/jcom.12157>]. *Journal of Communication*, 65(5), 888–908. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12157>

1. **Citation key:** zelizer\_terms\_2015
2. **Author(s):** Barbie Zelizer
3. **Year:** 2015
4. **Publication:** Journal of Communication
5. **Keywords:** journalism, crisis, uncertainty, discourse, media studies
6. **Summary:** Zelizer critiques the prevailing discourse that frames contemporary journalism as being in a state of "crisis." She argues that this framing overlooks the contingent and varied futures of journalism by imposing a rigid narrative of decline. The term "crisis," she contends, is a strategic rhetorical device that institutions use to manage uncertainty rather than an objective descriptor of journalism's current conditions. By tracing the historical use of crisis discourse, she demonstrates how its invocation both obscures the underlying structural changes in journalism and narrows the scope of possible responses.
7. **Theory:** Zelizer's argument is rooted in a broader critique of modernity's discomfort with uncertainty. She engages with theoretical perspectives on risk (Beck, 1992), contingency (Rorty, 1989), and institutional legitimacy (Weber, 1978)

to show that crisis is not merely a descriptive term but a means of controlling discourse. Institutions, she argues, rely on crisis narratives to impose temporal and spatial boundaries on uncertainty, creating a before-and-after framework that artificially simplifies complex transformations. Journalism, as an institution, has historically relied on the crisis frame to define its role and sustain its authority, but this framing may now hinder a fuller understanding of its evolving nature. Instead of accepting crisis as an objective condition, she calls for recognizing the multiple and often contradictory challenges facing journalism without assuming a singular trajectory of decline.

**8. Methods:** This study is a discourse analysis of how journalism's contemporary challenges are framed as a crisis. Zelizer examines scholarly and journalistic narratives that employ the crisis discourse, identifying patterns in their temporal and spatial framing. She traces how past technological disruptions, such as the introduction of radio and television, were similarly framed as existential crises, yet did not lead to journalism's demise. She also compares the crisis discourse in different geographical contexts, showing that journalism's perceived crisis is largely an Anglo-American construction, while other regions experience distinct but equally significant transformations without invoking the same crisis terminology.

**9. Hypotheses:** Zelizer hypothesizes that the crisis frame serves more as a rhetorical and institutional mechanism than as an accurate description of journalism's challenges. She tests this through three key arguments:

- The crisis frame follows a familiar historical pattern in which journalism is always seen as being in existential peril, yet it persists and adapts.
- The term "crisis" artificially imposes temporal and spatial boundaries on journalism's evolution, obscuring more nuanced and contingent trajectories.
- The discourse of crisis is disproportionately shaped by Anglo-American perspectives, which may not accurately reflect journalism's diverse global realities.

Her findings confirm that the invocation of crisis is less about journalism's actual conditions and more about managing uncertainty through strategic discourse.

**10. Main findings:** Zelizer demonstrates that the crisis frame is a discursive construct rather than an empirical reality. While journalism is undergoing profound changes due to technological, economic, and political shifts, these changes do not necessarily conform to a singular narrative of decline. Historical precedents, such as the transitions from print to radio and from radio to television, show that journalism has always faced disruption without collapsing. Moreover, the focus on crisis as a unitary phenomenon obscures the multiple pathways journalism might take in different contexts. In some regions, the economic crisis of journalism dominates; in others, political repression or public trust are the primary concerns. By interrogating the assumptions underlying the crisis discourse, Zelizer argues for a more open-ended and contextually sensitive approach to understanding journalism's future.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The invocation of 'crisis' as a way to explain journalism's predicament thus misses an opportunity to recognize how contingent and differentiated the futures of journalism might be" (p. 888).
- "'Crisis, then, invites coherency, a clear and often subjunctive vision of a hypothetical aspirational landscape that is better than what is presently available, even if it does not faithfully represent it'" (p. 892).
- "'Much of the crisis discourse is driven by journalists themselves: A Google search for 'the end of journalism' yields 9.2 billion hits'" (p. 895).

#### 4.2.12 Creating the Hybrid Field of Political Communication: A Five-Decade-Long Evolution of the Concept of Effects

Jamieson, K. H. (2017, August). Creating the Hybrid Field of Political Communication: A Five-Decade-Long Evolution of the Concept of Effects. K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication* (pp. 15–46). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199793471.013.27>

**1. Citation key:** jamieson\_creating\_2017

**2. Author(s):** Kathleen Hall Jamieson

**3. Year:** 2017

**4. Publication:** The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication

**5. Keywords:** political communication, minimal effects model, media effects, constructionism, hybrid field, political discourse

**6. Summary:** Jamieson traces the development of the interdisciplinary field of political communication, emphasizing its evolution from the Columbia election studies of the 1940s to its hybrid status spanning sociology, political science, psychology, and communication. She details how scholars like Elihu Katz, Kurt and Gladys Lang, Murray Edelman, and Doris Graber shaped the intellectual foundation of the field. The chapter explores the historical emergence of media effects research, challenges to the minimal effects model, and the role of communication in shaping electoral outcomes.

**7. Theory:** Jamieson situates the emergence of political communication within broader theoretical debates about the role of media in political life. She examines how early scholarship, particularly the Columbia and Michigan school studies, emphasized the reinforcement of political predispositions rather than persuasion, leading to the dominance of the minimal effects paradigm. However, she argues that this view underestimated the complex ways in which media shape political behavior, particularly through agenda setting, priming, and framing. The hybrid nature of political communication, she contends, arises from its integration of both positivist methodologies (e.g., experimental studies of media effects) and constructionist approaches (e.g., discourse analysis of political messaging). She also highlights

the contributions of figures such as Katz and Lazarsfeld in shifting the focus from direct persuasion to the mediated influence of interpersonal networks, and of Edelman and Gruber in framing political communication as a process of meaning construction rather than simple information transmission.

**8. Methods:** The chapter employs a historical and theoretical analysis of the field's evolution, synthesizing key studies and methodological shifts over five decades. Jamieson traces the intellectual lineage of political communication through both quantitative and qualitative approaches, examining shifts from survey-based electoral studies to experimental research on media effects. She also discusses the incorporation of cognitive psychology into political communication research, particularly in studies of voter heuristics, and evaluates the influence of agenda-setting and priming theories in moving beyond the minimal effects paradigm. Additionally, she engages in discourse analysis to critique the narratives that have defined political communication, identifying how scholars have constructed competing understandings of media influence.

**9. Hypotheses:** Jamieson advances the argument that the hybrid nature of political communication results from the convergence of multiple disciplinary perspectives and methodological approaches. She tests this claim through several key contentions:

- The field of political communication did not emerge until scholars began challenging the minimal effects model, opening the door to studies of agenda-setting, priming, and framing.
- Political communication research has historically oscillated between sociological models of interpersonal influence and psychological models of media-driven attitude change.
- The hybrid nature of the field stems from the coexistence of positivist and constructionist approaches, rather than a singular methodological orientation.

Her findings confirm that the field has evolved through intellectual contestation, with key shifts occurring as different disciplines have contributed their theoretical and methodological tools.

**10. Main findings:** Jamieson demonstrates that political communication has evolved from a narrowly defined study of media effects into an interdisciplinary field that integrates research on persuasion, discourse, and institutional influence. She challenges the notion that the minimal effects model ever fully captured media influence, arguing that subsequent work on agenda setting, priming, and framing has revealed more nuanced forms of media power. The field's hybrid nature, she argues, results from its absorption of methodologies from political science, sociology, psychology, and communication studies, creating a space for both experimental and qualitative research. She also highlights the continued relevance of early communication research, noting that while traditional campaign studies focused on reinforcement rather than persuasion, more recent research has demonstrated significant indirect effects of media exposure. Ultimately, she contends that political communication remains a contested but vibrant field, shaped by both theoretical debates and empirical advancements.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Political communication did not emerge as a field until the notion that mass media don't [sic] much matter had been dispatched" (p. 17).
- "The minimal effects model threatened to mothball that embryonic research area with such relics as the elocution machine even as it contributed to our understanding of factors such as selective perception and partisan predispositions that blunt the 'direct' effects of mass media" (p. 18).
- "By integrating psychological processes into 'meaning,' one could easily parse the essays in the handbook into those two themes as Katz defines them" (p. 31).

#### 4.2.13 The Power of Political Communication

Tesler, M., & Zaller, J. (2017, August). The Power of Political Communication. K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication* (pp. 69–84). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199793471.013.003>

**1. Citation key:** tesler\_power\_2017

**2. Author(s):** Michael Tesler and John Zaller

**3. Year:** 2017

**4. Publication:** The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication

**5. Keywords:** persuasion, communication effects, mass communication, duration of communication effects, party cues

**6. Summary:** Tesler and Zaller examine the extent to which mass communication influences political attitudes and behavior. They challenge the conventional wisdom that mass media effects are either minimal or universally powerful, arguing instead that the impact of political communication is highly contingent on context. The authors find that most media effects are short-lived and primarily influence weakly held attitudes, rather than deeply entrenched ideological commitments. However, party cues within mass communication can shift political attitudes and even affect voting behavior, though these effects are stronger for individuals with lower levels of political sophistication.

**7. Theory:** Tesler and Zaller present a nuanced theoretical framework that integrates insights from political communication, psychology, and media studies. They argue that the impact of political communication is contingent on three primary factors: (1) the degree of partisan cueing in the message, (2) the prior political commitments of the audience, and (3) the duration of exposure to political communication. Drawing from the minimal effects literature, they acknowledge that many political messages fail to alter deeply held beliefs but contend that strategic partisan messaging can shift opinion under certain conditions. Their argument builds on the notion that elite cues—especially those from

political parties—play a crucial role in shaping public opinion. They also emphasize the importance of field studies over laboratory experiments, suggesting that real-world media effects are more variable than previously assumed. Ultimately, they argue that while short-term persuasion effects are often transient, communication that persists over time (such as long-term partisan media slant) can produce meaningful shifts in political behavior.

**8. Methods:** Tesler and Zaller conduct a comprehensive review of recent field studies on media effects, focusing on research that examines changes in political attitudes, voting behavior, and partisan polarization. They highlight three key field experiments that estimate the effects of partisan news coverage on electoral outcomes. These studies include: (1) a randomized experiment providing free newspaper subscriptions to voters, which found that exposure to partisan newspapers significantly influenced vote choice; (2) a longitudinal panel study examining how shifts in newspaper endorsements affected voter preferences; and (3) an analysis of Fox News' market expansion, which showed that increased exposure to conservative media led to a modest but measurable shift in Republican vote share. The authors also discuss experimental research on political advertising, demonstrating that television campaign ads can have significant short-term effects but tend to decay rapidly.

**9. Hypotheses:** Tesler and Zaller hypothesize that political communication effects depend on contextual factors rather than being uniformly strong or weak. Their key contentions include:

- Most media effects are transient, fading rapidly unless reinforced over time.
- Partisan cues are a powerful mechanism of persuasion, particularly for individuals with weak or ambivalent political attitudes.
- Non-partisan communication has limited effects on political attitudes, as individuals are less likely to update beliefs in the absence of clear partisan framing.
- The political consequences of mass communication depend on timing; messages delivered close to elections or legislative decisions are more likely to have lasting effects.

Their findings confirm that while mass communication can influence political outcomes, its power is often overstated outside of contexts where partisan reinforcement is strong.

**10. Main findings:** The authors conclude that political communication is powerful but context-dependent. While mass media can shape attitudes and voting behavior, its effects are often short-lived and primarily influence those without strong preexisting commitments. They find that partisan cues embedded in media coverage can shift public opinion, but these effects are most pronounced among low-information voters. Field experiments demonstrate that partisan news consumption can alter vote choice, with estimates suggesting that exposure to ideologically slanted news sources can shift voter preferences by several percentage points. However, they also emphasize that media effects decay over time, making continuous reinforcement necessary for sustained opinion change. The study challenges both the minimal effects paradigm and overly simplistic models of media influence, advocating for a more nuanced understanding of how political communication operates within real-world electoral contexts.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Most scholars agree that the effects of mass communication are more than minimal. We find, however, that most communication effects are short-lived, involve mainly weakly held attitudes, and produce no political consequences" (p. 69).
- "Short-term communication effects can be quite consequential if they occur close to a relevant political decision, such as an election or congressional vote. Communication that continues over a long period of time, such as messages carrying the value of racial equality, may also be important" (p. 70).
- "Party cues conveyed in mass communication can change attitudes, but usually weakly held ones; when individuals hold strong views, they often change parties rather than change attitudes" (p. 71).

#### 4.2.14 A Call to Contextualize Public Opinion-Based Research in Political Communication

Rojas, H., & Valenzuela, S. (2019). A Call to Contextualize Public Opinion-Based Research in Political Communication [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2019.1670897>. *Political Communication*, 36(4), 652–659. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2019.1670897>

1. **Citation key:** rojas\_call\_2019
2. **Author(s):** Hernando Rojas and Sebastián Valenzuela
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** public opinion, political communication, comparative research, affective polarization, fake news
6. **Summary:** Rojas and Valenzuela argue for the necessity of contextualizing public opinion-based research in political communication, particularly in comparative and cross-national studies. They critique the tendency of Western political communication scholarship to assume that findings from the U.S. and Europe are universally applicable, highlighting how political, cultural, and media system differences influence the relationships between variables. Using case studies on affective polarization and fake news perceptions in the U.S., China, Japan, and South Korea, they illustrate the limitations of decontextualized analyses and advocate for more nuanced, context-dependent research frameworks.
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the implicit assumption in much of political communication research that relationships between media exposure, political attitudes, and participation are stable across different national and institutional contexts. Drawing from comparative media studies (Hallin & Mancini, 2004) and political psychology, they argue that public opinion research should explicitly incorporate contextual variables, such as media system structures, cultural

orientations, and historical political developments. They highlight how concepts such as affective polarization—often assumed to be a universal consequence of partisan media exposure—manifest differently across political systems. In doing so, they propose a framework that integrates contextualization into empirical research, showing that findings should not be treated as universally generalizable without considering the structural and historical factors that shape them.

**8. Methods:** Rojas and Valenzuela employ a comparative survey analysis across four countries (the U.S., China, Japan, and South Korea) to examine two key political communication phenomena: affective polarization and fake news perceptions. They use:

- **Cross-national survey data:** Conducted in 2018, the surveys measure political attitudes, media consumption patterns, and perceptions of fake news.
- **Regression analysis:** To determine whether media consumption (traditional vs. social media) influences affective polarization differently across national contexts.
- **Comparative content analysis:** Assessing differences in news media narratives and their potential effects on polarization.
- **Historical comparisons:** Revisiting Almond and Verba's *Civic Culture* (1963) study to assess long-term trends in political attitudes across different political systems.

Their methodological approach emphasizes the importance of identifying country-specific media effects rather than assuming homogeneity across national cases.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Media consumption influences political polarization differently depending on national media environments.
- The relationship between social media use and affective polarization is stronger in highly polarized political systems (e.g., the U.S. and South Korea) than in systems with different political structures (e.g., Japan and China).
- Perceptions of fake news vary significantly across countries, shaped by both media literacy and trust in institutions.
- Cross-national comparisons reveal systematic differences in public opinion formation that are obscured in single-country studies.

Their findings confirm that context matters significantly in shaping public opinion and that assumptions derived from Western democracies do not necessarily apply globally.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds significant variation in how media consumption relates to affective polarization and fake news perceptions across different countries. In the U.S. and South Korea, social media consumption is associated with increased affective polarization, reinforcing the “echo chamber” hypothesis. However, in Japan and China, no such relationship exists, suggesting that different media landscapes and political cultures mediate the effects of social media. Additionally, while Americans report high exposure to fake news, they also express greater confidence in their ability to detect it compared to respondents in China and Japan. These findings highlight the necessity of incorporating political and cultural context when analyzing media effects, challenging the assumption that patterns observed in one country apply universally. The authors argue that contextualized approaches enhance theoretical rigor by specifying the conditions under which certain political communication effects hold.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “In this piece, we advocate for contextualizing public opinion research in all cases, because of course relationships among variables are always context/historic dependent” (p. 652).
- “A researcher studying only the U.S. would find that controlling for demographic variables, people who tend to receive news more frequently from social media are also more likely to be affectively polarized, while those receiving news from newspapers or television are not. However, things become more complicated when we add some comparisons into the mix” (p. 655).
- “The evidence on affective polarization and fake news presented above should make it readily apparent the risks of not specifying the conditions under which social media use affects the political system from studying—to continue with the prior example—the U.S. context only” (p. 657).

#### 4.2.15 Never Say Never... Or the Value of Context in Political Communication Research

Salgado, S. (2019). Never Say Never ... Or the Value of Context in Political Communication Research [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2019.1670902>]. *Political Communication*, 36(4), 671–675. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2019.1670902>

1. **Citation key:** salgado\_never\_2019

2. **Author(s):** Susana Salgado

3. **Year:** 2019

4. **Publication:** Political Communication

5. **Keywords:** political communication, comparative research, media effects, contextualism, cross-national studies

6. **Summary:** Salgado critiques the tendency of political communication research to prioritize generalization over contextual specificity. She argues that while comparative studies aim for broad theoretical applicability, they often overlook crucial local variables that shape political communication processes. By analyzing research on media effects, democratic transitions, and election coverage across different countries, Salgado emphasizes that context mediates the relationships between variables, making one-size-fits-all conclusions problematic. She calls for greater methodologi-

cal balance between quantitative and qualitative approaches to ensure that political communication research remains attuned to local realities.

7. **Theory:** Salgado builds on the work of Hallin and Mancini (2017) and Sartori (1970) to argue that political communication concepts do not always travel well across different national contexts. She identifies a persistent methodological imbalance in comparative research, where the emphasis on quantitative techniques often comes at the expense of deep contextual understanding. Drawing from theories of media systems and political behavior, she contends that media effects, public opinion formation, and political discourse cannot be fully understood without accounting for country-specific historical, cultural, and institutional factors. The dominance of abstraction and generalization, she argues, has led to conceptual stretching, where broad theoretical claims lose their explanatory power when applied to diverse cases. She advocates for a “contextualist” approach, in which concepts and findings are rigorously tested within their specific environments before being extended to other cases.
8. **Methods:** Salgado employs a comparative analysis of research on political communication across different regions, focusing on:
  - **Media effects research:** She examines studies on the impact of social media on political polarization in different countries, highlighting how context mediates these effects.
  - **Election coverage:** Using content analysis, she compares media framing of elections in Greece, Portugal, Spain, and Ireland following the Euro Crisis, demonstrating how national contexts shape journalistic priorities.
  - **Lusophone Africa case studies:** Through interviews and media analysis, she explores how digital media function in Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe, showing how media roles shift based on levels of press freedom and political competition.

Her research design emphasizes the need for mixed-methods approaches that combine quantitative breadth with qualitative depth to capture the full complexity of political communication.

9. **Hypotheses:** Salgado argues that:
  - Political communication research must be grounded in local contexts to avoid misleading generalizations.
  - Media effects are not uniform across countries; their influence depends on political institutions, media systems, and cultural norms.
  - The over-reliance on quantitative methodologies has led to an “epistemological imbalance,” where comparative studies prioritize breadth over depth.
  - Effective comparative research must integrate qualitative methods to account for contextual variation in political communication dynamics.

Her findings support these hypotheses, demonstrating that contextual differences significantly mediate how media shape public opinion and political discourse.

10. **Main findings:** Salgado’s analysis reveals that media and political dynamics vary significantly across different national contexts, challenging the assumption that political communication processes are universally generalizable. She finds that political polarization and media fragmentation—widely studied in the U.S. and Europe—manifest differently in other parts of the world. Her research on Lusophone Africa demonstrates that online media serve distinct functions based on levels of press freedom: as an alternative to state-controlled media in restrictive regimes, as a complement in more pluralistic environments, and as a reinforcement of elite narratives where journalistic independence is weak. Similarly, her study of European election coverage shows that the Euro Crisis was framed differently across countries, with issue-based coverage in Greece and Portugal contrasting with strategy-focused coverage in Spain and Ireland. These findings reinforce her argument that comparative research must take national contexts seriously to avoid misleading conclusions.

11. **Key quotations:**
  - “The need for context is so obvious in everyday life that we could ask why is it so often overlooked in political communication comparative research?” (p. 671).
  - “Most comparative research in political communication has been guided by an overarching objective of generalization that entails high levels of conceptual abstraction and is often accompanied by a resistance in acknowledging local specific contextual factors” (p. 672).
  - “Although election news coverage has been increasingly framed as strategy rather than as a discussion of issues and candidates’ proposals, crisis situations may influence the election news framing, but the specific national context may also hold some influence over the type of coverage” (p. 674).

## 4.3 Shifting Foundations of Political Communication

### 4.3.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of political communication has undergone a transformation from early models that emphasized message transmission and persuasion to more nuanced frameworks that interrogate the evolving role of media, technological adaptation, and the professionalization of political messaging. Traditional perspectives centered on the effects of mass communication on public opinion and electoral behavior, often assuming a linear relationship between media exposure and political attitudes. However, contemporary scholarship has complicated this view by examining how media logic, technological shifts, and elite-driven strategic communication reshape the nature of political discourse. Recent research has critiqued oversimplified narratives of professionalization, investigated the structural effects of mediatization, explored the intersection of race and digital media engagement, and analyzed how partisan

identity influences discussion networks. These shifts in political communication research challenge conventional wisdom, revealing that political messaging is not merely a function of strategic adaptation but is deeply embedded in broader social, economic, and technological contexts.

- **Professionalization of Political Communication:** Scholarship on the professionalization of political communication has long suggested that political campaigns have evolved toward greater reliance on expertise, strategic messaging, and media management. However, Lilleker and Negrine (2002) challenge the broad application of the term “professionalization,” arguing that it conflates multiple distinct trends under a single concept. They critique existing definitions for their inconsistency, noting that scholars variously attribute professionalization to modernization, the employment of external consultants, or the centralization of campaign management. Through an analysis of British political campaigns, they demonstrate that professionalization is neither a monolithic process nor an inevitable trajectory toward more sophisticated political communication. Instead, they argue for a more precise conceptualization that differentiates between specialization, media adaptation, and the increasing reliance on external experts in shaping political messaging. Their critique underscores the need for more targeted analytical frameworks that account for variation across political systems and historical contexts.
- **Mediatization and the Shifting Influence of Media Logic:** The concept of mediatization has gained prominence as scholars seek to understand how political institutions adapt to the evolving demands of media environments. Strömbäck (2008) outlines a four-phase model of mediatization, distinguishing between mediated politics—where media serve as conduits for political messages—and fully mediatized politics, in which political actors internalize media logic to the extent that it shapes governance and decision-making. His framework highlights how media institutions have gained autonomy from political actors, shifting the balance of power in agenda-setting and political framing. Rather than viewing mediatization as a uniform process, Strömbäck’s model identifies distinct stages through which political systems become more dependent on media imperatives. The final phase, in which political decisions are largely dictated by media considerations, raises concerns about the potential erosion of substantive policy discourse in favor of dramatization, personalization, and immediacy. This framework has broad implications for understanding how political communication is increasingly structured by media logic rather than traditional mechanisms of governance.
- **Race, Digital Capital, and Online Political Discourse:** The rise of digital communication has prompted scholars to revisit theories of political participation and media engagement, particularly in relation to historically marginalized groups. Brock, Kvasny, and Hales (2010) critique deficit-based models of the digital divide, arguing that such frameworks fail to recognize how Black women leverage online platforms to construct identity and resist hegemonic narratives. Using Bourdieu’s concepts of cultural and technical capital, they analyze weblogs as spaces of self-definition where users engage in counter-hegemonic discourse. Their findings reveal that digital media function not simply as sites of passive consumption but as arenas for active meaning-making, where technical skills and social narratives intersect. By highlighting how Black women reframe mainstream representations through digital discourse, their study challenges prevailing assumptions about technological access and participation, advocating for a more nuanced understanding of digital political engagement.
- **Partisan Identity and the Avoidance of Political Discussion:** While traditional models of political communication emphasize the role of mass media in shaping public attitudes, recent research has explored how individuals actively navigate and avoid political discourse in everyday interactions. Settle and Carlson (2019) investigate why people opt out of political discussions, revealing that partisan identity structures social interactions beyond explicitly political contexts. Through a series of experiments, they demonstrate that individuals demand higher compensation to engage in discussions with out-partisans, even on nonpolitical topics. Their findings suggest that affective polarization extends beyond media consumption, influencing interpersonal dynamics in ways that reinforce ideological sorting. This research complicates earlier models of political discussion networks, showing that political avoidance is not merely a function of contentious issues but is deeply tied to the broader social costs of engaging across partisan lines.
- **Structural Biases in Scholarly Communication:** In addition to examining political communication in electoral and media contexts, scholars have turned their attention to the institutional structures that shape academic discourse. Knobloch-Westerwick and Glynn (2013) identify the “Matilda effect” in scholarly communication, showing that female-authored research is systematically under-cited compared to male-authored work. Drawing on role congruity theory, they argue that implicit biases in citation networks reinforce gender disparities in academic recognition, particularly in male-dominated subfields such as political communication. Their findings contribute to broader discussions about the structural barriers that shape whose voices are amplified in academic and public discourse, raising questions about the role of visibility and network effects in shaping scholarly impact.
- **Disciplinary Exclusions and the Erasure of Race in Communication Theory:** Recent critiques of political communication scholarship have also addressed the epistemological boundaries of the field. Chakravarty and Jackson (2020) examine the systematic exclusion of race and colonialism in communication theory, revealing that doctoral training in U.S. programs overwhelmingly prioritizes Eurocentric frameworks while marginalizing critical race and decolonial perspectives. Through a content analysis of syllabi, they find that race, when included, is often relegated to a single week rather than integrated into foundational theoretical frameworks. Their work challenges dominant narratives in political communication, arguing that disciplinary whiteness continues to shape what is considered core knowledge. By advocating for a fundamental restructuring of communication pedagogy, they call attention to the broader ideological and institutional forces that determine which perspectives are legitimized within the field.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** As political communication research continues to evolve, several key de-

bates remain unresolved. Scholars continue to grapple with the extent to which professionalization reflects genuine innovation versus elite control over political discourse. Similarly, questions persist about whether mediatization enhances democratic engagement or prioritizes media-centric logic at the expense of substantive governance. Research on digital communication has expanded understandings of participatory politics, yet concerns remain about digital inequalities and the ways online engagement replicates offline power structures. Furthermore, scholarship on political discussion networks has raised new questions about the implications of affective polarization for civic engagement. Future research is likely to explore the intersection of media logic and political behavior, the role of algorithmic curation in shaping public discourse, and the continued impact of racial and gender biases in political communication. These emerging directions reflect a broader shift in the field—away from static models of message effects and toward a more dynamic understanding of how political communication operates within evolving social, technological, and institutional contexts.

#### 4.3.2 Professionalization: Of What? Since When? By Whom?

Lilleker, D. G., & Negrine, R. (2002). Professionalization: Of What? Since When? By Whom? [Publisher: SAGE Publications]. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 7(4), 98–103. <https://doi.org/10.1177/108118002236354>

1. **Citation key:** lilleker\_professionalization\_2002
2. **Author(s):** Darren G. Lilleker and Ralph Negrine
3. **Year:** 2002
4. **Publication:** Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics
5. **Keywords:** political communication, professionalization, campaign strategy, media management, political marketing
6. **Summary:** Lilleker and Negrine critically assess the use of the term “professionalization” in political communication scholarship, arguing that it is often used too broadly and imprecisely. They analyze how the concept has evolved and been applied in different contexts, questioning whether it effectively captures the nuanced transformations in political campaigning. They argue that rather than being a singular process, professionalization encompasses a variety of distinct developments, including specialization, increased reliance on external consultants, and the centralization of campaign control. The authors advocate for a more precise terminology to avoid conflating disparate phenomena under a vague, overarching term.
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the dominant scholarly narrative that conceptualizes professionalization as a monolithic trend transforming political communication. They argue that existing literature presents inconsistent and sometimes contradictory definitions of professionalization, making it difficult to discern what exactly is being described. Some scholars view professionalization as a process of making political communication more effective through modernization and enhanced message delivery, while others see it as the employment of external specialists such as public relations consultants and data analysts. Lilleker and Negrine suggest that these interpretations fail to account for the broader historical and institutional contexts in which political campaigns evolve. They propose that rather than treating professionalization as a singular force, scholars should instead examine its constituent elements—such as technological adaptation, the division of labor within campaigns, and the centralization of communication strategies—to develop a more accurate understanding of political change.
8. **Methods:** This study is based on an analysis of contemporary political communication literature, with a particular focus on British campaigns. The authors critically review prior conceptualizations of professionalization in political communication and compare them with empirical developments in British electoral politics. They analyze the extent to which professionalization has led to specialization among campaign actors, the role of external consultants, and the degree to which media strategies have become standardized. Their methodological approach involves evaluating existing definitions of professionalization, identifying inconsistencies, and assessing whether the term is an appropriate descriptor for recent transformations in political campaigning.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors argue that professionalization is too broadly defined and that it fails to capture the specific mechanisms driving change in political communication. They hypothesize that:
  - Professionalization is often conflated with modernization, obscuring important distinctions in how political campaigns evolve.
  - The term professionalization inadequately accounts for variation across different political systems, campaign structures, and historical contexts.
  - The increased reliance on political consultants and communication specialists does not necessarily indicate a uniform process of professionalization but rather reflects broader trends in political marketing and media adaptation.

Their findings support these hypotheses, highlighting the need for a more precise conceptual framework.

10. **Main findings:** Lilleker and Negrine conclude that the term “professionalization” is insufficiently precise and often misleading when applied to political communication. They argue that the concept is frequently used in a normative manner, implying an inevitable progression toward more sophisticated and effective political campaigns. However, they demonstrate that professionalization is neither a uniform process nor necessarily beneficial for political engagement. Instead, it involves various intersecting trends, including the specialization of campaign roles, the increased use of expert consultants, and the centralization of communication strategies. The authors emphasize that these changes must be contextualized within broader historical and technological shifts, as political campaigns have always adapted to new communication technologies. They propose that scholars abandon the catchall term professionalization in favor of more specific descriptors, such as “specialization of tasks,” “media adaptation,” and “centralized campaign

management."

### 11. Key quotations:

- "The differing definitions of professionalization illustrated above present the reader with some confusion over the use of the term: Is professionalization a process of making communication more effective through updating and enhancing the modes for delivering a political message? Alternatively, is professionalization related to the employment of professional communicators—public relations experts, image consultants, data analysts, and so forth—to manage the campaign?" (p. 98).
- "One problem in trying to understand these questions is that the use of words such as professional often makes sense only in relation to the activities and to the requirements of the media. Does being a professional mean any more than simply systematically providing the media with the sorts of information and in the form that they need?" (p. 99).
- "We would wish to argue, and our present research lends support to this assertion, that the term professionalization needs to be more carefully defined and, when explaining certain aspects of a process of evolution, abandoned in favor of more specific and more accurate phrases such as specialization of tasks, the increased use of experts and the management or centralization of the campaign." (p. 101).

#### 4.3.3 Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of the Mediatization of Politics

Strömbäck, J. (2008). Four Phases of Mediatization: An Analysis of the Mediatization of Politics [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 13(3), 228–246. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161208319097>

1. **Citation key:** stromback\_four\_2008
2. **Author(s):** Jesper Strömbäck
3. **Year:** 2008
4. **Publication:** Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics
5. **Keywords:** mediatization, political communication, media logic, political logic, journalism
6. **Summary:** Strömbäck examines the concept of mediatization as a multidimensional and process-oriented phenomenon, outlining four distinct phases through which politics becomes increasingly dependent on media logic. He distinguishes between *mediated* and *mediatized* politics, arguing that while mediation refers to the media's role as a conduit for political communication, mediatization is a broader transformation where political institutions and actors gradually adapt to media logic. The article proposes a four-phase framework that captures the progression of media influence over political actors and institutions, culminating in a stage where political decision-making is largely shaped by media logic rather than traditional political processes.
7. **Theory:** Strömbäck argues that mediatization is not a binary condition but rather a process that unfolds in distinct stages. He differentiates between *media logic*—the commercial and presentational imperatives governing journalistic content—and *political logic*, which is driven by governance, policy-making, and institutional priorities. As politics becomes increasingly mediatized, media logic gains precedence over political logic, reshaping the ways in which political actors communicate, strategize, and engage with the public. The author critiques prior conceptualizations of mediatization for failing to specify its empirical manifestations and presents a structured framework to assess its progression. He further argues that while mediatization is often viewed negatively—implying a decline in substantive political discourse—its effects should be empirically assessed rather than normatively assumed.
8. **Methods:** Strömbäck employs a conceptual and theoretical approach, synthesizing existing literature on media influence, political communication, and journalism studies. He draws upon historical and contemporary examples, primarily from Western democracies, to illustrate the four phases of mediatization. The study does not rely on direct empirical data collection but instead offers a process-oriented framework to analyze how media and politics interact over time. By delineating the different degrees of media influence across these phases, Strömbäck provides a heuristic tool for future empirical studies.
9. **Hypotheses:** Strömbäck proposes that mediatization unfolds through four progressive phases:
  - In the **first phase**, politics is primarily mediated, meaning the media serve as the main channel of communication between political elites and the public, but political logic still dominates.
  - In the **second phase**, media institutions gain autonomy from political institutions, influencing how political messages are framed and disseminated.
  - In the **third phase**, political actors begin to adapt their behavior to media logic, prioritizing media strategies in their policymaking and communication.
  - In the **fourth phase**, media logic is fully internalized by political institutions, making it a fundamental component of political governance and decision-making.
 These phases suggest that as mediatization advances, political actors increasingly prioritize media considerations over traditional governance concerns.
10. **Main findings:** Strömbäck concludes that mediatization is an ongoing and intensifying process that fundamentally alters the nature of political communication and governance. While mediation has always been a feature of politics, mediatization represents a deeper transformation wherein political actors are not only reliant on media but also adapt their strategies, priorities, and rhetoric to align with media logic. The process is not unidirectional—certain political systems may resist or even reverse some aspects of mediatization—but the general trend across democracies has been toward greater media influence. He warns that in the later phases of mediatization, political decision-making risks

being driven more by media imperatives (e.g., immediacy, personalization, and dramatization) than by substantive policy concerns. Ultimately, he calls for more empirical research to assess the extent to which different countries and political systems have progressed through these phases.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Mediated politics should thus be understood as something different from politics experienced through interpersonal communication or directly by the people" (p. 230).
- "Put differently, political communication in a particular society can, to a significant extent, be governed mainly by either media logic or political logic" (p. 233).
- "In the fourth phase of mediatization, the dominant source of information continues to be the media. However, the intensity of media experiences is stronger than in earlier phases, and politics and society—from the micro to the macro level—are permeated with the media to such an extent that the media and their communicative output is almost impossible to avoid" (p. 240).

#### 4.3.4 Cultural Appropriations of Technical Capital: Black Women, Weblogs, and the Digital Divide

Brock, A., Kvasny, L., & Hales, K. (2010). Cultural Appropriations of Technical Capital: Black women, weblogs, and the digital divide [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2010.498897>]. *Information, Communication & Society*, 13(7), 1040–1059. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2010.498897>

1. **Citation key:** brock\_cultural\_2010

2. **Author(s):** André Brock, Lynette Kvasny, and Kayla Hales

3. **Year:** 2010

4. **Publication:** Information, Communication & Society

5. **Keywords:** digital divide, cultural capital, technical capital, Black feminism, weblogs

6. **Summary:** Brock, Kvasny, and Hales critique the dominant narrative of the digital divide, which frames marginalized communities' technology use in terms of deficits rather than adaptations and innovations. Using Bourdieu's concepts of *cultural capital* and *technical capital*, they analyze how Black women use weblogs to construct identity, resist hegemonic stereotypes, and articulate their experiences in the matrimonial market. Their study demonstrates that Black women's digital engagement is not a sign of technological deficiency but rather a rearticulation of social and cultural capital through digital means.

7. **Theory:** The authors employ Bourdieu's concepts of cultural and technical capital to challenge deficit-based models of ICT use. They argue that traditional discussions of the digital divide focus on material access to technology while overlooking how marginalized groups strategically use digital tools to advance their own cultural and social narratives. Drawing from Black feminist theory, they contend that Black women's engagement with weblogs exemplifies how historically excluded groups appropriate digital spaces to challenge dominant discourses on race, gender, and class. By situating weblogs within broader power structures, they illustrate how technical capital—skills acquired through digital participation—allows Black women to reframe narratives about their social positioning, particularly in discussions of relationships and marriage.

8. **Methods:** The study employs a *critical technocultural discourse analysis* (CTDA) to examine how Black women engage in digital discourse about relationships, self-definition, and social standing. The authors analyze three weblogs—*Essence*, *Jezebel*, and *Racialicious*—which discuss Black women's experiences in the matrimonial market. They conduct close readings of blog posts and comment threads, integrating insights from Black feminist theory to interpret how these digital spaces facilitate the accumulation and activation of cultural and technical capital. The analysis considers both the content of the discussions and the digital affordances that shape these conversations.

9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Traditional digital divide research underestimates the extent to which marginalized groups leverage cultural and technical capital in online spaces.
- Black women use weblogs to challenge hegemonic representations of their identities, particularly in discussions about relationships and desirability.
- The articulation of cultural capital through digital platforms offers an alternative framework for understanding ICT engagement beyond deficit models.

Their findings strongly support these hypotheses, demonstrating that weblogs serve as spaces where Black women construct alternative narratives and resist dominant racialized and gendered stereotypes.

10. **Main findings:** The authors argue that Black women's weblog engagement challenges deficit-based perspectives on the digital divide by demonstrating how these platforms serve as sites of self-definition and resistance. They find that weblogs facilitate discussions about race, gender, and desirability that would have traditionally taken place in gendered offline spaces, such as beauty salons. The study reveals how digital discourse enables Black women to critique hegemonic standards of beauty, respond to stereotypes about being "undesirable" or "too independent," and articulate new forms of self-worth. Additionally, weblogs provide opportunities for communal validation, allowing participants to affirm each other's experiences and contest mainstream narratives that marginalize Black women. The findings suggest that rather than being mere consumers of digital content, Black women are active producers of discourse who use technical capital to reframe cultural narratives.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "It is our contention that this phenomenon—the articulation of cultural capital mediated through technical

prowess—is a strong argument against the deficit models of minority information and communication technology use promoted by digital divide research” (p. 1041).

- “Online environs such as Racialicious and Essence have become new ‘third places’ and (reasonably) safe spaces within which women of color can reflect upon their discursive construction in media and in policy” (p. 1050).
- “We see these counter-hegemonic ways of knowing and coping skills as Afrocentric forms of cultural capital” (p. 1052).

#### 4.3.5 The Matilda Effect—Role Congruity Effects on Scholarly Communication

Knobloch-Westerwick, S., & Glynn, C. J. (2013). The Matilda Effect—Role Congruity Effects on Scholarly Communication: A Citation Analysis of Communication Research and Journal of Communication Articles [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Communication Research*, 40(1), 3–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650211418339>

1. **Citation key:** knobloch-westerwick\_matilda\_2013
2. **Author(s):** Silvia Knobloch-Westerwick and Carroll J. Glynn
3. **Year:** 2013
4. **Publication:** Communication Research
5. **Keywords:** Matilda effect, gender bias, role congruity theory, citation analysis, scholarly communication
6. **Summary:** Knobloch-Westerwick and Glynn investigate the existence of the “Matilda effect,” a systematic under-recognition of female scientists’ contributions in scholarly communication. Using citation analysis, they examine 1,020 articles published between 1991 and 2005 in *Communication Research* and *Journal of Communication*, along with the citations those articles received and referenced. Drawing on role congruity theory, they test whether articles authored by women receive fewer citations than those authored by men, and they explore moderating factors such as research topic, author productivity, citing author’s gender, and temporal changes. Their findings provide robust empirical support for the Matilda effect, demonstrating that female scholars are systematically undercited.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on role congruity theory, which posits that social expectations shape how individuals in particular roles are evaluated. Applied to academic publishing, the theory suggests that female scholars face biases because the perceived communal attributes of women conflict with the agentic qualities stereotypically associated with successful scientists. They argue that this gender-role incongruity contributes to the systematic undercitation of women’s work. Additionally, the Matilda effect, derived from Rossiter (1993), suggests that female scientists are disproportionately overlooked in scholarly recognition compared to their male counterparts. The authors integrate insights from network analysis to further explore how academic citation patterns reflect underlying gender biases in scholarly communication.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a large-scale citation analysis of articles published in *Communication Research* and *Journal of Communication* from 1991 to 2005. The authors examine how frequently these articles are cited and analyze the gender composition of citing authors. Using a combination of bibliometric techniques and network analysis, they assess factors such as research topic (categorized as male-typed or female-typed), author productivity, and temporal trends in citation disparities. To measure citation networks, they construct a dataset linking author names, article topics, and citation patterns, using statistical analyses to test hypotheses about gender-based differences in scholarly recognition.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors test six hypotheses regarding gender disparities in citations:
  - **H1:** Articles authored by men receive more citations than those authored by women.
  - **H2:** The gender gap in citations is particularly strong for male-typed research topics.
  - **H3:** The Matilda effect is more pronounced for highly productive female scholars, as prolific women may violate gendered expectations.
  - **H4:** Male scholars are less likely than female scholars to cite research authored by women.
  - **H5:** The proportion of citations to female-authored work increases over time.
  - **H6:** Female scholars’ citation networks are less dense and cohesive than those of male scholars.
- The findings largely support these hypotheses, with the exception of H5, which suggests that gender bias in citations persists over time.
10. **Main findings:** The study confirms the presence of the Matilda effect, showing that female-authored publications receive significantly fewer citations than male-authored ones, even when controlling for factors such as research topic and productivity. The citation gap is particularly pronounced for male-typed research topics (e.g., political communication, journalism), where male authors receive disproportionate recognition. The authors find that highly productive female scholars face greater citation disparities, suggesting that success does not mitigate gender bias but may exacerbate it. Additionally, citation patterns reveal that male scholars are significantly less likely to cite female-authored work compared to their female counterparts. Contrary to expectations, the gender citation gap does not narrow over time, indicating that systemic biases persist in scholarly communication. Finally, network analysis demonstrates that female scholars’ citation networks are less cohesive, further limiting their visibility and scholarly impact.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Publications with female lead authors were cited 12.77 times on average, whereas publications with male lead authors were cited 17.73 times on average. This finding supports the Matilda effect suggested in H1” (p. 12).
  - “Male scholars indeed showed a disproportionate preference for citing male scholars, whereas female scholars did not show a preference for citing male or female scholars” (p. 19).

- "The Matilda effect in citations may be just the tip of an iceberg, as role incongruity perceptions in the academic communication context may occur on a much broader basis" (p. 22).

#### 4.3.6 Opting Out of Political Discussions

Settle, J. E., & Carlson, T. N. (2019). Opting Out of Political Discussions [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2018.1561563>]. *Political Communication*, 36(3), 476–496. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2018.1561563>

- 1. Citation key:** settle\_opting\_2019
- 2. Author(s):** Jaime E. Settle and Taylor N. Carlson
- 3. Year:** 2019
- 4. Publication:** Political Communication
- 5. Keywords:** political discussion, polarization, experiments, discussion networks, avoidance
- 6. Summary:** Settle and Carlson explore why individuals avoid political discussions, investigating whether this avoidance is a function of the topics themselves or the composition of discussion groups. They employ a series of experiments designed to assess how much individuals would need to be compensated to engage in discussions under varying conditions. Using an approach grounded in utility maximization, they show that people demand significantly higher compensation to discuss politics with out-partisans than with co-partisans. More surprisingly, this preference extends to nonpolitical topics, demonstrating that partisan bias influences interpersonal interactions in broader social contexts.
- 7. Theory:** The authors draw on theories of affective polarization and social identity to argue that political discussion networks are shaped by active choices rather than purely environmental constraints. They theorize that people not only prefer to engage in discussions with like-minded individuals about political topics but also extend this preference to nonpolitical conversations. This finding suggests that partisan identity has become an organizing social force beyond explicit political discourse. The authors further propose that individuals may avoid discussing politics due to the cognitive and social costs associated with engaging in disagreement. Building on the spiral of silence theory, they argue that individuals fear social sanctions for expressing dissenting opinions, leading them to self-select into ideologically homogeneous discussion networks.
- 8. Methods:** The study employs three experimental designs to assess discussion preferences. In each experiment, participants were asked how much compensation they would require to engage in a five-minute discussion under various conditions. The independent variables included (1) the discussion topic (political vs. nonpolitical), (2) the partisan composition of the group (co-partisans, out-partisans, or mixed groups), and (3) the framing of disagreement (explicit partisan identity vs. general disagreement). Participants were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk and a university omnibus survey, and the experiments were designed to distinguish between intentional and accidental selection in political discussion networks. The authors analyze their data using regression models to compare compensation demands across conditions.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The authors test four hypotheses regarding individuals' preferences for political discussion:
  - **H1:** Individuals demand higher compensation to discuss political topics than nonpolitical topics.
  - **H2:** Individuals demand higher compensation to discuss political topics with out-partisans than with co-partisans.
  - **H3:** Individuals demand higher compensation to discuss nonpolitical topics with out-partisans than with co-partisans.
  - **H4:** The preference for discussing topics with like-minded individuals is stronger when the difference is framed in partisan identity terms rather than general disagreement.
- The findings largely support these hypotheses, with the exception of H1, which received mixed evidence across the studies.
- 10. Main findings:** Settle and Carlson's findings provide strong evidence that individuals avoid discussions with out-partisans, even when the topic is not explicitly political. Across three experiments, participants consistently demanded higher compensation to engage in discussions with out-partisans, reinforcing the idea that partisan identity structures social interactions beyond the political sphere. The study also reveals that people are not particularly sensitive to the content of discussions but are highly responsive to the partisan composition of discussion groups. Additionally, they find that partisan identity—rather than mere disagreement—is the primary factor driving avoidance, suggesting that affective polarization extends to everyday social interactions. Their results highlight the broader implications of political sorting and social division in a highly polarized political environment.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - "Individuals demanded significantly more compensation to engage in a discussion with out-partisans than with co-partisans, for both political and non-political topics" (p. 478).
  - "More surprisingly, and more consequentially, it appears that people also prefer talking with their co-partisans about topics that are not explicitly political" (p. 479).
  - "The extent of affective polarization has become severe enough that across multiple samples and contexts, we have evidence supporting the notion that people prefer to avoid conversations with out-partisans, period" (p. 490).

#### 4.3.7 The Disavowal of Race in Communication Theory

Chakravarty, P., & Jackson, S. J. (2020). The disavowal of race in communication theory [Publisher: NCA Website \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1771743>]. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 17(2), 210–219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2020.1771743>

1. **Citation key:** chakravarty\_disavowal\_2020
2. **Author(s):** Paula Chakravarty and Sarah J. Jackson
3. **Year:** 2020
4. **Publication:** Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies
5. **Keywords:** communication pedagogy, critical theory, graduate education, race, imperialism
6. **Summary:** Chakravarty and Jackson examine the systematic exclusion of race and colonialism in communication theory, focusing on doctoral pedagogy in U.S. communication programs. They analyze syllabi from sixteen highly ranked doctoral programs to assess the degree to which critical race theory and decolonial perspectives are incorporated into the field's foundational theoretical training. Their findings reveal a persistent disavowal of race and empire, with most syllabi privileging a Eurocentric canon that marginalizes nonwhite scholars and critical perspectives. They argue that this exclusion reproduces structures of whiteness in communication studies and propose steps to decolonize the curriculum.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on critical race theory, decolonial thought, and cultural studies to argue that communication theory has been shaped by a historical and ongoing disavowal of race and imperialism. Drawing on Stuart Hall, Saidiya Hartman, and Edward Said, they contend that Western communication scholarship remains rooted in Eurocentric epistemologies that systematically exclude racialized and colonial histories. They critique the field's reliance on white, male theorists who construct concepts of democracy, publics, and power without engaging the racial and colonial underpinnings of these systems. Chakravarty and Jackson emphasize that communication theory must move beyond token inclusion of race in isolated syllabus weeks and instead integrate decolonial perspectives into its core theoretical framework.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a qualitative content analysis of syllabi from sixteen highly ranked doctoral programs in communication and media studies in the United States. The authors requested required first-year doctoral seminar syllabi and coded them for assigned readings, identifying patterns in the inclusion or exclusion of race and colonialism. They categorized assigned scholars based on their theoretical focus and assessed the frequency with which critical race and decolonial scholars appeared. The analysis also examined how and where race-related content was positioned within syllabi, revealing that it was often relegated to a single week rather than integrated throughout the curriculum.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Communication doctoral syllabi overwhelmingly privilege white, Eurocentric theoretical traditions while marginalizing critical race and postcolonial perspectives.
  - Race and colonialism, when included, are treated as specialized or secondary topics rather than foundational to the study of communication.
  - The exclusion of nonwhite scholars and critical perspectives perpetuates disciplinary whiteness and epistemological exclusion in communication studies.Their findings strongly support these hypotheses, demonstrating that race remains systematically excluded from the core theoretical training of communication scholars.
10. **Main findings:** Chakravarty and Jackson find that across sixteen doctoral programs, communication theory syllabi overwhelmingly prioritize white, Western theorists while neglecting scholarship on race and empire. Of the most frequently assigned scholars, nearly all are white men, and critical race theorists appear only in isolated cases. Even when race is included, it is typically relegated to a single week or framed as an "optional" perspective rather than integrated into the field's theoretical foundations. The study also identifies a small number of programs that incorporate more diverse epistemologies, demonstrating that alternatives exist but remain the exception rather than the norm. The authors argue that this exclusion reflects broader patterns of racialized knowledge production in academia and call for a fundamental restructuring of communication pedagogy to center critical race and decolonial thought.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "If we engage the astute analysis of scholars like Hall, Hartman, and Said in the context of communication, journalism, and media studies scholarship, we are faced with the reality that while the slippages Hall and Said describe between race and nation are very much a global reality today, our field maintains an attachment to a theoretical canon that systematically disavows the centrality of colonialism and race" (p. 211).
  - "Turning to the most assigned scholars and texts, those assigned six or more times across 25 syllabi, the most frequently assigned texts are chapters from textbooks that pay little or no attention to questions of colonialism and race" (p. 214).
  - "For communication and media theory and theorists to speak fully to concerns of democracy, publics, and power, and a wide range of other topics we lay claim to, we must do more to engage the rich theoretical scholarship on colonialism and race in our doctoral programs" (p. 216).

## 4.4 Understanding the Market

### 4.4.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Scholarship on media markets and political communication investigates the economic and structural forces shaping the dissemination of political information. While traditional models emphasized journalism's normative role in democracy, contemporary research highlights the market-driven nature of news production, where economic incentives influence content selection, framing, and ideological slant. Scholars examine how corporate ownership, audience demand, regulatory frameworks, and advertising pressures shape the media environment, often privileging profitability over public interest journalism. The literature also explores how media concentration affects political knowledge, electoral behavior, and democratic accountability. By integrating perspectives from political economy, media studies, and behavioral research, this body of work underscores the extent to which market dynamics structure the flow of political information.
- **Corporate Ownership and News Bias:** A foundational concern in media market research is the extent to which corporate ownership influences news content. Gilens and Hertzman's (2000) study on newspaper coverage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act demonstrated that newspapers with substantial television ownership framed deregulation more favorably than those without such holdings, providing systematic evidence that media corporations tailor coverage to align with their economic interests. Their findings support a broader claim that financial incentives influence not only editorial decisions but also ostensibly objective news reporting. This research has spurred further inquiries into how media conglomerates use their platforms to shape public discourse in ways that reinforce corporate priorities.
- **Consumer Demand and Market Pressures:** The role of consumer preferences in shaping media content is another key dimension of this literature. Iyengar, Norpoth, and Hahn (2004) argue that the prevalence of horserace journalism in election coverage stems from audience demand rather than journalistic bias. Using an experimental design, they show that news consumers gravitate toward strategy-based reporting over substantive issue coverage, reinforcing economic incentives for media organizations to prioritize electoral competition narratives. This consumer-driven model of news production challenges assumptions that media content is dictated solely by elite interests, emphasizing instead the interactive relationship between audience preferences and journalistic output.
- **Measuring Media Bias and Ideological Positioning:** Beyond ownership and consumer demand, scholars have sought to quantify media bias systematically. Groseclose and Milyo (2005) develop an empirical measure of media slant by analyzing think tank citations in news reporting, comparing them to ideological benchmarks derived from congressional voting records. Their results suggest that most mainstream media outlets lean left relative to the median U.S. legislator, with only a few exceptions displaying a conservative bias. This approach, which applies methods from political economy to media analysis, has influenced subsequent debates over whether journalistic biases reflect economic pressures, audience segmentation, or ideological predispositions among reporters.
- **Media Competition and Reputation Effects:** Scholars have also examined how market structures influence bias and accuracy. Gentzkow and Shapiro (2006) develop a reputational model of media bias, arguing that news organizations distort coverage to align with consumer priors in order to maintain credibility with their audience. Their findings indicate that competition among independently owned outlets can mitigate bias by exposing discrepancies between sources, whereas concentrated ownership structures reinforce ideological homogeneity. This research underscores the tension between media market competition and the preservation of journalistic integrity.
- **Market Incentives and the Transformation of News Content:** Hamilton's (2006) work on media economics further advances the argument that market forces dictate the structure of news production. He replaces traditional journalistic norms with a profit-driven analytical framework, emphasizing how consumer demographics, advertiser interests, and production costs influence editorial decisions. His analysis demonstrates that the proliferation of soft news and infotainment is not merely a cultural shift but a rational market response to profitability concerns. Hamilton's findings highlight how deregulation and corporate consolidation exacerbate these trends, leading to reduced investigative journalism and an increased emphasis on commercially viable content.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** The study of media markets in political communication continues to evolve, with scholars investigating the implications of digital media, algorithmic curation, and social media platforms on the political information environment. Ongoing debates center on whether digital fragmentation enhances media diversity or reinforces ideological echo chambers, the extent to which platform algorithms prioritize engagement over accuracy, and the potential regulatory interventions to balance market efficiency with democratic accountability. Future research is likely to explore the role of emerging technologies in shaping news consumption patterns, the effects of media consolidation in the digital age, and the evolving strategies of political actors in an increasingly commercialized media landscape.

### 4.4.2 Corporate Ownership and News Bias: Newspaper Coverage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act

Gilens, M., & Hertzman, C. (2000). Corporate Ownership and News Bias: Newspaper Coverage of the 1996 Telecommunications Act [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 62(2), 369–386. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-3816.00017>

1. **Citation key:** gilens\_corporate\_2000
2. **Author(s):** Martin Gilens and Craig Hertzman
3. **Year:** 2000
4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** media ownership, news bias, corporate influence, telecommunications policy, regulatory politics

- 6. Summary:** Gilens and Hertzman examine whether corporate media ownership influences news coverage by analyzing how newspapers covered the 1996 Telecommunications Act, particularly its provisions loosening restrictions on television station ownership. They compare coverage in newspapers owned by companies with substantial television holdings to those owned by companies without television investments. Their findings indicate that newspapers with substantial television ownership were significantly more favorable toward the deregulation of media ownership than newspapers with no financial stake in television, suggesting that corporate ownership interests shape news content.
- 7. Theory:** The authors argue that mass media play an essential role in democratic governance by providing the public with the information necessary to evaluate policies, leaders, and social conditions. However, they contend that media consolidation introduces potential conflicts of interest, as corporate owners may prioritize their financial interests over journalistic integrity. The study builds on prior literature on media bias, which often debates ideological slant but rarely examines ownership as a source of distortion in news reporting. Gilens and Hertzman propose that media corporations use their news outlets to shape public discourse in ways that serve their economic interests, particularly regarding policies that impact their industry. They suggest that corporate influence over news content is not merely a matter of editorial selection but extends to ostensibly objective reporting on regulatory issues that affect the financial bottom line of media conglomerates.
- 8. Methods:** The study employs a content analysis of 397 newspaper articles covering the 1996 Telecommunications Act. The authors categorize newspapers into three groups based on their parent companies' television holdings: those with no TV stations, those with limited TV ownership (2–5 stations), and those with substantial TV ownership (9 or more stations). Articles were coded for mentions of the ownership cap provisions and whether the consequences of deregulation were framed positively or negatively. The study also accounts for potential confounding variables such as newspaper circulation, presidential endorsements, and revenue dependence on broadcasting. The authors use statistical tests to evaluate differences in coverage patterns across ownership categories.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that newspapers owned by corporations with substantial television holdings will present more favorable coverage of the Telecommunications Act's provisions loosening TV ownership restrictions, while newspapers without TV holdings will highlight the potential negative consequences of media consolidation.
- Newspapers owned by companies with substantial TV holdings will be more likely to emphasize the positive consequences of deregulation.
  - Newspapers owned by companies with no TV holdings will be more likely to highlight concerns about media concentration and democratic debate.
  - Differences in coverage patterns will persist even after controlling for other factors such as newspaper circulation and political orientation.

The findings support these hypotheses, with newspapers in the "substantial TV ownership" category framing deregulation in a more favorable light and downplaying concerns about media consolidation.

- 10. Main findings:** The results reveal a strong relationship between corporate ownership interests and news content. Newspapers with substantial TV holdings were significantly more likely to frame the Telecommunications Act's ownership cap provisions in a positive light, emphasizing benefits such as increased competition and reduced regulatory interference. In contrast, newspapers without TV holdings were far more likely to discuss negative consequences, such as reduced diversity in viewpoints and threats to democratic discourse. While the amount of coverage dedicated to ownership caps did not differ significantly between groups, the framing of consequences varied sharply: newspapers with no TV holdings mentioned negative consequences in 58% of stories, compared to only 15% in newspapers with substantial TV interests. These differences persisted even after controlling for potential confounding factors, reinforcing the conclusion that corporate ownership shapes news reporting on regulatory policies that affect media conglomerates.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "To the extent that corporate ownership interests influence news content, then, we would expect to find that newspapers owned by companies with substantial television ownership would report more favorably on this aspect of the Telecommunications Act than would newspapers run by companies that owned no TV stations" (p. 373).
- "Readers of newspapers that did not own any TV stations were less likely to be exposed to positive observations about the consequences of the proposed changes and more likely to encounter negative observations, compared with the readers of newspapers owned by companies with investments in TV stations" (p. 380).
- "This study provides systematic evidence that the financial interests of media owners influence not only newspaper editorials but straight news reporting as well" (p. 383).

#### 4.4.3 Consumer Demand for Election News: The Horserace Sells

Iyengar, S., Norpoth, H., & Hahn, K. S. (2004). Consumer Demand for Election News: The Horserace Sells [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 66(1), 157–175. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1468-2508.2004.00146.x>

1. **Citation key:** iyengar\_consumer\_2004
2. **Author(s):** Shanto Iyengar, Helmut Norpoth, and Kyu S. Hahn
3. **Year:** 2004
4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** election news, media bias, horserace journalism, political communication, news consumption

6. **Summary:** Iyengar, Norpoth, and Hahn investigate why media coverage of political campaigns focuses heavily on horserace-style reporting rather than substantive policy discussions. They test the market hypothesis, which suggests that the dominance of strategy-oriented news arises from consumer demand rather than journalistic or structural biases. Using behavioral data from a multimedia CD-ROM experiment during the 2000 U.S. presidential election, the authors demonstrate that voters are more likely to engage with horserace-style news than with issue-based coverage, reinforcing the incentives for media organizations to prioritize strategic over substantive reporting.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that the prevalence of horserace journalism in election coverage is not solely a product of journalistic norms or the influence of political elites but is driven by consumer preferences. They theorize that audiences find strategy-based reporting more engaging because it aligns with broader entertainment and competition-based media consumption habits. Unlike issue coverage, which is often repetitive and policy-laden, horserace news provides an ongoing narrative of winners and losers, making it more appealing to a general audience. This explanation challenges the notion that the public passively receives media content and instead suggests that news outlets actively cater to consumer demand. The authors also build on the concept of interpretive journalism, where reporters focus less on candidates' direct statements and more on analyzing their tactics and strategies. This shift is reinforced by the proliferation of polling data, which allows for continual updates on the state of the race, further fueling the cycle of strategic coverage.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a behavioral experiment using a multimedia CD-ROM containing 206 election news reports from various print and broadcast sources. A randomly selected sample of online voters received the CD two weeks before the 2000 U.S. presidential election and was free to navigate the content as they chose. The authors tracked participants' usage, recording the number of times they accessed different types of stories. This data was analyzed using time-series methods and regression models to determine the relative popularity of different types of news content. They controlled for potential confounders such as media credibility, audiovisual presentation, and user demographics. The study also incorporated a survey component to measure respondents' attitudes toward politics, media consumption habits, and political engagement levels.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that consumer demand drives the prevalence of horserace journalism. Specifically:
  - News consumers will engage more with horserace and strategy-focused news than with issue-based reporting.
  - Interest in horserace coverage will be particularly high among politically engaged individuals.
  - Media credibility and presentation format (e.g., audiovisual elements) will influence engagement levels but will not override the general preference for strategy-oriented news.
 The findings confirm these hypotheses, showing a clear preference for horserace news, particularly among politically sophisticated voters.
10. **Main findings:** The results demonstrate that horserace journalism attracts significantly more consumer engagement than issue-based reporting. Even after controlling for placement order within the CD-ROM, strategic coverage received the highest number of views, while stories on policy and governance were largely ignored. The authors find that political cynics and partisan individuals were especially likely to engage with horserace content, suggesting that competition-based narratives appeal both to those who see politics as a game and those with strong political identities. Multimedia elements and source credibility influenced engagement but did not substantially alter the overarching preference for strategy-focused news. The study concludes that media organizations have strong market incentives to continue prioritizing horserace journalism, as it aligns with audience demand and maximizes profitability.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Our evidence shows that substantial numbers of readers sought out the news reports on the horserace, even though these reports were located at the end of the CD" (p. 173).
  - "Horserace news sells, but leaves voters unsold on the campaign and the electoral process" (p. 174).
  - "News reports that focused on the candidates' personalities and their track records as public officials performed quite well as attention-getters. Therefore, it should be possible to increase the share of news that focuses on the candidates without substantially diminishing market share" (p. 175).

#### 4.4.4 A Measure of Media Bias

Groseclose, T., & Milyo, J. (2005). A Measure of Media Bias\*. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 120(4), 1191–1237. <https://doi.org/10.1162/003355305775097542>

1. **Citation key:** groseclose\_measure\_2005
2. **Author(s):** Tim Groseclose and Jeffrey Milyo
3. **Year:** 2005
4. **Publication:** Quarterly Journal of Economics
5. **Keywords:** media bias, ideological slant, news content analysis, think tanks, political communication
6. **Summary:** Groseclose and Milyo develop a quantitative measure of media bias by assessing the ideological positioning of news outlets relative to members of Congress. They analyze how frequently various media outlets cite policy think tanks and compare these citation patterns to those of legislators with known ideological scores, derived from Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) ratings. Their findings indicate that most mainstream news outlets exhibit a left-leaning bias, with the exception of Fox News' *Special Report* and the *Washington Times*, which lean to the right.
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the notion that media bias is purely subjective and instead propose a systematic ap-

proach to measuring ideological slant in news reporting. They argue that media outlets, like legislators, reveal their ideological positions through their selection of sources and experts. By linking media citation patterns to the well-established ideological scores of legislators, Groseclose and Milyo posit that media bias can be objectively quantified. Their theoretical framework builds on rational-choice models of media consumption and political economy, suggesting that market incentives and journalist preferences shape the ideological composition of news content. They also consider alternative explanations for perceived media bias, such as the argument that journalists' personal ideological leanings may be counterbalanced by professional norms of objectivity. However, their empirical findings suggest that news organizations consistently favor sources aligned with the political left.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a content analysis of major U.S. media outlets, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Fox News*, *CNN*, and the three major network evening news programs (ABC, CBS, NBC). The authors track citations of 200 prominent think tanks and policy organizations, then compare these citation frequencies to those found in congressional speeches, where legislators' ideological scores are already established through ADA ratings. Using a maximum likelihood estimation model, they generate ideological scores for each media outlet based on its think tank citation patterns. To control for potential confounding factors, they exclude editorials, letters to the editor, and book reviews, focusing exclusively on straight news reporting.

**9. Hypotheses:** Groseclose and Milyo hypothesize that:

- Mainstream media outlets will exhibit a measurable ideological slant, which can be compared to the political spectrum of congressional representatives.
- Most major news organizations will have a bias to the left of the median U.S. voter.
- Media bias will be correlated with journalists' personal ideological preferences rather than a neutral market-driven model.

Their findings confirm these hypotheses, showing that nearly all news outlets lean left relative to the average member of Congress.

**10. Main findings:** The results indicate that nearly all major media outlets lean to the left relative to the median member of Congress. *CBS Evening News* and *The New York Times* were found to be among the most liberal, with ideological scores comparable to those of left-leaning Democratic legislators. *PBS NewsHour*, *CNN's Newsnight*, and *ABC's Good Morning America* were closest to the center, while *Fox News' Special Report* and the *Washington Times* were the only outlets analyzed that leaned right. The study also found that ideological positioning remained consistent across different types of media (print, television, and online), suggesting that news bias is a persistent structural feature rather than an isolated phenomenon. Importantly, the authors note that their results refer strictly to news content, excluding opinion pieces and editorials.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Our results show a strong liberal bias: all of the news outlets we examine, except *Fox News' Special Report* and the *Washington Times*, received scores to the left of the average member of Congress" (p. 1191).
- "Few studies provide an objective measure of the slant of news, and none has provided a way to link such a measure to ideological measures of other political actors" (p. 1192).
- "This study provides systematic evidence that the financial interests of media owners influence not only newspaper editorials but straight news reporting as well" (p. 1198).

#### 4.4.5 Media Bias and Reputation

Gentzkow, M., & Shapiro, J. M. (2006). Media Bias and Reputation [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *Journal of Political Economy*, 114(2), 280–316. <https://doi.org/10.1086/499414>

1. **Citation key:** gentzkow\_media\_2006
2. **Author(s):** Matthew Gentzkow and Jesse M. Shapiro
3. **Year:** 2006
4. **Publication:** Journal of Political Economy
5. **Keywords:** media bias, reputation, Bayesian updating, consumer demand, competition
6. **Summary:** Gentzkow and Shapiro develop a theoretical model of media bias rooted in the reputational incentives of news organizations. They argue that media outlets slant their reports to conform to consumers' prior beliefs in order to be perceived as more credible. The model predicts that bias emerges even when it is not socially optimal and can be reduced when consumers receive independent evidence about the true state of the world. Furthermore, they hypothesize that competition among independently owned media outlets can help mitigate bias, whereas concentrated ownership may sustain it.
7. **Theory:** The authors construct a Bayesian model in which media firms seek to maximize their reputation for accuracy. They assume that consumers judge the quality of an outlet based on whether its reports align with their prior beliefs, which creates an incentive for media firms to conform to audience expectations rather than report the most accurate information. This strategic bias arises even when both media firms and consumers are primarily interested in the truth. The theory also predicts that media bias will be weaker in contexts where independent verification of information is available (e.g., weather forecasts, stock prices) and stronger where verification is difficult or delayed (e.g., foreign policy, war coverage). Furthermore, the authors argue that competition between independent media firms reduces bias by increasing the likelihood of contradiction and exposure, whereas monopoly or concentrated ownership structures allow bias to persist by eliminating these disciplining mechanisms.

**8. Methods:** The study combines theoretical modeling with empirical evidence. The theoretical model is a formal Bayesian updating framework in which media firms choose reporting strategies to maximize their expected reputation. Empirical validation is provided through several case studies, including an analysis of media coverage of a battle in Samarra, Iraq, in which different news outlets reported the same event with drastically different slants. The authors also draw on existing survey data, showing that consumers' trust in news sources is highly correlated with their political predispositions. Additional supporting evidence includes an analysis of weather reporting (a high-feedback environment) and sports journalism, where bias is lower due to rapid and objective feedback mechanisms.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Media outlets slant their coverage toward the prior beliefs of their consumers in order to maintain a reputation for accuracy.
- Bias is more pronounced in areas where consumers lack independent verification of the news (e.g., political reporting) and weaker where verification is easy (e.g., weather forecasts).
- Competition between independently owned media firms reduces bias by increasing the likelihood of independent verification and exposure.
- Media bias persists when ownership is concentrated because coordinated reporting reduces the likelihood of contradiction.

Their findings confirm these hypotheses, showing that bias follows consumer priors, is less severe where independent evidence is available, and is mitigated by competition.

**10. Main findings:** The study provides strong empirical and theoretical support for the idea that media firms distort their reporting to conform to consumer expectations. The authors demonstrate that news outlets covering the same event produce widely different narratives based on the political leanings of their audience. They also find that consumer trust in media is strongly linked to the alignment between a news source's reporting and the consumer's prior beliefs. Furthermore, they show that media bias decreases when independent verification mechanisms exist, such as in weather forecasting and sports journalism. Additionally, their model predicts and their empirical evidence confirms that competition reduces bias by increasing the likelihood of contradiction, while concentrated media ownership allows bias to persist by eliminating these competitive incentives.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Our first set of results shows that firms will tend to distort information to make it conform with consumers' prior beliefs" (p. 281).
- "If a firm misreports its signal so as to move closer to consumers' priors, it runs the risk that the truth will come out and its report will be falsified, damaging its reputation" (p. 282).
- "Competition in the news market can lead to lower bias. A firm competing with another news outlet runs the risk that, if it distorts its signal, the competitor's report will expose the inaccuracy and thus reduce consumers' assessments of the distorting firm's quality" (p. 283).

#### 4.4.6 All the News That's Fit to Sell: How the Market Transforms Information Into News

Hamilton, J. (2006, April). *All the News That's Fit to Sell: How the Market Transforms Information Into News* [Google-Books-ID: VhfQKo3mmkkC]. Princeton University Press

**1. Citation key:** hamilton\_all\_2006

**2. Author(s):** James T. Hamilton

**3. Year:** 2006

**4. Publication:** Princeton University Press

**5. Keywords:** media economics, market incentives, news content, soft news, information demand

**6. Summary:** Hamilton examines the role of market forces in shaping the production and dissemination of news. He argues that economic incentives, rather than journalistic ideals, largely determine what stories are covered, how they are framed, and which audiences they target. Using an economic framework, he contends that news is a product shaped by supply and demand dynamics, where consumer preferences, advertiser incentives, and cost structures influence editorial decisions. The book challenges the notion that media organizations serve a purely democratic function and instead presents them as profit-driven entities responding to audience segmentation and revenue maximization strategies.

**7. Theory:** Hamilton's central thesis is that news content is not dictated by traditional journalistic norms but by economic imperatives. He replaces the standard journalistic "five Ws" with a market-driven set of questions: "Who cares about a particular piece of information? What are they willing to pay to find it? Where can media outlets or advertisers reach these people? When is it profitable to provide the information? Why is this profitable?" This theoretical framework suggests that media outlets prioritize content that attracts lucrative demographics, often at the expense of substantive, public-interest journalism. Hamilton draws on economic models of information markets, emphasizing the idea that news production follows consumer demand rather than democratic necessity. He also explores how deregulation and ownership concentration have exacerbated these trends, leading to increased infotainment, sensationalism, and the marginalization of investigative journalism. Ultimately, he argues that unless structural incentives change, media organizations will continue to prioritize profitability over the dissemination of high-quality public affairs reporting.

**8. Methods:** Hamilton employs a combination of economic modeling, historical analysis, and empirical data to support his claims. He traces the evolution of press independence in the 19th century, showing how the transition from partisan

newspapers to commercial, nonpartisan outlets was driven by market forces rather than ideological shifts. He also analyzes contemporary news consumption patterns using audience research and survey data to demonstrate how demographic targeting influences news content. Case studies of television and newspaper markets illustrate how audience segmentation and advertising revenue structures shape journalistic priorities. Additionally, he examines regulatory changes, such as the relaxation of ownership restrictions, to highlight their impact on the diversity and quality of news coverage.

**9. Hypotheses:** Hamilton hypothesizes that:

- News production is guided by market incentives rather than democratic ideals.
- Media outlets tailor their content to attract the most valuable advertising demographics, often young, affluent consumers.
- The decline of investigative and hard news coverage is driven by profitability concerns, not a lack of public interest.
- Deregulation and media consolidation exacerbate these trends by reducing competition and increasing the focus on commercially viable content.

His findings support these hypotheses, showing that economic considerations drive editorial decisions and that soft news proliferation is a rational response to market pressures.

**10. Main findings:** Hamilton's findings indicate that economic incentives fundamentally shape the production of news, often at the expense of democratic values and substantive journalism. He demonstrates that media organizations prioritize content that appeals to advertiser-friendly demographics, particularly younger and more affluent consumers, leading to an emphasis on soft news, entertainment, and sensationalism. The decline of investigative and hard news coverage is not due to a lack of audience interest but rather to the higher production costs and lower profitability associated with such reporting. Hamilton also finds that media consolidation exacerbates these trends by reducing competition, making it easier for media conglomerates to align content with advertiser preferences rather than public interest. Additionally, he shows that deregulation has allowed profit-driven motives to dominate news production, diminishing the watchdog role traditionally associated with journalism. His analysis suggests that unless regulatory interventions or alternative funding models emerge, the market's influence on news content will continue to shape media in ways that privilege commercial considerations over democratic accountability.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Market-driven journalism:* A model of news production where content decisions are influenced primarily by profit motives, audience preferences, and advertiser demands rather than journalistic ethics or democratic responsibility.
- *Soft news:* News content that emphasizes entertainment, sensationalism, and human-interest stories over substantive public affairs reporting.
- *Audience segmentation:* The practice of tailoring news content to specific demographic groups based on their perceived value to advertisers.
- *Information asymmetry:* A condition in which media organizations possess greater knowledge about audience behavior and advertising effectiveness than consumers, allowing them to manipulate content to maximize engagement and revenue.

#### 4.4.7 The Other Divide: Polarization and Disengagement in American Politics

Krupnikov, Y., & Ryan, J. B. (2022, January). *The Other Divide* [Google-Books-ID: F4pZEEAAQBAJ]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** krupnikov\_other\_2022

2. **Author(s):** Yanna Krupnikov and John Barry Ryan

3. **Year:** 2022

4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press

5. **Keywords:** political engagement, polarization, deep involvement, media effects, public opinion

6. **Summary:** Krupnikov and Ryan challenge the conventional understanding of polarization in American politics by arguing that the most significant divide is not between Democrats and Republicans but between those who are "deeply involved" in politics and those who are disengaged. They introduce the concept of deep involvement, which characterizes individuals who make politics central to their lives, spend substantial time on political engagement, and perceive even minor political events as consequential. Through a combination of survey data, experiments, and media analysis, they demonstrate that the overrepresentation of the deeply involved in political discourse distorts perceptions of polarization and disengages the broader public from political participation.

7. **Theory:** The authors develop a theoretical framework that reinterprets political engagement as a function of deep involvement rather than traditional partisanship. They argue that the deeply involved constitute a small but vocal minority that dominates political discourse, shaping media narratives and reinforcing the perception of extreme polarization. Unlike the merely politically interested, the deeply involved exhibit a heightened emotional investment in politics, consume political information obsessively, and prioritize ideological purity over compromise. Krupnikov and Ryan suggest that this dynamic is self-reinforcing: as media outlets and politicians cater to the most engaged citizens, disengaged individuals feel alienated, leading to further declines in broad-based participation. This phenomenon contributes to a cycle in which political institutions respond primarily to the highly engaged, exacerbating polarization

not just among elites but also in the electorate's perception of American politics. The book also challenges the normative assumption that increased political engagement is necessarily beneficial, arguing that deep involvement can distort representation and contribute to political dysfunction.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a multi-method approach, including large-scale surveys, experimental studies, and media content analysis. The authors develop a measure of deep involvement using a composite scale based on individuals' self-reported time spent on politics, belief in politics' importance, and political expression habits. They analyze multiple representative samples of the American public to assess how deep involvement correlates with partisanship, political efficacy, and affective polarization. Additionally, they conduct experiments to determine whether media exposure amplifies deep involvement and influences political perceptions. The book also includes qualitative data from interviews with journalists, exploring how media coverage disproportionately highlights the views and behaviors of the deeply involved, reinforcing a distorted public narrative of polarization.

**9. Hypotheses:** Krupnikov and Ryan hypothesize that:

- The divide between the deeply involved and the disengaged is more consequential than partisan polarization in shaping political discourse.
- The deeply involved are overrepresented in political media, leading to a distorted public perception of political polarization.
- The behaviors and attitudes of the deeply involved differ significantly from those of the broader electorate, particularly in terms of affective polarization, policy certainty, and social networks.
- Increased media coverage of extreme political engagement reinforces disengagement among the less involved by making politics appear toxic and exclusionary.

Their findings support these hypotheses, demonstrating that political engagement is concentrated among a small subset of Americans who wield disproportionate influence over media narratives and public discourse.

**10. Main findings:** The book presents compelling evidence that the deeply involved are not representative of the American electorate but dominate public perceptions of political engagement. Krupnikov and Ryan show that deeply involved individuals are more likely to exhibit extreme partisan attitudes, higher levels of internal efficacy, and stronger emotional investment in political events. They are also more likely to engage in political discussions, share their opinions on social media, and interpret politics as a central component of their identity. Media dynamics further exacerbate this divide by disproportionately amplifying the voices of the deeply involved, creating a feedback loop in which political discourse appears more polarized than it actually is. The authors argue that this pattern discourages broader public participation, as less engaged individuals perceive politics as hostile or inaccessible. They also find that the deeply involved prioritize different policy issues than the general electorate, suggesting that political elites respond to a skewed set of preferences. Ultimately, the book challenges traditional notions of democratic engagement, highlighting the potential downsides of a political system dominated by a hyper-engaged minority.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Deep involvement:* A form of intense political engagement characterized by a significant investment of time in politics, a perception that political events are highly consequential, and a frequent tendency to express political opinions publicly.
- *Affective polarization:* The emotional divide between partisans that extends beyond ideological disagreement to include strong negative feelings toward opposing political groups.
- *Media amplification effect:* The tendency for news coverage to disproportionately highlight the views and actions of the deeply involved, making them appear more representative of the general public than they actually are.
- *Engagement distortion:* A phenomenon in which political discourse and policy responsiveness are skewed toward the preferences and behaviors of the most involved individuals, rather than reflecting the priorities of the broader electorate.

## 4.5 News Media as an Institution

### 4.5.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of news media as an institution has evolved from viewing it as a neutral conduit of information to recognizing it as a structured political actor embedded in economic, political, and social contexts. Early perspectives treated media as a passive intermediary, relaying information between political elites and the public. However, more recent scholarship emphasizes that media actively construct political meaning, shape governance, and influence public opinion. Scholars like Schudson (2002) argue that the news media function as political institutions in their own right, shaped by economic ownership structures, journalistic norms, and political pressures. Institutional approaches further stress that news organizations develop routinized behaviors in response to financial, professional, and informational uncertainties, reinforcing homogeneity in news content. Meanwhile, political economy perspectives highlight how market-driven imperatives and corporate consolidation affect news coverage, while cultural analyses reveal how ideological framing influences political discourse. Collectively, these strands of research underscore that the news media are neither entirely autonomous nor merely a mouthpiece for political elites but instead operate as a semi-independent institution with structured constraints and agency in shaping democratic politics.
- **News Media as Political Institutions:** Schudson (2002) contends that political science has historically overlooked the media's role as a political institution, instead focusing on formal governing bodies like legislatures and courts. He critiques this omission and proposes an integrated framework that considers three dominant perspectives: (1) the *political*

economy approach, which examines how ownership and economic structures shape media content; (2) the *social organization approach*, which studies how newsroom routines and journalist-source relationships influence reporting; and (3) the *cultural approach*, which explores how news narratives embed ideological assumptions. Schudson challenges the notion that media merely reflect political events, arguing instead that they actively construct political reality, reinforcing elite perspectives through their reliance on official sources.

- **Press Independence and the Indexing Hypothesis:** Althaus (2003) revisits the indexing hypothesis, which posits that news coverage primarily mirrors elite discourse, thereby constraining journalistic autonomy. Challenging this assumption, Althaus' content analysis of Persian Gulf War coverage reveals that while government officials shape news narratives, journalists introduce independent critical perspectives through framing. He differentiates between reporting on *means* (policy options), *ends* (goals), and *context* (historical analogies), finding that oppositional discourse emerges most frequently in contextual framing. His findings suggest that journalists possess greater autonomy than the indexing hypothesis implies, particularly in shaping how policies are perceived by the public.
- **Comparative Media Systems and Political Structures:** Hallin and Mancini (2004) introduce a typology of media systems, demonstrating how variations in media structures correspond to differences in political institutions. They identify three ideal-type models: (1) the *Liberal Model*, prevalent in the United States and United Kingdom, characterized by a market-driven press with low political parallelism; (2) the *Democratic Corporatist Model*, found in Northern Europe, featuring a strong mass-circulation press with high journalistic professionalism and significant state involvement; and (3) the *Polarized Pluralist Model*, common in Southern Europe, marked by high political parallelism, low journalistic autonomy, and significant state intervention. They argue that media systems shape political discourse as much as political institutions shape media structures, underscoring the co-evolution of journalism and governance.
- **New Institutionalism and Media Constraints:** Cook (2006) and Sparrow (2006) advance a new institutionalist perspective on media, contending that news organizations function as structured political institutions rather than neutral information providers. Cook critiques the binary view of media as either watchdogs or elite-controlled, proposing instead that media operate as a "semi-independent" institution governed by professional norms, market constraints, and political dependencies. Sparrow expands on this by identifying three fundamental uncertainties shaping media behavior: economic survival (reliance on advertising revenue), professional legitimacy (maintaining credibility in polarized environments), and informational uncertainty (dependence on political actors for news content). These constraints lead to routinized news production, reinforcing structural biases in political reporting.
- **Market Pressures, Ownership, and News Quality:** Dunaway (2008) examines how corporate ownership and market competition influence the substance of campaign coverage. Analyzing news reports from competitive state-level elections, she finds that corporate-owned media prioritize commercially viable content—such as horse race coverage—over substantive policy reporting. Her study underscores the tension between journalistic quality and profit-driven imperatives, highlighting how market structures shape the availability of political information.
- **Media Bias and Consumer Demand:** Gentzkow and Shapiro (2010) test the assumption that media slant is driven by ownership ideology, instead finding that consumer preferences exert a stronger influence. Using text analysis to measure ideological bias in U.S. newspapers, they demonstrate that market demand for ideologically congruent content accounts for significant variation in media slant, whereas ownership identity explains only a fraction of these differences. Their findings challenge supply-side theories of bias, suggesting that media polarization is a response to audience preferences rather than direct editorial intervention.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Contemporary research continues to explore the extent of media independence, the influence of digital platforms, and the evolving role of journalism in democracy. Ongoing debates include whether increased media fragmentation enhances political diversity or exacerbates polarization, the implications of algorithmic curation for news consumption, and the role of misinformation in democratic governance. Scholars also increasingly examine how new media technologies reshape traditional institutional constraints, potentially altering the long-standing dynamics between news organizations, political elites, and the public.

#### 4.5.2 The News Media as Political Institutions

Schudson, M. (2002). THE NEWS MEDIA AS POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS [Publisher: Annual Reviews]. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 5(Volume 5, 2002), 249–269. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.5.111201.115816>

1. **Citation key:** schudson\_news\_2002
2. **Author(s):** Michael Schudson
3. **Year:** 2002
4. **Publication:** Annual Review of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** news media, political institutions, political economy, media bias, journalism
6. **Summary:** Schudson argues that political science has largely neglected the study of news media as political institutions, despite their significant influence on governance, public opinion, and policy-making. He identifies three primary research perspectives on the media: political economy, social organization, and cultural analysis. The article examines how news institutions function as political actors, shaping and being shaped by economic, social, and political structures. Schudson critiques past approaches to media analysis and calls for a more systematic understanding of the news as a structured and consequential political institution.
7. **Theory:** Schudson contends that the news media function as political institutions in their own right, not merely as intermediaries between the public and the state. He identifies three dominant perspectives on the media. The political economy approach examines the relationship between media ownership and content, highlighting how corporate interests and state regulation shape news production. The social organization perspective considers how journalists, edi-

tors, and newsroom routines influence reporting, focusing on interactions between reporters and government sources. The cultural approach investigates how news embeds ideological assumptions and broader societal narratives. While these perspectives offer distinct insights, Schudson argues they should be integrated to fully understand the media's political role. He further emphasizes that news production is an inherently inter-institutional process, wherein journalists rely on political figures as sources, reinforcing elite-driven narratives. Ultimately, Schudson critiques the notion that media simply reflect reality, instead asserting that news actively constructs political meaning.

**8. Methods:** The article is a theoretical and literature-based analysis rather than an empirical study. Schudson synthesizes previous research from sociology, political science, and communication studies to develop a framework for understanding the news media as political institutions. He draws on historical and comparative examples, including analyses of press-government relations in different political systems, studies of newsroom practices, and examinations of media ownership structures. Through this review, Schudson highlights key findings from prior research while identifying gaps in the field that require further exploration.

**9. Hypotheses:** Schudson does not test explicit hypotheses but presents the following theoretical claims:

- The news media function as political institutions that shape governance rather than merely reporting on it.
- Media ownership and economic structure influence news content, but this effect is mediated by journalistic routines and professional norms.
- Political actors strategically engage with the media to shape public discourse, and journalists rely on official sources, reinforcing elite perspectives.
- The cultural dimensions of journalism embed ideological biases that influence how political issues are framed and understood.

**10. Main findings:** Schudson finds that media institutions play an active role in political life by structuring how political information is produced and disseminated. He critiques the assumption that the media simply reflect political events, arguing instead that they help construct political reality. He demonstrates how economic ownership structures, journalistic norms, and cultural assumptions collectively shape news content. He also highlights the growing phenomenon of "mediatization," where political actors tailor their behavior to suit media logic, making publicity a strategic tool in governance. Furthermore, he notes that while the media can serve as a check on power, they are also constrained by reliance on official sources and market pressures. Overall, Schudson calls for greater scholarly attention to the institutional role of news in democratic politics.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Political science has never extended to the news media the lovingly detailed attention it has lavished on legislatures, parties, presidents, and prime ministers" (p. 249).
- "Journalism, on a day-to-day basis, is the story of the interaction of reporters and government officials, both politicians and bureaucrats. Most analysts agree that officials have the upper hand" (p. 256).
- "The media influence political outcomes—especially election outcomes in democracies—but they also affect the fate of legislative decisions, bureaucratic infighting, and individual political advancement or failure" (p. 264).

#### 4.5.3 When News Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence

ALTHAUS, S. L. (2003). When News Norms Collide, Follow the Lead: New Evidence for Press Independence [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600390244158>. *Political Communication*, 20(4), 381–414. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600390244158>

**1. Citation key:** althaus\_when\_2003

**2. Author(s):** Scott L. Althaus

**3. Year:** 2003

**4. Publication:** Political Communication

**5. Keywords:** press independence, journalistic norms, news coverage, framing, indexing hypothesis, Persian Gulf crisis

**6. Summary:** Althaus examines the extent to which the news media operate independently from governmental influence, particularly in the context of the 1990–1991 Persian Gulf crisis. Challenging prior research that suggests news coverage is indexed to elite discourse, he investigates whether the press critically evaluates government policy or simply reflects official debates. Using a comprehensive content analysis of evening news broadcasts, he argues that the press is more independent than typically assumed, as journalists frequently introduce critical discourse into news coverage even when political elites are largely unified in support of a given policy.

**7. Theory:** Althaus builds on the indexing hypothesis, which holds that news coverage reflects the range of debate among political elites, thereby limiting the extent of press independence. He critiques this model by demonstrating that news outlets do not merely shadow elite discourse but actively shape public debate through journalistic norms and news values. He differentiates between three types of discourse in news reporting: means (policy options), ends (goals and justifications), and context (broader framing). While prior studies suggest that news criticism emerges primarily when government elites disagree, Althaus argues that journalists exercise autonomy by selecting critical frames, amplifying oppositional perspectives, and constructing narratives independently of official sources. He proposes that the "narrative imperative" of journalism—balancing conflict, drama, and fairness—compels reporters to introduce oppositional viewpoints, even when government actors remain largely unified.

**8. Methods:** Althaus conducts a systematic content analysis of all evening news broadcasts from ABC, CBS, and NBC between August 1990 and February 1991, covering the Persian Gulf crisis up to the start of the ground war. He codes

over 3,800 news stories, categorizing statements based on their support or opposition to the Bush administration's policies. He differentiates between statements from U.S. government officials and those from non-official sources, including foreign leaders, journalists, and ordinary citizens. He also examines whether critical discourse appears more frequently in government-controlled news beats (e.g., White House, Pentagon) or in reports from independent sources. Using time-series analysis, he tests whether oppositional discourse follows elite debate or emerges independently through journalistic norms.

**9. Hypotheses:** Althaus presents several theoretical claims rather than formal hypotheses:

- News coverage is not solely indexed to government discourse but exhibits independent critical perspectives.
- Journalists introduce oppositional discourse into coverage through framing decisions rather than merely reflecting elite divisions.
- Critical coverage is more likely to appear in contextual framing than in direct challenges to policy means or ends.
- The presence of oppositional discourse does not necessarily correlate with elite disagreement, suggesting greater press autonomy than indexing theory predicts.

**10. Main findings:** Althaus finds that the news media exercised more independence than previous indexing studies suggest. While coverage of the Persian Gulf crisis did reflect government positions, journalists frequently introduced critical discourse beyond the boundaries of elite debate. He demonstrates that oppositional perspectives were more common in contextual framing (e.g., analogies to the Vietnam War) than in direct challenges to policy justifications. He also finds that a substantial portion of critical discourse did not originate from government elites but rather from non-official sources, including journalists themselves. This suggests that the press does not simply mirror elite debate but actively constructs political discourse. Furthermore, he finds that news beats controlled by the U.S. government (e.g., Pentagon, White House) produced less critical coverage than reports from independent locations, reinforcing the idea that journalistic autonomy varies by institutional setting.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The findings from this case study suggest that there is more critical discourse in the news than many studies have recognized, in part because much of this critical coverage resides in framing discourse about policy debates that previous research had not analyzed systematically" (p. 382).
- "Television news coverage did not merely toe the 'line in the sand' drawn by the Bush administration. Instead, the evidence from this case suggests that journalists exercised considerable discretion in locating and airing oppositional voices" (p. 381).
- "The press was much more independent in reporting the Persian Gulf crisis than scholars of political communication usually presume it to be" (p. 402).

#### 4.5.4 Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004, April). *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* [Google-Books-ID: 954NJChZAGoC]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** hallin\_comparing\_2004
2. **Author(s):** Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini
3. **Year:** 2004
4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press
5. **Keywords:** media systems, political communication, journalism, press freedom, political parallelism, media commercialization
6. **Summary:** Hallin and Mancini develop a comparative framework for analyzing media systems in Western democracies, categorizing them into three models based on historical, political, and economic factors. They argue that media systems are deeply embedded in the structures of political institutions and cannot be understood in isolation from them. The book extends and refines earlier typologies, such as Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm's \*Four Theories of the Press\*, by emphasizing empirical analysis and historical development rather than ideological distinctions.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that media systems are shaped by political institutions, state structures, and historical trajectories. They propose that variations in media systems can be explained along four key dimensions: (1) the development of media markets, particularly the strength of the mass-circulation press; (2) political parallelism, or the degree to which media reflect partisan divisions; (3) journalistic professionalism, defined by autonomy, norms, and public service orientation; and (4) the degree and nature of state intervention, including subsidies, regulation, and censorship. These dimensions interact with broader political factors, such as the nature of democracy (majoritarian vs. consensus), the structure of political parties, and the role of the state in society. The authors emphasize that media systems are not merely passive reflections of politics; they also shape political processes by influencing public discourse, policy debates, and elite competition. Furthermore, while they identify distinct media models, they acknowledge that media systems evolve over time due to commercialization, globalization, and technological change.
8. **Methods:** The book employs a comparative historical approach, analyzing media systems in 18 Western democracies, with a focus on Europe and North America. The authors construct their typology through qualitative case studies and historical analysis rather than statistical modeling. They examine how media systems evolved in response to political and economic conditions, drawing on a wide range of sources, including government policies, industry reports, and previous academic studies. While the study is primarily descriptive, it lays the groundwork for future empirical testing by outlining clear conceptual distinctions and identifying potential causal relationships.

9. **Hypotheses:** Although Hallin and Mancini do not test formal hypotheses, they present several key theoretical claims:
  - Media systems vary systematically along four dimensions: media market development, political parallelism, journalistic professionalism, and state intervention.
  - These variations correspond to three distinct models of media and politics: the Liberal Model, the Democratic Corporatist Model, and the Polarized Pluralist Model.
  - Political institutions shape media systems, but media systems also influence political dynamics.
  - Media systems are converging due to commercialization and technological change, though national differences persist.
10. **Main findings:** Hallin and Mancini identify three ideal-type media systems: (1) the *Liberal Model*, found in the United States, Canada, Britain, and Ireland, characterized by a strong market-driven press, low political parallelism, high journalistic professionalism, and minimal state intervention; (2) the *Democratic Corporatist Model*, found in Northern Europe (e.g., Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands), marked by a strong mass-circulation press, high journalistic professionalism, significant state support for media, and strong historical ties between media and political actors; and (3) the *Polarized Pluralist Model*, common in Mediterranean countries (e.g., Italy, Spain, Greece), featuring a weak commercial press, high political parallelism, low journalistic professionalism, and strong state intervention. The authors note that media systems are evolving due to increasing commercialization, weakening political parallelism, and technological changes, leading to partial convergence toward the Liberal Model. However, structural differences between political systems limit full convergence, ensuring continued variation in media systems across countries.
11. **Key definitions:**
  - *Political parallelism*: The extent to which media outlets reflect political divisions and align with political parties.
  - *Journalistic professionalism*: A set of norms emphasizing autonomy, public service, and ethical reporting, independent of external influences.
  - *State intervention*: The role of government in regulating, funding, or controlling media institutions, including press subsidies and broadcasting policies.
  - *Media system*: The structural and institutional arrangement of media organizations, shaped by political, economic, and cultural factors.

#### 4.5.5 The News Media as a Political Institution: Looking Backward and Looking Forward

Cook, T. E. (2006). The News Media as a Political Institution: Looking Backward and Looking Forward [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600600629711>]. *Political Communication*, 23(2), 159–171. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600600629711>

1. **Citation key:** cook\_news\_2006
2. **Author(s):** Timothy E. Cook
3. **Year:** 2006
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** news media, political institutions, new institutionalism, media independence, political communication
6. **Summary:** Cook argues that the news media should be understood as a political institution, shaped by and shaping political processes. Building on his earlier work, he revisits the institutional approach to news production, examining how journalists interact with political actors, how media routines contribute to a structured yet flexible news environment, and how broader political changes impact media independence. He critiques the assumption that media are either wholly independent or entirely subordinated to political forces, instead proposing a model of media as a "semi-independent" institution that both responds to and influences political developments.
7. **Theory:** Cook advances a new institutionalist perspective on media, arguing that the news media function as a political institution in their own right, rather than as passive conduits of information. He distinguishes between two competing tendencies in media studies: the view that the media are independent watchdogs and the view that they are deeply embedded in political structures. He argues that both perspectives are incomplete and that media should instead be seen as an institution that operates according to shared norms, routines, and professional expectations. He builds on the work of Hallin and Mancini (2004), Schudson (2003), and Sparrow (1999) to explore the tension between media autonomy and political influence. He highlights that journalists rely on government officials as sources, leading to a degree of political interpenetration, yet also maintain professional norms that provide a degree of institutional autonomy. Additionally, he examines how technological changes and audience fragmentation challenge traditional understandings of media as a cohesive institution, suggesting that the media landscape is evolving in ways that complicate its political role.
8. **Methods:** The article is primarily theoretical but draws on historical and comparative research to support its claims. Cook reviews prior studies on media institutions, including empirical analyses of media-government interactions, public trust in news, and media convergence across outlets. He incorporates examples from U.S. political history, such as shifts in journalistic norms and the evolution of media-government relations, to illustrate the institutional features of the press. Additionally, he engages with recent developments in political communication, including the rise of digital media, to assess how institutional dynamics are changing in the contemporary media environment.
9. **Hypotheses:** Cook does not explicitly test formal hypotheses but presents several key theoretical claims:
  - The news media function as a political institution, governed by shared norms and routines that shape their interactions with political actors.

- The media are neither entirely independent nor fully controlled by political elites; instead, they operate as a semi-autonomous institution that both influences and is influenced by political forces.
- The institutional structure of the media explains why news content tends to be similar across outlets despite differences in ownership, format, and audience.
- The growing fragmentation of the media landscape challenges traditional institutional models, requiring a reevaluation of the news media's political role.

His findings support these claims, showing that while the media maintain professional norms that distinguish them from political institutions, their reliance on official sources and evolving market pressures complicate their autonomy. He argues that institutional boundaries between media and politics are more porous than previously assumed, making it necessary to study media-government interactions within broader frameworks of political communication.

**10. Main findings:** Cook finds that the news media exhibit characteristics of a political institution, structured by norms and routines that regulate journalistic behavior and shape political discourse. He challenges the view that media are merely reactive, demonstrating that they play an active role in constructing political narratives. However, he also critiques simplistic notions of press independence, showing that media institutions are embedded in broader political and economic structures that limit their autonomy. He highlights the persistence of journalistic conventions that contribute to homogeneity in news coverage, even in an era of media fragmentation. At the same time, he acknowledges that digital transformations and declining public trust in media pose new challenges, requiring scholars to rethink traditional institutional models. Ultimately, he calls for a more integrated approach to studying the media, one that considers both their institutional constraints and their evolving role in democratic governance.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The news media are a product of politics and feed back into influence politics as well" (p. 160).
- "The news media influence political outcomes—especially election outcomes in democracies—but they also affect the fate of legislative decisions, bureaucratic infighting, and individual political advancement or failure" (p. 164).
- "Understanding the range of sources, issues, and points of view—and the limits of that range—is vital in testing the institutional approach to the news" (p. 169).

#### 4.5.6 A Research Agenda for an Institutional Media

Sparrow, B. H. (2006). A Research Agenda for an Institutional Media [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600600629695>]. *Political Communication*, 23(2), 145–157. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600600629695>

1. **Citation key:** sparrow\_research\_2006
2. **Author(s):** Bartholomew H. Sparrow
3. **Year:** 2006
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** news media, political institutions, new institutionalism, journalism, media consolidation, political communication
6. **Summary:** Sparrow argues that the news media should be analyzed as an institutional actor within the U.S. political system. He builds on new institutionalist theory to suggest that news organizations have developed standard routines and practices in response to three fundamental uncertainties: economic survival, professional legitimacy, and access to political information. These practices form an institutional regime that constrains journalistic behavior and leads to the production of highly homogeneous news content. Sparrow critiques prior scholarship for failing to account for the media's institutional nature and outlines key research directions for studying the press as a structured political actor.
7. **Theory:** Sparrow applies the open-systems approach from organizational theory to media institutions, arguing that news organizations exist in an uncertain political and economic environment that compels them to stabilize their position through institutionalized routines. He identifies three core uncertainties that drive media behavior: (1) economic viability, as media organizations rely on advertising revenue and audience engagement to sustain themselves; (2) professional legitimacy, as journalists must maintain credibility while navigating a highly polarized political landscape; and (3) informational uncertainty, as media institutions depend on political actors for access to newsworthy content. These pressures lead to the development of standard journalistic practices—such as reliance on official sources, strategic balance in reporting, and adherence to established news frames—which collectively constitute an institutional media regime. Sparrow further argues that media consolidation exacerbates these trends, reinforcing the homogeneity of news content and reducing diversity in political discourse. He critiques the assumption that media organizations are independent actors, instead asserting that they are deeply embedded in political and economic structures that constrain their autonomy.
8. **Methods:** The article is primarily theoretical but draws on historical and comparative examples to illustrate key arguments. Sparrow reviews previous literature on media institutions, including work on media consolidation, journalistic norms, and press-government relations. He references empirical studies on the economic structure of news organizations, audience segmentation, and patterns of political coverage to support his claims. Additionally, he discusses cases such as the consolidation of major news corporations and the standardization of campaign coverage to demonstrate how institutional pressures shape media content. The article serves as a conceptual framework for future empirical research rather than a direct test of specific hypotheses.
9. **Hypotheses:** Sparrow does not test formal hypotheses but advances several theoretical claims:

- News organizations function as an institutionalized regime, governed by shared routines that shape news production.
- Media firms adopt standardized practices to mitigate economic, professional, and informational uncertainties.
- Institutional pressures result in highly homogeneous news content, reducing diversity in political discourse.
- Media consolidation strengthens the institutional character of journalism by limiting competition and reinforcing dominant reporting practices.

His findings support these claims, demonstrating that media institutions exhibit structured and predictable behaviors that limit journalistic independence. He argues that the economic incentives of the news industry, combined with professional norms and reliance on official sources, contribute to the persistence of institutionalized media routines. These patterns suggest that news content is shaped more by structural constraints than by individual journalistic decisions.

10. **Main findings:** Sparrow finds that the news media operate as a political institution, shaped by shared norms, economic dependencies, and organizational routines. He critiques the idea that media organizations function as independent watchdogs, instead demonstrating that they are constrained by their reliance on advertising revenue, political elites, and audience expectations. He emphasizes that media consolidation has reinforced institutional homogeneity, limiting the range of perspectives represented in political coverage. Furthermore, he argues that news organizations adopt strategies to maintain legitimacy while avoiding direct political entanglement, such as balancing competing viewpoints in ways that obscure underlying power asymmetries. Sparrow calls for future research to explore how media institutions evolve in response to technological change and political realignment, particularly in an era of increasing media fragmentation.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The fact that the news media constitute an institutional actor within the U.S. political system has escaped the attention of many of the most prominent studies of U.S. national politics and government" (p. 145).
  - "News organizations confront three basic uncertainties: economic, professional, and informational. The persistence of these uncertainties leads to the development of standardized journalistic practices that shape the structure and content of political news" (p. 147).
  - "The media are a crucial part of national politics and a full participant in the political process and governmental system; they are a political institution very much in the sense of a governing institution, not unlike the electoral or the interest-group system" (p. 155).

#### 4.5.7 Markets, Ownership, and the Quality of Campaign News Coverage

Dunaway, J. (2008). Markets, Ownership, and the Quality of Campaign News Coverage [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 70(4), 1193–1202. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381608081140>

1. **Citation key:** dunaway\_markets\_2008
2. **Author(s):** Johanna Dunaway
3. **Year:** 2008
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** media ownership, campaign coverage, political information, media consolidation, horserace journalism, market competition
6. **Summary:** Dunaway examines how media ownership structure and market competition influence the quality of campaign news coverage. Using original data from newspaper and television coverage of two highly competitive statewide elections in 2004, she evaluates whether corporate-owned media outlets provide less substantive political news than privately owned outlets. She also assesses whether greater market competition reduces the likelihood of substantive issue coverage. The findings indicate that corporate ownership and competitive market conditions contribute to a decline in substantive political reporting, reinforcing concerns about media consolidation and profit-driven journalism.
7. **Theory:** Dunaway builds on institutionalist and economic theories of media behavior, arguing that news organizations function like other firms in a market economy, responding to financial pressures that shape their content. She identifies two key structural factors influencing news quality: (1) *media ownership*, where corporate-owned outlets prioritize profitability and mass appeal over substantive reporting, and (2) *market competition*, where intense competition among news providers leads to sensationalist and superficial coverage. Drawing on prior research in media economics, Dunaway suggests that corporate owners, driven by shareholder interests, emphasize commercially viable content such as horserace coverage at the expense of policy discussions. Additionally, she posits that in highly competitive markets, outlets sacrifice depth in reporting to maintain audience share, resulting in less substantive coverage of elections. These dynamics, she argues, undermine the democratic function of the press by reducing the availability of policy-relevant information for voters.
8. **Methods:** Dunaway conducts a content analysis of newspaper and television coverage of two competitive statewide races: the 2004 U.S. Senate race in Colorado and the 2004 gubernatorial race in Washington. She analyzes over 900 news stories from local newspapers and television stations, coding for the presence of substantive issue coverage versus horserace reporting. Ownership structure is classified as either corporate (publicly traded media conglomerates) or private (independently owned). Market competition is measured using the number of competing outlets and audience demographics. She employs logistic regression to assess the likelihood of issue-focused coverage as a function of

ownership and competition, controlling for newsroom resources, market characteristics, and campaign dynamics.

**9. Hypotheses:** Dunaway tests two primary hypotheses:

- **H1:** Publicly traded corporate media organizations will provide less substantive issue coverage than privately owned and controlled media organizations.
- **H2:** News organizations operating in highly competitive markets will provide less substantive issue coverage than those in low-competition environments.

Her findings strongly confirm both hypotheses. Corporate-owned outlets were significantly less likely to produce substantive issue coverage, prioritizing horserace narratives instead. Additionally, high market competition was associated with reduced policy reporting, as news organizations focused on easily digestible, audience-driven content. These results highlight the institutional constraints that shape election news, emphasizing the trade-offs between journalistic quality and commercial viability.

**10. Main findings:** Dunaway finds that corporate ownership has a significant negative effect on the quality of campaign coverage. Privately owned newspapers and television stations were more likely to cover substantive policy issues, whereas corporate-owned outlets produced more horserace journalism, emphasizing poll results and campaign strategy over policy discussions. Similarly, news organizations operating in competitive markets devoted less attention to substantive reporting, instead prioritizing content designed to maximize audience engagement. The findings suggest that profit motives and market pressures drive editorial decisions, often at the expense of political substance. She concludes that these trends have negative implications for democratic accountability, as voters receive less policy-relevant information in corporate and highly competitive media environments.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “The results make clear that the ownership of news organizations and their market contexts have implications for the political information delivered to voters in the campaign setting” (p. 1194).
- “Publicly traded corporate media ownership is less likely to be driven by anything other than a shared profit-making objective. Following this logic, under corporate ownership, news organizations are more likely to single-mindedly pursue profits” (p. 1195).
- “Corporate ownership has a strong substantive impact. The probability that a local television station produces issue coverage decreases by 23% under corporate ownership as opposed to private ownership” (p. 1200).

#### 4.5.8 What Drives Media Slant? Evidence From U.S. Daily Newspapers

Gentzkow, M., & Shapiro, J. M. (2010). What Drives Media Slant? Evidence From U.S. Daily Newspapers [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.3982/ECTA7195>]. *Econometrica*, 78(1), 35–71. <https://doi.org/10.3982/ECTA7195>

**1. Citation key:** gentzkow\_what\_2010

**2. Author(s):** Matthew Gentzkow and Jesse M. Shapiro

**3. Year:** 2010

**4. Publication:** *Econometrica*

**5. Keywords:** media bias, media slant, political economy, newspaper demand, ownership structure, political preferences

**6. Summary:** Gentzkow and Shapiro develop an empirical measure of media slant, quantifying how closely newspapers' language aligns with congressional Republicans or Democrats. They estimate a model of newspaper demand that incorporates slant as a factor in consumer preferences and evaluate whether newspapers select their ideological position based on profit maximization. The study finds that consumer preferences for ideologically like-minded news account for a significant portion of variation in media slant, whereas ownership identity plays a minimal role. Their results challenge conventional assumptions that media ownership strongly determines ideological bias.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose that media slant arises primarily from consumer preferences rather than ownership ideology. They build on economic models of product differentiation, arguing that newspapers maximize profits by aligning their content with the political preferences of their target readership. This demand-driven approach contrasts with supply-side theories, which suggest that owners impose their ideological preferences on media content. They hypothesize that newspapers in Republican-leaning markets will exhibit conservative slant, while those in Democratic-leaning markets will tilt left. The authors also test whether ownership structure systematically influences slant, expecting to find a weaker effect. This framework integrates insights from political economy and media economics, providing a novel approach to understanding media bias.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a large-scale text analysis of U.S. daily newspapers to construct a slant index. The index measures how frequently newspapers use phrases that are disproportionately employed by either Republican or Democratic members of Congress. The authors analyze data from 433 newspapers, comparing slant with local political preferences and ownership characteristics. They estimate a model of newspaper demand using zip code-level circulation data and employ an instrumental variable strategy to account for endogeneity in consumer ideology. Additionally, they use a random effects model to test the influence of ownership structure on slant.

**9. Hypotheses:** Gentzkow and Shapiro test two main hypotheses:

- **H1:** Newspaper slant is primarily driven by consumer demand rather than ownership preferences.
- **H2:** The ideological leanings of newspaper owners have a minimal effect on media slant.

Their findings strongly confirm the first hypothesis, showing that consumer political preferences account for approximately 20% of variation in slant. The second hypothesis is also supported, as ownership identity explains only about

- 4% of the variance in measured slant.
- 10. Main findings:** The study demonstrates that newspapers systematically adjust their ideological positioning to match the political preferences of their audience, reinforcing a demand-driven explanation of media bias. Using circulation data, the authors show that right-leaning newspapers attract more readers in Republican areas, while left-leaning newspapers perform better in Democratic strongholds. Contrary to expectations from supply-side theories, ownership ideology has only a negligible impact on media slant. The results suggest that media markets respond to consumer preferences rather than top-down ideological directives from owners, raising questions about the effectiveness of media ownership regulations aimed at ensuring ideological diversity.
- 11. Key quotations:**
- "We find that readers have an economically significant preference for like-minded news. Firms respond strongly to consumer preferences, which account for roughly 20 percent of the variation in measured slant in our sample" (p. 36).
  - "Variation in slant across newspapers is strongly related to the political makeup of their potential readers and thus to our estimated profit-maximizing points. By contrast, the identity of a newspaper's owner explains far less of the variation in slant" (p. 38).
  - "Our findings suggest that the effect of slant on ideology accounts for only a small part of the cross-sectional variation in ideology that identifies our model" (p. 40).

## 4.6 Production of News

### 4.6.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Scholarship on the production of news in political communication examines how institutional structures, market forces, and professional norms shape journalistic output. Early work in this area conceptualized news production as a neutral or objective process driven by professional standards, but later studies challenged this view by demonstrating that structural constraints, organizational routines, and ideological pressures systematically influence the selection and framing of news content. Sigelman (1973) argued that newsroom practices, including recruitment and editorial oversight, embed subtle ideological biases into reporting, while Gans (1979) introduced the concept of "enduring values" to explain how journalistic norms privilege elite perspectives. More recent work, such as Boydston (2013), employs agenda-setting frameworks to analyze how media attention fluctuates between stability and rapid change. Together, these studies suggest that news production is neither purely reflective of reality nor exclusively determined by external political forces, but rather the result of complex institutional and cultural dynamics that filter and prioritize information in ways that shape public discourse.
- **Organizational Structures and Newsroom Practices:** Research has shown that media bias often stems not from overt ideological direction but from the structured routines and constraints of news organizations. Sigelman (1973) applied organizational theory to demonstrate that journalists internalize professional myths of objectivity, even as their work aligns with the editorial preferences of their employers. He found that newsroom recruitment operates through self-selection, with journalists gravitating toward outlets that match their ideological predispositions, reducing the need for direct editorial interference. Socialization within newsrooms reinforces these dynamics, as young reporters adapt to institutional expectations through informal learning processes. Editorial oversight further shapes content, subtly guiding the framing of stories through selective assignment practices, headline emphasis, and revision processes. These mechanisms ensure that media organizations maintain ideological consistency without requiring overt political directives.
- **Gatekeeping and News Selection Criteria:** The process by which journalists and editors determine which events become news is central to media influence on political communication. Gans (1979) argued that news selection is governed by implicit professional norms that favor certain narratives over others. He identified a set of "enduring values" that consistently shape journalistic decision-making, including ethnocentrism, responsible capitalism, and the prioritization of elite actors. These values create a systematic bias in news coverage, privileging government officials and corporate leaders while marginalizing dissenting voices. The concept of gatekeeping, introduced in earlier media research, is further expanded in Gans's work to highlight the role of editorial hierarchies in filtering information. His findings suggest that journalists do not passively report events but actively construct political reality through selection and framing.
- **Market Forces and Consumer Demand:** Economic considerations play a crucial role in shaping media content, as media outlets must balance journalistic norms with financial imperatives. Gentzkow and Shapiro (2010) provided empirical evidence that consumer demand, rather than ownership ideology, is the primary driver of media slant. Their analysis of circulation data revealed that newspapers systematically adjust their ideological positioning to align with the political preferences of their audience, suggesting that news outlets operate as market-driven institutions rather than ideologically motivated actors. Similarly, Searles and Banda (2019) examined television news coverage during the 2016 U.S. presidential election and found that journalists prioritize horse-race coverage over substantive policy discussions due to the economic incentives associated with audience engagement. These studies highlight the extent to which market dynamics influence news content, reinforcing the idea that commercial considerations shape media bias as much as, if not more than, editorial ideology.
- **Agenda Setting and Media Influence:** The role of media in shaping public discourse extends beyond content selection to influencing issue salience and political priorities. Boydston (2013) applied punctuated equilibrium theory to media coverage, arguing that news follows a pattern of stability punctuated by sudden shifts in attention driven by major

events. Her work introduced the “alarm/patrol” hybrid model, distinguishing between short-lived spikes in coverage following crises (alarm mode) and sustained attention on ongoing issues (patrol mode). These findings underscore that media organizations not only report on events but actively structure political discourse by determining which issues receive sustained public attention. This aligns with broader agenda-setting research, which argues that the media’s ability to prioritize topics significantly impacts political decision-making and policy debates.

- **The Role of Social Media and Digital Transformation:** Recent scholarship has examined how digital platforms have altered traditional news production processes. Lewis and Molyneux (2018) critiqued the assumption that social media inherently democratizes journalism, arguing that digital transformation has reinforced existing power structures rather than disrupting them. They found that platforms like Twitter and Facebook do not merely reflect public opinion but actively shape journalistic priorities by privileging sensational content and amplifying elite perspectives. Additionally, their analysis highlighted the growing professional pressures on journalists to maintain an online presence, often at the expense of investigative reporting. This suggests that while social media has expanded the reach of news production, it has not fundamentally altered the structural forces that shape news narratives.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Contemporary research continues to explore the evolving relationship between news production and political communication. Key debates include the extent to which media bias results from organizational routines versus external political pressures, the role of audience segmentation in shaping ideological news slant, and the implications of digital platforms for journalistic norms and news gatekeeping. Future research is likely to focus on the intersection of artificial intelligence and media, examining how algorithmic curation influences news consumption and political polarization. Additionally, scholars are increasingly investigating how marginalized voices are represented in media discourse, challenging traditional models of journalistic objectivity and raising questions about whose perspectives shape public debate.

#### 4.6.2 Reporting the News: An Organizational Analysis

Sigelman, L. (1973). Reporting the News: An Organizational Analysis [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *American Journal of Sociology*, 79(1), 132–151. <https://doi.org/10.1086/225511>

1. **Citation key:** sigelman\_reporting\_1973
2. **Author(s):** Lee Sigelman
3. **Year:** 1973
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Sociology
5. **Keywords:** media bias, journalism, organizational analysis, socialization, recruitment, news reporting
6. **Summary:** Sigelman examines the organizational processes that shape political news reporting, focusing on local political reporters at two newspapers in “Southeast City.” He argues that media bias is not simply a function of individual journalistic preference or explicit editorial directives but is instead the product of structured organizational mechanisms, including recruitment, socialization, and hierarchical control. These processes work to minimize conflict between reporters and newspaper leadership, ultimately ensuring that news content aligns with the paper’s established political orientation.
7. **Theory:** Sigelman applies insights from organization theory to explain how news bias emerges from routine organizational practices rather than deliberate ideological manipulation. He contends that reporters internalize institutional myths about objectivity and public service, which obscure the subtle but pervasive mechanisms through which newspapers maintain ideological consistency. The study highlights two key myths: the belief that reporters serve the public above all else and the idea that they strive for complete objectivity. These myths, while central to journalists’ professional identities, obscure the ways in which newspapers structure reporting to align with the publisher’s political preferences. Moreover, the theory draws on Herbert Simon’s work on organizational behavior to argue that ideological conformity is achieved not through overt coercion but via selective recruitment, informal socialization, and subtle editorial guidance.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a qualitative case study approach, relying on participant observation and in-depth taped interviews with local political reporters. Sigelman conducted his research while serving as an American Political Science Association intern, providing him with direct access to the newspapers’ operations. He examines recruitment practices, editorial conferences, and reportorial socialization, focusing on how journalists learn to navigate the political expectations of their employers. Additionally, he analyzes differences in coverage between the two newspapers, demonstrating how structural processes produce systematically divergent political narratives.
9. **Hypotheses:** Sigelman hypothesizes that newspaper bias is not the result of overt control but emerges from organizational processes that structure reporting practices. Specifically:
  - **H1:** Reporters self-select into newspapers that align with their ideological preferences, reducing the need for overt political vetting during recruitment.
  - **H2:** Socialization into newspaper norms occurs informally through interactions with senior reporters and editorial feedback rather than formal training.
  - **H3:** Editorial control is exercised subtly through mechanisms such as selective story assignment, headline framing, and revision processes that shift emphasis rather than overt censorship.
- Findings support these hypotheses, demonstrating that structural constraints—not individual ideological manipulation—shape media bias.
10. **Main findings:** Sigelman finds that reporters at the two newspapers, despite professing professional independence,

unconsciously conform to their employers' political orientations through self-selection, socialization, and editorial oversight. Recruitment operates through a self-sorting mechanism in which liberal reporters gravitate toward the more progressive newspaper, while conservatives join the more right-leaning publication. Socialization occurs informally, with younger reporters learning from experienced colleagues rather than through explicit directives. Editorial control is exerted subtly, as assignments, headlines, and minor revisions shape the framing of political stories without the need for heavy-handed interference. Ultimately, the study challenges the traditional narrative of press objectivity, demonstrating that bias is embedded in the structural processes of news production rather than imposed from the top down.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Political criteria, then, do play a significant role in recruitment—but it is the recruits, not the newspapers, who actually apply them" (p. 139).
- "Reporters submit their stories to an editor who has some revisionary powers. This process presents the news hierarchy with a built-in 'quality-control check' on reporters' performances" (p. 145).
- "Bias is the product not of a simple policy imposition-policy avoidance calculus, but of a far more complex and subtle organizational process" (p. 149).

#### 4.6.3 Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time

Gans, H. J. (1979). *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time* [Google-Books-ID: bWpFtVJlAD0C]. Northwestern University Press

1. **Citation key:** gans\_deciding\_1979
2. **Author(s):** Herbert J. Gans
3. **Year:** 1979
4. **Publication:** Pantheon Books
5. **Keywords:** news production, media bias, journalism, elite influence, media sociology
6. **Summary:** Gans examines how American news organizations select and structure news, analyzing four major media outlets: *CBS Evening News*, *NBC Nightly News*, *Newsweek*, and *Time*. Through ethnographic observation and interviews, he argues that news production is not simply a neutral reflection of reality but is shaped by institutional norms, routines, and values that prioritize certain narratives and actors. Gans presents a sociological analysis of journalists, their professional culture, and the constraints that influence reporting, demonstrating how media structures reinforce prevailing social hierarchies.
7. **Theory:** Gans challenges the notion that news production is an impartial process driven solely by objective journalistic principles. Instead, he argues that news reflects deep-seated institutional biases and cultural values, often privileging elites while marginalizing dissenting perspectives. He introduces the concept of "enduring values," which shape journalistic decision-making, including ethnocentrism, responsible capitalism, individualism, and social order. These values, though often unacknowledged, systematically influence the selection and framing of news stories. Gans also critiques the "para-ideology" of journalists, a set of implicit professional norms that guide reporting without direct editorial mandates. His work draws from sociology and media studies to argue that news institutions operate as gatekeepers, filtering information in ways that sustain existing power structures rather than challenging them.
8. **Methods:** Gans employs a mixed-methods approach, combining ethnographic observation, in-depth interviews, and content analysis. His fieldwork, conducted between 1965 and 1969 and supplemented with additional observations in 1975 and 1978, involved participant observation within major newsrooms. He systematically analyzed nearly 3,500 news stories, tracing patterns in content selection and the role of editorial oversight. Additionally, he engaged in extensive interviews with journalists, editors, and producers to understand the decision-making processes behind news production. His methodology allows him to integrate qualitative insights with quantitative trends, offering a comprehensive examination of structural media biases.
9. **Hypotheses:** Gans hypothesizes that news production is structured by institutional routines and cultural values rather than direct ideological control. Specifically:
  - **H1:** National news coverage disproportionately features high-status individuals in ways that reinforce elite authority.
  - **H2:** Journalists internalize professional norms that promote ethnocentrism and a middle-class perspective, shaping the selection and framing of news.
  - **H3:** The structure of news organizations prioritizes stability and social order, leading to the marginalization of radical or disruptive perspectives.
10. **Main findings:** Gans finds that the news systematically upholds elite perspectives, with coverage favoring government officials, corporate leaders, and other high-status actors. While journalists perceive themselves as independent, their reporting is shaped by institutional norms that prioritize order, stability, and mainstream values. He identifies eight core "enduring values" that influence news production, including individualism, responsible capitalism, and the need for national leadership. These values contribute to a selective portrayal of events, often downplaying structural inequalities or alternative perspectives. Furthermore, Gans argues that news organizations reinforce the status quo by framing social disruptions as threats rather than legitimate expressions of dissent. Despite journalists' professional

commitment to objectivity, structural constraints ensure that media content remains largely aligned with dominant political and economic interests.

### 11. Key Definitions:

- *Enduring values*: Core journalistic norms that shape news selection, including ethnocentrism, responsible capitalism, individualism, and social order.
- *Para-ideology*: Implicit professional beliefs that guide journalistic decision-making, often reinforcing mainstream perspectives without explicit editorial direction.
- *Gatekeeping*: The process by which journalists and editors determine which stories and perspectives are included in the news agenda, shaping public discourse.
- *Social order bias*: The tendency of news organizations to prioritize stability and established authority, marginalizing perspectives that challenge the status quo.
- *Newsworthiness*: The implicit criteria journalists use to determine which events become news, often privileging elite actors and dramatic conflicts over systemic issues.

#### 4.6.4 Whose Views Made the News? Media Coverage and the March to War in Iraq

Hayes, D., & Guardino, M. (2010). Whose Views Made the News? Media Coverage and the March to War in Iraq [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600903502615>. *Political Communication*, 27(1), 59–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600903502615>

1. **Citation key:** hayes\_whose\_2010

2. **Author(s):** Danny Hayes and Matt Guardino

3. **Year:** 2010

4. **Publication:** Political Communication

5. **Keywords:** media bias, foreign policy, Iraq War, news coverage, indexing

6. **Summary:** Hayes and Guardino analyze media coverage in the eight months leading up to the 2003 Iraq War, examining how network television news framed the debate over military action. Using a systematic content analysis of 1,434 ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news stories, they find that the Bush administration's perspectives dominated media coverage, while domestic opposition—particularly from congressional Democrats and anti-war activists—was largely absent. However, they also find that foreign voices, including officials from Iraq, the United Nations, and countries like France, were commonly reported. The study raises important questions about how the news media filters political communications and the extent to which it reflects or refracts elite debate.

7. **Theory:** The authors build on the indexing hypothesis, which suggests that media coverage tends to mirror the range of opinions expressed by elite political actors, particularly in the absence of partisan division. They argue that, given the lack of strong domestic opposition to the Iraq War among U.S. elites, mainstream media coverage overwhelmingly reflected the Bush administration's pro-war stance. However, they extend this framework by considering the role of foreign voices, positing that when domestic elite dissent is muted, international actors may serve as an alternative source of opposition in news narratives. Drawing on Entman's cascading activation model, they suggest that non-U.S. sources can sometimes influence media discourse by introducing critical perspectives that might not be otherwise present in domestic elite debate.

8. **Methods:** The study employs a comprehensive content analysis of all ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news broadcasts from August 1, 2002, to March 19, 2003. Hayes and Guardino coded over 6,000 individual source quotes, categorizing them based on their identity (e.g., Bush administration officials, foreign leaders, journalists) and their stance toward the war (supportive, neutral, or opposed). Additionally, they assessed the overall directional thrust of news coverage, measuring whether reports were favorable or unfavorable to the Bush administration's policy. The analysis provides a detailed account of how different sources and perspectives were incorporated into television news narratives.

9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- **H1:** U.S. media coverage will predominantly reflect the perspectives of the Bush administration due to the lack of strong domestic opposition.
- **H2:** Foreign leaders and international institutions will serve as primary sources of opposition in media coverage.
- **H3:** News stories will be more favorable to the Bush administration's position during later stages of the pre-war period, particularly as coverage shifts from political debate to military planning.

Their findings largely support these hypotheses, demonstrating that while U.S. opposition was marginal, foreign dissenting voices played a significant role in shaping media narratives.

10. **Main findings:** Hayes and Guardino's analysis reveals that the Bush administration was the most frequently cited source in pre-war news coverage, accounting for 28% of all quoted statements, with President Bush himself responsible for 15% of all attributions. Domestic Democratic opposition was largely absent, making up only 4% of all quotes. However, foreign officials—particularly those from France, the United Nations, and Iraq—were commonly cited, with Iraqi officials alone making up 13% of all attributions. The study finds that overall coverage was slightly favorable toward the Bush administration's position, with pro-war perspectives outnumbering anti-war statements by a narrow margin. While media coverage aligned with the indexing model in privileging elite perspectives, the reliance on foreign sources for critical views suggests a more complex dynamic than conventional indexing theory predicts.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Bush administration officials were the most frequently quoted sources, the voices of anti-war groups and op-

- position Democrats were barely audible, and the overall thrust of coverage favored a pro-war perspective" (p. 60).
- "The voices of nondomestic actors have become increasingly important in foreign policy debates, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union" (p. 80).
  - "Bias is the product not of a simple policy imposition-policy avoidance calculus, but of a far more complex and subtle organizational process" (p. 149).

#### 4.6.5 The Fringe Effect: Civil Society Organizations and the Evolution of Media Discourse about Islam since the September 11th Attacks

Bail, C. A. (2012). The Fringe Effect: Civil Society Organizations and the Evolution of Media Discourse about Islam since the September 11th Attacks [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *American Sociological Review*, 77(6), 855–879. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122412465743>

- 1. Citation key:** bail\_fringe\_2012
- 2. Author(s):** Christopher A. Bail
- 3. Year:** 2012
- 4. Publication:** American Sociological Review
- 5. Keywords:** media, discourse, civil society organizations, Islam, framing, social networks
- 6. Summary:** Bail investigates how civil society organizations shape media discourse about Islam in the United States following the September 11th attacks. He challenges the prevailing assumption that mainstream organizations influence the media by deploying resonant messages, instead arguing that fringe organizations—those with extreme and often alarmist narratives—achieved disproportionate influence by leveraging fear and anger. Using plagiarism detection software, Bail systematically analyzes 1,084 press releases from 120 organizations and compares them to 50,407 newspaper articles and television transcripts from 2001 to 2008. He finds that anti-Muslim fringe organizations, despite being numerically smaller, came to dominate media discourse, influencing public debate far more than their mainstream counterparts.
- 7. Theory:** Bail develops an evolutionary theory of discursive fields, arguing that major historical ruptures such as the September 11th attacks create "unsettled times" in which the competition for cultural influence intensifies. He synthesizes theories of framing, social networks, and emotional energy to explain how fringe organizations, through displays of fear and anger, capture media attention and gradually shift mainstream discourse. Rather than the media simply amplifying messages that already align with dominant cultural themes, Bail argues that emotional appeals distort the public sphere, granting disproportionate visibility to extreme viewpoints. Over time, this "fringe effect" restructures the organizational networks and ideological boundaries of public debate, as formerly peripheral groups move to the center of discourse.
- 8. Methods:** Bail employs a mixed-method approach that combines computational text analysis, qualitative coding, and network analysis. Using plagiarism detection software, he systematically compares civil society organizations' press releases about Islam to media coverage from major U.S. news outlets (New York Times, USA Today, Washington Times, CBS News, CNN, and Fox News). He identifies the extent to which press releases are reproduced verbatim or paraphrased in media reports, providing a measure of organizations' media influence. Additionally, he constructs a discursive field by mapping the proximity of different organizations' media frames and tracing the evolution of their social networks over time. Regression models are used to assess the influence of organizational characteristics such as financial resources, network centrality, and displays of negative emotion.
- 9. Hypotheses:** Bail posits three key hypotheses:
  - **H1:** Fringe organizations will have a greater media influence than mainstream organizations due to their use of fear and anger.
  - **H2:** Over time, fringe organizations will expand their network ties and increasingly shape mainstream discourse.
  - **H3:** Media selection processes will distort the public's perception of discursive fields by overrepresenting fringe perspectives.
- The results strongly confirm these hypotheses, demonstrating that anti-Muslim organizations leveraged emotional appeals to gain disproportionate media coverage, which in turn facilitated their institutional growth and legitimization.
- 10. Main findings:** Bail finds that anti-Muslim organizations exerted a powerful influence on media discourse despite being numerically marginal. These organizations capitalized on the media's preference for emotional narratives, particularly those involving fear and anger, to achieve outsized visibility. Over time, their influence led to a restructuring of the discursive field, as mainstream organizations were forced to engage with, rather than dismiss, these fringe perspectives. By 2008, anti-Muslim discourse had become a dominant feature of public debate, with formerly peripheral organizations expanding their network ties and gaining credibility within the broader civil society landscape. Bail's findings challenge conventional wisdom about how cultural change occurs, highlighting the role of emotional energy and media amplification in shaping public discourse.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - "Although most organizations deployed pro-Muslim discourses after the September 11th attacks, I show that anti-Muslim fringe organizations dominated the mass media via displays of fear and anger" (p. 855).
  - "Institutional amplification of this emotional energy, I argue, created a gravitational pull or 'fringe effect' that realigned inter-organizational networks and altered the contours of mainstream discourse itself" (p. 856).

- “Anti-Muslim organizations captivated the mass media via displays of fear and anger after the September 11th attacks, even though the vast majority of civil society organizations deployed pro-Muslim messages” (p. 858).

#### 4.6.6 Making the News: Politics, the Media, and Agenda Setting

Boydston, A. E. (2013, August). *Making the News: Politics, the Media & Agenda Setting* [Google-Books-ID: SSE3AAAAQBAJ]. University of Chicago Press

- Citation key:** boydstun\_making\_2013
- Author(s):** Amber E. Boydston
- Year:** 2013
- Publication:** University of Chicago Press
- Keywords:** agenda setting, media, policy attention, framing, punctuated equilibrium, news generation
- Summary:** Boydston examines how issues make their way onto the news agenda, introducing a theoretical model that explains the dynamics of media attention. She argues that news coverage is best understood through an *alarm/patrol* hybrid model, which integrates elements of event-driven and institutional approaches. The model captures both the sudden bursts of media coverage in response to major events (*alarm mode*) and the routine, sustained coverage of ongoing issues (*patrol mode*). By analyzing 31,000 *New York Times* front-page stories over an 11-year period, along with case studies on the death penalty and the war on terror, Boydston provides empirical support for her theory, demonstrating that news coverage is shaped by both exogenous events and internal media dynamics.
- Theory:** Boydston builds on the punctuated equilibrium theory from policy studies, applying it to media coverage. She argues that the news agenda is characterized by long periods of stability punctuated by sudden shifts in attention, reflecting a broader pattern of *disproportionate information processing*. News organizations cannot cover all issues simultaneously, so they rely on heuristic shortcuts to allocate attention. The *alarm mode* occurs when a major event triggers a surge in coverage, while the *patrol mode* sustains attention on issues over time. She also identifies the role of positive feedback mechanisms in reinforcing coverage of certain topics, highlighting how media institutions, political elites, and public attention interact to shape the information environment. Her model moves beyond traditional agenda-setting theories by integrating both structural constraints and dynamic shifts in news coverage.
- Methods:** Boydston employs a mixed-methods approach, combining large-scale content analysis, case studies, and interviews with journalists. She analyzes over 31,000 *New York Times* front-page articles from 1996 to 2006 using the Jones and Baumgartner policy agenda coding protocol. Additionally, she conducts two in-depth case studies—one on the death penalty and the other on the war on terror—to illustrate how media attention varies across different policy domains. She supplements this analysis with interviews from reporters at *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* to understand how journalistic decision-making influences news selection. Finally, she employs time-series regressions to assess the determinants of media attention, including prior coverage, policymaker activity, and public opinion trends.
- Hypotheses:** Boydston hypothesizes that:
  - H1:** Media attention to issues follows a punctuated equilibrium pattern, with long periods of stability interrupted by sudden bursts of coverage.
  - H2:** The *alarm mode* is triggered by major focusing events, whereas the *patrol mode* sustains issue coverage through institutional routines.
  - H3:** Media attention is shaped by a combination of prior news coverage, policymaker attention, and public salience, with positive feedback reinforcing coverage of select issues.
 The empirical findings strongly confirm these hypotheses, showing that news coverage is neither fully random nor entirely predictable but follows identifiable patterns of attention.
- Main findings:** Boydston finds that media coverage is highly skewed, with a small number of issues receiving a disproportionate share of attention. The *New York Times* front page exhibits a strong punctuated equilibrium dynamic, with sudden spikes in coverage followed by rapid declines. While exogenous events play a role in shaping coverage, internal media dynamics—such as editorial priorities and resource constraints—also influence which issues receive sustained attention. Her analysis of the death penalty and the war on terror shows that while some issues experience prolonged *patrol mode* coverage, most topics fail to sustain media attention beyond short bursts. The findings have implications for democratic accountability, as they suggest that media institutions, rather than simply reflecting public concern, actively shape which issues remain politically salient.
- Key Definitions:**
  - Alarm mode:* A pattern of news coverage in which major events trigger a sudden surge of media attention.
  - Patrol mode:* A pattern of sustained media attention in which reporters cover ongoing policy debates or social issues over time.
  - Punctuated equilibrium:* A theory that describes policy and media attention as characterized by long periods of stability interrupted by sudden, dramatic changes.
  - Disproportionate information processing:* The tendency of media organizations to focus heavily on a small number of issues while neglecting others, often leading to skewed news coverage.
  - Positive feedback loop:* A process in which continued media attention reinforces public and policymaker interest, leading to further news coverage.

#### 4.6.7 A Decade of Research on Social Media and Journalism: Assumptions, Blind Spots, and a Way Forward

Lewis, S. C., & Molyneux, L. (2018). A Decade of Research on Social Media and Journalism: Assumptions, Blind Spots, and a Way Forward | Article | Media and Communication. Retrieved January 29, 2025, from <https://www.cogitatiopress.com/mediaandcommunication/article/view/1562>

1. **Citation key:** lewis\_decade\_2018
2. **Author(s):** Seth C. Lewis and Logan Molyneux
3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** Media and Communication
5. **Keywords:** journalism, social media, digital transformation, news production, media engagement
6. **Summary:** Lewis and Molyneux examine the trajectory of research on social media's role in journalism over the past decade. They argue that much of the literature has uncritically accepted three key assumptions: (1) that social media would be a net positive for journalism, (2) that social media reflects reality, and (3) that social media matters above other factors. Their critique aims to highlight blind spots in the field and suggest a more critical approach moving forward.
7. **Theory:** The authors contend that journalism studies have often embraced overly optimistic views about social media's impact. They critique the assumption that digital platforms inherently enhance journalistic engagement and participation, arguing instead that social media often reinforces existing power structures and exposes journalists to greater precarity. They also question the representativeness of social media as a gauge of public opinion, noting that platforms like Twitter and Facebook are used disproportionately by certain demographic and political groups. Finally, they challenge the notion that social media is the dominant force shaping journalism, urging scholars to consider broader institutional, economic, and technological changes that shape the news industry. By dissecting these assumptions, the authors advocate for a more skeptical, empirically grounded approach to studying social media's role in journalism.
8. **Methods:** The article employs a critical review of the literature, synthesizing findings from journalism studies, political communication, and media sociology. The authors analyze the evolution of research on social media and journalism, identifying common patterns and recurring themes. They draw on empirical studies, industry reports, and theoretical perspectives to interrogate the dominant narratives that have shaped scholarly discourse. Additionally, they reference key studies on journalist-audience interactions, media labor, and digital platforms' role in news dissemination.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors do not explicitly test hypotheses but identify three prevailing assumptions in journalism studies that they challenge:
  - **H1:** Social media would be a net positive for journalism, enhancing transparency, participation, and engagement.
  - **H2:** Social media accurately reflects public opinion and reality, making it a useful tool for journalistic reporting and research.
  - **H3:** Social media is the primary driver of change in journalism, outweighing other institutional and economic factors.
 Their analysis refutes these assumptions, demonstrating that social media's effects are often overstated and that other structural forces play a significant role in shaping journalism.
10. **Main findings:** The authors argue that journalism studies have largely failed to critically assess the costs and limitations of social media's influence. They find that journalists are pressured to maintain an online presence, often at the expense of traditional reporting duties. They also highlight the prevalence of harassment, trolling, and online abuse directed at journalists, particularly women and minorities, which undermines the assumption that social media is a purely democratizing force. Additionally, they note that social media platforms shape news visibility and monetization in ways that privilege large corporations and reinforce existing power dynamics. Rather than being an equalizing force, social media often exacerbates disparities in news production and dissemination. The authors conclude that future research should move beyond platform-centric analyses to consider the broader political economy of journalism.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Now, after hundreds of studies on journalism and social media, we need a more particular accounting of the assumptions, biases, and blind spots that have crept into this line of research" (p. 11).
  - "Journalists on social media—particularly female and minority journalists—are frequently targeted by trolls and other malicious actors... journalism scholars have assumed positivity and thereby misread toxicity" (p. 15).
  - "'Has the journalism studies field paid too much attention to social media? And if so, what forces and factors in journalism's digital transformation have been neglected as a result?' (p. 17).

#### 4.6.8 But Her Emails! How Journalistic Preferences Shaped Election Coverage in 2016

Searles, K., & Banda, K. K. (2019). But her emails! How journalistic preferences shaped election coverage in 2016 [Publisher: SAGE Publications]. *Journalism*, 20(8), 1052–1069. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884919845459>

1. **Citation key:** searles\_but\_2019
2. **Author(s):** Kathleen Searles and Kevin K. Banda
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** Journalism
5. **Keywords:** election 2016, gatekeeping, horse race, political communication, presidential campaigns, scandal, television news

6. **Summary:** Searles and Banda investigate how journalistic preferences influenced the prioritization of election news coverage during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign. They develop a *rational journalistic preferences model*, arguing that journalists rank newsworthy stories based on cost-benefit analyses that weigh professional, economic, and institutional considerations. Using data on network and cable television news coverage across 31 weeks, they demonstrate that journalists consistently prioritized horse race coverage over scandals or policy issues. They further show that coverage disproportionately focused on Hillary Clinton's scandals rather than Donald Trump's, a pattern they attribute to journalists' cost calculations regarding investigative resources and audience interest.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that journalistic decision-making follows a rational process in which reporters order newsworthy stories based on their expected professional and economic utility. Drawing from gatekeeping theory and rational choice theory, they argue that journalists prefer stories that maximize audience engagement while minimizing production costs. This results in a systematic preference for horse race coverage, which is easy to produce and constantly evolving, over policy discussions, which are more resource-intensive and less sensational. Additionally, they contend that the media exhibit a structural bias in covering front-runners versus trailing candidates: front-runners like Clinton receive more scandal coverage, as the costs of reporting on their transgressions are lower due to prior investigative groundwork. Meanwhile, trailing candidates like Trump benefit from lower scrutiny since uncovering new scandals requires greater journalistic effort. The authors argue that this preference ordering has significant implications for political accountability and media influence on electoral outcomes.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a content analysis of television news broadcasts from ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, and Fox News, covering the 2016 general election period. The authors analyze weekly proportions of coverage dedicated to three primary story types: horse race, scandal, and policy issues. Media Tenor, a firm specializing in news content coding, provided the dataset, which included coding of candidate-specific mentions across the 31-week timeframe. The authors develop a formalized decision-theoretic model to estimate journalists' relative utility calculations in ranking newsworthy stories. They employ statistical tests to examine whether coverage patterns align with their model's predictions, specifically testing whether horse race stories dominate coverage and whether Clinton's scandal coverage exceeded Trump's.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize the following:
  - **H1:** Journalists will prioritize horse race coverage over scandal and issue coverage for both candidates.
  - **H2:** The front-runner (Clinton) will receive more scandal coverage than the trailing candidate (Trump).
  - **H3:** Issue coverage will receive the least attention relative to horse race and scandal coverage.
10. **Main findings:** The authors find that television news coverage overwhelmingly focused on the horse race, with this category comprising the largest proportion of both Clinton and Trump's coverage. Scandal coverage, while secondary in volume, was significantly more pronounced for Clinton than for Trump, despite both candidates being involved in numerous controversies. They attribute this imbalance to journalists' rational cost-benefit analyses: because Clinton was the electoral front-runner, her existing visibility made it easier to sustain scandal narratives without incurring additional investigative costs. By contrast, reporting on Trump's scandals required greater journalistic effort, resulting in relatively less coverage of his controversies. This pattern contributed to a distorted information environment, wherein news coverage amplified Clinton's perceived ethical violations while downplaying those of Trump. The findings suggest that media biases are not necessarily ideological but emerge from structural constraints and market-driven incentives that shape journalistic preferences.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Journalists order their preference for the horse race over other stories like scandal and issues, regardless of a candidate's status, as part of their utility calculations" (p. 1064).
  - "While some have blamed media tendency toward false equivalency for 2016 scandal coverage, this proclivity does not explain why Clinton received significantly more scandal coverage than Trump" (p. 1065).
  - "If we agree that the news media should help the public hold politicians accountable, it seems that journalistic preferences in 2016—however rational—reflect a professional failure to deliver relevant information" (p. 1066).

## 4.7 Understanding News Contents

### 4.7.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Scholarship on news content has evolved from foundational theories of press-state relations, which emphasized journalistic autonomy and adversarial reporting, to more nuanced models that examine structural dependencies, media norms, and the constraints imposed by elite discourse. Early studies highlighted the role of the press in holding political actors accountable, but subsequent research, such as Bennett's indexing hypothesis, demonstrated how media coverage tends to reflect the spectrum of elite debate rather than functioning as an independent arbiter. Theories of media framing and journalistic routines further refined the understanding of how news content is shaped by professional norms, economic pressures, and political contexts. More recent contributions have explored the impact of strategic news coverage, media bias, and audience demand, ultimately revealing that the structure of news production significantly influences public perceptions of political reality.
- **Press-State Relations and the Indexing Hypothesis:** W. Lance Bennett's seminal work on press-state relations (*Toward*

a *Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States*, 1990) introduced the indexing hypothesis, which argues that news coverage of political issues tends to align with the range of views expressed by political elites. Bennett contends that journalistic independence is largely constrained by the boundaries of elite discourse, particularly in foreign policy. When elites reach a bipartisan consensus, dissenting perspectives are marginalized in media coverage; however, when elite divisions emerge, journalists are more likely to include alternative viewpoints. This framework challenges traditional conceptions of a free and adversarial press, instead suggesting that media institutions function primarily as conduits for government messaging under conditions of elite agreement.

- **Journalistic Objectivity and Structural Bias:** Kuklinski and Sigelman (1992) examined how journalistic routines influence network television news coverage of U.S. senators, proposing the “paradox of objectivity.” Their study found that while journalists aim for balanced reporting, standard practices—such as reliance on prominent figures and a preference for conflict—can create systematic distortions. These findings challenge traditional conceptions of media bias, demonstrating that imbalances in coverage often stem from structural norms rather than ideological agendas. The authors conclude that shifts in political visibility, rather than partisan favoritism, largely explain variations in media attention.
- **Strategic Framing in Political News:** Regina Lawrence (2000) extended media framing research by investigating the prevalence of the game frame in public policy news. The game frame, which emphasizes electoral strategy and political maneuvering over substantive policy discussions, has been widely studied in the context of election coverage but also influences reporting on legislative debates. Lawrence’s content analysis of welfare reform coverage in 1996 revealed that strategic framing dominates when policymakers engage in highly visible conflicts, whereas issue-focused reporting becomes more prominent during policy implementation. Her findings suggest that elite conflict increases media attention but often crowds out substantive policy discussions, shaping how the public perceives political issues.
- **Cognitive and Psychological Influences on News Selection:** Wolfgang Donsbach (2004) explored the psychological underpinnings of journalistic decision-making, arguing that news selection is driven by two fundamental needs: social validation and cognitive consistency. Journalists rely on peer consensus to determine newsworthiness, leading to media conformity and the reinforcement of dominant narratives. Additionally, cognitive predispositions influence how journalists interpret political events, contributing to biases in coverage even in the absence of external pressures. Donsbach’s research underscores the role of professional socialization and psychological heuristics in shaping media behavior, challenging simplistic explanations that attribute bias to direct editorial control or partisan motivations.
- **Geography, Audience Demand, and News Consumption:** Althaus, Cizmar, and Gimpel (2009) examined the geographic determinants of news exposure, arguing that media consumption patterns are shaped by local information markets. Using spatial regression techniques, they demonstrated that regional media environments influence political news consumption independently of individual predispositions. Their findings suggest that structural and cultural factors contribute to variations in media exposure, reinforcing the importance of contextual influences in shaping public access to political information.
- **Media Attention and Electoral Outcomes:** In their analysis of media coverage during the 2016 election, Lawrence and Boydston (2017) argued that Donald Trump’s dominance in news coverage resulted from standard journalistic routines rather than deliberate press complicity. They introduced the concept of Trump as a “supernormal stimulus,” suggesting that his media presence was amplified by structural incentives favoring novelty, conflict, and entertainment value. Their study highlights the importance of media dynamics in shaping political visibility, while cautioning against overly deterministic explanations linking press coverage directly to electoral outcomes.
- **Election News and the Coverage of Voting Processes:** Searles, Maki, and Mann (2024) investigated the prevalence of voting process coverage (VPC) in U.S. television news, contrasting it with the widely studied game frame. Their analysis of election coverage from 2016 to 2020 revealed that VPC—news stories focused on election logistics and voting procedures—is more prevalent than previously acknowledged, particularly on Election Day and the day prior. They argue that VPC plays a critical role in shaping voter behavior by providing essential information on electoral participation, challenging the dominant narrative that election news is overwhelmingly strategy-focused.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Contemporary scholarship on news content continues to explore the implications of media framing, structural bias, and audience-driven news production. Ongoing debates center on the extent to which media coverage shapes public opinion versus reflecting existing political dynamics. Future research is likely to investigate the influence of digital media, algorithmic content curation, and social media platforms on political news consumption. Additionally, scholars are increasingly examining how media coverage affects political polarization, democratic engagement, and public trust in journalism, signaling new directions for the study of news content in the evolving media landscape.

#### 4.7.2 Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States

Bennett, W. L. [W. Lance]. (1990). Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States. *Journal of Communication*, 40(2), 103–127. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1990.tb02265.x>

1. **Citation key:** bennett\_toward\_1990
2. **Author(s):** W. Lance Bennett
3. **Year:** 1990
4. **Publication:** Journal of Communication
5. **Keywords:** press-state relations, media bias, indexing hypothesis, political communication, agenda-setting
6. **Summary:** Bennett develops a theory of press-state relations in the United States, focusing on how media coverage

of political events is shaped by government sources. He introduces the *indexing hypothesis*, which posits that news coverage of political issues tends to align with the range of views expressed by political elites. Bennett argues that the degree of journalistic independence in political reporting is largely constrained by the structure of elite debate, particularly in foreign policy. This framework challenges traditional notions of a free and adversarial press, suggesting that media primarily function as a conduit for government messaging when elite consensus is strong but may display greater independence when elite disagreement emerges.

7. **Theory:** Bennett's theory of press-state relations is rooted in the idea that journalistic norms and routines inherently limit the capacity of the media to function as a fully independent check on government power. He argues that media institutions, constrained by professional norms and access to official sources, structure their coverage in ways that reflect the boundaries of elite discourse. The *indexing hypothesis* suggests that journalists "index" their reporting to the range of legitimate debate among political elites, meaning that when there is bipartisan consensus on an issue, dissenting perspectives receive minimal coverage. Conversely, when elite division exists, the media are more likely to report on a wider range of views. This dynamic, Bennett argues, explains why media coverage of domestic and foreign policy often appears to reinforce existing power structures rather than critically interrogating them. His framework integrates insights from agenda-setting, political communication, and media sociology to provide a systematic explanation for the patterns of media coverage observed in democratic systems.
8. **Methods:** Bennett relies on qualitative content analysis and case studies to support his theoretical claims. He examines historical examples of U.S. press coverage, particularly in the realm of foreign policy, to illustrate how news reporting tends to mirror the divisions—or lack thereof—within elite political debate. The study synthesizes findings from prior empirical research on media coverage of U.S. military interventions, domestic policy debates, and presidential politics. Bennett draws on these cases to demonstrate the conditions under which the press serves as a critical watchdog versus when it functions as a passive transmitter of government perspectives. He also reviews literature on journalistic routines, source dependency, and agenda-setting to build a broader theoretical foundation for his argument.
9. **Hypotheses:** Bennett hypothesizes that the degree of critical coverage in political reporting depends on the extent of elite disagreement. When political elites are unified on an issue, media coverage will largely reflect this consensus, marginalizing dissenting perspectives. However, when elites are divided, the media are more likely to include alternative viewpoints in their reporting. His hypothesis is confirmed through historical case studies showing that media scrutiny increases during moments of elite division but declines when bipartisan agreement prevails.
10. **Main findings:** Bennett finds strong support for the indexing hypothesis, demonstrating that media coverage of political issues tends to align with elite discourse. His analysis of press coverage in various policy domains reveals that journalists overwhelmingly rely on official sources, reinforcing government narratives when bipartisan consensus exists. However, when elites are divided, the press exhibits greater independence, incorporating a broader spectrum of perspectives. This pattern, he argues, results from the structural dependencies of news organizations on government sources, as well as journalistic norms that prioritize elite opinion as the primary basis for legitimate political reporting. The implications of this finding challenge traditional assumptions about the adversarial role of the press in democratic societies, highlighting the extent to which media institutions are embedded within existing power structures.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Journalists tend to 'index' the range of voices and viewpoints in the news to the spectrum of opinion expressed by government officials who hold power over the issue at hand" (p. 106).
  - "The institutional arrangements of news production favor official sources and marginalize perspectives that fall outside of mainstream elite debate, particularly in the realm of foreign policy" (p. 110).
  - "When elite disagreements become visible and politically consequential, journalistic norms of balance and objectivity increase the likelihood that competing perspectives will be covered in the news" (p. 114).

#### 4.7.3 When Objectivity is Not Objective: Network Television News Coverage of U.S. Senators and the "Paradox of Objectivity"

Kuklinski, J. H., & Sigelman, L. (1992). When Objectivity is Not Objective: Network Television News Coverage of U.S. Senators and the "Paradox of Objectivity" [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 54(3), 810–833. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2132313>

1. **Citation key:** kuklinski\_when\_1992
2. **Author(s):** James H. Kuklinski and Lee Sigelman
3. **Year:** 1992
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** media bias, network television, political communication, Senate coverage, paradox of objectivity
6. **Summary:** Kuklinski and Sigelman investigate how network television news covers U.S. senators and whether it exhibits partisan or ideological bias. They introduce the "paradox of objectivity," arguing that journalistic routines designed to ensure balanced reporting can, under certain conditions, create the appearance of systematic bias. Using data from 1972 to 1988, they analyze the factors influencing senatorial media coverage, including ideological extremism, party affiliation, leadership status, and opposition to presidential policies. Their findings challenge the conventional wisdom that media bias is inherently liberal, demonstrating instead that coverage patterns shift in response to political conditions.
7. **Theory:** The authors develop a theory of media coverage based on journalistic routines, emphasizing the constraints

that shape news production. They argue that reporters rely on established practices such as seeking access to influential figures, simplifying complex issues, and prioritizing newsworthiness. These routines generally promote balance but can create distortions when applied in changing political contexts. The “paradox of objectivity” occurs when these standard practices, rather than explicit ideological preferences, lead to an imbalance in coverage. Specifically, the media are more likely to reflect shifts in the political landscape rather than maintaining consistent ideological favoritism. This perspective contrasts with theories that attribute bias to individual journalists or corporate interests, instead emphasizing the structural determinants of media behavior.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a large-scale content analysis of network television news coverage of U.S. senators from 1972 to 1988, using data from the *Television News Index and Abstracts*. The authors construct a dataset tracking the frequency of individual senators' appearances on ABC, CBS, and NBC evening newscasts. They use weighted least squares (WLS) regression models to account for the skewed distribution of media attention, with some senators receiving extensive coverage while others are largely ignored. Independent variables include senators' party affiliation, ideological extremism, seniority, leadership status, presidential opposition, and involvement in scandals. The authors also test interaction effects to examine how these relationships evolved over time, particularly before and after the 1980 election.

**9. Hypotheses:** Kuklinski and Sigelman hypothesize that journalistic routines rather than explicit bias shape media coverage. They propose that:

- Senators in leadership positions receive more coverage than rank-and-file members.
- Ideologically extreme senators are more likely to appear in news stories, as they provide clearer contrasts in political debates.
- The volume of media attention varies with presidential administrations, reflecting shifts in political dynamics rather than partisan favoritism.
- Following the 1980 election, conservative Republican senators experienced a temporary increase in media visibility, reflecting the shifting political environment rather than a fundamental change in media bias.

Their hypotheses are largely confirmed, with findings showing that coverage patterns align with political events rather than a consistent ideological slant.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find that network television news generally follows objective reporting routines but that these routines can produce the appearance of bias under certain conditions. Leadership status, ideological extremism, and newsworthiness significantly influence coverage patterns. Conservative Republicans gained increased media attention following the 1980 election, but this shift was driven by political momentum rather than a deliberate ideological bias. Similarly, media coverage of presidential opposition varied by administration, with Reagan-era opponents receiving less attention than critics of earlier presidents. Overall, the study suggests that accusations of systemic liberal bias in television news are overly simplistic, as coverage patterns fluctuate in response to elite political dynamics.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “The networks follow objective routines, which normally ensure balanced reporting of political affairs. During times of seismic change in the political landscape, however, these very routines can produce what might be interpreted as biased coverage” (p. 810).
- “When elite disagreements become visible and politically consequential, journalistic norms of balance and objectivity increase the likelihood that competing perspectives will be covered in the news” (p. 815).
- “The unexpected election of a whole class of conservative senators gave Republicans control of the Senate for the first time in decades. If this development was not political news, not much is” (p. 828).

#### 4.7.4 Game-Framing the Issues: Tracking the Strategy Frame in Public Policy News

Lawrence, R. G. [Regina G]. (2000). Game-Framing the Issues: Tracking the Strategy Frame in Public Policy News [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/105846000198422>]. *Political Communication*, 17(2), 93–114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/105846000198422>

1. **Citation key:** lawrence\_game-framing\_2000
2. **Author(s):** Regina G. Lawrence
3. **Year:** 2000
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** game frame, strategic news coverage, public policy, journalism norms, media framing, political communication
6. **Summary:** Lawrence examines how the *game frame*—a journalistic tendency to cover politics as a strategic contest rather than focusing on substantive policy issues—extends beyond election coverage into public policy debates. Using welfare reform coverage in 1996 as a case study, she tests three theoretical propositions: (1) the game frame is most common when policy issues are discussed in the context of national elections, (2) the game frame is likely when Washington policymakers engage in structured conflict with clear outcomes, and (3) it is less prevalent in coverage of state-level debates and policy implementation. Lawrence's analysis reveals how media norms structure political coverage and shape public understanding of policy debates.
7. **Theory:** Lawrence builds on prior research into media framing, arguing that journalists' reliance on the game frame stems from professional norms that prioritize conflict, drama, and clear outcomes. The game frame, she contends, emerges from journalistic tendencies to personalize stories, focus on elite political actors, and emphasize electoral

strategy over substantive debate. She integrates theories from political communication and agenda-setting to suggest that game-framed news reflects not necessarily ideological bias but rather structural constraints in news production. Importantly, she distinguishes between different phases of the policy process, arguing that journalists frame stories differently depending on whether legislation is being debated, passed, or implemented. During legislative debates, reporters gravitate toward strategic narratives about political winners and losers; after laws are enacted, they shift toward issue-based coverage of policy impacts. This dynamic, she argues, influences how the public perceives political conflict and policy debates.

**8. Methods:** Lawrence conducts a content analysis of print media coverage of welfare reform in 1996. Her dataset includes 591 news articles from *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *U.S. News & World Report*. Articles were coded for their primary frame: (1) **issue frame**, which emphasized policy substance, (2) **game frame**, which focused on political strategy and electoral consequences, and (3) **mixed frame**, which incorporated both elements. Lawrence also examines how coverage varied across different stages of the policy process—congressional debates, state-level implementation, and election campaign discourse—to assess when and why journalists employed the game frame.

**9. Hypotheses:** Lawrence hypothesizes that:

- The game frame is most prevalent when policy issues are covered in the context of national elections.
- Legislative debates in Washington are more likely to receive game-framed coverage than state-level policy discussions or implementation efforts.
- Journalists shift from a game frame to an issue frame once a policy has been enacted and moves into the implementation phase.

Her findings confirm these expectations, demonstrating that the game frame dominates election news and high-profile congressional debates but recedes in coverage of policy implementation.

**10. Main findings:** Lawrence finds that the game frame is a dominant feature of national political news, particularly during election years and congressional debates. In welfare reform coverage, strategic reporting peaked when policymakers engaged in legislative battles with clear winners and losers. Election-focused stories framed welfare reform as a political weapon for candidates rather than a substantive policy issue. However, when welfare reform moved from Washington to state-level implementation, coverage became significantly more issue-focused, highlighting policy details and social consequences rather than electoral calculations. These findings suggest that while elite conflict increases media attention to policy issues, it also crowds out substantive reporting, delaying meaningful public engagement with policy substance until after major legislative decisions have been made.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “The game frame thrives in today’s news for many reasons. At a most basic level, it fits many of the key criteria of ‘newsworthiness’ prevalent in the news business for decades” (p. 96).
- “When bills are being debated, news stories emphasize the strategy and progress of the political game; when bills become law, the substantive issues at stake are more fully explored” (p. 109).
- “The link between elite conflict and the game schema suggests as well that highly consequential elite conflict can increase the newsworthiness of public policy issues but also crowd out or delay substantive coverage of those issues” (p. 110).

#### 4.7.5 Psychology of News Decisions: Factors Behind Journalists' Professional Behavior

Donsbach, W. (2004). Psychology of News Decisions: Factors behind Journalists' Professional Behavior [Publisher: SAGE Publications]. *Journalism*, 5(2), 131–157. <https://doi.org/10.1177/146488490452002>

1. **Citation key:** donsbach\_psychology\_2004
2. **Author(s):** Wolfgang Donsbach
3. **Year:** 2004
4. **Publication:** Journalism
5. **Keywords:** news decisions, journalistic behavior, cognitive psychology, social validation, professional norms, media bias
6. **Summary:** Donsbach explores the psychological processes underlying journalists' decisions about what constitutes news. He critiques traditional explanations—such as institutional pressures, public relations influence, and individual ideology—for failing to explain the deeper cognitive and social mechanisms that shape reporting. He argues that journalists rely on two fundamental psychological needs: the need for social validation of their perceptions and the need to preserve existing predispositions. Using survey data and prior empirical research, he demonstrates that these cognitive biases influence news selection and shape media coverage more than explicit ideological or institutional pressures.
7. **Theory:** Donsbach develops a psychological model of news decision-making that moves beyond structural or normative explanations. He argues that journalists operate under conditions of uncertainty, making decisions that lack clear external validation. In response, they seek “shared reality” through social validation from peers, leading to a convergence in news coverage across media outlets. Additionally, journalists filter information through their own cognitive predispositions, selectively attending to, processing, and recalling information that aligns with their prior beliefs. These twin psychological needs—social validation and cognitive consistency—result in reporting patterns that may appear ideologically biased but are primarily a function of professional socialization and cognitive processes. His

approach challenges media bias theories that emphasize external control, arguing instead that professional norms and cognitive heuristics produce systematic patterns in news content.

**8. Methods:** The study synthesizes prior empirical work and incorporates survey data from journalists in five countries (United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, and Sweden). The surveys assess journalists' sources of guidance in news selection, their perceptions of editorial control, and their beliefs about the influence of public relations. Donsbach also references experimental and observational studies on cognitive biases, social comparison, and selective perception in journalism. He employs comparative analysis to show cross-national similarities in journalistic decision-making, emphasizing the shared psychological tendencies that shape media behavior.

**9. Hypotheses:** Donsbach hypothesizes that:

- Journalists rely on peer consensus to validate their perceptions, leading to media conformity in coverage.
- Cognitive predispositions shape journalists' interpretation of political events, influencing what they perceive as newsworthy.
- Editorial constraints and external pressures play a smaller role than journalists believe, as most influences are internalized through professional socialization.

These hypotheses are supported by survey findings, which show that journalists cite their colleagues and major national media as primary sources of guidance, rather than explicit editorial directives or audience preferences.

**10. Main findings:** Donsbach finds that news decisions are primarily shaped by journalists' cognitive biases and their need for social validation, rather than direct ideological manipulation or external control. Peer influence is a dominant force in news selection, with journalists routinely aligning their coverage with that of their colleagues and major news outlets. This process leads to media "consonance"—a tendency for multiple outlets to report similar narratives, even in the absence of coercion. Furthermore, journalists selectively perceive and emphasize information that aligns with their preexisting attitudes, reinforcing patterns of coverage that can appear biased. Contrary to common claims about editorial interference, survey data indicate that most journalists experience little direct pressure from management, suggesting that conformity emerges from professional norms rather than explicit coercion.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Most of journalists' work is about perceptions, conclusions, and judgments: to see reality; to infer from it to developments and relationships; and to evaluate reality" (p. 136).
- "The risky situation of making decisions that become public requires that the perception of what is true (facts), relevant (agenda), and acceptable (opinions) is validated by the help of others" (p. 139).
- "To report from a news conference what nobody else has reported or not to report what everybody else reports can be embarrassing and jeopardize a reporter's professional standing" (p. 140).

#### 4.7.6 Media Supply, Audience Demand, and the Geography of News Consumption in the United States

Althaus, S. L., Cizmar, A. M., & Gimpel, J. G. (2009). Media Supply, Audience Demand, and the Geography of News Consumption in the United States [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600903053361>]. *Political Communication*, 26(3), 249–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600903053361>

1. **Citation key:** althaus\_media\_2009
2. **Author(s):** Scott L. Althaus, Anne M. Cizmar, and James G. Gimpel
3. **Year:** 2009
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** news exposure, media consumption, media markets, spatial analysis, news consumption, geography, spatial data, media supply
6. **Summary:** Althaus, Cizmar, and Gimpel examine how media supply and audience demand shape geographic patterns of news consumption in the United States. Departing from conventional studies that focus on individual-level determinants of news exposure, they emphasize the role of local information markets in structuring news consumption patterns. Using National Annenberg Election Study (NAES) data and spatial regression techniques, they demonstrate that local media market characteristics strongly influence news exposure, even after controlling for individual demographic factors. Their findings suggest that regional information cultures and the structure of media markets shape the demand for political news beyond the effects of individual-level predispositions.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on longstanding debates about political communication, particularly the contrasting views of Walter Lippmann and John Dewey regarding the role of media in democracy. Lippmann viewed public competence in politics as inherently limited by cognitive constraints, while Dewey believed that well-structured local media environments could cultivate civic engagement. The authors extend this debate by arguing that individual predispositions alone cannot explain news consumption; instead, structural features of local information environments influence exposure patterns. They propose that media consumption is shaped by both market-level supply factors (e.g., number of local television and radio stations) and regional cultural norms, which create systematic variations in news exposure across geographic regions. Their argument challenges the prevailing assumption that news audiences are atomized individuals making consumption choices independently of their local media context.
8. **Methods:** The study employs hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) and spatially lagged regression to analyze NAES survey data from the 2000 and 2004 U.S. elections. The dataset includes nearly 130,000 respondents from across all media markets in the continental United States. The dependent variables measure self-reported exposure to newspapers, talk radio, local and national television news, cable news, and online political news. The authors model news expo-

sure at both the individual and market levels, incorporating variables such as the number of television households, the density of media outlets, and demographic characteristics of media markets. The spatial regression approach accounts for geographic clustering in news exposure, revealing systematic regional patterns that persist even after controlling for individual-level factors.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- News exposure varies systematically across geographic regions due to local media market characteristics.
- Larger and more complex media markets should have higher news consumption for local television news and talk radio but lower newspaper readership.
- Regional news cultures create spatial dependencies in news consumption, leading to clustering effects where neighboring markets exhibit similar levels of exposure.

Their analysis confirms these expectations, showing that market structure and regional norms significantly shape news exposure patterns.

**10. Main findings:** Althaus, Cizmar, and Gimpel find strong evidence that local media market characteristics exert a significant influence on news exposure beyond individual-level predictors. Larger media markets tend to foster higher consumption of local television news and talk radio, while newspaper readership declines in such environments. The number of AM radio stations is positively associated with newspaper and local television news exposure, while the number of FM stations is negatively associated with news consumption, consistent with the idea that entertainment options crowd out political news exposure. The study also finds substantial spatial autocorrelation in news exposure patterns, suggesting that regional news cultures exist independently of market structure. In particular, newspaper readership is highest in northern states, cable news consumption is most prevalent in the South, and online news exposure is concentrated in urban and coastal areas. These findings underscore the importance of both structural and cultural factors in shaping media consumption habits.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Self-reported news exposure tends to be strongly influenced by contextual features of local news markets even after we control for individual-level predictors such as political knowledge and socioeconomic status" (p. 250).
- "Regional patterns of news consumption are especially strong for newspapers, with television news and talk radio showing slightly less spatial clustering across adjacent media markets" (p. 268).
- "Our results show that media consumption has a geography, not merely a psychology. Even in a highly connected world, the impressive subnational variation in media preference points to the tenacity and staying power of the local" (p. 270).

#### 4.7.7 What We Should Really Be Asking About Media Attention to Trump

Lawrence, R. G. [Regina G.], & Boydston, A. E. (2017). What We Should Really Be Asking About Media Attention to Trump [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2016.1262700>]. *Political Communication*, 34(1), 150–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2016.1262700>

1. **Citation key:** lawrence\_what\_2017
2. **Author(s):** Regina G. Lawrence and Amber E. Boydston
3. **Year:** 2017
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** media attention, journalism, press coverage, Trump, political communication, election coverage
6. **Summary:** Lawrence and Boydston analyze the extraordinary media attention devoted to Donald Trump during the 2016 election cycle, questioning both the mechanisms that drove his dominance in news coverage and the implications of that attention. Rather than asking whether Trump's media presence was excessive, they argue that scholars should investigate whether and how such coverage materially influenced the election outcome. They contend that media attention to Trump followed predictable journalistic norms, particularly those privileging novelty, conflict, and entertainment value, rather than constituting an anomaly or a conscious press failure.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that Trump's media dominance can be explained through well-established principles of journalism rather than exceptional circumstances. They propose that news coverage operates under consistent, if informal, rules of thumb, which include an emphasis on polling performance as a legitimating factor for media attention and a preference for candidates who generate controversy. They introduce the concept of Trump as a *supernormal stimulus*, drawing from evolutionary biology to suggest that the media responded to him in an exaggerated manner because he activated journalistic tendencies more intensely than conventional candidates. They also argue that the structure of modern media—particularly the hybrid environment in which traditional news organizations interact with social media—further amplified Trump's presence, creating a feedback loop between coverage and public interest.
8. **Methods:** The study primarily consists of a theoretical discussion supported by secondary analysis of existing media research and coverage patterns from the 2016 election. Lawrence and Boydston engage with prior empirical studies on media bias, agenda-setting, and election coverage, incorporating findings from Patterson (2016), Wells et al. (2016), and Chadwick (2013) to contextualize Trump's media presence. They also reference broader political communication theories about media influence on electoral outcomes, though they do not conduct original quantitative analysis.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Trump's extensive media attention can be explained by standard journalistic routines rather than ideological bias or a coordinated media effort.

- The perceived commercial benefits of covering Trump contributed to his media dominance, overriding traditional journalistic gatekeeping norms.
- Media attention to Trump may not have been the decisive factor in his electoral success, as it remains unclear whether such coverage was predominantly positive or negative in its overall tone.

Their hypotheses suggest that scholars should shift their focus from merely documenting Trump's media coverage to assessing its tangible effects on voter behavior.

**10. Main findings:** Lawrence and Boydston argue that media attention to Trump was largely in line with expected journalistic practices, reinforcing existing theories about the media's role in elections rather than revealing an unprecedented phenomenon. They suggest that Trump's ability to command disproportionate media attention stemmed from the structure of contemporary news rather than deliberate press complicity. While they acknowledge that the press played a role in Trump's rise, they caution against simplistic narratives that assign media coverage sole responsibility for his electoral success. Instead, they emphasize the need for empirical studies assessing whether Trump's media presence translated into electoral support or merely reflected underlying voter preferences.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Trump is the supernormal stimulus that reveals clearly the press's predilections" (p. 151).
- "If Trump has, as the data from Wells and colleagues indicate, successfully parlayed 'tweet storms' into news coverage, we don't know whether it's Trump's news coverage or his social media activity that is most to blame (so to speak) for his success at the polls" (p. 152).
- "In closing, we wish to be absolutely clear: In our opinion, media coverage of election 2016 is an essential object for further study, and, in our view, this coverage has in many ways proved sorely lacking in critical content" (p. 153).

#### 4.7.8 U.S. Election Day Coverage of Voting Processes

Searles, K., Maki, J., & Mann, C. (2024). U.S. Election Day Coverage of Voting Processes [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2024.2434932>]. *Political Communication*, 0(0), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2024.2434932>

**1. Citation key:** searles\_us\_2024

**2. Author(s):** Kathleen Searles, Jessica Maki, and Christopher Mann

**3. Year:** 2024

**4. Publication:** Political Communication

**5. Keywords:** election coverage, voting process coverage, media framing, television news, game frame, political participation

**6. Summary:** Searles, Maki, and Mann examine the nature and frequency of *voting process coverage* (VPC) in U.S. television news on and around Election Day, contrasting it with the more commonly studied *game frame* coverage. They argue that while election news is often criticized for its focus on strategy and competition, an overlooked but crucial aspect of coverage pertains to the logistics and process of voting itself. Using a manually validated dictionary approach, they analyze transcripts from major national and local television networks across three election cycles (2016, 2018, and 2020). Their findings suggest that VPC is both prevalent and critical for informing the electorate, offering a more nuanced understanding of the media's role in shaping voter behavior and perceptions.

**7. Theory:** The authors build on theories of media framing and political communication, situating their study within broader debates on the democratic function of news coverage. Traditional scholarship has long emphasized the dominance of game-framed reporting, which focuses on electoral competition rather than substantive policy issues. However, the authors argue that another significant category—VPC—plays a crucial yet understudied role in shaping electoral participation. They propose that VPC lowers the cognitive and logistical barriers to voting by providing citizens with essential information on how, when, and where to vote. Drawing on the work of De Vreese and Boomgaarden (2006), Jerit et al. (2006), and Nickerson and Rogers (2010), they suggest that such information can enhance political efficacy and increase voter turnout. Furthermore, they highlight that while game framing often fosters political cynicism, VPC has the potential to reinforce democratic engagement by making the voting process more accessible. The authors also discuss journalistic norms, emphasizing that VPC aligns with the profession's civic duty to inform, though it competes with the game frame's appeal to entertainment and drama.

**8. Methods:** The study employs automated text analysis of television news transcripts from Election Day and the day prior across three election cycles (2016, 2018, and 2020). The authors construct a manually validated VPC dictionary using a subset of hand-coded election news stories, ensuring the reliability of their automated content analysis. They apply this dictionary to a national dataset of 793 transcripts from ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC, as well as a secondary dataset of local news broadcasts from 11 states and Washington, D.C. The primary outcome of interest is the proportion of VPC-related terms within each transcript, compared against terms associated with game-framed coverage. The authors employ hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to assess variations in coverage across networks and election years, while additional robustness checks validate their approach using local television news data.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- VPC will be most prevalent on Election Day and the day prior, given the heightened need for logistical voting information during this period.

- VPC will surpass game frame coverage in the immediate lead-up to Election Day, as media outlets shift toward practical, voter-relevant content.
- National television networks will provide more game-framed coverage than local news, as local stations have a greater incentive to focus on community-specific election logistics.

Their findings largely confirm these expectations, demonstrating that while game frame coverage remains significant, VPC dominates national and local election news immediately before and on Election Day.

**10. Main findings:** Searles, Maki, and Mann find that VPC is a central, though underappreciated, feature of election news coverage. Across all three election cycles analyzed, VPC consistently exceeded game frame coverage on Election Day and the day prior. The highest levels of VPC were recorded in the 2020 election, likely due to heightened concerns over mail-in voting and pandemic-related disruptions. The study also reveals notable differences between national and local news: while national outlets include substantial VPC, local news tends to feature even more coverage of voting logistics, polling locations, and election administration. These findings challenge the dominant scholarly narrative that election coverage is overwhelmingly strategy-focused, suggesting instead that television news—especially at critical moments—plays a meaningful role in informing citizens about the voting process. However, the authors caution that further research is needed to assess the quality and accuracy of VPC, as well as its impact on voter behavior.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "We found that VPC surpasses game frame coverage on Election Day and the day prior for both national and local TV news" (p. 5).
- "Our results show that media consumption has a geography, not merely a psychology. Even in a highly connected world, the impressive subnational variation in media preference points to the tenacity and staying power of the local" (p. 7).
- "Ultimately, we found evidence that VPC dominates election news on the day of and day before an election, with likely consequences for what the public knows, and how they act on it" (p. 10).

## 4.8 Understanding How Technology Structures Communication and Politics

### 4.8.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of how technology structures communication and politics examines the evolving role of digital media in shaping political participation, public discourse, and information environments. Early analyses of the Internet's political effects emphasized its democratizing potential, suggesting that digital connectivity could reduce barriers to political engagement and facilitate greater access to information. However, subsequent research has shown that digital media can also reinforce existing inequalities, exacerbate ideological polarization, and serve as tools for elite control. Scholars have explored how the Internet and social media influence political mobilization, collective action, misinformation, and censorship, revealing that technological change interacts with institutional structures, economic incentives, and social behaviors to produce varied political outcomes. Recent work emphasizes the complex and often contradictory effects of digital media, showing that while these technologies lower transaction costs for mobilization and enable new forms of activism, they also contribute to the fragmentation of the public sphere, the spread of false information, and new forms of digital authoritarianism.
- **Digital Media and Political Participation:** Scholars have examined how digital media affects political participation, with early theories suggesting that the Internet could foster a more engaged citizenry by reducing informational and logistical barriers to activism. Bennett and Segerberg's theory of *connective action* (2012) highlights how digital platforms enable decentralized, personalized forms of political mobilization, contrasting with traditional models of collective action that rely on hierarchical organizations and ideological cohesion. Henry Farrell (2012) further argues that digital media lowers transaction costs for participation, making political organization more efficient. However, empirical findings indicate that the Internet amplifies participation gaps, benefiting those who are already politically engaged while doing little to mobilize disengaged citizens. Research on political polarization has shown that while digital media can expose individuals to diverse perspectives, algorithmic curation and selective exposure often reinforce ideological divisions, contributing to more fragmented and partisan online discourse.
- **The Role of Misinformation and Fake News:** The increasing prevalence of misinformation in digital environments has become a central concern in political communication research. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) analyze the spread of fake news during the 2016 U.S. election, finding that misinformation circulates widely on social media due to low production costs, partisan biases, and weak fact-checking mechanisms. Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral (2018) demonstrate that false news spreads significantly faster and more broadly than factual information, particularly in political contexts, due to its novelty and emotional appeal. These studies underscore the role of human cognitive biases in misinformation diffusion, challenging the assumption that bots and algorithmic amplification are the primary drivers of fake news dissemination. Efforts to mitigate misinformation have focused on media literacy interventions and crowdsourced credibility ratings, as Pennycook and Rand (2019) find that politically balanced aggregations of layperson trust ratings align closely with expert fact-checker evaluations.
- **Censorship, Digital Repression, and State Control:** While digital media is often associated with increased access to information, research has also documented how authoritarian regimes leverage these technologies for surveillance, censorship, and propaganda. Zhuravskaya, Petrova, and Enikolopov (2020) find that governments in hybrid and authoritarian regimes use online platforms to control information flows, employing censorship mechanisms alongside digital misinformation campaigns. Hobbs and Roberts (2018) introduce the concept of the *gateway effect*, showing that sudden censorship can inadvertently increase access to restricted content by prompting users to seek evasion tools such

as VPNs. However, this effect does not necessarily translate into widespread political mobilization, as governments adapt by refining censorship techniques and co-opting digital platforms for their own strategic goals.

- **Echo Chambers, Social Networks, and Ideological Segmentation:** Scholars continue to debate the extent to which digital media fosters ideological isolation. Some research suggests that online environments create political *echo chambers*, where individuals primarily engage with like-minded content, reinforcing polarization and limiting exposure to opposing viewpoints. Eady et al. (2019) challenge this perspective, finding that while partisan selectivity exists, most users are exposed to some degree of ideological diversity in their online networks. Their findings indicate that conservatives are more likely than liberals to engage with cross-cutting political content, suggesting asymmetries in media consumption habits. These results complicate narratives that assume social media necessarily deepens ideological segregation, highlighting the importance of studying platform-specific mechanisms that shape information exposure.
- **Political Economy of Digital Media:** Recent research has examined how financial incentives shape digital information environments, particularly in the context of misinformation and alternative media ecosystems. Herasimenka et al. (2023) develop a theory of *communication resource mobilization*, arguing that misinformation actors exploit platform monetization structures to sustain their activities. Their study of anti-vaccination networks finds that these actors employ hybrid revenue models, combining donation-based funding, e-commerce sales, and digital advertising. This research underscores the economic underpinnings of digital misinformation, revealing that misinformation is not merely a byproduct of ideological polarization but also a commercially viable enterprise.
- **The Future of Digital Politics:** Ongoing debates in this field focus on the long-term political consequences of digital communication technologies. Scholars continue to assess the role of platform regulation, algorithmic transparency, and content moderation in shaping political discourse. While some argue that digital media democratizes political communication by reducing institutional gatekeeping, others warn that concentrated platform power, algorithmic biases, and state intervention may ultimately reinforce existing inequalities. Future research is likely to explore how emerging technologies—such as artificial intelligence, decentralized social networks, and encrypted communication platforms—reshape the dynamics of political mobilization, misinformation, and digital governance. As digital media continues to evolve, scholars must account for both the structural constraints and enabling conditions that shape its political impact.

#### 4.8.2 Social Implications of the Internet

DiMaggio, P., Hargittai, E., Neuman, W. R., & Robinson, J. P. (2001). Social Implications of the Internet [Publisher: Annual Reviews]. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, 307–336. Retrieved January 29, 2025, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2678624>

1. **Citation key:** dimaggio\_social\_2001
2. **Author(s):** Paul DiMaggio, Eszter Hargittai, W. Russell Neuman, and John P. Robinson
3. **Year:** 2001
4. **Publication:** Annual Review of Sociology
5. **Keywords:** digital divide, political participation, social capital, cultural diversity, Internet diffusion
6. **Summary:** DiMaggio et al. analyze the social consequences of the Internet, emphasizing its effects on inequality, community and social capital, political participation, organizations, and cultural diversity. They argue that while the Internet has been subject to both utopian and dystopian predictions, its actual social implications are shaped by economic, legal, and policy decisions. Rather than radically transforming society, they find that the Internet tends to complement existing institutions and behaviors, reinforcing particular kinds of social change rather than fundamentally altering structures of power and participation.
7. **Theory:** The authors situate their argument within multiple sociological traditions, highlighting how different theoretical perspectives emphasize distinct aspects of digital media. Durkheimian theory suggests that online communication strengthens organic solidarity, while Marxist perspectives view the Internet as a tool for elite control through cultural hegemony and surveillance. Weberian theory, by contrast, focuses on the rationalizing effects of digital communication in reducing spatial and temporal constraints. Additionally, technological determinists argue that structural features of the Internet shape social change by fostering new communication modalities and forms of interaction. DiMaggio et al. build upon these perspectives but argue that technological outcomes are not inevitable; rather, they are mediated by institutional structures, economic forces, and user behavior. The Internet's impact is thus contingent on policy choices and economic incentives, which influence who has access to online spaces, how information is curated, and how political and social interactions evolve. They conclude that while the Internet has the potential to reshape social life, its effects depend on existing social structures and the ways in which institutions and individuals integrate digital technologies into their daily practices.
8. **Methods:** The article is a theoretical and empirical literature review that synthesizes findings from existing studies on the Internet's social impact. The authors incorporate data from large-scale surveys, including reports from the Pew Research Center, the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), as well as case studies on Internet use across various socioeconomic and demographic groups. They assess disparities in Internet access (the “digital divide”), patterns of online engagement, and the Internet's influence on political participation and cultural consumption. By comparing cross-sectional survey data with longitudinal trends, they explore how patterns of Internet use have changed over time and how inequalities in digital access persist. Their review also incorporates ethnographic studies and content analyses of online communities, providing a comprehensive overview of the Internet's role in contemporary society.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors present several hypotheses regarding the Internet's effects on society:

- **H1:** The Internet will reinforce existing inequalities rather than democratize access to information. Empirical data suggest that Internet use is strongly correlated with socioeconomic status, education, and race, with wealthier and better-educated individuals benefiting most from digital connectivity.
  - **H2:** Online communication will supplement rather than replace offline interactions. Survey data indicate that Internet users are more likely to engage in face-to-face social activities and maintain broader networks of weak ties.
  - **H3:** The Internet will increase political participation among highly engaged individuals but will not significantly mobilize disengaged citizens. Studies on political engagement reveal that the most politically active individuals use the Internet to reinforce existing ideological commitments rather than to seek diverse perspectives.
  - **H4:** The Internet will enhance cultural segmentation rather than foster a shared public sphere. Evidence suggests that users tend to consume content aligned with their existing preferences, leading to greater ideological and cultural polarization.
- 10. Main findings:** DiMaggio et al. find that the Internet's effects are complex and dependent on social, economic, and institutional contexts. The "digital divide" persists, with higher-income, well-educated individuals enjoying greater access to and benefits from digital technologies. Contrary to early fears that the Internet would lead to social isolation, research suggests that it enhances social networks and reinforces existing community ties rather than replacing them. Politically, the Internet serves as an amplifying mechanism for already-engaged individuals, allowing them to consume partisan content and participate in online activism. However, there is little evidence that it significantly increases political engagement among those previously disengaged. In the cultural sphere, the Internet facilitates greater access to diverse content, yet it also contributes to audience fragmentation by enabling users to tailor media consumption to their existing interests. Rather than fostering a unified "digital public sphere," it reinforces existing cultural divisions. Ultimately, the authors conclude that the Internet is best understood as an evolving medium whose effects are shaped by policy decisions, economic structures, and user behaviors.
- 11. Key quotations:**
- "A recurrent theme across domains is that the Internet tends to complement rather than displace existing media and patterns of behavior" (p. 307).
  - "Despite early claims that the Internet would democratize access to information, evidence suggests that disparities in digital access persist and, in some cases, have widened" (p. 311).
  - "Rather than increasing ideological diversity, the Internet appears to facilitate political polarization by allowing users to self-select into like-minded communities" (p. 320).

#### 4.8.3 The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics

Bennett, W. L. [W. Lance], & Segerberg, A. (2012). The Logic of Connective Action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.670661>]. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(5), 739–768. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.670661>

1. **Citation key:** bennett\_logic\_2012
2. **Author(s):** W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg
3. **Year:** 2012
4. **Publication:** Information, Communication & Society
5. **Keywords:** connective action, digital media, social movements, political participation, networked activism
6. **Summary:** Bennett and Segerberg argue that digital media have facilitated new forms of political mobilization that differ from traditional collective action. They introduce the concept of *connective action*, a mode of political participation enabled by digital networks, which allows individuals to engage in activism through personalized content sharing. Unlike traditional collective action, which relies on strong organizational structures and collective identities, connective action is characterized by loosely networked individuals who engage in politics through digital media. The authors develop a typology of connective action networks and contrast them with traditional social movements, highlighting how digital technologies reshape the dynamics of political activism.
7. **Theory:** The authors distinguish between two logics of political action: the *logic of collective action*, which is based on hierarchical organizations, shared ideological commitments, and resource mobilization, and the *logic of connective action*, which emerges in digital environments where individuals share personalized content with minimal organizational coordination. Drawing from theories of social movements, communication networks, and political participation, they argue that digital technologies reduce the cost of coordination and facilitate large-scale mobilization without the need for centralized leadership. The authors propose that connective action is particularly effective in societies characterized by high levels of individualization, where people are more likely to engage in political activism through self-expressive means rather than through membership in formal organizations. They emphasize that digital networks allow activists to bypass traditional gatekeepers, enabling direct communication and the rapid spread of personalized political messages.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a comparative case study approach, analyzing large-scale protest movements, including the Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street movement, and Spain's *Indignados*. The authors examine how digital platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube facilitated mobilization and message diffusion. They assess the organizational structures of these movements, comparing those that relied on traditional collective action mechanisms with those that functioned through decentralized digital networks. The analysis is based on a combination of media

content analysis, secondary sources, and survey data on protest participation, providing empirical evidence for their distinction between collective and connective action.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Digital media enable new forms of political participation that do not require strong organizational structures.
- Connective action networks will be more flexible and adaptive than traditional collective action organizations.
- Protest movements that rely on connective action will be more inclusive and capable of scaling up rapidly compared to those that depend on collective identity formation.

Their findings largely confirm these expectations, demonstrating that digital platforms allow for large-scale mobilization without centralized leadership. However, they also highlight that connective action networks face challenges in maintaining long-term cohesion and translating mobilization into sustained political outcomes.

**10. Main findings:** Bennett and Segerberg find that connective action networks operate through the diffusion of personalized political messages, often facilitated by social media. These networks are highly flexible, allowing for rapid scaling and adaptation to changing political conditions. Unlike traditional collective action, which relies on ideological cohesion and formal organization, connective action thrives on individual self-expression and peer-to-peer sharing. The authors illustrate that movements such as Occupy Wall Street and the *Indignados* were able to mobilize large numbers of participants despite lacking centralized leadership structures. However, they also note that the lack of organizational cohesion in connective action movements can lead to difficulties in sustaining long-term political engagement and achieving concrete policy changes. Overall, they argue that while connective action represents a powerful new form of activism, its effectiveness depends on how well digital networks can sustain engagement beyond initial mobilization.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Understanding such variations in large-scale action networks requires distinguishing between at least two logics that may be in play: The familiar logic of collective action associated with high levels of organizational resources and the formation of collective identities, and the less familiar logic of connective action based on personalized content sharing across media networks” (p. 748).
- “Compared to many conventional social movement protests with identifiable membership organizations leading the way under common banners and collective identity frames, these more personalized, digitally mediated collective action formations have frequently been larger; have scaled up more quickly; and have been flexible in tracking moving political targets and bridging different issues” (p. 751).
- “The linchpin of connective action is the formative element of ‘sharing’: the personalization that leads actions and content to be distributed widely across social networks” (p. 760).

#### 4.8.4 The Consequences of the Internet for Politics

Farrell, H. (2012). The Consequences of the Internet for Politics [Publisher: Annual Reviews]. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 15(Volume 15, 2012), 35–52. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-030810-110815>

**1. Citation key:** farrell\_consequences\_2012

**2. Author(s):** Henry Farrell

**3. Year:** 2012

**4. Publication:** Annual Review of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** Internet, political polarization, preference falsification, Arab Spring, information cascades

**6. Summary:** Farrell explores the implications of the Internet for politics, arguing that instead of treating the Internet as a singular entity, scholars should examine it as a collection of distinct mechanisms that influence political outcomes. He focuses on three primary mechanisms: the Internet’s impact on the costs of collective action, the role of homophily in online political communities, and the potential for digital media to alter patterns of preference falsification. Through this framework, he evaluates major debates on the Internet’s effects, particularly concerning political polarization in the United States and the role of digital media in the Arab Spring uprisings.

**7. Theory:** Farrell contends that political science should move beyond broad, undifferentiated claims about the Internet’s impact and instead focus on the causal mechanisms that link Internet usage to political behavior. He identifies three such mechanisms: (1) the Internet lowers transaction costs for collective action, making mobilization easier and reducing reliance on centralized leadership; (2) homophily, or the tendency for like-minded individuals to cluster together online, may exacerbate ideological polarization and limit exposure to opposing viewpoints; and (3) digital media can reshape preference falsification by making it easier for individuals to reveal their true political beliefs, thereby facilitating rapid shifts in public sentiment. Farrell applies these mechanisms to debates over polarization in American politics and the role of digital media in recent political upheavals, arguing that disentangling these causal pathways is essential for understanding the Internet’s evolving role in political life.

**8. Methods:** The article employs a theoretical and conceptual analysis rather than an empirical study, synthesizing existing research on political communication, collective action, and digital media. Farrell reviews literature on political polarization, drawing from studies on online discourse, ideological clustering, and exposure to diverse viewpoints. He also examines evidence from case studies of digital activism, particularly the role of social media in the Arab Spring protests. While the article does not present original data analysis, it provides a framework for future research by outlining testable hypotheses and methodological approaches to studying the Internet’s effects on politics.

**9. Hypotheses:** The author hypothesizes that:

- The Internet lowers transaction costs for collective action, facilitating mobilization and enabling decentralized political activism.
- Homophily in online spaces leads to ideological polarization, as individuals primarily engage with like-minded peers.
- Digital media reduce preference falsification by allowing individuals to publicly express views they might otherwise conceal.

Farrell's analysis provides mixed support for these hypotheses. He finds strong evidence that the Internet reduces transaction costs for mobilization, as seen in political movements such as the Arab Spring. However, he notes that while homophily is evident in online communities, its effect on polarization remains contested, with some studies suggesting that online interactions expose individuals to diverse viewpoints. Similarly, while digital platforms can reduce preference falsification, they also create new forms of social pressure that may reinforce dominant narratives rather than fostering dissent.

**10. Main findings:** Farrell argues that the Internet's political impact is best understood through its distinct mechanisms rather than through broad generalizations. He finds that the Internet significantly lowers transaction costs for political organization, enabling movements to mobilize more efficiently and with less reliance on traditional leadership structures. While homophily does contribute to ideological clustering, the evidence on its effect on polarization is inconclusive, as many online spaces expose users to a range of viewpoints. Regarding preference falsification, he suggests that digital media can both encourage and inhibit the expression of political dissent, depending on contextual factors. His analysis of the Arab Spring illustrates how digital platforms facilitated rapid mobilization but also highlights the limitations of online activism in achieving sustained political change. Ultimately, he concludes that political science must integrate Internet studies into broader research on political behavior, moving beyond the simplistic notion that the Internet is either inherently democratizing or destabilizing.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The most promising way to study the Internet is to look at the role that causal mechanisms such as the lowering of transaction costs, homophilous sorting, and preference falsification play in intermediating between specific aspects of the Internet and political outcomes" (p. 35).
- "It is increasingly possible to break down broad questions (such as the consequences of the Internet for citizenship) into specific lines of inquiry regarding, e.g., effects on political knowledge and political participation and exposure to different opinions" (p. 37).
- "Even if the protests were sufficient to destabilize the old regimes in Tunisia and Egypt, they may not be sufficient to build self-sustaining democracies in their places" (p. 44).

#### 4.8.5 Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election

Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(2), 211–236. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.2.211>

**1. Citation key:** allcott\_social\_2017

**2. Author(s):** Hunt Allcott and Matthew Gentzkow

**3. Year:** 2017

**4. Publication:** Journal of Economic Perspectives

**5. Keywords:** fake news, misinformation, social media, political polarization, 2016 election

**6. Summary:** Allcott and Gentzkow examine the role of social media in the dissemination of fake news during the 2016 U.S. presidential election. They provide an economic framework for understanding the supply and demand for fake news, analyze new empirical data on fake news consumption, and assess whether fake news could have influenced election outcomes. The authors define fake news as "news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false, and could mislead readers" (p. 214) and argue that its prevalence on social media is facilitated by low production costs, partisan preferences, and weak fact-checking mechanisms.

**7. Theory:** The authors conceptualize fake news within an economic model of media markets, where news firms sell signals about the true state of the world. Fake news arises because producing false signals is cheaper than verifying and reporting accurate information. Consumers, in turn, engage with fake news due to cognitive biases, partisan preferences, and the entertainment value of sensationalist misinformation. The authors outline two key incentives driving the fake news market: (1) firms seek profit by maximizing clicks and advertising revenue rather than accuracy, and (2) consumers may derive psychological utility from reading ideologically congruent news, regardless of its veracity. Additionally, social media platforms exacerbate the problem by reducing barriers to entry for content producers, thereby enabling rapid dissemination of falsehoods without editorial oversight. The authors argue that these structural conditions contribute to the spread of misinformation and may distort political decision-making by shaping voter beliefs and preferences.

**8. Methods:** The authors employ a mixed-methods approach, combining theoretical modeling with empirical analysis. They construct a database of 156 election-related fake news stories from Snopes, PolitiFact, and BuzzFeed fact-checking lists, tracking their dissemination and engagement on Facebook. They supplement this with web-browsing data to measure exposure to fake news and conduct a post-election survey of 1,200 U.S. adults to assess recall and belief in fake news headlines. They also estimate the potential impact of fake news on voter behavior by comparing fake news exposure rates with established benchmarks for media persuasion effects.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Fake news is more widely consumed on social media than traditional news sources.
- Fake news disproportionately favors Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton.
- Exposure to fake news is correlated with partisan identity and media consumption habits.

Their findings largely confirm these hypotheses. They document that social media referrals accounted for a significant share of traffic to fake news sites but only a small portion of traffic to mainstream news outlets. Their analysis reveals a strong partisan asymmetry: pro-Trump fake news stories were shared nearly four times as much as pro-Clinton stories. They also find that individuals with ideologically homogeneous social media networks were significantly more likely to believe fake news stories that aligned with their partisan preferences.

**10. Main findings:** Allcott and Gentzkow conclude that while fake news was widely shared during the 2016 election, its overall impact on voter behavior was likely small. Their analysis suggests that the average U.S. adult read and remembered roughly one fake news article in the lead-up to the election, with higher exposure to pro-Trump stories. They estimate that if fake news were as persuasive as traditional campaign advertisements, its effects on vote choice would be marginal—on the order of hundredths of a percentage point. However, they caution that fake news could still have contributed to broader trends in political polarization and declining trust in traditional media. They argue that future research should focus on understanding the psychological mechanisms of fake news belief, the role of social media algorithms in amplifying misinformation, and potential policy interventions to mitigate the spread of false information.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Fake news arises in equilibrium because it is cheaper to provide than precise signals, because consumers cannot costlessly infer accuracy, and because consumers may enjoy partisan news" (p. 212).
- "Our data confirm that fake news was both widely shared and heavily tilted in favor of Donald Trump" (p. 213).
- "We estimate that the average U.S. adult read and remembered about one fake news story prior to the election, suggesting that its impact on vote choice was likely modest" (p. 232).

#### 4.8.6 Quantifying the Power and Consequences of Social Media Protest

Freelon, D., McIlwain, C., & Clark, M. (2018). Quantifying the power and consequences of social media protest. *New Media & Society*, 20(3), 990–1011. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816676646>

**1. Citation key:** freelon\_quantifying\_2018

**2. Author(s):** Deen Freelon, Charlton McIlwain, and Meredith Clark

**3. Year:** 2018

**4. Publication:** New Media & Society

**5. Keywords:** Black Lives Matter, computational methods, connective action, protest, social movements, Twitter

**6. Summary:** Freelon, McIlwain, and Clark develop a framework for quantifying the power of social media in political protests, specifically examining the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. They introduce three metrics of social media power—unity, numbers, and commitment—derived from Charles Tilly's WUNC framework (worthiness, unity, numbers, commitment). Using a dataset of 40.8 million tweets related to police killings of unarmed Black individuals from 2014–2015, they analyze how BLM, its political opponents, and mainstream media wielded social media power. They find that commitment, measured as continued engagement over time, best predicts elite responses to protest, suggesting that sustained activism on social media influences political discourse.

**7. Theory:** The authors conceptualize social media as a distinct arena of power competition between movements, counter-movements, and unaligned actors such as the media. Drawing on Tilly's WUNC framework, they argue that social movements succeed when they project strength through high levels of unity, broad participation, and sustained commitment. They distinguish their approach from previous work by emphasizing competition on social media, where movements must vie with counter-movements and mainstream media for influence. Social media power, they argue, can be quantified by examining digital traces—such as retweets, hashtag use, and user engagement—to measure the extent to which movements maintain cohesion, attract participants, and persist over time. They theorize that the most successful movements will demonstrate high levels of commitment, as persistence in online activism signals resilience and generates broader public and elite attention.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a large-scale computational analysis of 40.8 million tweets about police shootings of unarmed Black individuals from June 2014 to May 2015. The authors categorize tweets into three distinct communities—BLM activists, political conservatives (a counter-movement), and mainstream media—using network community detection algorithms. They operationalize three dimensions of social media power: (1) *unity*, measured by the concentration of hashtag use; (2) *numbers*, measured by the volume of unique users participating in each community; and (3) *commitment*, measured by the proportion of users who continue engaging in the conversation over time. To assess the political impact of social media protest, they conduct a Granger causality analysis to test whether social media activity predicts elite political responses, such as tweets from government officials.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Social movement participants exhibit higher unity, numbers, and commitment than counter-movements and unaligned media.
- Commitment is the strongest predictor of elite political response, as sustained engagement signals movement resilience.

- The relationship between social media protest and elite response is mediated by mainstream news coverage.

Their findings largely confirm these hypotheses. BLM exhibited higher unity, numbers, and commitment compared to political conservatives and mainstream media, with commitment emerging as the strongest predictor of elite response. The analysis also supports the claim that mainstream media coverage acts as a conduit between social media activism and elite engagement, amplifying the movement's visibility and influence.

**10. Main findings:** Freelon, McIlwain, and Clark find that BLM demonstrated greater social media power than both its opponents and mainstream news media, particularly in its ability to sustain engagement over time. Among the three metrics analyzed, commitment—measured by repeat participation in the conversation—was the best predictor of elite response, indicating that sustained activism is more influential than sheer volume or ideological unity alone. Their Granger causality analysis suggests that social media activity drives mainstream media coverage, which in turn increases elite political engagement with the issue of police brutality. These results challenge traditional models of agenda-setting by showing that grassroots digital activism can shape media narratives and influence political discourse. The authors conclude that movements seeking policy change must prioritize long-term engagement rather than relying solely on viral moments.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Our results indicate that commitment—the ability to sustain engagement over time—was the strongest predictor of elite response, suggesting that persistence matters more than volume or ideological unity" (p. 1003).
- "We demonstrate for the first time that social movements can attract elite attention via social media as their concerns are broadcast through news outlets" (p. 1006).
- "While movements like BLM have succeeded in generating sustained attention to police brutality, our findings suggest that long-term engagement—not just viral moments—is critical for shaping political discourse" (p. 1007).

#### 4.8.7 The Spread of True and False News Online

Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online [Publisher: American Association for the Advancement of Science]. *Science*, 359(6380), 1146–1151. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aap9559>

**1. Citation key:** vosoughi\_spread\_2018

**2. Author(s):** Soroush Vosoughi, Deb Roy, and Sinan Aral

**3. Year:** 2018

**4. Publication:** Science

**5. Keywords:** misinformation, social media, Twitter, political news, diffusion of information

**6. Summary:** Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral examine the differential diffusion of true and false news on Twitter between 2006 and 2017. Using a dataset of approximately 126,000 news stories tweeted by three million users more than 4.5 million times, they assess the speed, depth, and reach of false versus true news. The authors find that false news spreads significantly farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than true news, with the effects most pronounced in political news. They attribute these differences to human behavior rather than the influence of automated bots, highlighting the role of novelty and emotional appeal in the dissemination of falsehoods.

**7. Theory:** The authors draw from theories of information diffusion and decision-making to explain why false news spreads more rapidly than true news. They argue that false news is more novel than true news, making it more likely to be shared because people derive social status and informational utility from spreading unique content. Additionally, they propose that false news elicits stronger emotional reactions, particularly surprise and disgust, which further incentivize sharing. They challenge conventional wisdom by demonstrating that the faster spread of misinformation is not due to bots but rather to human cognitive biases and engagement patterns. Their theoretical framework suggests that misinformation diffusion is driven by both structural factors (e.g., social media algorithms) and psychological mechanisms (e.g., novelty-seeking and emotional amplification).

**8. Methods:** The study employs a large-scale quantitative analysis of Twitter data, examining the spread of 126,000 news stories that were fact-checked by six independent organizations, including Snopes and PolitiFact. They use network analysis to track the diffusion of news across Twitter, measuring several key dimensions: (1) *depth*, or how many retweet "hops" a story travels from its origin; (2) *breadth*, or how many unique users share the story; (3) *speed*, or the time it takes for a story to reach a given number of users; and (4) *structural virality*, or the extent to which a news story spreads through peer-to-peer sharing rather than a single broadcast. They also employ a bot-detection algorithm to assess whether the faster spread of false news is attributable to automated accounts.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- False news spreads farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than true news across all categories.
- False political news exhibits the strongest diffusion patterns compared to other types of misinformation.
- Bots amplify both true and false news at similar rates, meaning human behavior primarily drives the spread of misinformation.

Their findings confirm these hypotheses. False news stories were consistently more viral than true ones, reaching more people at every level of analysis. Political misinformation exhibited the greatest diffusion disparities, traveling deeper and reaching more users than any other category of false news. Furthermore, their bot analysis demonstrates that both true and false news are shared at similar rates by automated accounts, indicating that human users—not bots—are responsible for the rapid spread of misinformation.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that false news spreads much more rapidly and widely than true news, particularly

in political contexts. Falsehoods reach a significantly larger audience than factual information, and they propagate six times faster on average. The top 1% of false news cascades reach between 1,000 and 100,000 people, while true news rarely spreads beyond 1,000 people. Novelty plays a crucial role in this dynamic, as false news tends to be more unexpected and engaging than factual reports. Additionally, the emotional responses to false and true news differ: false news elicits surprise and disgust, while true news tends to evoke anticipation, trust, and sadness. Contrary to common assumptions, the study finds that bots do not disproportionately spread false news—humans are the primary agents of misinformation diffusion. The authors conclude that misinformation containment policies should focus on behavioral interventions, such as media literacy campaigns and platform design changes, rather than solely targeting automated disinformation campaigns.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Falsehood diffused significantly farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than the truth in all categories of information, and the effects were more pronounced for false political news than for false news about terrorism, natural disasters, science, urban legends, or financial information” (p. 1147).
- “Contrary to conventional wisdom, robots accelerated the spread of true and false news at the same rate, implying that false news spreads more than the truth because humans, not robots, are more likely to spread it” (p. 1148).
- “False news was more novel than true news, which suggests that people were more likely to share novel information” (p. 1149).

#### 4.8.8 How Sudden Censorship Can Increase Access to Information

Hobbs, W. R., & Roberts, M. E. (2018). How Sudden Censorship Can Increase Access to Information. *American Political Science Review*, 112(3), 621–636. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055418000084>

1. **Citation key:** hobbs\_how\_2018

2. **Author(s):** William R. Hobbs and Margaret E. Roberts

3. **Year:** 2018

4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review

5. **Keywords:** censorship, authoritarian regimes, internet freedom, Great Firewall, political behavior

6. **Summary:** Hobbs and Roberts examine the counterintuitive effects of censorship in authoritarian regimes, arguing that sudden censorship can inadvertently increase access to restricted information. They develop the concept of the “gateway effect,” where individuals motivated by a newly imposed censorship restriction learn evasion techniques, subsequently gaining access to a broader range of previously inaccessible content. Using data from China’s 2014 Instagram block, they show that many Chinese social media users acquired virtual private networks (VPNs) to maintain access to Instagram but then began exploring censored political information, including dissident networks on Twitter and politically sensitive Wikipedia pages.

7. **Theory:** The authors propose that censorship does not always function as a straightforward restriction mechanism but can instead act as a catalyst for increased information access. They argue that when an authoritarian government suddenly blocks a previously accessible platform, citizens accustomed to that platform will have stronger incentives to seek out circumvention tools. This gateway effect occurs because evasion techniques, such as VPNs, provide users with unrestricted access to the internet, exposing them to a wider range of previously blocked information. The authors emphasize that this effect does not necessarily stem from political dissent or organized resistance but rather from habitual media consumption patterns. While censorship can successfully limit information access for many, those who seek to evade restrictions for non-political reasons may unintentionally become politicized once exposed to unrestricted content.

8. **Methods:** The authors employ a mixed-method approach, leveraging large-scale digital trace data to track behavioral responses to China’s censorship policies. They analyze over 419,000 geolocated Instagram posts from China before and after the September 2014 block, comparing usage trends to those in Hong Kong, where Instagram remained available. To assess VPN adoption, they examine application download rankings from App Annie, a mobile analytics firm, tracking spikes in VPN installations following the censorship event. They further analyze Twitter activity by identifying geolocated tweets from China, measuring account creation rates and content engagement shifts among new users. Lastly, they assess Wikipedia traffic data, identifying surges in visits to politically sensitive pages. These multi-source data allow them to quantify the gateway effect and evaluate its broader political implications.

9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Sudden censorship will incentivize a substantial portion of users to adopt censorship evasion tools.
- Individuals who acquire evasion tools will not only regain access to the newly censored platform but will also explore other previously inaccessible content.
- Users exposed to unrestricted internet access will begin engaging with political information, even if their initial motivation for evasion was non-political.

Their findings strongly confirm these hypotheses. The Instagram block led to a sharp increase in VPN downloads, with some VPN applications jumping from obscurity to the top 10 most downloaded in China overnight. Many users who initially sought to regain Instagram access began signing up for Twitter, following dissident accounts, and engaging with politically sensitive topics. Wikipedia traffic data further support the gateway effect, revealing spikes in visits to censored pages on topics such as the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and Chinese political dissidents.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds that censorship, under certain conditions, can unintentionally expand access to infor-

mation for a subset of the population. Following the Instagram block, an estimated 16 million Chinese users adopted VPNs to maintain platform access, and many subsequently explored additional blocked content. Twitter saw an unprecedented surge in new users from China, with sign-ups increasing by over 600% on the day of the Instagram block. A significant portion of these new users initially engaged with entertainment-related content but soon shifted toward political discourse, including Hong Kong protest discussions. Analysis of Wikipedia page views further supports this trend, as previously apathetic users began researching politically sensitive topics. The authors conclude that while censorship remains an effective tool for authoritarian regimes, sudden and blunt censorship efforts can undermine their own objectives by pushing citizens toward greater digital literacy and political awareness.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “When governments suddenly impose censorship on previously uncensored information, citizens accustomed to acquiring this information will be incentivized to learn methods of censorship evasion” (p. 621).
- “Contrary to conventional wisdom, censorship can inadvertently increase access to information among those who adopt evasion tools to maintain access to newly blocked platforms” (p. 622).
- “A sudden increase in censorship can erode its own effectiveness, can politicize previously apolitical citizens, and can accumulate collective action potential that it often seeks to suppress” (p. 623).

#### 4.8.9 How Many People Live in Political Bubbles on Social Media? Evidence From Linked Survey and Twitter Data

Eady, G., Nagler, J., Guess, A., Zilinsky, J., & Tucker, J. A. (2019). How Many People Live in Political Bubbles on Social Media? Evidence From Linked Survey and Twitter Data [Publisher: SAGE Publications]. *Sage Open*, 9(1), 2158244019832705. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019832705>

1. **Citation key:** eady\_how\_2019
2. **Author(s):** Gregory Eady, Jonathan Nagler, Andy Guess, Jan Zilinsky, and Joshua A. Tucker
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** SAGE Open
5. **Keywords:** echo chambers, social media, polarization, political communication, ideological exposure
6. **Summary:** Eady et al. challenge the prevailing belief that social media creates ideological “bubbles” where users are only exposed to politically congenial content. Using linked survey and Twitter data, they analyze the ideological distribution of accounts followed and tweets received by a representative sample of U.S. Twitter users. They find that, while individuals exhibit some partisan selectivity in whom they follow, there is substantial ideological overlap in media consumption across the political spectrum. Additionally, conservatives appear more likely than liberals to engage with ideologically opposing content.
7. **Theory:** The authors engage with two competing theories regarding social media’s impact on ideological exposure. One perspective argues that individuals engage in selective exposure, curating media diets that reinforce existing beliefs, leading to ideological homophily and political polarization. This view aligns with prior research on partisan media consumption and selective news exposure. The alternative perspective suggests that social media enables incidental exposure to diverse viewpoints, as users encounter retweets, replies, and shared content from outside their immediate network. Eady et al. hypothesize that while social media users exhibit some partisan tendencies in following patterns, they also receive substantial cross-cutting political content. Moreover, they suggest that conservatives are more likely than liberals to engage with ideologically opposing media sources, a pattern they attribute to asymmetries in media supply and demand.
8. **Methods:** The study combines survey data from YouGov with large-scale behavioral data from Twitter. The authors analyze the Twitter activity of 1,496 respondents who provided access to their public accounts, tracking all followed accounts ( $N = 642,345$ ) and tweets received from those accounts ( $N = \text{(approx.) } 1.2 \text{ billion}$ ). They estimate ideological placement using Barberá’s (2015) Bayesian ideal point estimation method, which infers user ideology from the political orientation of followed accounts. They categorize accounts into media elites, political elites, and non-elite users, comparing the ideological distributions of accounts followed and tweets received. To test for ideological bubbles, they measure the extent of overlap between the media diets of liberals and conservatives, considering both direct following behavior and incidental exposure via retweets.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Most social media users will not exist in ideological echo chambers but will instead exhibit substantial ideological overlap in their media consumption.
  - Conservatives will be more likely than liberals to follow media sources and political figures from the opposing ideological spectrum.
  - Incidental exposure through retweets will further diversify the political content seen by users.
10. **Main findings:** Eady et al. find that political polarization on social media is overstated. A significant portion of users follow accounts spanning the ideological spectrum, and incidental exposure through retweets broadens the range of political information encountered. Notably, conservatives demonstrate higher levels of cross-cutting media

consumption, following left-leaning accounts at higher rates than liberals follow right-leaning ones. Approximately 22% of conservatives follow at least one account as far left as MSNBC, whereas only 16% of liberals follow at least one account as far right as Fox News. The study also finds that direct following behavior is more polarized than the tweets received, suggesting that social media platforms may counteract selective exposure by facilitating exposure to diverse perspectives. Retweets contribute to ideological diversification, though the effect size is limited. Overall, the results challenge alarmist claims about the internet fostering ideological isolation and suggest that online political engagement is more complex than binary echo chamber narratives imply.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "More than a third of respondents do not follow any media sources, but among those who do, we find a substantial amount of overlap (51%) in the ideological distributions of accounts followed by users on opposite ends of the political spectrum" (p. 2).
- "While there is considerable overlap that both groups see, there are also areas of the media ecosystem that are primarily viewed by members of one ideological group" (p. 19).
- "Our results provide a nuanced portrait of the information environments of Americans on Twitter. Most critically, we do not find evidence supporting a strong characterization of 'echo chambers' in which the majority of people's sources of news are mutually exclusive and from opposite poles" (p. 19).

#### 4.8.10 Less Than You Think: Prevalence and Predictors of Fake News Dissemination on Facebook

Guess, A., Nagler, J., & Tucker, J. (2019). Less than you think: Prevalence and predictors of fake news dissemination on Facebook. *Science Advances*, 5(1), eaau4586. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aau4586>

1. **Citation key:** guess\_less\_2019

2. **Author(s):** Andrew Guess, Jonathan Nagler, and Joshua Tucker

3. **Year:** 2019

4. **Publication:** Science Advances

5. **Keywords:** fake news, misinformation, Facebook, social media, political behavior, selective exposure

6. **Summary:** Guess, Nagler, and Tucker investigate the prevalence and predictors of fake news dissemination on Facebook during the 2016 U.S. presidential election. They combine self-reported survey data with observed Facebook sharing behavior to analyze who shares fake news and why. Contrary to popular perceptions, they find that sharing fake news is rare: only 8.5% of survey respondents shared at least one link from a fake news domain. Their analysis highlights significant partisan and demographic differences in fake news sharing, showing that conservatives and older users, particularly those over 65, were disproportionately likely to disseminate misinformation.

7. **Theory:** The authors engage with theories of selective exposure and digital media effects, which suggest that individuals are more likely to consume and share information that aligns with their preexisting beliefs. Fake news is theorized to spread due to cognitive biases, low digital literacy, and partisan motivations. The study builds on prior research showing that misinformation circulates widely on social media but questions the assumption that most users engage in its dissemination. The authors propose that the spread of fake news is not evenly distributed across the population but is instead driven by specific demographic and ideological factors. They argue that the pro-Trump bias in 2016 fake news content explains its greater prevalence among conservatives. Additionally, they theorize that older individuals may be more susceptible due to lower digital literacy or cognitive decline affecting their ability to discern misinformation.

8. **Methods:** The study combines a three-wave online survey of 3,500 respondents conducted by YouGov with digital trace data from Facebook. The authors analyze the Facebook sharing behavior of 1,331 respondents who consented to provide access to their profile data. Fake news articles are identified using lists compiled by journalists and researchers, including BuzzFeed's Craig Silverman and Allcott and Gentzkow's (2017) dataset of fact-checked misinformation. The authors employ Poisson and quasi-Poisson regression models to examine the individual-level predictors of fake news sharing, controlling for partisanship, ideology, age, education, and online activity. The analysis also incorporates a robustness check using alternative fake news classifications.

9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Sharing fake news is a relatively rare activity on Facebook.
- Conservatives are more likely than liberals to share fake news, reflecting the pro-Trump slant of 2016 misinformation.
- Older individuals, particularly those over 65, will share more fake news than younger users, even after controlling for partisanship and ideology.

Their findings largely confirm these hypotheses. Fake news sharing was indeed rare, with fewer than 10% of users engaging in this behavior. Conservatives and very conservative users were significantly more likely to share misinformation, aligning with the partisan imbalance in fake news production. The most robust finding is the age effect: individuals over 65 shared nearly seven times as many fake news articles as those in the youngest age cohort, a result that persisted across multiple model specifications.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds that despite widespread concern over fake news, its dissemination on Facebook was relatively uncommon during the 2016 election. Only 8.5% of respondents shared at least one fake news article, with the vast majority of Facebook users not engaging in this behavior at all. However, there were clear demographic and ideological patterns in fake news sharing. Conservatives and self-identified very conservative individuals were signifi-

cantly more likely to share misinformation, likely due to the predominantly pro-Trump orientation of fake news during the election. The most striking result is the strong age effect: older users, particularly those over 65, shared substantially more fake news than any other age group, even when controlling for ideology, partisanship, and education. This pattern suggests that digital literacy and cognitive factors may play a crucial role in misinformation dissemination. The authors conclude that efforts to combat fake news should focus on improving digital media literacy, particularly among older populations, rather than solely on content moderation or platform-based interventions.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Overall, sharing articles from fake news domains was a rare activity. We find some evidence that the most conservative users were more likely to share this content—the vast majority of which was pro-Trump in orientation—than were other Facebook users" (p. 2).
- "Our most robust finding is that the oldest Americans, especially those over 65, were more likely to share fake news to their Facebook friends. This is true even when holding other characteristics—including education, ideology, and partisanship—constant" (p. 4).
- "Despite widespread concerns about the role of fake news in shaping voter behavior, our findings suggest that only a small subset of the population actively engaged in its dissemination, with patterns of sharing reflecting ideological and demographic divides" (p. 6).

#### 4.8.11 Fighting Misinformation on Social Media Using Crowdsourced Judgments of News Source Quality

Pennycook, G., & Rand, D. G. (2019). Fighting misinformation on social media using crowdsourced judgments of news source quality [Publisher: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences]. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116(7), 2521–2526. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1806781116>

1. **Citation key:** pennycook\_fighting\_2019
2. **Author(s):** Gordon Pennycook and David G. Rand
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences
5. **Keywords:** misinformation, fake news, social media, crowdsourcing, media trust
6. **Summary:** Pennycook and Rand examine the potential of using crowdsourced trust ratings to combat misinformation on social media. They propose that instead of relying solely on professional fact-checkers, social media platforms can incorporate user-generated trust ratings to adjust their ranking algorithms. Their research assesses whether laypeople's trust ratings of news outlets align with expert fact-checkers' evaluations and whether politically balanced crowdsourced ratings can effectively distinguish between reliable and unreliable news sources.
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the assumption that laypeople are incapable of differentiating between credible and non-credible news sources, arguing that collective intelligence, or the "wisdom of crowds," can be harnessed to filter misinformation. They posit that, although partisanship influences perceptions of media trustworthiness, politically balanced aggregations of layperson ratings will still provide meaningful differentiation between reliable and unreliable outlets. Furthermore, they hypothesize that individuals with higher cognitive reflection abilities will be more discerning in their media trust ratings, suggesting that misinformation susceptibility is more related to cognitive style than to partisan bias.
8. **Methods:** The study consists of two preregistered surveys conducted with 1,010 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and 970 participants from Lucid, a more nationally representative sample. Participants rated the trustworthiness of 60 news sources spanning three categories: mainstream media, hyperpartisan outlets, and fake news sites. These layperson ratings were then compared against trust ratings from eight professional fact-checkers. Additionally, the researchers examined the relationship between media trust discernment and cognitive reflection by administering the Cognitive Reflection Test (CRT) to participants.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Laypeople's trust ratings will be systematically related to news source quality, with mainstream media sources rated more favorably than hyperpartisan or fake news sites.
  - Politically balanced aggregations of layperson trust ratings will strongly correlate with professional fact-checkers' evaluations.
  - Individuals higher in cognitive reflection will be better at distinguishing between high- and low-quality sources.
 The findings confirm these hypotheses. Laypeople across the political spectrum rated mainstream sources as significantly more trustworthy than hyperpartisan or fake news sources, despite partisan differences in specific outlet ratings. Politically balanced crowdsourced ratings correlated highly with fact-checkers' assessments ( $r = 0.90$ ). Furthermore, individuals scoring higher on the CRT demonstrated greater ability to differentiate between credible and unreliable sources.
10. **Main findings:** The study provides strong evidence that crowdsourced media trust ratings can serve as a viable mechanism for identifying misinformation on social media. Laypeople, when aggregated across partisan lines, demonstrated high accuracy in distinguishing reliable from unreliable news sources. Republican participants exhibited greater skepticism toward mainstream media compared to Democrats, but both groups rated fake news sites as significantly less trustworthy than mainstream sources. Fact-checkers' ratings of news source credibility showed a near-perfect correlation with politically balanced layperson ratings, suggesting that social media platforms could use crowdsourced assessments to adjust content ranking algorithms effectively. Moreover, the findings indicate that misinformation sus-

ceptibility is more closely linked to cognitive reflection than to ideological bias, as individuals with higher CRT scores were more discerning in their evaluations.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Despite substantial partisan differences, we find that laypeople across the political spectrum rated mainstream sources as far more trustworthy than either hyperpartisan or fake news sources" (p. 2521).
- "Our results indicate that using crowdsourced trust ratings to gain information about media outlet reliability—information that can help inform ranking algorithms—shows promise as one such approach" (p. 2525).
- "Laypeople's trust ratings were very strongly correlated with ratings provided by professional fact-checkers, suggesting that incorporating such ratings into social media ranking algorithms may effectively identify low-quality news outlets" (p. 2526).

#### 4.8.12 Political Effects of the Internet and Social Media

Zhuravskaya, E., Petrova, M., & Enikolopov, R. (2020). Political Effects of the Internet and Social Media [Publisher: Annual Reviews]. *Annual Review of Economics*, 12(Volume 12, 2020), 415–438. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-economics-081919-050239>

1. **Citation key:** zhuravskaya\_political\_2020
2. **Author(s):** Ekaterina Zhuravskaya, Maria Petrova, and Ruben Enikolopov
3. **Year:** 2020
4. **Publication:** Annual Review of Economics
5. **Keywords:** Internet, social media, politics, voting, protests, fake news, polarization, censorship, manipulation, echo chambers
6. **Summary:** Zhuravskaya, Petrova, and Enikolopov provide a comprehensive review of empirical studies on the political effects of the Internet and social media. They focus on the distinctive features of online platforms—such as low barriers to entry and user-generated content—and analyze their impact on voting, political participation, protests, political polarization, xenophobia, misinformation, and state propaganda. The authors assess both positive effects, such as increased access to information and mobilization potential, and negative effects, including the spread of misinformation, manipulation by authoritarian regimes, and the formation of ideological echo chambers.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that the Internet and social media differ from traditional media in several fundamental ways that shape political outcomes. First, low barriers to entry allow marginalized political actors and opposition groups to gain visibility, which can lead to increased political accountability. Second, the decentralized nature of user-generated content facilitates both civic engagement and misinformation. Third, social media's ability to connect individuals horizontally enhances collective action, lowering coordination costs for protests and political mobilization. However, these same features also enable authoritarian regimes to engage in digital censorship, online propaganda, and manipulation. Additionally, social media's algorithmic structure fosters ideological polarization by exposing individuals to self-reinforcing content, potentially deepening societal divisions.
8. **Methods:** The authors conduct a systematic literature review of empirical studies from economics, political science, and communication research. They evaluate studies that employ natural experiments, randomized controlled trials, and observational data to measure the political impact of the Internet and social media. Their analysis covers various methodological approaches, including instrumental variable techniques, difference-in-differences models, and large-scale survey data. Specific studies reviewed include cross-national analyses of Internet penetration, field experiments on social media's effects on political participation, and case studies on government censorship and online propaganda.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors review multiple hypotheses tested in prior research, including:
  - Social media increases political participation and mobilization by lowering coordination costs.
  - Social media contributes to political polarization by creating ideological echo chambers.
  - Online misinformation spreads faster and more widely than accurate information.
  - Authoritarian regimes use the Internet for both censorship and propaganda to maintain political control.
  - The Internet increases political accountability by providing citizens with greater access to information about government actions.

Their review finds mixed evidence. Studies confirm that social media facilitates mobilization, particularly in autocratic regimes, but also contributes to polarization and misinformation in democracies. The Internet has been shown to increase political accountability in some cases, yet authoritarian governments effectively exploit digital tools for surveillance and control.

10. **Main findings:** The Internet and social media have had significant political consequences, both positive and negative. Empirical studies indicate that social media platforms have facilitated political protests and increased voter engagement, but they have also contributed to misinformation, polarization, and manipulation. In authoritarian regimes, online platforms have enabled opposition movements, yet governments have responded with digital censorship and propaganda. Research on misinformation reveals that false news spreads more rapidly than true information, with social media amplifying its reach. The authors also highlight that while social media can reduce information asymmetry, it simultaneously fosters ideological segregation by reinforcing preexisting biases through algorithmic filtering.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Observers have started to blame social media in democracies for the rise of populism, the spread of xenophobic ideas, and the proliferation of fake news" (p. 416).

- “The spread of the Internet and social media has contributed, at least in part, to the electoral success of populists in Europe and to reduced political support for the ruling parties in immature democracies and semi-autocratic regimes” (p. 419).
- “There is convincing evidence that low entry barriers and the potential for horizontal flows of information make social media a vehicle to facilitate political protests” (p. 423).

#### 4.8.13 Moto-Taxis, Drivers, Weather, and WhatsApp: Contextualizing New Technology in Rwandan Newsrooms

Moon, R. (2022). Moto-Taxis, Drivers, Weather, and WhatsApp: Contextualizing New Technology in Rwandan Newsrooms. *Digital Journalism*, 10(9), 1569–1590. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1929365>

- 1. Citation key:** moon\_moto-taxis\_2022
- 2. Author(s):** Ruth Moon
- 3. Year:** 2022
- 4. Publication:** Digital Journalism
- 5. Keywords:** global journalism, technology, Rwanda, reporting, infrastructure, actor-network theory, WhatsApp, social relationships
- 6. Summary:** Moon examines how Rwandan journalists incorporate new digital technologies, particularly WhatsApp, into their newsgathering processes while navigating structural and material limitations. Using actor-network theory and organizational sociology, she investigates the infrastructural and social constraints shaping journalistic practices in two Rwandan newsrooms. She finds that WhatsApp enhances communication and coordination but does not eliminate challenges such as transportation limitations, hierarchical editorial control, and the prioritization of proximity in reporting. The study highlights how digital platforms function within pre-existing power structures rather than fundamentally altering them.
- 7. Theory:** The study is grounded in actor-network theory (ANT), which conceptualizes journalism as a network of human and non-human actors, including journalists, sources, digital tools, transportation, weather conditions, and institutional hierarchies. Moon argues that new technologies like WhatsApp do not replace physical newsgathering but instead reinforce existing journalistic practices and newsroom power dynamics. The infrastructure of reporting in Rwanda is shaped by material constraints, including limited transportation and high costs, which make event-based journalism the dominant mode of reporting. Digital tools facilitate communication but do not fundamentally alter the structural challenges faced by journalists. WhatsApp, while useful for coordination, extends editorial surveillance and control, reinforcing existing hierarchies within news organizations.
- 8. Methods:** Moon employs ethnographic methods, including three months of newsroom observations in two Rwandan media organizations—The New Times and KT Press—semi-structured interviews with 15 journalists and editors, and an analysis of WhatsApp group transcripts from the newsrooms. The study examines how journalists use WhatsApp for coordination, sourcing, and editorial communication. The ethnographic data is supplemented by documentary analysis of policy documents, media reports, and prior research on Rwandan journalism. The research applies ANT to trace interactions between physical infrastructure, digital tools, and journalistic routines.
- 9. Hypotheses:** Moon does not explicitly frame her study around formal hypotheses but examines several key expectations grounded in ANT and journalism studies:
  - WhatsApp facilitates journalistic coordination but does not replace physical presence in newsgathering.
  - Digital tools reinforce rather than disrupt hierarchical control within newsrooms.
  - Structural constraints such as transportation access, weather, and government oversight continue to shape journalism in Rwanda despite the adoption of new communication technologies.
 The findings support these expectations. WhatsApp is primarily used for logistical coordination, extending the reach of editorial oversight but not fundamentally altering the structure of newsgathering. Physical presence remains essential in reporting, and digital tools operate within, rather than outside of, existing material and social constraints.
- 10. Main findings:** The study finds that WhatsApp is widely used in Rwandan newsrooms but does not substitute for physical newsgathering. Journalists prioritize event coverage, navigating significant infrastructural challenges such as unreliable transportation and financial constraints. WhatsApp enables coordination between reporters and editors, reinforcing newsroom hierarchy and editorial surveillance. While digital tools can enhance communication, they do not mitigate broader challenges such as government censorship, economic precarity, or the material difficulties of reporting. The findings emphasize the continuing relevance of physical presence in journalism, even in digital environments, and the role of infrastructure in shaping journalistic routines.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “WhatsApp is an important newsgathering tool, but it has limits: the editor needed an eyewitness to confirm the story, on the record, in order to publish, and material limitations intervened to halt the process” (p. 2).
  - “Digital tools enhance rather than subdue the power of proximity across a number of dimensions. Place-based references become more important signals of legitimacy in digital contexts, and place-based knowledge is increasingly important to journalism” (p. 5).
  - “In these Rwandan newsrooms, WhatsApp allows editors to surveil their employees outside of the physical newsroom space, permitting them to remind employees constantly of important newsroom values, schedules, and other information” (p. 15).

#### 4.8.14 The Political Economy of Digital Profiteering: Communication Resource Mobilization by Anti-Vaccination Actors

Herasimenka, A., Au, Y., George, A., Joynes-Burgess, K., Knuutila, A., Bright, J., & Howard, P. N. (2023). The political economy of digital profiteering: Communication resource mobilization by anti-vaccination actors. *Journal of Communication*, 73(2), 126–137. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqac043>

1. **Citation key:** herasimenka\_political\_2023
2. **Author(s):** Aliaksandr Herasimenka, Yung Au, Anna George, Kate Joynes-Burgess, Aleksi Knuutila, Jonathan Bright, and Philip N. Howard
3. **Year:** 2023
4. **Publication:** Journal of Communication
5. **Keywords:** hybrid media, vaccines, COVID-19, misinformation, communication resource mobilization, digital profiteering
6. **Summary:** Herasimenka et al. investigate the political economy of misinformation by examining how anti-vaccination groups mobilize digital communication infrastructures to sustain their activities. The authors analyze the financial and infrastructural mechanisms that allow these actors to spread vaccine misinformation, drawing on a dataset of 59 anti-vaccination groups. They develop a theory of *communication resource mobilization*, arguing that anti-vaccination actors adopt hybrid monetization strategies that integrate radical social movement funding models, online celebrity tactics, and junk news revenue streams. Their findings demonstrate that misinformation actors systematically leverage platform monetization structures to generate financial resources, underscoring the economic incentives that drive the production of misleading content.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose a new theoretical framework—*communication resource mobilization*—to explain how misinformation actors accumulate financial and material resources. They argue that anti-vaccination campaigns function within a hybrid media system that blends movement-based organizing, influencer-driven content strategies, and junk news monetization techniques. Unlike traditional propaganda, which is often elite-driven, misinformation campaigns operate within decentralized digital infrastructures that allow actors to fund their activities through a combination of donations, advertising revenue, and e-commerce. The study builds on resource mobilization theory (RMT) and connective action theory, demonstrating that misinformation actors strategically integrate digital affordances to maximize financial gain while maintaining ideological narratives.
8. **Methods:** The authors employ a multi-method approach, combining content analysis, digital infrastructure analysis, and correspondence analysis. They analyze 59 anti-vaccination websites and social media profiles, coding them based on monetization strategies such as donation requests, advertising, merchandise sales, and membership fees. They use browser plug-ins and HTML scraping techniques to identify financial intermediaries (e.g., PayPal, Donor Box) and digital advertising networks. Additionally, they apply correspondence analysis to map the clustering of different monetization strategies, revealing how anti-vaccination actors blend multiple funding approaches.
9. **Hypotheses:** The study is structured around the following key expectations:
  - Anti-vaccination actors will rely on hybrid monetization strategies that combine elements of social movement funding, influencer marketing, and junk news advertising.
  - The most prevalent monetization strategy will be donation-based funding, followed by sales of merchandise and advertising revenue.
  - Anti-vaccination groups will use interlinked website networks to enhance visibility and financial sustainability.The findings support these hypotheses, demonstrating that anti-vaccination actors employ diverse monetization strategies, with donation requests being the most common. The study also finds that these groups frequently link their websites to e-commerce platforms, maximizing revenue while maintaining ideological coherence.
10. **Main findings:** Herasimenka et al. find that anti-vaccination actors systematically exploit digital platforms to mobilize resources. The majority (85%) of the websites analyzed engage in some form of monetization, with appeals for donations being the most frequent strategy (58%). Additionally, 41% sell informational products (e.g., books, documentaries), and 31% offer merchandise. While traditional advertising revenue is present (22%), it is less central than direct financial contributions. The study also identifies clusters of interlinked websites that reinforce misinformation narratives while serving as financial hubs. The findings suggest that misinformation actors operate within a *hybrid material resource mobilization* model, integrating elements of radical social movement fundraising, online celebrity branding, and junk news advertising.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “The political economy of misinformation depends on platform monetization infrastructures, which allow actors to sustain operations and, in some cases, profit from the dissemination of misleading content” (p. 126).
  - “Anti-vaccination groups have both movement-like (membership dues and donations), celebrity-like (converting attention into money through advertising and direct appeals), and junk news-like (third-party advertising) resource-gathering strategies that function in a hybrid process” (p. 129).
  - “Rather than being isolated actors, misinformation groups are embedded in digital infrastructures that enable coordinated monetization across multiple platforms, blending activism with commercial enterprise” (p. 132).

## 4.9 Attention and Information

### 4.9.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Scholarship on attention and information in political communication examines how individuals allocate cognitive resources to political content in an increasingly fragmented and competitive media environment. Early studies focused on news exposure as a function of rational information-seeking, while more recent research emphasizes structural constraints, digital curation, and the psychological factors shaping selective attention. The attention economy framework highlights that public affairs content competes with entertainment and other distractions, making attention a scarce resource. Research also explores how emotions, algorithmic filtering, and social identity influence news consumption, demonstrating that political engagement is not solely a product of individual preferences but is shaped by institutional and technological forces.
- **Selective Exposure and Media Skepticism:** Foundational theories of media consumption proposed that individuals seek information that aligns with their existing beliefs, a concept formalized as selective exposure. However, studies like Tsafati and Cappella (2003) challenge this assumption by demonstrating that media skepticism moderates news exposure patterns. Their research finds that distrust of mainstream media reduces engagement with traditional news sources while increasing reliance on alternative outlets such as political talk radio and online platforms. This suggests that trust in media institutions influences both the quantity and composition of an individual's media diet.
- **Emotional Triggers and Political Information-Seeking:** Psychological research on affect and political behavior has explored how emotions shape media engagement. Ryan (2012) demonstrates that anger, rather than anxiety, increases political information-seeking in digital environments. Using field experiments with online advertisements, he finds that individuals exposed to anger-inducing messages are more likely to click on political content, contradicting affective intelligence theory's emphasis on anxiety as a driver of information-seeking. This research highlights that different emotions have distinct effects on political engagement, with anger serving as a mobilizing force in digital media.
- **Attention as a Scarce Resource in the Digital Age:** Stroud (2017) conceptualizes attention as a finite cognitive resource subject to competition among media actors. She synthesizes research on news consumption and digital engagement, emphasizing that individuals allocate attention based on psychological, social, and technological factors. Her analysis highlights the role of emotions, social identity, and platform design in structuring political information flows. She also notes that while digital platforms increase access to political content, they simultaneously encourage fragmented engagement, reducing sustained attention to substantive news.
- **News Consumption Across Platforms:** The shift to mobile news consumption has altered patterns of attention to political information. Dunaway et al. (2018) investigate the effects of mobile device use on news engagement, finding that attention to political content decreases on smartphones due to constraints related to screen size, usability, and cognitive effort. Their study, which combines eye-tracking experiments and web traffic analysis, reveals that mobile users exhibit lower engagement with embedded news links and spend less time on news articles compared to desktop users. These findings suggest that the transition to mobile-based consumption may reduce in-depth political learning.
- **Curated Flows and Incidental Exposure:** Contemporary media environments are shaped by algorithmic and social curation, influencing how individuals encounter political news. Thorson and Wells (2016) propose the "curated flows" framework, which recognizes that information exposure is structured by journalistic, strategic, personal, social, and algorithmic curation processes. Similarly, Weeks and Lane (2020) develop an ecological model of incidental news exposure, arguing that exposure to political content increasingly occurs passively through digital platforms, rather than through intentional selection. These studies suggest that modern news consumption is shaped not only by individual preferences but also by the structural dynamics of digital media.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Current debates in the study of attention and information focus on the implications of digital media for democratic engagement. While some argue that increased access to diverse news sources enhances political knowledge, others highlight the risks of fragmentation, selective exposure, and algorithmically driven echo chambers. Future research is likely to explore how changing media consumption habits affect political participation, the role of misinformation in shaping public opinion, and the extent to which algorithmic curation reinforces ideological polarization. As media environments continue to evolve, scholars will need to develop new methodological approaches to capture the complexities of attention and information processing in the digital age.

### 4.9.2 Do People Watch What They Do Not Trust? Exploring the Association Between News Media Skepticism and Exposure

Tsafati, Y., & Cappella, J. N. (2003). Do People Watch what they Do Not Trust?: Exploring the Association between News Media Skepticism and Exposure [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Communication Research*, 30(5), 504–529. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650203253371>

1. **Citation key:** tsafati\_people\_2003
2. **Author(s):** Yariv Tsafati and Joseph N. Cappella
3. **Year:** 2003
4. **Publication:** Communication Research
5. **Keywords:** media skepticism, news exposure, trust, mainstream media, nonmainstream media
6. **Summary:** Tsafati and Cappella investigate the relationship between skepticism toward the mainstream news media and audience exposure to different types of news sources. Using four large-scale survey datasets, they assess whether individuals who distrust mainstream media consume less mainstream news and seek alternative sources such as polit-

ical talk radio and the internet. Their findings indicate that media skepticism is negatively correlated with mainstream news exposure but positively correlated with nonmainstream news consumption, suggesting that trust influences media choices and audience engagement with political information.

7. **Theory:** The authors build on prior research in social science that conceptualizes trust as a fundamental aspect of human interaction, extending this framework to the media environment. Trust is defined as an expectation that interactions with a given institution will yield reliable and beneficial outcomes. Skepticism, by contrast, implies a belief that an institution fails to meet its normative expectations, leading individuals to seek alternative sources of information. Drawing from rational choice theory, the authors propose that individuals consume news strategically, seeking trustworthy sources that maximize informational benefits while minimizing costs. This selective exposure model suggests that those who distrust mainstream media will be less likely to consume traditional news and more likely to engage with nonmainstream alternatives. Additionally, the study builds on existing research on media credibility and selective exposure, hypothesizing that media skepticism is a stable individual trait rather than a transient perception influenced by specific news events.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a quantitative approach using four large survey datasets: the Electronic Dialogue (ED) study from the 2000 U.S. election, the 1996 and 1998 National Election Studies (NES), and the 2000 Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) study. Media skepticism is measured using a composite index that includes perceptions of fairness, accuracy, completeness, and trustworthiness of news media. News exposure is operationalized through self-reported frequency of consumption across mainstream sources (e.g., network TV, newspapers) and nonmainstream sources (e.g., political talk radio, online news). The authors use regression analysis to examine the relationship between skepticism and media exposure while controlling for political interest, ideology, demographic factors, and other potential confounders.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- **H1:** Media skepticism will be negatively associated with mainstream news exposure.
- **H2:** Media skepticism will be positively associated with nonmainstream news exposure.
- **H3:** Higher levels of media skepticism will lead to a greater proportion of nonmainstream sources in individuals' overall media diets.

Results from regression models confirm these hypotheses: individuals with greater media skepticism report lower levels of engagement with traditional news sources and higher levels of exposure to alternative media.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds that skepticism toward the mainstream media is a significant predictor of news consumption patterns. Individuals who distrust mainstream media consume less national television news and newspapers while increasing their reliance on political talk radio and internet-based sources. Regression results indicate that skepticism is associated with a 1.84-point decrease in mainstream news exposure and a corresponding 1.05-point increase in nonmainstream media consumption. This effect persists across multiple datasets, reinforcing the argument that media skepticism influences media selection. However, overall news consumption does not significantly differ between skeptics and non-skeptics; rather, the composition of news sources within individuals' media diets shifts in response to levels of trust. While the study demonstrates a robust correlation between skepticism and exposure, the authors acknowledge potential bidirectionality—exposure to nonmainstream sources may also cultivate greater skepticism toward traditional news.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Media skepticism is the perception that journalists are not fair and objective in their reports, that they do not always tell the whole story, and that they would sacrifice accuracy and precision for personal and commercial gains" (p. 506).
- "The higher the skepticism, the lower the reported mainstream news exposure. This association was borderline significant ( $p = .058$ ). As predicted by Hypothesis 2, media skepticism was positively and significantly associated with nonmainstream exposure—the higher the skepticism, the higher the exposure to nonmainstream media" (p. 514).
- "People who trust the mainstream media tend to watch and read mainstream news. People who are skeptical toward the mainstream media tend to consume nonmainstream sources such as the World Wide Web and PTR" (p. 517).

#### 4.9.3 What Makes Us Click? Demonstrating Incentives for Angry Discourse with Digital-Age Field Experiments

Ryan, T. J. (2012). What Makes Us Click? Demonstrating Incentives for Angry Discourse with Digital-Age Field Experiments [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 74(4), 1138–1152. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381612000540>

1. **Citation key:** ryan\_what\_2012
2. **Author(s):** Timothy J. Ryan
3. **Year:** 2012
4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** anger, political communication, selective exposure, digital media, emotions in politics
6. **Summary:** Ryan investigates how anger influences political information-seeking behavior, particularly in the digital media environment. He theorizes that anger, rather than suppressing information-seeking as suggested by Affective Intelligence Theory (AIT), may instead motivate individuals to actively seek political information. Through three

large-scale field experiments using online advertisements, Ryan demonstrates that anger can substantially increase engagement with political content, challenging existing perspectives that primarily emphasize the role of anxiety in stimulating political awareness.

**7. Theory:** Ryan builds on theories of emotion in political psychology, particularly AIT, which posits that anxiety increases political attentiveness while anger leads to confrontation rather than information-seeking. However, he argues that anger may instead serve as an activating emotion under certain conditions, increasing the likelihood that individuals will seek out political information. He draws on psychological research suggesting that anger has motivational properties distinct from fear or anxiety, potentially leading individuals to engage in behaviors that align with goal-oriented responses, such as information gathering. Ryan contrasts two perspectives: AIT's claim that anger reduces information-seeking and an alternative view that anger, like anxiety, can increase engagement with political content. He hypothesizes that anger will enhance engagement with political stimuli, particularly in the context of digital advertising, where the costs of information-seeking are low.

**8. Methods:** Ryan conducts three online field experiments using Facebook political advertisements to examine whether anger influences information-seeking behavior. He manipulates emotional responses through ad content and imagery, measuring engagement via click-through rates. In each experiment, individuals are randomly assigned to see different ads designed to evoke either anger, anxiety, or a neutral emotional state. The study utilizes a 3x2 design, with emotions (anger, anxiety, neutral) as one factor and message framing (protection-oriented vs. retribution-oriented) as the other. Participants' responses are passively recorded, providing a behavioral measure of engagement. Additionally, manipulation checks are conducted using Amazon Mechanical Turk to confirm that the advertisements successfully induce the intended emotional responses.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- **H1:** Anger will increase political information-seeking behavior, as measured by click-through rates.
- **H2:** Anxiety will also increase political information-seeking, consistent with previous research.
- **H3:** Anger-induced information-seeking will be more pronounced when information is framed as facilitating retribution rather than protection.

The findings support H1 but not H2 or H3—anger increases information-seeking, while anxiety does not significantly alter engagement, and the framing manipulation has no significant effect.

**10. Main findings:** Ryan's results provide strong evidence that anger can increase political information-seeking behavior in digital contexts. Across three experiments, individuals exposed to anger-inducing advertisements were significantly more likely to click on political links compared to those in neutral or anxiety-inducing conditions. The click-through rate for anger-based ads was approximately twice as high as that of neutral ads. Contrary to previous theories, anxiety did not consistently increase engagement, suggesting that different emotional triggers may have distinct effects on political behavior. Additionally, while Ryan hypothesized that anger-induced engagement would be moderated by message framing (retribution vs. protection), he finds no evidence of this interaction—anger broadly increases engagement regardless of the type of information offered. His findings suggest that political actors may have strategic incentives to use anger-inducing rhetoric to increase audience engagement with political content, particularly in digital media settings.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Across three studies, I find anger, evoked alone, to increase information-seeking to a large degree—substantially increasing web users' proclivity to click through to a political website" (p. 1138).
- "While anxiety signals that habits are not adequate to deal with an obstacle and thus encourages information seeking, AIT expects something different of emotions in the aversion category. Aversive emotions signal that existing habits are adequate to cope with an obstacle and spur a desire to confront an understood adversary" (p. 1140).
- "The results outline systematic psychological tendencies in the electorate that impel some politicians to adopt angry, heated rhetoric. Generating anger in this way is, at least sometimes, an effective way to attract attention" (p. 1149).

#### 4.9.4 Gresham's Law of Political Communication: How Citizens Respond to Conflicting Information

Boudreau, C. (2013). Gresham's Law of Political Communication: How Citizens Respond to Conflicting Information [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2012.737422>]. *Political Communication*, 30(2), 193–212. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2012.737422>

**1. Citation key:** boudreau\_greshams\_2013

**2. Author(s):** Cheryl Boudreau

**3. Year:** 2013

**4. Publication:** Political Communication

**5. Keywords:** political communication, conflicting information, political sophistication, citizen decision-making, elite cues

**6. Summary:** Boudreau examines how citizens respond to conflicting political communications from elite sources, particularly when one source is more credible than the other. She argues that a version of Gresham's Law operates in political communication: when both a credible and a less credible source provide conflicting information, citizens are more likely to make worse decisions than when only the credible source is available. Using a series of laboratory

experiments, she demonstrates that unsophisticated individuals are especially vulnerable to misinformation, sometimes even relying more on the less credible source, which has implications for the effectiveness of credible political communication and the strategic use of misinformation in campaigns.

7. **Theory:** The author builds on existing research on political communication and elite influence to explore how conflicting messages affect citizen decision-making. She frames the study around Gresham's Law, which in economics describes how bad money drives out good money, and applies this to political communication. The core theoretical claim is that when exposed to conflicting information from political elites, individuals—especially those with lower political sophistication—often fail to disregard unreliable sources, leading to worse decision-making. Boudreau contrasts her argument with existing theories that assume citizens can use credible cues to make better decisions. While some research suggests that elite endorsements and polling data help uninformed voters approximate the choices they would make if fully informed, her work highlights an important limitation: conflicting information, even when one source is more credible, leads to confusion and worse outcomes. This effect is particularly pronounced among politically unsophisticated individuals, who struggle to distinguish between high- and low-credibility sources and may become disengaged as a result.
8. **Methods:** Boudreau conducts a series of laboratory experiments at a large public university, recruiting undergraduate participants to examine how conflicting information affects decision-making. Participants were asked to solve binary-choice math problems, where correct answers resulted in financial rewards and incorrect answers led to financial penalties. The key experimental manipulation involved the provision of information from different sources before participants made their decisions. Some participants received information from a single, credible source (e.g., an expert endorser who had a financial incentive to provide correct answers), while others received information from both a credible and a less credible source (e.g., misleading polling data or an untrustworthy endorser with incentives to provide incorrect answers). The study measured the accuracy of participants' decisions across these conditions, allowing for a comparison of how exposure to conflicting information influenced their performance. Additionally, Boudreau differentiated between high- and low-sophistication participants (using SAT math scores as a proxy) to examine whether political knowledge and reasoning ability moderated the effects of conflicting information.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - When individuals receive only credible information, they will make more welfare-improving decisions.
  - When individuals receive both credible and less credible information, they will make worse decisions than when they receive only credible information.
  - The negative effects of conflicting information will be most pronounced among individuals with lower political sophistication.
10. **Main findings:** The results strongly support Boudreau's theory that conflicting information degrades decision-making quality, even when one source is more credible than the other. Participants who received only credible information performed significantly better than those who received conflicting information. Among unsophisticated participants, exposure to conflicting information led to more errors and increased likelihood of abstaining from making decisions altogether. Even though rational decision-making models suggest that individuals should ignore unreliable sources when a clearly credible source is available, many participants—especially those with lower political sophistication—failed to do so. These findings have significant implications for political campaigns and voter behavior, suggesting that strategic actors can use misinformation or conflicting cues to their advantage by confusing or demobilizing less knowledgeable voters. Furthermore, the study highlights a major limitation in the effectiveness of elite cues as informational shortcuts, as they do not necessarily improve decision-making when conflicting information is present.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "When a credible source suggests the welfare-improving choice and a less credible source simultaneously suggests a choice that will make subjects worse off, subjects make worse decisions than when only the credible source is available" (p. 193).
  - "Given that unsophisticated subjects are swayed by a less credible source in a controlled laboratory environment where the relative quality of the information is clear, citizens may similarly struggle in real-world political contexts where there is a greater quantity of information whose credibility may be unclear" (p. 195).
  - "Political campaigns may benefit from sending conflicting information to voters, particularly if they want to induce citizens to change their decisions or forgo participation" (p. 206).

#### 4.9.5 Emotion, Motivation, and Social Information Seeking About Politics

Lyons, J., & Sokhey, A. (2014). Emotion, Motivation, and Social Information Seeking About Politics [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2013.828138>]. *Political Communication*, 31(2), 237–258. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2013.828138>

1. **Citation key:** lyons\_emotion\_2014
2. **Author(s):** Jeffrey Lyons and Anand Sokhey
3. **Year:** 2014
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** political discussion, emotions, social information seeking, affective intelligence, disagreement
6. **Summary:** Lyons and Sokhey investigate the motivations behind citizens' engagement in disagreeable political discussions. Drawing on affective intelligence theory, they examine whether such interactions are driven by a desire to

seek novel information or if they serve more expressive and participatory functions. Using data from the 2008–2009 and 2000 American National Election Studies (ANES), they assess whether emotions like fear and enthusiasm influence the likelihood of engaging in political discussions across ideological divides. Their findings suggest that rather than seeking out new information, individuals engage in political disagreement primarily as a form of expression and political participation.

**7. Theory:** The authors build on affective intelligence theory, which posits that emotions influence how individuals process political information and engage in political behaviors. They propose that emotions like fear and anxiety activate the surveillance system, leading individuals to seek out novel information, whereas enthusiasm activates the disposition system, reinforcing prior beliefs and motivating participation. If citizens engage in political disagreement to acquire information, then fear should predict greater engagement in cross-cutting discussions. Conversely, if disagreement is an expressive or participatory act, enthusiasm should be the primary driver. This perspective challenges traditional models of social information seeking, which assume that political discussion serves primarily heuristic functions, helping individuals acquire low-cost information about politics. Instead, Lyons and Sokhey argue that political disagreement operates more as an act of political expression, akin to participation in campaigns or protests.

**8. Methods:** The authors analyze two nationally representative datasets from the ANES to test their hypotheses. The 2008–2009 ANES panel study provides data on discussion networks, emotional responses to political candidates, and the extent of partisan and general disagreement in political conversations. The 2000 ANES allows for a more precise test of temporal ordering, as it includes emotion measures collected in the pre-election wave and political discussion measures collected in the post-election wave. The dependent variable is the level of disagreeable discussion, measured using general disagreement (perceived ideological distance) and partisan disagreement (differences in party identification and vote choice among discussants). The key independent variables are in-party and out-party fear (as measures of anxiety) and in-party and out-party enthusiasm (as measures of political engagement). The models control for political interest, partisan strength, demographic variables, and network size. The authors employ OLS regression and static score models to assess whether emotions predict political disagreement and whether disagreement influences emotions.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Fear (anxiety) should increase the likelihood of engaging in disagreeable political discussions if such discussions are motivated by information seeking.
- Enthusiasm should increase the likelihood of disagreeable discussions if such interactions are primarily a form of political expression and participation.
- The impact of emotions on political discussion should hold across different measures of disagreement (general disagreement and partisan disagreement).

The results provide little support for the hypothesis that fear leads to disagreeable discussion. In only one of six models does fear significantly predict disagreement, and even then, the substantive effect is modest. In contrast, enthusiasm is a robust and consistent predictor of political disagreement across models, suggesting that political discussion across ideological lines is more about expression and participation than information seeking.

**10. Main findings:** Lyons and Sokhey find strong evidence that enthusiasm, rather than fear, drives political disagreement. Individuals who feel enthusiasm for the out-party candidate engage in more cross-cutting discussions, likely as an act of solidarity or political expression. Conversely, those who feel enthusiasm for their in-party candidate engage in less disagreeable discussion, suggesting that strong partisans prefer discussions with like-minded individuals. Fear has a weak and inconsistent effect on disagreement, contradicting the idea that citizens engage in political discussions to seek new information. Their analysis of the 2000 ANES supports this conclusion by showing that pre-election emotions predict post-election disagreement, but disagreement does not predict subsequent changes in emotion. This finding challenges models that assume political discussion functions as a rational heuristic for acquiring political information and instead suggests that individuals engage in disagreement for expressive and participatory reasons.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Consistent with motives of information seeking, those reporting fear—whether of the in- or out-party candidate—are predicted to engage in higher rates of disagreeable discussion. However, in only one of six cases does this relationship hold, and even then, the effect is modest” (p. 245).
- “The out-party result is anticipated, as we would expect those expressing excitement toward the other party’s candidate to engage supporters of the other party (perhaps to express solidarity or shared excitement). Though we had no formal expectation for in-party enthusiasm, the direction jells with our suspicions—as some empirical work has shown persuasion to be a rarely named motive, we would not expect to see high rates of disagreeable talk among those enthusiastic about their own party’s candidate” (p. 245).
- “There is little evidence to support the idea of disagreeable discussion as information seeking, and more to support the idea of such civic talk as a sort of expressive participatory act” (p. 250).

#### 4.9.6 Curated Flows: A Framework for Mapping Media Exposure in the Digital Age

Thorson, K., & Wells, C. (2016). Curated Flows: A Framework for Mapping Media Exposure in the Digital Age: Curated Flows. *Communication Theory*, 26(3), 309–328. <https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12087>

1. Citation key: thorson\_curated\_2016

2. Author(s): Kjerstin Thorson and Chris Wells

3. **Year:** 2016
4. **Publication:** Communication Theory
5. **Keywords:** media exposure, curated flows, information networks, selective exposure, social media, algorithmic curation
6. **Summary:** Thorson and Wells propose a framework for understanding media exposure in the digital age, emphasizing the concept of "curated flows." They argue that contemporary media exposure is not solely dictated by individuals' choices or traditional mass communication structures but is instead shaped by various curating actors, including journalists, social contacts, strategic communicators, algorithms, and personal selections. This framework challenges binary models of media exposure, such as selective exposure and incidental exposure, by offering a more complex, networked understanding of how individuals encounter political information.
7. **Theory:** The curated flows framework is built on the premise that media exposure today is structured by overlapping and competing processes of curation. The authors critique traditional media exposure models, which either emphasize individuals' deliberate choices in shaping their information environment (e.g., selective exposure theories) or highlight passive exposure through structural conditions (e.g., incidental exposure theories). Instead, they argue that information exposure is best understood through the interaction of five curating actors: (1) journalistic curation, where traditional news organizations filter and highlight information; (2) strategic curation, where political and corporate actors shape exposure through targeted messaging; (3) personal curation, where individuals construct their own media environments based on preferences and behaviors; (4) social curation, where information is filtered and amplified through personal networks; and (5) algorithmic curation, where digital platforms employ recommendation systems to determine what content users see. By integrating these curation processes, the framework accounts for the increasingly fragmented and networked nature of modern media consumption. The authors emphasize that these curatorial forces do not operate in isolation but interact dynamically, shaping public discourse and influencing political behaviors in ways that require empirical mapping.
8. **Methods:** The authors develop their framework through a synthesis of media effects research, computational social science, and network analysis. They draw on existing studies in communication, political science, and information science to illustrate how curated flows shape media exposure. While the article itself is primarily theoretical, it outlines empirical research directions, advocating for methodological approaches that combine traditional surveys with digital trace data to map individual information networks. They highlight research utilizing Facebook data, Twitter content analysis, and digital behavioral tracking to capture the interplay of curated flows in real-world information consumption. The authors suggest that future studies should measure the relative influence of different curating actors by examining individuals' exposure to content from various sources, their engagement with that content, and the downstream effects on attitudes and political participation.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Media exposure in the digital environment is shaped by multiple curatorial forces, rather than a single dominant process.
  - The relative influence of journalistic, strategic, personal, social, and algorithmic curation varies across individuals and media contexts.
  - Curated flows can either amplify or mitigate political polarization depending on the balance of exposure to diverse versus reinforcing information.
  - Algorithmic curation plays an increasingly significant role in shaping what individuals see, often in ways that users do not consciously perceive.

The authors argue that these hypotheses are supported by existing empirical work on media fragmentation, algorithmic filtering, and selective exposure. However, they stress that more research is needed to systematically test how curated flows interact and influence democratic processes.
10. **Main findings:** Thorson and Wells introduce curated flows as a framework that moves beyond traditional dichotomies of media exposure by recognizing the complexity of contemporary information environments. They argue that understanding media exposure requires considering the interactions between journalistic, strategic, personal, social, and algorithmic curation. While traditional media remain influential, algorithmic and social curations are increasingly central in shaping the content individuals encounter. The authors highlight concerns about the implications of curated flows for democratic engagement, noting that algorithmic curation and strategic curation may contribute to polarization, misinformation, and the narrowing of ideological perspectives. However, they also suggest that social curation has the potential to introduce individuals to diverse viewpoints, depending on the composition of their networks. The framework provides a foundation for future empirical research on how different curatorial forces interact to influence political learning, opinion formation, and participation.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "There is no one dominant pattern of content 'flow'; there are competing patterns based on individual interests, social networks, and the infrastructures of digital communication" (p. 2).
  - "Unlike the mass media era, in which communication could be conceptualized as largely controlled by political elites and media actors, in the digital information environment processes of curation are also undertaken by actors such as friends and social contacts, computer algorithms, and individual media users themselves" (p. 3).
  - "Investigating the contingencies of message exposure in the networked media environment therefore depends on conceptualizing the interactions of an individual, her personal network, and the content flowing over that network" (p. 4).

#### 4.9.7 Partisan Provocation: The Role of Partisan News Use and Emotional Responses in Political Information Sharing in Social Media

Hasell, A., & Weeks, B. E. [Brian E.]. (2016). Partisan Provocation: The Role of Partisan News Use and Emotional Responses in Political Information Sharing in Social Media: Partisan News, Emotions, and Information Sharing. *Human Communication Research*, 42(4), 641–661. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hcre.12092>

1. **Citation key:** hasell\_partisan\_2016
2. **Author(s):** A. Hasell and Brian E. Weeks
3. **Year:** 2016
4. **Publication:** Human Communication Research
5. **Keywords:** partisan news media, emotion, information sharing, social media, political communication, affective polarization
6. **Summary:** Hasell and Weeks investigate how exposure to partisan news media influences political information sharing on social media, focusing on the role of emotional responses. They argue that partisan media consumption fosters anger toward opposing candidates, which in turn encourages individuals to share political content online. Using panel survey data from the 2012 U.S. presidential election, the authors test whether exposure to proattitudinal news sources increases anger and anxiety toward the opposing party's candidate and whether these emotions subsequently drive political information sharing. They find that proattitudinal news consumption is associated with increased anger but not anxiety, and that anger positively influences political information sharing.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on theories of emotion and political behavior, particularly affective intelligence theory and cognitive appraisal theory, to argue that partisan news consumption elicits discrete emotional responses that influence political expression. They distinguish between two negative emotions—anger and anxiety—each of which has distinct motivational effects. Anger is an approach emotion that arises when individuals perceive injustice or threats to their worldview, prompting mobilization and collective action. Anxiety, by contrast, is an avoidance emotion that fosters uncertainty and may lead individuals to seek more information or disengage from politics altogether. Given the nature of partisan media, which frequently criticizes opposing candidates while reinforcing in-group identities, Hasell and Weeks hypothesize that exposure to proattitudinal news will generate anger toward the opposing candidate and facilitate political information sharing. They argue that information sharing serves as an outlet for anger, allowing individuals to express outrage and reinforce their partisan identities through social media interactions.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a two-wave panel survey conducted during the 2012 U.S. presidential election. The sample, drawn from a nationally representative online panel, includes respondents who reported using social media for political discussion. The authors measure proattitudinal news consumption using self-reported frequency of exposure to partisan news websites and blogs. Emotional responses are assessed by asking respondents to report their levels of anger and anxiety toward the opposing party's presidential candidate. Political information sharing is measured by the frequency with which respondents post, forward, or comment on political content on social media. The analysis includes a lagged dependent variable model to account for prior sharing behavior and controls for demographic characteristics, political interest, strength of partisanship, and other forms of news consumption. The authors use mediation analysis to test whether anger and anxiety mediate the relationship between partisan news exposure and political information sharing.

##### 9. Hypotheses:

- Exposure to proattitudinal online news increases anger toward the opposing party's presidential candidate.
- Exposure to proattitudinal online news increases anxiety toward the opposing party's presidential candidate.
- Anger toward the opposing candidate increases the frequency of political information sharing on social media.
- Anxiety toward the opposing candidate may influence political information sharing, though the direction of the effect is uncertain.
- The relationship between proattitudinal online news exposure and political information sharing is mediated by anger.

The findings support the hypothesis that partisan news consumption fosters anger toward the opposing candidate, which subsequently increases political information sharing. However, anxiety does not mediate the relationship between partisan news exposure and sharing behavior, suggesting that anger is the primary emotional driver of political expression in social media.

10. **Main findings:** Hasell and Weeks find strong evidence that proattitudinal news consumption increases anger toward the opposing party's candidate, but not anxiety. This anger, in turn, facilitates political information sharing on social media. The results suggest that partisan news contributes to online political discourse by eliciting strong emotional reactions that drive engagement. The authors also find that those with more homogeneous online social networks and stronger partisan attachments are particularly susceptible to the anger-sharing relationship. While previous research has suggested that emotions like fear and anxiety can also mobilize political behavior, this study indicates that anger—rather than anxiety—is the primary affective mechanism linking partisan media consumption to online political engagement. The findings have implications for understanding the role of emotions in digital political communication, as they suggest that partisan news outlets not only reinforce political identities but also drive patterns of online expression by provoking negative emotions toward out-group candidates.

##### 11. Key quotations:

- "Using panel survey data collected during the 2012 U.S. presidential election, we found that use of proattitudinal

partisan news online is associated with increased anger, but not anxiety, directed at the opposing party's presidential candidate and that anger subsequently facilitated information sharing about the election on social media" (p. 641).

- "Given that politics are inherently emotional, this prior research suggests that citizens who experience strong emotional responses to political content and actors may be more likely to share information in social media" (p. 642).
- "In other words, partisan media may encourage political information sharing by arousing anger in its audience" (p. 653).

#### 4.9.8 Attention as a Valuable Resource

Stroud, N. J. (2017). Attention as a Valuable Resource. *Political Communication*, 34(3), 479–489. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1330077>

1. **Citation key:** stroud\_attention\_2017
2. **Author(s):** Natalie Jomini Stroud
3. **Year:** 2017
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** attention economy, media consumption, political information, news engagement, digital media
6. **Summary:** Stroud examines attention as a finite cognitive resource in the context of the modern media environment. She argues that the increasing competition for public attention—often conceptualized as the “attention economy”—poses challenges for news consumption and political engagement. The article synthesizes existing research on what motivates individuals to consume news and proposes a research agenda for better understanding how public affairs content competes with entertainment and other distractions. Stroud highlights key factors influencing attention, including emotional triggers, social identity, media design, and technological changes that shape exposure to political information.
7. **Theory:** Stroud draws from interdisciplinary research in communication, psychology, and political science to explain how individuals allocate their attention to political information. She argues that attention is a limited resource, and media organizations compete for it by leveraging psychological and social mechanisms. Building on theories of selective exposure, affective intelligence, and the uses and gratifications framework, Stroud outlines several key determinants of political attention. First, emotions—particularly anxiety and aversion—can either encourage or suppress news consumption. Second, social identity influences media selection, as individuals gravitate toward news that reinforces their political affiliations. Third, platform design and algorithmic curation shape attention patterns by influencing the salience of certain types of content. Stroud also discusses the role of habitual media consumption, noting that structural and technological factors shape long-term patterns of engagement. By integrating these perspectives, she offers a framework for understanding how and why individuals allocate attention to political information in a fragmented and highly competitive media environment.
8. **Methods:** The article is primarily a theoretical synthesis, drawing on empirical studies from multiple disciplines to outline determinants of attention to public affairs content. Stroud reviews research on news consumption patterns, digital media engagement, and the psychological factors influencing attention allocation. She categorizes existing findings into seven key areas: (1) emotional and neurobiological impulses, (2) uses and gratifications theory, (3) social identity and political partisanship, (4) social context and network effects, (5) media design and content presentation, (6) choice and media fragmentation, and (7) broader environmental factors influencing newsworthiness. While the article does not present original empirical data, Stroud highlights methodological approaches that future research should adopt, including eye-tracking studies, digital trace data analysis, and controlled experiments to test how different stimuli capture attention in political communication contexts.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Attention is a finite cognitive resource, and individuals allocate it selectively based on psychological, social, and environmental factors.
  - Emotional triggers, particularly anxiety and aversion, influence whether individuals engage with or avoid political information.
  - Social identity shapes media selection, with individuals preferring content that aligns with their political views and values.
  - News organizations and digital platforms influence attention allocation through content design, algorithmic curation, and engagement-driven strategies.
  - The increasing competition for attention in the digital age poses challenges for democratic engagement, as public affairs content competes with entertainment and other distractions.
- Stroud finds strong support for the idea that attention is a scarce resource subject to competition among media actors. She argues that while some factors—such as emotional engagement and personalized recommendations—can increase attention to political news, the broader trend is toward fragmentation and declining engagement with substantive public affairs content.
10. **Main findings:** Stroud highlights that attention to political news is shaped by a complex interplay of cognitive, emotional, and structural factors. She finds that emotional responses, particularly anxiety, can drive political engagement, while aversion can suppress it. Selective exposure tendencies lead individuals to prioritize ideologically consistent

information, but social networks and digital platforms introduce additional curatorial forces that shape exposure patterns. The rise of algorithmic curation, clickbait headlines, and engagement-driven design strategies have shifted how individuals allocate attention, often favoring sensationalist content over substantive political news. Stroud also discusses how changing media consumption habits, such as second-screening and multitasking, further dilute public attention to political affairs. She concludes by calling for more research on how news organizations can adapt to the evolving attention economy and better compete for engagement in a fragmented digital landscape.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “Our attention is a fixed resource. The race to capture it has become known as the attention economy, where various entities compete for our cognitive focus” (p. 479).
- “Unlike the mass media era, in which communication could be conceptualized as largely controlled by political elites and media actors, in the digital information environment, processes of curation are also undertaken by actors such as friends and social contacts, computer algorithms, and individual media users themselves” (p. 481).
- “As the amount of available information has increased, structures that facilitate our ability to navigate it have become increasingly important. Organizations and technology affect what options are available to us, sometimes in ways that enhance our choices and sometimes in ways that may filter content less transparently” (p. 483).

#### 4.9.9 News Attention in a Mobile Era

Dunaway, J., Searles, K., Sui, M., & Paul, N. (2018). News Attention in a Mobile Era. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 23(2), 107–124. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmy004>

1. **Citation key:** dunaway\_news\_2018
2. **Author(s):** Johanna Dunaway, Kathleen Searles, Mingxiao Sui, and Newly Paul
3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication
5. **Keywords:** news consumption, mobile devices, digital media, attention economy, political information
6. **Summary:** Dunaway et al. investigate how mobile device use influences attention to news. They argue that mobile platforms, such as smartphones and tablets, attenuate news attention due to constraints related to screen size, usability, and cognitive effort. The study employs two eye-tracking lab experiments and a large-scale analysis of web traffic data to compare attention to news across desktop computers, tablets, and smartphones. The authors find that users spend significantly less time consuming news content on mobile devices than on desktops, with smartphone users exhibiting the lowest levels of engagement. Their findings have important implications for the digital media landscape and democratic citizenship, as they suggest that mobile news consumption may be more superficial than traditional desktop-based engagement.
7. **Theory:** The authors frame their study within the broader research on digital media consumption, selective exposure, and the economics of attention. They draw from human-computer interaction theory and rational choice models of information-seeking to argue that mobile devices impose higher cognitive costs on news consumers. First, they highlight that mobile screens require greater effort for reading, scrolling, and navigation, which discourages sustained engagement. Second, they discuss the role of fragmented media environments, noting that mobile users are more likely to engage in multitasking, skimming, and rapid content switching. Third, they emphasize how mobile browsing fosters “snacking” behavior—users consume news in brief interactions rather than engaging in deep reading. By integrating these perspectives, Dunaway et al. argue that mobile news consumption creates structural constraints that systematically reduce attention to political information.
8. **Methods:** The study consists of three empirical components. Study 1 is a lab experiment conducted in the LSU Manship School of Communication Media Effects Lab, where participants were randomly assigned to read a news article on a desktop computer, tablet, or smartphone while their eye movements were tracked. Study 2 replicates Study 1 with a different sample, measuring fixation time on news content and embedded links. Study 3 expands the analysis to a large-scale observational dataset of web traffic from comScore, tracking digital news consumption across desktop and mobile platforms. Key dependent variables include time spent reading news, number of fixations on news links, and probability of noticing hyperlinks. The authors employ regression models with clustered standard errors to compare attention across devices, controlling for user demographics, political interest, and browsing habits.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Users spend less time reading news on mobile devices than on desktop computers.
  - Attention to embedded news links is lower on mobile devices than on desktop computers.
  - Smartphone users exhibit the lowest levels of news attention compared to tablet and desktop users.
  - The effect of mobile device use on news attention is robust across experimental and observational data.
- The findings confirm that mobile device users spend significantly less time attending to news content than desktop users. Smartphone users show the largest deficit in attention, while tablet users exhibit an intermediate level of engagement. Across all studies, mobile browsing is associated with shorter fixation durations and reduced engagement with hyperlinks.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds strong evidence that mobile device use reduces attention to news. In the lab experiments, participants using tablets and smartphones spent significantly less time reading articles and were less likely to fixate on embedded links compared to those using desktops. The eye-tracking data show that mobile users engage

in more rapid scanning and exhibit lower cognitive effort when processing news content. The web traffic analysis corroborates these findings, demonstrating that mobile users spend less time per visit on news sites. The authors suggest that these patterns have broad implications for political communication, as they indicate that the transition to mobile news consumption may reduce public engagement with substantive information. They caution that while mobile devices increase access to news, they may simultaneously encourage more superficial information processing, potentially exacerbating information gaps and reinforcing selective exposure.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We find that on average, people spend less time consuming news on mobile devices relative to computers" (p. 108).
- "Attention—an important precursor for recall, learning, and the ability to discern fact from fiction—is curbed on mobile devices" (p. 116).
- "Even as mobile access proliferates, for the mobile dependent, the depth of attention to news is shrinking" (p. 118).

#### 4.9.10 A Model of Attentiveness to Outlying News

Lamberson, P. J., & Soroka, S. (2018). A Model of Attentiveness to Outlying News. *Journal of Communication*, 68(5), 942–964. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqy040>

1. **Citation key:** lamberson\_model\_2018

2. **Author(s):** P. J. Lamberson and Stuart Soroka

3. **Year:** 2018

4. **Publication:** Journal of Communication

5. **Keywords:** news consumption, negativity bias, information processing, media coverage, public opinion

6. **Summary:** Lamberson and Soroka present a formal model to explain attentiveness to negative news, emphasizing that negativity bias in media consumption and production results from the "outlyingness" of information rather than negativity per se. They argue that public expectations shape what information is perceived as outlying, meaning that attentiveness to negative news fluctuates based on context. The authors develop a dynamic model in which news consumers and media institutions prioritize information that deviates most from expectations. They empirically test the model using economic indicators, media coverage of the economy, and public sentiment, finding that people and the media respond more strongly to negative information when expectations are positive, while the effect diminishes when expectations become more negative.

7. **Theory:** The authors develop their argument from research on negativity biases in information processing, media gatekeeping, and public opinion. They contend that attentiveness to information is driven by deviation from expectations rather than intrinsic negativity. Drawing on impression formation theory and human cognitive biases, they argue that individuals and media institutions prioritize information that stands out from their baseline expectations. In times of economic stability, negative news is perceived as more surprising and thus attracts greater attention. Conversely, during economic downturns, negative news becomes routine, and positive news stands out instead. This framework aligns with work in psychology and political communication that shows systematic asymmetries in attention to information. The authors extend this logic to mass media, asserting that the media's focus on negativity reflects both consumer preferences and institutional incentives to highlight outlying information.

8. **Methods:** The study employs a two-pronged approach, using computational modeling and empirical data analysis. First, the authors construct a formal mathematical model that simulates public expectations and media responsiveness to information signals. The model assumes that individuals update their beliefs based on new information, with greater weight given to signals that deviate most from prior expectations. The model generates predictions about when negative news should receive heightened attention. Second, the authors test these predictions using empirical data on the U.S. economy, economic news coverage, and public economic sentiment. They use time-series regression models to examine how media coverage and public attitudes shift in response to economic fluctuations. The data include macroeconomic indicators from the Conference Board's Composite Leading Indicator, media tone from the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, and public opinion data from the Michigan Survey of Consumers.

9. **Hypotheses:**

- Public attentiveness to news is highest for information that deviates from expectations.
- Negative news receives more attention when expectations about the economy are positive.
- During economic downturns, the asymmetry in attentiveness shifts, making positive news more surprising and thus more salient.
- Media negativity biases are at least partially explained by the public's tendency to focus on outlying information rather than negativity itself.

The findings confirm that negativity bias is context-dependent. When economic expectations are positive, negative news attracts greater attention. However, during prolonged downturns, the focus shifts, and positive information becomes more attention-grabbing. These results support the model's prediction that attentiveness is driven by deviation from expectations rather than negativity alone.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds strong evidence that negativity bias in media consumption and production is a function of information outlyingness rather than negativity itself. In empirical tests, media coverage of the economy is significantly more negative when economic indicators are strong, while coverage becomes less negative during recessions.

sions. Public opinion follows a similar pattern, with individuals responding more strongly to negative economic news in good times and paying more attention to positive economic news during downturns. The authors argue that these results suggest a dynamic, context-dependent model of media consumption, in which information that deviates from expectations—rather than negativity per se—drives public attention. They highlight the implications of this finding for understanding media coverage cycles and shifts in political discourse.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “One reason for a negativity bias in news consumption and production is that negative information is more ‘outlying’: that is, further away from expectations” (p. 942).
- “The model predicts that the public and media will focus more on negative news when the economy is strong, but in periods of prolonged economic decline, attention will shift towards positive news as it becomes more surprising” (p. 949).
- “Attentiveness to information is based, in part, on the extent to which that information deviates from expectations, and expectations themselves vary over time and space” (p. 954).

#### 4.9.11 The Ecology of Incidental Exposure to News in Digital Media Environments

Weeks, B. E. [Brian E], & Lane, D. S. (2020). The ecology of incidental exposure to news in digital media environments. *Journalism*, 21(8), 1119–1135. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884920915354>

1. Citation key: weeks\_ecology\_2020

2. Author(s): Brian E. Weeks and Daniel S. Lane

3. Year: 2020

4. Publication: Journalism

5. Keywords: incidental exposure, news consumption, digital media, information environment, curated flows

6. Summary: Weeks and Lane propose an ecological model for understanding incidental news exposure in digital media environments. They argue that modern news exposure is no longer strictly intentional, as individuals frequently encounter news passively through social media, search engines, and digital platforms. Their model accounts for individual and environmental factors that shape the likelihood and impact of incidental exposure, organizing them into six levels: cognitive, identity, perceptions, motivations, social networks, and media systems. They emphasize that incidental exposure's effects are highly contextual, depending on both user traits and structural media dynamics.

7. Theory: The authors integrate insights from media ecology, cognitive psychology, and political communication to explain how individuals encounter and engage with news in digital environments. They argue that incidental exposure is best understood as a function of interactions between individual motivations and structural factors within the media system. Unlike earlier research that conceptualized incidental exposure as a passive, binary phenomenon, Weeks and Lane emphasize the “curated flows” of news—where exposure is shaped by algorithms, social networks, and platform design rather than individual intent. Their ecological model distinguishes between state-like factors (malleable, context-dependent) and trait-like factors (stable, inherent to an individual), showing that attentiveness to incidental news varies across individuals and contexts. The model builds on prior work suggesting that digital news exposure is increasingly governed by social network effects and algorithmic filtering, rather than individual choice alone. They argue that incidental exposure does not have uniform democratic benefits or harms; instead, its effects are conditional, shaped by who is exposed, the type of content encountered, and the larger informational ecosystem.

8. Methods: The article presents a conceptual framework rather than an empirical analysis. The authors develop their ecological model by synthesizing prior research on news exposure, selective exposure, and digital media environments. They outline six levels of influence on incidental news exposure, ranging from micro-level cognitive traits to macro-level media structures. Each level includes both stable (trait-like) and dynamic (state-like) factors that influence the probability and consequences of incidental exposure. Their framework also incorporates previous empirical findings on news exposure patterns, algorithmic curation, and social media dynamics to illustrate how individuals and institutions shape news consumption in digital environments.

9. Hypotheses:

- Incidental exposure to news is shaped by both individual traits (e.g., political interest, identity, cognitive ability) and environmental factors (e.g., social networks, platform algorithms, media structures).
- The effects of incidental exposure depend on whether exposure is state-driven (momentary) or trait-driven (habitual).
- Digital media's networked nature increases the likelihood of incidental exposure but also amplifies selective exposure dynamics.
- Incidental exposure can lead to both increased engagement and misinformation, depending on the context and the curatorial forces at play.
- Perceptions of the information environment (e.g., whether users believe news will “find them”) influence the extent to which incidental exposure leads to learning or engagement.

The authors do not conduct original empirical tests but argue that existing research supports the notion that incidental exposure is highly contingent on individual and contextual factors. They suggest that future studies should integrate their ecological framework into empirical designs.

10. Main findings: Weeks and Lane's ecological model highlights the complex interplay of individual and environmental factors in shaping incidental news exposure. They argue that incidental exposure is not inherently beneficial or

harmful; rather, its effects depend on who is exposed, what information they encounter, and how they engage with it. Their model demonstrates that while digital media environments create new opportunities for unintentional news consumption, they also reinforce existing inequalities in information access and engagement. The authors stress that prior research has often treated incidental exposure as a monolithic phenomenon, failing to account for its variation across different contexts. By distinguishing between state- and trait-like factors, their model provides a more nuanced framework for studying digital news exposure. They conclude by calling for future research to test the interactive effects of their proposed factors, particularly in relation to platform design, algorithmic curation, and social network structures.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Given the abundance of news and socially shared information in digital media, it is increasingly likely that individuals will be unintentionally or accidentally exposed to news while engaging in other activities" (p. 1120).
- "Incidental exposure and its influence will depend on a multitude of factors that are unique to individuals and the social, cultural, and information environments they inhabit" (p. 1121).
- "Our ecological model is not a theory, as it does not directly predict the nature of relationships between variables. Rather, it serves as a heuristic that can drive research across multiple levels of influence" (p. 1131).

## 4.10 Understanding Media Effects

### 4.10.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of media effects encompasses a broad and evolving area of political communication, addressing how exposure to media content influences attitudes, knowledge, and behavior. This subtopic largely serves as a "catch-all" for this particular chapter. Foundational theories in this domain examine the extent to which media shape public opinion, either by setting the agenda, priming certain considerations in decision-making, or framing issues in ways that structure public interpretation. Early scholars such as McCombs and Shaw introduced agenda-setting as a mechanism through which media dictate issue salience, while later work by Iyengar expanded the field by distinguishing between episodic and thematic framing effects. Over time, research has incorporated the role of individual predispositions, selective exposure, and digital media, leading to more nuanced models that account for variations in audience effects based on motivation, partisanship, and media format. Today, the study of media effects is an expansive and multi-faceted field, integrating insights from psychology, political science, and communication studies.
- **Agenda-Setting and Issue Salience:** McCombs and Shaw's seminal work on agenda-setting theory proposed that the media influence what the public perceives as important by emphasizing particular issues. Their analysis of the 1968 U.S. presidential election demonstrated a strong correlation between the issues highlighted in news coverage and those identified by voters as critical. This research established the foundational idea that the media do not tell people what to think but rather what to think about. Subsequent work has examined variations in agenda-setting effects based on media type, audience characteristics, and changes in the news environment. Scholars have also explored second-level agenda-setting, which investigates how media influence the attributes associated with political figures or policy issues, shaping both salience and evaluative perceptions.
- **Priming and the Role of Media in Political Judgment:** The concept of priming extends agenda-setting by suggesting that media exposure influences the criteria individuals use when making political evaluations. Iyengar and Kinder's experimental studies demonstrated that individuals primed with extensive news coverage on a given issue were more likely to use that issue as a benchmark for evaluating political leaders. Althaus and Kim later built on this work, emphasizing that priming effects are not merely a function of information accessibility but also depend on the applicability of media cues to an individual's existing knowledge structure. Their findings underscore that priming effects can vary based on exposure patterns and the evaluative tone of coverage.
- **Framing Effects and Public Interpretation:** Framing theory focuses on how the presentation of information influences audience interpretation and opinion formation. Iyengar's distinction between episodic and thematic frames illustrates how media choices shape policy discourse. Episodic framing, which presents issues through individual case studies, tends to encourage attributions of responsibility to individuals, whereas thematic framing, which contextualizes issues within broader societal structures, fosters systemic explanations. Research in this area has expanded to include studies on protest framing, racialized crime coverage, and the impact of media framing on policy preferences.
- **Selective Exposure and Media Fragmentation:** As media environments have shifted from mass broadcast networks to fragmented digital platforms, scholars have increasingly focused on selective exposure—the tendency for individuals to seek out information that aligns with their preexisting beliefs. Stroud's research on partisan media consumption highlights how ideological sorting in news choices reinforces political polarization. Arceneaux, Johnson, and Murphy further explored oppositional media hostility, showing that exposure to counter-attitudinal media can heighten perceptions of bias and reduce trust in news organizations. These findings illustrate how contemporary media dynamics contribute to the divergence of political perspectives in the public sphere.
- **Social Media and Incidental Exposure:** The rise of digital platforms has introduced new dynamics in media effects research, particularly concerning incidental exposure to political information. Weeks and Lane's ecological model of incidental news exposure suggests that digital media environments increase unintentional encounters with political content but also reinforce disparities in engagement and knowledge acquisition. Feezell and Ortiz tested whether such exposure leads to greater political learning but found that while it increases confidence in political knowledge, it does not necessarily enhance factual understanding. These studies emphasize that while social media provide new pathways for political information, their effects are conditioned by user behavior and platform design.

- **Cognitive Processing and Political Learning:** Scholars have also examined how individuals process and retain political information from media exposure. Kim and Garrett challenged the traditional dichotomy between memory-based and online processing models, proposing a hybrid framework in which individuals simultaneously integrate new information and retrieve stored evaluations. Similarly, Lecheler and de Vreese analyzed the durability of framing effects, demonstrating that while media frames can have lasting influence, their persistence is moderated by political knowledge and cognitive engagement. These findings highlight the complex nature of media effects, wherein exposure, retention, and interpretation interact to shape political attitudes.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** The field of media effects continues to evolve, with ongoing debates about the extent of media influence, the conditions under which media shape public opinion, and the role of technological advancements in altering traditional models. Scholars increasingly focus on how misinformation spreads in digital environments, the role of algorithmic curation in shaping exposure, and the implications of declining trust in mainstream news sources. Future research is likely to investigate the long-term consequences of media fragmentation, the role of artificial intelligence in content selection, and the resilience of democratic norms in an era of increasingly personalized and interactive media environments.

#### 4.10.2 The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media

McCOMBS, M. E., & SHAW, D. L. (1972). THE AGENDA-SETTING FUNCTION OF MASS MEDIA\*. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187. <https://doi.org/10.1086/267990>

1. **Citation key:** mccombs\_agenda-setting\_1972
2. **Author(s):** Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw
3. **Year:** 1972
4. **Publication:** Public Opinion Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** agenda-setting, media effects, public opinion, political communication, elections
6. **Summary:** McCombs and Shaw investigate the agenda-setting function of the mass media by analyzing how media coverage of political issues influences voters' perceptions of issue importance. Using data from the 1968 U.S. presidential election, they examine the correlation between the issues emphasized by the media and the issues voters identify as most significant. Their findings suggest that the media shape political reality by determining which issues receive the most attention, thereby influencing public perceptions of what matters most in an election.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that the mass media play a central role in shaping political discourse by determining which issues are salient to the public. Drawing on prior research in media effects, they suggest that while the media may not dictate what people think, they are highly effective in determining what people think about. This conceptualization aligns with Bernard Cohen's assertion that "*the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about*" (p. 177). Their agenda-setting hypothesis posits that media attention to particular issues increases their perceived importance among voters. By selectively covering certain topics while downplaying or ignoring others, the media construct a political landscape that influences voter priorities and expectations.
8. **Methods:** The study examines the relationship between media coverage and public issue salience during the 1968 U.S. presidential campaign. McCombs and Shaw conduct a content analysis of newspapers, magazines, and television broadcasts to assess the frequency and prominence of different campaign issues. They then survey 100 undecided voters in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, asking them to identify the most important issues in the election. By comparing the media's agenda with voters' responses, they measure the correlation between issue emphasis in news coverage and public concern. The study controls for alternative explanations by restricting the analysis to a single community and ensuring that respondents were exposed to the same media environment.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - The issues emphasized by the mass media will correspond to the issues voters perceive as most important.
  - Voters who consume more political news will demonstrate a higher correlation between media emphasis and their stated issue priorities.
- Their findings support these hypotheses, demonstrating a strong correlation between media issue emphasis and voter perceptions of issue importance.
10. **Main findings:** McCombs and Shaw's analysis reveals that the issues highlighted in mass media coverage closely align with the issues voters identify as the most important in the election. They find a correlation of +.967 between major media issue emphasis and voter perceptions of issue importance, suggesting that the media play a critical role in shaping the political agenda. Their findings also indicate that voters are more influenced by the cumulative media agenda than by coverage specific to their preferred candidate or party, reinforcing the agenda-setting hypothesis. Furthermore, their results challenge the notion of selective perception, as voters appear to absorb the broader media narrative rather than exclusively focusing on information favorable to their own party. The study concludes that media coverage is instrumental in structuring public debate and influencing voter concerns.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures. They are constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass should think about, know about, have feelings about" (p. 177).
  - "The correlation between the major item emphasis on the main campaign issues carried by the media and voters'

- independent judgments of what were the important issues was +.967" (p. 181).
- "In short, the political world is reproduced imperfectly by individual news media. Yet the evidence in this study that voters tend to share the media's composite definition of what is important strongly suggests an agenda-setting function of the mass media" (p. 184).

#### 4.10.3 Where You Live and What You Watch: The Impact of Racial Proximity and Local Television News on Attitudes about Race and Crime

Gilliam, F. D., Valentino, N. A., & Beckman, M. N. (2002). Where You Live and What You Watch: The Impact of Racial Proximity and Local Television News on Attitudes about Race and Crime. Retrieved January 27, 2025, from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7g05r6s4>

- 1. Citation key:** gilliam\_where\_2002
- 2. Author(s):** Franklin D. Gilliam Jr., Nicholas A. Valentino, and Matthew N. Beckman
- 3. Year:** 2002
- 4. Publication:** Public Opinion Quarterly
- 5. Keywords:** race and media, crime news, racial attitudes, social contact theory, group threat theory
- 6. Summary:** Gilliam, Valentino, and Beckman examine the interaction between local television news coverage of crime and neighborhood racial composition in shaping white Americans' attitudes toward race and crime. They argue that exposure to racially stereotypic crime news scripts reinforces negative racial attitudes but that residential proximity to African Americans can mitigate these effects. Using an experimental design, they expose subjects to different versions of local news crime reports and assess how these treatments interact with the racial composition of their neighborhoods to influence racial perceptions and policy attitudes.
- 7. Theory:** The authors draw on two competing theories—*social contact theory* and *group threat theory*—to explain how racial proximity might shape responses to media portrayals of crime. Social contact theory holds that interracial proximity fosters more positive attitudes by increasing familiarity and reducing reliance on negative stereotypes. By contrast, group threat theory argues that racial proximity increases perceptions of competition and threat, exacerbating negative stereotypes. The study also incorporates the concept of the *crime news script*, which frames crime stories in ways that disproportionately associate African Americans with criminality. The authors posit that whites in racially homogeneous neighborhoods, lacking real-world interactions with African Americans, will be most susceptible to media-driven racial stereotypes. Conversely, those living in racially diverse neighborhoods should be less likely to internalize these portrayals, as personal interactions provide alternative, more positive information about African Americans.
- 8. Methods:** The study employs an experimental design conducted in a simulated living room environment, where 390 white participants were exposed to different local news crime stories. The key manipulation varied the race of the suspect in crime reports (Black, White, or no suspect shown). Participants' residential racial composition was determined using U.S. Census data to assess the percentage of Black residents in their zip codes. The dependent variables measured racial attitudes, such as endorsement of negative stereotypes, feelings of closeness to African Americans, and support for punitive crime policies. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the interactive effects of racial proximity and media exposure while controlling for socioeconomic status, political predispositions, and media consumption.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - **H1:** Whites living in racially homogeneous neighborhoods will be more likely to endorse negative stereotypes about African Americans and support punitive crime policies after exposure to crime news featuring a Black suspect.
  - **H2:** Whites living in racially heterogeneous neighborhoods will either be unaffected by or will actively reject the stereotypic portrayal of Black criminals in the news.

The findings largely support the first hypothesis, showing that media effects are stronger among whites with little exposure to Black neighbors.
- 10. Main findings:** The results demonstrate that exposure to crime news featuring Black suspects increases negative racial stereotypes and support for punitive crime policies, but only among whites living in predominantly white neighborhoods. Participants from homogeneous white areas who viewed crime stories with Black suspects reported greater endorsement of stereotypes (e.g., seeing Blacks as aggressive and undisciplined), greater perceived social distance from African Americans, and stronger support for punitive crime measures such as the death penalty and three-strikes laws. However, whites from more racially diverse neighborhoods exhibited the opposite reaction: they rejected racial stereotypes and became less supportive of punitive crime policies when exposed to the same news content. These findings align with social contact theory and challenge group threat theory by showing that increased exposure to African Americans in daily life can moderate the negative effects of racialized media portrayals.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - "In the absence of direct interracial contact, racial attitudes are largely shaped by mass media portrayals. When exposure to these portrayals is unchallenged by real-world experiences, negative stereotypes can take hold" (p. 2).
  - "Those from overwhelmingly white neighborhoods who saw the Black crime suspect were significantly more likely to endorse punitive crime policies and to express racial stereotypes. However, whites from more integrated

neighborhoods either remained unaffected or actually exhibited more positive racial attitudes after exposure" (p. 17).

- "Thus, 'where you live' interacts with 'what you watch' to influence how you think about race and crime. These findings suggest that media effects on racial attitudes are conditional on personal social contexts and that the reinforcement of racial stereotypes through media exposure is strongest when alternative sources of information are absent" (p. 24).

#### 4.10.4 Sex, Lies, and War: How Soft News Brings Foreign Policy to the Inattentive Public

Baum, M. A. (2002). Sex, Lies, and War: How Soft News Brings Foreign Policy to the Inattentive Public. *American Political Science Review*, 96(1), 91–109. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055402004252>

1. **Citation key:** baum\_sex\_2002

2. **Author(s):** Matthew A. Baum

3. **Year:** 2002

4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review

5. **Keywords:** soft news, foreign policy, political communication, media effects, public opinion

6. **Summary:** Baum argues that soft news programs—entertainment-oriented television that occasionally covers political issues—introduce foreign policy information to politically inattentive audiences. He suggests that such programs reduce the cost of learning about international affairs by presenting them in a more engaging, dramatic, and human-interest-focused manner. Using survey data and content analyses, Baum finds that individuals who typically avoid hard news can nonetheless acquire political knowledge when foreign crises receive attention in the soft news media.

7. **Theory:** The study advances the *incidental by-product model*, which posits that politically disengaged individuals passively consume foreign policy information when it is embedded in entertainment-focused programming. Baum contends that soft news lowers cognitive barriers to political knowledge by employing *cheap framing*, wherein complex foreign policy issues are presented in simplified, emotionally resonant narratives. He further hypothesizes that this exposure can increase public attentiveness to foreign crises, challenge elite control over foreign policy narratives, and reduce disparities in political awareness across the public. Baum situates this work within the broader literature on political communication, public opinion, and media consumption, challenging the assumption that disengaged citizens remain completely uninformed about international affairs.

8. **Methods:** Baum employs a combination of survey data analysis and content analysis of media coverage. He draws on data from the Pew Research Center's Media Consumption surveys to examine patterns of soft news consumption and attentiveness to foreign crises. He also performs a systematic content analysis of soft news programs, including talk shows and entertainment-oriented news, to assess the extent and framing of foreign policy coverage. Ordered logit regression models test the relationship between media consumption, political knowledge, and crisis attentiveness while controlling for demographic and political variables.

9. **Hypotheses:**

- **H1:** Individuals who consume soft news are more likely to follow foreign policy crises than their counterparts who do not.
- **H2:** The effects of soft news consumption on attentiveness to foreign crises are strongest among politically disengaged individuals.
- **H3:** Soft news programs frame foreign crises using dramatic, human-interest narratives, making them more accessible to inattentive audiences.

The findings confirm all three hypotheses, demonstrating that exposure to soft news increases awareness of foreign crises among politically uninvolved individuals.

10. **Main findings:** Baum finds that soft news consumption significantly predicts attentiveness to foreign policy crises, particularly among individuals with low levels of political engagement. Respondents who watched soft news programs were more likely to recall details about U.S. interventions in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Iraq. Moreover, content analysis reveals that soft news coverage of foreign crises emphasizes human-interest angles, such as individual heroism or suffering, rather than geopolitical analysis. This framing enables disengaged audiences to absorb political information without consciously seeking it out. Baum concludes that soft news has reshaped the information environment, broadening the scope of political knowledge beyond the traditional "attentive public."

11. **Key quotations:**

- "Soft news media have increased many politically inattentive individuals' exposure to information about select high-profile political issues, primarily those involving scandal, violence, heroism, or other forms of human drama" (p. 91).
- "When an issue crosses over, via piggybacking, from network newscasts to the soft news media, a far broader audience will likely confront it. And unlike the relatively mundane or arcane presentation of political information offered by network newscasts, soft news programs employ cheap framing to appeal to entertainment-seeking audiences" (p. 96).
- "Individuals who follow international affairs less closely do appear to learn about foreign crises through the soft news media. Consistent with the incidental by-product model, the relationships are strongest for respondents who claim to follow international affairs 'not at all' closely" (p. 99).

#### 4.10.5 Soft News and Political Knowledge: Evidence of Absence or Absence of Evidence?

BAUM, M. A. (2003). Soft News and Political Knowledge: Evidence of Absence or Absence of Evidence? [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600390211181>]. *Political Communication*, 20(2), 173–190. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600390211181>

1. **Citation key:** baum\_soft\_2003
2. **Author(s):** Matthew A. Baum
3. **Year:** 2003
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** soft news, political knowledge, infotainment, media effects, public opinion
6. **Summary:** Baum examines whether soft news consumption contributes to political knowledge. In response to Markus Prior's assertion that soft news does not enhance factual political knowledge, Baum argues that the absence of evidence does not necessarily indicate an absence of learning. He suggests that soft news facilitates learning through heuristic cues and emotional tagging rather than increasing long-term factual recall. Using survey data and content analysis, he demonstrates that soft news consumption can enhance political attentiveness and affect attitudes toward foreign policy, even if it does not significantly improve factual knowledge retention.
7. **Theory:** Baum challenges the conventional view that political learning requires the accumulation of factual knowledge. He argues that learning can occur through heuristic processing, in which individuals extract emotional and evaluative cues from media coverage rather than memorizing detailed facts. This aligns with the *on-line processing model*, which posits that people may forget specific facts but retain affective impressions that shape future political judgments. Baum contends that soft news reduces the cognitive cost of acquiring political information by presenting it in accessible, entertainment-driven formats. He further suggests that the effectiveness of soft news in shaping political knowledge depends on the context and the characteristics of its audience, particularly among politically inattentive individuals.
8. **Methods:** Baum employs survey data from the Pew Research Center and content analysis of soft news programs to assess the relationship between media consumption and political knowledge. He constructs indices for soft news and hard news consumption, measuring their impact on respondents' ability to recall specific facts about foreign policy events. He also examines Nielsen ratings to assess the audience size for soft news and infotainment programs, testing whether these programs reach a politically inattentive public. Logit regression models evaluate the extent to which soft news consumption predicts factual knowledge about specific political events, controlling for education, demographic factors, and general media exposure.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Soft news exposure increases attentiveness to political issues among politically disengaged individuals.
  - Soft news consumers process political information through heuristic cues and emotional framing rather than factual recall.
  - Soft news consumption may lead to short-term knowledge gains but does not necessarily enhance long-term factual political knowledge.
10. **Main findings:** Baum demonstrates that soft news can shape political awareness and attitudes, particularly among individuals with low political engagement. His analysis reveals that while soft news consumers do not exhibit consistent gains in factual political knowledge, they are more likely to develop opinions on foreign policy issues based on the emotional framing of news stories. He finds that infotainment programs disproportionately emphasize dramatic and human-interest aspects of political events, which can influence how audiences perceive U.S. foreign interventions. Additionally, his results suggest that the effects of soft news vary by education level, with less-educated individuals showing greater sensitivity to its framing. Baum concludes that dismissing soft news as politically irrelevant overlooks its ability to shape public opinion through indirect learning mechanisms.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The absence of a measurable increase in factual political knowledge does not demonstrate the absence of learning. Rather, it simply demonstrates the absence of long-term retention of factual knowledge" (p. 175).
  - "Soft news outlets disproportionately emphasize negative coverage of U.S. foreign policy initiatives, using episodic framing that enhances emotional engagement while discouraging thematic analysis" (p. 186).
  - "Even if soft news does not expand the public's long-term store of factual knowledge, it can still influence political attitudes and attentiveness by making political information more accessible to those who would otherwise ignore it" (p. 190).

#### 4.10.6 Citizens, Knowledge, and the Information Environment

Jerit, J., Barabas, J., & Bolen, T. (2006). Citizens, Knowledge, and the Information Environment. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(2), 266–282. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3694272>

1. **Citation key:** jerit\_citizens\_2006
2. **Author(s):** Jennifer Jerit, Jason Barabas, and Toby Bolen
3. **Year:** 2006
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

5. **Keywords:** political knowledge, media effects, information environment, education, knowledge gap
6. **Summary:** Jerit, Barabas, and Bolen examine the role of the information environment in shaping political knowledge. While existing literature emphasizes static individual-level predictors like education and socioeconomic status, the authors argue that media coverage can influence the distribution of knowledge. Using content analysis and public opinion surveys spanning more than a decade, they test whether variation in media attention affects the knowledge gap between the most and least educated citizens. Their findings indicate that newspaper coverage disproportionately benefits highly educated individuals, reinforcing knowledge inequalities, whereas television coverage reduces these disparities by making information accessible to less educated individuals.
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the assumption that political knowledge is solely determined by fixed individual characteristics such as education and income. They propose that the *information environment*—the amount and type of media coverage available on political topics—can moderate these relationships. Drawing from the *knowledge gap hypothesis* (Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien 1970), they argue that as media attention increases, everyone learns more, but individuals with greater cognitive resources (e.g., higher education levels) benefit disproportionately. The authors also differentiate between print and broadcast media, hypothesizing that newspapers, which use more abstract and fact-dense reporting, will reinforce knowledge inequalities, while television, with its reliance on visuals and narrative-driven formats, will provide more accessible political information, particularly benefiting those with lower education levels.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a two-part empirical strategy. First, the authors analyze over three dozen public opinion surveys conducted between 1992 and 2003, each containing political knowledge questions about recent political issues. They pair these surveys with content analyses of Associated Press, *USA Today*, and *CBS Evening News* transcripts from the six weeks preceding each survey. This allows them to measure variation in media coverage and assess its effects on political knowledge. Using multilevel probit regression models, they estimate how differences in media coverage influence the relationship between education and knowledge. They also include an item-response model to control for variation in question difficulty across surveys.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- As media attention to an issue increases, the average level of political knowledge among survey respondents will rise.
- Higher education levels will be more strongly associated with knowledge in an informationally rich environment, reinforcing disparities between the most and least educated.
- Increases in newspaper coverage will primarily benefit highly educated individuals, strengthening the knowledge gap.
- Increases in television coverage will raise the average level of knowledge but will not reinforce the relationship between education and knowledge.

Their findings support these hypotheses, demonstrating that media exposure plays a crucial role in shaping political knowledge.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds strong evidence that the amount and type of media coverage influence political knowledge. On issues that receive substantial media attention, the average level of knowledge increases, but the *gains are not equally distributed*. Newspaper coverage disproportionately benefits highly educated individuals, reinforcing existing knowledge inequalities, while television coverage has a more egalitarian effect, helping to close the gap between low- and high-education respondents. Their analysis also reveals that coverage format matters: newspapers provide more contextual and expert-driven content, which is more accessible to educated readers, while television news simplifies political information and uses visual storytelling, making it easier for less-educated viewers to absorb. Additionally, the authors show that variation in political knowledge across issues cannot be explained solely by static individual-level predictors but is significantly influenced by fluctuations in the information environment.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Higher levels of information in the environment elevate knowledge for everyone, but the educated learn disproportionately more from newspaper coverage. Increases in television coverage, by contrast, benefit the least educated almost as much as the most educated” (p. 268).
- “We have shown that variations in the level of knowledge correspond to differences in the amount of news coverage. We also have shown that the well-known relationship between education and knowledge is not fixed—not even within the same issue” (p. 272).
- “Simply providing more information is likely to reinforce the knowledge gap that exists between people with low and high levels of education. Although scholars lament the tendency of television to provide ‘simplistic, nonsubstantive, nonhistorical and noncontextual’ coverage, our results suggest the importance of transmitting political information in ways that can be comprehended by the least educated” (p. 277).

#### 4.10.7 Priming Effects in Complex Information Environments

Althaus, S. L., & Kim, Y. M. (2006). Priming Effects in Complex Information Environments: Reassessing the Impact of News Discourse on Presidential Approval [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 68(4), 960–976. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00483.x>

1. **Citation key:** althaus\_priming\_2006
2. **Author(s):** Scott L. Althaus and Young Mie Kim

3. **Year:** 2006
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** priming, media effects, news discourse, presidential approval, information environment
6. **Summary:** Althaus and Kim reassess the impact of media priming on public opinion by analyzing how news discourse influences presidential approval in complex information environments. While previous research has focused on priming effects in controlled laboratory settings, this study examines the real-world dynamics of priming during the 1990–91 Persian Gulf Crisis. Using daily survey data from Gallup polls and a comprehensive content analysis of television news, they demonstrate that priming effects are shaped not only by the accessibility of information in memory but also by the applicability of knowledge constructs over time. Their findings suggest that both short-term and cumulative media exposure contribute to priming effects in public evaluations of political leaders.
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the prevailing assumption that priming effects are purely a function of the accessibility of information in long-term memory. Drawing from social psychology, they introduce the distinction between *accessibility effects*, which occur when recent media exposure increases the likelihood of using a particular construct in evaluation, and *applicability effects*, which emerge when repeated exposure reinforces the relevance of a construct in making judgments. They argue that previous political communication studies have largely ignored applicability effects, leading to an incomplete understanding of priming in complex information environments. Althaus and Kim propose that news priming effects are not merely driven by increases in the volume of coverage on an issue but also by shifts in the evaluative tone of coverage, which can alter the weight assigned to different criteria in presidential approval ratings.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a quasi-experimental design using a combination of public opinion data and content analysis. They analyze 20 national Gallup surveys conducted between August 9, 1990, and February 10, 1991, measuring daily fluctuations in presidential approval and attitudes toward the Gulf Crisis. These surveys are paired with a detailed content analysis of 3,854 nightly news stories from *ABC World News Tonight*, *CBS Evening News*, and *NBC Nightly News*. The authors code news coverage for the volume of Gulf Crisis-related stories, the presence of policy discourse, and the evaluative tone of news content. They then estimate daily changes in the strength of priming effects using logistic regression models, examining how different types of media exposure—recent versus cumulative, favorable versus unfavorable—shape the weight of crisis-related attitudes in presidential approval ratings.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Priming effects will be influenced not only by recent media exposure but also by cumulative exposure to relevant news discourse.
  - News priming effects will be stronger when the evaluative tone of coverage aligns with the preexisting attitudes of respondents.
  - The effect of media priming will differ depending on the type of information presented: policy-focused discourse will have a greater impact on priming than general news coverage.
  - Priming effects will exhibit substantial variation over time, rather than remaining stable, due to fluctuations in media coverage and shifts in public attention.
10. **Main findings:** The results reveal that priming effects are not solely a function of accessibility but also of applicability, with cumulative media exposure significantly influencing the weight of attitudes in presidential approval ratings. While previous studies suggested that priming effects dissipate quickly, Althaus and Kim show that repeated exposure to relevant news discourse can create long-lasting changes in how individuals evaluate political leaders. The analysis demonstrates that news coverage's evaluative tone is a critical moderator of priming effects: unfavorable discourse about the Gulf Crisis increased the weight of crisis-related attitudes in presidential approval, while favorable discourse had a weaker effect. The findings also indicate that priming effects are highly dynamic, with daily fluctuations in their magnitude depending on the volume and nature of news coverage. These results challenge traditional conceptions of media priming by showing that applicability effects play a crucial role in shaping public opinion over time.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Priming effects on presidential job approval were influenced not only by recent exposure to news about the Persian Gulf Crisis but also by cumulative exposure to relevant news discourse and changes in the evaluative tone of that discourse" (p. 961).
  - "The social psychology literature envisions priming as something like a two-stage process: the priming stimuli should influence the accessibility of some knowledge constructs more than others, but whether people use those primed constructs as evaluative criteria depends on the degree to which they are perceived as applicable to the judgmental task" (p. 963).
  - "Taken together, the findings suggest a pattern of nuanced influences on priming effects rather than a mechanistic and determinative relationship between construct accessibility and construct weight in relevant attitude structures" (p. 973).

#### 4.10.8 Political Campaigns and Open-Minded Thinking

Kam, C. D. (2006). Political Campaigns and Open-Minded Thinking [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 68(4), 931–945. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00481.x>

1. Citation key: kam\_political\_2006
2. Author(s): Cindy D. Kam
3. Year: 2006
4. Publication: The Journal of Politics
5. Keywords: political campaigns, open-minded thinking, cognitive engagement, campaign intensity, political psychology
6. Summary: Kam challenges the prevailing assumption that political campaigns primarily serve to reinforce existing attitudes and mobilize partisan voters. Instead, she argues that intense campaigns can foster *open-minded thinking*, a cognitive process in which individuals engage with multiple perspectives and weigh the strengths and weaknesses of competing candidates. Drawing on data from the Senate Election Study, she finds that intense campaigns reduce pro-incumbent biases and increase the likelihood that citizens will acknowledge both positive and negative aspects of candidates. This effect is observed across levels of education, suggesting that campaigns can serve a deliberative function in democratic politics.
7. Theory: Kam builds on political psychology and deliberative democratic theory to argue that campaigns can promote open-minded thinking by motivating individuals to consider multiple perspectives on political candidates. Traditional models of voter decision-making emphasize constraint and ideological consistency as markers of political sophistication. However, Kam suggests that the capacity for citizens to entertain competing arguments is equally important for democratic deliberation. Drawing from Aristotle, Mill, and Dewey, she contends that cognitive engagement in politics requires not just exposure to political information but also *actively open-minded thinking*, a process in which individuals are willing to revise their opinions in light of new evidence. She integrates insights from the Heuristic-Systematic Model, arguing that campaigns heighten motivation to process political information systematically rather than relying on partisan cues. Campaign intensity—measured through spending, media coverage, and competitiveness—creates a context in which voters are more likely to acknowledge the merits and drawbacks of multiple candidates.
8. Methods: Kam uses data from the 1988–1992 Senate Election Study to examine how campaign intensity affects open-minded thinking. The dataset consists of stacked cross-sections from three election cycles, allowing her to analyze how citizens evaluate Senate candidates in varying campaign contexts. Her key independent variable is *campaign intensity*, operationalized as a composite measure of per capita campaign spending, media coverage, and electoral competitiveness. The dependent variable, *open-minded thinking*, is measured using respondents' willingness to identify both positive and negative attributes of Senate candidates. Kam employs a nested multinomial logit (NMNL) model to estimate the probability of respondents displaying biased versus open-minded evaluations, controlling for education, partisanship, and other individual characteristics. She further tests whether these effects are moderated by education level, assessing whether both high- and low-education citizens exhibit gains in open-minded thinking during intense campaigns.
9. Hypotheses:
  - As campaign intensity increases, citizens will be more likely to engage in open-minded thinking.
  - Intense campaigns will reduce pro-incumbent biases, increasing the probability that voters acknowledge both positive and negative attributes of candidates.
  - The effects of campaign intensity on open-minded thinking will be observed across levels of education, rather than being confined to highly educated citizens.
  - Citizens who engage in open-minded thinking will be more likely to participate in elections than those who express only biased candidate evaluations.Kam finds support for these hypotheses, demonstrating that campaign intensity fosters open-minded political engagement.
10. Main findings: Kam's analysis reveals that intense campaigns significantly reduce pro-incumbent biases and increase the likelihood of open-minded evaluations of Senate candidates. The results indicate that as campaign spending, media coverage, and competitiveness increase, citizens are more likely to articulate both positive and negative considerations about multiple candidates. Importantly, this effect is observed across education levels, suggesting that cognitive engagement is not limited to highly educated voters. Further, she finds that citizens who engage in open-minded thinking are more likely to turn out to vote, demonstrating the broader participatory consequences of cognitive engagement in campaigns. The findings challenge conventional wisdom in political science that emphasizes the reinforcing nature of campaigns, instead highlighting their potential to foster deliberative engagement.
11. Key quotations:
  - "Intense campaigns provide citizens with the motivation to engage in open-minded thinking regarding candidates for public office. As such, electoral campaigns, as recurring national and subnational conversations about politics, can fulfill an important social function by pulling citizens into open-minded thinking" (p. 931).
  - "Increases in intensity chip away at that incumbency advantage. The coefficients on *Intensity Republican Incumbent* and *Intensity Democratic Incumbent* are both statistically significant and negative. These coefficients indicate that intensity significantly chips away at pro-incumbent biases, across both parties" (p. 937).
  - "Far from reinforcing biased views of the candidates, intense campaigns engage citizens in even-handed consideration of the candidates. Campaigns can motivate in-partisans to entertain pros and cons about the candidates, and if anything, the pattern is more, not less, pronounced among the highly educated" (p. 940).

#### 4.10.9 Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies

Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007). Framing Public Opinion in Competitive Democracies. *American Political Science Review*, 101(4), 637–655. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055407070554>

1. **Citation key:** chong\_framing\_2007
2. **Author(s):** Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman
3. **Year:** 2007
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** framing, public opinion, elite influence, competitive democracy, media effects
6. **Summary:** Chong and Druckman examine how competitive political environments influence framing effects on public opinion. While past research has largely focused on noncompetitive settings where elite frames operate in isolation, the authors investigate how exposure to competing frames alters their influence. They develop a theoretical framework outlining the conditions under which competition moderates or intensifies framing effects and test these hypotheses using experimental data on two policy issues: urban growth management and the right of an extremist group to conduct a rally. Their findings suggest that framing effects persist even in competitive contexts, though their magnitude depends on the relative strength and frequency of competing frames.
7. **Theory:** Chong and Druckman challenge the assumption that exposure to multiple frames neutralizes framing effects, instead proposing that competition alters but does not eliminate them. They argue that framing influences public opinion through three psychological mechanisms: *availability* (a frame must introduce relevant considerations into memory), *accessibility* (considerations must be readily retrievable), and *applicability* (considerations must be deemed relevant to the issue at hand). The authors emphasize that the relative strength of frames—determined by source credibility, alignment with prior beliefs, and perceived persuasiveness—determines their impact in competitive contexts. They hypothesize that (1) strong frames dominate weak frames, (2) repetition amplifies weak frames only among less politically knowledgeable individuals, and (3) individuals exposed to multiple conflicting frames engage in motivated reasoning, reinforcing preexisting attitudes rather than balancing competing perspectives. The study also explores contrast effects, wherein exposure to a weak frame in opposition to a strong frame may backfire, pushing individuals further toward the strong frame's position.
8. **Methods:** The authors conduct two experiments to assess how framing effects operate in competitive environments. The first experiment examines public opinion on urban growth management policies, exposing participants to frames emphasizing either environmental preservation or economic costs. The second experiment investigates attitudes toward a hate group rally, where frames emphasize free speech versus public safety concerns. Participants are randomly assigned to conditions that vary in the number, strength, and direction of frames received. The study distinguishes between one-sided exposure (receiving only one frame), dual exposure (receiving competing frames with equal strength), and unequal two-sided exposure (receiving frames of varying strength or frequency). The dependent variable is support for the policy position associated with each frame. The authors employ ordered probit models to estimate the effects of framing under different competitive conditions, controlling for individual political knowledge, prior values, and motivation.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Strong frames will dominate weak frames in competitive contexts because they are perceived as more applicable and persuasive.
  - Weak frames invoking accessible but not applicable considerations will influence opinions only in noncompetitive settings, particularly among less motivated individuals.
  - Repetition of a weak frame will increase its influence among less knowledgeable individuals, but will not affect more politically sophisticated respondents.
  - Exposure to competing strong frames will elicit conflicting considerations, pulling respondents toward intermediate positions rather than canceling framing effects.
  - Weak frames in opposition to strong frames may backfire, reinforcing the stronger frame's influence rather than mitigating it.

The authors find substantial support for these hypotheses across both experiments.

10. **Main findings:** The results demonstrate that competitive political environments do not eliminate framing effects but instead modify their impact based on the strength and repetition of frames. Strong frames significantly shape public opinion in both one-sided and competitive contexts, while weak frames influence opinions only in noncompetitive settings. When weak frames compete with strong frames, they often fail to gain traction and, in some cases, even backfire by reinforcing the stronger frame's persuasiveness. Repetition amplifies the effects of weak frames only among individuals with low political knowledge, suggesting that political sophistication moderates framing susceptibility. The findings challenge prior research suggesting that exposure to competing frames neutralizes elite influence, highlighting the importance of frame quality and cognitive engagement in shaping public opinion.

11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Our results indicate that framing effects depend more heavily on the qualities of frames than on their frequency of dissemination and that competition alters but does not eliminate the influence of framing" (p. 637).
  - "Weak frames that invoke accessible but inapplicable considerations may move opinions in one-sided conditions but fail to do so when challenged by stronger counterframes" (p. 640).
  - "Mere competition is insufficient to temper framing effects; the strength of competing frames determines whether

individuals engage in substantive evaluation or simply reinforce preexisting biases" (p. 648).

#### 4.10.10 The Mass Media and the Public's Assessments of Presidential Candidates, 1952–2000

Gilens, M., Vavreck, L., & Cohen, M. (2007). The Mass Media and the Public's Assessments of Presidential Candidates, 1952–2000 [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 69(4), 1160–1175. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2007.00615.x>

1. **Citation key:** gilens\_mass\_2007
2. **Author(s):** Martin Gilens, Lynn Vavreck, and Martin Cohen
3. **Year:** 2007
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** mass media, campaign coverage, political advertising, policy voting, political knowledge
6. **Summary:** Gilens, Vavreck, and Cohen investigate whether declines in substantive news coverage of presidential campaigns have led to a deterioration in voters' political knowledge and engagement. They assess 50 years of media content and public attitudes using the Presidential Election Discourse Dataset (PEDD), which combines content analyses of media coverage, campaign advertisements, and voter survey data from 1952 to 2000. The authors argue that while news coverage has become increasingly focused on candidate character, scandal, and the horse race, Americans have not become less informed about candidates' policy positions. They attribute this stability in voter knowledge to the rise of policy-oriented political advertising, which has compensated for declines in substantive news coverage.
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the common perception that American voters have become less informed due to declining news quality and consumption. They propose that while traditional news coverage has become less substantive, this has been counterbalanced by the increasing prevalence of policy-oriented campaign advertising. They theorize that political knowledge is shaped not only by exposure to traditional news media but also by direct candidate communications, particularly through television advertisements. They argue that voters' reliance on policy-based considerations in presidential elections has increased over time, despite a media environment that is often criticized for its sensationalism and lack of substantive content. The authors posit that paid political advertising serves as a crucial mechanism for informing the electorate, particularly as campaign messaging has become more targeted and sophisticated. Furthermore, they contend that the ideological polarization of political parties may also contribute to the electorate's increased focus on policy, as clearer partisan differences make policy-based voting more salient.
8. **Methods:** The authors employ a longitudinal analysis using the Presidential Election Discourse Dataset (PEDD), which includes content analyses of presidential campaign advertisements, news coverage, and voter surveys from 1952 to 2000. The PEDD integrates data from sources such as the *New York Times*, network television news, and the National Election Studies (NES) open-ended candidate like/dislike questions. The study measures changes in the policy and character content of news coverage and advertising, as well as trends in voters' political knowledge and the factors they cite in candidate evaluations. To assess the impact of media exposure on voter knowledge, the authors use both individual-level survey data and aggregate-level measures of media content, employing regression models to estimate the influence of news quality, political advertising, education, and party polarization on voters' policy-based evaluations of candidates.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - The decline in policy-oriented news coverage will be associated with a decline in voters' political knowledge and policy-based candidate evaluations.
  - Increased ideological polarization of political parties will contribute to an increase in voters' reliance on policy-based considerations in presidential elections.
  - Exposure to policy-focused campaign advertising will counterbalance the decline in policy content in traditional news media, maintaining or even increasing the level of policy-based voter evaluations.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds no evidence of a decline in voters' ability to accurately place presidential candidates on policy issues, despite the deterioration of substantive news coverage. Instead, policy-based considerations in candidate evaluations have increased over time, while character-based evaluations have declined. The authors attribute this trend to the increasing role of paid political advertising, which has provided voters with policy-relevant information even as traditional news coverage has shifted toward scandal and horse-race reporting. Their regression analyses confirm that exposure to policy-oriented advertisements is a significant predictor of policy-based candidate evaluations, while education and party polarization play lesser roles. The findings suggest that the contemporary political information environment, though often criticized, has not resulted in a less informed electorate; rather, campaign advertisements have taken on a greater role in shaping voter knowledge and engagement.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "While news may be more sensational and less substantive than in the past, campaign advertising has become more substantive in content and has grown tremendously in reach, frequency, and sophistication" (p. 1160).
  - "The ability of respondents to correctly place the candidates relative to each other on issue position scales has not declined...Indeed, the importance of policy stances (in comparison to personal qualities) has increased over time" (p. 1163).
  - "In both longitudinal and cross-sectional analyses, we find that Americans' evaluations of the presidential can-

dicates are far more strongly linked to the content of political ads than to news coverage of the campaigns" (p. 1172).

#### 4.10.11 Getting Real: The Duration of Framing Effects

Lecheler, S., & De Vreese, C. H. (2011). Getting Real: The Duration of Framing Effects. *Journal of Communication*, 61(5), 959–983. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01580.x>

1. **Citation key:** lecheler\_getting\_2011
2. **Author(s):** Sophie Lecheler and Claes H. de Vreese
3. **Year:** 2011
4. **Publication:** Journal of Communication
5. **Keywords:** framing effects, media effects, political knowledge, longitudinal experiments, opinion formation
6. **Summary:** Lecheler and de Vreese examine the persistence of media framing effects over time. While existing research has documented the immediate impact of framing on political opinions, few studies assess whether these effects endure beyond initial exposure. Using a survey experiment conducted in the Netherlands ( $n = 625$ ), the authors test the durability of framing effects at four time points—immediately after exposure, one day later, one week later, and two weeks later. Their findings indicate that framing effects are surprisingly persistent, though they decay over time. Importantly, political knowledge moderates this effect, with individuals possessing moderate levels of political knowledge exhibiting the most enduring framing effects.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on framing effects literature, which suggests that media frames influence opinion by making certain considerations more salient. While past research has treated framing effects as short-term phenomena, the authors argue that understanding their duration is critical for evaluating their real-world significance. They propose that framing effects operate through three psychological mechanisms: accessibility (the ease with which considerations are retrieved), applicability (the perceived relevance of framed information), and availability (the integration of new considerations into an individual's belief system). They further theorize that political knowledge conditions these effects over time. Individuals with low political knowledge are initially more susceptible to framing but are less likely to retain these effects due to limited cognitive engagement. Highly knowledgeable individuals, on the other hand, are more resistant to framing due to strong preexisting attitudes. The authors thus hypothesize that framing effects will be most persistent among individuals with moderate political knowledge, who engage with the information but lack the cognitive resources to fully counter-argue.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a longitudinal survey experiment with a between-subjects design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: exposure to a positive frame, a negative frame, or a control condition. The experiment focused on the economic consequences of Bulgaria and Romania joining the European Union, a topic that had received relatively little prior media coverage. After initial exposure, participants' opinions were measured at four points: immediately after exposure (t1), after one day (t2), after one week (t3), and after two weeks (t4). The authors control for intervening variables, such as participants' exposure to related news during the interim period. Political knowledge was measured using a battery of factual knowledge questions about the EU and national politics, allowing for the categorization of participants into low, moderate, and high knowledge groups. The authors employ regression analyses to assess the impact of framing over time, with interaction terms testing the moderating role of political knowledge.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - News frames will significantly affect opinion, with positive frames leading to higher levels of support for the issue and negative frames leading to lower levels of support.
  - Framing effects will decay over time, but they will persist beyond immediate exposure.
  - Political knowledge will moderate framing effects: individuals with moderate levels of political knowledge will display the most persistent framing effects over time.

The findings confirm these hypotheses, showing that framing effects last up to two weeks, with the strongest persistence among moderately knowledgeable individuals.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that framing effects do not dissipate immediately, as previously assumed. Rather, they persist for at least two weeks, though their strength diminishes over time. The effects of positive and negative frames decay at different rates, with negative frames exhibiting greater durability. Additionally, political knowledge significantly moderates the duration of framing effects. While low-knowledge individuals initially exhibit the strongest framing effects, these effects fade quickly. High-knowledge individuals are less influenced by framing due to their ability to counter-argue. In contrast, moderately knowledgeable individuals show the most persistent framing effects, likely because they engage with the framed information but lack the cognitive resources to effectively challenge it. These findings challenge prior assumptions that framing effects are ephemeral and suggest that media framing can have lasting consequences for public opinion.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Our results show that a framing effect can persist beyond initial exposure. In fact, the effects in our study proved to be extraordinarily robust" (p. 972).
  - "Contrary to our expectations, we found no immediate moderating effect of political knowledge. However, over time, participants with moderate levels of political knowledge displayed most consistent framing effects compared to participants with low or high knowledge levels" (p. 974).

- “Effects that are traceable up to 2 weeks after exposure can be considered lasting, and do thus empirically substantiate the conceptualization of framing effects as long-term effects” (p. 976).

#### 4.10.12 Polarized Political Communication, Oppositional Media Hostility, and Selective Exposure

Arceneaux, K., Johnson, M., & Murphy, C. (2012). Polarized Political Communication, Oppositional Media Hostility, and Selective Exposure [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 74(1), 174–186. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002238161100123X>

- 1. Citation key:** arceneaux\_polarized\_2012
- 2. Author(s):** Kevin Arceneaux, Martin Johnson, and Chad Murphy
- 3. Year:** 2012
- 4. Publication:** The Journal of Politics
- 5. Keywords:** partisan media, selective exposure, hostile media perception, media fragmentation, media trust
- 6. Summary:** Arceneaux, Johnson, and Murphy examine the effects of partisan news media on public trust in news organizations, particularly focusing on a phenomenon they term *oppositional media hostility*—the tendency for individuals to perceive ideologically counterattitudinal news sources as biased and hostile. They argue that while exposure to partisan media increases perceived hostility toward opposing outlets, the presence of media choice moderates this effect. Through a series of six laboratory experiments, they test whether individuals exposed to counterattitudinal news programming exhibit greater hostility toward the media and whether selective exposure mitigates this response. Their findings indicate that while exposure to counterattitudinal media increases perceptions of bias, allowing individuals to choose their media exposure significantly blunts this effect.
- 7. Theory:** The authors build on research on the *hostile media effect*, which suggests that partisans view neutral or even balanced news coverage as biased against their political position. They extend this by arguing that in the current fragmented media environment, where partisan news outlets explicitly frame issues from ideological perspectives, hostility toward media is likely to be even more pronounced when individuals are exposed to counterattitudinal sources. This hostility, however, is tempered by the availability of selective exposure, as individuals tend to avoid ideologically discordant media. They propose a model in which perceived media bias is a function of forced exposure to counterattitudinal news, proattitudinal reinforcement, and selective avoidance. They further suggest that oppositional media hostility is driven by psychological resistance to counterattitudinal information, media cueing effects, and elite rhetoric that delegitimizes opposing media sources.
- 8. Methods:** The study employs six laboratory-based experiments to investigate the effects of partisan media exposure on perceptions of media bias. The first three experiments use a forced-exposure design, where participants are randomly assigned to watch either proattitudinal or counterattitudinal news clips from MSNBC or Fox News, and then rate their perceptions of media bias. The final three experiments introduce a selective-exposure component, allowing participants to choose between partisan news and entertainment options, simulating a more natural media environment. The authors measure participants' perceptions of fairness, hostility, and bias in the media using semantic differential scales and factor analysis. They also include a thought-listing task to capture immediate affective responses to media content. Regression models assess the impact of exposure conditions on media trust, while interaction terms test the moderating effects of selective exposure.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - Exposure to counterattitudinal partisan media will increase perceptions of media bias and hostility.
  - Exposure to proattitudinal partisan media will decrease perceptions of media bias and increase media trust.
  - The presence of selective exposure will attenuate the effects of counterattitudinal media exposure on media hostility.
  - Individuals who prefer entertainment media over news media will exhibit the strongest oppositional media hostility when forced to watch counterattitudinal content.

The findings support these hypotheses, showing that selective exposure significantly reduces perceptions of media hostility compared to forced exposure conditions.
- 10. Main findings:** The study finds that exposure to counterattitudinal media significantly increases perceptions of bias and hostility toward the news media, while exposure to proattitudinal media has the opposite effect, reinforcing trust in ideologically aligned outlets. However, when participants are given the option to choose their media exposure, hostility toward counterattitudinal sources is significantly diminished. The results suggest that while partisan media can contribute to media distrust, the ability to avoid discordant sources moderates this effect. Moreover, individuals who typically avoid news media and prefer entertainment programming exhibit the highest levels of oppositional media hostility when forced to watch counterattitudinal content, suggesting that media skepticism is not merely a function of partisanship but also of general media avoidance tendencies. The authors conclude that media fragmentation and selective exposure mitigate, rather than exacerbate, the polarizing effects of partisan media.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “We find that counterattitudinal news programming is more likely to induce hostile media perceptions than proattitudinal programming, but that the presence of choice blunts oppositional media hostility” (p. 175).
  - “Subjects who viewed counterattitudinal shows were more likely to judge the news media as untrustworthy, yet this effect disappears when individuals are given the option to choose their media exposure” (p. 182).
  - “By selecting out of watching political news, people dilute the effects of polarizing media” (p. 185).

#### 4.10.13 On-line and Memory-based: Revisiting the Relationship Between Candidate Evaluation Processing Models

Kim, Y. M., & Garrett, K. (2012). On-line and Memory-based: Revisiting the Relationship Between Candidate Evaluation Processing Models. *Political Behavior*, 34(2), 345–368. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-011-9158-9>

1. Citation key: kim\_-line\_2012

2. Author(s): Young Mie Kim and Kelly Garrett

3. Year: 2012

4. Publication: Political Behavior

5. Keywords: on-line processing, memory-based processing, candidate evaluation, hybrid model, vote choice

6. Summary: Kim and Garrett revisit the theoretical divide between on-line and memory-based models of political information processing, proposing a hybrid approach that integrates elements of both. They argue that individuals process political information through both mechanisms simultaneously rather than alternately. Using a real-time tracking method during a 2008 Democratic presidential primary debate, they provide empirical evidence for the co-occurrence of both processing models in candidate evaluations and vote choice. Their findings challenge the conventional dichotomy between on-line and memory-based processing, offering a more nuanced understanding of how citizens use political information in decision-making.

7. Theory: The dominant models of candidate evaluation—on-line processing and memory-based processing—are often conceptualized as mutually exclusive. The memory-based model assumes that individuals retrieve and evaluate stored information at the moment of decision-making (Zaller 1992), whereas the on-line model posits that individuals form running evaluations of political candidates as they receive new information, storing only their affective summary rather than specific details (Lodge et al. 1989). Kim and Garrett challenge this dichotomy, drawing on dual-process theories from social psychology to propose a hybrid model in which both processing mechanisms operate simultaneously. They argue that citizens are “flexible processors” who incorporate real-time evaluative updates (on-line processing) while also retrieving stored information (memory-based processing) when making candidate assessments. The co-occurrence of these modes of processing is critical to understanding political judgment, as it accounts for both immediate affective responses and deliberate reasoning in forming candidate evaluations. The authors hypothesize that the relative influence of each process depends on the nature of the political task, suggesting that on-line processing dominates when individuals assess single candidates, whereas memory-based processing gains prominence when voters compare multiple candidates or make vote choices.

8. Methods: The study employs a real-time tracking approach, measuring participants’ reactions to a Democratic presidential primary debate between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. Participants (N = 280) watched the debate online and recorded their real-time impressions of the candidates at regular intervals. The authors measured on-line processing by tracking the cumulative updates participants made to their candidate evaluations during the debate. Memory-based processing was measured post-debate by asking participants to recall specific details about the candidates and rate the favorability of the remembered information. Comparative analyses were conducted to assess whether on-line and memory-based processing co-occurred in candidate evaluations and vote choice. The study also included a control group that did not provide real-time assessments, ensuring that the measurement of on-line processing did not interfere with participants’ memory recall.

9. Hypotheses:

- Both on-line and memory-based processes influence candidate evaluations simultaneously, rather than alternately.
- On-line processing has a stronger effect on candidate evaluations, as individuals integrate real-time impressions into their assessments.
- Memory-based processing is more influential in vote choice, as individuals engage in comparative reasoning when selecting between multiple candidates.
- When the two processes generate conflicting evaluations, individuals rely more on effortful, memory-based reasoning to resolve inconsistencies.

The results support these hypotheses, showing that while both processing mechanisms operate concurrently, on-line processing tends to exert greater influence on immediate candidate evaluations, whereas memory-based processing becomes more prominent in comparative decision-making.

10. Main findings: The study confirms that on-line and memory-based information processing co-occur in candidate evaluation and vote choice. On-line processing exerts a stronger influence on candidate evaluations, as individuals integrate real-time affective updates while watching the debate. However, when participants were required to make a vote choice, memory-based processing played a greater role, particularly when individuals experienced conflicting affective responses during the debate. The authors find that participants who had stronger prior attitudes toward a candidate were more likely to rely on on-line processing, while those who had weaker pre-existing attitudes engaged in more memory-based reasoning. Additionally, real-time impressions of candidates tended to be more influential than recalled information when the two were congruent, but memory-based processing gained prominence when the two sources of evaluation conflicted. These results provide strong empirical support for a hybrid model, suggesting that political decision-making is a dynamic process in which different modes of information processing interact rather than function in isolation.

11. Key quotations:

- “Our results confirm that individuals engage in both on-line and memory-based information processing simulta-

neously, with the relative influence of each mode depending on the nature of the political task" (p. 347).

- "When individuals are exposed to real-time political information, they update their candidate evaluations on the spot. However, when they must make a comparative judgment—such as choosing between two candidates—memory-based retrieval plays a greater role" (p. 354).
- "Rather than alternating between distinct modes of processing, citizens integrate on-line and memory-based considerations into a unified judgment, revealing the flexibility of political cognition" (p. 362).

#### 4.10.14 Expertise and Bias in Political Communication Networks

Ahn, T. K., Huckfeldt, R., Mayer, A. K., & Ryan, J. B. (2013). Expertise and Bias in Political Communication Networks [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2012.00625.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(2), 357–373. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2012.00625.x>

1. Citation key: ahn\_expertise\_2013

2. Author(s): T. K. Ahn, Robert Huckfeldt, Alexander K. Mayer, and John Barry Ryan

3. Year: 2013

4. Publication: American Journal of Political Science

5. Keywords: political communication, expertise, opinion leaders, information networks, polarization

6. Summary: Ahn et al. examine how political expertise and bias shape the formation of political communication networks. They argue that individuals seek out informants who combine expertise with shared preferences, yet these ideal informants are often scarce within one's immediate social circles. Using a series of small-group experiments and an agent-based model, the authors explore how individuals balance the trade-offs between expertise and bias in selecting political informants. Their findings suggest that expertise is more influential in guiding political decisions, but contextual constraints on network formation can lead to polarization and the reinforcement of biases in communication.

7. Theory: The authors build on theories of political communication and opinion leadership to examine how individuals form political information networks. Traditional models suggest that citizens reduce information costs by relying on well-informed associates (Downs 1957; Lupia and McCubbins 1998). However, Ahn et al. argue that this process is constrained by the availability of informants who share one's political preferences. The authors integrate insights from network theory and social cognition, emphasizing that (1) political informants are often chosen based on both expertise and ideological alignment, (2) the costs of seeking informants beyond one's immediate network create barriers to unbiased information exchange, and (3) asymmetric distributions of expertise across political groups can lead to systematic biases in communication. By analyzing these dynamics, the study highlights the conditions under which political polarization is reinforced through social communication.

8. Methods: The study employs two primary methodological approaches: a small-group experimental design and an agent-based model. In the experiment, groups of seven participants communicated via networked computers in a simulated electoral decision-making task. Participants received private information about candidates, public information, and had opportunities to acquire additional information from other participants, who varied in expertise and political alignment. The agent-based model extends these findings by simulating network formation under different distributions of expertise and political preferences, allowing the authors to test how individual-level selection mechanisms scale to population-wide effects.

9. Hypotheses:

- Individuals will prioritize expertise when selecting political informants, but shared preferences will also play a role in selection.
- When expertise and shared preferences are misaligned, individuals will experience a trade-off between acquiring accurate information and reinforcing their existing biases.
- Asymmetric distributions of expertise across political groups will contribute to biased communication networks, where some groups exert disproportionate influence over political discourse.
- Communication barriers between groups with differing levels of expertise will reinforce polarization and reduce cross-cutting political discussion.

The findings largely support these hypotheses, demonstrating that while expertise is a primary determinant of informant selection, shared preferences influence the flow of political information and contribute to ideological segmentation.

10. Main findings: Ahn et al. find that expertise plays a crucial role in determining who is sought out as a political informant, but the distribution of expertise within a given social setting affects whether individuals seek information within or beyond their own political group. Participants in the experimental setting showed a preference for obtaining information from knowledgeable sources, yet when ideological alignment was absent, communication was less frequent and more likely to reinforce biases. The agent-based model extends these insights, demonstrating that asymmetric distributions of expertise across groups can lead to communication structures that favor certain political perspectives over others. Groups with higher levels of expertise become more central in political networks, shaping the flow of information in ways that amplify polarization. Moreover, the study finds that the presence of communication costs further limits cross-group interactions, reinforcing the tendency for individuals to engage in politically homogenous information networks.

11. Key quotations:

- “Ideal informants are typically characterized by the joint presence of political expertise and shared preferences, but the supply of these individuals quite often varies across groups and settings” (p. 357).
- “The path of least resistance is to select an informant readily at hand. From a collective action standpoint, the costs of an extended search for like-minded associates are likely to swamp the expected benefits” (p. 359).
- “Network formation occurs within a social context that introduces opportunities and constraints on patterns of association. Problems thus arise when the range of available options is constrained—when an individual’s own preferences are rare, when the supply of experts is low, and especially when these two circumstances coincide” (p. 370).

#### 4.10.15 Remembering to Forget: A Note on the Duration of Campaign Advertising Effects

Bartels, L. M. (2014). Remembering to Forget: A Note on the Duration of Campaign Advertising Effects [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2014.956198>]. *Political Communication*, 31(4), 532–544. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2014.956198>

- 1. Citation key:** bartels\_remembering\_2014
- 2. Author(s):** Larry M. Bartels
- 3. Year:** 2014
- 4. Publication:** Political Communication
- 5. Keywords:** campaign advertising, persuasion effects, political memory, motivated reasoning, voter learning
- 6. Summary:** Bartels investigates the duration of campaign advertising effects, challenging the conventional view that their decay results from simple forgetting. Using an experimental design embedded in the 2012 Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project (CCAP), he finds that while an Obama campaign ad initially increased vote intentions for Obama by 2.8 percentage points, this effect diminished by half in a post-election survey. However, the decline was not uniform: the effect remained stable among undecided voters and Obama supporters but reversed among Romney supporters, suggesting that ad effects are eroded by motivated reasoning rather than mere memory decay.
- 7. Theory:** The prevailing view in the literature is that campaign advertising has strong but short-lived persuasive effects, which fade due to forgetting. Bartels challenges this interpretation, arguing that the observed decay is instead a product of motivated reasoning. He suggests that individuals predisposed to reject a message actively counterargue and reinterpret it over time. Drawing on theories of political cognition and partisan bias, he proposes that advertising effects are contingent on voters’ prior attitudes: those favorable to the ad’s message retain its influence, while those opposed to it engage in motivated reasoning to neutralize or even reverse its effects. This argument implies that political communication does not merely shape attitudes in a unidirectional manner but interacts dynamically with existing predispositions, making the effects of persuasion both conditional and asymmetric.
- 8. Methods:** Bartels conducts a survey experiment within the 2012 CCAP, exposing 1,503 respondents to a pro-Obama advertisement while maintaining a control group of 1,497 respondents. The ad’s impact on vote intentions was measured immediately after exposure and again in a post-election follow-up survey conducted 1–3 weeks later. The study employs a panel design, tracking individual-level changes rather than relying on aggregate trends. Bartels examines how prior candidate preferences condition the persistence or decay of advertising effects, using regression models to estimate the impact of ad exposure on vote choice while controlling for baseline attitudes, party identification, and demographic factors.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - The initial persuasive effect of campaign ads will decay over time, but not uniformly across all voters.
  - Among voters predisposed to support the candidate featured in the ad, the effect will persist or diminish only slightly.
  - Among voters predisposed to oppose the candidate, the effect will reverse over time due to motivated reasoning.
  - Decay patterns will reflect active counterarguing rather than passive forgetting.

The findings support these hypotheses, demonstrating that advertising effects are contingent on prior political attitudes rather than a simple function of memory decay.
- 10. Main findings:** Bartels finds that the immediate effect of ad exposure was a 2.8 percentage point increase in vote intentions for Obama, but this effect declined to 1.4 points in the post-election survey. However, the decline was not evenly distributed: Obama supporters and undecided voters exhibited little to no decay, whereas Romney supporters initially shifted toward Obama but later reverted, producing a net negative effect. This pattern suggests that exposure to counterattitudinal political messages does not merely fade from memory but is actively countered by those predisposed to resist them. The results challenge dominant models of persuasion by emphasizing the role of motivated reasoning in shaping the durability of campaign advertising effects.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “The effect of ad exposure remained virtually constant among people who were undecided or predisposed to support Obama. The reduced aggregate effect was almost entirely attributable to Romney supporters who moved toward Obama in the immediate wake of ad exposure but returned to Romney by Election Day” (p. 533).
  - “Apparent decay in the net persuasive effects of campaign ads may result in significant part from some sort of active counterarguing by people predisposed to resist them rather than simple ‘forgetting’” (p. 534).
  - “Rather than alternating between distinct modes of processing, citizens integrate on-line and memory-based considerations into a unified judgment, revealing the flexibility of political cognition” (p. 541).

#### 4.10.16 Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire: How Fact-Checking Influences Citizens' Reactions to Negative Advertising

Fridkin, K., Kenney, P. J., & Wintersieck, A. (2015). Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire: How Fact-Checking Influences Citizens' Reactions to Negative Advertising [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2014.914613>]. *Political Communication*, 32(1), 127–151. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2014.914613>

1. **Citation key:** fridkin\_liar\_2015
2. **Author(s):** Kim Fridkin, Patrick J. Kenney, and Amanda Wintersieck
3. **Year:** 2015
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** fact-checking, negative campaigning, political advertising, persuasion, elections
6. **Summary:** Fridkin, Kenney, and Wintersieck examine the role of fact-checking in shaping public perceptions of negative political advertisements. They argue that fact-checks influence citizens' assessments of ad accuracy, tone, and usefulness, and that these effects vary by political sophistication, tolerance for negativity, and partisan attachments. Using an Internet survey experiment conducted during the 2012 U.S. Senate race in Ohio, the authors find that negative fact-checks—those that challenge the truthfulness of a campaign ad—are more powerful than positive fact-checks in shaping public attitudes toward candidates and campaign messaging.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on theories of persuasion and information processing to argue that fact-checking functions as a corrective mechanism in political campaigns, shaping voters' acceptance of political messaging. Drawing on dual-mode models of persuasion, they posit that voters process fact-checks either systematically (engaging in analytical evaluation) or heuristically (relying on credibility cues). Given the negativity bias in information processing, they hypothesize that negative fact-checks (which debunk misleading claims) will have a stronger impact than positive fact-checks (which affirm accurate claims). Additionally, they argue that citizens' responsiveness to fact-checking is moderated by three key individual-level factors: (1) political sophistication, as more knowledgeable citizens are better equipped to evaluate competing claims; (2) intolerance for negative campaigning, as individuals who dislike attack ads will be more sensitive to corrections; and (3) partisanship, as motivated reasoning may lead partisans to resist fact-checks that contradict their preferred candidate's messaging.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a 2 (advertisement target: Sherrod Brown vs. Josh Mandel) × 3 (fact-check condition: no fact-check, accurate fact-check, inaccurate fact-check) factorial design, producing six experimental conditions. A national sample of 452 respondents was recruited for an Internet-based survey experiment conducted in August 2012. Participants were randomly assigned to view a negative campaign ad from the 2012 Ohio Senate race, followed by either no fact-check, a fact-check affirming the ad's accuracy, or a fact-check debunking the ad's claims. Respondents then completed a questionnaire assessing their perceptions of the ad's accuracy, tone, and usefulness, as well as their willingness to accept the claims made about the candidate. The authors use OLS regression to test whether fact-checks influence these perceptions, and whether political sophistication, intolerance toward negativity, and partisanship moderate these effects.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Negative fact-checks will be more influential than positive fact-checks in shaping perceptions of political advertisements.
  - Politically sophisticated individuals will be more responsive to fact-checks, particularly negative ones.
  - Individuals with low tolerance for negativity will be more influenced by fact-checks than those more accepting of negative campaign tactics.
  - Partisan voters will be less likely to accept fact-checks that contradict their preexisting beliefs about their preferred candidate.

The results largely confirm these expectations, with fact-checks—especially negative ones—significantly affecting perceptions of ad accuracy, tone, and usefulness.
10. **Main findings:** The authors find that fact-checking significantly influences public evaluations of negative political advertisements, with negative fact-checks proving more effective than positive ones. Exposure to a negative fact-check reduces the perceived accuracy and usefulness of an ad, while also making respondents view its tone more harshly. The effects of fact-checking are moderated by political sophistication and intolerance toward negativity: more sophisticated respondents and those less tolerant of negative campaigning are especially responsive to fact-checks debunking false claims. However, partisanship does not strongly condition responses to fact-checks, as both Democrats and Republicans reacted similarly to corrections. The study provides robust evidence that fact-checking can shape voters' evaluations of political advertising, though its effects depend on individual predispositions.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Fact-checks influence people's assessments of the accuracy, usefulness, and tone of negative political ads. The fact-checks also sway citizens' likelihood of accepting the claims made in the advertisements" (p. 127).
  - "People who are most intolerant of negativity and most politically sophisticated are especially likely to update their beliefs in response to a fact-check, particularly when the fact-check disputes the claims of a negative advertisement" (p. 140).
  - "Negative fact-checks—those that contradict the claims of a negative advertisement—are far more influential than positive fact-checks, reinforcing the well-documented negativity bias in information processing" (p. 146).

#### 4.10.17 Winning Faces Vary by Ideology: How Nonverbal Source Cues Influence Election and Communication Success in Politics

Laustsen, L., & Petersen, M. B. (2016). Winning Faces Vary by Ideology: How Nonverbal Source Cues Influence Election and Communication Success in Politics [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2015.1050565>]. *Political Communication*, 33(2), 188–211. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2015.1050565>

1. **Citation key:** laustsen\_winning\_2016
2. **Author(s):** Lasse Laustsen and Michael Bang Petersen
3. **Year:** 2016
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** elections, facial dominance, followership psychology, ideology, nonverbal cues, persuasion, source cues
6. **Summary:** Laustsen and Petersen examine how nonverbal source cues, particularly facial dominance, influence electoral success and persuasive communication. They argue that facial traits interact with the ideological predispositions of the audience, such that dominant faces are more persuasive among conservatives but backfire among liberals. Using five studies, they find consistent evidence that facial dominance increases success for conservative candidates but decreases it for liberal candidates. These findings suggest that political candidates who do not match the ideological preferences of their constituents in their facial appearance may struggle to gain votes and policy support.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that both partisan stereotypes and followership psychology shape how audiences perceive political candidates based on facial dominance. They build on research showing that people infer ideological traits from facial features, associating dominant, masculine faces with conservatism and warm, non-dominant faces with liberalism. Furthermore, followership psychology suggests that individuals prefer dominant leaders in conflict-ridden environments, a perception more common among conservatives, whereas liberals favor cooperative and non-dominant leaders. These processes suggest an interaction between facial dominance and voter ideology: dominant faces will be persuasive for conservatives but repellent to liberals. The authors also argue that these effects are psychologically ingrained and persist across cultures, extending beyond explicit verbal ideology cues.
8. **Methods:** The authors conduct five studies utilizing experimental and observational data across Denmark and the United States. Studies 1 and 2 use experimental vignettes in which subjects are asked to select a leader in a fictional tribal setting, with manipulated facial dominance cues. Study 3 analyzes real-world election outcomes from Danish local elections, correlating candidate vote shares with perceived facial dominance. Studies 4 and 5 test the persuasion effects of facial dominance in political communication using manipulated images of Danish politicians in policy support scenarios. Across studies, the authors employ logistic regressions, principal component factor analysis, and structural equation modeling to assess the interaction between facial traits, voter ideology, and electoral success.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Dominant-looking candidates will receive greater electoral and communication success among conservative audiences.
  - Non-dominant-looking candidates will be more successful among liberal audiences.
  - These effects will hold across different cultural contexts and political environments.
  - The relationship between facial dominance and electoral success will be more pronounced among male candidates.
  - The effect of facial dominance on persuasion will be weaker for well-known politicians, as other explicit cues will override nonverbal source effects.

Their hypotheses are largely confirmed, with robust evidence showing that dominant facial features benefit conservative candidates and harm liberal candidates, though the effect diminishes for highly recognizable politicians.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds that facial dominance significantly influences both electoral and communicative success, but its effects are conditional on audience ideology. Across experimental and observational studies, conservatives prefer dominant-looking leaders, whereas liberals prefer non-dominant-looking ones. In Danish local elections, dominant facial traits increase vote shares for conservative candidates but reduce them for liberals. In persuasion experiments, dominant faces enhance message credibility among conservatives but weaken it among liberals. Additionally, these effects appear to be rooted in psychological predispositions regarding conflict perception. The study also finds that nonverbal cues matter less for well-known politicians, suggesting that explicit ideological cues can override facial trait effects.

11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Across five studies, we demonstrate that a dominant face is a winning face when the audience is conservative but backfires and decreases success when the audience is liberal” (p. 188).
  - “Conservatives, we suggest, are more likely to view the social world in a way that corresponds to the wartime contexts investigated in the followership literature. Liberals, in contrast, are more likely to view the social world in a way that corresponds to the peacetime contexts investigated in the followership literature” (p. 192).
  - “To be successful in politics, strong arguments are not always enough. Arguments need to be delivered by a source, and the nonverbal cues associated with this source need to fit the narrow preferences of the audience” (p. 205).

#### 4.10.18 Does Media Coverage of Partisan Polarization Affect Political Attitudes?

Levendusky, M., & Malhotra, N. (2016). Does Media Coverage of Partisan Polarization Affect Political Attitudes? *Political Communication*, 33(2), 283–301. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2015.1038455>

1. **Citation key:** levendusky\_does\_2016
2. **Author(s):** Matthew Levendusky and Neil Malhotra
3. **Year:** 2016
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** polarization, media coverage, perceptions of polarization, affective polarization, partisan attitudes
6. **Summary:** Levendusky and Malhotra examine the effects of media coverage of partisan polarization on political attitudes. While existing research focuses on whether polarization is increasing in the electorate, this study investigates whether media portrayals of polarization shape how people perceive the political landscape. Using a survey experiment, the authors find that exposure to media narratives about a highly polarized electorate increases perceptions of partisan polarization, moderates citizens' policy attitudes, but simultaneously heightens affective polarization—causing individuals to dislike opposing partisans more. These findings highlight the complex and counterintuitive ways in which media representations influence political attitudes.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that media coverage depicting a polarized public serves as an "anti-cue," prompting citizens to moderate their issue positions. However, this same media portrayal also fosters greater dislike toward the opposing party, thereby increasing affective polarization. They suggest that individuals react negatively to depictions of a deeply divided electorate, as this violates widely held norms of moderation and compromise. In response, people adjust their own ideological positions to be less extreme. At the same time, exposure to these media narratives reinforces negative stereotypes about opposing partisans, strengthening affective polarization. This dual effect—moderation in issue attitudes but increased partisan animosity—contrasts with existing theories that assume media exposure uniformly reinforces polarization.
8. **Methods:** The authors conduct a between-subjects survey experiment with a nationally representative sample of 1,587 U.S. adults. Respondents are randomly assigned to one of three conditions: (1) a news article describing the electorate as highly polarized, (2) a news article depicting the electorate as relatively moderate, or (3) a control condition featuring an apolitical article. After exposure to the stimulus, participants answer questions about their perceptions of polarization, their own policy preferences, and their feelings toward the opposing party. The authors use OLS regression models to assess whether exposure to polarization coverage influences these outcomes.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Exposure to media coverage emphasizing mass polarization will increase citizens' perceptions that the electorate is polarized.
  - Exposure to media coverage emphasizing mass polarization will lead individuals to moderate their issue positions.
  - Exposure to media coverage emphasizing mass polarization will increase affective polarization, making individuals more hostile toward the opposing party.

The findings confirm all three hypotheses, illustrating that media depictions of polarization have distinct effects on issue positions and partisan attitudes.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that media coverage of polarization significantly alters public perceptions and attitudes. First, exposure to stories about a deeply divided electorate increases perceptions of partisan polarization. Respondents in the "polarized electorate" condition perceive greater ideological distance between Democrats and Republicans compared to those in the "moderate electorate" condition. Second, exposure to these narratives leads to issue moderation, as individuals adjust their policy preferences away from extreme positions. However, and paradoxically, exposure to these same media narratives also heightens affective polarization: individuals express stronger negative feelings toward members of the opposing party, rating them more unfavorably on feeling thermometers and showing increased reluctance to engage with them socially. These findings suggest that while media coverage of polarization might temper ideological extremity, it simultaneously deepens partisan animosity, exacerbating affective polarization.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "We show that media coverage of polarization increases citizens' beliefs that the electorate is polarized. Furthermore, the media's depiction of a polarized electorate causes voters to moderate their own issue positions but increases their dislike of the opposing party" (p. 283).
  - "When citizens are exposed to media coverage depicting mass polarization, they dislike members of the opposition more, and rate them more negatively on a number of dimensions" (p. 284).
  - "While media coverage of partisan polarization moderates issue positions, it also simultaneously increases affective polarization, heightening the animosity between partisans" (p. 290).

#### 4.10.19 Learning From News on Different Media Platforms: An Eye-Tracking Experiment

Kruikemeier, S., Lecheler, S., & Boyer, M. M. (2018). Learning From News on Different Media Platforms: An Eye-Tracking Experiment [Publisher: Routledge\_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1388310>]. *Political Communication*, 35(1), 75–96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2017.1388310>

1. **Citation key:** kruikemeier\_learning\_2018

2. **Author(s):** Sanne Kruikemeier, Sophie Lecheler, and Ming M. Boyer
3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** news website, printed newspaper, platforms, learning, experiment, eye tracking
6. **Summary:** Kruikemeier, Lecheler, and Boyer investigate how news modality—whether news is read in a printed newspaper or on a news website—affects visual attention and learning outcomes. Using an eye-tracking experiment with 149 participants, they assess differences in attention across media platforms and explore the mechanisms through which news format influences knowledge acquisition. Their findings suggest that printed newspapers facilitate more diverse learning through broader visual attention, whereas news websites lead to selective attention and learning focused on specific topics.
7. **Theory:** The authors examine the competing perspectives on how digitalization affects news consumption and political learning. While some argue that online news reduces engagement and leads to fragmented knowledge acquisition due to selective exposure, others suggest that self-selection enhances learning by increasing motivation to process information. The study builds on theories of user control and linearity of news presentation. In print newspapers, editorial cues structure the reading experience, guiding readers toward diverse news content. In contrast, digital news platforms grant users more autonomy in selecting articles, potentially fostering engagement but also increasing cognitive load and the risk of selective exposure. Visual attention serves as a key mediator in this process: attention influences which news is processed, stored, and recalled. The authors propose that while print news fosters inadvertent learning through broader exposure, digital news facilitates in-depth learning through selective attention.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a laboratory experiment utilizing eye-tracking technology to measure visual attention and its impact on news learning. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: reading a printed newspaper, an e-newspaper (tablet), or a news website. The printed and tablet conditions maintained a linear structure similar to traditional newspapers, whereas the website condition allowed for self-directed navigation. Eye-tracking data captured dwell time and selective visual attention, which were analyzed as mediators in the relationship between news modality and learning outcomes. Learning was assessed using recall and recognition tests, with statistical analyses conducted through mediation models using Hayes' PROCESS macro.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that print-news reading leads to greater learning compared to online news consumption due to increased visual attention. However, they also anticipate that selective attention in online news environments can enhance learning about specific topics. Their findings confirm that print news fosters broader knowledge acquisition, while digital platforms encourage deeper but narrower engagement with news.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that print newspapers promote greater overall news learning by encouraging broad visual attention across multiple articles, facilitated by editorial cues. Conversely, online news consumption results in more selective attention, with users spending more time on fewer articles, leading to in-depth learning on chosen topics but reduced exposure to diverse news content. Mediation analyses show that visual attention significantly influences learning outcomes, with both broad and selective attention playing a role. The findings highlight a trade-off: print media support more general political knowledge, while digital media facilitate more focused knowledge acquisition. The results suggest that digitalization does not inherently diminish news learning but alters its nature by encouraging issue-specific rather than general political knowledge.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Exposure to printed news media leads to more diverse learning through increased visual attention, while more selective visual attention to news on websites leads to learning of specific subjects only" (p. 75).
  - "Newspaper readers use the linear structure and editorial cues to read more diverse articles for a longer period of time than news website readers" (p. 87).
  - "Selective and not selective visual attention serve as the underlying process that may explain the contradictory findings regarding the relationship between reading news on a website versus reading news in a printed newspaper, and learning" (p. 89).

#### 4.10.20 The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States

Iyengar, S., Lelkes, Y., Levendusky, M., Malhotra, N., & Westwood, S. J. (2019). The Origins and Consequences of Affective Polarization in the United States [Publisher: Annual Reviews]. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 22(Volume 22, 2019), 129–146. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051117-073034>

1. **Citation key:** iyengar\_origins\_2019
2. **Author(s):** Shanto Iyengar, Yphtach Lelkes, Matthew Levendusky, Neil Malhotra, and Sean J. Westwood
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** Annual Review of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** affective polarization, partisanship, ideology, social identity, American politics
6. **Summary:** Iyengar et al. analyze the phenomenon of affective polarization, in which partisans view members of the opposing party with increasing hostility and distrust. The authors argue that affective polarization is distinct from ideological polarization, as it stems primarily from the social identity aspects of partisanship rather than policy disagreements. They explore its origins in partisan group identity, its intensification due to elite rhetoric and media fragmentation, and its consequences for political behavior, interpersonal relationships, and broader social trust. The article also examines potential strategies for mitigating partisan animosity.

- 7. Theory:** The authors argue that partisanship functions as a social identity, leading individuals to categorize others into in-groups (their own party) and out-groups (the opposing party). Drawing on social identity theory, they posit that affective polarization arises naturally from the psychological tendency to favor one's own group while viewing the out-group with suspicion and hostility. This process is reinforced by partisan sorting, elite messaging, and media dynamics, which exacerbate misperceptions about the extremity of the opposing party. The authors contend that affective polarization is distinct from ideological polarization, as it does not necessarily require substantive policy disagreements. Instead, it is rooted in emotional reactions to partisanship as a marker of social belonging.
- 8. Methods:** The authors review empirical evidence from survey research, implicit bias tests, and behavioral experiments to measure affective polarization. They examine trends in ANES feeling thermometer data, showing a steady rise in partisan animosity since the 1980s. They also analyze implicit association tests (IAT) that reveal subconscious partisan bias, and experimental studies demonstrating how partisans discriminate against out-party members in social and economic interactions. Additionally, they explore the effects of partisan media exposure and campaign rhetoric on polarization using observational and experimental designs.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The authors suggest that affective polarization is driven by the salience of partisan identities rather than issue-based ideological extremity. They hypothesize that:
- Individuals with stronger partisan identities exhibit greater affective polarization.
  - Partisan media consumption increases animosity toward the opposing party.
  - Political campaigns heighten affective polarization by reinforcing partisan identity.
  - Misperceptions about the demographic composition of opposing partisans fuel partisan hostility.
- Empirical findings support these hypotheses, showing that partisan identity, media exposure, and elite rhetoric all contribute to affective polarization.
- 10. Main findings:** Iyengar et al. find that affective polarization has increased significantly in the United States over the past several decades, largely due to the intensification of partisan identities rather than ideological extremity. Partisans not only dislike members of the opposing party but are increasingly unwilling to socialize with them, work alongside them, or even accept them as family members. They demonstrate that elite messaging, partisan media, and social sorting reinforce affective polarization by fostering negative stereotypes of the opposing party. Moreover, affective polarization extends beyond politics, influencing economic behavior, hiring decisions, and interpersonal relationships. The authors also identify potential interventions, such as emphasizing shared national identity or correcting misperceptions about the other party, as strategies for reducing partisan animosity.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Ordinary Americans increasingly dislike and distrust those from the other party. Democrats and Republicans both say that the other party's members are hypocritical, selfish, and closed-minded, and they are unwilling to socialize across party lines" (p. 129).
- "The more salient the group to the sense of personal identity, the stronger these intergroup divisions... Partisanship is a particularly salient and powerful identifier for two main reasons. First, it is acquired at a young age and rarely changes over the life cycle... Second, political campaigns—the formal occasions for expressing one's partisan identity—recur frequently and last for many months" (p. 130).
- "We find that Americans are averse to cross-partisan dialogue within their families, especially in the wake of the 2016 election... The percentage of Americans who would be somewhat or very unhappy if their child married someone of the opposite party has increased by about 35 percentage points over the last 50 years" (p. 136).

#### 4.10.21 Negativity Biases and Political Ideology: A Comparative Test across 17 Countries

Fournier, P., Soroka, S., & Nir, L. (2020). Negativity Biases and Political Ideology: A Comparative Test across 17 Countries. *American Political Science Review*, 114(3), 775–791. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000131>

1. **Citation key:** `fournier_negativity_2020`
2. **Author(s):** Patrick Fournier, Stuart Soroka, and Lilach Nir
3. **Year:** 2020
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** negativity bias, political ideology, psychophysiology, cross-national analysis, political psychology
6. **Summary:** Fournier, Soroka, and Nir examine the link between negativity biases and political ideology using a large cross-national psychophysiological experiment. Prior research suggests that individuals with stronger physiological reactions to negative stimuli are more likely to hold conservative attitudes, but most studies have focused on the United States. This article tests whether the association between negativity biases and ideology extends beyond the U.S. by exposing participants from 17 countries to positive and negative televised news reports and static images while measuring their skin conductance. The study finds little consistent evidence of a global link between negativity biases and political ideology.
7. **Theory:** The negativity bias—the tendency to prioritize negative over positive information—is a well-documented cognitive pattern with implications for political attitudes. Prior work suggests that individuals with heightened physiological responses to negative stimuli tend to hold more conservative views. This paper tests whether this relationship extends beyond the American context by conducting a large-scale cross-national study. The authors argue that if negativity biases underlie political ideology, this effect should be observable across different cultural, economic, and political environments. However, they acknowledge that existing studies, which are primarily conducted in the

United States, may not generalize due to institutional and societal differences. They also note that replication studies have struggled to reproduce prior findings, casting doubt on the robustness of the relationship between negativity biases and conservatism.

8. **Methods:** The study employs a psychophysiological experimental design across 17 countries spanning six continents. Participants were exposed to both positive and negative stimuli, including real-world televised news stories from BBC World News and controlled photographic images from the International Affective Picture System (IAPS). Electrodermal activity (skin conductance) was recorded to measure physiological arousal in response to these stimuli. Political ideology was assessed using a modified Wilson-Patterson Conservatism scale and self-reported left-right ideological placement. The analysis was conducted at three levels: (1) individual-level averages of physiological responses, (2) stimulus-level reactions to different types of content, and (3) second-by-second time-series analysis of physiological responses.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors test whether physiological responses to negative stimuli are stronger among conservatives than liberals, as suggested by previous research. They expect that individuals who identify as conservative will exhibit greater electrodermal responses to negative stimuli compared to liberals, across all three levels of analysis. However, their results fail to confirm this expectation.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds strong evidence for a general negativity bias, as all participants, regardless of ideology, react more strongly to negative stimuli than to positive stimuli. However, there is little to no consistent evidence that negativity biases are systematically associated with political ideology across different national contexts. In both the video and photographic experiments, conservatives did not exhibit significantly stronger physiological responses to negative content than liberals. Furthermore, results varied widely across countries, with no discernible pattern linking ideology to physiological reactions. These findings challenge prior research that suggests a universal relationship between negativity biases and conservatism, instead indicating that the connection may be more context-dependent or weaker than previously assumed.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "We view this research not as an exact replication of prior work, but rather a conceptual replication, testing the same idea with different stimuli, procedures, and measures" (p. 775).
  - "Even as we find strong evidence of negativity biases generally, we find little to no evidence that biases are systematically associated with ideology, in the United States or elsewhere" (p. 776).
  - "Our results are thus, in part, a reminder of the importance of replication of small-sample, American findings. They are a warning against sometimes-polarizing claims about ideology and biology in the popular press" (p. 776).

#### 4.10.22 Protest Coverage Matters: How Media Framing and Visual Communication Affects Support for Black Civil Rights Protests

Brown, D. K., & Mourão, R. R. (2021). Protest Coverage Matters: How Media Framing and Visual Communication Affects Support for Black Civil Rights Protests [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2021.1884724>. *Mass Communication and Society*, 24(4), 576–596. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2021.1884724>

1. **Citation key:** brown\_protest\_2021
2. **Author(s):** Danielle K. Brown and Rachel R. Mourão
3. **Year:** 2021
4. **Publication:** Mass Communication and Society
5. **Keywords:** protest paradigm, media framing, visual communication, Black Lives Matter, social movements
6. **Summary:** Brown and Mourão examine how media coverage of protests influences public opinion, particularly in the context of Black Lives Matter (BLM) demonstrations. They assess how different framing devices—riot, confrontation, and debate frames—impact audience support for protests, criticism of the police, and identification with demonstrators. Using a  $3 \times 2$  experimental design, the authors find that legitimizing frames increase support for protests, whereas riot and confrontation frames lead to greater criticism of demonstrators and lower criticism of law enforcement.
7. **Theory:** The study builds on the protest paradigm, which describes how journalistic norms often delegitimize social movements by emphasizing conflict, violence, and disruption rather than the substantive goals of protests. Brown and Mourão argue that while evolving media landscapes have allowed for some shifts in coverage, mainstream press continues to portray Black-led protests in delegitimizing ways. They highlight how media framing influences audience attitudes by reinforcing existing biases, showing that riot and confrontation frames reduce support for protesters while legitimizing frames increase it. The study also considers the role of preexisting attitudes about race, police, and protest movements in shaping media effects. The authors contend that audience predispositions significantly influence reactions to protest coverage, sometimes outweighing the effects of framing itself.
8. **Methods:** The authors employ an online survey experiment with a  $3$  (framing: riot, confrontation, debate)  $\times$   $2$  (visual: photo, no photo) factorial design. Participants ( $N = 610$ ) were randomly assigned to read one of six versions of a news article about a Black Lives Matter protest. The articles varied in their framing of the protest, either emphasizing violence and disorder (riot frame), clashes with police (confrontation frame), or the movement's grievances and demands (debate frame). Some participants were also shown accompanying images reinforcing the textual frame. The dependent variables included criticism of police, criticism of protesters, support for protesters, and identification with demonstrators. Preexisting attitudes about race, policing, and protests were included as covariates. The analysis

utilized multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) and hierarchical regression models to test the hypotheses.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Exposure to riot and confrontation frames will increase criticism of protesters, decrease criticism of police, and reduce both support for and identification with demonstrators. This hypothesis was supported.
- The presence of a photo will intensify framing effects, reinforcing the impact of riot, confrontation, or debate frames. This hypothesis was not supported.
- Preexisting attitudes about race, policing, and protests will be stronger predictors of audience responses than media frames alone. This hypothesis was supported.

**10. Main findings:** The results confirm that media framing significantly shapes audience perceptions of protests. Articles using a legitimizing debate frame increased support for protesters, identification with the movement, and criticism of the police. In contrast, articles employing riot or confrontation frames heightened criticism of protesters and reduced both support for and identification with them. However, preexisting attitudes about race, policing, and the Black Lives Matter movement played a larger role in shaping audience reactions than media framing alone. The study also found that the presence of visuals did not amplify framing effects, contradicting expectations that images would intensify audience responses. These findings suggest that while journalistic framing influences public opinion, audience predispositions remain the strongest determinant of attitudes toward protests.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Findings showed that articles with a legitimizing debate frame increased support for protesters, identification with protesters, and police criticism compared to articles with riot and confrontation frames” (p. 577).
- “The riot and confrontation frames increase criticism toward protesters, decrease support for and identification with the movement, and decrease police criticism” (p. 578).
- “Results revealed prior levels of support for the movement influenced criticism of police action and support for and identification with protesters more than media frames” (p. 579).

#### 4.10.23 ‘I saw it on Facebook’: An Experimental Analysis of Political Learning through Social Media

Feezell, J. T., & Ortiz, B. (2021). ‘I saw it on Facebook’: An experimental analysis of political learning through social media [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1697340>]. *Information, Communication & Society*, 24(9), 1283–1302. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1697340>

**1. Citation key:** feezell\_i\_2021

**2. Author(s):** Jessica T. Feezell and Brittany Ortiz

**3. Year:** 2021

**4. Publication:** Information, Communication & Society

**5. Keywords:** social media, political communication, incidental exposure, political knowledge, misinformation

**6. Summary:** Feezell and Ortiz examine whether incidental exposure to political information through social media contributes to political learning. They conduct two longitudinal, controlled experiments embedded within the Facebook platform to assess whether exposure to political content affects factual political knowledge. Their findings indicate that exposure to political information through Facebook does not significantly increase factual political knowledge. However, among those with low political interest, exposure to incidental political information leads to greater confidence in their political knowledge, increasing the likelihood of guessing rather than admitting uncertainty.

**7. Theory:** The authors build on theories of incidental political exposure and media effects, arguing that political knowledge is unevenly distributed across society and that exposure to political information through social media may offer an avenue for learning, particularly among those who typically avoid political content. They theorize that social media’s structure allows for political learning through exposure to political content that users might not seek out deliberately. However, they acknowledge that previous studies suggest political knowledge is primarily driven by motivation and engagement rather than incidental exposure. Drawing on theories of media effects and cognitive processing, the authors hypothesize that social media exposure could enhance political knowledge but may also inflate confidence without necessarily improving factual understanding. This aligns with prior research indicating that individuals with lower political interest are more susceptible to media effects in controlled environments but generally avoid political information outside of such settings.

**8. Methods:** The study employs two longitudinal experiments on Facebook, where participants were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. The treatment group received political news posts within a Facebook group, while the control group received non-political content. Participants’ political knowledge was measured before and after exposure through multiple-choice factual knowledge tests. The second experiment introduced an option for respondents to indicate “Don’t Know” to assess confidence levels and willingness to guess. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression was used to analyze the effects of treatment assignment on political knowledge and response behavior. Interaction effects were tested to examine whether the impact of exposure varied based on political interest.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that exposure to political content through Facebook will increase political knowledge, particularly among those with lower levels of political interest. However, they also explore whether incidental exposure influences confidence in political knowledge, leading individuals to guess rather than admit uncertainty.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds no significant effect of incidental exposure to political information on factual political knowledge. Political knowledge at the pre-test stage strongly predicts knowledge at the post-test, suggesting that

prior knowledge is a more significant determinant than exposure. However, among individuals with low political interest, exposure to political content reduces the likelihood of responding "Don't Know" and increases the likelihood of providing incorrect answers, suggesting a rise in self-perceived knowledge without corresponding gains in factual accuracy. These findings align with prior research on the illusion of knowledge and overconfidence effects in political learning.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "This study asks: Does exposure to incidental political information through social media promote political learning among users? We conduct two longitudinal, controlled experiments administered through the Facebook platform, and find no statistical difference in the levels of factual political knowledge among participants exposed to political information compared to those who were not" (p. 1284).
- "Our findings suggest that exposure to political information via Facebook does not necessarily lead to higher levels of factual knowledge but may increase self-perceived knowledge, particularly among those with low political interest" (p. 1295).
- "None of the participants became more politically knowledgeable, but encountering incidental political information on Facebook did seem to make the low-interest subjects feel more knowledgeable and the high-interest subjects question their knowledge" (p. 1296).

## 4.11 The Role of Communication in Democracy

### 4.11.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of political communication in democracy examines how mass media, digital platforms, and interpersonal discourse influence democratic governance. Early models emphasized the role of media in informing citizens, enabling rational debate, and acting as a watchdog against government overreach. Over time, scholars have critiqued these assumptions, highlighting the increasing commercialization of media, the rise of infotainment, and the challenges posed by media fragmentation. Theories of mediatization suggest that political actors now tailor their strategies to media logic, prioritizing spectacle over substantive debate. Additionally, scholars have explored the impact of social media on political engagement, noting both its potential to enhance participation and its role in fostering polarization, misinformation, and echo chambers. The evolving landscape of political communication thus raises pressing questions about media power, the quality of public discourse, and the resilience of democratic institutions.
- **Mediatization of Politics and Media Influence:** Scholars such as Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) introduced the concept of mediatization, arguing that while mass media have not supplanted political institutions, they have fundamentally reshaped political communication. Political actors increasingly conform to media logic, crafting messages that prioritize spectacle, strategic communication, and image construction over substantive policy discourse. This shift is particularly pronounced in electoral politics, where campaigns rely on media-driven narratives to engage voters. Comparative research suggests that the degree of mediatization varies across political systems, with parliamentary democracies often resisting media dominance more effectively than presidential systems. While some argue that mediatization enhances political engagement, others contend that it erodes deliberative democracy by reducing citizens to passive consumers of political spectacle.
- **Media and Democratic Accountability:** The traditional view of media as a democratic watchdog has been complicated by evidence that journalistic institutions are subject to commercial pressures, ideological biases, and elite influence. Graber (2003) challenges the assumption that democracy requires a highly informed citizenry, suggesting instead that democratic resilience depends more on elite political culture and institutional stability than on widespread political knowledge. She argues that while media shape public perceptions, they are neither entirely independent nor wholly subservient to political interests. Moreover, concerns about media consolidation and declining journalistic quality raise questions about the extent to which contemporary news media fulfill their democratic function.
- **Transparency, Deliberation, and Polarization:** Scholars have debated whether increased transparency in political deliberation fosters consensus or exacerbates polarization. Stasavage (2007) argues that public deliberation may encourage representatives to engage in performative signaling rather than genuine policy learning. While transparency is often assumed to enhance accountability, his formal model suggests that it can incentivize strategic posturing, particularly in polarized political environments. This challenges conventional deliberative democratic theory by suggesting that private deliberation may, in some cases, lead to more informed decision-making.
- **Social Media and Democratic Stability:** The impact of digital communication on democracy is highly contested. Early discussions of social media framed it as a democratizing force, enabling grassroots mobilization and circumventing state-controlled media. However, Tucker et al. (2017) argue that social media have increasingly been weaponized by authoritarian regimes and illiberal actors within democracies. Their framework highlights three roles of social media: as a tool for democratic activists, an instrument of state repression, and a mechanism for amplifying extremist voices. The authors caution against simplistic narratives that portray social media as either inherently democratizing or inherently harmful, instead emphasizing its contested nature.
- **Media Fragmentation and the High-Choice Environment:** Van Aelst et al. (2017) examine how the shift to a high-choice media environment has reshaped political communication. While technological advances have expanded access to political news, they have also exacerbated information inequalities, facilitated ideological polarization, and contributed to declining journalistic quality. The authors identify six major concerns: (1) a declining supply of political information, (2) reductions in news quality, (3) increasing media concentration, (4) rising fragmentation and polarization, (5) the spread of misinformation, and (6) widening inequalities in political knowledge. Their findings underscore

the challenges of sustaining an informed citizenry in an era of media fragmentation.

- **Political Talk and Social Divisions:** Beyond institutional media, scholars have explored how interpersonal political discussions shape democratic engagement. Wells et al. (2017) analyze how political talk is maintained or abandoned in contentious environments, finding that extreme partisanship often leads individuals to avoid political conversations to preserve social relationships. Their research suggests that while political discussion can integrate diverse perspectives, it can also reinforce divisions, limiting exposure to cross-cutting perspectives.
- **Disrupted Public Spheres and the Changing Nature of Political Communication:** Bennett and Pfetsch (2018) argue that traditional political communication frameworks are increasingly inadequate in the face of media disruption. The decline of party-centered politics, diminishing trust in mainstream journalism, and the rise of alternative media ecosystems necessitate a rethinking of how political communication functions in contemporary democracies. They call for new theoretical approaches that account for fragmented and polarized public spheres.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Key debates in political communication research center on the role of media in democratic accountability, the effects of digital platforms on public discourse, and the impact of polarization on political engagement. Scholars continue to explore the balance between transparency and effective governance, the trade-offs of social media regulation, and the normative assumptions underlying political communication research. Future work will likely focus on the evolving nature of media effects in a fragmented information environment, the role of digital disinformation in democratic backsliding, and potential policy interventions to mitigate these challenges.

#### 4.11.2 “Mediatization” of Politics: A Challenge for Democracy?

MAZZOLENI, G., & SCHULZ, W. (1999). "Mediatization" of Politics: A Challenge for Democracy? [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/105846099198613>. *Political Communication*, 16(3), 247–261. <https://doi.org/10.1080/105846099198613>

1. **Citation key:** mazzoleni\_meditatization\_1999
2. **Author(s):** Gianpietro Mazzoleni and Winfried Schulz
3. **Year:** 1999
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** democracy, mass media, media power, mediatization, political communication, political parties
6. **Summary:** Mazzoleni and Schulz explore the concept of *mediatization*, the process by which political institutions become increasingly dependent on mass media while still retaining control over political functions. They challenge the notion that mass media have completely usurped political institutions, instead arguing that political communication has been transformed rather than overtaken. The authors analyze how media influence political actors, electoral campaigns, and governance structures, addressing concerns that media-driven democracy may distort the democratic process.
7. **Theory:** The authors introduce the concept of mediatization as distinct from mediation, emphasizing that modern politics has adapted to the logic and structures of mass media. Mediatization implies a shift in the balance of power between political institutions and media organizations, with media functioning as an independent force rather than a passive conduit for political communication. They argue that while critics fear that media have supplanted traditional democratic structures, political institutions remain intact but increasingly shape their behavior according to media logics. This development is especially evident in electoral politics, where political campaigns have become highly media-driven, relying on spectacle, image construction, and strategic communication. The authors also explore the argument that media influence is not uniform across different political systems, noting that some democratic institutions resist media dominance better than others.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a comparative analysis of political communication trends across multiple democracies, drawing on examples from the United States, Italy, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. The authors review empirical studies and historical cases to illustrate the impact of media on political structures. They assess instances of media-driven electoral victories, such as Fernando Collor de Mello in Brazil (1989), Silvio Berlusconi in Italy (1994), and Tony Blair in the UK (1997), to demonstrate how media strategies have reshaped electoral dynamics. The study also examines patterns of media influence on political discourse, news selection biases, and public perception of politics.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Political institutions, while increasingly shaped by mass media, have not been supplanted by them.
  - The media's growing influence is not uniform across all democratic systems; national political structures mediate its impact differently.
  - Mediatization has led to a shift in how political actors engage with the public, emphasizing image, spectacle, and strategic communication over substantive debate.
 The findings support these hypotheses, indicating that while media power has expanded, political institutions have adapted rather than relinquished control.
10. **Main findings:** The study concludes that while media-driven politics has transformed democratic processes, the fundamental structures of governance remain intact. Political actors have increasingly adapted their strategies to fit media logic, prioritizing image management, soundbites, and spectacle over substantive deliberation. However, contrary to fears of a “media takeover,” political institutions continue to exert influence, albeit through new channels. The authors note that different political systems exhibit varying degrees of susceptibility to mediatization, with parliamentary systems often resisting media dominance more effectively than presidential systems. Additionally, they highlight the

paradox that while media enable greater political engagement, they also contribute to the erosion of substantive political discourse, reducing citizens to passive consumers of political spectacle rather than active participants in democratic deliberation.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "The best description of the current situation is 'mediatization,' where political institutions increasingly are dependent on and shaped by mass media but nevertheless remain in control of political processes and functions" (p. 247).
- "Critics argue that the media's presentation of politics as 'show-biz'—based on battles of images, conflicts between characters, polls, and marketing—has diminished, if not supplanted altogether, debate about ideas, ideals, issues, and people's vital interests" (p. 249).
- "The tendency of politics to turn into a sort of mediated politics, of parties to turn into mediated parties, is not going unchallenged by the existing political institutions" (p. 259).

#### 4.11.3 The Media and Democracy: Beyond Myths and Stereotypes

Graber, D. (2003). THE MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY: Beyond Myths and Stereotypes [Publisher: Annual Reviews]. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 6(Volume 6, 2003), 139–160. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.6.121901.085707>

1. Citation key: graber\_media\_2003

2. Author(s): Doris Graber

3. Year: 2003

4. Publication: Annual Review of Political Science

5. Keywords: media effects, democracy, political communication, public opinion, First Amendment, media ownership

6. Summary: Graber critically examines the widely held assumptions about the role of the media in democratic governance. She argues that the media neither fully fulfill the functions expected of them in a democratic society nor completely fail in their responsibilities. The essay challenges myths about media influence, the assumed necessity of an informed citizenry, and the marketplace of ideas. Graber suggests that democracy persists despite these shortcomings, largely due to political culture and periodic surges of civic activism during crises.

7. Theory: The author theorizes that traditional models of democracy overestimate both the role of the media and the capacity of the public to engage with political information. She challenges the assumption that an informed citizenry is necessary for democracy to function effectively, instead positing that democratic survival depends more on institutional resilience and elite political culture than on widespread public engagement. She argues that the media serve as both a watchdog and an agenda-setter, but their influence is constrained by structural limitations, ownership patterns, and audience disinterest. While some critics claim that the media manufacture consent and distort public opinion, Graber suggests that their impact is often overstated. Instead, she emphasizes the role of political elites in shaping both media narratives and democratic outcomes. She also critiques the notion that media concentration necessarily reduces democratic accountability, highlighting that media ownership patterns do not always align with ideological homogeneity.

8. Methods: Graber employs a qualitative analysis of existing literature, historical case studies, and empirical research on media influence. She synthesizes findings from media scholars, legal studies on First Amendment assumptions, and political science research on participatory democracy. The study draws on content analysis data to evaluate media coverage of politics, particularly in the United States. Additionally, Graber reviews scholarship on media ownership patterns and the regulatory environment governing American news media. Her work incorporates comparative insights by referencing media structures in other democracies, illustrating how different political systems mediate the effects of mass communication.

9. Hypotheses: The study tests several key hypotheses:

- The assumption that democracy requires an informed and engaged citizenry is overstated.
- The media do not consistently serve as an effective watchdog, but neither do they entirely fail in this role.
- Ownership concentration does not necessarily lead to a decline in media diversity or democratic accountability.
- The persistence of democratic governance depends more on elite political culture and institutional stability than on media performance.

These hypotheses are largely supported, as Graber finds that while media performance is imperfect, democracy endures due to structural and cultural factors.

10. Main findings: Graber concludes that the media play a paradoxical role in democracy. While they provide critical political information, they also contribute to misinformation and superficial coverage, driven by economic pressures and audience preferences. The media do not fully realize their watchdog function but remain a key mechanism for public oversight of government. Despite concerns about media bias and ownership consolidation, Graber argues that democracy is not as dependent on idealized media performance as many scholars assume. Instead, political elites shape the broader democratic environment, and public engagement is often episodic rather than sustained. She also finds that news consumption patterns reflect existing political predispositions rather than shaping them in a deterministic way.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "The fact that democracy can persist despite citizens and media that fall short of the expected performance suggests that political culture may be more important than citizen wisdom and media excellence" (p. 140).

- “The media’s great political significance is also acknowledged by those scholars who call the media a political institution that plays an important role in politics along with many other institutions” (p. 140).
- “Many broad and definitive judgments about the substantive content of mass media are still made without actual content analyses of these media” (p. 141).

#### 4.11.4 Polarization and Publicity: Rethinking the Benefits of Deliberative Democracy

Stasavage, D. (2007). Polarization and Publicity: Rethinking the Benefits of Deliberative Democracy [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 69(1), 59–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2007.00494.x>

- 1. Citation key:** stasavage\_polarization\_2007
- 2. Author(s):** David Stasavage
- 3. Year:** 2007
- 4. Publication:** The Journal of Politics
- 5. Keywords:** deliberative democracy, polarization, transparency, public debate, political representation
- 6. Summary:** Stasavage examines the relationship between transparency in government and opinion polarization, challenging the assumption that public deliberation necessarily fosters consensus. Using a formal model, he argues that when representatives deliberate in public, they face incentives to signal loyalty to their constituents rather than respond to private information about optimal policies. As a result, public decision-making may reinforce polarization rather than reduce it. By contrast, private deliberation allows representatives to incorporate expert knowledge into policymaking, facilitating a more informed consensus.
- 7. Theory:** The article builds on the deliberative democracy literature, which traditionally posits that public debate enhances consensus and informed decision-making. Stasavage critiques this view by incorporating insights from political representation theory and signaling models. He argues that representatives balance two competing incentives: selecting the optimal policy and maintaining a reputation for aligning with constituent preferences. Publicity alters this balance by incentivizing representatives to prioritize signaling over truth-seeking, particularly when electoral accountability is at stake. The result is a paradox—while public deliberation theoretically provides greater transparency, it can actually inhibit meaningful policy learning by discouraging representatives from acting on private information. Instead of reducing polarization, public deliberation can entrench existing divisions, as representatives strategically conform to preexisting constituent biases. Stasavage’s model suggests that transparency reforms in democratic institutions may have unintended consequences, particularly in polarized political environments where representatives have strong incentives to perform for their constituencies.
- 8. Methods:** The study employs a formal game-theoretic model to compare decision-making outcomes under public and private deliberation. The model assumes a representative body where members hold varying degrees of private information about policy effectiveness. Representatives must vote on a binary policy choice, with outcomes contingent on an unobserved state of the world. The key distinction is whether deliberation occurs publicly (where individual votes are observed) or privately (where only the final policy decision is revealed). Stasavage derives equilibrium conditions for two scenarios: one in which representatives vote based on private information and another where they prioritize reputation signaling. By comparing these equilibria, he demonstrates that public deliberation incentivizes representatives to vote strategically rather than sincerely, ultimately impeding policy learning.
- 9. Hypotheses:** Stasavage hypothesizes that:
  - Public deliberation increases polarization by encouraging representatives to conform to constituent expectations rather than act on private information.
  - Private deliberation facilitates more informative decision-making by allowing representatives to incorporate expert knowledge without electoral pressures.
  - The effects of transparency reforms depend on the strength of reputational concerns—when electoral accountability is high, public deliberation is more likely to reinforce polarization.
 These hypotheses are supported by the model’s equilibrium conditions, which show that transparency can exacerbate, rather than mitigate, political divisions.
- 10. Main findings:** The study finds that while transparency in decision-making is often assumed to enhance democratic accountability, it can have counterproductive effects on polarization. In public deliberation settings, representatives are more likely to make decisions based on electoral signaling rather than substantive policy considerations. This leads to a breakdown in information aggregation, as constituents are unable to update their beliefs based on meaningful deliberation. By contrast, private deliberation enables representatives to make decisions informed by expert knowledge, which, although less transparent, may produce better policy outcomes. Stasavage’s findings suggest that increasing government transparency does not automatically lead to greater consensus and that the effects of publicity must be evaluated in light of strategic incentives faced by political actors.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “When representatives make decisions in public, they face incentives to use their actions as a signal of loyalty to their constituents, potentially ignoring private information about the true desirability of different policies” (p. 60).
  - “According to standard accounts, openness in government and publicity of debate should help produce political consensus. By these standards, given the institutional changes to increase openness that have taken place at different levels of government in the United States over the last 40 years, we would logically expect polarization

to have decreased. If the opposite has taken place, then this may be due in part to the fact that greater publicity of debate between representatives has actually reinforced polarization" (p. 63).

- "An important implication of this is that private decision making may, in many instances, actually do more to reduce polarization of opinions in society than will public decision making" (p. 67).

#### 4.11.5 From Liberation to Turmoil: Social Media and Democracy

Tucker, J. A., Theocharis, Y., Roberts, M. E., & Barberá, P. (2017). From Liberation to Turmoil: Social Media And Democracy [Publisher: Johns Hopkins University Press]. *Journal of Democracy*, 28(4), 46–59. Retrieved January 29, 2025, from <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/1/article/671987>

- 1. Citation key:** tucker\_liberation\_2017
- 2. Author(s):** Joshua A. Tucker, Yannis Theocharis, Margaret E. Roberts, and Pablo Barberá
- 3. Year:** 2017
- 4. Publication:** Journal of Democracy
- 5. Keywords:** social media, democracy, political communication, authoritarianism, polarization, collective action
- 6. Summary:** Tucker, Theocharis, Roberts, and Barberá explore the evolving role of social media in democratic and authoritarian contexts. While early discussions of digital platforms emphasized their potential for democratization, the authors argue that social media have increasingly been weaponized by both autocratic regimes and illiberal actors within democracies. They trace a historical progression from the use of social media as a "liberation technology" during the Arab Spring to its more recent function as a tool for state repression, misinformation, and polarization. The article provides a theoretical framework to explain these contradictory effects and examines the implications for democratic governance.
- 7. Theory:** The authors challenge the prevailing optimism about social media's role in fostering democracy, arguing that its effects are contingent on the political context in which it is deployed. They outline a framework in which social media serve three distinct functions: 1) a tool for democratic activists to organize, bypassing state-controlled media; 2) an instrument of authoritarian control, used to censor dissent and spread propaganda; and 3) a mechanism for amplifying antisystem actors in democratic societies, including extremist groups and disinformation campaigns. The authors emphasize that social media do not inherently favor democratic or autocratic outcomes; rather, they function as a contested space where competing political actors struggle for influence. As political institutions and regimes adapt, social media evolve from being an enabler of democratization to a more complex and often destabilizing force. This evolution has prompted democratic governments to consider regulatory interventions, raising normative questions about the limits of free speech online and the trade-offs between security and open communication.
- 8. Methods:** The authors employ a historical and comparative analysis, drawing on case studies from the Arab Spring, U.S. elections, and authoritarian state responses to online activism. They integrate empirical findings from political science, communication studies, and computational social science to examine patterns of social media use across different regimes. The study synthesizes evidence from content analyses, survey data, and research on state-sponsored disinformation campaigns. Additionally, the authors reference literature on digital repression, highlighting techniques such as algorithmic censorship, bot-driven propaganda, and the use of "flooding" strategies to drown out dissenting voices online.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The article presents several hypotheses about social media's impact on democracy:
  - Social media initially facilitated democratization by reducing collective-action barriers, but its effectiveness has diminished as authoritarian regimes have developed countermeasures.
  - Authoritarian governments increasingly use social media for censorship, surveillance, and the strategic dissemination of misinformation.
  - In democratic societies, social media empower antisystem actors, enabling the rapid spread of extremist content and disinformation.
  - The effectiveness of social media as a democratic tool depends on the institutional and political environment, rather than its technological affordances alone.
- The evidence supports these hypotheses, demonstrating that social media's effects vary depending on how different political actors harness the technology.
- 10. Main findings:** The authors conclude that social media have played a dual role in global politics—initially serving as a catalyst for democratization, but increasingly becoming a tool for autocratic repression and democratic instability. While early adopters used social media to coordinate protests and circumvent state-controlled media, authoritarian regimes have since adapted by developing sophisticated digital strategies to monitor dissent and manipulate public discourse. In democratic contexts, social media have enabled populist and extremist movements to gain traction, often at the expense of established political institutions. The authors caution against simplistic narratives that portray social media as either inherently democratizing or inherently harmful. Instead, they argue that the political effects of social media are shaped by the interactions between digital technologies, state actors, and civil society. Their findings highlight the need for a nuanced approach to social media governance, balancing the benefits of open communication with the risks of manipulation and polarization.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - "Social media give a voice to those whose views are normally excluded from political discussions in the mainstream media. Yet social media can obviously amplify other and more extreme voices as well, including those

which, from the point of view of liberal democracy, are ‘antisystem’ ” (p. 48).

- “The same infrastructure that can empower democratic opposition can also be used for authoritarian purposes. The tactics pioneered by authoritarian regimes, however, are also available to groups that operate within democratic societies to pursue illiberal aims” (p. 53).
- “Much as liberation technology created problems for autocracies, the success of social media has fueled political turmoil in democracies” (p. 55).

#### 4.11.6 Political Communication in a High-Choice Media Environment: A Challenge for Democracy?

Van Aelst, P., Strömbäck, J., Aalberg, T., Esser, F., De Vreese, C., Matthes, J., Hopmann, D., Salgado, S., Hubé, N., Stepińska, A., Papathanassopoulos, S., Berganza, R., Legnante, G., Reinemann, C., Sheaffer, T., & Stanyer, J. (2017). Political communication in a high-choice media environment: A challenge for democracy? *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 41(1), 3–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2017.1288551>

- 1. Citation key:** van\_aelst\_political\_2017
- 2. Author(s):** Peter Van Aelst, Jesper Strömbäck, Toril Aalberg, Frank Esser, Claes de Vreese, Jörg Matthes, David Hopmann, Susana Salgado, Nicolas Hubé, Agnieszka Stepińska, Stylianos Papathanassopoulos, Rosa Berganza, Guido Legnante, Carsten Reinemann, Tamir Sheaffer, and James Stanyer
- 3. Year:** 2017
- 4. Publication:** Annals of the International Communication Association
- 5. Keywords:** political communication, media environment, political information, polarization, news diversity, media fragmentation
- 6. Summary:** Van Aelst et al. examine how transformations in media environments, particularly the shift to a high-choice media landscape, affect the dissemination and acquisition of political information. They argue that while technological advances have increased the volume of available political news, they have also exacerbated inequalities in political knowledge, facilitated polarization, and raised concerns about declining journalistic quality. The authors assess six major concerns associated with these shifts: (1) a declining supply of political information, (2) a reduction in news quality, (3) increasing media concentration and declining news diversity, (4) rising fragmentation and polarization, (5) the spread of relativism and misinformation, and (6) widening inequalities in political knowledge.
- 7. Theory:** The authors contend that the high-choice media environment has fundamentally altered the balance between the supply and demand of political news, influencing how citizens engage with political information. They argue that greater media choice does not necessarily translate into a more informed citizenry. Instead, audience fragmentation and selective exposure allow individuals to tailor their media consumption in ways that reinforce preexisting beliefs, leading to ideological polarization and information gaps between politically engaged and disengaged citizens. The decline of traditional journalism, coupled with the rise of algorithm-driven content distribution, has further contributed to information asymmetries. This shift has significant implications for democratic governance, as access to reliable political information is essential for informed decision-making and public deliberation. While digital technologies have expanded opportunities for political participation, they have also led to a more segmented public sphere, where different groups engage with distinct, often non-overlapping, sources of information. The authors emphasize that the consequences of these transformations are not uniform across media systems and political contexts; they vary depending on institutional factors, regulatory frameworks, and journalistic traditions.
- 8. Methods:** The study employs a comprehensive review of empirical research on political communication and media environments, synthesizing findings from multiple disciplines, including political science, communication studies, and media economics. The authors analyze cross-national studies on media consumption patterns, audience segmentation, and news quality, drawing on data from both experimental and observational research. They also examine trends in media concentration, the impact of digital platforms on news diversity, and the effects of media fragmentation on public opinion. Their analysis is structured around six key concerns regarding the political information environment, each supported by empirical evidence from previous studies.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The article presents several hypotheses about the effects of a high-choice media environment on democracy:
  - The increasing volume of political information does not necessarily improve public knowledge, as media fragmentation leads to greater disparities in information acquisition.
  - The decline in journalistic resources and commercial pressures have reduced the quality of political news, resulting in more sensationalist, strategic, and entertainment-driven coverage.
  - Media concentration and algorithmic content curation have led to a decline in news diversity, limiting exposure to a broad range of perspectives.
  - Audience fragmentation contributes to political polarization, as individuals increasingly consume ideologically consistent news sources.
  - The proliferation of misinformation and relativism in political discourse undermines democratic deliberation and trust in media institutions.
  - Greater media choice exacerbates inequalities in political knowledge, as highly engaged citizens consume more political information while disengaged individuals avoid news altogether.

The evidence largely supports these hypotheses, demonstrating that while digital media have expanded access to political information, they have also deepened existing divisions in political engagement and knowledge.

**10. Main findings:** The authors conclude that the transition to a high-choice media environment presents significant challenges for democratic governance. While technological advancements have made political news more accessible, they have also led to greater audience segmentation, ideological polarization, and disparities in political knowledge. The evidence suggests that traditional news media, particularly public service broadcasters, play a crucial role in mitigating these effects by providing high-quality, diverse, and fact-based journalism. However, the decline of traditional news institutions, combined with the rise of algorithm-driven content distribution, has weakened their ability to serve as a unifying force in democratic societies. The authors argue that policy interventions, such as media literacy initiatives and regulatory measures to ensure news diversity, may be necessary to address these challenges. They emphasize that while digital media have the potential to enhance democratic engagement, their impact depends on how they are integrated into broader political and media systems.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “For a democracy to be well functioning, citizens need information about politics. Only when people have knowledge about the actors, the state of various societal affairs, and the rules of the political game can they hold informed opinions and act meaningfully as citizens” (p. 4).
- “The more media choice, the more selective people have to be, and the more selective people have to be, the more important their preferences become. As a consequence, several studies have found growing gaps between heavy users and low/nonusers which are attributable largely to different sets of motivations and gratifications sought by people” (p. 7).
- “While digital technologies have expanded opportunities for political participation, they have also led to a more segmented public sphere, where different groups engage with distinct, often non-overlapping, sources of information” (p. 12).

#### 4.11.7 When We Stop Talking Politics: The Maintenance and Closing of Conversation in Contentious Times

Wells, C., Cramer, K. J., Wagner, M. W., Alvarez, G., Friedland, L. A., Shah, D. V., Bode, L., Edgerly, S., Gabay, I., & Franklin, C. (2017). When We Stop Talking Politics: The Maintenance and Closing of Conversation in Contentious Times. *Journal of Communication*, 67(1), 131–157. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12280>

1. **Citation key:** wells\_when\_2017

2. **Author(s):** Chris Wells, Katherine J. Cramer, Michael W. Wagner, German Alvarez, Lewis A. Friedland, Dhavan V. Shah, Leticia Bode, Stephanie Edgerly, Itay Gabay, and Charles Franklin

3. **Year:** 2017

4. **Publication:** Journal of Communication

5. **Keywords:** political talk, polarization, partisanship, contentiousness, social media, civic culture, political culture, integration, tolerance, spiral of silence

6. **Summary:** Wells et al. explore how political talk is maintained or breaks down in times of political contention. Using the 2012 recall election of Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker as a case study, they analyze how citizens navigated conversations about politics in an environment of extreme partisan conflict. Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data, they argue that political talk can be an essential component of civic culture, yet in polarized contexts, such discussions often become fraught, leading individuals to avoid or entirely cease engaging in political conversations. They find that political disagreement, particularly when linked to occupation, geography, and perceived economic hardship, can fracture discussion networks, challenging assumptions about the ability of talk to bridge social and ideological divides.

7. **Theory:** The authors build on theories of political talk as a vital element of civic culture, drawing on literature that sees informal discussion as a mechanism for integrating individuals into democratic life. However, they challenge the optimistic view that political talk can always accommodate difference, arguing instead that under conditions of intense partisanship, political discussion may be abandoned to preserve social relationships. Their theory posits that the ability of political talk to integrate society depends on structural factors, such as workplace identity, social class, and rural-urban divides. They emphasize that these structural differences—rather than partisan identification alone—are central to understanding why political conversations fracture. The study engages with theories of deliberative democracy and the spiral of silence, arguing that when political talk becomes contentious, individuals may withdraw from discussion to avoid conflict. This withdrawal, they contend, has significant implications for civic culture, as it may erode the social fabric that sustains democratic engagement. The authors also explore how social media serves as both a facilitator and disruptor of political talk, sometimes encouraging discussion but often leading to the exclusion of dissenting voices through self-selection and digital sorting mechanisms.

8. **Methods:** The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining ethnographic fieldwork with survey analysis. The qualitative component involves observations of 39 discussion groups in 27 Wisconsin communities, capturing informal political conversations in public spaces such as coffee shops and workplaces. These observations inform hypotheses about the maintenance and breakdown of political talk, which are then tested using survey data from the Marquette Law School Poll. The survey, conducted during the lead-up to the recall election, measures the frequency of political discussion and whether individuals had stopped talking about politics due to disagreement. Key independent variables include occupational identity, political ideology, community type (rural, suburban, urban), and media consumption patterns. The study also examines how social media use correlates with both increased political discussion and the likelihood of ending conversations due to conflict.

9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that political talk is influenced by both structural and individual factors. Specif-

ically, they propose:

- Individuals whose occupational identities are politicized (e.g., public-sector workers affected by policy changes) will engage in more political talk but also be more likely to cut off discussions when disagreements arise.
- Rural residents, due to greater exposure to diverse political perspectives in their social networks, will be more likely to cut off political talk when tensions escalate.
- Political outsiders—those whose partisan leanings diverge from the majority opinion in their community—will be less likely to engage in political talk and more likely to stop discussions when disagreement occurs.
- Stronger partisans will engage in more political talk but will not necessarily be more likely to cut off conversations.
- Social media use will be associated with both increased political discussion and an increased likelihood of ending conversations due to disagreement.

Their findings largely confirm these hypotheses, with occupational identity, community type, and social media use playing significant roles in determining whether individuals maintain or abandon political talk.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that political talk often breaks down in contentious political environments, particularly when occupational identities become politically charged. Public-sector employees and those who felt directly affected by economic policies were more likely to engage in political discussions but also more likely to disengage when faced with disagreement. Rural residents, despite having more ideologically diverse networks, were more prone to ceasing political discussions when tensions rose. Political outsiders—those whose views differed from the majority in their community—were less likely to engage in political talk overall and more likely to stop conversations when disagreements emerged. Strong partisans talked more about politics, but their conversations were not more likely to end in conflict. Social media played a dual role: it encouraged political discussion but also facilitated the exclusion of opposing viewpoints, leading to increased political polarization and ideological sorting. These findings suggest that while political talk can foster democratic engagement, it can also reinforce divisions and lead to conversational breakdowns, limiting exposure to cross-cutting perspectives.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “The tenor of the field is consistent with the claim that citizen talk is the ‘soul of democracy’... Yet evidence suggests that a fracturing of civic culture took place in which many citizens found it impossible to continue political discussion” (p. 131).
- “One group was explicit about their avoidance of the topic of recent contention, with one member stating: ‘You know, we just haven’t talked about it... we’ll talk about anything else’” (p. 138).
- “Political talk, long valued for its capacity to integrate diverse perspectives, appears in some cases to function instead as a wedge, deepening divides and leading to the silencing of conversation” (p. 149).

#### 4.11.8 Rethinking Political Communication in a Time of Disrupted Public Spheres

Bennett, W. L. [W Lance], & Pfetsch, B. (2018). Rethinking Political Communication in a Time of Disrupted Public Spheres. *Journal of Communication*, 68(2), 243–253. <https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqx017>

1. **Citation key:** bennett\_rethinking\_2018
2. **Author(s):** W. Lance Bennett and Barbara Pfetsch
3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** Journal of Communication
5. **Keywords:** political communication, public sphere, media fragmentation, democratic legitimacy, digital media, press institutions
6. **Summary:** Bennett and Pfetsch argue that traditional frameworks of political communication, grounded in stable democratic institutions and a coherent public sphere, are increasingly inadequate in the face of contemporary media disruption. They contend that the hollowing out of center parties, declining public trust in traditional media, and the rise of digital information flows necessitate a fundamental rethinking of core political communication concepts. The article examines how contemporary political communication operates within fragmented and polarized media environments, where traditional theories of agenda-setting, gatekeeping, and media effects fail to account for the declining coherence of democratic discourse.
7. **Theory:** The authors develop a theoretical critique of existing political communication scholarship, highlighting the disconnect between classical democratic models and contemporary realities of political fragmentation and media disintermediation. They argue that previous research has relied on assumptions about relatively stable public spheres, in which mainstream media serve as central information gatekeepers. However, political communication today is marked by dispersed and often contradictory information flows, including populist messaging, alternative media ecosystems, and algorithm-driven content dissemination. They suggest that core concepts such as framing, agenda-setting, and indexing must be re-evaluated in light of the proliferation of digital media and the decline of shared public narratives. Moreover, they emphasize that the erosion of institutional legitimacy—reflected in declining party loyalty, weakened press authority, and increasing polarization—has transformed how political actors communicate and how citizens engage with political information. This shift, they argue, requires scholars to move beyond traditional media-centric models toward a more dynamic understanding of how communication shapes, and is shaped by, broader political transformations.
8. **Methods:** The article employs a theoretical and conceptual analysis, reviewing key political communication concepts

and assessing their applicability to contemporary media environments. Bennett and Pfetsch synthesize findings from recent empirical studies on media fragmentation, declining news consumption, and rising disinformation campaigns. They engage with research on media ecosystems, drawing from both qualitative case studies and large-scale audience behavior data to illustrate the weakening of traditional media functions. Additionally, they critically assess the limitations of agenda-setting and framing theories in an era where political actors can bypass mainstream journalism to communicate directly with supporters via digital platforms.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors propose several key hypotheses regarding the transformation of political communication:

- Traditional media institutions no longer function as authoritative gatekeepers of political information, as digital media enable direct and often unfiltered communication between political actors and citizens.
- The decline of mainstream media's agenda-setting power has led to fragmented political discourse, with competing and often contradictory narratives circulating in digital spaces.
- Disrupted public spheres exacerbate polarization, as citizens increasingly consume information that aligns with preexisting beliefs while avoiding cross-cutting political perspectives.
- Classical theories of political communication, including indexing, framing, and gatekeeping, must be revised to account for hybrid media environments in which traditional press institutions have lost their centrality.

The evidence supports these hypotheses, demonstrating that contemporary political communication is characterized by increasing media pluralism, declining institutional legitimacy, and growing political fragmentation.

**10. Main findings:** Bennett and Pfetsch conclude that the field of political communication must undergo a paradigm shift to better reflect the realities of contemporary information environments. They argue that while traditional concepts such as agenda-setting and framing remain useful, they must be adapted to account for the decentralization of political discourse and the rise of alternative media ecosystems. The article highlights how digital platforms have transformed political communication by enabling politicians to bypass journalistic scrutiny and mobilize supporters directly. Additionally, the authors emphasize that declining trust in institutions—both political and media-related—has led to an increasingly contested and polarized public sphere. They suggest that future research should prioritize understanding the role of disinformation, the dynamics of algorithmic content distribution, and the evolving nature of audience engagement in political processes. Ultimately, they call for a rethinking of political communication frameworks to account for the complexities of digital democracy and the challenges posed by an increasingly fragmented media landscape.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "It is time to rethink assumptions—long grounded in idealized normative conceptions of democratic politics—about media systems and press/politics interactions" (p. 243).
- "The proliferation of disruptive communication processes—both at the core and on the periphery of many polities—raises questions about just how systemic democratic media systems really are these days" (p. 245).
- "As political communication processes become more disrupted, conventional assumptions about coherent, systemic democratic public spheres become harder to defend" (p. 249).

#### 4.11.9 Complaining and Sharing Personal Concerns as Political Acts

Sun, Y., Graham, T., & Broersma, M. (2022). Complaining and sharing personal concerns as political acts: How everyday talk about childcare and parenting on online forums increases public deliberation and civic engagement in China [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2021.1950096>]. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 19(2), 214–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2021.1950096>

**1. Citation key:** sun\_complaining\_2022

**2. Author(s):** Yu Sun, Todd Graham, and Marcel Broersma

**3. Year:** 2022

**4. Publication:** Journal of Information Technology & Politics

**5. Keywords:** online deliberation, everyday political talk, third spaces, public sphere, China

**6. Summary:** Sun, Graham, and Broersma investigate how online discussions about childcare and parenting function as political acts in contemporary China. They analyze conversations on three types of Chinese online forums: a government-run forum, a commercial-lifestyle forum, and a commercial-topical forum. The study argues that discussions in these nonpolitical spaces serve as "third spaces" where everyday talk facilitates public deliberation and civic engagement. By framing personal concerns as public issues, users engage in indirect political discourse that transcends conventional deliberative frameworks, challenging traditional notions of political participation.

**7. Theory:** The authors build on theories of the public sphere and deliberative democracy to argue that everyday political talk does not always conform to rational-critical debate but can still foster civic engagement. Traditional public sphere theory, largely derived from Habermas, assumes that political communication should be grounded in reasoned debate. However, the authors challenge this perspective, emphasizing that communicative acts such as complaining and sharing personal concerns should also be considered part of the political discourse. They contend that informal and nontraditional modes of political expression, particularly in authoritarian contexts like China, serve as meaningful forms of engagement. The study also situates its argument within the literature on "third spaces" (Wright, 2012), which describes nonpolitical venues where political talk can emerge organically. Unlike Western contexts, where deliberation often centers on open political debate, Chinese digital spaces reflect a distinct social-cultural logic, shaped by paternalistic state-citizen relationships. The study thus reinterprets political participation through the lens of in-

formal, everyday interactions, demonstrating that personal grievances—such as struggles with childcare—can evolve into collective political discussions.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a comparative content analysis of online discussions from three distinct Chinese forums: (1) a government-run (party-state) forum, (2) a commercial-lifestyle forum, and (3) a commercial-topical forum. The researchers analyze 2,435 posts across these platforms, coding them based on deliberative characteristics such as rationality, reciprocity, and continuity, as well as alternative forms of communication like storytelling, advice-giving, and complaining. The content is examined to assess how private concerns transition into public discourse, highlighting differences in how political talk manifests across different types of digital spaces. The study also incorporates qualitative textual analysis, using specific examples of online conversations to illustrate patterns of deliberation and civic expression.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors propose that:

- Political talk in Chinese online forums does not fully conform to traditional deliberative norms but instead manifests through informal communicative acts such as complaining and personal storytelling.
- The characteristics of different forums influence the nature of political discussions, with nonpolitical spaces fostering more open and inclusive discourse.
- Complaints and personal narratives serve as indirect forms of political engagement, allowing users to address policy-related grievances in a way that does not directly challenge state authority.
- Chinese online discussions exhibit social-civic communicative practices that blend personal concerns with broader political discourses, offering a unique alternative to Western deliberative models.

The findings largely support these hypotheses, demonstrating that online discussions about childcare and parenting often develop into broader critiques of public policy, despite occurring in spaces not explicitly designed for political discourse.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that informal, nonpolitical forums create spaces where Chinese citizens can engage in political discourse without overtly challenging state authority. Unlike the government-run forum, where discussions about childcare tend to be framed within state-approved narratives, the commercial-lifestyle and topical forums allow for more organic political expression. Complaints about education, child welfare, and family policies serve as catalysts for broader discussions on state responsibilities and social justice. However, the nature of political talk varies by platform. The government-run forum facilitates top-down communication, with users often seeking policy redress rather than engaging in debate. In contrast, commercial-lifestyle and topical forums foster more reciprocal discussions, where personal stories lead to collective meaning-making. The study concludes that these informal spaces contribute to an evolving Chinese public sphere by providing alternative avenues for political engagement. While not always deliberative in the classical sense, these conversations enable citizens to negotiate public concerns in a manner that aligns with local social and cultural norms.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Compared to the government-run (party-state) forum, the nonpolitical (lifestyle and topical) forums created open and inclusive ‘third spaces’ for citizens to engage in child welfare politics” (p. 216).
- “Political (narrative) acts of complaining and sharing personal concerns—grounded in citizens’ life experiences—were the norm, capturing and recognizing public problems in the private sphere” (p. 218).
- “We argue that to understand the nature of political talk in Chinese third spaces, communicative acts that have not been considered central to deliberative reasoning, such as complaining and sharing personal concerns, should be given more normative importance” (p. 220).

#### 4.11.10 Theory and/as Normative Assumptions in Political Communication Research

Billard: *Theory and/as Normative Assumptions – PolComm* (tech. rep. No. 30). (2024). Retrieved January 27, 2025, from <https://politicalcommunication.org/article/billard-theory-and-as-normative-assumptions/>

1. **Citation key:** noauthor\_billard\_2024
2. **Author(s):** Thomas J. Billard
3. **Year:** 2024
4. **Publication:** Political Communication Report
5. **Keywords:** political communication, normative theory, deliberative democracy, media effects, incivility
6. **Summary:** Billard critically examines the normative assumptions embedded in political communication research, arguing that the field often upholds hegemonic structures while neglecting the power dynamics that shape communication. Drawing from Sandra Ball-Rokeach's framework, Billard contends that theories of political communication are deeply rooted in implicit normative commitments about human nature, social order, and the possibility of equality. The article challenges the field's reliance on deliberative democracy, objectivity, and civility as universal ideals and calls for a reexamination of the assumptions that underpin research in the discipline.
7. **Theory:** Billard argues that political communication research is implicitly guided by a set of normative ideals that often go unexamined. These include the assumption that democracy is best served by rational-critical deliberation, that neutrality is both possible and desirable in news media, and that incivility is inherently detrimental to democratic discourse. Drawing on the work of Ball-Rokeach, Billard highlights that scholars in the field often fail to recognize the ideological foundations of their research. The article critiques the tendency of political communication scholarship to position itself as “neutral” while reinforcing existing power structures. In particular, Billard challenges the field's

treatment of polarization, arguing that the concept is frequently misapplied to equate the actions of marginalized groups with the systemic violence of dominant political forces. By adopting a perspective grounded in critical theory and pragmatism, Billard calls for a more reflexive approach to political communication research—one that interrogates its own biases and normative assumptions rather than taking them as given.

**8. Methods:** The article is a conceptual and theoretical critique rather than an empirical study. Billard draws on a range of existing literature in political communication, media studies, and normative theory to deconstruct common assumptions within the field. The argument is built through a close reading of foundational texts in political communication, including work on media effects, deliberative democracy, and political incivility. Billard engages with both classical theorists (such as Habermas and Dewey) and contemporary scholars in critical media studies to illustrate how dominant paradigms shape research priorities and limit the scope of inquiry.

**9. Hypotheses:** Billard does not test empirical hypotheses but makes several theoretical claims:

- Political communication research is not value-neutral; it is shaped by implicit normative commitments that prioritize certain democratic ideals over others.
- The field's focus on deliberative democracy marginalizes alternative conceptions of political participation, particularly those that emphasize agonism and conflict.
- The concept of polarization is frequently misused in ways that obscure the power asymmetries between dominant and marginalized political groups.
- The emphasis on civility in political discourse serves to delegitimize forms of communication that challenge systemic oppression.
- A more reflexive and critical approach to political communication research is necessary to account for the field's normative assumptions.

These arguments are developed through a theoretical critique rather than empirical testing.

**10. Main findings:** Billard's analysis reveals that political communication research has long been guided by a set of normative ideals that are often unacknowledged. The field's emphasis on deliberative democracy, neutrality, and civility privileges elite perspectives and reinforces hegemonic structures. Billard argues that these assumptions obscure the ways in which communication operates as a site of power and contestation. Rather than assuming that democratic communication should conform to a specific ideal, the article calls for a more critical approach that recognizes the diversity of communicative practices and their political implications. The piece concludes that political communication scholars must critically examine their own assumptions, particularly regarding objectivity, polarization, and incivility, in order to better account for the realities of contemporary political discourse.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Neutrality assumes certain norms and it places unflinching faith in those norms as objectively given reality" (p. 2).
- "By normatively upholding 'civility' as a standard of political discourse, the field normalizes hegemonic standards while delegitimizing forms of political communication that challenge systemic oppression" (p. 5).
- "Our theories are so shot through with normative assumptions that it's hard to see where they cease to be models for explaining the dynamics of social phenomena and where they begin to be means of measuring reality against our normative ideals of how politics 'should' be" (p. 6).

#### 4.11.11 News Coping and Resistance: An Examination of Entertainment as Self-Care in the Digital Black Press

Williams Fayne, M. (2024). News Coping and Resistance: An Examination of Entertainment as Self-Care in the Digital Black Press [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2295541>]. *Journalism Studies*, 25(3), 260–277. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2023.2295541>

**1. Citation key:** williams\_fayne\_news\_2024

**2. Author(s):** Miya Williams Fayne

**3. Year:** 2024

**4. Publication:** Journalism Studies

**5. Keywords:** digital journalism, Black press, entertainment, self-care, news avoidance, Black Lives Matter

**6. Summary:** Williams Fayne examines the role of entertainment in the digital Black press as a means of self-care and resistance against the trauma induced by mainstream news coverage of Black communities. The study investigates how both journalists and readers perceive the utility of entertainment news and how it functions to counteract the negative psychological effects of hard news, particularly concerning racial violence and the Black Lives Matter movement. Using interviews with journalists and focus groups with readers, Williams Fayne finds that entertainment content serves multiple roles: offering positive representations of Black culture, providing an emotional buffer against traumatic news, and fostering community resilience.

**7. Theory:** The author argues that entertainment in the Black press plays a critical function in shaping communal identity, emotional well-being, and political engagement. The study builds on literature concerning news avoidance, race-based trauma, and media consumption to explore why African Americans may turn to entertainment as an intentional strategy for psychological relief. Traditional news avoidance theories suggest that individuals disengage from news due to political apathy or cognitive overload; however, Williams Fayne posits that for Black audiences, avoidance of hard news is often a strategic act of self-preservation. The study also engages with the concept of "Black joy" as a form of resistance against the persistent media portrayal of Black suffering. Rather than viewing entertainment consumption

as mere escapism, the author suggests that it is an essential practice for maintaining mental health and fostering collective resilience. By incorporating insights from journalism studies, critical race theory, and media psychology, the article challenges normative assumptions about news consumption and repositions entertainment as a legitimate and necessary form of political and cultural engagement for Black communities.

**8. Methods:** Williams Fayne employs a mixed-methods approach, combining 30 in-depth interviews with Black press journalists and four focus groups with 30 Black press readers. The journalists interviewed represent a range of digital-first and legacy Black news outlets, including *TheRoot.com*, *TheGrio.com*, and *BuzzFeed.com*. Focus group participants, drawn from Chicago and Los Angeles, were separated by generational cohorts (Generation X and Millennials) to assess variations in perceptions of entertainment news. The interviews explore journalists' motivations for producing entertainment content and whether they perceive it as a necessary adaptation to digital news consumption patterns. The focus groups investigate how audiences use entertainment news to manage stress, maintain cultural connection, and engage in selective news avoidance. The study applies grounded theory to analyze patterns in the data, identifying key themes such as comprehensive coverage, self-protection, coping mechanisms, and self-care.

**9. Hypotheses:** While not structured around formal hypotheses, the study advances several key arguments:

- Black press journalists intentionally incorporate entertainment content as part of a broader strategy to provide balanced and comprehensive coverage of the Black community.
- Black audiences actively use entertainment news as a coping mechanism to manage the psychological toll of hard news coverage, particularly regarding racial violence.
- Entertainment content functions as an act of resistance and self-care, enabling Black readers to engage with news in a way that prioritizes mental and emotional well-being.
- The consumption of entertainment news does not indicate political disengagement but rather reflects a strategic approach to news consumption that allows for temporary disengagement from trauma-inducing stories while maintaining an awareness of broader political issues.

**10. Main findings:** Williams Fayne finds that entertainment in the digital Black press serves as both an escape from and a complement to hard news consumption. Journalists perceive entertainment content as an essential part of their mission to provide holistic coverage of Black life, countering the predominantly negative portrayals of Black communities in mainstream media. Readers, in turn, view entertainment news as a necessary counterbalance to traumatic hard news, using it as a form of emotional regulation and community affirmation. Many participants describe entertainment news as an act of self-care, helping them manage stress while staying connected to Black culture. The study challenges the assumption that entertainment consumption signals political disengagement, showing instead that Black audiences remain highly engaged with social and political issues but navigate news in a way that prioritizes psychological resilience.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Black joy isn't about erasing the difficulties of the Black experience, but showing the whole truth by creating balance" (p. 264).
- "Entertainment news can be an emotional reprieve for those in the Black community who want to avoid hard news coverage and can be used as a tool for coping with traumatic content" (p. 267).
- "While mainstream journalists may view entertainment as less important to their audience as compared to hard news content, Black press journalists view it as essential given its productive function in the Black community" (p. 272).

#### 4.11.12 Negotiating News: How Cross-Cutting Romantic Partners Select, Consume, and Discuss News Together

Van Duyn, E. (2024). Negotiating News: How Cross-Cutting Romantic Partners Select, Consume, and Discuss News Together [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2023.2270445>]. *Political Communication*, 41(2), 224–243. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2023.2270445>

1. **Citation key:** van\_duyn\_negotiating\_2024
2. **Author(s):** Emily Van Duyn
3. **Year:** 2024
4. **Publication:** Political Communication
5. **Keywords:** cross-cutting relationships, news consumption, polarization, political discussion, political communication
6. **Summary:** Van Duyn investigates how romantic partners with differing political affiliations navigate news consumption, selection, and discussion. As political partisanship becomes increasingly entrenched, she examines how "cross-cutting" relationships—those in which partners hold opposing political beliefs—affect the way couples engage with political news. Using in-depth interviews, Van Duyn identifies two central processes: *negotiated exposure*, in which partners influence each other's news consumption patterns, and *two-step conflict*, where news selection and discussion become sites of political disagreement. The study highlights the relational complexities of navigating news exposure in an era of heightened polarization.
7. **Theory:** The author builds on theories of selective exposure, political sorting, and interpersonal communication to argue that news consumption in romantic relationships is shaped not just by individual preferences but also by relational dynamics. Traditional theories of news consumption suggest that individuals seek information that aligns with their ideological predispositions, minimizing exposure to cross-cutting perspectives. However, Van Duyn contends that in cross-cutting romantic relationships, news selection and discussion become an *interpersonal negotiation*, where

partners must balance personal political identities with the need for relational harmony. She introduces the concept of *negotiated exposure* to describe how partners influence the news each other selects and consumes, either through active discussion, passive exposure, or avoidance. Additionally, she develops the idea of *two-step conflict*, demonstrating that, rather than simply facilitating information exchange, news media can serve as a source of political disagreement, triggering disputes over content, sources, or volume of consumption. These insights expand political communication research by incorporating relational context into studies of news exposure and polarization.

**8. Methods:** The study is based on in-depth interviews with 67 individuals in cross-cutting romantic relationships. Participants were recruited through targeted Facebook advertisements and screened through an online questionnaire to ensure political diversity within their relationships. Interviews were conducted via phone, lasting approximately 30 minutes each. The semi-structured interview guide covered topics including political backgrounds, relational conflict, and news consumption habits. Van Duyn employed grounded theory methods to analyze the data, identifying patterns in how couples navigate news exposure, discussion, and avoidance. The sample included individuals of various demographic backgrounds, relationship statuses, and political affiliations, allowing for a nuanced exploration of how partisanship influences news-related relational dynamics.

**9. Hypotheses:** The study is structured around research questions rather than formal hypotheses, but Van Duyn advances several key arguments:

- Cross-cutting romantic partners engage in *negotiated exposure*, wherein they influence each other's news selection and consumption, leading to co-viewing, strategic avoidance, or active discussion.
- News consumption serves as a site of relational conflict, with disagreements emerging over content, sources, or volume of news consumed.
- Political differences in romantic relationships extend beyond ideological beliefs to shape how individuals experience and engage with news media.
- Relational context plays a crucial role in news consumption patterns, challenging the assumption that news selection is purely an individualistic process.

**10. Main findings:** Van Duyn finds that cross-cutting romantic partners navigate news selection and discussion through ongoing negotiation. Some couples co-view news as a shared ritual, while others engage in deliberate avoidance to maintain relational harmony. *Negotiated exposure* is evident in cases where partners adjust their news habits based on their partner's preferences, often selecting neutral sources or compromising on when and where to consume news. However, news also serves as a trigger for *two-step conflict*, where disagreements arise over not just political issues but the act of consuming news itself. Some partners attempt to manage conflict by setting boundaries around news exposure, while others disengage from news altogether to avoid disputes. The findings suggest that political polarization does not only manifest in public discourse but also permeates intimate relationships, shaping patterns of media consumption and political engagement in everyday life.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Negotiating exposure was also about how partners negotiated news consumption, whether that was consuming news separately or together" (p. 230).
- "News media served as more than a conduit for discussion or a transfer of information. In these relationships, news media also served as a source of political conflict between partners, activating differences between them that would have otherwise been unprovoked" (p. 234).
- "Cross-cutting relationships do not equate to cross-cutting exposure, nor do they necessarily result in constructive cross-cutting dialogue that might help temper polarized attitudes or identities" (p. 239).

## 4.12 Governing With the News

### 4.12.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Political communication scholarship has increasingly recognized that the news media do not function merely as passive conduits of information but rather as active participants in governance. Timothy Cook's seminal work, *Governing with the News* (2005), advances this argument by demonstrating that the news media operate as a political institution, shaping governance rather than merely reporting on it. Cook's analysis builds on institutionalist perspectives to argue that journalism has become structured by professional norms, economic dependencies, and political relationships that shape its role in democracy. Historically, the press evolved from a partisan model to a professionalized field, yet its institutional nature means that news coverage is shaped by journalistic routines, reliance on elite sources, and structural incentives that prioritize certain narratives over others. By framing journalism as an institution embedded within governance, Cook challenges traditional conceptions of press independence and objectivity, highlighting how media practices both reflect and reinforce political power structures.
- **The News Media as a Political Institution:** Cook's central theoretical contribution is the argument that the news media should be analyzed as a political institution rather than an external observer of political affairs. He contends that news organizations have developed structured norms, professional incentives, and economic dependencies that influence how they cover politics. Drawing on historical and institutionalist theories, he traces the evolution of journalism from the early partisan press to the modern professionalized model, showing how structural factors, such as press credentialing, advertising pressures, and beat reporting, shape journalistic behavior. Cook introduces the concept of "news subsidies," referring to the ways in which government officials and political elites shape media narratives by providing access, framing stories, and directing journalistic attention. He argues that these subsidies create a

symbiotic relationship between the press and government, where journalists rely on official sources for information while officials use the press to legitimize and disseminate their messages.

- **Historical Evolution of the Press:** Cook's analysis situates the modern media environment within a broader historical trajectory, tracing how journalistic practices have been shaped by political and economic forces. He distinguishes between different eras of news production, from the partisan press of the 19th century to the rise of objective journalism in the 20th century. This professionalization of journalism, while ostensibly increasing press autonomy, also introduced structural dependencies that shaped how news is gathered and reported. For instance, the establishment of White House press briefings, congressional press galleries, and institutionalized beat reporting created an environment in which journalists became structurally reliant on political actors for information. Cook argues that while adversarial journalism has increased over time, the institutionalized nature of news production means that even investigative reporting often operates within established journalistic norms that reinforce elite perspectives.
- **News Production and Structural Constraints:** Cook identifies several structural constraints that influence how news is produced and disseminated. He argues that journalistic norms—such as objectivity, balance, and newsworthiness—function as institutionalized rules that guide reporting decisions. These norms shape coverage by prioritizing conflict, elite perspectives, and episodic framing over structural or policy-focused reporting. Additionally, economic pressures, such as declining advertising revenue and newsroom consolidation, have further constrained journalistic autonomy, leading to increased reliance on official sources and prepackaged information from government agencies and political elites. Cook suggests that these structural factors contribute to a media environment in which political actors anticipate and strategically manipulate news coverage to their advantage.
- **Media-Government Relationships and Political Power:** A central theme in Cook's analysis is the reciprocal relationship between journalists and political actors. He argues that political elites do not merely react to media coverage but actively anticipate and shape journalistic routines to control narratives and influence public opinion. This dynamic is particularly evident in areas such as press conferences, leaks, and strategic framing of policy issues. Cook demonstrates that journalists, while often seeking to maintain professional independence, are constrained by their reliance on government sources for information. This structural dependency means that even critical reporting can reinforce existing political power structures by operating within the frames and narratives provided by elite sources.
- **The Limits of Media Independence:** While the ideal of an independent press remains central to democratic theory, Cook challenges the assumption that journalistic professionalism guarantees objectivity or autonomy. He argues that media independence is constrained by both institutional and economic factors, including ownership structures, advertising pressures, and journalistic routines that prioritize certain kinds of coverage over others. Cook's analysis reveals that media independence does not necessarily equate to neutrality, as journalists operate within an institutional environment that influences which issues receive attention and how they are framed.
- **Implications for Democratic Accountability:** Cook's work raises important questions about the role of the media in democratic accountability. While traditional democratic theory assumes that the press serves as a watchdog, exposing government misconduct and informing the public, Cook argues that the institutional nature of journalism complicates this role. He suggests that media coverage often amplifies elite perspectives rather than providing a counterbalance to political power. This has implications for public opinion formation, as citizens receive information filtered through journalistic norms and structural constraints that shape how political issues are presented. Cook's analysis underscores the need to reassess the media's role in democracy, considering not only its potential for accountability but also the structural factors that limit its independence and shape its influence.
- **Contemporary Challenges and Future Directions:** Cook's argument remains highly relevant in the contemporary media environment, where the rise of digital media, social networking platforms, and alternative news sources has transformed journalistic practices. While traditional media institutions continue to shape political discourse, the fragmentation of the media landscape has introduced new challenges, including the proliferation of partisan outlets, the decline of local journalism, and the increasing role of algorithmic content curation. Future research on media and governance will need to consider how these changes affect the institutional role of journalism, particularly in relation to misinformation, media polarization, and the evolving strategies of political elites in managing news coverage. Additionally, ongoing debates about media regulation, press subsidies, and the economic sustainability of journalism will shape the future of political communication scholarship.

#### 4.12.2 Congress, the Press, and Political Accountability

Arnold, R. D. (2004). *Congress, the Press, and Political Accountability* [Google-Books-ID: 4WoiAQAAQBAJ]. Princeton University Press

1. **Citation key:** arnold\_congress\_2004
2. **Author(s):** R. Douglas Arnold
3. **Year:** 2004
4. **Publication:** Princeton University Press
5. **Keywords:** Congress, local media, political accountability, representation, public opinion
6. **Summary:** Arnold investigates the role of local newspapers in shaping public accountability for members of Congress. Using extensive content analysis and multiple datasets, he examines how frequently representatives are covered, what aspects of their behavior are highlighted, and how these patterns vary across different media markets. His findings challenge conventional wisdom about incumbency advantage in media coverage, showing that local newspapers can serve as mechanisms of accountability, but their effectiveness is inconsistent. Arnold also explores how different jour-

- nalistic norms, newspaper resources, and electoral contexts influence the degree and nature of congressional coverage.
7. **Theory:** Arnold builds on foundational theories of democratic accountability, arguing that the media serve as crucial intermediaries between elected officials and their constituents. He applies two evaluative standards to assess the quality of congressional coverage: the “full news standard,” which posits that newspapers should provide comprehensive coverage of legislative activity, and the “burglar alarm standard,” which suggests that media should selectively highlight the most critical political developments. Arnold theorizes that newspapers balance these approaches based on resource constraints, audience demand, and editorial priorities. Furthermore, he posits that members of Congress are strategic actors who seek out media attention to build their reputations, but their success in doing so is contingent on newsworthiness and the structure of local media markets.
  8. **Methods:** Arnold employs a multi-method approach that includes quantitative content analysis and comparative case studies of newspaper coverage. He constructs three primary datasets: (1) an in-depth content analysis of 25 local newspapers examining their coverage of a single representative from their circulation area; (2) a broader dataset of 242 representative-newspaper dyads to assess the volume of congressional reporting across districts; and (3) a comparative analysis of newspaper coverage in six cities with multiple competing local newspapers. Arnold supplements this media analysis with survey data from the 1994 National Election Studies to explore the effects of newspaper coverage on public knowledge and attitudes. His methodology integrates both qualitative and quantitative assessments of media content, offering a nuanced perspective on the relationship between congressional behavior and journalistic practice.
  9. **Hypotheses:** Arnold hypothesizes that:
    - Local newspapers will provide regular coverage of members of Congress, but the extent and content of that coverage will vary significantly by newspaper size, resources, and editorial focus.
    - Coverage will disproportionately highlight position-taking and electoral competition rather than legislative activity or policy outcomes.
    - Newspapers with limited resources will prioritize sensational or highly visible political events over routine legislative reporting.
    - Incumbents will not always benefit from local media coverage, as newspapers may be more critical of officeholders than challengers in competitive elections.

His findings support these hypotheses, particularly regarding the variation in coverage and the tendency for media attention to emphasize political conflict over substantive policymaking.

10. **Main findings:** Arnold demonstrates that coverage of local congressional representatives is a regular feature in many newspapers, even in large metropolitan markets, but the nature of this coverage varies widely. He finds that smaller newspapers with fewer resources sometimes provide more consistent congressional coverage than larger newspapers with dedicated Washington reporters, challenging assumptions about media capacity. His analysis reveals that newspapers focus more on legislators' position-taking and electoral dynamics than on their policymaking roles, limiting the depth of substantive political information available to the public. He also finds that while incumbents receive more media attention, they are not always portrayed favorably, particularly in competitive races. Importantly, Arnold's findings suggest that newspapers can foster political accountability but do so unevenly, influenced by financial constraints, editorial priorities, and electoral considerations.

#### 11. Key Definitions:

- *Full news standard:* The expectation that media should provide citizens with comprehensive coverage of legislative activities, including policy debates and representatives' positions on a broad array of issues.
- *Burglar alarm standard:* The idea that media should focus coverage on the most urgent and significant political events, alerting the public to major developments rather than providing routine policy reporting.
- *Newsworthiness:* The criteria by which journalists decide whether an event, statement, or action is sufficiently important or interesting to merit coverage.
- *Local media market:* The geographic and economic space in which newspapers compete for readership and advertising revenue, influencing the nature and volume of political coverage.
- *Incumbent media advantage:* The theory that sitting members of Congress receive more news coverage than challengers, though Arnold complicates this view by showing that incumbents may also attract more negative coverage.

#### 4.12.3 Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution

Cook, T. E. (2005). *Governing With the News, Second Edition: The News Media as a Political Institution* [Google-Books-ID: UIVhEAAAQBAJ]. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** cook\_governing\_2005
2. **Author(s):** Timothy E. Cook
3. **Year:** 2005
4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press
5. **Keywords:** news media, political institutions, journalism, media bias, press-government relations
6. **Summary:** Cook argues that the news media function as a political institution rather than merely as an external observer of political affairs. He challenges the conventional view of journalism as a neutral intermediary and instead demonstrates how institutional norms, professionalization, and government subsidies shape media content and be-

havior. The book traces the historical evolution of the press, highlighting its embeddedness in political structures and the reciprocal relationship between journalists and government officials. Cook also critiques the structural constraints that influence news coverage, leading to the perpetuation of existing political power dynamics.

**7. Theory:** Cook theorizes that the press should not be viewed as a passive transmitter of information but rather as an active participant in governance. He posits that news organizations operate within institutional frameworks that influence how political information is gathered, framed, and disseminated. Drawing from institutionalist perspectives, Cook argues that journalism has evolved into a structured entity with its own norms, routines, and incentives that shape political discourse. He introduces the concept of "subsidies," which encompasses both direct government support (e.g., postal discounts, press galleries) and the indirect ways that political elites shape media narratives by controlling access to information. Cook contends that this dependence on governmental and elite sources creates a symbiotic relationship that influences what is reported and how it is framed. Ultimately, he challenges the idea that media independence equates to neutrality, instead suggesting that institutionalized journalistic practices reinforce existing political power structures.

**8. Methods:** Cook employs a historical-institutionalist approach, combining archival research, case studies, and content analysis of media coverage. He systematically examines the development of journalism from the partisan press era to the professionalization of news reporting in the twentieth century. The book draws on extensive secondary literature, government records, and interviews with journalists to illustrate the interplay between media institutions and political actors. Cook also analyzes the formal and informal mechanisms that sustain journalistic routines, such as press credentialing, beat reporting, and news norms that prioritize conflict and elite perspectives. His methodological approach allows for a comprehensive examination of the media's role in governance while situating contemporary media practices within a broader historical and institutional context.

**9. Hypotheses:** Cook hypothesizes that:

- The news media function as a political institution, shaping governance rather than merely reporting on it.
- Government subsidies, both direct and indirect, play a crucial role in sustaining journalistic institutions.
- Professionalization in journalism has not led to increased independence but has instead reinforced structured dependencies on official sources.
- The institutional norms of news organizations influence political discourse by determining which issues receive coverage and how they are framed.
- Political actors strategically anticipate media responses, incorporating journalistic routines into their policymaking and public relations efforts.

His findings largely support these hypotheses, demonstrating that journalism is embedded within political processes and that media independence does not necessarily equate to neutrality or objectivity.

**10. Main findings:** Cook demonstrates that the media are not external watchdogs but integral components of the political system, influencing governance through structured norms and dependencies. He finds that government policies historically facilitated the development of the press, reinforcing its institutionalized role within the political sphere. Cook's analysis shows that news production follows routinized patterns, with journalists relying heavily on elite sources, which skews coverage toward established power holders. He argues that this reliance on official sources creates a self-reinforcing cycle where political elites shape media narratives, while journalists, constrained by professional norms and institutional expectations, inadvertently legitimize those narratives. His findings also reveal that while adversarial journalism has increased in recent decades, it has not fundamentally altered the press-government relationship, as investigative reporting often operates within the same institutional constraints that shape routine news coverage.

#### 11. Key Definitions:

- *Political institution:* A structured set of practices and norms that guide behavior within a specific domain of governance. Cook argues that the news media qualify as a political institution due to their embedded role in shaping political discourse and influencing governance.
- *Subsidies:* The direct and indirect forms of government support that facilitate journalism, including financial assistance (e.g., postal rate reductions) and informational access (e.g., press briefings, credentialing).
- *News norms:* The established conventions that guide journalistic practice, such as objectivity, conflict-driven narratives, and reliance on elite sources.
- *Professionalization:* The transformation of journalism into a distinct field with standardized training, ethical codes, and institutionalized norms, which, according to Cook, has reinforced media dependence on official sources rather than increasing editorial independence.
- *Beat journalism:* A reporting system where journalists specialize in covering specific institutions or topics (e.g., Congress, the White House), leading to a reliance on routine access to official sources and the reinforcement of dominant political narratives.

#### 4.12.4 Why Do Partisan Media Polarize Viewers?

Levendusky, M. S. (2013). Why Do Partisan Media Polarize Viewers? [Leprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12008>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(3), 611–623. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12008>

1. Citation key: levendusky\_why\_2013

2. **Author(s):** Matthew S. Levendusky
3. **Year:** 2013
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** partisan media, polarization, motivated reasoning, media effects, political communication
6. **Summary:** Levendusky investigates how partisan media contribute to political polarization. Using theories of motivated reasoning, he explains why exposure to partisan media reinforces ideological extremity, why these effects are stronger for certain individuals, and how long these effects persist. Through a series of original experiments, he demonstrates that partisan media do not necessarily radicalize moderates but instead amplify extremity among those already politically engaged. His findings indicate that while partisan media viewership is limited to a relatively small segment of the public, its broader political effects are substantial, particularly in exacerbating polarization among the already ideologically committed.
7. **Theory:** Levendusky draws on the framework of motivated reasoning, which posits that individuals process information through two primary goals: *accuracy goals* (seeking objective truth) and *directional goals* (reinforcing preexisting beliefs). He argues that partisan media accentuate directional reasoning by presenting slanted, one-sided narratives that reinforce ideological predispositions. Exposure to like-minded media strengthens confirmation bias, leading viewers to uncritically accept reinforcing messages, while exposure to counter-attitudinal media often triggers counterarguing, which paradoxically strengthens preexisting beliefs. He further theorizes that partisan media operate as *echo chambers* that do not necessarily convert moderates into extremists but instead deepen the polarization of already committed partisans. The structure of partisan media, which primes political identities and presents highly curated narratives, creates an environment conducive to attitudinal extremity, making compromise and bipartisan consensus more difficult in the broader political sphere.
8. **Methods:** Levendusky employs a series of experimental studies to test the effects of partisan media exposure. Participants were randomly assigned to watch clips from Fox News (conservative), MSNBC (liberal), or the neutral PBS NewsHour, and their attitudes were measured both immediately after exposure and several days later to assess the durability of effects. His methodology includes:
  - A pretest-posttest experimental design in which baseline attitudes were measured before exposure.
  - Randomized assignment to like-minded, counter-attitudinal, or neutral media.
  - Measurement of attitude extremity post-exposure and at a follow-up time point to assess the persistence of media effects.
  - A follow-up study analyzing real-world viewing preferences to validate the external validity of the experimental findings.

This approach allows him to isolate the causal effects of partisan media exposure while controlling for self-selection biases that often confound observational studies of media influence.

9. **Hypotheses:** Levendusky hypothesizes:
  - **H1:** Exposure to like-minded partisan media will increase attitude extremity, reinforcing preexisting beliefs.
  - **H2:** Exposure to counter-attitudinal partisan media will, on average, also increase attitude extremity due to counterarguing (a “boomerang effect”).
  - **H3:** The effects of counter-attitudinal media will be strongest for individuals with strongly held prior attitudes, as they are most motivated to counterargue.
  - **H4:** The polarizing effects of partisan media will persist for several days post-exposure.

His findings confirm all four hypotheses, demonstrating that partisan media deepen ideological polarization and that these effects do not fade immediately after exposure.

10. **Main findings:** Levendusky finds that partisan media amplify polarization by reinforcing ideological extremity among already committed partisans. He demonstrates that exposure to like-minded media increases attitude extremity, while exposure to counter-attitudinal media also heightens polarization due to counterarguing. These effects are most pronounced among those with strong prior attitudes, as they are better equipped to resist persuasion and selectively process information. Moreover, he finds that the effects of partisan media endure for at least several days post-exposure, suggesting that they have lasting implications for political attitudes. While partisan media viewership is relatively small, the individuals who consume such media are politically engaged and influential, meaning that their increased polarization has wider political consequences, including the exacerbation of partisan gridlock and elite polarization.

11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Partisan media therefore heighten mass polarization not by turning moderates into extremists, but rather by further polarizing those who are already away from the political center” (p. 612).
  - “Like-minded media take subjects who are already extreme and make them even more extreme. Thus, like-minded media polarize not by making moderate viewers more extreme, but rather by affecting those already away from the political center” (p. 620).
  - “Partisan media consumers can put pressure on elected officials to take extreme positions and eschew bargaining with the other side...partisan media alone do not cause these effects, but they certainly exacerbate broader trends toward division, gridlock, and dissensus” (p. 621).

#### 4.12.5 The “Nate Silver Effect” on Political Journalism

Toff, B. (2019). The ‘Nate Silver effect’ on political journalism: Gatecrashers, gatekeepers, and changing newsroom practices around coverage of public opinion polls [Publisher: SAGE Publications]. *Journalism*, 20(7), 873–889. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884917731655>

1. **Citation key:** toff\_nate\_2019
2. **Author(s):** Benjamin Toff
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** Journalism
5. **Keywords:** gatekeeping, political journalism, public opinion, polling, media effects
6. **Summary:** Toff examines how the increasing reliance on polling aggregator websites, particularly those modeled after FiveThirtyEight, has altered newsroom practices and journalistic gatekeeping norms. Using in-depth interviews with political journalists, media analysts, and public opinion pollsters, he documents a shift in how journalists assess and cover public opinion, highlighting concerns over declining expertise, the loss of traditional editorial standards, and the potential for overconfidence in poll-based election forecasting. His findings suggest that while aggregators have democratized access to polling data, they have also weakened traditional mechanisms of journalistic accountability in reporting public opinion.
7. **Theory:** Toff applies gatekeeping theory to analyze the changing role of journalists in filtering and interpreting public opinion data. He argues that the rise of polling aggregators has led to a decline in traditional journalistic standards for vetting individual polls, as journalists increasingly rely on aggregation rather than in-house expertise to determine the credibility of polling data. He also explores how media fragmentation and digital news consumption have weakened the press’s traditional function as an arbiter of reliable information. Drawing on theories of precision journalism, Toff contends that the “Nate Silver effect” has introduced both positive and negative consequences: while aggregators reduce reliance on individual, potentially biased polls, they also contribute to an illusion of precision that can mislead audiences and journalists alike. He further theorizes that the shift in gatekeeping functions—from journalists to algorithm-driven aggregators—has created new vulnerabilities in political reporting, particularly in election forecasting.
8. **Methods:** Toff employs a qualitative research design, conducting 41 in-depth interviews with political journalists, media analysts, and public opinion pollsters between 2014 and 2015. His methodology includes:
  - Semi-structured interviews focusing on journalists’ perceptions of polling data and their evaluation processes.
  - Purposive and snowball sampling to recruit participants from major news organizations, polling firms, and digital media outlets.
  - Thematic analysis of interview transcripts to identify patterns in attitudes toward polling, aggregation, and journalistic responsibility.

This approach allows Toff to assess the evolving norms surrounding public opinion reporting and the extent to which reliance on aggregators has altered journalistic practices.

9. **Hypotheses:** Toff hypothesizes:
  - **H1:** Journalists increasingly rely on polling aggregator websites rather than evaluating individual polls independently.
  - **H2:** The rise of aggregators has weakened traditional gatekeeping norms, leading to the inclusion of lower-quality polling data in news coverage.
  - **H3:** Journalists express ambivalence about their own ability to assess polling accuracy due to declining in-house expertise.
  - **H4:** The growing demand for precise election forecasts has led to overconfidence in poll-based models and an underappreciation of their uncertainty.

His findings confirm these hypotheses, particularly regarding the shift in gatekeeping authority from journalists to digital aggregators and the growing difficulty of distinguishing between high- and low-quality polling data.

10. **Main findings:** Toff finds that the increasing reliance on polling aggregators has reshaped how journalists engage with public opinion data, leading to both greater accessibility and diminished scrutiny. Journalists now frequently rely on poll averages rather than independently assessing the credibility of individual surveys, which has led to an erosion of traditional editorial standards. Many journalists express uncertainty about their own ability to evaluate polling methodologies, reflecting a broader decline in in-house expertise. Toff also identifies a growing tendency among journalists to assume greater precision in election forecasting than is warranted, a phenomenon he terms the “Nate Silver effect.” He highlights concerns that this overconfidence has contributed to misplaced expectations in recent elections, particularly in cases where aggregators’ models failed to account for polling uncertainty. Ultimately, his findings suggest that while aggregators have provided valuable corrections to cherry-picked polls, they have also weakened traditional journalistic skepticism and reinforced a data-driven determinism in political reporting.

11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Many of those interviewed valued polls but expressed ambivalence about the role of aggregator and forecasting sites in changing how political campaigns are covered” (p. 874).
  - “Many saw imprecision due to sampling error as an inevitable, if frustrating, aspect of reliance on surveys to assess public opinion... Even when aggregated, other sources of less quantifiable survey error persist, causing tension given demands for precision” (p. 880).

- “With data, as with all else, we need to do our job. The same characteristics required in reporting and fact checking—inquiring skepticism and sensitivity to the motivations of sources—are also required when handling survey data” (p. 881).

#### 4.12.6 Strategic Candidate Entry and Congressional Elections in the Era of Fox News

Arceneaux, K., Dunaway, J., Johnson, M., & Vander Wielen, R. J. (2020). Strategic Candidate Entry and Congressional Elections in the Era of Fox News [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12478>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 64(2), 398–415. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12478>

- Citation key:** arceneaux\_strategic\_2020
- Author(s):** Kevin Arceneaux, Johanna Dunaway, Martin Johnson, and Ryan J. Vander Wielen
- Year:** 2020
- Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
- Keywords:** candidate entry, partisan media, congressional elections, electoral competition, Fox News
- Summary:** Arceneaux et al. examine the role of partisan media—specifically, the conservative Fox News Channel—in shaping the electoral landscape by influencing the strategic entry decisions of high-quality candidates. They argue that partisan media affects candidate perceptions of electoral viability, which in turn influences whether strong candidates decide to challenge incumbents. Using congressional district-level data on Fox News availability, they find that the presence of Fox News increased the likelihood that Republican challengers would contest Democratic incumbents, particularly in competitive districts.
- Theory:** The authors build on theories of strategic candidate entry and rational anticipation to argue that high-quality candidates are more likely to enter a race when they perceive an increased probability of success. They contend that national partisan media shapes these perceptions by providing a biased signal about electoral viability. Drawing on prior work showing that Fox News has contributed to partisan shifts in electoral behavior, the authors argue that exposure to Fox News led potential Republican candidates to overestimate their electoral prospects in Democratic-held districts. This shift is particularly pronounced in marginal districts where partisan balance is uncertain. They situate their argument within the broader literature on media effects, candidate emergence, and political polarization, demonstrating how shifts in the media landscape influence not only voters but also elite decision-making.
- Methods:** The authors employ a mixed-methods approach, primarily leveraging observational data with a natural experiment design. Their empirical strategy includes:
  - Congressional district-level data on Fox News availability from 1997 to 2009, obtained from the Nielsen Company.
  - Candidate entry data from the Federal Election Commission and other electoral records to identify high-quality challengers.
  - Logistic regression models to estimate the probability of a quality challenger entering a race, controlling for district-level partisan composition and incumbent strength.
  - Placebo tests to ensure that Fox News availability was not systematically correlated with preexisting electoral trends.
  - Matching analyses to improve covariate balance and reduce potential confounders.
 Their identification strategy exploits the staggered rollout of Fox News across congressional districts, treating it as an exogenous shock to the media environment.
- Hypotheses:** The authors test several hypotheses related to the influence of Fox News on candidate entry:
  - H1:** The presence of Fox News increases the likelihood of a quality Republican challenger entering a race against a Democratic incumbent.
  - H2:** This effect is moderated by district partisanship, with the strongest effects occurring in marginal districts.
  - H3:** Fox News availability has no meaningful effect on Democratic candidate entry in Republican-held districts.
 Their findings provide strong support for H1 and H2, while H3 is confirmed, indicating that Fox News primarily influenced Republican candidate behavior.
- Main findings:** The authors find that Fox News availability significantly increased the probability that Democratic incumbents faced quality Republican challengers, particularly in districts with a competitive partisan balance. In marginal Democratic-held districts, the probability of facing a quality Republican challenger increased by nearly 40 percentage points as Fox News penetration rose from zero to full saturation. However, Fox News did not have a comparable effect on Democratic candidates running in Republican-held districts. The findings suggest that Fox News altered the perceptions of Republican potential candidates, making them more likely to enter races they otherwise might have avoided. This contributes to broader discussions of media influence, showing that partisan media not only shapes public opinion but also affects elite-level strategic decisions.
- Key quotations:**
  - “We find that the presence of Fox News increased the likelihood that quality Republican challengers emerged in districts that were tenuously held by Democratic incumbents” (p. 399).
  - “If news media coverage within a congressional district shifts in their direction, ambitious potential candidates should correspondingly increase their perceived probability of winning and, as a result, their chance of running for Congress” (p. 401).
  - “Taken together, we offer compelling evidence that the emergence of national partisan news media altered candidate entry dynamics in House elections” (p. 403).

#### 4.12.7 The Wolves in Sheep's Clothing: How Russia's Internet Research Agency Tweets Appeared in U.S. News as Vox Populi

Lukito, J., Suk, J., Zhang, Y., Doroshenko, L., Kim, S. J., Su, M.-H., Xia, Y., Freelon, D., & Wells, C. (2020). The Wolves in Sheep's Clothing: How Russia's Internet Research Agency Tweets Appeared in U.S. News as Vox Populi [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 25(2), 196–216. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161219895215>

1. **Citation key:** lukito\_wolves\_2020
2. **Author(s):** Josephine Lukito, Jiyoun Suk, Yini Zhang, Larissa Doroshenko, Sang Jung Kim, Min-Hsin Su, Yiping Xia, Deen Freelon, and Chris Wells
3. **Year:** 2020
4. **Publication:** The International Journal of Press/Politics
5. **Keywords:** journalism, journalistic norms, state-media relations, disinformation, hybrid media system
6. **Summary:** Lukito et al. analyze how tweets from the Russian-sponsored Internet Research Agency (IRA) were incorporated into U.S. news media, examining how journalistic gatekeeping processes inadvertently amplified disinformation. The study focuses on the tendency of news outlets to use tweets as a representation of public opinion, or *vox populi*, without verifying their authenticity. By analyzing 314 news articles quoting IRA-controlled Twitter accounts, the authors find that many tweets were presented as representative of American public sentiment, raising concerns about how modern journalism practices unintentionally facilitate the spread of foreign disinformation.
7. **Theory:** The authors draw on gatekeeping theory and the concept of the hybrid media system to argue that modern journalistic practices have altered the traditional mechanisms through which information enters the news. While classic gatekeeping models emphasize the role of journalists as filters of information, the hybrid media environment has complicated this process by enabling the rapid integration of digital content. They contend that *vox populi* practices—where journalists quote social media posts as a representation of public opinion—create a vulnerability that disinformation actors can exploit. The IRA's ability to pose as ordinary citizens allowed their messages to be absorbed into news narratives, reinforcing preexisting ideological divides. The authors situate this within broader discussions of journalistic routines, digital media ecosystems, and the challenges of verifying information in an era of social media-driven reporting.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a content analysis of 314 U.S. news articles that quoted at least one IRA tweet between 2015 and 2017. The authors constructed a database of IRA-controlled Twitter accounts using a dataset released by Twitter. They then searched for instances where these accounts were quoted in major U.S. news outlets, drawing from a sample of 117 digital and legacy media sources. They coded articles based on whether IRA tweets were used as sources of *fact* or *opinion*, and whether they were quoted as part of a broader *vox populi* practice. Then, the authors conducted statistical tests to assess whether IRA tweets were more likely to appear in digital-first outlets than legacy media, and whether they were embedded in collections of multiple tweets. This mixed-methods approach allowed the authors to evaluate both the prevalence and presentation of IRA tweets within mainstream news reporting.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors test several hypotheses related to the role of *vox populi* in amplifying IRA disinformation:
  - H1: IRA tweets appeared more frequently in digital-first news stories than in legacy media.
  - H2: IRA tweets were more likely to be quoted for their opinion rather than for factual information.
  - H3: IRA tweets were more often attributed to everyday citizens rather than authoritative sources.
  - H4: IRA tweets were frequently embedded alongside at least two other tweets as part of a broader *vox populi* representation.The findings provide strong support for H1, H2, and H3, and partial support for H4, confirming that IRA tweets were often quoted as representative of public sentiment.
10. **Main findings:** The study reveals that a significant portion of IRA tweets appearing in U.S. news media were framed as *vox populi*, rather than as questionable or potentially foreign-sourced content. Journalists frequently quoted these tweets in collections of multiple Twitter posts, reinforcing the perception that they represented authentic American public opinion. Notably, 63.1% of articles referred to IRA accounts as everyday Twitter users, while only 2.22% identified them as authoritative sources. Furthermore, IRA tweets were quoted for their opinion 56.4% of the time, compared to only 32.5% for factual information. These patterns illustrate how the journalistic practice of sourcing social media commentary facilitated the spread of Russian disinformation. The study raises broader concerns about how digital-era reporting norms have weakened traditional gatekeeping functions, allowing foreign actors to manipulate narratives within mainstream news coverage.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "We find that the presence of IRA tweets in U.S. news media was not random; rather, these tweets were often embedded as *vox populi*, conveying opinion rather than fact, and presented as coming from everyday Twitter users" (p. 197).
  - "Taken together, these findings suggest that the hybrid media system has introduced new vulnerabilities into journalistic gatekeeping practices, enabling foreign disinformation actors to penetrate the news cycle by masquerading as members of the public" (p. 203).
  - "Our results highlight the need for journalists to exercise greater scrutiny when embedding social media content into news stories, as these practices can inadvertently amplify the very disinformation campaigns they aim to expose" (p. 209).



Figure 4.1: The issue, the candidate, and the communications office

## 5 Congress

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5.1	Introduction . . . . .	551
5.2	Ideology and Spatial Models . . . . .	552
5.2.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	552
5.2.2	NOMINATE: A Short Intellectual History . . . . .	552
5.2.3	Lawmaking and Roll Calls . . . . .	553
5.2.4	Measuring Policy Positions in Political Space . . . . .	554
5.3	Party Influence in Congress . . . . .	555
5.3.1	Party Influence in Congress . . . . .	555
5.3.2	Majority Party Power and Procedural Motions in the U.S. Senate . . . . .	556
5.4	Veto Politics . . . . .	557
5.4.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	557
5.4.2	Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power . . . . .	558
5.4.3	The Politics of Blame: Bargaining Before an Audience . . . . .	559
5.4.4	Presidential Vetoes in the Early Republic: Changing Constitutional Norms or Electoral Reform . . . . .	560
5.4.5	Beyond Pivotal Politics: Constituencies, Electoral Incentives, and Veto Override Attempts in the House . . . . .	561
5.4.6	Veto Rhetoric and Legislative Riders . . . . .	562
5.4.7	The Issue Politics of Presidential Veto Threats . . . . .	563
5.5	Legislative Agendas . . . . .	564
5.5.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	564
5.5.2	Senators as Political Entrepreneurs: Using Bill Sponsorship to Shape Legislative Agendas .	564
5.5.3	The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-96 . . . . .	565
5.5.4	Where's the Pivot? Obstruction and Lawmaking in the Pre-Cloture Senate . . . . .	566
5.5.5	Issue Attention and Legislative Proposals in the U.S. Senate . . . . .	567
5.5.6	Winning Coalition Formation in the U.S. Senate: The Effects of Legislative Decision Rules and Agenda Change . . . . .	568
5.6	Rulemaking, Rulebreaking, and Innovation . . . . .	569
5.6.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	569
5.6.2	Assessing Congressional Responses to Growing Presidential Powers: The Case of Recess Appointments . . . . .	570
5.6.3	Exceptions to the Rule: The Politics of Filibuster Limitations in the U.S. Senate . . . . .	571
5.6.4	Rule Breaking and Political Imagination . . . . .	572
5.6.5	Reid's Rules: Filibusters, the Nuclear Option, and Path Dependence in the US Senate .	573
5.6.6	What Is Regular Order Worth? Partisan Lawmaking and Congressional Processes . . . . .	574
5.7	Representation in Congress . . . . .	575
5.7.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	575
5.7.2	Race, Representation, and the Voting Rights Act . . . . .	576
5.7.3	Descriptive and Substantive Representation in Congress . . . . .	577
5.7.4	Legislative Staff and Representation in Congress . . . . .	578

5.7.5	The Party or the Purse? Unequal Representation in the US Senate . . . . .	579
5.7.6	Donors, Primary Elections, and Polarization in the United States . . . . .	581
5.7.7	The Economic Backgrounds of Politicians . . . . .	582
5.8	Nominations and Confirmations . . . . .	583
5.8.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	583
5.8.2	Courting the President: How Circuit Court Judges Alter Their Behavior for Promotion to the Supreme Court . . . . .	584
5.8.3	The Logic of Collective Inaction: Senatorial Delay in Executive Nominations . . . . .	585
5.8.4	Advising, Consenting, Delaying, and Expediting: Senator Influences on Presidential Appointments . . . . .	586
5.8.5	The When and Why of Nominations: Determinants of Presidential Appointments . . . . .	587
5.8.6	The Power to Appoint: Presidential Nominations and Change on the Supreme Court . . . . .	588
5.8.7	Presidential Control of Independent Agencies' Leadership and Personnel: A Two-Case Study of Interbranch Contestation over the Bureaucracy and the Unitary Executive under Donald Trump . . . . .	589
5.9	The Separation of Powers . . . . .	590
5.9.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	590
5.9.2	The Separation of Powers, Court Curbing, and Judicial Legitimacy . . . . .	591
5.9.3	Ducking Trouble: Congressionally Induced Selection Bias in the Supreme Court's Agenda	592
5.9.4	Presidential Speeches and the Stages of the Legislative Process . . . . .	593
5.9.5	Investigating the President: Committee Probes and Presidential Approval, 1953–2006 . . . . .	594
5.9.6	The Opportunistic President: How US Presidents Determine Their Legislative Programs . . . . .	595
5.9.7	A Separation-of-Powers Approach to the Supreme Court's Shrinking Caseload . . . . .	596
5.10	Miscellaneous Topics in Congress . . . . .	597
5.10.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	597
5.10.2	A Bayesian Hierarchical Topic Model for Political Texts: Measuring Expressed Agendas in Senate Press Releases . . . . .	597
5.10.3	Examining the Electoral Connection Across Time . . . . .	598
5.10.4	Cue-Taking in Congress: Interest Group Signals from Dear Colleague Letters . . . . .	599
5.10.5	Women's Representation and the Gendered Pipeline to Power . . . . .	600
5.10.6	Inside Congressional Committees: Function and Dysfunction in the Legislative Process . . . . .	601
5.10.7	Competition in Congressional Elections: Money versus Votes . . . . .	602
5.10.8	Anchoring or Expanding? Gender and Judicial Nominations . . . . .	604
5.10.9	Evaluating (In)Experience in Congressional Elections . . . . .	605

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a supplementary examination of the study of Congress, integrating a diverse range of theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches, and empirical findings to elucidate the dynamics of legislative behavior and institutional processes. The texts compiled within these sections offer insights into the ideological structuring of congressional decision-making, the influence of political parties on legislative outcomes, and the strategic deployment of executive power within a separated system. Additionally, this chapter delves into the mechanisms that shape legislative agendas, the procedural innovations and deviations that alter congressional function, and the evolving nature of representation within the legislature.

The chapter commences with a discussion of ideology and spatial models, a foundational area of study in congressional research. Scholars working in this tradition seek to quantify and map legislative preferences in a structured policy space, allowing for the empirical estimation of ideological positions through roll call voting and other indicators. A core component of this discussion is the intellectual history and application of NOMINATE scores, a scaling method that has transformed the study of congressional voting by illustrating the stability and dimensionality of ideological alignment. These studies collectively reveal the ways in which lawmakers' preferences can be systematically inferred, providing an analytical framework for subsequent discussions of partisan influence and institutional constraints.

The focus then shifts to the role of party influence in Congress, which remains a central and contested topic in legislative studies. This section is brief, as much of what is provided in chapter 3 remains true in the legislative context. The texts presented here scrutinize various theoretical models of party control, including the conditional party government thesis, cartel theory, and pivotal politics. By juxtaposing these perspectives, this section considers the extent to which party leaders shape legislative outcomes, particularly through agenda-setting powers and procedural control. The comparative treatment of House and Senate dynamics within this literature further highlights the asymmetries in party influence between the two chambers, raising important considerations regarding the institutional foundations of majority rule and obstruction.

The discussion of veto politics extends the analysis beyond intra-legislative dynamics to encompass executive-legislative bargaining. The studies included in this section explore the conditions under which presidents wield the veto strategically rather than as a reactive instrument. Scholarship on veto bargaining emphasizes how presidents use threats and rejections to extract policy concessions from Congress, while research on blame-game politics reveals the electoral calculations that influence legislative-executive confrontations. The historical evolution of veto use, as examined through analyses of early republic practices and modern legislative strategy, demonstrates that the power of the veto is not static but deeply embedded in broader patterns of institutional development and partisan competition.

Legislative agendas represent another crucial dimension of congressional research, as scholars seek to understand how issues gain prominence and why certain policies advance while others stall. The readings within this section interrogate agenda-setting dynamics through multiple lenses, including the role of individual political entrepreneurs, institutional constraints on legislative output, and the strategic calculations that underpin obstructionist tactics. Historical examinations of legislative gridlock further illuminate how patterns of productivity and stasis in Congress evolve over time, shaped by both structural and contextual factors.

The study of rulemaking, rulebreaking, and institutional innovation offers a deeper look into the adaptive capacities of Congress. Legislative norms and procedures do not remain fixed; rather, they undergo constant reinterpretation and contestation. The texts in this section analyze key moments of procedural transformation, including filibuster limitations, the strategic use of recess appointments, and the so-called "nuclear option." These studies illustrate that congressional rules, while often framed as procedural constraints, serve as instruments of power that can be leveraged to advance partisan and institutional objectives.

The chapter continues with an examination of representation in Congress, highlighting the intersection of institutional design, electoral incentives, and demographic composition. The included works investigate key issues such as racial and gender representation, the impact of legislative staff on policymaking, and the economic backgrounds of politicians. By assessing how well Congress reflects the diverse interests of the electorate, these studies engage broader debates regarding democratic responsiveness and the distribution of political influence within the legislative process.

The study of nominations and confirmations presents an additional perspective on legislative-executive relations, exploring how partisan dynamics and procedural rules shape the selection and approval of judicial and executive appointments. This section evaluates the factors influencing senatorial delay, the strategic behavior of judicial nominees, and the shifting norms of confirmation battles. By examining the intersection of institutional prerogatives and partisan strategies, the readings in this section provide a deeper understanding of how the nomination process reflects broader tensions within the governing structure. The separation of powers framework further contextualizes the tensions and bargaining strategies between Congress and the executive branch. The research in this section assesses how institutional design influences legislative oversight, presidential influence, and interbranch negotiation. Topics such as court curbing, committee investigations, and presidential agenda setting illustrate the varied mechanisms through which Congress seeks to assert its authority while responding to executive actions. These studies contribute to a broader understanding of how institutional interactions shape governance outcomes over time.

In sum, this chapter offers a multifaceted exploration of Congress as a political institution, emphasizing the interactions between ideology, party power, executive-legislative relations, procedural evolution, and representation. The thematic structure of the chapter allows for a nuanced consideration of legislative politics, bridging foundational theories with contemporary debates. By engaging with this material as a supplement to that provided in chapters 1 through 3, readers should gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms that structure congressional action and the methodological tools that scholars employ to uncover patterns of governance within the U.S. legislative system.

## 5.2 Ideology and Spatial Models

### 5.2.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** This subsection, as with many others for this and the following chapter, merely fills in a few missing texts that have yet to be mentioned elsewhere in the guide. That being the case, there is little need to derive a full subject area summary for these few articles. I recommend you reference these, along with Krehbiel's (1998) seminal work, *Pivotal Politics*, along with Snyder and Groseclose's (2000) "Estimating Party Influence in Congressional Roll-Call Voting."

### 5.2.2 NOMINATE: A Short Intellectual History

Poole, K. T. (1999). NOMINATE: A Short Intellectual History. *The Political Methodologist*, 9, 1–6

1. **Citation key:** poole\_nominate\_1999
2. **Author(s):** Keith T. Poole
3. **Year:** 1999
4. **Publication:** Political Analysis
5. **Keywords:** NOMINATE, roll call voting, ideology, spatial theory, congressional voting
6. **Summary:** Poole provides an intellectual history of the NOMINATE (Nominal Three-Step Estimation) model, a high-tech method developed with Howard Rosenthal for analyzing roll call voting in Congress. He explains how the method builds on spatial theories of voting and belief systems, arguing that legislators' ideological preferences can be represented in a low-dimensional space. The article details the theoretical foundations of the model, its computational complexity, and its advantages over earlier one-dimensional scaling methods. Ultimately, Poole contends that NOMINATE provides a superior approach for understanding congressional polarization and ideological realignment over time.
7. **Theory:** Poole's theoretical foundation for NOMINATE is rooted in spatial models of voting, particularly the notion that ideology can be understood as a constrained belief system operating within a low-dimensional space. Drawing on Converse's (1964) concept of constraint and Ordeshook-Hinich's (1976) theory of a fundamental "Basic Space," Poole argues that political choices are structured along a limited number of dimensions. While traditional spatial theory posited a separate dimension for each issue, empirical evidence from psychometrics and early factor analysis studies suggested that most political choices could be captured using just one or two dimensions. Poole conceptualizes ideology as a fundamental structure shaping legislators' voting behavior, which can be empirically estimated through roll call analysis. The central insight of NOMINATE is that legislators have stable ideological positions, and their votes can be modeled as probabilistic choices driven by utility maximization in a spatial setting. The model assumes that legislators vote for the alternative with the highest utility, where utility is a function of ideological proximity to the roll call outcome, incorporating both deterministic and stochastic components.
8. **Methods:** NOMINATE employs a probabilistic spatial model to estimate legislators' ideological positions using roll call votes. The model builds on earlier one-dimensional scaling techniques, such as Poole's 1978 "Edith" algorithm, which ranked legislators based on roll call patterns but did not account for errors or multidimensionality. In contrast, NOMINATE uses maximum likelihood estimation to infer ideal points for legislators and cutpoints for roll calls in a low-dimensional ideological space. The estimation process assumes a logistic error structure, allowing it to differentiate systematic ideological differences from random voting behavior. Poole and Rosenthal initially applied NOMINATE to congressional roll call data from the 1960s and 1970s, revealing distinct ideological blocs (Northern Democrats, Southern Democrats, and Republicans). They later extended the model into a dynamic, time-series variant (D-NOMINATE) to analyze ideological shifts over longer historical periods. The computational demands of the model were significant, requiring the use of supercomputers for early estimations.
9. **Hypotheses:** Poole hypothesizes that:
  - Ideological positions of legislators are stable over time and can be represented in a low-dimensional space.
  - Roll call voting is primarily structured by one dominant ideological dimension, with a secondary dimension capturing issues like race and regional conflicts.
  - The NOMINATE model, using a probabilistic approach, produces more accurate ideological placements of legislators than simple rank-ordering methods.

These hypotheses are supported by empirical applications, which show that a two-dimensional NOMINATE model effectively captures historical patterns of congressional voting and party polarization.

10. **Main findings:** Poole finds that congressional roll call voting can be effectively modeled using a low-dimensional ideological space, with one primary dimension (liberal-conservative) structuring most votes. The second dimension, historically relevant for capturing sectional divides (e.g., North vs. South on civil rights issues), has become less significant over time. The empirical results demonstrate that ideological polarization in Congress has increased steadily since the mid-20th century, with modern legislators more consistently aligned with their parties. The model also highlights

how individual legislators, such as ideological mavericks, are better positioned within NOMINATE's probabilistic framework than in earlier deterministic scaling methods.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "The language of politics is full of spatial terms like left, right, and center, and it seemed to me that the spatial model was the ideal model of political choice" (p. 1).
- "We assumed that the stochastic component was a random draw from the logit distribution. Given these random draws, we could then calculate the probabilities of each legislator voting Yea or Nay" (p. 6).
- "The bulk of our book – *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting* – is devoted to showing that important episodes in American political and economic history can be better understood by supplementing and/or reinterpreting more traditional analyses with the basic space theory of ideology as measured by the NOMINATE scores" (p. 14).

#### 5.2.3 Lawmaking and Roll Calls

Clinton, J. D. (2007). Lawmaking and Roll Calls [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 69(2), 457–469. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2007.00543.x>

1. Citation key: clinton\_lawmaking\_2007

2. Author(s): Joshua D. Clinton

3. Year: 2007

4. Publication: The Journal of Politics

5. Keywords: lawmaking, roll call voting, party influence, pivot theory, gridlock interval

6. Summary: Clinton critiques the reliance on roll call votes to test theories of lawmaking, arguing that such votes are both a cause and a consequence of legislative decision-making. He assesses two dominant theories of congressional lawmaking—the party gatekeeping theory and the pivot theory—by embedding their predictions within a statistical model of roll call voting. Using data from the 90th to the 106th Congresses, he empirically tests whether these theories' predictions align with observed legislative behavior. His findings indicate little support for either theory, calling into question existing approaches to measuring legislative gridlock and party influence.

7. Theory: Clinton examines two competing theories of lawmaking: the party gatekeeping theory (Cox and McCubbins 1993, 2005) and the pivot theory (Brady and Volden 1998; Krehbiel 1998). The party gatekeeping theory posits that majority party leaders wield significant influence over legislative outcomes by controlling the agenda and preventing undesirable bills from reaching the floor. Legislators delegate power to party leaders, who in turn use their agenda-setting prerogatives to advance policies that benefit the party as a collective. By contrast, the pivot theory argues that lawmaking outcomes are primarily structured by institutional constraints such as filibuster rules and veto players (e.g., the president or key senators), rather than partisan agenda control. According to the pivot theory, legislative gridlock arises because policies must gain the approval of pivotal actors situated between the status quo and the chamber median. Clinton critiques both theories by arguing that their empirical tests are flawed, as roll call votes are often used to estimate legislators' policy preferences without fully accounting for the theories' behavioral assumptions. He proposes that measuring gridlock intervals using ideal points derived from roll call votes may be an inappropriate way to test these models.

8. Methods: Clinton employs a statistical voting model to estimate the ideological positions of legislators and tests whether the predicted gridlock intervals from the party gatekeeping and pivot theories are consistent with observed roll call voting behavior. He restricts his analysis to final passage votes, which he argues are the most theoretically relevant cases for testing lawmaking theories. Using Bayesian ideal point estimation methods, he assesses whether the chamber median and the majority party median are statistically indistinguishable (as predicted by the party gatekeeping theory) and whether the filibuster and veto pivots produce a clear gridlock interval (as predicted by the pivot theory). His analysis spans multiple congressional sessions (90th–106th House, 90th–100th Senate) and incorporates estimated cutpoints to determine whether legislators' voting patterns align with the constraints predicted by each theory.

9. Hypotheses: Clinton tests the following hypotheses:

- **Party Gatekeeping Hypothesis:** The ideal points of the chamber median and the majority party median should be indistinguishable, indicating that agenda control prevents votes that would divide the party.
- **Pivot Theory Hypothesis:** The ideal points of the filibuster and veto-override pivots should be indistinguishable, indicating that only policies capable of passing the pivotal voter test will be proposed.

The results reject both hypotheses, as the estimated gridlock intervals are nonzero in all cases, suggesting that neither theory fully accounts for observed legislative behavior.

10. Main findings: Clinton finds that neither the party gatekeeping theory nor the pivot theory accurately predicts the observed distribution of roll call votes. The estimated ideal points of the majority party median and the chamber median are statistically distinct in all analyzed sessions, contradicting the central claim of the party gatekeeping model. Similarly, the pivot theory's predicted gridlock intervals are not supported by the data, as pivotal legislators do not vote consistently as the theory suggests. These findings challenge the use of roll call-based measures to test lawmaking theories and highlight the need for empirical models that better integrate legislative behavior with theoretical predictions.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “The ability to generate theories of lawmaking has not been matched by an ability to evaluate the success of these theories for explaining legislative reality” (p. 457).
- “Because the party gatekeeping and pivot theories have predictions for the legislative agenda, a nonzero gridlock interval measured using ideal points estimated on the set of theoretically relevant votes indicates either: (1) the theory does not perfectly characterize the data or (2) the theory is true but the votes used to generate the ideal points are irrelevant to the theory” (p. 463).
- “Integrating the theoretical implications of the two theories into the roll-call measurement model reveals no support for either theory. For every subset of votes I consider in either chamber, the ideal point based gridlock interval is always nonzero” (p. 467).

#### 5.2.4 Measuring Policy Positions in Political Space

Laver, M. (2014). Measuring Policy Positions in Political Space [Publisher: Annual Reviews]. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 17(Volume 17, 2014), 207–223. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-061413-041905>

- 1. Citation key:** laver\_measuring\_2014
- 2. Author(s):** Michael Laver
- 3. Year:** 2014
- 4. Publication:** Annual Review of Political Science
- 5. Keywords:** policy positions, spatial modeling, dimensionality, expert surveys, roll-call voting, text analysis
- 6. Summary:** Laver provides a comprehensive review of methods used to measure policy positions in political space, highlighting theoretical and empirical challenges in scaling political preferences. He examines the fundamental conceptual issues underlying policy measurement, including the cognitive basis of spatial models, the interpretation of policy dimensions, and the comparability of scales across different settings. Laver then surveys various approaches to measuring policy positions, including expert surveys, voter and legislator surveys, text analysis, and legislative voting behavior. He concludes by emphasizing the need for methodological rigor when selecting measurement techniques, cautioning against the uncritical use of widely available datasets.
- 7. Theory:** Laver frames his discussion within the broader context of spatial models, which are central to political science for understanding ideological and policy positioning. He distinguishes between “weakly” spatial models, which merely describe observed differences between actors, and “strongly” spatial models, which propose that political actors conceptualize their preferences in a structured policy space. He argues that the dimensionality of this space is not fixed but depends on context, with some settings being best described by a single left-right dimension and others requiring multiple dimensions. The article discusses the trade-offs between a priori and a posteriori definitions of policy scales, noting that the former impose theoretical assumptions about issue importance, while the latter infer dimensions inductively from data. Laver also highlights the challenge of ensuring that policy scales are comparable across time and space, as different political environments may attach different meanings to ideological labels. He cautions against the assumption that policy spaces derived from statistical techniques necessarily reflect cognitive structures in the minds of political actors.
- 8. Methods:** Laver reviews multiple empirical strategies for measuring policy positions, each with its strengths and weaknesses. Expert surveys, such as the Comparative Manifestos Project and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey, rely on the judgments of specialists to estimate party positions but may suffer from biases introduced by the experts' own perceptions. Legislator and voter surveys provide self-reported ideological placements, but these can be influenced by question wording and differences in how individuals interpret political scales. Text analysis methods, including human coding and automated content analysis, extract policy positions from party manifestos, legislative speeches, and social media, though concerns about coding reliability persist. Finally, roll-call voting analyses, such as NOMINATE and Bayesian ideal point estimation, infer policy positions based on legislative behavior but may be limited by the strategic nature of recorded votes. Throughout the discussion, Laver emphasizes the importance of choosing methods that align with the theoretical constructs being measured.
- 9. Hypotheses:** While Laver's article is primarily a methodological review rather than a hypothesis-driven study, he explores several key assumptions underlying different measurement approaches:
  - **Dimensionality Hypothesis:** Political spaces are not inherently one-dimensional; rather, the number of dimensions needed depends on the substantive issues at play.
  - **Comparability Hypothesis:** Policy positions cannot always be directly compared across countries or time periods, as the meaning of ideological labels varies by context.
  - **Measurement Validity Hypothesis:** The choice of measurement technique influences the resulting policy estimates, with different methods producing systematically different policy scales.
- 10. Main findings:** Laver concludes that there is no single “best” way to measure policy positions; rather, scholars must carefully select methods based on their theoretical and empirical goals. He stresses that all quantitative models of political space are simplifications, meaning that researchers must validate their choices and be mindful of the assumptions underlying their data sources. Expert surveys and text analysis are useful for estimating party positions but can be subject to coder biases, while roll-call voting analyses are valuable for legislative studies but may not generalize beyond specific institutional settings. The article underscores the importance of assessing whether measurement techniques align with theoretical expectations and warns against the uncritical adoption of widely used datasets without considering their limitations.

## 11. Key quotations:

- “Whenever we confront spatial models with data, we need valid and reliable ways to measure policy positions in political space” (p. 207).
- “Are policy spaces just ways to describe relationships, or are they behavioral models of how real humans think?” (p. 208).
- “Too many prominently published papers use inappropriate datasets or measurement techniques because these are readily available and have something to do with policy positions” (p. 219).

## 5.3 Party Influence in Congress

### 5.3.1 Party Influence in Congress

Smith, S. S. (2007, May). *Party Influence in Congress* [Google-Books-ID: TFUIPdx5hYkC]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** smith\_party\_2007
2. **Author(s):** Steven S. Smith
3. **Year:** 2007
4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press
5. **Keywords:** party influence, congressional parties, party leadership, agenda control, party polarization
6. **Summary:** Smith critiques prevailing theories of party influence in Congress, arguing that existing models are overly simplistic and fail to account for the complex interactions between party leadership, individual legislators, and institutional rules. He assesses the strengths and weaknesses of leading theories, including conditional party government (CPG), cartel theory, and pivotal politics, and highlights their inability to fully explain party behavior across different legislative contexts. Instead of offering a unified theory of party influence, Smith identifies key variables that must be incorporated into any comprehensive framework, emphasizing the role of party leaders, institutional constraints, and the strategic trade-offs parties make between policy and electoral goals.
7. **Theory:** Smith situates his analysis within the broader debate on whether parties matter in Congress, challenging the dichotomy between the “party influence” and “individual preferences” camps. He critiques Krehbiel’s (1998) pivotal politics model for underestimating the role of parties, while also questioning the empirical assumptions of CPG and cartel theory, particularly their reliance on majority party strength as a predictor of legislative outcomes. Instead of adhering to a single theoretical model, Smith argues that party influence is contingent on multiple factors, including the internal cohesion of party caucuses, the nature of party leadership strategies, and the extent to which party leaders control the legislative agenda. He also explores how institutional features such as the filibuster, committee system, and electoral incentives shape party behavior. His central claim is that congressional parties do exert influence, but not in the straightforward ways suggested by dominant theories—party leaders must balance competing priorities, and their influence varies depending on context.
8. **Methods:** Smith combines theoretical critique with empirical analysis, drawing on roll call voting data, case studies, and historical analysis of party leadership decisions. He examines congressional party behavior over multiple decades, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative evidence to assess the validity of existing models. His empirical strategy involves comparing legislative behavior across different institutional settings, particularly contrasting the House and Senate to test whether party effects are consistent across chambers. Additionally, he incorporates interviews with congressional staff and historical accounts of key legislative battles to illustrate the nuances of party influence.
9. **Hypotheses:** While Smith does not propose formal hypotheses, he evaluates key claims made by dominant theories:
  - **Conditional Party Government (CPG) Hypothesis:** Party influence should be strongest when the majority party is ideologically cohesive.
  - **Cartel Theory Hypothesis:** Majority parties use agenda control to prevent legislation that would divide their members from reaching the floor.
  - **Pivotal Politics Hypothesis:** Legislative outcomes are primarily determined by the preferences of pivotal voters, rather than by party leaders.
- Smith finds partial support for each of these claims but argues that no single theory fully captures the complexity of party influence.
10. **Main findings:** Smith finds that party influence in Congress is real but highly contingent. He argues that party leaders wield power through a combination of agenda control, strategic bargaining, and internal party discipline, but their influence is constrained by institutional rules and electoral incentives. He demonstrates that while strong party leadership can shape legislative outcomes, this effect is inconsistent across different political contexts. He also highlights the importance of considering the Senate, where weaker party structures complicate the application of theories developed primarily for the House. Ultimately, Smith concludes that scholars must develop more nuanced models that incorporate multiple sources of party influence rather than relying on overly simplistic frameworks.
11. **Key Definitions:**
  - *Conditional Party Government (CPG):* A theory proposing that party leadership is most influential when the majority party is ideologically homogeneous and its members delegate authority to leaders.
  - *Cartel Theory:* A theory asserting that the majority party in Congress exerts influence primarily by controlling the legislative agenda and preventing votes on issues that could divide the party.
  - *Pivotal Politics:* A theory emphasizing the importance of pivotal legislators—such as the median voter, the filibuster pivot, and the veto override pivot—in determining legislative outcomes, downplaying the role of party

leaders.

- *Agenda Control:* The ability of party leaders to structure the legislative process by deciding which bills reach the floor and under what conditions they are debated.
- *Party Polarization:* The degree to which political parties are ideologically distinct and internally cohesive, affecting the extent of party influence in legislative decision-making.

### 5.3.2 Majority Party Power and Procedural Motions in the U.S. Senate

Smith, S. S., Ostrander, I., & Pope, C. M. (2013). Majority Party Power and Procedural Motions in the U.S. Senate [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/lsq.12011>]. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 38(2), 205–236. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lsq.12011>

1. **Citation key:** smith\_majority\_2013
2. **Author(s):** Steven S. Smith, Ian Ostrander, and Christopher M. Pope
3. **Year:** 2013
4. **Publication:** Legislative Studies Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** majority party power, Senate procedures, negative agenda control, procedural motions, motion to table
6. **Summary:** Smith, Ostrander, and Pope evaluate the extent to which the majority party in the U.S. Senate can exert procedural control using the motion to table. They contrast two perspectives: a “strong party” view, which suggests that the motion to table provides negative agenda control akin to House procedural tools, and a “weak party” view, which argues that Senate procedural constraints limit majority party influence. Using an empirical analysis of roll-call votes and interest group ratings, they find that motions to table do not provide significant political cover or increase party influence in the Senate. Instead, the motion to table is primarily used as a time-saving mechanism rather than a partisan tool to manipulate outcomes.
7. **Theory:** The authors examine competing theories of majority party influence in the Senate, focusing on whether procedural tools such as the motion to table enhance partisan control. They engage with the broader literature on party power, drawing on Cox and McCubbins’ (2005) “cartel theory” and Rohde’s (1991) “conditional party government” model. The strong party perspective holds that the motion to table allows the majority party to block amendments without direct substantive votes, functioning as a mechanism of negative agenda control. By contrast, the weak party perspective argues that the Senate’s rules, including the filibuster and the lack of majority rule in key procedural areas, severely limit the majority party’s ability to control outcomes. Rather than being a tool for party discipline, motions to table are framed as a pragmatic adaptation to legislative time constraints. The authors critique the assumption that procedural motions inherently increase party cohesion, emphasizing that empirical evidence for this claim remains weak.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a quantitative analysis of Senate roll-call votes, comparing votes on amendments to votes on motions to table. The authors assess whether motions to table increase party unity or provide electoral insulation for senators. They analyze thousands of votes spanning multiple decades, incorporating interest group scorecards (e.g., ADA and ACU ratings) to examine whether procedural motions shield legislators from electoral scrutiny. Additionally, they test whether motions to table correlate with contested votes and examine historical trends in their usage to determine whether they reflect shifts in party strategy or broader institutional constraints.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors test several hypotheses related to the effects of motions to table:
  - **H1:** Votes on motions to table have weaker electoral consequences than direct amendment votes.
  - **H2:** Motions to table exhibit stronger party influence than direct amendment votes.
  - **H3:** The frequency of motions to table is positively correlated with contested amendments that concern the majority leader.
  - **H4:** The use of motions to table is inversely correlated with budget-related procedural votes.
  - **H5:** The frequency of motions to table is positively correlated with time constraints on the Senate’s legislative agenda.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that motions to table do not function as a strong party tool for enforcing discipline or protecting senators from electoral consequences. Interest group ratings show that votes on motions to table are just as likely to be highlighted as direct votes on amendments, undermining claims that they provide electoral cover. Statistical models of Senate roll-call votes indicate that motions to table do not increase party cohesion compared to direct votes. Historical trends show that the increased use of motions to table in the 1970s coincided with growing legislative workload and procedural constraints, supporting the weak party argument that they are primarily used for efficiency rather than partisan control. Furthermore, recent declines in the use of motions to table coincide with the rise of alternative procedural tools, such as budget points of order and unanimous consent agreements. The authors conclude that, despite theoretical claims to the contrary, the majority party in the Senate lacks the procedural dominance enjoyed by its House counterpart.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Does the motion to table yield negative agenda control or special party influence? Using an analysis of individual Senators’ behavior on thousands of votes and an assessment of interest group scores, we find that motions to

table do not elicit higher party influence or provide much political cover" (p. 205).

- "The evidence does suggest that motions to table are used often by Senate majority leaders as a means of expediting the legislative process rather than influencing the outcome of amendments" (p. 206).
- "Our findings are considerably different than the arguments of recent work on Senate agenda control and affirm that the Senate majority party is a far weaker cartel than its House counterpart" (p. 206).

## 5.4 Veto Politics

### 5.4.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of veto politics explores how presidents utilize the veto power as a strategic tool in legislative bargaining, rather than merely as a reactive instrument of rejection. Early perspectives often viewed the veto as a constitutional check against legislative overreach, but more recent scholarship demonstrates that presidents employ veto threats and actual vetoes to shape policy outcomes, extract concessions, and signal political strength. This body of work incorporates rational choice theory, formal modeling, and empirical analyses of veto patterns to assess how presidents navigate divided government, legislative uncertainty, and public opinion constraints. Scholarship on veto bargaining illustrates that presidential vetoes are not just final decisions but are embedded in ongoing negotiations between the executive and legislative branches. Moreover, recent research highlights the electoral and informational dynamics of veto politics, showing how presidents and legislators use veto threats and vetoes as signals to external audiences, including voters and interest groups.
- **Theoretical Foundations of Veto Bargaining:** Cameron (2000) provides a foundational contribution by reframing the presidential veto as a bargaining tool rather than a blunt instrument of policy rejection. Drawing on rational choice theory and formal modeling, he demonstrates that the president and Congress engage in strategic negotiation, where veto threats serve to preempt legislative proposals that would otherwise be unacceptable to the executive. His Sequential Veto Bargaining Model formalizes the iterative nature of this process, showing how Congress makes incremental policy modifications in response to presidential objections. The theory also highlights that veto bargaining becomes more frequent under divided government, where ideological distance between the president and Congress increases the likelihood of both vetoes and preemptive concessions. Additionally, the Override Game model suggests that Congress sometimes deliberately enacts legislation it expects the president to veto, factoring in the possibility of a veto override attempt.
- **Blame-Game Vetoes and Public Perception:** The strategic use of vetoes extends beyond interbranch negotiations to electoral politics. Groseclose and McCarty (2001) introduce a formal model in which Congress and the president engage in veto bargaining before an external audience, particularly voters. Their blame-game politics model suggests that Congress may intentionally send a bill to the president knowing it will be vetoed to portray the president as extreme. Empirical tests using Gallup approval data from 1956 to 1992 confirm that presidential approval ratings tend to decline following major vetoes, reinforcing the argument that vetoes carry political risks for the executive. This model challenges earlier views that veto bargaining operates in a purely institutional context, emphasizing instead the role of voter perception in shaping legislative strategies.
- **The Evolution of Veto Usage in the Early Republic:** McCarty (2009) challenges the assumption that early presidents refrained from using the veto due to constitutional norms. Instead, he argues that the infrequent use of vetoes prior to the Jacksonian era was driven by the absence of electoral incentives that later encouraged strategic veto politics. Through historical analysis and empirical modeling, he demonstrates that the rise of mass parties and the expansion of the electorate in the 1820s and 1830s corresponded with an increase in presidential veto usage. His findings suggest that electoral considerations, rather than constitutional constraints, explain shifts in presidential veto behavior.
- **Electoral Incentives and Veto Overrides:** Hickey (2014) extends the analysis of veto politics by examining congressional responses to presidential vetoes. He argues that existing pivotal politics models fail to fully explain why legislators switch their votes between initial passage and veto override attempts. Instead, he finds that a president's popularity in a legislator's constituency and electoral vulnerability significantly influence override vote behavior. Legislators from districts where the president is popular are more likely to switch votes in favor of an override, whereas vulnerable members are less likely to switch their positions due to electoral risks. This research highlights the interaction between executive power and congressional electoral incentives in determining veto override success.
- **Veto Rhetoric and Legislative Strategy:** Hassell and Kornell (2016) shift focus to the role of veto threats in shaping legislative behavior, particularly in the context of appropriations riders. They argue that presidential veto threats are not merely signals of policy preferences but also influence congressional decision-making by encouraging filibusters, procedural maneuvers, and strategic bill modifications. Analyzing nearly 1,000 threatened and non-threatened riders from 1985 to 2008, they demonstrate that veto threats significantly reduce the likelihood of controversial riders surviving the legislative process. Their findings counter claims that veto threats are empty signals, showing instead that they meaningfully shape legislative bargaining.
- **Agenda Setting and the Politics of Veto Threats:** Lewallen (2017) explores the agenda-setting function of veto threats, arguing that presidents strategically use them to shape interbranch conflict and influence issue salience. His analysis of presidential veto threats from 1985 to 2014 finds that presidents are more likely to issue threats on issues they have previously prioritized, particularly in foreign policy and high-salience public concerns. Under divided government, presidents shift their focus to appropriations bills, using veto threats to protect executive priorities rather than pursuing broad public policy objectives. This research underscores the broader strategic function of veto threats beyond immediate legislative bargaining.

- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Scholarship on veto politics continues to evolve, with ongoing debates centered on the extent of presidential influence, the role of public opinion in veto bargaining, and the impact of institutional reforms on veto dynamics. Some scholars argue that increased legislative polarization has heightened the strategic importance of veto threats, while others emphasize how changes in congressional procedures influence the effectiveness of presidential vetoes. Future research is likely to explore the effects of digital media and partisan polarization on presidential bargaining power, as well as the interaction between executive veto strategies and emerging congressional coalitions. Additionally, the growing reliance on omnibus legislation and continuing resolutions in budgetary politics raises new questions about how veto power shapes contemporary governance.

#### 5.4.2 Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power

Cameron, C. M. (2000, June). *Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power* [Google-Books-ID: ZlCrB-dHD4owC]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** cameron\_veto\_2000
2. **Author(s):** Charles Cameron
3. **Year:** 2000
4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press
5. **Keywords:** presidential veto, separation of powers, legislative bargaining, executive-legislative relations, divided government
6. **Summary:** Cameron examines the strategic use of the presidential veto as a tool of legislative bargaining. He challenges conventional wisdom that sees the veto as a reactive power, arguing instead that presidents use veto threats and actual vetoes to extract policy concessions from Congress. The book integrates formal modeling, empirical analysis, and historical case studies to explore when and how presidents deploy the veto to shape legislation. Through an extensive dataset of vetoes from the Truman through Bush Sr. administrations, Cameron demonstrates that veto bargaining is an active and consequential dimension of presidential power.
7. **Theory:** The book builds on rational choice theory and positive political theory to conceptualize the veto as a bargaining tool rather than a blunt instrument of rejection. Cameron develops three formal models of veto bargaining. The first replicates existing models in which Congress anticipates and avoids vetoes, producing legislative outcomes aligned with presidential preferences. The second and third models, which introduce uncertainty about the president's policy preferences and Congress's ability to override vetoes, demonstrate why vetoes occur even when both branches are strategic. The third model—the \*Sequential Veto Bargaining Model\*—is Cameron's most novel contribution, illustrating how presidential vetoes create a dynamic back-and-forth process in which Congress makes incremental policy concessions. The theory highlights that divided government increases the likelihood of vetoes, and that presidential threats alone can influence legislative outcomes by signaling resolve and shaping congressional expectations.
8. **Methods:** Cameron employs a mixed-methods approach that combines formal modeling, large-N quantitative analysis, and qualitative case studies. The empirical component includes a dataset of 434 presidential vetoes from 1945 to 1992, coded for legislative significance and bargaining context. Statistical tests assess the validity of predictions derived from the formal models, including how veto frequency changes under divided government, the effect of presidential threats on congressional concessions, and the strategic sequencing of vetoes. Cameron also conducts detailed case studies, using historical records to illustrate key instances of veto bargaining, such as Truman's tax cut vetoes and Reagan's budget negotiations.
9. **Hypotheses:** Cameron's theoretical framework generates several testable hypotheses about presidential veto power:
  - Presidents will use veto threats strategically to extract policy concessions from Congress.
  - Vetoes will be more frequent under divided government when partisan differences increase bargaining uncertainty.
  - The likelihood of congressional concessions increases when the president issues a veto threat before the final legislative stage.
  - Veto chains—sequences of repeated bill rejections and modifications—will emerge when Congress miscalculates the president's resolve or when policy stakes are high.
  - The influence of veto threats will vary depending on the president's public approval and the political costs of inaction.
10. **Main findings:** Cameron demonstrates that presidential vetoes are not simply a defensive reaction to congressional overreach but are instead a proactive mechanism for shaping policy. His empirical analysis reveals that most vetoes occur under divided government, where ideological distance between the president and Congress is greatest. He also finds that veto threats alone can induce congressional concessions, reducing the need for actual vetoes. The book highlights the importance of sequencing, showing that veto chains often emerge in high-stakes policy disputes when Congress iteratively revises legislation in response to presidential objections. Finally, Cameron provides evidence that presidential bargaining power fluctuates based on factors such as electoral cycles, public approval, and the salience of policy issues.
11. **Key Definitions:**
  - *Veto bargaining:* The process by which the president uses the threat or exercise of the veto to negotiate legislative

outcomes more favorable to their policy preferences.

- *Sequential Veto Bargaining Model*: A formal model developed by Cameron that accounts for iterative legislative bargaining, in which Congress revises bills in response to presidential vetoes.
- *Override Game*: A theoretical model in which Congress enacts legislation with the expectation of an attempted veto override, incorporating strategic uncertainty about whether the president will reject the bill.
- *Blame-game politics*: A situation in which Congress knowingly passes a bill the president will veto to shift political responsibility for inaction onto the executive.

#### 5.4.3 The Politics of Blame: Bargaining Before an Audience

Groseclose, T., & McCarty, N. (2001). The Politics of Blame: Bargaining before an Audience [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 45(1), 100–119. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2669362>

1. **Citation key:** groseclose\_politics\_2001
2. **Author(s):** Tim Groseclose and Nolan McCarty
3. **Year:** 2001
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** blame-game politics, veto bargaining, legislative signaling, divided government, presidential approval
6. **Summary:** Groseclose and McCarty develop a formal model of political bargaining in which two actors—such as Congress and the president—negotiate in the presence of an external audience (e.g., voters). They argue that the presence of this audience fundamentally alters bargaining dynamics, leading to inefficient outcomes, such as blame-game vetoes, where Congress strategically sends a bill it knows the president will veto to make the president appear extreme. Using both formal theory and empirical analysis, the authors demonstrate that vetoes can damage presidential approval, particularly under divided government.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on existing models of legislative bargaining but introduce a crucial third-party audience: the electorate. Their model assumes that Congress and the president are fully informed about each other's preferences, but the audience is not. Congress, knowing that voters prefer moderation, may craft a bill that is purposefully too extreme for the president to sign, forcing a veto that makes the president appear more ideologically extreme. Similarly, presidents may strategically sign bills they dislike to avoid appearing too partisan. The model produces several counterintuitive results: first, vetoes can occur even when compromise is possible; second, the president's approval declines after a veto because voters infer that the president is more extreme than they initially believed; third, veto bargaining is more frequent under divided government due to increased partisan incentives for strategic disagreement. This approach challenges traditional veto bargaining models that assume complete information and policy-driven negotiations.
8. **Methods:** Groseclose and McCarty use a combination of formal modeling and empirical testing. Their theoretical framework models a three-stage game where Congress proposes a bill, the president accepts or vetoes it, and the electorate updates its beliefs based on the observed actions. The empirical portion tests the key prediction that presidential approval ratings decline after a veto. Using Gallup presidential approval data from 1956 to 1992, they estimate the effects of major vetoes on public opinion. They control for economic conditions and other confounding factors using regression analysis, comparing approval changes following vetoes during divided and unified government. Their findings confirm that vetoes negatively impact presidential approval, particularly for major legislation.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors develop several hypotheses about blame-game politics and veto bargaining:
  - Congress will sometimes send the president a bill it knows he will veto to make him appear extreme.
  - The likelihood of blame-game vetoes increases under divided government.
  - Presidential approval will decline after a major veto, as voters infer that the president is ideologically extreme.
  - The bargaining process is shaped by the president's desire to appear moderate and Congress's desire to portray him as extreme.

Their empirical analysis supports these hypotheses, confirming that vetoes harm presidential approval, especially in election years and during divided government.

10. **Main findings:** Groseclose and McCarty's findings suggest that vetoes are not always a result of policy disputes but are often driven by strategic political calculations aimed at shaping public perceptions. They show that presidential approval ratings drop by an average of two percentage points following a major veto, reinforcing the idea that voters interpret vetoes as signals of extremism. Their analysis also confirms that vetoes are significantly more common under divided government, with congressional majorities exploiting blame-game tactics to weaken the president's political standing. The study provides strong evidence that congressional-presidential bargaining is influenced by electoral considerations and that strategic disagreement—rather than genuine policy conflict—often drives legislative stalemates.

11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Congress sometimes writes a bill that it knows the president will veto. Thus, despite Congress and the president being completely informed, an uninformed third party causes the outcome to be Pareto inefficient" (p. 100).
  - "The opposition members of Congress pass an extreme bill, which is intended to force the president to veto the bill so they will have a campaign issue in the upcoming election" (p. 101).
  - "We estimate that when a president vetoes a major piece of legislation, on average this causes his approval rating to decrease by about two percentage points" (p. 112).

#### 5.4.4 Presidential Vetoes in the Early Republic: Changing Constitutional Norms or Electoral Reform

McCarty, N. (2009). Presidential Vetoes in the Early Republic: Changing Constitutional Norms or Electoral Reform? [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 71(2), 369–384. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381609090331>

1. **Citation key:** mccarty\_presidential\_2009
2. **Author(s):** Nolan McCarty
3. **Year:** 2009
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** presidential veto, constitutional norms, early republic, executive-legislative relations, electoral reform
6. **Summary:** McCarty examines the evolution of presidential veto power in the early American republic, assessing whether early presidents were constrained by constitutional norms or if electoral and institutional changes shaped the development of veto usage. He argues that the relative rarity of vetoes before the Jacksonian era was not due to an established constitutional norm limiting their use but rather to the absence of electoral incentives that later encouraged blame-game politics in executive-legislative bargaining. Using historical evidence, statistical models, and formal theories of veto bargaining, McCarty shows that the increased use of vetoes coincided with the expansion of the mass electorate and the rise of partisan competition.
7. **Theory:** McCarty challenges the prevailing notion that early presidents adhered to a self-imposed constitutional constraint limiting vetoes to cases of unconstitutional or administratively flawed legislation. He contends that instead of formal constraints, electoral and institutional incentives best explain the evolution of veto usage. Prior to the 1830s, presidential elections were largely controlled by political elites, limiting the need for presidents to engage in public position-taking through vetoes. However, as the electorate expanded and partisan competition intensified, vetoes became an important strategic tool for defining policy disagreements before the public. McCarty builds on Groseclose and McCarty's (2001) blame-game model, arguing that vetoes are often used to portray political opponents as extreme rather than to prevent undesirable policy. He posits that the shift in veto usage around the Jacksonian period was driven by changes in electoral incentives rather than a breakdown of constitutional norms.
8. **Methods:** McCarty employs a mixed-method approach, combining historical analysis, formal modeling, and empirical testing. He first reviews constitutional debates, early presidential practices, and the historical record of vetoes to assess whether early presidents were normatively constrained in their veto use. He then develops a formal model of veto bargaining under incomplete information, illustrating how changing electoral dynamics influenced presidential incentives. Finally, he conducts a statistical analysis comparing predicted and actual veto usage from 1789 to 1877, using negative binomial regression models to test whether vetoes increased as electoral competition intensified. He also analyzes congressional override votes and presidential roll rates to assess changes in presidential legislative influence.
9. **Hypotheses:** McCarty tests several key hypotheses regarding presidential vetoes in the early republic:
  - The rarity of early presidential vetoes was not due to constitutional norms but rather to the absence of electoral incentives for blame-game politics.
  - The likelihood of vetoes increased with the expansion of the electorate and the rise of mass parties in the 1820s and 1830s.
  - Presidents facing divided government are more likely to issue vetoes as part of blame-game strategies.
  - The emergence of mass democracy increased the strategic use of vetoes for electoral positioning rather than strictly policy-based considerations.
 His empirical findings strongly support these hypotheses, showing a structural break in veto usage beginning in the 1830s.
10. **Main findings:** McCarty finds little empirical support for the idea that constitutional norms constrained early veto use. Instead, he demonstrates that early presidents had substantial legislative influence despite their infrequent use of the veto. His statistical models indicate that veto usage increased significantly after the 1820s, coinciding with broader electoral participation and the emergence of mass parties. The analysis of override votes suggests that Congress did not seek to punish presidents for vetoing legislation, contradicting claims that an anti-veto norm existed. Additionally, McCarty's study of presidential roll rates shows that pre-Jacksonian presidents were not significantly more likely to be overridden than their successors, further undermining the constitutional norms hypothesis. Instead, he argues that the increasing frequency of vetoes in the nineteenth century reflects a growing tendency for presidents and legislators to use the veto as a strategic electoral tool rather than as a last resort against unconstitutional laws.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "I argue that early veto usage was quite different, not because of constraining constitutional norms, but because the electoral conditions that generate equilibrium vetoes had yet to emerge" (p. 369).
  - "The expanded electorate increased the importance of position taking for a variety of reasons. First, it is reasonable to expect that the new voters were less well informed about the policy positions of presidents and legislators than were the old elites" (p. 374).
  - "The data from 1829 onward indicate that electoral politics was an important factor in generating executive-legislative conflict. But prior to that, veto usage was lower and qualitatively different in the early republic" (p. 382).

#### 5.4.5 Beyond Pivotal Politics: Constituencies, Electoral Incentives, and Veto Override Attempts in the House

Hickey, P. T. (2014). Beyond Pivotal Politics: Constituencies, Electoral Incentives, and Veto Override Attempts in the House [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/psq.12151>]. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 44(4), 577–601. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psq.12151>

1. **Citation key:** hickey\_beyond\_2014
2. **Author(s):** Patrick T. Hickey
3. **Year:** 2014
4. **Publication:** Presidential Studies Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** veto bargaining, presidential power, pivotal politics, electoral incentives, congressional behavior
6. **Summary:** Hickey investigates the determinants of congressional vote switching on veto override attempts, arguing that existing theories—primarily those emphasizing party and ideology—fail to fully account for why members change their votes between final passage and the override vote. By analyzing House veto override attempts from 1973 to 2011, he finds that the president's strength in a member's constituency and electoral incentives play a critical role in shaping member behavior, complementing traditional explanations. His analysis provides a micro-level understanding of presidential influence in Congress, demonstrating how individual legislators respond to constituency pressures and electoral calculations in the high-stakes politics of veto overrides.
7. **Theory:** Hickey builds on the pivotal politics model but contends that it alone is insufficient to explain vote switching on veto override attempts. He argues that beyond party and ideology, two factors—constituency effects and electoral vulnerability—shape legislators' responses to vetoes. He theorizes that (1) members are more likely to switch their votes to align with their constituency when the president is strong in their district, and (2) electorally vulnerable members will be less likely to switch their votes due to their need to maintain consistency with their prior position. By incorporating constituency and electoral incentives into models of legislative behavior, Hickey challenges the assumption that ideological proximity to the president is the primary determinant of veto override voting and instead highlights the role of individual political calculations.
8. **Methods:** Hickey conducts a statistical analysis of all House veto override attempts from 1973 to 2011. His dependent variables capture whether a member switches their vote between final passage and the override vote, either joining or defecting from the president's coalition. He employs logistic regression models with bill-level fixed effects and clustered standard errors, controlling for factors such as party, ideology (DW-NOMINATE scores), constituency-level presidential vote share, and electoral vulnerability (measured as the inverse of a member's electoral margin in their most recent race). By disaggregating his analysis by party and member type (e.g., presidential party members vs. opposition party members), Hickey provides a nuanced assessment of how different legislators respond to veto politics.
9. **Hypotheses:** Hickey tests two primary hypotheses:
  - **Constituency Hypothesis:** As the president's strength in a member's constituency increases, the likelihood of that member joining the president's veto override coalition increases. Conversely, as the president's strength in a member's constituency decreases, a member is more likely to defect from the president's coalition.
  - **Vulnerability Hypothesis:** As a member's electoral vulnerability increases, their likelihood of switching votes on a veto override attempt decreases. This suggests that vulnerable members prioritize consistency in their roll-call behavior to minimize electoral risks.His findings strongly support the Constituency Hypothesis, while the Vulnerability Hypothesis receives mixed support.
10. **Main findings:** Hickey finds that ideological and party-based explanations alone fail to account for all vote switching on veto override attempts. Members representing constituencies where the president is popular are more likely to switch their votes to support the president, particularly among members of the president's party. Conversely, opposition party members from districts where the president is weak are more likely to defect from the president's coalition. His analysis also reveals that electorally safe members are more likely to switch their votes, while vulnerable members maintain consistency in their voting behavior. These findings highlight how presidential influence in Congress operates not only through ideological and partisan alignments but also through strategic electoral considerations. Ultimately, Hickey demonstrates that constituency and electoral incentives shape legislative decision-making in ways that extend beyond the pivotal politics framework.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The president's ability to win, or keep, members' support on veto override votes is determined in part by members' electoral incentives and the president's strength in members' constituencies" (p. 577).
  - "Members from the veto pivot quintile make up just 26.9% of all House members who switch their votes on override attempts. In fact, slightly more members (27.2%) from what Krehbiel calls the extreme opponents quintile change their votes" (p. 579).
  - "The Constituency Hypothesis holds that as the president's strength in a member's constituency increases, that member will be more likely to join the president's coalition on a veto override attempt. On the other hand, as the president's strength in a member's constituency decreases, that member will be more likely to defect from the president's coalition on a veto override attempt" (p. 584).

#### 5.4.6 Veto Rhetoric and Legislative Riders

Hassell, H. J. G., & Kernell, S. (2016). Veto Rhetoric and Legislative Riders. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(4), 845–859. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12217>

1. **Citation key:** hassell\_veto\_2016
2. **Author(s):** Hans J. G. Hassell and Samuel Kernell
3. **Year:** 2016
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** veto threats, presidential power, appropriations, legislative bargaining, congressional strategy
6. **Summary:** Hassell and Kernell analyze the effectiveness of presidential veto threats in shaping legislative outcomes, particularly in the context of appropriations riders. They argue that presidents employ veto rhetoric strategically to influence congressional deliberations and that such threats alter legislative processes by encouraging filibusters, unorthodox procedures, and strategic bill modification. Examining nearly 1,000 threatened and non-threatened riders from 1985 to 2008, they find that presidential threats significantly reduce the likelihood of objectionable riders surviving the legislative process, contrary to conventional views that dismiss veto threats as mere “cheap talk.”
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge traditional separation-of-powers models that view veto threats as either minimally effective or entirely strategic tools for pinpointing a president’s lowest acceptable policy position. Instead, they argue that veto rhetoric operates within a bicameral legislature shaped by partisan competition. In this context, veto threats influence policy by mobilizing the president’s congressional allies, who act to eliminate threatened provisions at key legislative junctures. The authors further contend that veto threats create incentives for legislative leaders to alter deliberative processes, moving away from the textbook model of bill passage toward more strategic procedural maneuvers, including filibusters, direct floor deliberations, and omnibus bill packaging. Their theory predicts that (1) the House, as the initiator of appropriations bills, will resist presidential threats; (2) the Senate, particularly under divided government, will be more responsive by removing threatened provisions; and (3) the conference committee will act as a final check, disproportionately eliminating veto-threatened riders.
8. **Methods:** The authors construct a dataset of 989 appropriations riders introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives between 1985 and 2008, distinguishing between those that received a presidential veto threat and those that did not. They identify veto threats from Statements of Administration Policy (SAPs) issued by the Office of Management and Budget, classifying threats based on their severity (e.g., “will veto” vs. “strongly objects”). Using logistic regression models, they analyze the probability that a given rider survives at different legislative stages, controlling for institutional factors such as party control of Congress, electoral timing, and bill urgency. They also track whether threatened riders were removed in the House, the Senate, or in conference negotiations. Additionally, they use references in *Congressional Quarterly Weekly* to measure filibuster attempts associated with threatened legislation.
9. **Hypotheses:** Hassell and Kernell test several predictions regarding the impact of veto threats:
  - **House Resistance Hypothesis:** The House of Representatives, as the chamber initiating appropriations, will resist presidential threats and retain most threatened riders.
  - **Senate Responsiveness Hypothesis:** The Senate will respond more strongly to veto threats by (a) removing threatened riders, (b) resorting to filibusters, and (c) using unorthodox legislative procedures to circumvent direct floor votes.
  - **Conference Committee Hypothesis:** The conference committee will be more likely to remove veto-threatened riders than non-threatened ones, especially when both chambers initially endorsed them.
 Their empirical findings support these hypotheses, particularly the idea that the Senate and conference stages serve as critical arenas where veto rhetoric reshapes legislative outcomes.
10. **Main findings:** The authors find that presidential veto threats are highly effective in eliminating objectionable riders, contradicting claims that they constitute mere “cheap talk.” The House rarely removes threatened riders, instead leaving this task to the Senate. Once a veto threat is issued, the likelihood of a filibuster in the Senate increases significantly, with explicit threats (“will veto”) more strongly associated with filibuster attempts than weaker objections. The Senate is also more likely to bypass the standard deliberative process when a bill contains a threatened rider, frequently opting to fold appropriations bills into omnibus packages. In conference negotiations, threatened riders are disproportionately eliminated, even when both chambers initially supported them. Overall, their results demonstrate that veto threats not only influence final policy outcomes but also reshape the legislative process by disrupting conventional bargaining and encouraging strategic procedural adaptations.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Unlike conventional models that regard veto threats as minimally effective, the findings presented here depict veto rhetoric as integral to identifying critical riders separating the legislative parties that must be resolved in order to avoid gridlock and pass annual appropriations legislation” (p. 845).
  - “The presence of a veto threat more than halves a rider’s chance of surviving the legislative gauntlet. Moreover, as predicted by the model, the attrition of threatened riders tracks the influence of the president’s legislative partisans at the different junctures of the legislative process” (p. 846).
  - “Beyond negotiating policy differences, each side will try to exploit, or even seek to change, legislative rules and procedures to improve chances for success. The success of the president’s partisans when they are in the minority may vary according to their share of the membership and by chamber” (p. 848).

#### 5.4.7 The Issue Politics of Presidential Veto Threats

Lewallen, J. (2017). The Issue Politics of Presidential Veto Threats. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 47(2), 277–292. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psq.12368>

1. **Citation key:** lewallen\_issue\_2017
2. **Author(s):** Jonathan Lewallen
3. **Year:** 2017
4. **Publication:** Presidential Studies Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** veto threats, agenda setting, presidential power, issue attention, divided government
6. **Summary:** Lewallen examines the role of presidential veto threats in shaping issue attention and agenda setting. While much of the existing literature on veto bargaining focuses on legislative outcomes, Lewallen shifts attention to the issues that prompt veto threats and how they influence interbranch conflict. Using a dataset of presidential veto threats from 1985 to 2014, he finds that presidents issue threats primarily on issues they prioritize, foreign policy issues, and topics of high public salience. Under divided government, presidents shift their attention toward protecting their own priorities in appropriations bills and away from broader public priorities.
7. **Theory:** Lewallen extends the agenda-setting literature by arguing that veto threats function not just as bargaining tools but as mechanisms for structuring issue attention and defining interbranch conflicts. Building on Schattschneider's theory of conflict expansion, he argues that veto threats elevate the visibility of policy disputes and shape the federal government's agenda. Unlike previous models that treat veto threats as purely strategic signals of a president's willingness to reject legislation, Lewallen contends that they also serve to highlight presidential priorities and shift attention toward specific policy areas. His theory predicts that presidents will issue more veto threats on (1) issues they have already prioritized, (2) foreign policy issues where they have greater unilateral authority, and (3) issues that are of high public concern. Under divided government, he hypothesizes that presidents will devote more veto threats to appropriations bills and fewer to public priorities, reflecting heightened competition over agenda space.
8. **Methods:** Lewallen constructs an original dataset of presidential veto threats from 1985 to 2014, drawing from Statements of Administration Policy (SAPs) coded according to the Policy Agendas Project (PAP) framework. He uses time-series cross-sectional negative binomial regression models to assess the relationship between veto threats and issue characteristics. Independent variables include presidential agenda-setting efforts (measured by State of the Union addresses), public priorities (measured by Gallup's Most Important Problem survey), and the presence of divided government. He also controls for legislative activity on each issue and presidential fixed effects. To distinguish between general legislative veto threats and appropriations-specific threats, he estimates separate models for all veto threats, non-appropriations threats, and appropriations-only threats.
9. **Hypotheses:** Lewallen tests four main hypotheses:
  - **Presidential Priorities Hypothesis:** Presidents issue more veto threats on issues they have emphasized in State of the Union addresses.
  - **Two Presidencies Hypothesis:** Presidents issue more veto threats on foreign policy issues than domestic issues.
  - **Public Priorities Hypothesis:** Presidents issue more veto threats on issues that the public considers a high priority.
  - **Divided Government Hypothesis:** Under divided government, presidents issue more veto threats on appropriations bills (H4a), fewer threats on foreign policy bills (H4b), and fewer threats on public priorities (H4c).The results largely confirm these hypotheses, with some variation between appropriations and non-appropriations legislation.
10. **Main findings:** Lewallen finds that presidential veto threats are systematically related to issue dynamics rather than purely legislative strategy. Presidents are significantly more likely to threaten vetoes on issues they highlight in the State of the Union, supporting the idea that veto threats are an extension of agenda-setting efforts. Foreign policy bills are nearly twice as likely to receive veto threats, consistent with the "two presidencies" hypothesis. Additionally, presidents are more likely to threaten vetoes on issues that rank highly in public concern, reinforcing the link between presidential responsiveness and veto politics. Under divided government, presidents shift their veto threat attention toward appropriations battles and away from broader public concerns. The findings challenge the conventional wisdom that veto threats are purely reactive and instead suggest that they are instrumental in shaping the issue agenda and structuring legislative conflict.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "When a president threatens to veto a bill, he raises its visibility and scope and thus helps shape the federal government's issue agenda" (p. 277).
  - "Presidents threaten to veto legislation as a strategy to shift policy outputs, but we should also expect them to react to defend their priorities and respond to congressional invitations to conflict on issues they already have prioritized" (p. 279).
  - "As presidents issue relatively fewer veto threats on public priorities during years of divided government, they threaten to veto more spending legislation that corresponds to their issue priorities laid out at the beginning of the year" (p. 286).

## 5.5 Legislative Agendas

### 5.5.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of legislative agendas examines how lawmakers structure policy priorities, respond to political constraints, and leverage institutional mechanisms to shape lawmaking outcomes. Scholars have explored how legislative agendas are influenced by external political pressures, internal institutional dynamics, and strategic behavior by individual legislators. Early work emphasized agenda-setting as a function of party leadership and institutional rules, while more recent studies have focused on the strategic use of bill sponsorship, issue attention, and legislative gridlock. The literature highlights the constraints imposed by divided government, bicameralism, and procedural rules, demonstrating that legislative outcomes are shaped by both structural limitations and the strategic calculations of political actors.
- **Strategic Bill Sponsorship and Legislative Entrepreneurship:** A key strand of research explores how legislators use bill sponsorship to shape the legislative agenda. Schiller (1995) argues that U.S. senators strategically introduce bills to signal policy priorities, build reputations, and navigate institutional constraints. Contrary to views of the Senate as an unstructured environment, her findings suggest that factors such as seniority, committee assignments, and electoral incentives systematically influence legislative entrepreneurship. Similarly, Woon (2009) finds that committee membership is a dominant predictor of issue attention, as senators with institutional advantages are better positioned to introduce legislation in their areas of expertise. These studies underscore that legislative agendas are not solely dictated by party leadership but are actively shaped by individual lawmakers responding to both institutional constraints and political opportunities.
- **Legislative Gridlock and Institutional Constraints:** Legislative agendas are also shaped by the extent of gridlock in Congress. Binder (1999) challenges the assumption that divided government is the primary driver of policy deadlock, arguing that intrabranch conflict—particularly ideological polarization and bicameral differences—plays a more decisive role. Using a measure of gridlock based on newspaper editorials, Binder finds that legislative inaction is more strongly correlated with ideological divergence between the House and Senate than with partisan control of the presidency. Her findings suggest that legislative productivity is determined by the internal composition of Congress rather than by whether party control is unified or divided. These insights contribute to broader debates on how institutional structures constrain legislative agendas.
- **Veto Politics and Presidential Influence:** Presidential veto threats serve as an important mechanism through which the executive branch shapes legislative agendas. Lewallen (2016) argues that veto threats are not merely bargaining tools but also agenda-setting instruments that structure issue attention and interbranch conflict. Presidents use veto threats to highlight policy priorities, particularly in foreign affairs and high-salience domestic issues. Under divided government, veto threats become more concentrated on appropriations bills, reflecting executive-legislative struggles over budgetary priorities. This research demonstrates that presidential influence over legislative agendas extends beyond formal veto powers, as presidents actively shape congressional deliberations through strategic signaling.
- **Coalition Formation and Procedural Constraints:** The ability of legislators to advance policy priorities is heavily influenced by procedural rules and coalition-building dynamics. Madonna (2011) examines how legislative decision rules, such as the cloture rule in the Senate, affect coalition sizes. He finds that shifts in the legislative agenda, rather than formal rule changes, explain variation in coalition-building strategies. Similarly, Wawro and Schickler (2004) challenge assumptions about the necessity of supermajority coalitions in the pre-cloture Senate, demonstrating that narrow majorities were often sufficient to pass legislation. These studies suggest that while procedural rules impose constraints, legislative actors retain strategic flexibility in coalition formation.
- **Agenda Change and External Political Forces:** Legislative agendas evolve in response to external political and societal pressures. Research has shown that shifts in public opinion, media coverage, and electoral dynamics influence the prioritization of issues in Congress. For example, studies on issue attention have found that lawmakers allocate resources to issues that align with constituent demands, electoral incentives, and national policy concerns. Additionally, agenda-setting is shaped by broader partisan dynamics, as majority party status and institutional control affect which issues receive legislative attention. These findings underscore that legislative agendas are dynamic and responsive to both institutional constraints and external political forces.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Scholars continue to debate the relative influence of institutional structures versus strategic behavior in shaping legislative agendas. While some argue that procedural constraints and ideological polarization are the primary determinants of legislative productivity, others highlight the role of individual lawmakers and executive influence in shaping issue priorities. Future research is likely to explore how digital media, partisan realignment, and changes in congressional norms affect agenda-setting processes. Additionally, growing interest in comparative legislative studies may provide further insights into how different institutional arrangements shape policy priorities across political systems.

### 5.5.2 Senators as Political Entrepreneurs: Using Bill Sponsorship to Shape Legislative Agendas

Schiller, W. J. (1995). Senators as Political Entrepreneurs: Using Bill Sponsorship to Shape Legislative Agendas [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 39(1), 186–203. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111763>

1. **Citation key:** schiller\_senators\_1995
2. **Author(s):** Wendy J. Schiller

3. **Year:** 1995
  4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
  5. **Keywords:** Senate, bill sponsorship, legislative entrepreneurship, institutional structure, political constraints
  6. **Summary:** Schiller examines how U.S. senators use bill sponsorship as a strategic tool to shape legislative agendas. By analyzing bill sponsorship in the 99th and 100th Congresses, she argues that senators operate within structured institutional and political constraints rather than in a freewheeling environment. Bill sponsorship serves as a mechanism for senators to advance policy goals, signal issue priorities, and establish legislative reputations. The study employs a combination of regression analysis and interviews with Senate legislative staff to assess the factors influencing the number of bills senators introduce.
  7. **Theory:** Schiller challenges the prevailing notion that the Senate is highly unstructured and unpredictable in its operations. Instead, she posits that senators operate within a defined institutional structure, making strategic calculations about bill sponsorship based on a combination of political ambition, institutional position, and external constraints. She argues that bill sponsorship is not merely symbolic but serves as an important tool for senators to shape their legislative careers and engage with institutional opportunities. Seniority, committee assignments, and external political considerations influence which bills senators introduce. Additionally, Schiller highlights the costs associated with bill sponsorship, including resource expenditures, opportunity costs, and potential political backlash. Senators must weigh these costs against the benefits of advancing policy, gaining recognition, and strengthening electoral prospects.
  8. **Methods:** The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative regression analysis with qualitative interviews. Schiller compiles a dataset of all public bills introduced in the 99th (1985-86) and 100th (1987-88) Congresses, using individual senators as the unit of analysis. The dependent variable is the number of bills introduced per senator, and key independent variables include seniority, committee assignments, staff size, state economic conditions, and electoral considerations. A multivariate regression model estimates the effects of these variables on bill sponsorship. In addition to the statistical analysis, Schiller conducts interviews with staff members in 42 Senate offices to contextualize the decision-making process behind bill sponsorship and understand the motivations underlying senators' legislative choices.
  9. **Hypotheses:** Schiller hypothesizes that a senator's bill sponsorship behavior is influenced by institutional and political factors. Key hypotheses include:
    - Senators with greater seniority will introduce more bills.
    - Committee chairs and members of powerful committees (e.g., Finance, Appropriations) will sponsor more bills.
    - Senators with larger legislative staffs will introduce more bills due to increased capacity for policy work.
    - Senators facing reelection will introduce more bills to signal legislative activity to constituents.
    - Senators from states with larger and more diverse economies will introduce more bills to accommodate constituent interests.
- The findings confirm that institutional position and state economic conditions significantly influence bill sponsorship, while partisan and ideological factors play a more limited role.
10. **Main findings:** Schiller finds that senators' bill sponsorship behavior follows discernible patterns shaped by institutional and political constraints. Senior senators introduce more bills than freshmen, reflecting accumulated experience and influence. Senators with more committee assignments and leadership positions introduce more bills, particularly those with jurisdiction over high-profile policy areas like Finance and Appropriations. Staff size is a strong predictor of bill sponsorship, suggesting that legislative resources directly impact senators' ability to draft and introduce legislation. Contrary to expectations, party and ideology exert limited influence, indicating that bill sponsorship is less about partisan signaling and more about strategic positioning within the chamber. Additionally, senators do not uniformly increase bill introductions in election years, suggesting that legislative activity is not merely a function of electoral incentives. The study challenges claims that the Senate lacks structure, instead demonstrating that senators operate within an institutional framework that constrains and directs their legislative behavior.
  11. **Key quotations:**
    - "A senator's choice of bills is a strong indicator of which issues he or she wants to be associated with and the reputation he or she wants to acquire among colleagues" (p. 187).
    - "This research suggests that current views of the Senate as a place that lacks structure and predictability in its operations may be overstated" (p. 188).
    - "If the legislator is a rational political actor, there must be benefits attached to bill sponsorship that can outweigh the costs. These benefits may include improvements in public policy, material gains for the senator's state, and internal and external reputations as an issue expert, all of which can contribute to electoral success" (p. 190).

### 5.5.3 The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-96

Binder, S. A. (1999). The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-96 [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 93(3), 519–533. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2585572>

1. **Citation key:** binder\_dynamics\_1999
2. **Author(s):** Sarah A. Binder
3. **Year:** 1999
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** legislative gridlock, divided government, bicameralism, policy preferences, congressional productivity

6. **Summary:** Binder examines the causes and patterns of legislative gridlock in Congress between 1947 and 1996, challenging the prevailing assumption that divided government is the primary driver of policy stalemate. Instead, she argues that intrabranch conflict—especially the distribution of policy preferences within and between the House and Senate—plays a crucial role in shaping legislative deadlock. Using a new measure of gridlock based on newspaper editorials, she assesses the extent to which divided government, bicameral differences, and ideological polarization contribute to legislative inaction.
7. **Theory:** Binder critiques the dominant view that divided government leads to legislative gridlock, contending that interbranch conflict alone cannot fully explain variations in policy stalemate. Instead, she proposes that internal congressional dynamics—such as ideological polarization, bicameral disagreements, and supermajority requirements—play a more substantial role. She builds on theories of institutional constraints, arguing that the preferences of key legislative actors, rather than simple party control, determine the difficulty of passing legislation. Binder also emphasizes the role of bicameralism, asserting that ideological divergence between the House and Senate is a more significant predictor of gridlock than party division between the executive and legislative branches. She challenges the traditional understanding of legislative performance by shifting the focus from raw policy output to a proportion-based measure of gridlock that considers both enacted and failed legislative initiatives.
8. **Methods:** Binder develops a new metric of legislative gridlock by analyzing New York Times editorials from 1947 to 1996 to identify salient legislative issues in each Congress. She calculates a gridlock score based on the proportion of agenda items that fail to become law. Using multivariate regression analysis, she tests competing explanations for gridlock, including divided government, partisan polarization, ideological diversity within Congress, bicameral policy divergence, and the filibuster threat. She also incorporates measures of economic conditions and public sentiment toward government activism to assess whether external factors influence legislative productivity. Binder's statistical approach includes weighted least-squares logit models to account for the proportion-based nature of her gridlock measure.
9. **Hypotheses:** Binder hypothesizes that gridlock is not simply a function of divided government but is significantly influenced by other institutional and partisan factors. Key hypotheses include:
  - Divided government increases legislative gridlock.
  - Greater partisan polarization leads to higher levels of gridlock by reducing opportunities for compromise.
  - Higher ideological heterogeneity within Congress increases gridlock.
  - Longer periods of minority status for a new majority reduce gridlock as the majority seeks to enact its policy agenda.
  - The greater the ideological distance between the House and Senate, the higher the level of gridlock.
  - A stronger filibuster threat leads to greater legislative inaction.
  - A larger federal budget surplus reduces gridlock by easing distributional conflicts.
  - Greater public support for government activism lowers gridlock.
 Her findings confirm that divided government does contribute to gridlock but that internal congressional factors—especially partisan polarization and bicameral differences—play an even greater role.
10. **Main findings:** Binder's analysis reveals that while divided government is associated with higher levels of gridlock, its effect is relatively modest compared to other factors. She finds that ideological polarization significantly increases gridlock, as the shrinking number of moderate legislators reduces opportunities for cross-party compromise. Bicameral divergence is one of the strongest predictors of gridlock, with greater ideological distance between the House and Senate leading to policy stalemate. Contrary to conventional wisdom, she finds limited evidence that the filibuster threat plays a major role in gridlock, suggesting that other institutional factors are more influential. Binder also finds that public sentiment toward government activism correlates with legislative productivity, with higher support for government intervention associated with lower levels of gridlock. Her findings challenge the assumption that divided government is the primary cause of legislative inaction, instead emphasizing the importance of intrabranch dynamics.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Most important, I suggest that intrabranch friction may be more significant than interbranch conflict in contributing to policy stalemate" (p. 519).
  - "Unified party control of government cannot guarantee the compromise necessary for breaking deadlock in American politics" (p. 530).
  - "House-Senate differences, not simply legislative-executive conflicts, have structured patterns of gridlock in post-war American politics" (p. 531).

#### 5.5.4 Where's the Pivot? Obstruction and Lawmaking in the Pre-Cloture Senate

Wawro, G. J., & Schickler, E. (2004). Where's the Pivot? Obstruction and Lawmaking in the Pre-cloture Senate [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.0092-5853.2004.00100.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 48(4), 758–774. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0092-5853.2004.00100.x>

1. **Citation key:** wawro\_wheres\_2004
2. **Author(s):** Gregory J. Wawro and Eric Schickler
3. **Year:** 2004
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** Senate, filibuster, cloture, pivotal politics, legislative obstruction

6. **Summary:** Wawro and Schickler investigate the nature of obstruction and coalition sizes in the U.S. Senate prior to the adoption of the cloture rule in 1917. They assess competing theoretical perspectives, including the pivotal politics model and universalism, to determine the coalition sizes necessary for passing legislation in the pre-cloture Senate. Using historical roll-call data and case studies, they argue that narrow majorities were often successful in passing legislation, contradicting the conventional belief that the lack of a cloture rule necessitated universal or near-universal coalitions.
7. **Theory:** The authors engage with two competing theories of coalition formation in the Senate: distributive universalism and pivotal politics. Distributive universalism posits that the absence of a cloture rule required legislators to construct unanimous or near-unanimous coalitions, as a single senator could obstruct legislation indefinitely. In contrast, the pivotal politics model, particularly a refinement of Krehbiel's framework, suggests that majoritarian rule still prevailed in the pre-cloture Senate. They argue that narrow majorities were often sufficient for passage, though obstruction became more effective when adjournment loomed. Their refined model emphasizes that while a simple majority could usually pass legislation, uncertainty regarding obstruction created conditions where larger coalitions were sometimes necessary. This perspective challenges the assumption that the Senate's procedural rules before 1917 fundamentally constrained majority rule.
8. **Methods:** The authors employ a three-pronged empirical strategy to assess the validity of their theoretical claims. First, they analyze coalition sizes on final passage votes of significant legislation before and after the adoption of cloture, drawing on historical roll-call data. Second, they examine dilatory motions as a measure of obstruction, assessing whether the size of the coalition opposing obstruction predicted a bill's success. Third, they focus on tariff legislation as a case study to determine whether legislative politics in this high-stakes policy area followed a majoritarian or universalist pattern. Their methodological approach includes regression models estimating the effect of coalition size on legislative success, controlling for institutional and temporal factors.
9. **Hypotheses:** Wawro and Schickler hypothesize that coalition sizes required for legislative success in the pre-cloture Senate were not universally large. Specific hypotheses include:
  - The absence of a cloture rule did not necessitate universal or near-universal coalitions for legislative passage.
  - A simple majority was often sufficient to pass legislation, though obstruction became more effective when adjournment was imminent.
  - Coalition sizes were larger when time constraints increased the cost of obstruction, particularly toward the end of a congressional session.
  - The pivotal politics model, incorporating the median voter and veto pivot, better explains coalition formation than the universalism model.
10. **Main findings:** The authors find strong support for the pivotal politics model, demonstrating that narrow majorities often succeeded in passing legislation in the pre-cloture Senate. Their analysis of significant legislation reveals that a substantial proportion of bills passed with fewer than two-thirds support, challenging the notion that universal coalitions were necessary. Additionally, their examination of dilatory motions indicates that opposition coalitions as small as 51% had a high probability of overcoming obstruction, except in the final days before adjournment, when uncertainty about obstructionists' ability to delay a vote increased. Their case study of tariff legislation further corroborates the argument that majoritarian processes dominated, rather than universalist coalition-building. Overall, their findings suggest that while obstruction was a factor, it did not fundamentally prevent slim majorities from governing.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Most important, I suggest that intrabranch friction may be more significant than interbranch conflict in contributing to policy stalemate" (p. 519).
  - "Unified party control of government cannot guarantee the compromise necessary for breaking deadlock in American politics" (p. 530).
  - "House-Senate differences, not simply legislative-executive conflicts, have structured patterns of gridlock in post-war American politics" (p. 531).

#### 5.5.5 Issue Attention and Legislative Proposals in the U.S. Senate

Woon, J. (2009). Issue Attention and Legislative Proposals in the U.S. Senate [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.3162/036298009787500367>]. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 34(1), 29–54. <https://doi.org/10.3162/036298009787500367>

1. **Citation key:** woon\_issue\_2009
2. **Author(s):** Jonathan Woon
3. **Year:** 2009
4. **Publication:** Legislative Studies Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** Senate, bill sponsorship, committee membership, legislative behavior, issue attention
6. **Summary:** Woon examines the factors shaping senators' attention to legislative issues, with a particular focus on bill sponsorship. He argues that committee membership is the most significant determinant of issue attention, outweighing the influence of ideology, partisanship, and national conditions. The study finds that senators prioritize issues based on expected electoral and policy benefits rather than simple position-taking. Woon's findings highlight the continuing importance of the committee system in a legislative environment often characterized as increasingly decentralized and individualistic.

7. **Theory:** The author frames legislative issue attention as a constrained optimization problem, where senators allocate their time and resources to maximize political and policy benefits while minimizing costs. He builds upon rational-choice models that view legislators as goal-oriented actors who weigh the benefits of position-taking and policy influence against the constraints imposed by institutions and strategic interactions. Unlike theories that emphasize partisanship or electoral incentives as primary drivers of legislative behavior, Woon contends that committee membership is the dominant determinant of issue attention. He suggests that institutional positions lower the costs of legislative entrepreneurship by providing senators with access to expertise, procedural advantages, and agenda control. Additionally, he explores the interplay between constituency interests, national policy concerns, and party issue ownership, arguing that these factors play a secondary role compared to committee hierarchies.
8. **Methods:** Woon employs a panel dataset covering nine issue areas in the U.S. Senate from the 101st through 106th Congresses (1989–2000). The dependent variable is the number of bills a senator introduces in each issue area. He classifies bills using Congressional Research Service (CRS) topic codes and tests hypotheses about the effects of committee membership, party majority status, ideological extremism, constituency demand, and national conditions on issue attention. The primary estimation method is a negative binomial regression model, which accounts for the count nature of bill sponsorship data. He also examines interaction effects between committee membership and party majority status to assess whether institutional influence varies based on partisan control of the Senate.
9. **Hypotheses:** Woon tests several hypotheses regarding the determinants of issue attention:
  - Committee membership increases the likelihood of bill sponsorship in issue areas relevant to the committee's jurisdiction.
  - Committee leadership positions further amplify issue attention compared to rank-and-file committee membership.
  - Constituency demand influences issue attention, particularly in economic policy areas where state-level economic interests are at stake.
  - National policy conditions, such as unemployment rates or crime trends, shape legislative attention to corresponding issues.
  - Ideological extremism increases legislative attention, as more ideologically committed senators are more likely to push policy proposals.
  - Majority party status interacts with committee membership to enhance issue attention, as majority party senators have greater agenda-setting influence.
10. **Main findings:** Woon finds that committee membership is the most consistent predictor of issue attention, with committee members sponsoring significantly more bills in their committee's jurisdiction than non-members. Full-committee chairs exhibit even greater levels of bill sponsorship, highlighting the importance of procedural control. While constituency demand influences issue attention in economic policy areas, it is generally less predictive than institutional factors. Contrary to expectations, ideological extremism does not consistently predict issue attention, and national conditions only matter for specific issues like unemployment and health policy. Majority party status does not have a uniform effect but interacts with committee membership in some cases to further enhance issue attention. The results suggest that legislative entrepreneurship is primarily structured by institutional positions rather than partisanship or ideological commitment.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "This analysis of bill sponsorship across a variety of issues and Congresses shows that committee membership is the single most important factor shaping a senator's level of issue attention" (p. 29).
  - "A fundamental aspect of lawmaking and representation is issue attention—determining which issues to pursue and how much to pursue them. But how do legislators decide which issues are worth their valuable time and effort?" (p. 30).
  - "The importance of the committee system is quite surprising in light of the contemporary Senate's reputation as a highly decentralized institution in which individualism runs rampant and policy specialization is no longer the norm" (p. 31).

**5.5.6 Winning Coalition Formation in the U.S. Senate: The Effects of Legislative Decision Rules and Agenda Change**  
 Madonna, A. J. (2011). Winning Coalition Formation in the U.S. Senate: The Effects of Legislative Decision Rules and Agenda Change [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00491.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(2), 276–288. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2010.00491.x>

1. **Citation key:** madonna\_winning\_2011
2. **Author(s):** Anthony J. Madonna
3. **Year:** 2011
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** Senate, coalition formation, cloture rule, filibuster, legislative decision rules
6. **Summary:** Madonna examines the determinants of winning coalition sizes in the U.S. Senate, with a specific focus on the role of legislative decision rules and agenda changes. He evaluates whether the adoption of Rule XXII, which introduced cloture in 1917, systematically increased the size of legislative coalitions. Contrary to previous research, Madonna finds that the observed increase in coalition sizes is largely driven by shifts in the legislative agenda, changes in the types of issues considered, and fluctuations in the partisan composition of the Senate. His findings suggest that

the link between decision rules and coalition sizes is weaker than previously assumed.

7. **Theory:** The prevailing view in legislative politics posits that institutional rules governing debate and obstruction influence the size of winning coalitions by structuring bargaining incentives. Scholars such as Krehbiel (1998) and Wawro and Schickler (2004, 2006) have argued that the adoption of Rule XXII forced legislative leaders to form larger, cloture-proof coalitions to overcome obstruction. Madonna challenges this claim, suggesting that coalition size is better explained by broader historical trends in congressional policymaking. He theorizes that as Congress moved away from divisive, zero-sum policy areas (e.g., tariffs, voting rights) and towards more distributive and universalistic policies, winning coalitions naturally expanded. Additionally, the increased use of recorded roll-call votes over time created the illusion of growing coalition sizes, as votes on broadly supported bills were more frequently documented. Madonna's theory emphasizes exogenous factors such as agenda change and majority party size over procedural reforms in explaining coalition formation.
8. **Methods:** Madonna employs a dataset of final passage votes on landmark legislative enactments in the U.S. Senate, covering the period from 1865 to 1946. He analyzes variation in coalition sizes using a tobit regression model, accounting for the truncated nature of the dependent variable (coalition size ranging between 50% and 100%). Key independent variables include a dummy for the post-1917 cloture era, the partisan composition of the Senate, and issue-specific controls for tariff policy, voting rights, and wartime legislation. Madonna also explores the impact of recorded versus unrecorded votes, testing whether the increased documentation of roll-call votes contributes to observed trends in coalition size.
9. **Hypotheses:** Madonna evaluates several hypotheses concerning the determinants of coalition formation:
  - The adoption of Rule XXII should increase the average size of winning coalitions, as legislative leaders respond to the cloture threshold by crafting larger, filibuster-proof majorities.
  - Majority party size should be positively associated with coalition size, as larger majorities reduce the costs of coalition expansion.
  - Coalition size should vary by issue area, with tariffs and voting rights legislation generating smaller, more polarized coalitions, while war-related legislation fosters broad, bipartisan support.
  - The increasing use of recorded roll-call votes should contribute to the appearance of growing coalition sizes, as more lopsided votes become part of the historical record.
10. **Main findings:** Madonna finds no direct evidence that the introduction of Rule XXII systematically increased the size of winning coalitions in the Senate. Instead, he attributes the observed trend to two primary factors: (1) shifts in the legislative agenda, particularly the decline of tariff and voting rights disputes and the rise of universalistic policies; and (2) changes in voting procedures, which increased the likelihood that lopsided, broadly supported bills would be subjected to recorded roll-call votes. His analysis also confirms that coalition size is highly responsive to the size of the majority party, with larger majorities producing broader winning coalitions. Additionally, wartime legislation consistently generates the largest coalitions, while tariff policy fosters narrow, polarized majorities. Madonna's findings suggest that prior research overstated the impact of procedural rules on coalition formation, failing to account for broader structural changes in congressional policymaking.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "The aggregate size of winning coalitions is highly responsive to the underlying legislative agenda, the size of the Senate's majority party, and the manner in which researchers treat unrecorded votes" (p. 276).
  - "The adoption of Rule XXII represented a trade-off of sorts, institutionalizing the filibuster in exchange for more legislative certainty late in the session" (p. 279).
  - "The evidence here suggests these external factors have played a more pronounced role in the lawmaking process than recent scholarship has given them credit for" (p. 286).

## 5.6 Rulemaking, Rulebreaking, and Innovation

### 5.6.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of congressional rulemaking and rulebreaking encompasses both the formal institutional procedures that structure legislative activity and the strategic deviations from these rules that shape policymaking outcomes. Scholars examine how procedural mechanisms, such as cloture, reconciliation, and the filibuster, establish legislative constraints, while also considering how actors innovate within, bend, or outright violate these constraints to achieve political objectives. Early research into congressional procedures emphasized the stabilizing role of rules in facilitating deliberation and structuring conflict, whereas contemporary scholarship highlights the ways in which political entrepreneurs exploit procedural ambiguities for partisan advantage. These studies underscore that rule adherence and deviation alike are shaped by political incentives, institutional path dependencies, and strategic considerations.
- **Institutional Constraints and Procedural Governance:** Foundational research on legislative institutions established that rules serve as both enabling and constraining mechanisms, dictating the formal processes by which Congress operates. Classic studies, such as those by Polsby, conceptualized Congress as an institution governed by stable norms, with rules structuring legislative order and protecting minority rights. However, later work demonstrated that formal rules often serve strategic purposes, with legislative majorities leveraging them to secure policy advantages. Krehbiel's pivotal politics model illustrated how institutional constraints, including veto points and supermajority requirements, systematically shape legislative outcomes. More recent scholarship has investigated how rules governing debate, amendments, and procedural motions interact to privilege certain coalitions while marginalizing others, reinforcing

the idea that procedural constraints are inherently political.

- **Strategic Rule Breaking and Procedural Adaptation:** While formal rules impose order, political actors frequently seek ways to circumvent institutional constraints when faced with gridlock or partisan opposition. Shepsle's work on procedural entrepreneurship demonstrated that rulebreaking and procedural manipulation are central to congressional strategy. He distinguished between procedural innovation—where actors reinterpret existing rules to serve new purposes—and outright transgression, where rules are broken to achieve immediate policy goals. Studies of the filibuster, for instance, highlight how senators have historically exploited procedural ambiguities to delay or block legislation. Wawro and Schickler's research on filibuster reform showed that rule changes often emerge from strategic necessity rather than principled institutional design, as partisan majorities seek to neutralize obstructionist tactics. Similarly, research on the use of the nuclear option in judicial confirmations illustrates how procedural norms are regularly recalibrated in response to shifting partisan incentives.
- **The Filibuster and Rule Evasion:** The filibuster, one of the most visible examples of congressional rulebreaking, has evolved from a rarely used delaying tactic into a routine legislative hurdle. Scholars have documented how changes in Senate norms transformed the filibuster from an exceptional tool of legislative dissent into a near-constant obstacle to majority rule. Binder and Smith's analysis of filibuster reform traced how rule modification efforts have been shaped by long-term shifts in partisan polarization and institutional incentives. Recent studies also explore the use of silent filibusters, hold tactics, and the increasing reliance on cloture motions to overcome obstruction, highlighting how procedural adaptations allow legislators to bypass traditional constraints without formally eliminating the filibuster itself.
- **Majoritarian Exceptions and Procedural Workarounds:** Despite its supermajoritarian structure, Congress has institutionalized mechanisms that enable majorities to bypass obstructionist rules under specific conditions. Reynolds' research on majoritarian exceptions demonstrated that tools like budget reconciliation allow simple majorities to advance policy goals without facing filibuster threats. The reconciliation process, established in the 1974 Budget Act, has been instrumental in enacting major legislation, including tax cuts and healthcare reforms, by allowing for expedited consideration with limited debate. Other procedural innovations, such as fast-track authority in trade negotiations and limits on amendment opportunities, illustrate how congressional leaders strategically deploy procedural workarounds to enhance legislative efficiency and minimize partisan obstruction.
- **Institutional Change and the Dynamics of Rule Innovation:** Congressional rulemaking is not static but evolves in response to shifting political and institutional pressures. Wawro and Schickler's research on the nuclear option demonstrated that procedural change is often the result of cumulative pressures rather than sudden shifts, with partisan majorities gradually eroding institutional constraints over time. The path-dependent nature of procedural change suggests that once a rule is weakened or circumvented, future actors find it easier to further modify or eliminate it. Hacker and Pierson's broader institutional theories reinforce this perspective, arguing that rule changes, once enacted, generate self-reinforcing dynamics that shape subsequent congressional behavior.
- **Legislative Leadership and Rule Enforcement:** While procedural constraints shape legislative behavior, enforcement mechanisms determine the extent to which rules are followed or disregarded. Research on congressional leadership has highlighted the role of party leaders in both enforcing procedural norms and selectively tolerating rule violations when politically advantageous. Lee and Curry's analysis of unorthodox lawmaking illustrated how leadership-driven processes, including omnibus legislation and closed rules, allow majorities to structure debate and limit opposition input. These studies demonstrate that legislative rules are not neutral constraints but instruments of power, wielded strategically to facilitate or obstruct policy change.
- **Future Directions in Rulemaking and Procedural Reform:** Contemporary debates over congressional rulemaking focus on the tension between procedural stability and institutional adaptability. Scholars continue to examine whether reforms, such as eliminating the filibuster or revising reconciliation rules, would enhance legislative efficiency or merely shift partisan conflict to new arenas. The growing use of executive action as a response to congressional gridlock also raises questions about the long-term viability of legislative rule enforcement. Future research is likely to explore the extent to which procedural innovations reinforce or undermine congressional authority, particularly in an era of heightened polarization and executive-legislative confrontation.

### 5.6.2 Assessing Congressional Responses to Growing Presidential Powers: The Case of Recess Appointments

Black, R. C., Lynch, M. S., Madonna, A. J., & Owens, R. J. (2011). Assessing Congressional Responses to Growing Presidential Powers: The Case of Recess Appointments [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1741-5705.2011.03887.x>]. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 41(3), 570–589. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5705.2011.03887.x>

1. **Citation key:** black\_assessing\_2011
2. **Author(s):** Ryan C. Black, Michael S. Lynch, Anthony J. Madonna, and Ryan J. Owens
3. **Year:** 2011
4. **Publication:** Presidential Studies Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** presidential power, recess appointments, Senate procedures, unilateral executive action, separation of powers
6. **Summary:** Black, Lynch, Madonna, and Owens analyze Congress's ability to check presidential unilateral powers, focusing on the Senate's unprecedented decision in 2007 to hold continuous sessions to prevent President George W. Bush from making recess appointments. They argue that Congress only effectively constrains presidential unilateralism when the president's actions impose significant political costs on a sufficient number of legislators, facilitating

collective action. Using a combination of case studies and statistical analysis of recess appointments from 1987 to 2006, they demonstrate that Bush's frequent use of recess appointments created strong political incentives for Senate Democrats to respond with procedural innovation.

**7. Theory:** The authors contend that the president's ability to act unilaterally often expands because Congress struggles to coordinate a response. Drawing from scholarship on executive orders and presidential signing statements, they argue that unilateral actions persist when the costs of congressional opposition are too high. However, they propose that congressional resistance emerges under two conditions: (1) the president's use of a unilateral power imposes substantial political costs on members of Congress, and (2) these costs affect a sufficiently large group of legislators to facilitate collective action. In the case of recess appointments, Senate Democrats were able to act collectively due to the direct policy consequences of Bush's appointments. Additionally, the institutional rules of the Senate provided a low threshold for collective action—Democrats needed only a majority to change Senate scheduling, whereas blocking other forms of unilateral presidential action, such as executive orders, would require a supermajority to override a veto.

**8. Methods:** The study employs both qualitative case study analysis and quantitative modeling. The authors first examine historical cases where Congress attempted to constrain recess appointments, including judicial challenges, threats of delay, and previous legislative maneuvers. They then analyze a dataset of all civilian nominations and recess appointments from 1987 to 2006, using rare-events logistic regression to identify factors that influence a president's decision to make a recess appointment rather than seeking Senate confirmation. Independent variables include presidential approval ratings, divided versus unified government, the length of nomination delays, and the agency or court to which an individual was appointed. By estimating counterfactual scenarios, they project that if the Senate had not changed its rules in 2007, Bush would have used recess appointments to fill approximately 54% of vacancies on major independent boards and commissions.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Presidents are more likely to use recess appointments when facing high levels of Senate opposition.
- The likelihood of recess appointments increases in the final years of a presidency, particularly under divided government.
- Bush's use of recess appointments exceeded that of his predecessors, even when his party controlled the Senate.

Empirical findings confirm these expectations, showing that Bush used recess appointments at a rate twelve times higher than Clinton under unified party control.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that presidential recess appointments are a powerful form of unilateral action, particularly when the Senate is gridlocked or controlled by the opposition party. President Bush's use of recess appointments was far more aggressive than that of previous presidents, including during periods of unified party control, suggesting that he viewed them as a strategic tool rather than a last resort. The Senate's decision to remain in permanent session was an effective and low-cost strategy to curb these appointments, illustrating that Congress can check executive unilateralism when institutional mechanisms lower the threshold for collective action. Their predictive models suggest that without this intervention, Bush would have used recess appointments to fill a significant majority of pending vacancies, thereby shaping policy outcomes at independent agencies in ways unfavorable to Senate Democrats.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We argue that for Congress to effectively check increasing presidential powers two conditions must exist. First, the president's use of a unilateral power must create high political costs for members of Congress. Second, these costs must be felt by a sufficiently large number of members to reach a threshold necessary to attain collective action" (p. 571).
- "Compared to lawsuits and threats of delay, pro forma sessions are an effective and low-cost way to prevent recess appointments. Reid, acting as Democratic majority leader, only needs the members of his party to allow him to call these sessions" (p. 580).
- "This practice prevented Bush from filling hundreds of vacancies, including key policy-making positions on the Federal Election Commission, National Labor Relations Board, or Securities and Exchange Commission. While we will never know what the difference in the rulings issued by these boards would have been, had Bush been allowed to use recess appointments to fill these boards, there is little question that the results would have benefited Bush and hurt Senate Democrats" (p. 587).

### 5.6.3 Exceptions to the Rule: The Politics of Filibuster Limitations in the U.S. Senate

Reynolds, M. E. (2017, July). *Exceptions to the Rule: The Politics of Filibuster Limitations in the U.S. Senate* [Google-Books-ID: wNQBDgAAQBAJ]. Brookings Institution Press

**1. Citation key:** reynolds\_exceptions\_2017

**2. Author(s):** Molly E. Reynolds

**3. Year:** 2017

**4. Publication:** Brookings Institution Press

**5. Keywords:** filibuster, U.S. Senate, legislative procedure, majoritarian exceptions, reconciliation process

**6. Summary:** Reynolds examines how the U.S. Senate, despite its reputation as a super-majoritarian institution dominated by filibusters, has developed procedural mechanisms that allow for majoritarian decision-making in specific circumstances. She identifies and analyzes "majoritarian exceptions"—rules embedded in statutory law that prevent

filibusters and lower the threshold for legislative action. Through a combination of formal modeling, historical analysis, and quantitative data, Reynolds demonstrates that these exceptions serve both procedural and electoral functions for the Senate's majority party, helping it enact legislation and maintain control of the chamber.

**7. Theory:** Reynolds argues that majoritarian exceptions arise when Senate leaders seek to bypass traditional super-majoritarian constraints in order to secure legislative victories. She posits that these exceptions emerge due to two primary motivations: (1) facilitating the passage of critical legislation by limiting the ability of minority senators to obstruct, and (2) bolstering the electoral fortunes of the majority party by allowing it to claim credit for policy achievements. Drawing on the party-as-cartel theory, she suggests that Senate leaders act collectively to empower their caucus while minimizing opportunities for individual senators to defect or obstruct. These procedural changes, she argues, are not purely functional but are deeply embedded in the partisan competition for institutional control. Additionally, Reynolds connects majoritarian exceptions to broader theories of institutional change, showing that they are endogenous responses to short-term political needs rather than principled reforms.

**8. Methods:** Reynolds employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative historical case studies with large-N quantitative analysis. She systematically identifies 161 majoritarian exceptions adopted between the 91st and 113th Congresses (1969–2014), using archival records, legislative histories, and congressional votes. She then employs statistical models to test hypotheses about when and why majoritarian exceptions are created, focusing on key variables such as the ideological composition of the Senate, unified versus divided government, and the policy domain of the exception. In addition, she applies spatial modeling techniques to examine the role of pivotal senators in shaping the adoption and use of these procedures. Case studies of reconciliation, fast-track trade authority, and executive oversight exceptions illustrate the broader patterns identified in the quantitative analysis.

**9. Hypotheses:** Reynolds hypothesizes that:

- Majoritarian exceptions are more likely to be created when the majority party anticipates electoral vulnerability and seeks legislative accomplishments.
- The use of majoritarian exceptions will be higher in periods of intense partisan polarization, as they allow for policymaking without bipartisan consensus.
- Reconciliation bills and other procedural exceptions will be strategically designed to minimize policy risks to the majority party while maximizing credit-claiming opportunities.

The empirical analysis largely supports these hypotheses, showing a strong correlation between electoral incentives and the adoption of majoritarian exceptions.

**10. Main findings:** Reynolds finds that the Senate, often viewed as an institution constrained by the filibuster, has repeatedly modified its rules to allow for majoritarian decision-making in specific cases. Majoritarian exceptions serve as a strategic tool for the majority party, helping it circumvent obstruction and achieve policy goals. The reconciliation process, for example, has been used extensively since the 1980s to pass budgetary and fiscal legislation without needing 60 votes. Similarly, fast-track trade authority and oversight provisions on executive actions demonstrate how statutory exceptions can empower simple majorities. However, these procedures are not uniformly available—they are selectively applied to areas where the majority party perceives a strong electoral benefit. Reynolds' findings challenge the conventional wisdom that the Senate is uniformly super-majoritarian and highlight the dynamic interplay between procedural innovation and partisan strategy.

#### 11. Key Definitions:

- *Majoritarian exception:* A statutory provision that exempts certain legislation from the Senate's standard filibuster rules, allowing it to pass with a simple majority.
- *Reconciliation:* A legislative process that permits expedited consideration of budget-related bills, restricting debate time and preventing filibusters.
- *Fast-track authority:* A procedural mechanism granting the president the ability to negotiate trade agreements subject to an up-or-down congressional vote without amendments or filibusters.
- *Executive oversight exception:* A rule that ensures congressional review of specific executive actions, often requiring a simple majority for approval or rejection.
- *Legislative cartel:* A theoretical model in which party leaders control procedural mechanisms to advance collective partisan goals while limiting individual senators' ability to obstruct.

#### 5.6.4 Rule Breaking and Political Imagination

Shepsle, K. A. (2017, September). *Rule Breaking and Political Imagination* [Google-Books-ID: rLQvDwAAQBAJ]. University of Chicago Press

1. **Citation key:** shepsle\_rule\_2017

2. **Author(s):** Kenneth A. Shepsle

3. **Year:** 2017

4. **Publication:** University of Chicago Press

5. **Keywords:** institutional change, rule breaking, political strategy, procedural politics, political imagination

6. **Summary:** Shepsle examines how political actors navigate institutional constraints through rule breaking, reinterpretation, and imaginative tactics. While political institutions are typically regarded as structures that channel and constrain behavior, Shepsle argues that actors often find ways to circumvent or outright defy institutional rules in pursuit of their objectives. By analyzing historical and contemporary cases—from the Roman Republic to the modern

U.S. Senate—he explores how leaders use procedural manipulation, institutional transgression, and creative problem-solving to challenge existing constraints.

**7. Theory:** Shepsle develops a theoretical framework distinguishing between two primary modes of institutional circumvention: (1) *imagination*, which entails creatively working around institutional constraints without openly defying them, and (2) *transgression*, which involves direct defiance and overt rule breaking. He argues that while formal rules define the boundaries of political action, their application is often fluid, allowing savvy political actors to exploit ambiguities, reinterpret procedural norms, and find innovative pathways to power. This framework builds on rational choice institutionalism, demonstrating that rules are not static but are subject to strategic manipulation. Furthermore, Shepsle highlights how political entrepreneurs play a key role in pushing institutional boundaries, often paving the way for long-term institutional evolution.

**8. Methods:** The book employs a comparative historical approach, drawing on diverse case studies to illustrate how rule breaking has shaped institutional development across different political systems. Shepsle examines episodes of procedural innovation and institutional defiance in the U.S. Congress, the British Parliament, and authoritarian regimes, as well as unconventional forms of rule breaking such as vigilante justice in the American West and covert intelligence operations post-9/11. His analysis is informed by both qualitative narrative accounts and formal modeling techniques from political economy and game theory.

**9. Hypotheses:** Shepsle hypothesizes that:

- Political actors are more likely to engage in imaginative rule circumvention when institutional penalties for outright transgression are high.
- Rule breaking is most successful when it aligns with broader institutional trends, making formal rule change more likely.
- Political entrepreneurs who engage in strategic rule breaking can catalyze long-term institutional transformations.

His case studies provide evidence that institutional evolution often originates from individual actors who creatively challenge procedural constraints.

**10. Main findings:** Shepsle finds that institutions are far more malleable than they appear, as political actors frequently reinterpret, circumvent, or defy rules to achieve their objectives. He demonstrates that rule breaking has played a pivotal role in shaping legislative procedures, executive power, and judicial oversight throughout history. His analysis of the U.S. Senate highlights how leaders like Lyndon B. Johnson manipulated chamber rules to consolidate power, while his discussion of ancient Rome shows how figures like Sulla and Caesar exploited procedural loopholes to amass authority. The book challenges conventional views of institutions as fixed constraints, instead portraying them as dynamic arenas where strategic actors continually redefine the rules of the game.

**11. Key Definitions:**

- *Imagination:* The creative circumvention of institutional rules without outright defiance, often by exploiting ambiguities or procedural loopholes.
- *Transgression:* The direct violation or defiance of institutional rules, challenging existing norms and constraints.
- *Political entrepreneur:* A strategic actor who identifies opportunities for institutional change and leverages rule breaking to advance their goals.
- *Procedural manipulation:* The strategic use of institutional rules to create advantages or circumvent constraints without formally violating them.
- *Institutional evolution:* The gradual transformation of political institutions through repeated acts of rule breaking and procedural adaptation.

#### 5.6.5 Reid's Rules: Filibusters, the Nuclear Option, and Path Dependence in the US Senate

Wawro, G. J., & Schickler, E. (2018). Reid's Rules: Filibusters, the Nuclear Option, and Path Dependence in the US Senate [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/lsq.12207>]. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 43(4), 619–647. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lsq.12207>

**1. Citation key:** wawro\_reids\_2018

**2. Author(s):** Gregory J. Wawro and Eric Schickler

**3. Year:** 2018

**4. Publication:** Legislative Studies Quarterly

**5. Keywords:** Senate, filibuster, nuclear option, cloture, path dependence

**6. Summary:** Wawro and Schickler analyze the Senate's transition from a supermajoritarian to a more majoritarian institution, focusing on the 2013 and 2017 changes to filibuster rules. They compare competing theories of institutional development, particularly path dependence, and examine whether supermajority procedures persisted due to being "locked in" or because Senate majorities actively preferred them. Their findings suggest that institutional preferences and strategic considerations, rather than simple procedural inheritance, explain why supermajority rules persisted until the nuclear option was invoked.

**7. Theory:** The authors evaluate the evolution of the Senate's filibuster rules through the lens of path dependence. They outline two competing perspectives: (1) the *lock-in hypothesis*, which argues that historical institutional choices (e.g., the 1806 elimination of the Previous Question motion) created a procedural structure that majorities could not easily overturn, and (2) the *remote majoritarian hypothesis*, which suggests that Senate majorities could always have imposed

majority rule but preferred supermajoritarianism due to the long-term strategic benefits it offered. Drawing on theories of institutional stability and change from scholars like Pierson, Thelen, and Mahoney, the authors argue that early procedural decisions shaped senators' preferences over time, rather than simply constraining them. Institutional adaptations such as the development of cloture and tracking systems allowed the Senate to function despite increased obstruction, but partisan polarization eventually pushed the chamber toward reform.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a historical institutionalist approach, analyzing the procedural evolution of the Senate with a focus on key moments of reform. The authors examine archival records, legislative proceedings, and secondary literature to trace the development of the filibuster and cloture rules. They also compare theoretical perspectives on institutional change, incorporating insights from political science and legislative studies. Key case studies include the 1806 elimination of the Previous Question motion, the adoption of cloture in 1917, the 1975 reduction of the cloture threshold, and the 2013 and 2017 nuclear options.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Senate majorities historically maintained supermajoritarian procedures because they preferred them, not because they were institutionally locked in.
- The decision to deploy the nuclear option in 2013 and 2017 was driven by rising partisan polarization and a breakdown in the strategic benefits of supermajoritarianism.
- Procedural changes such as tracking, reconciliation, and unanimous consent agreements reinforced the path-dependent nature of Senate procedures by making supermajoritarianism more tolerable for majorities.

The authors find that these hypotheses are largely supported by historical evidence.

**10. Main findings:** Wawro and Schickler demonstrate that the Senate's procedural trajectory was shaped by senators' evolving preferences rather than rigid institutional constraints. While early procedural changes set the chamber on a supermajoritarian path, majorities consistently chose to retain these rules because they benefited from them. Over time, however, increased obstruction and polarization made supermajoritarian procedures less viable. The 2013 and 2017 nuclear options marked a turning point, as majorities prioritized short-term policy gains over the long-term advantages of procedural stability. These findings challenge the view that the Senate's rules were simply inherited and immutable, instead emphasizing strategic adaptation and the role of partisan conflict in procedural change.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The imposition of majority rule constitutes a landmark change for an institution where rule by supermajorities had become the norm" (p. 619).
- "Rather than simply rehash existing debates, we ground our analysis of the recent landmark procedural changes in a discussion of the four predominant theoretical frameworks for path dependence, drawing on the work of Mahoney (2000), Pierson (2004), Page (2006), and Thelen (1999, 2004) to highlight important mechanisms that have been underspecified in the debate on Senate development" (p. 620).
- "Early institutional moves were important for Senate development, but not because they locked the Senate more or less exogenously into a particular set of procedural constraints. Instead, these early moves put the Senate on a path that shaped preferences and beliefs about the role of minority obstruction in the Senate" (p. 622).

### 5.6.6 What Is Regular Order Worth? Partisan Lawmaking and Congressional Processes

Curry, J. M., & Lee, F. E. (2020). What Is Regular Order Worth? Partisan Lawmaking and Congressional Processes [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 82(2), 627–641. <https://doi.org/10.1086/706893>

**1. Citation key:** curry\_what\_2020

**2. Author(s):** James M. Curry and Frances E. Lee

**3. Year:** 2020

**4. Publication:** The Journal of Politics

**5. Keywords:** regular order, legislative processes, partisanship, congressional leadership, lawmaking

**6. Summary:** Curry and Lee examine whether deviations from regular order in congressional lawmaking contribute to heightened partisanship. The authors analyze a dataset of 621 important laws passed from 1987 to 2016 and conduct in-depth interviews with members of Congress and senior staff. Their findings challenge conventional wisdom by showing that the use of unorthodox legislative processes does not systematically lead to greater partisan conflict. Instead, centralized and leadership-driven processes are often employed to navigate legislative gridlock and facilitate bipartisan compromise.

**7. Theory:** The authors investigate the widely held belief that the erosion of regular order—defined by committee-driven lawmaking, open amendment processes, and predictable procedural steps—has contributed to congressional partisanship. Many scholars and legislators argue that traditional processes promote bipartisanship, while centralized, leadership-driven lawmaking is used to impose partisan agendas. However, Curry and Lee suggest an alternative explanation: unorthodox processes are strategic adaptations to legislative challenges rather than inherent drivers of partisanship. They propose that party leaders use centralized processes not only to push partisan bills but also to craft bipartisan agreements that might otherwise be impossible under regular order. Drawing on theoretical perspectives from institutionalism and legislative studies, they contend that process choice reflects strategic considerations rather than an ideological agenda.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of legislative processes with qualitative insights from elite interviews. The authors construct an original dataset of 621 significant laws passed

between 1987 and 2016, coding the extent to which each bill adhered to or deviated from regular order. They develop indices of “unorthodox development” (violations of committee processes) and “unorthodox management” (floor procedures such as closed rules and cloture votes). To assess partisanship, they analyze final passage votes and party-line splits. Additionally, they conduct 24 in-depth interviews with long-serving members of Congress and high-level staff to explore the motivations behind the use of unorthodox legislative processes.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Unorthodox legislative processes, particularly centralized and leadership-driven procedures, are associated with increased partisanship in congressional voting.
- Bills developed outside of committee processes (unorthodox development) will be more partisan in nature than those developed through regular order.
- Floor procedures such as closed rules and cloture votes (unorthodox management) contribute to heightened partisanship in final passage votes.
- Congressional leaders employ unorthodox procedures primarily to advance their partisan agenda, rather than to resolve legislative gridlock or promote bipartisan agreements.

The authors find little empirical support for these hypotheses, instead demonstrating that process choice is often dictated by pragmatic considerations rather than partisanship.

**10. Main findings:** Curry and Lee’s empirical analysis reveals that deviations from regular order do not systematically lead to more partisan legislative outcomes. While unorthodox management processes (e.g., closed rules, cloture) show some correlation with partisan voting, bill development processes—whether traditional or centralized—bear little relationship to partisanship. Many bipartisan bills are passed using highly unorthodox processes, while some partisan bills emerge from regular order. Interviews with congressional insiders reinforce this conclusion, highlighting that centralized lawmaking often results from the need for efficiency, secrecy, and flexibility rather than purely partisan motives. The authors argue that scholars and reformers should reconsider the assumption that restoring regular order will automatically enhance bipartisanship.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “The relationship between processes and the partisan nature of legislative outcomes has not received close study. In this article, we ask: Are unorthodox and leadership-led legislative processes used to pass laws that are more partisan than those passed under regular order?” (p. 628).
- “We find almost no relationship between bill development processes and levels of partisanship and only a modest relationship between bill management processes and levels of partisanship. Congress employs both unorthodox and regular order processes on both bipartisan and partisan legislation. Nothing about regular order processes necessitates bipartisan cooperation.” (p. 629).
- “Our interview subjects emphasize that unorthodox processes are often used for the simple reason that they work to achieve a legislative outcome. Although Congress can and does use unorthodox processes in efforts to pass partisan legislation, it also frequently opts to violate regular order simply because doing so can be helpful in resolving legislative deadlocks.” (p. 636).

### 5.7 Representation in Congress

#### 5.7.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of representation in Congress centers on the extent to which legislators reflect and respond to the interests of their constituents, balancing descriptive and substantive dimensions of representation. Scholarship in this area explores how electoral structures, institutional constraints, legislative behavior, and constituent demographics shape congressional responsiveness. Early works emphasized the importance of electoral incentives in motivating legislators to act in accordance with constituent preferences, while contemporary research has expanded to examine biases in responsiveness, the role of identity, and the influence of institutional intermediaries such as legislative staff and interest groups. Key debates in this field address the disparities in representation across racial, economic, and partisan lines, as well as the mechanisms through which political institutions either facilitate or hinder equal representation.
- **Descriptive and Substantive Representation:** Scholars distinguish between descriptive representation—the degree to which legislators mirror the demographic composition of their constituents—and substantive representation, which concerns whether elected officials advocate for the interests of the groups they represent. Research has demonstrated that legislators who share racial, gender, or veteran status with constituents are more likely to advance policies benefiting those groups. Lowande, Ritchie, and Lauterbach (2019) analyze congressional inquiries to federal agencies and find that minority and female legislators are significantly more likely to intervene on behalf of marginalized groups, highlighting the role of identity in shaping legislative behavior. Their findings suggest that descriptive representation enhances substantive outcomes, particularly in areas of bureaucratic oversight where partisan constraints are less pronounced.
- **Race, Electoral Institutions, and Representation:** The impact of electoral institutions on racial representation has been a central concern in studies of congressional responsiveness. Schuit and Rogowski (2017) assess the effects of the Voting Rights Act’s preclearance requirement on legislative behavior, demonstrating that legislators from covered jurisdictions were significantly more supportive of civil rights policies than those from non-covered areas. Their findings suggest that legal protections can enhance substantive representation by structuring electoral incentives and increasing accountability to historically marginalized communities. However, the Supreme Court’s decision in *Shelby County*

v. Holder (2013), which invalidated key provisions of the VRA, has renewed concerns about legislative responsiveness to minority constituencies.

- **Legislative Staff as Mediators of Representation:** Representation in Congress is not solely determined by the behavior of elected officials but is also shaped by legislative staff, who play a crucial role in filtering information before it reaches legislators. Hertel-Fernandez, Mildenberger, and Stokes (2019) investigate staff perceptions of constituent preferences and find that senior congressional aides systematically overestimate the conservatism of their districts, leading to distortions in responsiveness. Their research identifies two primary sources of bias: egocentric misperceptions, where staffers project their own ideological leanings onto constituents, and asymmetric exposure to business and conservative interest groups, which reinforces skewed perceptions of public opinion. These findings highlight the indirect but significant influence of non-elected actors in shaping congressional representation.
- **Economic Disparities in Representation:** Another key dimension of congressional representation concerns economic inequalities in responsiveness. Lax, Phillips, and Zelizer (2019) examine the relative influence of affluent and low-income constituents in the U.S. Senate and find that senators are more responsive to their partisan base than to wealthy donors. While prior research has emphasized the disproportionate influence of economic elites on policymaking, their study suggests that partisanship structures responsiveness in ways that can mitigate or reinforce economic disparities. This finding challenges dominant elite-centered theories of representation, instead highlighting the role of party loyalty in shaping legislative behavior.
- **The Role of Donors in Candidate Ideology:** The influence of campaign finance on representation remains a critical area of study. Kujala (2020) investigates how partisan donors shape the ideological positions of congressional candidates, finding that nominees are more responsive to their donor base than to their primary or general electorates. This effect is particularly pronounced among Republican candidates, who maintain strong ideological alignment with donors regardless of electoral competitiveness. By contrast, Democratic donors exhibit greater willingness to support moderate candidates in competitive districts. These findings underscore the role of financial incentives in structuring candidate positioning and contribute to broader debates about the sources of polarization in Congress.
- **Economic Backgrounds and Policy Preferences:** Research also highlights the ways in which legislators' personal backgrounds influence their policy decisions. Carnes and Lupu (2023) review the overrepresentation of economic elites in Congress and find that politicians from wealthier backgrounds tend to support policies favoring affluent constituencies. Their analysis suggests that economic disparities in political representation contribute to systemic biases in policy outcomes, reinforcing broader patterns of inequality. Structural barriers, including campaign finance systems and candidate recruitment processes, further limit the political ascendance of working-class individuals, perpetuating elite dominance in legislative decision-making.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** The study of representation in Congress continues to evolve, with ongoing debates surrounding the impact of institutional design, electoral accountability, and identity-based representation. Scholars increasingly focus on the intersection of descriptive and substantive representation, examining how demographic shifts and changes in party composition influence legislative behavior. Future research is likely to explore the role of digital mobilization in expanding constituent influence, the effects of legislative polarization on policy responsiveness, and the impact of emerging political movements on congressional representation. As institutional and demographic transformations reshape the political landscape, understanding the mechanisms of congressional responsiveness remains a crucial area of inquiry.

### 5.7.2 Race, Representation, and the Voting Rights Act

Schuit, S., & Rogowski, J. C. (2017). Race, Representation, and the Voting Rights Act [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12284>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(3), 513–526. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12284>

1. **Citation key:** schuit\_race\_2017
2. **Author(s):** Sophie Schuit and Jon C. Rogowski
3. **Year:** 2017
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** Voting Rights Act, racial representation, electoral accountability, preclearance, civil rights policy
6. **Summary:** Schuit and Rogowski investigate the effects of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA), which required certain jurisdictions to obtain federal approval before changing election laws, on the representation of Black interests in Congress. Using roll-call votes on civil rights legislation from the 86th to the 105th Congresses, they find that legislators from covered jurisdictions were significantly more supportive of civil rights policies. Their findings suggest that the preclearance requirement increased accountability to Black constituents, especially in districts with higher Black populations and more competitive elections.
7. **Theory:** The authors build upon theories of electoral accountability, arguing that by preventing jurisdictions with histories of racial discrimination from enacting restrictive election laws, the preclearance provision of the VRA ensured greater access to the ballot for Black voters. This, in turn, enhanced their ability to hold elected officials accountable. As Black enfranchisement increased, legislators representing covered jurisdictions had stronger incentives to support civil rights policies, given the potential electoral consequences of failing to do so. The authors emphasize that the preclearance provision worked through different mechanisms than other VRA provisions that increased Black representation by redistricting. Rather than simply electing more Black officials, preclearance shaped the incentives of all legislators to be more responsive to Black interests. They further argue that the effects of preclearance should be

most pronounced in districts where Black voters comprised a larger share of the electorate and in competitive districts, where politicians had stronger electoral incentives to appeal to Black voters.

**8. Methods:** The authors analyze roll-call votes on civil rights-related legislation using data from the Policy Agendas Project, identifying 244 votes between the 86th and 105th Congresses. They construct a civil rights support score for each legislator, measuring the percentage of votes in favor of expanding civil rights. Their key independent variable is whether a legislator's district was subject to the VRA's preclearance requirement. They estimate a series of linear regression models, controlling for factors such as district partisanship, Black population percentage, electoral competitiveness, legislator race, and fixed effects for Congress and state. To strengthen causal inference, they employ within-district analyses using redistricting changes and conduct robustness checks using genetic matching to improve balance between treated and untreated districts.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Legislators representing districts covered by the preclearance provision will exhibit higher civil rights support scores than those from non-covered districts. This hypothesis is confirmed, as covered-district legislators were approximately 12-13 percentage points more supportive of civil rights.
- The effect of preclearance will be stronger in districts with higher Black populations. This hypothesis is confirmed, with results showing that as the Black population increases, the impact of preclearance on civil rights support also increases.
- The effect of preclearance will be stronger in competitive districts. This hypothesis is confirmed, with legislators in competitive covered districts displaying greater responsiveness to civil rights concerns.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that legislators from districts subject to preclearance under the VRA had significantly higher levels of support for civil rights legislation compared to those from non-covered districts. This effect persisted across multiple model specifications and robustness checks. The influence of preclearance was especially pronounced in districts with larger Black populations and in competitive elections, suggesting that electoral incentives played a critical role in shaping legislative behavior. Additionally, preclearance-covered districts were associated with higher levels of electoral competition, which may have further reinforced legislative responsiveness to Black interests. These findings challenge the Supreme Court's reasoning in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which struck down the preclearance formula by arguing that it was no longer necessary.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Focusing on the provisions contained in Section 5, which required jurisdictions that met certain criteria to obtain federal approval before changing their election law, we find that legislators from districts subject to federal preclearance compiled substantially more pro-civil rights voting records compared to members from otherwise similar districts" (p. 515).
- "Our findings have important implications for voting rights jurisprudence, the effects of election law on political representation, and the advancement of civil rights policies" (p. 516).
- "By guaranteeing the voting rights of Black constituents, Section 5 created the incentives for elected officials to better represent Black interests. Moreover, these effects persisted long after the VRA was passed, casting doubt on the majority's opinion in *Shelby County v. Holder* that 'things have changed' and that the issues addressed by the VRA are 'decades-old problems'" (p. 524).

#### 5.7.3 Descriptive and Substantive Representation in Congress

Lowande, K., Ritchie, M., & Lauterbach, E. (2019). Descriptive and Substantive Representation in Congress: Evidence from 80,000 Congressional Inquiries [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12443>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(3), 644–659. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12443>

**1. Citation key:** lowande\_descriptive\_2019

**2. Author(s):** Kenneth Lowande, Melinda Ritchie, and Erinn Lauterbach

**3. Year:** 2019

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** descriptive representation, substantive representation, legislative oversight, congressional inquiries, bureaucratic responsiveness

**6. Summary:** Lowande, Ritchie, and Lauterbach examine whether descriptive representation translates into substantive representation in Congress by analyzing over 88,000 congressional inquiries to federal agencies. Using Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to collect these records, the authors assess whether legislators from underrepresented backgrounds—women, racial and ethnic minorities, and military veterans—are more likely to intervene on behalf of constituents who share their identity. Their findings suggest that shared identity leads to greater legislative advocacy for marginalized groups, even in areas where political consensus is strong.

**7. Theory:** The authors argue that legislators' identities shape their behavior beyond public voting records, influencing their engagement with the bureaucracy on behalf of their constituents. They build on theories of descriptive representation, which posit that representatives who share demographic characteristics with certain groups are more likely to advocate for their interests. Unlike roll-call votes, which are constrained by party discipline and institutional structures, direct interactions with federal agencies allow for more independent and discretionary expressions of representation. The authors further contend that shared experiences—not just demographic alignment—drive legislators to monitor policy implementation more closely and ensure that underrepresented communities are not neglected. The

inclusion of veterans as a category of descriptive representatives offers a unique theoretical contribution, as support for veterans' benefits tends to be bipartisan, reducing the likelihood that observed patterns are solely a product of political polarization.

**8. Methods:** The study analyzes congressional correspondence logs from 15 federal agencies, obtained via FOIA requests. These logs document formal interventions by members of Congress on behalf of constituents between the 108th and 113th Congresses. The authors classify these interventions based on whether they advocate for protected groups (racial and ethnic minorities, women, or veterans). Their primary independent variable is whether a legislator belongs to one of these groups. They use a combination of difference-of-means tests, regression analyses, and coarsened exact matching to compare intervention rates between descriptively representative legislators and their counterparts. By controlling for factors such as district partisanship, ideological preferences, and electoral competitiveness, they aim to isolate the effect of shared identity on legislative advocacy.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- Legislators who are racial or ethnic minorities, women, or veterans will be more likely to intervene with federal agencies on behalf of constituents who share their identity.
- The effect of descriptive representation will be strongest in agency oversight, a venue where legislators face fewer partisan constraints compared to public votes.
- Shared experience, rather than just shared identity, will be a key mechanism driving legislators' interventions.

The results confirm all three hypotheses. Women legislators are about 8 percentage points more likely to contact agencies on behalf of women, racial and ethnic minority legislators are approximately 9 percentage points more likely to intervene for their communities, and military veterans in Congress are more active in representing veteran interests, particularly among those with active-duty experience.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds strong empirical support for the link between descriptive and substantive representation in Congress. Legislators from underrepresented backgrounds are significantly more likely to advocate for constituents who share their identity, with these effects persisting across multiple model specifications and robustness checks. Women in Congress are 8 percentage points more likely to intervene with federal agencies on behalf of women, and racial and ethnic minority legislators are approximately 9 percentage points more likely to do so for their communities. Among veterans, those with active-duty experience—not just reserve service—show the highest levels of engagement with the bureaucracy on behalf of fellow veterans, reinforcing the idea that shared experiences enhance substantive representation. These findings challenge the assumption that substantive representation only emerges in partisan conflict, as military veterans exhibit similar patterns despite broad bipartisan support for veterans' issues.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We find significant differences in the intervention patterns of female, minority, and veteran legislators that suggest descriptive representation leads to substantive representation in Congress" (p. 645).
- "The differences are most striking for women and men in Congress, where being represented by a female legislator is associated with a 40% increase in the probability of relevant service" (p. 646).
- "By shedding light on these questions, records of legislative interventions in the bureaucracy offer a unique approach to the study of representation. Unlike voting records, bill sponsorship, speeches, and committee hearings—which are influenced by both internal and external institutional pressures—representatives are comparatively less constrained in their communications with the federal bureaucracy" (p. 645).

#### 5.7.4 Legislative Staff and Representation in Congress

Hertel-Fernandez, A., Mildenberger, M., & Stokes, L. C. (2019). Legislative Staff and Representation in Congress. *American Political Science Review*, 113(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055418000606>

1. **Citation key:** hertel-fernandez\_legislative\_2019
2. **Author(s):** Alexander Hertel-Fernandez, Matto Mildenberger, and Leah C. Stokes
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** legislative staff, representation, constituent opinion, interest groups, congressional responsiveness
6. **Summary:** Hertel-Fernandez, Mildenberger, and Stokes examine the role of senior legislative staffers in shaping congressional representation. They argue that congressional staffers, who serve as intermediaries between constituents and elected officials, significantly misperceive public opinion, often overestimating their constituents' conservatism. Using a survey of senior congressional aides, combined with public opinion data and experimental evidence, the authors investigate the sources of these misperceptions and identify egocentric biases and interest group interactions—especially with business and conservative organizations—as primary contributors to staffers' distorted perceptions of constituent preferences.
7. **Theory:** The authors contend that representative democracy assumes a linkage between public opinion and legislative decision-making, but this connection is often mediated by legislative staffers, who filter information before it reaches members of Congress. Staffers, however, are susceptible to systematic biases in estimating public opinion, leading to distortions in representation. The authors propose that these biases stem from two key sources: (1) egocentric bias, wherein staffers project their own ideological preferences onto the public, and (2) asymmetric exposure to interest groups, particularly business and conservative organizations, which dominate congressional lobbying and constituent engagement. While previous scholarship has documented the disproportionate influence of wealthy individuals and

special interest groups on policymaking, this study highlights how staffers' misperceptions of public preferences contribute to congressional unresponsiveness to ordinary citizens. Importantly, the authors emphasize that these biases persist even when staffers report valuing constituent opinion in policymaking.

**8. Methods:** The authors use a multi-method approach, combining a survey of 101 senior congressional staffers with district- and state-level public opinion data on five major policy issues: gun control, carbon pollution restrictions, repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), infrastructure spending, and raising the minimum wage. The survey asked staffers to estimate constituent support for these policies, allowing the authors to compare staffer perceptions with actual public opinion estimates derived from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) and other sources. Additionally, the authors conducted two survey experiments. The first—a list experiment—examined whether staffers altered their policy positions after interest groups provided campaign contributions. The second tested whether staffers interpreted communications from businesses as more representative of constituent opinion than messages from ordinary citizens. These methods allow the authors to isolate the factors driving misperceptions in staffer judgment.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Staffers systematically misestimate constituent preferences, often overestimating the conservatism of their districts.
- Staffer misperceptions are shaped by egocentric biases, with staffers projecting their own policy preferences onto their constituents.
- Greater contact with business and conservative interest groups leads to larger misperceptions of public opinion.
- Electoral competitiveness and staffer experience in Congress will not significantly reduce misperceptions.

The authors find strong empirical support for these hypotheses. Staffers consistently overestimate the conservatism of their districts, with Republican staffers more prone to misperceptions than Democratic staffers. Egocentric bias is a significant driver of these misperceptions, as staffers with conservative policy views tend to assume that their constituents share their opinions. Furthermore, staffers who interact more frequently with business and conservative interest groups exhibit greater misperceptions, while those with stronger connections to labor unions and mass-based organizations demonstrate more accurate perceptions. Electoral competitiveness and staffer experience do not appear to correct these biases.

**10. Main findings:** The study reveals that legislative staffers play a crucial role in distorting the representation of public preferences in Congress. Across five major policy issues, staffers systematically misestimate constituent opinions, often perceiving greater conservative support than exists in reality. Republican staffers are particularly prone to these misperceptions, especially on issues like the ACA and minimum wage. The authors identify two primary mechanisms driving these distortions: (1) egocentric bias, wherein staffers' personal beliefs influence their estimates of public opinion, and (2) disproportionate contact with business and conservative interest groups, which shape staffers' perceptions of what their constituents believe. The study's experimental evidence further confirms these mechanisms. The list experiment indicates that approximately 45% of staffers report changing their policy positions after their member of Congress received campaign contributions from an interest group. Additionally, staffers are more likely to interpret business correspondence as representative of constituent opinion compared to messages from ordinary citizens. The authors conclude that these biases in staffer perceptions contribute to the broader patterns of political inequality in congressional representation, with organized interests disproportionately shaping legislative decision-making.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Despite their best efforts to estimate the preferences of their Members' constituents, senior legislative staff have very skewed perceptions of public attitudes" (p. 1).
- "Staffers whose personal opinions deviated from their constituents' opinions were less accurate in their estimates of district and state preferences. In addition, staffers who reported greater contact with corporate and ideologically conservative interest groups over liberal and mass-based citizen groups—whether measured through staffers' own reports or campaign contributions to that staffer's Member—were less likely to get their constituents' preferences right" (p. 3).
- "Using a list experiment, we find that about 45% of senior legislative staffers report having changed their opinion about legislation after a group gave their Member a campaign contribution. In a second experiment, we show that staffers are more likely to interpret correspondence from businesses as being more representative of their constituents' preferences than correspondence from ordinary constituents" (p. 4).

#### 5.7.5 The Party or the Purse? Unequal Representation in the US Senate

Lax, J. R., Phillips, J. H., & Zelizer, A. (2019). The Party or the Purse? Unequal Representation in the US Senate. *American Political Science Review*, 113(4), 917–940. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055419000315>

1. Citation key: `lax_party_2019`

2. Author(s): Jeffrey R. Lax, Justin H. Phillips, and Adam Zelizer

3. Year: 2019

4. Publication: American Political Science Review

5. Keywords: representation, political inequality, economic elites, partisanship, U.S. Senate

6. Summary: Lax, Phillips, and Zelizer examine two major distortions in political representation—affluent influence and partisan bias—by analyzing 49 U.S. Senate roll-call votes from 2001 to 2015. The authors argue that affluent influence

is contingent on partisanship and that party loyalty supersedes responsiveness to wealthy constituents. Their analysis finds that Republican senators are more likely to be responsive to affluent constituents than to the poor, but only when Republican voters align with the rich. Conversely, Democratic senators are more responsive to lower-income constituents. Ultimately, they conclude that partisanship dominates affluent influence, with senators overwhelmingly siding with their party's voters over the wealthy.

7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the prevailing narrative that the wealthy exert disproportionate influence on policy outcomes, instead arguing that partisan dynamics play a stronger role in shaping legislative behavior. They suggest that partisan representation is a greater source of distortion than economic class, as senators prioritize their copartisan constituents over wealthy donors. This finding contradicts traditional economic elite domination models, which posit that wealthier Americans disproportionately shape policy outcomes. The authors propose that partisan pressures, including electoral incentives and ideological alignment, structure elite responsiveness in a way that constrains or facilitates affluent influence. Furthermore, they argue that both Democrats and Republicans prioritize party over class, though the nature of this responsiveness differs: Republicans are more likely to favor the wealthy but only when Republican voters do as well, while Democrats are more likely to favor the poor over the rich. The study thus integrates partisan and economic influences into a unified framework, showing that partisanship is the primary lens through which senators filter constituent preferences.
8. **Methods:** The authors employ a dyadic analysis of representation in the U.S. Senate using 49 roll-call votes from eight congressional sessions between 2001 and 2015. They use multilevel regression and poststratification (MRP) to estimate constituent opinion by state, income group, and party affiliation. Public opinion data are drawn from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), the National Annenberg Election Survey, and various other polling sources. The authors estimate support for key policies at the state level and among partisan and economic subgroups, allowing them to test whether senators' voting behavior aligns with the preferences of different constituent groups. Their analysis includes both responsiveness regressions (assessing the relationship between senator votes and constituent preferences) and congruence tests (measuring whether senators vote in line with their constituents' majorities). Additionally, they conduct "taking sides" analyses to examine how senators respond when partisan and economic groups have conflicting preferences.

#### 9. Hypotheses:

- Senators are more responsive to affluent constituents than to the poor, consistent with prior research on economic elite influence.
- Partisan biases structure representation, with senators prioritizing their copartisan constituents over median voters or the wealthy.
- Republican senators are more likely to support policies favored by the rich, but only when Republican voters also favor them.
- Democratic senators will be more responsive to the preferences of the poor than the rich, especially when there is intra-party class conflict.
- Partisan pressures, such as party loyalty and primary election concerns, will override responsiveness to economic elites when the two come into conflict.

The authors find strong support for their argument that partisanship constrains affluent influence. Republican senators are generally more responsive to the rich, but this effect is conditional on whether Republican voters also favor the policy. When Republican elites and the Republican base disagree, senators prioritize their copartisan constituents. Democratic senators, meanwhile, are significantly more responsive to lower-income constituents than the wealthy. Across all models, party loyalty emerges as the dominant force shaping legislative voting behavior, undermining the traditional claim that economic elites universally dominate policymaking.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds that senators are far more responsive to partisan constituents than to affluent ones, suggesting that economic elite influence is largely contingent on partisanship. While affluent individuals do see higher rates of policy congruence, this effect disappears when party and wealth are at odds. Republican senators are more likely to vote in line with affluent preferences, but only when Republican voters also support the policy. When faced with conflicting preferences between wealthy and middle-class Republican voters, senators overwhelmingly side with their base rather than the economic elite. Democratic senators, in contrast, exhibit greater responsiveness to lower-income constituents and are generally more aligned with public opinion than their Republican counterparts. The authors conclude that partisan identity, rather than economic status, is the primary determinant of legislative representation, meaning that affluent influence is significantly mediated by party politics. Additionally, the study highlights asymmetric partisan responsiveness: Democratic senators demonstrate stronger responsiveness to public opinion overall, while Republican senators exhibit lower levels of constituent alignment. The findings challenge conventional wisdom on economic elite domination, showing that partisan biases—not direct elite influence—shape congressional responsiveness.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "We find that affluent influence is overstated and itself contingent on partisanship—party trumps the purse when senators have to take sides" (p. 917).
- "Republican senators are, on average, more responsive to the rich than the poor, but Democratic senators are largely more responsive to the poor than the rich, particularly when there is class conflict" (p. 918).
- "Senators of both parties are far more responsive to copartisan opinion than rich opinion. When the two conflict, senators of both parties tend to side overwhelmingly with their copartisans over the rich" (p. 919).

### 5.7.6 Donors, Primary Elections, and Polarization in the United States

Kujala, J. (2020). Donors, Primary Elections, and Polarization in the United States [Leprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12477>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 64(3), 587–602. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12477>

1. **Citation key:** kujala\_donors\_2020
2. **Author(s):** Jordan Kujala
3. **Year:** 2020
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** campaign finance, ideological polarization, primary elections, partisan donors, U.S. House of Representatives
6. **Summary:** Kujala examines how partisan donors influence the ideological polarization of congressional candidates in the United States. By analyzing U.S. House elections from 2002 to 2010, the study assesses whether candidates are more responsive to donor constituencies than to their primary or general electorates. The author finds that donor influence is a major driver of polarization, leading to nominees who are more ideologically extreme than their primary electorate. The study also investigates how general election competition moderates donor effects, showing that Democratic donors may support more moderate candidates in competitive districts, whereas Republican donor influence remains consistently strong across all districts.
7. **Theory:** Kujala builds on theories of electoral competition and campaign finance to argue that donors play an outsized role in shaping candidate ideology. Traditional models of candidate positioning suggest that primary electorates drive ideological extremity, but Kujala contends that donors, rather than voters, are the primary force behind candidate polarization. This argument is grounded in the resource dependence of campaigns: candidates require substantial financial backing to mount viable primary challenges, which gives donors leverage over policy commitments. The study suggests that donors exert a constraining influence by demanding ideological proximity from candidates in exchange for financial resources, leading to nominees who are more extreme than their primary electorates. While this effect is present for both parties, it is particularly pronounced among Republican candidates, who remain highly responsive to donors even in competitive districts. In contrast, Democratic donors appear willing to moderate their demands when electoral viability is at stake, leading to some divergence in donor influence across party lines.
8. **Methods:** The study constructs a dataset containing ideological measures for major-party House nominees, their partisan donor constituencies, and their primary and general electorates. Candidate ideology is measured using Bonica's CFscores, which place both donors and candidates on the same ideological scale. The dataset spans U.S. House elections from 2002 to 2010, allowing for comparisons across multiple redistricting cycles. Kujala employs multilevel regression models to estimate the relationship between nominee ideology and donor extremity, controlling for district partisanship and primary electorate preferences. The study also examines how general election competitiveness moderates donor influence by incorporating a district favorability measure based on public opinion data. Finally, Kujala tests whether donors actively constrain candidate positions by analyzing the relationship between ideological distance from donors and campaign contributions.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Candidates who win House primaries will be more ideologically responsive to donor constituencies than to their primary or general electorates.
  - As donor constituencies become more extreme, House nominees will take more extreme positions, diverging from both their district and their party's primary electorate.
  - The influence of partisan donors will be stronger in safe districts than in competitive districts, as candidates in uncompetitive races have less incentive to moderate their positions.
  - Democratic donors will be more willing than Republican donors to support moderate candidates in competitive districts.
10. **Main findings:** Kujala finds that donor influence is a primary driver of ideological polarization in congressional primaries. Candidates are significantly more responsive to their partisan donor constituencies than to primary or general electorates, leading to the nomination of ideologically extreme candidates. The study reveals partisan asymmetries in donor influence: Republican donors exert strong ideological constraints regardless of district competitiveness, whereas Democratic donors appear more strategic, supporting moderate candidates in competitive districts. Statistical models demonstrate that donor extremity strongly predicts nominee extremity, confirming that financial backing from extreme donors pushes candidates away from the median voter. The analysis of campaign contributions further supports this conclusion, showing that candidates who are ideologically distant from donors receive fewer financial resources. These findings suggest that the donor class plays a critical role in sustaining and exacerbating congressional polarization by incentivizing candidates to adopt extreme positions in exchange for campaign funds.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "House nominees are more responsive to their donor constituencies than either their primary or general elec-

torates" (p. 587).

- "The polarizing effects of donor constituencies dominate any moderating effects, resulting in ideologically extreme nominees and, ultimately, members of Congress" (p. 588).
- "There is some evidence that Democratic donors are willing to support moderate primary candidates in competitive districts, although the polarizing effects of Republican donors are consistent across all congressional districts" (p. 588).

### 5.7.7 The Economic Backgrounds of Politicians

Carnes, N., & Lupu, N. (2023). The Economic Backgrounds of Politicians [Publisher: Annual Reviews]. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 26(Volume 26, 2023), 253–270. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051921-102946>

- 1. Citation key:** carnes\_economic\_2023
- 2. Author(s):** Nicholas Carnes and Noam Lupu
- 3. Year:** 2023
- 4. Publication:** Annual Review of Political Science
- 5. Keywords:** political elites, class, education, wealth, representation
- 6. Summary:** Carnes and Lupu review recent scholarship on the economic backgrounds of politicians, focusing on how economic status influences representation, policy decisions, and political behavior. They identify common themes in contemporary research, particularly the overrepresentation of economically advantaged individuals in government and the distinct political behaviors and policy priorities exhibited by politicians from different economic backgrounds. The article also discusses gaps in the literature, highlighting the need for more research on the causes of economic inequalities in political representation and the intersections of economic status with race, gender, and other social identities.
- 7. Theory:** The authors argue that economic background plays a crucial role in shaping political representation. They posit that political institutions are disproportionately occupied by individuals from wealthier backgrounds, which has significant consequences for governance and policy outcomes. The authors identify two central theoretical perspectives in this literature. First, the *descriptive representation* perspective emphasizes how economic elites dominate elected office, leading to a systematic underrepresentation of working-class and lower-income individuals. Second, the *substantive representation* perspective suggests that politicians from wealthier backgrounds tend to advocate policies that reflect their economic class interests. The authors also discuss structural barriers, such as candidate recruitment processes and campaign finance systems, that prevent individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds from attaining political office. They conclude that economic disparities in representation may reinforce broader patterns of political and economic inequality.
- 8. Methods:** The study synthesizes findings from multiple empirical studies examining the economic composition of political institutions worldwide. The authors review data on politicians' wealth, education, occupational history, and family economic status across different countries and time periods. They highlight methodological approaches used in prior research, including survey experiments, observational studies, and historical analyses. The article also discusses comparative studies that analyze variations in economic representation across electoral systems and institutional contexts. Additionally, Carnes and Lupu emphasize the importance of studying policy outcomes to understand how politicians' economic backgrounds influence legislative behavior and governance decisions.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - Politicians are significantly wealthier and more highly educated than the general population.
  - Economic elites are overrepresented in political institutions due to structural barriers that limit working-class individuals' access to candidacy and election.
  - Politicians from wealthier backgrounds are more likely to support policies favoring economic elites, such as tax cuts for the wealthy and reductions in social welfare spending.
  - Economic disparities in representation contribute to unequal responsiveness in policy-making, wherein politicians prioritize the preferences of affluent constituents over those of lower-income citizens.
- The article confirms that politicians are overwhelmingly drawn from economic elites and that this disparity has significant policy implications. The authors find strong support for the hypothesis that economic background influences policy preferences, with wealthier politicians consistently advocating for policies that benefit higher-income groups. However, they note that further research is needed to fully understand the causal mechanisms driving these disparities.
- 10. Main findings:** Carnes and Lupu demonstrate that economic elites dominate political office in virtually every democracy, leading to a systematic underrepresentation of working-class individuals. Their review of the literature finds that economic background shapes both legislators' policy preferences and their responsiveness to different segments of the electorate. Politicians from wealthier backgrounds tend to support policies that reduce taxation on high earners and limit social welfare programs, while those from less privileged backgrounds are more likely to advocate for redistributive policies. The authors also highlight structural factors—such as campaign finance rules, political party recruitment practices, and voter biases—that perpetuate economic inequalities in political representation. While prior research has documented these disparities, the authors argue that future studies should explore the intersection of economic background with other social categories, such as race and gender, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of representational inequality.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Politicians tend to be vastly better off than citizens on every economic measure and that politicians from different economic backgrounds tend to think and behave differently in office” (p. 253).
- “The typical labor force in the OECD includes 56–58% working-class jobs, but in the typical national legislature, only 3–5% of the legislators had working-class jobs when they first entered politics” (p. 257).
- “Most research on the economic backgrounds of politicians has been motivated by a shared normative concern about the fact that politicians tend to be vastly better off than ordinary citizens” (p. 255).

**5.8 Nominations and Confirmations****5.8.1 Subject Area Summary**

- **Overview:** The study of nominations and confirmations in American politics examines how institutional rules, strategic incentives, and partisan dynamics shape the selection and approval of judicial and executive branch appointees. Research in this area highlights the president’s power to nominate officials, the Senate’s role in confirmation, and the political and bureaucratic factors influencing delays, strategic withdrawals, and ideological shifts. Scholars have explored how judicial nominees alter their behavior to increase their likelihood of elevation, how senators use procedural tools to obstruct or expedite appointments, and how presidents manage the timing of nominations to maximize policy gains. Recent studies emphasize that nomination and confirmation processes are not merely formalistic but involve strategic calculations by multiple actors to shape institutional power and policy outcomes.
- **Presidential Nomination Strategies:** Presidents do not simply nominate candidates based on merit or ideological alignment; rather, they make strategic calculations to maximize policy influence while ensuring confirmability. Hollibaugh and Rothenberg (2017) demonstrate that presidents prioritize nominations based on agency ideology and Senate composition, delaying appointments when facing ideological opposition in the Senate. Their findings suggest that nominations to ideologically opposed agencies occur more quickly than those to aligned agencies, as presidents seek to shift policy direction as soon as possible. Similarly, Cottrell, Shipan, and Anderson (2019) argue that presidents can successfully shift the ideological median of the Supreme Court when replacing justices on the opposite ideological spectrum, particularly when the Senate shares the president’s ideological goals. These studies underscore that nomination timing and selection are critical tools of executive power, shaped by both internal policy considerations and external institutional constraints.
- **Senatorial Delay and Strategic Obstruction:** The Senate plays a critical role in the confirmation process, often using procedural mechanisms to obstruct or expedite nominations. Ostrander (2016) challenges the conventional wisdom that confirmation delays are purely partisan, arguing instead that senators use delays as a tool to maintain bureaucratic stability and prevent presidential politicization of agencies. Using a dataset of over 6,000 executive nominations, Ostrander finds that delays are more pronounced for nominees to agencies ideologically opposed to the president, for independent regulatory commissions, and during election years. Box-Steffensmeier et al. (2016) add to this perspective by analyzing the historical use of blue slips, showing that senators have used them both to block and to accelerate nominations, depending on political and institutional circumstances. These findings highlight that senatorial delay serves strategic ends beyond mere partisan obstruction, reinforcing the Senate’s ability to shape the executive branch and judiciary through procedural control.
- **Judicial Behavior and Career Incentives:** Judicial nominations introduce an additional strategic element, as lower court judges seeking elevation to the Supreme Court may modify their behavior to align with the preferences of the president and Senate. Black and Owens (2016) provide empirical evidence that circuit court judges alter their decisions to increase their chances of nomination during Supreme Court vacancy periods. Their findings show that contender judges are more likely to vote in line with the president’s ideology, rule in favor of the U.S. government, and write more dissenting opinions to signal their judicial philosophy. This strategic behavior reflects the broader institutional reality that judicial advancement is not solely determined by legal qualifications but also by the ability to appeal to key political actors.
- **Judicial Confirmation and Institutional Change:** The confirmation process for judicial nominees is shaped by Senate dynamics, judicial ideology, and institutional constraints. Cottrell, Shipan, and Anderson (2019) argue that Supreme Court confirmations offer a rare opportunity for presidents to reshape the ideological balance of the judiciary. Their formal modeling suggests that while Senate constraints matter, presidents exert greater influence than traditional spatial models predict. The findings reveal that nominee qualifications, judicial experience, and strategic positioning help presidents secure ideological movement on the Court, even when Senate opposition exists. These insights reinforce the view that judicial confirmations are not merely a reflection of partisan conflict but also of strategic maneuvering within institutional constraints.
- **Presidential Control Over the Bureaucracy:** Beyond nominations and confirmations, presidents seek to exert influence over independent agencies and bureaucratic leadership through legal and administrative mechanisms. Dodds (2022) examines how the Trump administration leveraged the unitary executive theory to expand presidential authority over independent agencies, particularly in cases such as *Lucia v. SEC* (2018) and *Seila Law v. CFPB* (2020). These decisions weakened statutory protections against presidential interference, reinforcing a broader trend toward executive dominance over federal agencies. The study highlights the ongoing interbranch struggle over bureaucratic control and the long-term consequences of judicial rulings on agency independence.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** The study of nominations and confirmations continues to evolve, with debates centering on the extent of Senate obstruction, the effectiveness of presidential strategies, and the long-term

consequences of judicial appointments. Future research is likely to focus on the impact of partisan polarization on confirmation dynamics, the role of informal Senate norms in shaping the process, and the implications of shifting judicial doctrines on executive power. Additionally, the increasing judicialization of the nomination process, with courts playing a larger role in interpreting appointment-related disputes, raises important questions about the balance of power between the branches. As new administrations navigate these institutional challenges, the strategic elements of nominations and confirmations will remain a central concern in American political research.

### 5.8.2 Courting the President: How Circuit Court Judges Alter Their Behavior for Promotion to the Supreme Court

Black, R. C., & Owens, R. J. (2016). Courting the President: How Circuit Court Judges Alter Their Behavior for Promotion to the Supreme Court [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12132>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(1), 30–43. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12132>

1. **Citation key:** black\_courting\_2016
2. **Author(s):** Ryan C. Black and Ryan J. Owens
3. **Year:** 2016
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** judicial behavior, Supreme Court nominations, career ambition, circuit courts, strategic decision-making
6. **Summary:** Black and Owens examine how career ambitions influence judicial behavior among circuit court judges who are potential nominees to the U.S. Supreme Court. They argue that judges seeking elevation modify their decisions to align with the sitting president's preferences during periods of Supreme Court vacancies. By comparing the behavior of contender and noncontender judges, they find that those with high promotion prospects are more likely to rule in favor of the president's ideological position, decide in favor of the U.S. government, and write more dissenting opinions when a vacancy exists.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that judicial behavior is shaped not only by policy goals but also by career incentives. While standard judicial decision-making models assume judges act primarily to advance their policy preferences, Black and Owens argue that judges also seek professional advancement. They suggest that judges aspiring to the Supreme Court strategically adjust their rulings to signal loyalty to the president, who holds nomination power. This aligns with Baum's (1997, 2006) argument that judicial behavior is influenced by external audiences, including political elites. The authors hypothesize that contender judges will prioritize career concerns over ideological purity, making decisions that enhance their nomination prospects. This strategic behavior is most pronounced during Supreme Court vacancy periods when presidential selection is imminent, incentivizing judges to align their decisions with presidential preferences.
8. **Methods:** Black and Owens employ a quasi-experimental matching design to compare judicial behavior in cases decided during Supreme Court vacancy periods versus non-vacancy periods. They define contender judges as those who appeared on the president's short list for Supreme Court nomination, based on Nemacheck (2007). The authors analyze over 4,900 judicial votes cast by contender judges and 6,800 votes from noncontenders, drawing data from the U.S. Courts of Appeals Database and LexisNexis. Their analysis matches cases based on judicial ideology (measured via Judicial Common Space scores), ideological alignment with the president, panel composition, and case characteristics. The dependent variables include whether a judge voted in line with the president's ideology, ruled in favor of the U.S. government, or wrote separate opinions (dissents or concurrences). They estimate a series of logistic regression models to assess behavioral changes under vacancy conditions.
9. **Hypotheses:** Black and Owens hypothesize that contender judges will alter their behavior strategically during vacancy periods. Specifically:
  - Judges with strong promotion prospects will be more likely to vote in line with the president's ideological preferences during Supreme Court vacancy periods.
  - Contender judges will increase their likelihood of ruling in favor of the United States when the government is a litigant.
  - During vacancy periods, contender judges will write more dissenting opinions to distinguish themselves, but not necessarily more concurring opinions.
  - Noncontender judges will not exhibit any significant behavioral changes in response to Supreme Court vacancies.
10. **Main findings:** The findings strongly support the hypothesis that career ambition influences judicial behavior. Contender judges are significantly more likely to vote in alignment with the president's ideology during vacancy periods, with the probability increasing from 42% to 51%—a 21% relative increase. Additionally, contender judges' likelihood of ruling in favor of the U.S. government doubles from 27% to 54% during vacancies. The authors also find a striking increase in dissenting opinions, with contender judges more than doubling their dissent rate from 8% to 18%, likely to signal their judicial philosophy to the president. However, they find no significant change in concurrence rates. Non-contender judges, by contrast, exhibit no measurable behavioral shifts during Supreme Court vacancies, reinforcing the argument that the observed changes stem from career motivations rather than broader judicial trends.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "We find that circuit judges who stand a good chance of elevation to the High Court behave differently when a vacancy arises on the Court than when there is no vacancy" (p. 30).
  - "The probability of a judge voting consistently with the president's general preferences increases from 0.42 when no vacancy exists to 0.51 when one does—a 21% relative increase" (p. 39).

- “By courting the president, they hope to increase their odds of elevation. These results underscore the need to examine more closely the goals judges hold and the role of audiences in judicial decision making” (p. 41).

### 5.8.3 The Logic of Collective Inaction: Senatorial Delay in Executive Nominations

Ostrander, I. (2016). The Logic of Collective Inaction: Senatorial Delay in Executive Nominations [Leprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12208>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(4), 1063–1076. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12208>

- 1. Citation key:** ostrander\_logic\_2016
- 2. Author(s):** Ian Ostrander
- 3. Year:** 2016
- 4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
- 5. Keywords:** executive nominations, senatorial delay, bureaucratic control, strategic obstruction, presidential appointments
- 6. Summary:** Ostrander examines the causes and patterns of senatorial delay in executive nominations, arguing that delay is often a strategic tool rather than simply a function of partisanship or institutional gridlock. He theorizes that senators delay nominations as a means of preventing presidential politicization of agencies, particularly when agencies have ideological predispositions opposed to the president. Using a dataset of over 6,000 executive nominations between 1987 and 2012, Ostrander demonstrates that agency ideology, position level, and political context systematically shape the likelihood and length of delay in the confirmation process.
- 7. Theory:** Ostrander contends that senatorial delay in executive nominations is a form of strategic obstruction aimed at preserving favorable policy environments rather than simply a function of partisanship or opposition. Drawing from bureaucratic politics and delegation theory, he argues that vacancies serve as a form of policy preservation, especially when the agency in question has an ideological predisposition contrary to the president’s agenda. In this framework, senators do not merely delay nominees to punish presidents or extract concessions but to maintain bureaucratic stability when career civil servants occupy key roles during a vacancy. The logic follows from principal-agent models, where Senate actors serve as additional principals seeking to constrain executive discretion. Delay is thus more likely when agencies are aligned against the president, when nominees are poised to shift an independent regulatory commission’s (IRC) balance of power, or when procedural obstruction carries limited electoral risk.
- 8. Methods:** Ostrander analyzes 6,282 executive nominations spanning the 100th to 112th Congresses (1987–2012), drawing from U.S. Senate records and THOMAS.gov. He employs a Weibull duration model to assess the time to confirmation while accounting for censoring (i.e., nominations returned without action). The key independent variables include agency ideology (measured using Clinton and Lewis’s [2008] expert scores), nomination tier (cabinet-level, high-level, major IRC, low-level, and lowest-level), divided government, Senate polarization (DW-NOMINATE scores), and presidential approval. Additional controls include the first 90 days of an administration, election years, Senate workload (measured by monthly roll-call votes), nominee gender, and prior confirmation experience. The Weibull model accounts for time-dependent hazard rates in confirmation duration.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - Delay will be greater for nominations to agencies with ideological dispositions opposite to the president.
  - Delay is significantly greater for nominations to major independent regulatory commissions (IRCs).
  - Delay is significantly greater for midlevel appointments compared to high-profile or low-profile positions.
  - Delay is significantly greater for nominations made in presidential election years.
  - Delay is significantly lower for nominations made by popular presidents.
  - Delay is significantly lower for nominations to defense-related agencies.
- The findings strongly support the theoretical argument that strategic delay is used to maintain favorable agency compositions. Nominations to agencies ideologically opposed to the president face significantly longer delays. Similarly, IRC nominations experience substantial slowdowns due to their potential to shift policymaking authority. Midlevel appointments, which balance high policy impact with low visibility, are delayed more than cabinet or low-level posts. Presidential election years and divided government exacerbate delays, while higher presidential approval and defense-related appointments reduce them.
- 10. Main findings:** Ostrander’s analysis reveals that agency ideology plays a decisive role in confirmation delays. Nominations to agencies ideologically opposed to the president take significantly longer to resolve, suggesting that Senate opposition uses procedural tools to maintain policy continuity. IRC nominations face even greater delays due to their small decision-making bodies and long-term institutional impact. Midlevel appointments—such as undersecretaries and non-cabinet agency heads—are delayed more often than either top-tier or minor positions, likely because they provide a balance of policy influence and procedural cover. Presidential election years slow the process significantly, while presidential popularity correlates with faster confirmations, reinforcing Neustadt’s (1990) argument about executive bargaining power. The findings underscore that nomination delays are not merely a function of obstructionist partisanship but rather a rational, strategic effort to preserve bureaucratic autonomy and constrain executive politicization.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “In addition to other important factors, agencies with predispositions opposed to the sitting president are more likely to be targeted for delay” (p. 1064).

- “Even if a majority of the Senate supports the president’s nominee, some senators will prefer the policies implemented by the career servants” (p. 1065).
- “By using obstruction to delay presidents from taking control over their opposing agencies, a Senate opposition would preserve a more favorable status quo” (p. 1066).

#### 5.8.4 Advising, Consenting, Delaying, and Expediting: Senator Influences on Presidential Appointments

Box-Steffensmeier, J. M., Campisano, C. P., Hitt, M. P., & Scott, K. M. (2016). Advising, Consenting, Delaying, and Expediting: Senator Influences on Presidential Appointments. [Publisher: Cambridge University Press]. *Studies in American Political Development*, 30(1), 19–37. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0898588X15000140>

- 1. Citation key:** box-steffensmeier\_advising\_2016
- 2. Author(s):** Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Charles P. Campisano, Matthew P. Hitt, and Kevin M. Scott
- 3. Year:** 2016
- 4. Publication:** Studies in American Political Development
- 5. Keywords:** judicial nominations, blue slips, senatorial courtesy, confirmation process, Senate Judiciary Committee
- 6. Summary:** Box-Steffensmeier et al. investigate the role of individual senators in influencing judicial nominations through the use of blue slips—a mechanism that allows home-state senators to register support or opposition to a nominee. Contrary to conventional wisdom, which views blue slips primarily as an obstructionist tool, the authors argue that blue slips have historically functioned both to delay and expedite nominations. Using newly available archival data covering blue slips from 1933 to 1960, they analyze the conditions under which senators return positive, negative, or nonReturned blue slips and their impact on nomination outcomes.
- 7. Theory:** The authors challenge the prevailing narrative that blue slips serve only as a mechanism of obstruction. Instead, they argue that blue slips historically allowed senators to exercise a form of agenda-setting power in judicial nominations, both in terms of delaying unwanted nominees and expediting favored ones. They propose that in the weak party system of the mid-20th century, senators had strong incentives to use blue slips not just to block nominees but also to signal support for preferred judicial candidates. This aligns with the broader theory of senatorial courtesy, where home-state senators play an influential role in shaping nominations. The theory suggests that senators strategically leverage blue slips to maintain control over appointments in their states, particularly when they lack influence over the Judiciary Committee chair. By distinguishing between positive and negative blue slips, the authors reveal how senators use the confirmation process to shape judicial appointments, even in periods of low party polarization.
- 8. Methods:** The study is based on an original dataset of blue slips from 1933 to 1960, compiled from the National Archives and Records Administration. The authors analyze 447 judicial nominations, coding each nomination based on whether the home-state senator returned a positive, negative, or nonReturned blue slip. They employ duration analysis to examine the impact of blue slips on the length of time before committee and Senate action, using a generalized gamma event history model to account for non-proportional hazard rates. Independent variables include the presence of unified government, the year of the president’s term, court level (district vs. circuit), ideological distance between the president and senators (measured using DW-NOMINATE scores), and whether the nominee was a renomination. The analysis also considers the effect of Judiciary Committee leadership, investigating whether senators were more likely to return positive blue slips when they lacked a coalition ally in the committee chair.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - Senators use blue slips not only to delay nominations but also to expedite favored nominees.
  - Positive blue slips from senators of the president’s party significantly reduce confirmation delays.
  - Negative blue slips from senators of either party significantly increase confirmation delays.
  - Senators are more likely to return positive blue slips when the Judiciary Committee chair is not a coalition ally.
  - The effect of blue slips is stronger in the Judiciary Committee than in the full Senate confirmation vote.

The findings confirm that blue slips function as a strategic tool for both obstruction and acceleration of nominations. Positive blue slips from senators of the president’s party reduce confirmation delays by up to 28 percent, while negative blue slips significantly increase delays, particularly when issued by opposition party senators. Senators without a coalition ally in the Judiciary Committee chair are more likely to use blue slips to push preferred nominees forward. The results underscore the importance of individual senatorial prerogatives in shaping judicial appointments.
- 10. Main findings:** The study demonstrates that blue slips historically played a dual role, allowing senators to both obstruct and facilitate judicial nominations. Contrary to modern perceptions of blue slips as primarily obstructionist, the authors find that during the weak party era (1933–1960), senators used blue slips more frequently to expedite confirmations than to block nominees. Positive blue slips from home-state senators, particularly those of the president’s party, significantly reduced the time to committee action and final confirmation. Negative blue slips, by contrast, were rare but highly consequential—effectively stalling nominations. The ideological distance between the president and the Judiciary Committee chair influenced confirmation delays, with greater distance leading to longer wait times. The results suggest that blue slips served as a tool for preserving senatorial influence over judicial appointments rather than merely a mechanism of partisan obstruction.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “The blue slip, in the era we studied, was more than a tool of obstruction. Rather, during the 1930s to 1950s, senators used this unseen procedural lever to aid nominees they favored more often than they used it to hamper nominees they opposed” (p. 20).

- “Senators were more likely to return positive blue slips when the Judiciary Committee chair was not a coalition ally” (p. 21).
- “By using blue slips to expedite confirmation, senators exercised a degree of agenda-setting power in judicial nominations, particularly in an era of weak parties and individualistic Senate norms” (p. 22).

### 5.8.5 The When and Why of Nominations: Determinants of Presidential Appointments

Hollibaugh, G. E., & Rothenberg, L. S. (2017). The When and Why of Nominations: Determinants of Presidential Appointments [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *American Politics Research*, 45(2), 280–303. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1532673X16628266>

- 1. Citation key:** hollibaugh\_when\_2017
- 2. Author(s):** Gary E. Hollibaugh, Jr. and Lawrence S. Rothenberg
- 3. Year:** 2017
- 4. Publication:** American Politics Research
- 5. Keywords:** executive appointments, presidential nominations, bureaucratic control, Senate confirmation, duration models
- 6. Summary:** Hollibaugh and Rothenberg examine the determinants of presidential nomination timing, arguing that delays in filling executive vacancies are not merely a function of bureaucratic inertia or Senate obstruction but reflect strategic decision-making by the president. The authors analyze a dataset of executive vacancies reported to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) from 1999 to 2013, finding that ideological divergence between the president and the Senate filibuster pivot, agency ideology, and vacancy importance all shape the length of the pre-nomination period. Their findings highlight the role of executive-legislative bargaining in the nomination stage, which has been largely overlooked in prior studies of confirmation delays.
- 7. Theory:** The authors challenge the conventional wisdom that nomination delays are primarily due to Senate obstruction, proposing instead that presidents strategically manage the nomination process based on ideological, institutional, and strategic factors. They argue that presidents prioritize nominations that offer the highest policy returns, particularly when filling vacancies in ideologically opposed agencies. Presidents must weigh the likelihood of Senate confirmation when selecting nominees, leading them to delay appointments when faced with ideological opposition in the Senate. Conversely, nominations to high-priority positions occur more quickly, as presidents seek to maximize their administrative control. The authors extend previous scholarship on bureaucratic politicization and presidential appointments by demonstrating that ideological and partisan dynamics shape nomination timing as much as they do confirmation processes.
- 8. Methods:** Hollibaugh and Rothenberg employ a Cox proportional hazards model to analyze the time between vacancy onset and nomination for over 1,100 executive appointments across multiple administrations. The dataset includes vacancies from the 106th to 112th Congresses (1999–2013), using GAO-reported vacancies supplemented with Library of Congress data. Key independent variables include the ideological distance between the president and the Senate filibuster pivot (measured using DW-NOMINATE scores), agency ideology (based on Clinton and Lewis's expert scores), vacancy importance (categorized into tiers based on position rank), and partisan control of the Senate. The authors also incorporate control variables for presidential approval, Senate workload, recess periods, and agency type. They use Kaplan-Meier survival curves to assess baseline nomination probabilities and interaction terms to examine how the effects of agency ideology vary over time.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - Nominations should be made more quickly to agencies ideologically opposed to the president, as these offer greater policy returns.
  - Nominations to high-ranking vacancies should be made more quickly than those to lower-ranking positions.
  - Early nominations to ideologically aligned agencies should occur more quickly, but this pattern should reverse over time as presidents prioritize shifting policy in opposed agencies.
  - Early nominations to ideologically opposed agencies should occur more quickly than those to neutral agencies, and this effect should strengthen over time.
  - Presidents should nominate more quickly when ideological divergence with the Senate filibuster pivot is low and more slowly when divergence is high.
  - (Unconditional Partisan Effects) Nominations should be made more slowly under divided government.
  - (Conditional Partisan Effects) Divided government should exacerbate the effects of ideological divergence, leading to quicker nominations when divergence is low and slower nominations when divergence is high.
- The findings strongly support the argument that presidents strategically delay or expedite nominations based on ideological and political considerations. Nominations to ideologically opposed agencies occur more quickly, particularly later in a president's term, confirming the importance of bureaucratic control in shaping nomination timing. High-ranking vacancies are filled more rapidly, reinforcing the view that presidents prioritize key appointments. The results also indicate that ideological divergence between the president and the Senate filibuster pivot slows nominations, with this effect being most pronounced under divided government. The conditional partisan hypothesis receives stronger support than the unconditional one, as divided government does not always delay nominations but does interact with ideological factors to shape timing.
- 10. Main findings:** The study finds that presidents move more quickly to fill vacancies in ideologically opposed agencies,

particularly later in their terms, suggesting an effort to secure bureaucratic control. High-ranking positions receive faster nominations, reflecting their policy importance. Ideological divergence with the Senate filibuster pivot significantly slows nominations, particularly under divided government, as presidents engage in more extensive vetting to ensure confirmability. Contrary to expectations, partisan control of the Senate alone does not significantly delay nominations; rather, its effects are conditional on ideological polarization. The study underscores the strategic nature of presidential nominations, demonstrating that the appointment process involves bargaining not just in the Senate confirmation stage but also in the pre-nomination period.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "While ideological and partisan gaps between the President and the Senate are found to elongate the period between nomination and confirmation, they have different effects on the time needed to generate a candidate" (p. 296).
- "Presidents seemingly use nominations to influence agencies not deemed political allies, especially in the later part of administrations, a result consistent with a desire to maintain politicization via the appointments process" (p. 297).
- "Nominations to ideologically opposed agencies occur more quickly, suggesting that presidents seek to shift policy direction as soon as they are able, while those to aligned agencies slow over time, reflecting a reduced sense of urgency" (p. 298).

#### 5.8.6 The Power to Appoint: Presidential Nominations and Change on the Supreme Court

Cottrell, D., Shipan, C. R., & Anderson, R. J. (2019). The Power to Appoint: Presidential Nominations and Change on the Supreme Court [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 81(3), 1057–1068. <https://doi.org/10.1086/703382>

1. **Citation key:** cottrell\_power\_2019
2. **Author(s):** David Cottrell, Charles R. Shipan, and Richard J. Anderson
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** judicial appointments, Supreme Court, presidential power, Senate confirmation, spatial models
6. **Summary:** Cottrell, Shipan, and Anderson examine whether and under what conditions presidents can use their appointment power to shift the ideological median of the Supreme Court toward their own policy preferences. Using a series of formal models and empirical tests, the authors find that presidents successfully move the Court's ideological center when two conditions are met: (1) the Senate and the president agree on the ideological direction of change, and (2) the departing justice is on the opposite side of the ideological spectrum from the president. Their results challenge conventional wisdom by demonstrating that presidents exert greater influence over Court composition than standard spatial models predict, even when Senate constraints should theoretically prevent ideological movement.
7. **Theory:** The authors develop a formal framework that builds upon existing spatial models of Supreme Court appointments (e.g., Moraski and Shipan 1999; Krehbiel 2007). They argue that a president's ability to shift the Court median depends on both the ideological position of the departing justice and the extent to which the Senate constrains presidential discretion. The standard expectation is that when the president and the Senate agree on a desired shift and the departing justice is on the opposite ideological side, the median can be moved. However, the authors go beyond prior models to argue that presidents can sometimes achieve ideological movement even when Senate constraints should prevent it. They hypothesize that presidents maximize their appointment influence when they replace a justice on the opposite ideological side of the median and when they leverage nominee characteristics (e.g., qualifications, experience) to overcome Senate opposition. Their framework also accounts for potential alternative sources of Court change, such as peer effects among justices and responsiveness to public opinion.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a combination of spatial modeling and empirical analysis of Supreme Court appointments from 1953 to 2010. The authors construct a dataset that includes ideology scores for justices, presidents, and the Senate using Bailey's cross-institutional ideal point estimates. Their primary dependent variable, *Median Change*, measures the ideological shift in the Court's median following a new appointment. They use regression analysis to test whether changes in the median align with theoretical predictions, with key independent variables including the ideological alignment between the president and Senate, the ideological position of the departing justice, and nominee characteristics such as experience and age. To address concerns about measurement uncertainty, they incorporate simulations using posterior distributions of ideal point estimates and conduct robustness checks that account for alternative explanations such as peer effects among justices and shifts in public opinion.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - Presidents will successfully shift the Court's median when they replace a justice ideologically distant from them.
  - The Senate will act as a constraint on presidential nominations, limiting ideological movement when the Senate and president disagree.
  - Nominations will have the largest effect when the president and Senate agree on the direction of change.
  - The magnitude of ideological change will be greater when the departing justice is on the opposite ideological side of the Court median.
  - Peer effects among justices and shifts in public opinion may also contribute to changes in the Court's ideological balance.

The findings support the hypothesis that presidents can shift the Court's median, particularly when replacing ideologically distant justices. However, contrary to existing spatial models, the results indicate that presidents sometimes achieve ideological gains even when Senate constraints should theoretically block such movement. Peer effects among justices also play a role in shaping Court dynamics, but they do not fully account for the observed shifts in the Court median.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find strong empirical support for the argument that presidents successfully pull the Supreme Court median closer to their ideological preferences when replacing justices on the opposite ideological side of the Court. The Senate does act as a constraint, but not as effectively as traditional models predict—presidents are often able to push the median further than expected. Nominee characteristics, particularly qualifications and age, influence the likelihood of Senate confirmation, with highly qualified nominees facing less resistance. The results also indicate that peer effects among justices contribute to ideological shifts but do not fully explain changes in the Court's composition. The study underscores the importance of considering both formal institutional constraints and strategic presidential behavior when analyzing judicial appointments.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Our findings show that presidents can use appointments to influence the location of the Court, shifting it closer to their ideal points when the theoretically identified conditions are met” (p. 1057).
- “Presidents, our data show, are able to move the Court in the direction and the distance that theory predicts. At the same time, we find that presidents are more powerful, or the Senate is less powerful, than these theories predict” (p. 1058).
- “Even if the president and the Senate prefer large changes to the location of the Court median, they are limited in that they can shift the median only as far as the next justice” (p. 1059).

### 5.8.7 Presidential Control of Independent Agencies' Leadership and Personnel: A Two-Case Study of Interbranch Contestation over the Bureaucracy and the Unitary Executive under Donald Trump

Dodds, G. G. (2022). Presidential Control of Independent Agencies' Leadership and Personnel: A Two-Case Study of Interbranch Contestation over the Bureaucracy and the Unitary Executive under Donald Trump [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/psq.12773>]. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 52(1), 168–194. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psq.12773>

**1. Citation key:** dodds\_presidential\_2022

**2. Author(s):** Graham G. Dodds

**3. Year:** 2022

**4. Publication:** Presidential Studies Quarterly

**5. Keywords:** bureaucratic control, independent agencies, unitary executive theory, presidential power, administrative law

**6. Summary:** Dodds examines the interbranch contestation over control of the federal bureaucracy, focusing on independent agencies under the Trump administration. Through a two-case study analysis of *Lucia v. SEC* (2018) and *Seila Law v. CFPB* (2020), the article explores how the unitary executive theory was used to justify enhanced presidential authority over agency leadership and personnel. Dodds argues that while these legal cases have received attention in legal scholarship, they have been overlooked by presidency scholars despite their significant implications for executive power and agency autonomy.

**7. Theory:** The study is grounded in the ongoing theoretical debate over the unitary executive theory, which posits that the president alone possesses all executive authority and should have extensive control over the federal bureaucracy. This perspective, long championed by conservative legal scholars, asserts that limitations on the president's ability to appoint or remove officials within the executive branch are unconstitutional. Dodds situates his analysis within a broader literature on bureaucratic control, interbranch conflict, and the shifting balance of power between Congress and the president. He highlights how independent agencies have historically been designed to insulate regulatory bodies from political influence, contrasting this tradition with the Trump administration's efforts to centralize authority. The article argues that the Supreme Court's rulings in *Lucia* and *Seila Law* reflect a broader judicial trend toward expanding executive control over the administrative state, with potential long-term consequences for agency independence, congressional oversight, and the separation of powers.

**8. Methods:** Dodds employs a qualitative case study approach, analyzing two Supreme Court decisions that shaped presidential control over independent agencies. He traces the legal, political, and administrative contexts of *Lucia v. SEC* and *Seila Law v. CFPB*, detailing the historical development of independent agencies and the evolving jurisprudence on presidential appointment and removal powers. The study draws on primary sources, including Supreme Court opinions, amicus briefs, executive orders, and congressional statements, as well as secondary literature from legal scholarship and political science. By comparing the legal reasoning and political responses to these cases, Dodds evaluates the extent to which recent decisions align with or depart from historical norms of bureaucratic independence.

**9. Hypotheses:**

- The Supreme Court's rulings in *Lucia v. SEC* and *Seila Law v. CFPB* reflect an increasing judicial willingness to endorse the unitary executive theory.
- The Trump administration sought to enhance presidential control over independent agencies by leveraging legal challenges to existing appointment and removal restrictions.

- The Court's decisions will have long-term consequences for agency independence by eroding statutory protections against political interference.
- The interbranch struggle over bureaucratic control is likely to intensify as future administrations seek to either expand or resist executive dominance over federal agencies.

The findings provide strong support for the argument that the judiciary has become increasingly receptive to claims of expanded presidential power. The Court's decisions in *Lucia* and *Seila Law* reinforced the president's authority over agency personnel, weakening statutory constraints on appointment and removal. While Dodds acknowledges that these rulings do not entirely eliminate congressional oversight, he concludes that they mark a significant shift toward executive dominance in the administrative state.

**10. Main findings:** Dodds finds that both *Lucia* and *Seila Law* serve as critical turning points in the legal and political struggle over control of independent agencies. In *Lucia v. SEC*, the Court ruled that administrative law judges (ALJs) are "officers of the United States" subject to the Appointments Clause, thereby requiring presidential or departmental appointment rather than internal agency selection. This decision effectively placed ALJs under greater presidential control. In *Seila Law v. CFPB*, the Court invalidated statutory protections for the director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, ruling that the president must have unrestricted removal power over agency heads. Together, these cases represent a judicial endorsement of the unitary executive theory and a significant weakening of agency independence. Dodds highlights how the Trump administration strategically pursued legal arguments that would maximize executive control, often departing from prior presidential practices. The article concludes that these decisions will likely shape future conflicts over bureaucratic autonomy, with potential ramifications for regulatory policymaking, presidential power, and the broader separation of powers.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Presidents and Congress have long fought over control of the federal bureaucracy. Indeed, such conflicts are a central aspect of the interbranch struggle for power and a primary way in which the two branches seek to check and balance each other" (p. 168).
- "The Supreme Court's decisions in *Lucia* and *Seila Law* demonstrate the Trump administration's efforts to undermine the independence of federal agencies and to enhance the executive's control over them" (p. 170).
- "By granting agency heads broad discretion to hire ALJs, the executive order opens the door to the politicization of the Social Security benefits disbursement procedure" (p. 175).

## 5.9 The Separation of Powers

### 5.9.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The separation of powers doctrine is a foundational principle in American constitutional design, structuring the institutional relationships between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Early theorists such as Montesquieu and Madison emphasized the need to prevent tyranny by distributing governmental powers among distinct institutions with checks and balances. While classical models depict the branches as coequal and independent, modern scholarship illustrates the extent to which strategic interactions, interbranch bargaining, and external political pressures influence institutional behavior. Judicial decisions, executive actions, and legislative constraints reflect an evolving balance of power rather than strict formal separations. Contemporary research examines the conditions under which institutional actors deviate from formal separation, whether through judicial deference, executive unilateralism, or legislative constraints, revealing a dynamic system where political, legal, and institutional factors shape the balance of power.
- **Classical Foundations and Institutional Design:** The origins of separation of powers theory trace back to Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748), which articulated the necessity of institutional differentiation to prevent arbitrary rule. Montesquieu's model heavily influenced the Framers of the U.S. Constitution, particularly James Madison, who incorporated these ideas into *The Federalist Papers*, emphasizing that ambition must counteract ambition to maintain a functional system of government. Madison argued that while separate institutions should wield distinct powers, mutual checks were necessary to ensure accountability. The Constitution operationalized this framework through staggered elections, distinct appointment procedures, and reciprocal veto powers. Despite this formal structure, scholars have long debated whether these mechanisms sufficiently maintain balance or whether interbranch conflicts and power consolidations lead to deviations from the original intent of institutional separation.
- **Judicial Review and Congressional Constraints:** The judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court, plays a central role in enforcing separation of powers, yet its decisions are constrained by congressional and executive pressures. Clark (2009) demonstrates that congressional court-curbing efforts serve as signals of waning judicial legitimacy, influencing the Supreme Court's strategic behavior. Using a dataset of court-curbing bills introduced between 1877 and 2006, Clark finds that when Congress exhibits hostility toward the judiciary, the Court exercises judicial review more cautiously, invalidating fewer federal laws. This empirical finding challenges conventional separation-of-powers models by illustrating that judicial independence is contingent on broader political pressures, rather than being solely a function of constitutional design. Relatedly, Harvey and Friedman (2009) argue that the Court strategically avoids reviewing cases where congressional preferences diverge sharply from its own, introducing selection bias into judicial decision-making. These findings suggest that the Court does not operate in isolation but rather adjusts its agenda and rulings in response to interbranch signals.
- **Executive Power and Unilateral Action:** The executive branch has historically tested the limits of separation of powers through unilateral actions, particularly in matters of national security, administrative rulemaking, and executive

orders. While the Constitution vests the president with the power to execute laws, historical patterns indicate that presidential power expands during crises. Lane (2022) examines how executive constraints influence Supreme Court decision-making, demonstrating that when the executive and legislative branches are ideologically aligned against the judiciary, the Court reduces its caseload to avoid potential retribution. Similarly, Dodds highlights how recent Supreme Court rulings, such as *Lucia v. SEC* and *Seila Law v. CFPB*, have strengthened the president's authority over federal agencies, eroding statutory constraints on executive power. These studies underscore the fluid nature of executive-legislative-judicial relations, revealing that presidential authority is not static but shaped by both legal precedents and political calculations.

- **Legislative Constraints and Interbranch Bargaining:** While Congress is constitutionally empowered to legislate, its ability to check the other branches depends on internal cohesion, partisan control, and institutional capacity. Research on congressional oversight mechanisms suggests that investigations, hearings, and budgetary controls serve as critical tools for constraining executive authority. Kriner and Schickler (2014) analyze congressional investigations from 1953 to 2006, finding that heightened investigative activity correlates with declining presidential approval, thereby reducing executive political capital. Their study highlights how congressional investigations function as a political check, reinforcing the idea that separation of powers operates not only through formal mechanisms but also through political pressures. Additionally, studies on the legislative veto, appropriations process, and statutory overrides illustrate how Congress attempts to constrain both judicial and executive authority, albeit with varying success depending on partisan alignment and institutional incentives.
- **Theoretical Challenges and Contemporary Applications:** Recent scholarship challenges traditional conceptions of separation of powers by emphasizing the role of strategic behavior, ideological polarization, and political context in shaping interbranch relations. Scholars argue that rather than a rigid framework of distinct powers, the system operates through a series of negotiations and recalibrations shaped by electoral incentives, party dynamics, and public opinion. For instance, presidential signing statements and executive enforcement discretion demonstrate how the executive branch can effectively reinterpret congressional statutes without formal legislative approval. Similarly, the increasing use of emergency powers and regulatory reinterpretations suggests that separation of powers is not a fixed constitutional principle but a fluid and contested political reality.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Scholars continue to debate the resilience of separation of powers in the face of executive aggrandizement, judicial politicization, and congressional dysfunction. While some argue that institutional checks remain robust despite partisan pressures, others contend that the balance of power has shifted in favor of the executive, particularly in the post-9/11 era. Future research is likely to explore how changes in party polarization, judicial appointments, and bureaucratic autonomy affect institutional dynamics. Additionally, the growing role of administrative agencies in policymaking raises questions about the effectiveness of legislative oversight and judicial review in an era where much of governance occurs outside the formal legislative process. Understanding the evolving nature of separation of powers requires examining not only constitutional principles but also the broader political forces that shape institutional behavior.

### 5.9.2 The Separation of Powers, Court Curbing, and Judicial Legitimacy

Clark, T. S. (2009). The Separation of Powers, Court Curbing, and Judicial Legitimacy [Leprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2009.00411.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 53(4), 971–989. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2009.00411.x>

1. **Citation key:** clark\_separation\_2009
2. **Author(s):** Tom S. Clark
3. **Year:** 2009
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** separation of powers, judicial legitimacy, court curbing, Supreme Court, Congress
6. **Summary:** Clark examines the influence of congressional hostility towards the Supreme Court on the Court's use of judicial review. He argues that court-curbing efforts by Congress serve as a signal of waning judicial legitimacy, influencing the Court's strategic behavior. Using an original dataset covering all court-curbing legislation proposed between 1877 and 2006, Clark demonstrates that when Congress is hostile, the Supreme Court exercises judicial review more cautiously, invalidating Acts of Congress less frequently. The findings challenge traditional separation-of-powers models by highlighting the role of public opinion as mediated through congressional action in shaping judicial decision-making.
7. **Theory:** Clark proposes an alternative interpretation of separation-of-powers theory, integrating insights from both statutory reversal and court-curbing literatures. Traditional models suggest that Congress's ability to reverse statutory decisions constrains the Court's behavior, but empirical support for this claim is mixed. Clark argues that congressional court-curbing attempts—distinct from statutory reversals—serve as an indicator of the Court's legitimacy in the eyes of the public. He contends that justices care not only about policy outcomes but also about institutional legitimacy, as an erosion of legitimacy may undermine their authority and influence. This assumption is supported by interviews with justices and law clerks who acknowledge that they are attentive to congressional hostility as a proxy for public sentiment. Because the Supreme Court lacks enforcement power, it depends on political actors to uphold its decisions; thus, sustained court-curbing efforts could signal a risk of noncompliance. Clark's theoretical model predicts that the Court will strategically restrain its use of judicial review when it perceives a threat to its legitimacy, even if there is no immediate risk of formal constraints being enacted.

**8. Methods:** Clark employs a mixed-method approach, combining formal modeling with quantitative analysis. He develops a game-theoretic model to formalize the interaction between Congress and the Court, demonstrating that court-curbing bills function as signals about the Court's legitimacy. The empirical component tests these predictions using a newly compiled dataset of all court-curbing bills introduced in Congress from 1877 to 2006. The dependent variable is the number of federal laws invalidated by the Supreme Court in a given year, while key independent variables include the frequency of court-curbing bills and ideological divergence between the Court and Congress. Clark also incorporates measures of public opinion towards the Court to assess how shifts in legitimacy influence judicial behavior. Using Poisson regression models with natural court fixed effects, he examines the relationship between congressional hostility and the Court's decision-making patterns.

**9. Hypotheses:** Clark hypothesizes that:

- The Court is less likely to invalidate Acts of Congress when court-curbing bills are introduced at high levels.
- The Court is more likely to self-restrain when it perceives public confidence in its legitimacy to be low.
- The constraining effect of court-curbing efforts on judicial behavior is weaker when ideological divergence between the Court and Congress is high, as Congress has greater incentive to bluff.
- The Court is most responsive to court-curbing efforts when its prior belief about its legitimacy is pessimistic.

The findings strongly support these hypotheses. When Congress introduces more court-curbing bills, the Court exercises greater self-restraint in invalidating laws. The Court is particularly responsive when it perceives declining public confidence, suggesting that legitimacy concerns drive judicial decision-making. Additionally, ideological divergence moderates the effect of court-curbing efforts, as anticipated in the theoretical model.

**10. Main findings:** Clark finds that court-curbing efforts by Congress have a significant constraining effect on the Supreme Court's use of judicial review. When Congress introduces a high volume of court-curbing bills, the Court invalidates fewer federal laws, indicating that justices strategically self-restrain in response to perceived threats to their legitimacy. The Court's behavior is particularly sensitive to public opinion; as public confidence declines, the effect of court-curbing bills intensifies. Moreover, ideological divergence between the Court and Congress reduces the impact of court-curbing efforts, as justices may discount the credibility of such threats when they come from ideologically opposed legislators. These findings suggest that the Court's independence is conditional, shaped by political and public pressures rather than purely institutional constraints.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The Court is pretty good about knowing how far it can go... Congress is better than we are, especially the House. They really have their finger on the pulse of the public" (p. 973).
- "Once the public ceases to believe that the Court is not a political institution, they will no longer support the Court" (p. 974).
- "Between 1877 and 2006, 284 laws were held unconstitutional; the model predicts that an additional 143 laws would have been struck down had there been no Court curbing, an over 50% increase in the frequency of judicial review" (p. 982).

### 5.9.3 Ducking Trouble: Congressionally Induced Selection Bias in the Supreme Court's Agenda

Harvey, A., & Friedman, B. (2009). Ducking Trouble: Congressionally Induced Selection Bias in the Supreme Court's Agenda [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 71(2), 574–592. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381609090471>

**1. Citation key:** harvey\_ducking\_2009

**2. Author(s):** Anna Harvey and Barry Friedman

**3. Year:** 2009

**4. Publication:** The Journal of Politics

**5. Keywords:** Supreme Court, judicial selection, congressional constraint, certiorari, separation of powers

**6. Summary:** Harvey and Friedman investigate the influence of congressional preferences on the Supreme Court's discretionary docket. They argue that existing studies fail to account for the fact that the Court chooses which cases to hear, thereby introducing selection bias into analyses of congressional constraint on judicial decision-making. Using a model of the certiorari process and an empirical analysis of cases involving congressional statutes, they demonstrate that the Court is significantly less likely to grant review in cases where congressional constraints would prevent the Court from issuing its preferred ruling. The authors conclude that this selection bias obscures the true extent of congressional influence over the Court's constitutional agenda.

**7. Theory:** The authors challenge conventional separation-of-powers models by highlighting the importance of selection bias in the Court's certiorari process. They argue that previous studies have largely focused on the final rulings of the Supreme Court while neglecting the constraints that Congress imposes on the Court's agenda-setting decisions. Under their theory, justices anticipate the likelihood of congressional retaliation—such as jurisdiction stripping, budgetary constraints, or Court-packing—when deciding whether to hear a case. If Congress is ideologically distant from the Court, the justices may avoid reviewing certain cases altogether to maintain judicial legitimacy and avoid direct confrontation. This dynamic suggests that empirical tests focusing only on final rulings underestimate congressional influence, as constrained justices may strategically avoid reviewing cases where they cannot achieve their preferred outcomes.

**8. Methods:** Harvey and Friedman employ a combination of formal modeling and empirical analysis. They construct

a game-theoretic model of the certiorari process in which the Court weighs the expected utility of granting review against the risk of congressional reprisal. To test their theoretical predictions, they compile a dataset of congressional statutes enacted between 1987 and 2001 and analyze the likelihood that these statutes were reviewed by the Court. Their dependent variable is whether a statute was reviewed, while key independent variables include the ideological distance between the Court and Congress, the salience of the statute, and measures of congressional hostility toward the judiciary. The authors estimate a series of grouped event history models (Poisson regressions with duration dependence) to assess how congressional preferences shape the Court's docket.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- The Supreme Court is less likely to grant certiorari in cases where congressional preferences diverge significantly from the Court's own ideological position.
- The likelihood of review increases when the Court faces a friendly Congress, as justices feel less constrained in issuing their preferred rulings.
- The selection bias introduced by congressional constraint leads to an underestimation of congressional influence in studies that examine only final rulings.
- The effects of congressional constraint are most pronounced in landmark cases, where legislative stakes are highest.

The findings strongly support these hypotheses. The empirical analysis reveals that the Court strategically avoids reviewing cases where congressional constraints would prevent the justices from ruling in accordance with their ideological preferences. The effect is particularly strong in landmark cases, where the probability of review decreases sharply under hostile congressional conditions.

**10. Main findings:** Harvey and Friedman find strong evidence that congressional preferences systematically influence the Supreme Court's agenda-setting decisions. When Congress is ideologically distant from the Court, the justices are significantly less likely to review congressional statutes, effectively avoiding decisions that could provoke congressional retaliation. This pattern introduces selection bias into existing analyses of judicial behavior, leading scholars to underestimate the extent to which the Court is constrained by Congress. The study also shows that the shift in congressional preferences following the Republican takeover of Congress in 1994 led to a substantial increase in the Court's willingness to review liberal statutes, as the risk of congressional opposition diminished. These findings suggest that the Court's independence is conditional, shaped by strategic considerations about maintaining judicial authority in the face of potential political backlash.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The Court's docket is significantly less likely to contain cases wherein there are large congressionally induced deviations between what the Court would like to do, and what it can do in its final rulings" (p. 574).
- "Once the public ceases to believe that the Court is not a political institution, they will no longer support the Court" (p. 589).
- "Between 1987 and 2001, the Court is predicted to have reviewed 123% more liberal statutes than it actually did, had congressional preferences been stable. This selection bias distorts our understanding of interbranch constraints" (p. 590).

#### 5.9.4 Presidential Speeches and the Stages of the Legislative Process

Eshbaugh-Soha, M., & Miles, T. (2011). Presidential Speeches and the Stages of the Legislative Process [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07343469.2011.602040>]. *Congress & the Presidency*, 38(3), 301–321. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07343469.2011.602040>

1. **Citation key:** eshbaugh-soha\_presidential\_2011
2. **Author(s):** Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha and Thomas Miles
3. **Year:** 2011
4. **Publication:** Congress & the Presidency
5. **Keywords:** presidential speeches, legislative process, congressional influence, going public, presidential power
6. **Summary:** Eshbaugh-Soha and Miles examine how presidents use public speeches at different stages of the legislative process to influence congressional outcomes. While past scholarship has focused primarily on whether presidential speeches impact final passage votes, this study expands the analysis by considering the agenda-setting, committee, and roll call stages. The authors argue that presidents strategically allocate their speeches to maximize legislative success, with emphasis on framing policy debates at the agenda-setting stage and exerting pressure during final roll call votes.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that presidential speeches serve distinct functions at different legislative stages. At the *agenda-setting* stage, presidents speak to define the parameters of policy debates and signal commitment to legislative priorities. At the *committee* stage, presidential speeches serve to pressure lawmakers to move bills forward, though their effectiveness depends on political conditions. At the *roll call* stage, presidential rhetoric attempts to secure final passage by mobilizing public and legislative support. The authors theorize that presidential speechmaking is most frequent at the beginning and end of the legislative process but is less common during committee deliberations, where private negotiations play a larger role. This framework extends previous scholarship on presidential influence by integrating agenda-setting theories with strategic rhetoric models.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining a quantitative analysis of presidential speeches

from 1989 to 2004 with a case study of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. The authors analyze 116 bills, tracking the frequency and timing of presidential speeches at each legislative stage. Their dataset includes public remarks, press conferences, and addresses archived in the *Public Papers of the Presidents*. Using negative binomial regression, they model the determinants of presidential speechmaking, focusing on factors such as divided government, presidential approval ratings, and legislative duration. The case study of the Clean Air Act Amendments supplements the statistical findings with archival materials from the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, offering insights into the administration's rhetorical and strategic decision-making.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Presidents will deliver the most speeches at the agenda-setting and roll call stages, with fewer speeches during committee deliberations.
- Presidential speech frequency will be inversely related to approval ratings—presidents with low approval will speak more frequently to counteract negative political signals.
- Presidents will engage in more speechmaking during divided government to compensate for legislative opposition.
- Presidential rhetoric at the committee stage will increase when bills face delays, as presidents attempt to expedite legislative progress.

The findings largely confirm these hypotheses. Presidents deliver the most speeches at the agenda-setting and roll call stages, while committee-stage speechmaking remains limited. Lower presidential approval ratings correlate with increased public appeals, suggesting that presidents use speeches to offset unfavorable political conditions. Additionally, presidents speak more often under divided government, particularly at the roll call stage. However, contrary to expectations, bill duration in committee does not significantly affect presidential speech frequency.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that presidents strategically time their public speeches to maximize legislative influence. Agenda-setting speeches dominate presidential rhetoric, with nearly half of all analyzed speeches occurring before bills are formally introduced. Presidents also allocate significant rhetorical resources to the roll call stage, where final passage is at stake. While committee-stage speechmaking is relatively rare, the Clean Air Act Amendments case study reveals that presidents may still exert behind-the-scenes influence. The statistical analysis confirms that low approval ratings and divided government encourage more presidential speeches, underscoring the role of rhetoric as a compensatory strategy when political conditions are unfavorable. However, the absence of a strong relationship between bill duration and committee-stage speechmaking suggests that presidents rely more on private bargaining at this stage.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Presidents speak mostly at the agenda-setting and roll call stages, and presidential attention at each stage varies by informational cues provided by the larger political environment" (p. 301).
- "Presidents are likely to devote more attention to a public policy at the agenda stage to reduce legislators' uncertainty about presidents' policy positions, their commitment to policy priorities, and to establish a foundation for legislative success" (p. 305).
- "Although presidents have incentives to speak publicly at the committee stage, they undoubtedly use other more private means at this stage" (p. 312).

#### 5.9.5 Investigating the President: Committee Probes and Presidential Approval, 1953–2006

Kriner, D. L., & Schickler, E. (2014). Investigating the President: Committee Probes and Presidential Approval, 1953–2006 [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 76(2), 521–534. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381613001448>

1. **Citation key:** kriner\_investigating\_2014
2. **Author(s):** Douglas L. Kriner and Eric Schickler
3. **Year:** 2014
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** presidential approval, congressional investigations, separation of powers, interbranch conflict, public opinion
6. **Summary:** Kriner and Schickler analyze the political consequences of congressional investigations into the executive branch, focusing on their effect on presidential approval ratings. They argue that committee investigations serve as a significant check on presidential power by diminishing public support for the president, thus reducing the president's political capital. Using a dataset of over 3,500 investigative hearings from 1953 to 2006, as well as an original survey experiment, they demonstrate that heightened investigative activity is associated with declining presidential approval.
7. **Theory:** The authors posit that congressional investigations influence public perceptions of the president in two primary ways. First, they serve as agenda-setting mechanisms, drawing media attention to executive branch misdeeds and ensuring sustained coverage of allegations of misconduct. Because media outlets prioritize conflict and official sources, congressional investigations are inherently newsworthy and keep allegations in the public eye for extended periods. Second, investigations lend institutional credibility to charges of executive misconduct, making them more persuasive to the public. This credibility mechanism suggests that allegations made through formal congressional channels have a greater negative impact on presidential approval than identical charges raised in non-congressional contexts. The authors contend that congressional investigations impose real political costs on presidents by undermin-

ing their public support, thus indirectly limiting their ability to advance legislative and policy initiatives.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a two-pronged empirical strategy. First, the authors construct an original dataset of congressional investigative hearings from 1953 to 2006 using Congressional Information Service (CIS) abstracts, identifying 3,507 hearings that involved allegations of executive misconduct. They conduct a series of time-series regression analyses to examine the relationship between investigative activity and presidential approval, controlling for factors such as economic conditions, major political events, war casualties, and divided government. To address endogeneity concerns—whereby lower presidential approval might trigger more investigations—they employ instrumental variable techniques, using the number of congressional session days as an exogenous predictor of investigative activity. Second, they conduct an original survey experiment, exposing subjects to news reports about alleged executive misconduct, with randomized attribution to different sources (e.g., congressional committees vs. unnamed political observers). This experimental design isolates the causal effect of congressional investigations on public opinion.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Increased congressional investigative activity will lead to a measurable decline in presidential approval ratings.
- The effect of investigations on presidential approval will be consistent across both unified and divided government.
- The impact of investigative activity on presidential approval is not a post-Watergate phenomenon but has been present throughout the modern presidency.
- Charges of executive misconduct will have a stronger negative effect on public opinion when attributed to congressional committees rather than to non-institutional actors.

The findings largely confirm these hypotheses. Time-series models show that increases in investigative hearings are significantly associated with declines in presidential approval, even after controlling for external political and economic conditions. The effect is robust across periods of unified and divided government, suggesting that investigations serve as a consistent mechanism of congressional influence. The experimental results further validate the credibility mechanism, showing that allegations of misconduct are more damaging to presidential approval when tied to congressional committees rather than anonymous political observers.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find that congressional investigations are a powerful, though often overlooked, check on presidential authority. Even in the absence of legislative constraints, Congress can erode a president's political standing through investigative scrutiny, weakening the president's leverage in policy negotiations. The time-series analysis shows that a two-standard deviation increase in investigative hearings corresponds to an average 2.5% drop in presidential approval—an effect comparable in magnitude to a major economic downturn. Contrary to expectations, the study finds no significant difference in the impact of investigations under unified versus divided government, suggesting that even co-partisan investigations impose political costs on the president. The survey experiment further demonstrates that the source of misconduct allegations matters: when congressional committees make accusations, they are more damaging to presidential approval than when identical accusations come from non-institutional sources. This supports the authors' claim that investigations influence public opinion not merely by generating attention but by conferring institutional legitimacy on allegations of wrongdoing.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We argue that congressional investigations of the executive branch damage the president's support among the public, making investigations a useful tool in interbranch battles" (p. 521).
- "Investigations hold the potential to do more than merely set the agenda by bringing certain facts, disputes, and allegations to light and then keeping them in the public eye. A second key mechanism is that formal committee inquiries imbue such charges with institutional legitimacy" (p. 524).
- "Sustained congressional investigative activity over time has the potential to seriously diminish a president's well of popular support" (p. 526).

### 5.9.6 The Opportunistic President: How US Presidents Determine Their Legislative Programs

Gelman, J., Wilkenfeld, G., & Adler, E. S. (2015). The Opportunistic President: How US Presidents Determine Their Legislative Programs [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/lsq.12080>]. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 40(3), 363–390. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lsq.12080>

**1. Citation key:** gelman\_opportunistic\_2015

**2. Author(s):** Jeremy Gelman, Gilad Wilkenfeld, and E. Scott Adler

**3. Year:** 2015

**4. Publication:** *Legislative Studies Quarterly*

**5. Keywords:** presidential agenda, legislative strategy, congressional constraints, issue salience, policy reauthorization

**6. Summary:** Gelman, Wilkenfeld, and Adler examine how U.S. presidents determine their legislative agendas, challenging traditional theories that emphasize ideological priorities, electoral mandates, or political capital. Instead, they argue that presidents act as "pragmatic opportunists" who structure their policy programs around legislative opportunities, particularly expiring laws and salient policy issues. Using a dataset covering presidential legislative requests from 1981 to 2008 across 12 policy areas, the authors find that presidents prioritize issues that Congress is already likely to consider, rather than simply advancing their own independent preferences.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose that presidential agenda-setting is primarily structured by external constraints rather than internal preferences. They reject the notion that presidents autonomously shape their policy programs based on

personal ideological commitments, campaign promises, or political capital. Instead, they argue that presidents strategically align their proposals with congressional legislative cycles and public concern. Two primary forces drive this behavior: (1) *legislative reauthorizations*, which create predictable agenda space as existing laws approach expiration, and (2) *issue salience*, where presidents respond to heightened public concern over specific policy areas. By leveraging these external factors, presidents maximize the likelihood that their proposals will receive congressional consideration, rather than wasting resources on issues unlikely to advance. This theory challenges conventional accounts that treat presidential initiative as the primary driver of the policy process, suggesting instead that presidents react to pre-existing legislative and public dynamics.

8. **Methods:** The authors employ a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative analysis of presidential policy proposals with Granger causality tests. They construct a dataset of presidential legislative requests from 1981 to 2008 using the *Public Papers of the President* and categorize them into 12 major policy areas. They measure *legislative reauthorizations* by tracking the number of expiring programs in a given year, identified using the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*. *Issue salience* is measured using Gallup's "Most Important Problem" polling data. The authors use a panel negative binomial regression model with fixed effects to assess whether expiring laws and issue salience predict the number of presidential proposals in each policy area. To address endogeneity concerns, they conduct Granger causality tests to determine whether presidential proposals shape public concern or vice versa.

9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Presidents will increase their legislative proposals in policy areas where existing programs are set to expire.
- As public concern over an issue increases, presidents will introduce more legislative requests in that policy area.
- The effect of legislative reauthorizations and issue salience on presidential agenda-setting will be stronger than the influence of campaign promises or presidential capital.

The findings strongly confirm the first two hypotheses. The authors find a significant positive relationship between the number of expiring programs in a policy area and the number of presidential proposals. Similarly, increases in public concern over an issue lead to a higher number of presidential legislative requests. In contrast, traditional explanations—such as presidential approval ratings, divided government, and electoral mandates—show no consistent effect on agenda-setting. While campaign promises influence presidential priorities to some extent, their effect is marginal compared to structural legislative opportunities.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds that presidential agenda-setting is highly responsive to legislative and public dynamics, rather than driven primarily by ideological priorities or electoral considerations. Presidents strategically align their proposals with issues Congress is already likely to debate, allowing them to exert influence within pre-existing legislative opportunities rather than initiating new ones. The data reveal that an increase of 12 expiring laws in a policy domain leads to an 8% increase in presidential proposals, while heightened public concern in a policy area nearly triples the number of presidential legislative requests. The results contradict conventional accounts that attribute agenda-setting to presidential ideology or political capital; instead, they suggest that presidents act as pragmatic legislators who respond to institutional and public constraints. Even during periods of divided government or low presidential approval, the size and structure of the presidential program remain stable, underscoring the importance of exogenous legislative factors in shaping presidential priorities.

11. **Key quotations:**

- "Presidents act strategically by focusing on legislation that Congress is likely to consider anyway, establishing their position at the outset of legislative bargaining" (p. 364).
- "Our findings suggest the concept of presidential influence needs additional refining. Rather than being endowed with a privileged, first-mover position, presidents cultivate that role by molding their program around specific issues" (p. 385).
- "By adhering to independently created legislative opportunities, administrations choose to constrain themselves in order to maximize their agenda's impact" (p. 385).

### 5.9.7 A Separation-of-Powers Approach to the Supreme Court's Shrinking Caseload

Lane, E. A. (2022). A Separation-of-Powers Approach to the Supreme Court's Shrinking Caseload. *Journal of Law and Courts*, 10(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1086/714086>

1. **Citation key:** lane\_separation--powers\_2022
2. **Author(s):** Elizabeth A. Lane
3. **Year:** 2022
4. **Publication:** Journal of Law and Courts
5. **Keywords:** supreme court, separation of powers, judicial behavior, congressional constraints, strategic decision-making
6. **Summary:** Lane examines the declining caseload of the U.S. Supreme Court, which has nearly halved since the late 1980s. While previous scholarship has primarily attributed this decline to institutional factors such as the certiorari pool or personnel changes, Lane argues that political constraints imposed by the legislative and executive branches also play a significant role. She provides a systematic analysis of how interbranch strategic considerations influence the Court's agenda-setting behavior, finding that justices reduce the number of cases they hear when facing a constraining political environment.
7. **Theory:** Lane theorizes that Supreme Court justices behave strategically when selecting cases for review, taking into

account the political preferences of the legislative and executive branches to avoid potential retribution. Drawing from separation-of-powers (SOP) literature, she argues that justices anticipate Congress's and the president's responses to Court decisions and adjust their behavior accordingly. When the political branches are ideologically opposed to the Court's median justice, justices become more selective in granting certiorari, reducing the number of cases heard each term. This behavior is driven by concerns over Court-curbing legislation, statutory overrides, and presidential non-compliance. Lane builds on previous SOP models by demonstrating that the Court's docket is not determined solely by internal factors but is also constrained by external political dynamics, particularly during periods of ideological hostility between the branches.

**8. Methods:** Lane analyzes Supreme Court docket trends from 1951 to 2016, using a negative binomial regression model to assess the impact of political constraints on the number of cases granted certiorari. She constructs a continuous measure of SOP constraint based on the ideological distance between the Court median and key institutional actors, including the chamber medians in Congress and the president. She also controls for institutional factors such as the Case Selections Act of 1988, personnel changes, and judicial ideology. Additionally, Lane conducts a series of robustness checks using alternative models of constraint (e.g., veto-filibuster and party gatekeeping models) to ensure the consistency of her findings.

**9. Hypotheses:** The author hypothesizes that:

- The Supreme Court will hear fewer cases per term when faced with a high level of ideological constraint from Congress and the president.
- The influence of SOP constraints will be robust across different measures of political constraint, including chamber medians, veto pivots, and party leadership models.
- The effect of SOP constraint on docket size will persist even after controlling for institutional changes within the Court, such as the expansion of discretionary review.

The findings strongly support these hypotheses. Lane demonstrates that when the Court is ideologically constrained by the elected branches, it hears significantly fewer cases. This effect remains consistent across multiple specifications of constraint. The results also show that interbranch constraints have a larger impact on the Court's agenda-setting behavior than commonly cited internal factors, such as certiorari pool dynamics or personnel shifts.

**10. Main findings:** Lane finds that Supreme Court justices strategically limit their docket size in response to political constraints from Congress and the president. During periods of high constraint, the Court avoids hearing an estimated 12 cases per term—equivalent to nearly 10% of its modern docket. This suggests that the Court's shrinking caseload is not merely a function of internal institutional shifts but also reflects justices' concerns about interbranch conflict. Lane's findings contribute to the broader literature on judicial independence by demonstrating that the Court's agenda-setting process is influenced by the separation-of-powers system. Importantly, her results indicate that justices anticipate and respond to potential retaliatory actions from the elected branches, highlighting the Court's vulnerability to external political pressures.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "I provide the first systematic examination of how extrastitutional influences affect the size of the Court's caseload. The results suggest that a constraining political environment significantly reduces the number of cases the justices agree to hear each term" (p. 2).
- "During times of extrastitutional ideological constraint, the results suggest that Supreme Court justices avoid as many as 12 cases. In an era in which the Court hears only 70 or so cases per term, even a single case has the potential to create profound legal, political, or social policy change" (p. 3).
- "Fear of retribution via Court-curbing legislation or being overturned by Congress and the president leads to the avoidance of one to two terms' worth of cases left unheard by the Supreme Court" (p. 8).

## 5.10 Miscellaneous Topics in Congress

### 5.10.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The following section contains a series of texts without clear thematic linkages other than that they relate directly to the U.S. Congress. These are still important texts that should be noted regardless. Topics covered in this section include: methodological advancements, committee structure, electoral behavior, and gender. The final of these topics relates more to behavior than mere representation considering the texts included in this section.

### 5.10.2 A Bayesian Hierarchical Topic Model for Political Texts: Measuring Expressed Agendas in Senate Press Releases

Grimmer, J. (2010). A Bayesian Hierarchical Topic Model for Political Texts: Measuring Expressed Agendas in Senate Press Releases. *Political Analysis*, 18(1), 1–35. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mpp034>

1. **Citation key:** grimmer\_bayesian\_2010
2. **Author(s):** Justin Grimmer
3. **Year:** 2010
4. **Publication:** Political Analysis
5. **Keywords:** Bayesian hierarchical models, topic modeling, congressional communication, unsupervised learning, legislative representation
6. **Summary:** Grimmer introduces a Bayesian hierarchical topic model—the expressed agenda model—designed to measure the priorities legislators articulate in public statements. Applying the model to a dataset of over 24,000 Senate

press releases from 2007, he demonstrates that the approach captures how senators communicate with constituents. Unlike traditional topic models, this method accounts for the hierarchical structure of legislative communication, treating each senator as a distinct author with unique but comparable issue priorities. The expressed agenda model enables large-scale analysis of legislative rhetoric, allowing researchers to systematically investigate theories of political representation and congressional communication.

7. **Theory:** Grimmer builds on theories of political representation and home style (Fenno 1978) by conceptualizing senators' public statements as a form of strategic agenda-setting. He argues that press releases serve as a critical mechanism through which legislators frame their work to constituents, selectively emphasizing certain topics while avoiding others. This rhetorical agenda-setting is both a function of electoral incentives and institutional constraints, with senators using their public statements to shape perceptions of their priorities. Traditional methods for analyzing congressional communication, such as manual content analysis, are costly and impractical at scale. Existing unsupervised learning models, though useful, fail to account for the hierarchical nature of political communication, where statements are nested within individual legislators. The expressed agenda model is designed to overcome these limitations by simultaneously identifying topics and measuring how much attention individual legislators allocate to each topic. By incorporating Bayesian inference and variational methods, the model provides an efficient and scalable approach to measuring political communication, facilitating new insights into how legislators explain their work to the public.
8. **Methods:** Grimmer employs a Bayesian hierarchical topic model to analyze senators' expressed agendas. The model estimates the probability that each press release belongs to a given topic while incorporating author-level information to measure senators' issue emphasis. The dataset consists of 24,000 press releases collected from Senate offices in 2007. The preprocessing step removes stopwords, stems words, and normalizes text. The model assigns each document to one of 43 estimated topics based on probabilistic clustering, using a von Mises-Fisher distribution to account for the unit-length nature of the text data. A Dirichlet prior is imposed on each senator's topic distribution to allow for partial pooling across legislators. The posterior distributions of senators' issue priorities are estimated using variational inference, which approximates the posterior analytically rather than relying on computationally intensive Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) methods. The resulting estimates provide a probabilistic measure of the extent to which each senator emphasizes particular policy areas in their press releases.
9. **Hypotheses:** The study hypothesizes that the expressed agenda model can systematically measure senators' rhetorical priorities and that these priorities will align with legislative behavior and electoral incentives. The findings support this hypothesis, demonstrating that senators' expressed agendas correlate with policy activity and strategic electoral considerations.
10. **Main findings:** Grimmer finds that senators' press releases are a powerful tool for shaping public perceptions of their legislative priorities. The expressed agenda model successfully identifies distinct policy topics and measures how much attention each senator devotes to them. Results indicate that senators strategically emphasize certain issues while downplaying others, often in ways that align with their partisan and electoral incentives. Senators from competitive states tend to emphasize broad, salient issues, while those from safe seats focus more on specialized policy areas. Additionally, press releases are frequently republished in local newspapers, suggesting that they play a significant role in shaping media coverage of legislative activity. The findings highlight the importance of rhetorical agenda-setting in congressional representation and demonstrate the value of computational text analysis in political science.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "I introduce a statistical model to measure the priorities political actors articulate in texts, which I apply to measure how legislators explain their work to constituents. The expressed agenda model incorporates information about the authors of texts and other covariates to create a method explicitly designed to measure how legislators articulate priorities to constituents" (p. 1).
- "Understanding the contents of these portrayals are critical to understanding home style and are inherently important to explaining how legislators maintain their connection with constituents" (p. 2).
- "By measuring how legislators explain their work in Washington to constituents, the model and data set provide powerful tools for understanding how political representation operates in America" (p. 3).

#### 5.10.3 Examining the Electoral Connection Across Time

Carson, J. L., & Jenkins, J. A. (2011). Examining the Electoral Connection Across Time. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 14(1), 25–46. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-030310-221852>

1. **Citation key:** carson\_examining\_2011
2. **Author(s):** Jamie L. Carson and Jeffery A. Jenkins
3. **Year:** 2011
4. **Publication:** Annual Review of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** Congress, ambition, accountability, autonomy, responsiveness
6. **Summary:** Carson and Jenkins investigate the applicability of David Mayhew's (1974) concept of the "electoral connection" across different historical periods of the U.S. Congress. They challenge the conventional view that the electoral incentive primarily applies to the contemporary, post-World War II era. By systematically examining four foundational conditions—ambition, autonomy, responsiveness, and accountability—they argue that these components were present in varying forms as far back as the Progressive Era, and potentially earlier. Their study contributes to a deeper understanding of how electoral incentives have shaped legislative behavior over time.

7. **Theory:** Carson and Jenkins revisit Mayhew's theoretical framework, arguing that while his concept of the electoral connection is largely associated with the modern Congress, its core principles extend across historical periods. They contend that the connection between legislators and their constituents, driven by reelection motives, has deep roots in American political development. By examining ambition, autonomy, responsiveness, and accountability, they assert that these elements are not exclusive to the contemporary Congress but have evolved in response to institutional changes and electoral reforms, such as the adoption of the Australian ballot and the direct primary system. The authors suggest that these reforms enhanced the individual electoral accountability of legislators, gradually transforming congressional careers from short-term pursuits to longer, more professional engagements. Carson and Jenkins argue that even in earlier periods, congressional members exhibited behaviors aligned with the electoral connection—engaging in credit claiming, position taking, and advertising to solidify their political standing.
8. **Methods:** The authors conduct a comprehensive literature review, synthesizing historical studies and empirical evidence spanning from the early 19th century to the present. They explore case studies of electoral reforms, such as the Australian ballot and direct primaries, to trace the evolution of electoral accountability. They also analyze data on congressional careers, including term lengths, turnover rates, and patterns of legislative behavior. By comparing these historical patterns with modern congressional practices, they identify continuities and shifts in the electoral connection.
9. **Hypotheses:** Carson and Jenkins hypothesize that the foundational conditions of the electoral connection—ambition, autonomy, responsiveness, and accountability—have been present across different eras of congressional history, albeit in varying degrees. Their analysis confirms this hypothesis, showing that while these conditions were more formalized in the modern era, elements of the electoral connection existed even in earlier periods.
10. **Main findings:** Carson and Jenkins find that the electoral connection, as theorized by Mayhew, extends beyond the contemporary Congress. They demonstrate that electoral incentives influenced legislative behavior as early as the Progressive Era, driven by institutional changes that allowed for greater individual accountability. The shift from party-centered to candidate-centered elections—facilitated by reforms like the Australian ballot—enabled voters to reward or punish individual legislators, fostering a stronger electoral connection. Their findings suggest that ambition and the pursuit of reelection have consistently motivated congressional behavior, with legislators engaging in credit claiming and position taking to appeal to constituents. Furthermore, they argue that the gradual professionalization of Congress, marked by longer tenures and careerism, reflects an enduring electoral connection that transcends specific historical periods.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "We discover that all four conditions were present in a strict sense as far back as the Progressive Era. Moreover, considerable evidence suggests that a weaker, less formalized version of the electoral connection existed even earlier in American history" (p. 25).
  - "Ambition, autonomy, responsiveness, and accountability serve as the building blocks of the electoral connection and have shaped legislative behavior across time" (p. 26).
  - "By clearly identifying the critical domains of the modern electoral connection, we can trace out its historical progression and pinpoint changes that were significant to its development" (p. 27).

#### 5.10.4 Cue-Taking in Congress: Interest Group Signals from Dear Colleague Letters

Box-Steffensmeier, J. M., Christenson, D. P., & Craig, A. W. (2019). Cue-Taking in Congress: Interest Group Signals from Dear Colleague Letters [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12399>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(1), 163–180. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12399>

1. **Citation key:** box-steffensmeier\_cue-taking\_2019
2. **Author(s):** Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Dino P. Christenson, and Alison W. Craig
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** Congress, interest groups, legislative process, Dear Colleague letters, policy signals
6. **Summary:** Box-Steffensmeier, Christenson, and Craig examine the role of interest groups in shaping legislative behavior through their endorsements in *Dear Colleague* letters. These letters serve as an important source of policy information for members of Congress, particularly in the early stages of the legislative process. The authors argue that endorsements from well-connected interest groups provide crucial signals that influence which bills receive cosponsorship and legislative momentum. Their analysis highlights how different types of endorsements affect legislative success across multiple stages of the policy process.
7. **Theory:** The authors theorize that legislators rely on external signals from interest groups to make informed decisions under conditions of limited time and expertise. They argue that *Dear Colleague* letters function as an efficient mechanism for information transmission, allowing members of Congress to assess the political and policy implications of legislation quickly. Drawing on theories of legislative behavior and cue-taking, they propose that endorsements from socially powerful interest groups carry disproportionate influence early in the legislative process, when members are deciding which bills to cosponsor. Later in the process, however, the total number of endorsements, rather than any single group's influence, becomes a stronger predictor of success. This distinction aligns with existing theories of legislative coalition-building, where early-stage decisions prioritize informational efficiency, while later stages emphasize broad support. The study also builds on prior research on lobbying and policy networks, suggesting that well-connected organizations act as legislative gatekeepers, filtering which bills gain traction in Congress.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a novel dataset of nearly 100,000 electronic *Dear Colleague* letters from members of Congress between 1999 and 2010. Using computational text analysis and network modeling, the authors identify interest group endorsements within these letters and examine their impact on legislative outcomes. They merge this data with the Congressional Bills Project to assess bill progression through three key stages: the number of cosponsors, committee reporting, and passage in the House. To measure the influence of interest groups, they construct a network-based indicator of social power using eigenvector centrality, capturing the connectivity of each organization within the broader advocacy community. Statistical analyses, including negative binomial and logistic regression models, test the effects of these endorsements while controlling for institutional and member-level characteristics such as majority party status, seniority, and ideological extremity.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Endorsements from well-connected interest groups provide stronger signals to members of Congress in the early stages of the legislative process.
- The influence of a single well-connected interest group declines in later stages, where the total number of endorsing organizations becomes a stronger predictor of legislative success.
- Interest group endorsements increase the likelihood of a bill gaining cosponsors, advancing through committee, and passing on the House floor.

The findings support these hypotheses, demonstrating that interest group endorsements significantly affect legislative outcomes. In the early stages, an endorsement from a socially powerful group increases cosponsorship rates, whereas later stages require broad coalition support. Bills backed by a larger number of interest groups are more likely to reach the floor and pass, suggesting that while individual influence matters early, collective advocacy determines final success.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that legislators rely heavily on interest group signals when deciding which bills to support, particularly in the absence of detailed policy knowledge. Endorsements from well-connected groups strongly influence cosponsorship decisions, indicating that members use these signals to quickly assess the viability of proposed legislation. However, as bills progress through the legislative process, the sheer number of supporting organizations becomes a more important determinant of success. The results show that a bill endorsed by a single high-centrality organization gains significantly more cosponsors than one endorsed by several low-centrality groups. By contrast, in later stages, the number of interest groups backing a bill predicts its likelihood of passing. This shift suggests a strategic interplay between elite signals and mass coalition-building in congressional policymaking. The findings underscore the institutional constraints legislators face, highlighting how external actors shape the legislative agenda through well-timed endorsements.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Endorsements from groups that are more well connected within the advocacy community send stronger signals in the earliest stages of the legislative process when there are a large number of bills competing for a member’s attention and limited information about their likely impact” (p. 164).
- “While a single endorsement from a well-connected organization is highly influential at the cosponsorship stage, broad coalitional support is a better predictor of legislative success as bills advance” (p. 167).
- “The ability of interest groups to shape congressional action is conditioned by both their network position and the strategic timing of their engagement in the legislative process” (p. 172).

#### 5.10.5 Women's Representation and the Gendered Pipeline to Power

Thomsen, D. M., & King, A. S. (2020). Women's Representation and the Gendered Pipeline to Power. *American Political Science Review*, 114(4), 989–1000. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000404>

**1. Citation key:** thomsen\_womens\_2020

**2. Author(s):** Danielle M. Thomsen and Aaron S. King

**3. Year:** 2020

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** women's representation, candidate emergence, gender gap, political ambition, Republican women

**6. Summary:** Thomsen and King examine the gendered pipeline to political office in the United States, arguing that the primary reason for women's underrepresentation in elected office is not just that women are less likely to run, but that they are significantly underrepresented in the professions and networks that feed into politics. The authors analyze three potential candidate pools—state legislators, individuals identified in newspapers as likely Senate candidates, and lawyers who contribute to campaigns—to assess both the rate at which men and women enter electoral contests and the gender composition of the eligibility pool itself. They find that even if women ran at the same rate as men, the gender disparity in candidates would persist due to the heavily male-dominated nature of traditional pathways to office. This imbalance is particularly stark among Republican women, who would need to be five to six times more likely to run than Republican men to achieve gender parity in candidacies.

**7. Theory:** The authors challenge the dominant explanation for women's underrepresentation—that women are less politically ambitious than men—and instead emphasize the structural constraints imposed by the gendered nature of candidate pipelines. They argue that traditional pathways to office (e.g., state legislatures, law, business) remain overwhelmingly male, meaning that even equal rates of entry for men and women would not lead to parity in candidacies. This perspective departs from existing research that focuses on individual-level political ambition, showing

instead that systemic barriers play a greater role in limiting women's access to elected office. Thomsen and King further contend that addressing gender imbalances in candidate pools requires institutional changes, such as targeted recruitment efforts and expanding occupational pathways into politics. Their analysis also underscores a partisan asymmetry: while Democratic women have made significant gains in recent years, Republican women face an even steeper uphill battle due to a smaller and less supportive candidate pipeline within their party.

**8. Methods:** The authors utilize three unique datasets to analyze candidate emergence. First, they examine a dataset of 30,000 state legislators from 2000 to 2010 to assess progressive ambition among officeholders. Second, they analyze 3,000 individuals identified in local and statewide newspapers as likely Senate candidates between 1994 and 2010. Third, they leverage a dataset of nearly 400,000 lawyers who made political contributions, allowing them to track individuals who are well-positioned to run for office. Across these datasets, they measure rates of entry into electoral contests while accounting for partisan differences. They use statistical models, including logistic regression, to assess whether women are systematically less likely to run than men after controlling for relevant factors. Additionally, they calculate counterfactual scenarios to estimate how much more likely women would need to run in order to match the number of male candidates.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Women are less likely to run for office than men, but this disparity alone does not fully account for their underrepresentation.
- The gender imbalance in the eligibility pool—rather than differences in political ambition—plays a larger role in shaping women's underrepresentation.
- Republican women face greater structural barriers to candidacy than Democratic women due to their party's narrower pipeline.

The findings confirm these hypotheses. While women exhibit slightly lower rates of entry into political races, the primary barrier to gender parity is the heavily male-dominated nature of the eligibility pool. Republican women, in particular, face a stark disadvantage, as they would need to run at rates five to six times higher than their male counterparts to match the number of male candidates.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that gender disparities in candidacies are primarily driven by the composition of the eligibility pool rather than differences in ambition or willingness to run. Even if women entered races at the same rate as men, the vast overrepresentation of men in traditional candidate pipelines means that male candidates would still far outnumber female candidates. The gender disparity is most extreme among Republicans, as Democratic women now make up a substantial share of their party's candidate pipeline, while Republican women remain severely underrepresented. The authors suggest that addressing this imbalance requires targeted interventions, such as expanding recruitment efforts for women in male-dominated professions and broadening the occupational pathways to office beyond law and business. They also highlight the role of party structures, noting that Democratic organizations have been more proactive in supporting female candidates than their Republican counterparts. Ultimately, their findings underscore that women's underrepresentation in American politics is as much a structural issue as it is an individual one.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "For the gender disparity in candidates to close, women have to be far more likely to run for office than men, particularly on the Republican side" (p. 989).
- "Even if women were as likely to run as men, the likelihood that a candidate would be a woman is low due to the much smaller number of women in the pool" (p. 992).
- "The upshot is that women need to have higher levels of political ambition, lower levels of election aversion, and be more likely to be recruited than men to reach gender parity" (p. 997).

#### 5.10.6 Inside Congressional Committees: Function and Dysfunction in the Legislative Process

Kornberg, M. (2023, February). *Inside Congressional Committees: Function and Dysfunction in the Legislative Process* [Google-Books-ID: 6\_18EAAAQBAJ]. Columbia University Press

**1. Citation key:** kornberg\_inside\_2023

**2. Author(s):** Maya L. Kornberg

**3. Year:** 2023

**4. Publication:** Columbia University Press

**5. Keywords:** Congress, committee hearings, legislative process, congressional dysfunction, institutional reform

**6. Summary:** Kornberg examines the evolving role of congressional committees in the modern legislative process, challenging the prevailing narrative that committees have become irrelevant due to the centralization of power in congressional leadership. She argues that committees remain critical to policymaking, albeit in increasingly constrained ways. Drawing on extensive qualitative research—including interviews, transcripts, and committee records—she identifies key functions of congressional hearings and explores the forces that shape committee effectiveness. Her findings suggest that while committees still serve deliberative, educational, and oversight roles, their ability to craft legislation has diminished due to declining staff expertise and partisan polarization.

**7. Theory:** Kornberg's central argument is that congressional committees continue to serve important, if altered, functions in the legislative process. She contends that committees are not obsolete but rather have adapted to changing institutional dynamics. Drawing on historical institutionalism and congressional scholarship, she theorizes that com-

mittee hearings serve four primary functions: (1) forums for deliberation, (2) educational platforms for members and staff, (3) theatrical stages for partisan grandstanding, and (4) spaces for personal connection and coalition-building. She attributes committee dysfunction to a combination of declining staff expertise, increased reliance on external actors (such as lobbyists and think tanks), and the strategic use of hearings for political messaging rather than substantive policy development. Kornberg further argues that committee effectiveness varies by committee type and partisanship, with bipartisan committees more likely to engage in genuine deliberation, while partisan committees (e.g., Judiciary) use hearings primarily for political spectacle. Her analysis suggests that while committees are less influential in shaping final policy outcomes, they remain central to agenda-setting, oversight, and information-sharing among legislators.

**8. Methods:** Kornberg employs a mixed-methods approach, relying primarily on qualitative data. She conducts in-depth interviews with congressional staff, former legislators, and policy experts to understand how committee hearings are structured and used. She also analyzes committee transcripts, hearing records, and legislative documents to identify patterns in witness selection, agenda-setting, and hearing content. In addition to these textual sources, she uses observational data to classify hearings based on their primary function. To assess the extent of external influence, she tracks the role of interest groups and lobbyists in shaping hearing agendas and witness lists. The book also engages with congressional staffing data, showing the decline in expert staff over time and its consequences for committee effectiveness.

**9. Hypotheses:** Kornberg hypothesizes that:

- Congressional committees continue to play a meaningful role in the legislative process despite the growing centralization of power in party leadership.
- The effectiveness of committee hearings is shaped by institutional factors, including staff expertise, partisan composition, and external influence from interest groups.
- Committees serve distinct functions—deliberative, educational, theatrical, and personal connection—that vary based on partisanship, legislative priorities, and the nature of the issue at hand.
- The decline in congressional staff expertise has increased the influence of external actors, such as lobbyists and interest groups, in shaping committee agendas and witness selection.

The findings support these hypotheses. Kornberg demonstrates that while committees no longer hold the same policymaking power they once did, they remain crucial venues for legislative deliberation and oversight. Institutional constraints—particularly the decline in expert staff—have led committees to rely more heavily on external actors, reinforcing concerns about legislative capacity. Additionally, her analysis of hearing transcripts confirms that committees fulfill different roles depending on their partisan composition and the political salience of their work. The study also finds that bipartisan committees are more likely to foster meaningful deliberation, whereas partisan committees tend to stage hearings for political theater.

**10. Main findings:** Kornberg finds that congressional committees, despite their diminished role in direct policymaking, continue to serve critical functions in the legislative process. She identifies four primary types of committee hearings: (1) deliberative hearings that promote substantive discussion, (2) educational hearings that provide members with policy expertise, (3) theatrical hearings designed for partisan messaging, and (4) hearings that facilitate personal connections among members. The study demonstrates that committee effectiveness is contingent on institutional design, with bipartisan committees more likely to conduct deliberative hearings while partisan committees engage in grandstanding. The decline in professional staff, particularly expert staff, has exacerbated committee dysfunction by increasing reliance on interest groups and external actors to structure hearings and provide policy information. Kornberg argues that institutional reforms—such as restoring expert staff, reducing the number of televised hearings to curb theatricality, and implementing bipartisan agenda-setting meetings—could enhance committee effectiveness and restore legislative capacity. While she remains cautiously optimistic about Congress's ability to reform itself, she acknowledges that the conditions that have weakened committees persist, making meaningful change difficult.

**11. Key definitions:**

- *Deliberative hearings:* Committee sessions designed to foster substantive debate, policy refinement, and problem-solving among legislators.
- *Theatrical hearings:* Highly publicized committee sessions primarily used for partisan messaging and political posturing rather than genuine policymaking.
- *Oversight function:* The role of congressional committees in monitoring executive agencies, ensuring compliance with legislative intent, and investigating misconduct.
- *Committee agenda-setting:* The process by which committee chairs and members determine hearing topics, select witnesses, and prioritize issues for legislative action.
- *Staff expertise:* The level of professional experience and subject-matter knowledge possessed by congressional staff, which has declined in recent decades.

#### 5.10.7 Competition in Congressional Elections: Money versus Votes

Thomsen, D. M. (2023). Competition in Congressional Elections: Money versus Votes. *American Political Science Review*, 117(2), 675–691. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422000764>

1. **Citation key:** thomsen\_competition\_2023
2. **Author(s):** Danielle M. Thomsen
3. **Year:** 2023

4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** electoral competition, fundraising, congressional primaries, campaign finance, candidate viability
6. **Summary:** Thomsen examines the extent to which different measures of competition in congressional elections—fundraising versus vote share—offer divergent perspectives on the nature of primary contests in the United States. Using data on preelection campaign receipts from U.S. House primaries spanning 1980 to 2020, she argues that electoral competition appears significantly weaker when measured by fundraising rather than by vote share. The study demonstrates that resource disparities play a crucial role in structuring primary competition and that traditional vote-share metrics obscure the financial barriers that many candidates face. Open-seat primaries, typically considered the most competitive contests, exhibit the largest disparity between vote-share-based and fundraising-based measures, suggesting that many candidates who appear competitive by vote share are not financially viable.
7. **Theory:** Thomsen theorizes that competition in congressional elections is systematically underestimated when scholars rely solely on vote-share-based measures. She argues that vote shares do not capture disparities in candidate resources, which are essential for running a viable campaign. Drawing on research on campaign finance and electoral competition, she contends that preprimary fundraising functions as a heuristic for candidate viability and is a strong predictor of electoral success. Candidates who raise more money can afford advertising, staff, and outreach efforts that improve their chances of victory, while underfunded candidates—even those who perform relatively well in vote shares—are typically nonviable. Thomsen identifies two key dimensions of electoral competition: (1) the extent to which elections are financially competitive (i.e., the top fundraiser's advantage) and (2) the number of candidates who are genuinely viable (measured through preprimary fundraising). She further argues that the gap between vote-share and fundraising measures is most pronounced in open-seat races because these contests attract a larger pool of long-shot candidates who fail to raise significant funds. Ultimately, her theoretical framework challenges the assumption that a high number of candidates necessarily indicates a competitive primary and underscores the importance of resource disparities in shaping electoral dynamics.
8. **Methods:** Thomsen employs a mixed-methods approach, relying on a dataset of more than 16,000 U.S. House primaries from 1980 to 2020. Her primary dependent variables include both traditional vote-share-based measures of competition (e.g., whether the top vote-getter received less than 57.5% of the vote) and new fundraising-based measures (e.g., whether the top fundraiser raised less than 57.5% of preprimary receipts). She also constructs a measure of the “effective number of candidates” based on both vote shares and fundraising data to compare the distribution of resources across candidates. The independent variables include district-level partisan composition, candidate incumbency status, and primary type (open-seat, incumbent-contested, and challenger-party primaries). She employs regression models with district and year fixed effects to account for contextual variation in electoral competitiveness over time. Additionally, she conducts robustness checks by examining the role of candidate dropouts and the extent to which the financial viability of candidates correlates with general election outcomes.
9. **Hypotheses:** Thomsen hypothesizes that:
  - The degree of competition in congressional primaries is lower when measured by fundraising rather than by vote share.
  - Open-seat primaries exhibit the largest gap between vote-share and fundraising measures of competition due to the presence of long-shot candidates with minimal financial resources.
  - The number of viable candidates (measured through fundraising) is consistently lower than the number of candidates on the ballot, particularly in primaries with strong partisan imbalances.
  - The probability that a primary is competitive in vote-share terms but not in fundraising terms increases with the number of financially nonviable candidates in the race.The findings strongly support these hypotheses. Thomsen shows that while traditional vote-share metrics suggest that primaries are highly competitive, fundraising measures reveal significant resource disparities that limit the viability of many candidates. Open-seat primaries, in particular, display the widest discrepancy between the two measures, as they often feature numerous candidates who attract few financial resources but manage to secure a non-negligible share of the vote. The study also finds that the effective number of candidates is significantly lower when measured using fundraising data, demonstrating that many primaries that appear competitive on the surface are, in reality, dominated by one or two well-funded contenders.
10. **Main findings:** Thomsen finds that vote-share-based measures systematically overstate the level of competition in congressional primaries compared to fundraising-based measures. Across all primary types, the probability of a race being competitive drops significantly when assessed through fundraising, with the sharpest decline occurring in open-seat primaries. She shows that the presence of long-shot candidates—who raise little or no money but still secure votes—accounts for much of this discrepancy. On average, these candidates receive 15% of the vote while raising less than 10% of preprimary receipts, distorting perceptions of primary competitiveness. The study also reveals that the effective number of candidates is nearly halved when measured using fundraising rather than vote share, highlighting the concentration of financial resources among a few viable contenders. Thomsen argues that these findings have significant implications for how scholars and practitioners interpret competition in American elections, emphasizing that financial viability is a crucial but often overlooked determinant of candidate success. She concludes that future research on electoral competition should incorporate both vote-share and fundraising measures to provide a more accurate picture of candidate viability.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “When the quality of primary competition is viewed through a fundraising lens, it looks markedly worse than

recent research suggests" (p. 677).

- "The number of candidates decreases by nearly half in safe districts and by 40% in competitive districts when competition is measured by receipts rather than votes" (p. 678).
- "Fundraising is at least as good a predictor of outcomes as previous political experience, the most commonly used measure of candidate quality" (p. 680).

### 5.10.8 Anchoring or Expanding? Gender and Judicial Nominations

King, J. M., Schoenherr, J. A., & Ostrander, I. (2024). Anchoring or Expanding? Gender and Judicial Nominations. *Political Research Quarterly*, 10659129241290211. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129241290211>

1. **Citation key:** king\_anchoring\_2024
2. **Author(s):** Jonathan M. King, Jessica A. Schoenherr, and Ian Ostrander
3. **Year:** 2024
4. **Publication:** Political Research Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** judicial nominations, representation, gender diversity, Senate, partisan politics
6. **Summary:** King, Schoenherr, and Ostrander analyze the role of gender in federal judicial nominations, focusing on the diverging strategies of Democratic and Republican presidents in diversifying the bench. They distinguish between two approaches: "anchoring," where presidents replace female judges with other women, and "expanding," where presidents actively increase gender diversity across judicial appointments. Using data on district and circuit court nominations from 1981 to 2022, they find that Republican presidents tend to anchor women to specific seats, whereas Democratic presidents expand diversity by nominating women to any available seat. Additionally, Senate composition influences the nomination process, with female senators increasing the likelihood that women are nominated to courts within their states.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that judicial diversification occurs within a framework shaped by partisan incentives, institutional constraints, and electoral considerations. Presidents face trade-offs when nominating judges: they seek to shape the judiciary ideologically while also responding to demands for increased representation. The authors posit that Democratic and Republican presidents follow distinct strategies due to their electoral constituencies. Democrats, who appeal to identity-based coalitions, have stronger incentives to broadly diversify the bench, while Republicans prioritize ideological purity over descriptive representation. As a result, Republican presidents often "anchor" diversity by replacing women with women rather than expanding it, thereby maintaining the ideological composition of the courts without fundamentally altering their demographic makeup. This strategy aligns with Republican voters' and elites' preferences for judicial conservatism over diversity. The authors further argue that the presence of female senators facilitates judicial diversification, as they play a role in recommending female candidates to fill vacancies within their states. This dynamic suggests that gender representation in one institution (the Senate) influences representation in another (the judiciary), creating a broader institutional effect.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a logistic regression analysis of 2,289 formal presidential nominations to federal district and circuit courts from the Reagan administration (1981) through Biden's first term (2022). The dependent variable is whether the nominee is a woman, and key independent variables include the gender of the judge being replaced, the party of the nominating president, and the gender composition of the relevant Senate delegation. The authors use interaction terms to assess whether partisan differences shape nomination patterns, controlling for factors such as partisan alignment between the president and Senate delegation, prior nomination failures, judicial vacancy length, and the proportion of female judges on the relevant court. The analysis separates district and circuit courts, acknowledging procedural differences in how nominees are selected and confirmed. The authors also employ first-difference estimations to compare the probabilities of female nominations under different conditions.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Democratic presidents will nominate women to any available judicial seat, regardless of whether the previous seat-holder was a man or a woman.
  - Republican presidents will be significantly more likely to nominate a woman to a seat previously held by a female judge than to a seat previously held by a man, engaging in a strategy of anchoring diversity.
  - The presence of female senators in a state's Senate delegation will increase the likelihood that a woman is nominated to a district court vacancy in that state.
  - Partisan control of the Senate will influence nomination patterns, with presidents more constrained in their diversification efforts when facing an opposition-controlled Senate.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that while both parties express a commitment to judicial diversity, their approaches differ systematically. Democratic presidents consistently nominate women at higher rates than Republican presidents and do so broadly across all available vacancies. Republican presidents, in contrast, engage in "anchoring" by replacing female judges with other women but show little inclination to nominate women to seats vacated by men. The findings strongly support the hypotheses. Democratic presidents show no significant difference in their likelihood of nominating a woman based on the gender of the previous judge, while Republican presidents are significantly more likely to replace female judges with female nominees but less likely to nominate women to seats previously held by men. Additionally, the presence of female senators in a state significantly increases the likelihood of a female district court nominee. However, this effect is not observed for circuit court nominations, likely due to the weaker influence of home-state senators on appellate nominations.

probability of a woman being nominated to a district court seat increases by approximately 6 percentage points when the relevant Senate delegation includes at least one female senator, underscoring the role of female legislators in shaping judicial diversity. These findings challenge prior assumptions that both parties have adopted similar strategies for diversifying the bench, highlighting the partisan asymmetry in approaches to gender representation in judicial appointments. The authors conclude that diversification within the judiciary is not simply a linear progression but is conditioned by partisan strategies, institutional structures, and broader political dynamics.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “Democratic presidents are as likely to nominate a woman to a circuit court vacancy previously held by a man as they are to nominate one to a vacancy previously held by a woman. In contrast, Republican presidents are significantly more likely to nominate a woman only when the previous judge was female” (p. 7).
- “The number of women nominated to district courts increases when a female senator is present in the relevant Senate delegation, demonstrating that representation in one branch of government influences representation in another” (p. 10).
- “Republican presidents appear to have embraced a strategy of maintaining, rather than expanding, judicial diversity—ensuring that women continue to occupy seats previously held by women but not significantly increasing their overall representation” (p. 12).

#### 5.10.9 Evaluating (In)Experience in Congressional Elections

Porter, R., & Treul, S. A. (2025). Evaluating (in)experience in congressional elections [Leprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12854>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 69(1), 284–298. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12854>

1. **Citation key:** porter\_evaluating\_2025
2. **Author(s):** Rachel Porter and Sarah A. Treul
3. **Year:** 2025
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** candidate experience, congressional elections, quality candidates, political outsiders, fundraising
6. **Summary:** Porter and Treul examine the declining advantage of experienced candidates in U.S. congressional elections. While historically, candidates with prior elected experience have enjoyed significant electoral advantages, recent elections suggest that amateurs—those without previous officeholding—are emerging and winning at unprecedented rates. The authors analyze both the emergence patterns of amateur candidates and their electoral success relative to experienced contenders, showing that the conventional benefits of prior officeholding, including fundraising prowess and voter heuristics, have weakened. They attribute these shifts to rising anti-establishment sentiment and changes in the campaign finance environment, which have facilitated the viability of outsider candidates.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that the traditional advantages associated with prior elected experience—such as fundraising capacity, name recognition, and perceived competence—are diminishing in modern congressional elections. Drawing on literature regarding incumbency advantages and candidate quality, they posit that two simultaneous trends have altered the electoral landscape: (1) increased voter distrust in career politicians, leading to greater support for political outsiders, and (2) shifts in campaign financing, particularly the rise of small-dollar online fundraising and outside spending, which enable amateur candidates to compete more effectively against experienced politicians. They theorize that these trends are particularly pronounced in open-seat races, where amateurs are increasingly competitive against experienced candidates. Additionally, they propose that partisanship conditions the success of amateurs, with Republican candidates benefiting more from an outsider identity and Democratic candidates gaining an advantage through identity-based representation, particularly for women and non-white candidates.
8. **Methods:** The authors compile an original dataset of all U.S. House primary and general election candidates from 1980 to 2020 ( $N = 31,106$ ), manually coding each candidate's prior elected experience. Using a combination of descriptive analysis and statistical modeling, they assess (1) changes in the emergence patterns of amateur candidates, (2) shifts in the success rates of experienced versus amateur candidates, and (3) the evolving electoral benefits of traditional indicators of candidate viability, such as fundraising and public service reputation. Their primary models include Poisson regressions estimating candidate emergence, logistic regressions modeling primary election success, and interaction models assessing the conditional effects of gender, race, and fundraising on electoral outcomes. They also employ marginal effects visualizations to illustrate how these trends have evolved over time and how they differ across parties.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - The proportion of amateur candidates emerging in congressional elections has increased over time, particularly in open-seat races.
  - Experienced candidates are no longer significantly more successful in primary elections than amateurs.
  - Fundraising advantages historically enjoyed by experienced candidates have weakened, and in recent elections, amateur candidates are equally or more likely to be top fundraisers.
  - Republican amateur candidates are more likely to win by presenting themselves as political outsiders, while Democratic amateur candidates are more likely to win through descriptive representation appeals (i.e., gender and racial identity).

The findings confirm all hypotheses. Amateur candidates are emerging and winning at historically high rates, espe-

cially in open-seat primaries. The advantages previously associated with prior elected experience—such as stronger fundraising ability—have eroded, with amateur candidates now often outraising their experienced counterparts. Additionally, Republican amateurs benefit from anti-establishment positioning, while Democratic amateurs, particularly women and non-white candidates, have a higher likelihood of success in primary elections.

**10. Main findings:** Porter and Treul demonstrate that the direct and indirect benefits of prior elected experience have substantially declined. In earlier decades, experienced candidates had a significantly higher probability of primary election success, but by the 2010s, this advantage had largely disappeared—especially for Republicans, among whom political outsiders have performed increasingly well. The authors find that amateur candidates are not only more likely to enter races but are also outperforming experienced candidates in fundraising, particularly through small-dollar donations and out-of-district contributions. While experienced candidates once dominated campaign finance, the authors show that amateurs now constitute the majority of top fundraisers. Additionally, they find asymmetric patterns across parties: Republican amateurs frequently campaign as anti-establishment figures, while Democratic amateurs benefit from gender and racial diversity appeals. In recent elections, the majority of female and non-white Democratic candidates who won office lacked prior elected experience, signaling a shift in traditional pathways to congressional representation. The study concludes that declining public trust in career politicians and the changing nature of campaign finance have transformed the way candidates emerge, campaign, and win in congressional elections.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Candidates without prior elected experience are entering the US House of Representatives today at rates not seen since the widespread adoption of primaries” (p. 284).
- “The advantages conventionally afforded to candidates with elective experience are waning. Past research shows that experienced candidates are especially successful at fundraising; this indirect benefit of experience has contributed to experienced candidates’ electoral dominance over amateurs. Our findings, though, indicate that experienced candidates have lost their fundraising edge; the majority of top fundraisers in recent elections are amateurs” (p. 285).
- “The influx of candidates who lack legislative experience may be concerning for the institution as a whole. Existing work shows that politicians with previous legislative experience are especially effective at navigating Congress’s complex policymaking environment. By the same token, amateur politicians may be especially ineffective lawmakers because they lack institutional knowledge and political acumen” (p. 286).

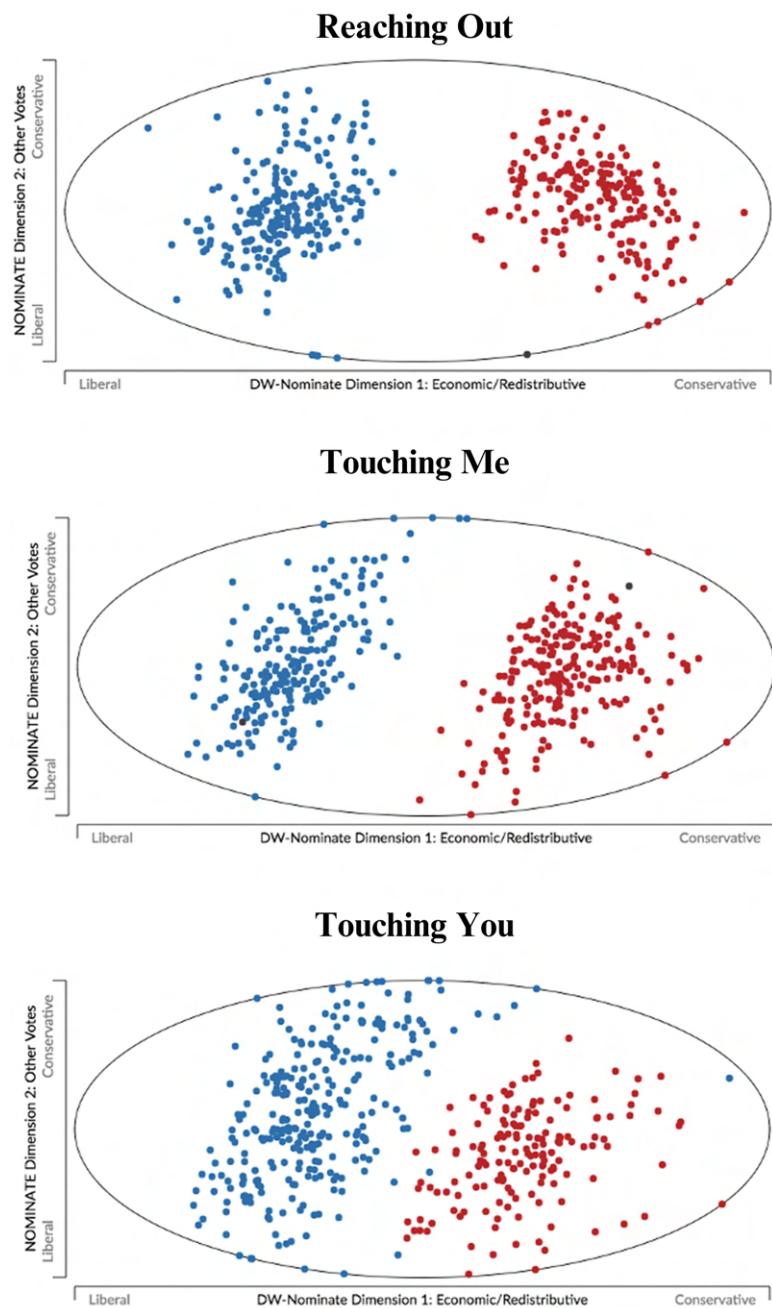


Figure 5.1: Sweet bipartisanship (bah, bah, bah)



## **6 Women in Politics**

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6.1	Introduction . . . . .	612
6.2	Foundations of Women in Politics . . . . .	613
6.2.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	613
6.2.2	Women’s Suffrage in the Measurement of Democracy: Problems of Operationalization . . .	614
6.2.3	Introduction: Gender and Politics: A Gendered World, a Gendered Discipline . . . . .	615
6.2.4	Can We Change How Political Science Thinks? “Gender Mainstreaming” in a Resistant Discipline . . . . .	616
6.2.5	Quantitative Methods and Feminist Political Science . . . . .	617
6.2.6	The Prevalence and Implications of Gender Blindness in Quantitative Political Science Research . . . . .	618
6.3	Candidate Emergence and the Decision to Run for Office . . . . .	619
6.3.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	619
6.3.2	Women Don’t Run? Election Aversion and Candidate Entry . . . . .	620
6.3.3	Stronger Together: Political Ambition and the Presentation of Women Running for Office .	621
6.3.4	To Emerge? Breadwinning, Motherhood, and Women’s Decisions to Run for Office . . . .	622
6.3.5	This One’s for the Boys: How Gendered Political Socialization Limits Girls’ Political Ambition and Interest . . . . .	623
6.4	Political Recruitment and Party Politics . . . . .	624
6.4.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	624
6.4.2	The Primary Reason for Women’s Underrepresentation? Reevaluating the Conventional Wisdom . . . . .	625
6.4.3	How to Elect More Women: Gender and Candidate Success in a Field Experiment . . . .	626
6.4.4	Can’t Buy Them Love: How Party Culture among Donors Contributes to the Party Gap in Women’s Representation . . . . .	627
6.4.5	Do Local Party Chairs Think Women and Minority Candidates Can Win? Evidence from a Conjoint Experiment . . . . .	627
6.4.6	The Emergence and Activities of Women’s Recruiting Groups in the U.S. . . . . .	628
6.4.7	Are Minority and Women Candidates Penalized by Party Politics? Race, Gender, and Access to Party Support . . . . .	629
6.5	Women Candidates and Voter Responses . . . . .	631
6.5.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	631
6.5.2	Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Male and Female Candidates . . . . .	632
6.5.3	Gender Stereotypes, Candidate Evaluations, and Voting for Women Candidates . . . .	633
6.5.4	Visual Information and Candidate Evaluations: The Influence of Feminine and Masculine Images on Support for Female Candidates . . . . .	634
6.5.5	Party and Gender Stereotypes in Campaign Attacks . . . . .	635
6.5.6	The Effects of Partisan Trespassing Strategies Across Candidate Sex . . . . .	636
6.5.7	Shifting Standards: How Voters Evaluate the Qualifications of Female and Male Candidates	637
6.5.8	Gender, Candidate Emotional Expression, and Voter Reactions During Televised Debates .	638
6.5.9	The Gendered Politics of Congressional Elections . . . . .	639
6.5.10	Candidate Aggression and Gendered Voter Evaluations . . . . .	640

6.5.11	Strong and Caring? The Stereotypic Traits of Women of Color in Politics . . . . .	641
6.5.12	Do Voters Punish Ambitious Women? Tracking a Gendered Backlash Toward the 2020 Democratic Presidential Contenders . . . . .	642
6.6	Attitudes and Opinions . . . . .	643
6.6.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	643
6.6.2	Feminists and the Gender Gap . . . . .	644
6.6.3	Feminism and the Gender Gap: A Second Look . . . . .	645
6.6.4	American Party Women: A Look at the Gender Gap within Parties . . . . .	645
6.6.5	American Party Women Redux: Stability in Partisan Gender Gaps . . . . .	646
6.6.6	Facing Change: Gender and Climate Change Attitudes Worldwide . . . . .	647
6.7	Female Politicians in Elected Office . . . . .	648
6.7.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	648
6.7.2	Power and Influence in State Legislative Policymaking: The Interaction of Gender and Position in Committee Hearing Debates . . . . .	649
6.7.3	Gender Inequality in Deliberative Participation . . . . .	650
6.7.4	Gendered Vulnerability: How Women Work Harder to Stay in Office . . . . .	651
6.7.5	Nice Girls? Sex, Collegiality, and Bipartisan Cooperation in the US Congress . . . . .	652
6.7.6	Take (Her) to the Limit: Term Limits Do Not Diminish Women's Overperformance in Legislative Office . . . . .	653
6.8	Policy Representation . . . . .	654
6.8.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	654
6.8.2	How Women Legislate . . . . .	655
6.8.3	How Women Represent Women: Political Parties, Gender, and Representation in the State Legislatures . . . . .	656
6.8.4	Pitch Perfect: Vocal Pitch and the Emotional Intensity of Congressional Speech . . . . .	657
6.8.5	Anti-abortion Policymaking and Women's Representation . . . . .	658
6.9	Gender Egalitarianism and Symbolic Representation . . . . .	659
6.9.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	659
6.9.2	"Engendering" Politics: The Impact of Descriptive Representation on Women's Political Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa . . . . .	660
6.9.3	Prominent Role Models: High-Profile Female Politicians and the Emergence of Women as Candidates for Public Office . . . . .	661
6.9.4	All-Male Panels? Representation and Democratic Legitimacy . . . . .	662
6.9.5	Can't We All Just Get Along? How Women MPs Can Ameliorate Affective Polarization in Western Publics . . . . .	663
6.10	Women and Law and the Courts . . . . .	664
6.10.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	664
6.10.2	How Judicial Qualification Ratings May Disadvantage Minority and Female Candidates .	665
6.10.3	Identifying Judicial Empathy: Does Having Daughters Cause Judges to Rule for Women's Issues? . . . . .	666
6.10.4	Gender and Judicial Replacement: The Case of U.S. State Supreme Courts . . . . .	667
6.10.5	Do Female Officers Police Differently? Evidence from Traffic Stops . . . . .	668
6.10.6	Ascriptive Characteristics and Perceptions of Impropriety in the Rule of Law: Race, Gender, and Public Assessments of Whether Judges Can Be Impartial . . . . .	669
6.11	Women in Executive Politics . . . . .	670
6.11.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	670
6.11.2	Gender Stereotyping in State Executive Elections: Candidate Selection and Success . .	671
6.11.3	Women in Executive Office: Variation Across American States . . . . .	672
6.11.4	Talk "Like a Man": The Linguistic Styles of Hillary Clinton, 1992–2013 . . . . .	673
6.11.5	Defending the Realm: The Appointment of Female Defense Ministers Worldwide . . .	674

6.11.6	Corruption, Accountability, and Women's Access to Power . . . . .	675
6.12	Gender and Participation . . . . .	<b>676</b>
6.12.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	676
6.12.2	The Political Economy of Gender: Explaining Cross-National Variation in the Gender Di- vision of Labor and the Gender Voting Gap . . . . .	677
6.12.3	The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation . . . . .	678
6.12.4	The Gendered Effects of Electoral Institutions: Political Engagement and Participation . .	680
6.12.5	Counting Women's Ballots: Female Voters from Suffrage through the New Deal . . . . .	681
6.12.6	Contextualizing the Gender Gap in Voter Turnout . . . . .	682
6.13	Intersectionality . . . . .	<b>683</b>
6.13.1	Subject Area Summary . . . . .	683
6.13.2	Congressional Enactments of Race–Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced–Gendered Institu- tions . . . . .	684
6.13.3	When Multiplication Doesn't Equal Quick Addition: Examining Intersectionality as a Re- search Paradigm . . . . .	685
6.13.4	Intersectionality . . . . .	686
6.13.5	The Black Women of the US Congress: Learning from Descriptive Data . . . . .	687

## 6.1 Introduction

The study of women in politics has evolved into a rigorous field, interrogating the structural, institutional, and cultural forces that shape political participation, representation, and policy influence. This chapter presents a comprehensive examination of key dimensions in the field, reflecting the thematic linkages between foundational debates, contemporary research, and methodological advancements. Across its sections, the chapter engages with the critical issues that have defined the study of gender and politics, demonstrating how the gendered nature of political institutions, electoral dynamics, and voter perceptions continues to influence political outcomes.

The chapter begins by addressing the foundational questions that have shaped the study of gender in politics. It critically examines early conceptualizations of democracy, particularly the extent to which political science has historically overlooked women's political participation in defining democratic development. This section highlights the challenges of measuring democracy when gender is ignored, underscoring how traditional indicators of democratization have systematically mischaracterized transitions to democratic governance. Scholars have demonstrated that by excluding women from analyses of democratic emergence, political science has produced an incomplete and often misleading understanding of political development. This chapter revisits these foundational critiques and explores how scholars have sought to integrate gender into democratic theory and measurement.

From this foundational discussion, the chapter turns to the question of candidate emergence and the factors influencing women's decisions to run for office. Here, research explores the psychological, economic, and institutional barriers that shape political ambition. A growing body of work has identified election aversion as a critical factor in explaining the gender gap in candidate entry, suggesting that competitive electoral environments disproportionately deter women from pursuing political office. Scholars have also examined how economic responsibilities, particularly breadwinning and caregiving obligations, constrain the political aspirations of women relative to their male counterparts. These constraints are further reinforced by early political socialization, which systematically discourages young girls from envisioning themselves as political leaders. The section presents empirical findings that illustrate how these barriers interact, shaping the likelihood that women will emerge as candidates and the conditions under which they do so.

Political recruitment and party politics represent another core theme of this chapter. Research in this area evaluates the extent to which party structures either facilitate or inhibit the political advancement of women. Scholars have debated whether institutional factors such as primary election processes, party leadership dynamics, and donor networks systematically disadvantage female candidates. This section highlights experimental and observational studies that test these claims, offering insights into how party culture, strategic gatekeeping, and donor preferences contribute to gender disparities in electoral success. It also considers the role of women's recruitment organizations, examining their effectiveness in fostering candidate emergence and mitigating structural biases within party systems.

Beyond the process of candidate emergence and recruitment, the chapter explores voter responses to women candidates and the electoral consequences of gendered perceptions. Research has consistently shown that gender stereotypes shape voter evaluations, influencing perceptions of candidate competence, ideological positioning, and electability. This section investigates how these stereotypes function in contemporary elections, with particular attention to how campaign strategies and media portrayals reinforce or counteract these biases. Additionally, the section discusses how voter reactions to female candidates vary across partisan contexts, illustrating the conditions under which gendered perceptions are most salient. Studies presented in this section offer empirical assessments of how gender interacts with other political identities, including race and party affiliation, to shape electoral outcomes.

The chapter then transitions to a discussion of women's political representation and policy influence in elected office. Here, scholars have examined how female legislators navigate institutional constraints, how gender affects legislative behavior, and the extent to which women's presence in political institutions leads to substantive policy change. Research has identified patterns of overperformance among women in office, as they often work harder to establish credibility and achieve policy success. Additionally, scholars have analyzed the role of institutional design in shaping gendered policymaking, highlighting how committee structures, party leadership hierarchies, and legislative norms condition the ability of female politicians to advance their agendas. This section evaluates competing perspectives on whether increased representation of women leads to distinct policy outcomes and the mechanisms through which such effects manifest.

Another critical focus of this chapter is the study of public attitudes and political participation through a gendered lens. Scholarship in this area examines the gender gap in political engagement, investigating how social norms, economic structures, and ideological commitments shape patterns of participation. The chapter presents evidence on the persistence of gender-based differences in political attitudes, particularly in areas such as partisanship, policy preferences, and voting behavior. It also considers how feminist mobilization and the rise of gender-conscious political movements have reshaped public discourse on gender and politics. These studies provide a broader context for understanding how gender influences political identity and action across different demographic and institutional settings.

The final sections of the chapter engage with questions of intersectionality, symbolic representation, and the role of women in executive and judicial politics. Intersectional analyses have expanded the study of gender and politics by considering

how race, class, and sexuality intersect with gender to produce distinct political experiences and outcomes. This section presents research that examines how women of color and other marginalized groups navigate political institutions and electoral landscapes. In addition, the chapter assesses the symbolic impact of female political leaders, exploring how their presence in high-profile positions influences political engagement and perceptions of democratic legitimacy. Finally, the chapter evaluates the role of gender in executive and judicial politics, analyzing how women in leadership positions confront institutional and cultural barriers that shape their governance and decision-making.

This chapter, through its engagement with these key themes, underscores the evolving nature of research on women in politics and identity as a whole. The breadth of topics covered reflects the complexity of gendered political dynamics and the interdisciplinary approaches scholars have employed to analyze them. By integrating theoretical perspectives with empirical findings, this chapter provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how gender continues to shape political representation, participation, and governance. Moving forward, ongoing debates in the field will likely center on the role of digital mobilization, the effectiveness of institutional reforms, and the implications of intersectional analyses for policy and representation. We are moving beyond mere representation studies. Through these discussions, the study of women in politics remains a vital and continually expanding area of inquiry within political science.

## 6.2 Foundations of Women in Politics

### 6.2.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of women in politics has developed into a robust field that interrogates the gendered dimensions of political representation, participation, and institutional power. Scholars have explored how structural and cultural barriers shape women's access to political office, the role of suffrage in democratic measurement, and the ways in which political science as a discipline has historically marginalized gender as an analytic category. Foundational research critiques the exclusion of women's experiences from mainstream democratic theory, demonstrating that suffrage rights and political inclusion fundamentally alter assessments of democratization and democratic quality. Later contributions emphasize the institutional mechanisms that constrain or facilitate women's political advancement, the intersections of gender and political behavior, and the methodological challenges inherent in studying gendered political phenomena. Recent research focuses on gender mainstreaming in political science, the role of feminist methodologies in advancing quantitative research, and the consequences of gender-blind analytical frameworks in empirical political studies.
- **Women's Suffrage and Democracy Measurement:** One of the earliest critiques of political science's treatment of gender came from Pamela Paxton's work on women's suffrage and its role in defining democracy. Paxton argued that traditional measures of democratization have systematically omitted women, leading to distorted assessments of democratic transitions and waves of democratization. By relying on male suffrage as the primary criterion, scholars misdated democratic transitions, mischaracterized early democratization as a Western-led phenomenon, and underestimated the importance of gender inclusion in political development. Her research proposed an alternative measurement strategy, advocating for graded democracy indices that account for the gradual extension of political rights to all citizens, rather than dichotomous classifications that ignore gender disparities. These findings challenged prevailing assumptions in comparative democratization literature and reshaped discussions on how democracy should be operationalized in empirical research.
- **Gender as a Structuring Force in Politics:** Scholars have demonstrated that political institutions are not neutral but deeply embedded with gendered norms that shape political opportunities and power distributions. Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, Georgina Waylen, and S. Laurel Weldon have shown how the conceptual boundaries of political science have been historically constructed to exclude gender as a fundamental category of analysis. They argue that gender structures political legitimacy, access to resources, and the organization of political institutions, yet remains marginalized in mainstream research. Their work builds upon feminist institutionalist perspectives, revealing that the categorization of political issues—such as reproductive rights and gender-based violence—has been shaped by androcentric definitions of what constitutes "politics." By broadening the analytical scope of political science, gender scholars challenge traditional disciplinary boundaries and advocate for methodological pluralism to better capture gendered political dynamics.
- **Institutional Resistance and Gender Mainstreaming:** Despite the expansion of feminist political science, mainstream political science has exhibited significant resistance to integrating gender as an analytic category. Jill Vickers' research on gender mainstreaming in political science highlights the structural and epistemological barriers that prevent the discipline from fully incorporating feminist insights. She critiques the assumption that increasing the number of women in the field will automatically transform its intellectual foundations, showing instead that institutional gatekeeping and methodological biases continue to marginalize gender-focused research. Political science's reliance on positivist methodologies and quantitative techniques has often excluded feminist epistemologies, reinforcing disciplinary silos that confine gender research to specialized subfields rather than integrating it into broader political analyses. Vickers' work calls for a reexamination of the discipline's epistemological assumptions and a concerted effort to mainstream gender in both theoretical and empirical political science.
- **Quantitative Methods and Feminist Political Science:** The relationship between feminist political science and quantitative methods has historically been contentious, as feminist scholars have critiqued positivist approaches for their claims to neutrality and objectivity, which often obscure gendered biases. Katelyn Stauffer and Diana O'Brien address this tension by demonstrating how feminist scholars have both challenged and utilized quantitative methods

to advance research on gender and politics. They argue that while traditional quantitative research has frequently ignored gender, feminist perspectives can improve measurement validity and data production by incorporating gender-sensitive research designs. Their work underscores the need for interdisciplinary collaboration to bridge methodological divides, advocating for an approach that combines statistical rigor with feminist critiques of power, representation, and bias in political science.

- **Gender Blindness in Empirical Political Research:** Aliza Forman-Rabinovici and Hadas Mandel's study on gender blindness in political science highlights the widespread failure of empirical research to account for gender as a meaningful analytical variable. Their work demonstrates that a substantial portion of mainstream political science research either omits gender entirely or fails to integrate it meaningfully in research design and analysis. By reassessing prominent political science studies, they show that gender-sensitive analysis often leads to significantly different conclusions, revealing the limitations of traditional models that assume gender neutrality. Their findings suggest that gender blindness is not merely an oversight but a systematic issue that affects the validity of political research, reinforcing the need for greater methodological inclusivity and the systematic incorporation of gender into empirical studies.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** The field of women in politics continues to evolve, engaging with ongoing debates about gender and democratic representation, institutional resistance, and methodological innovation. Scholars are increasingly turning to intersectional approaches that consider how race, class, and sexuality interact with gender to shape political outcomes. Additionally, the rise of digital mobilization and social media activism has introduced new avenues for studying women's political participation and representation. Future research is likely to expand on the role of policy structures in shaping gendered political dynamics, the effects of gendered leadership styles on governance, and the broader implications of gender-conscious research for political science as a discipline. As feminist scholars continue to challenge androcentric assumptions and advocate for more inclusive methodologies, the study of women in politics remains a vital and expanding area of inquiry.

### 6.2.2 Women's Suffrage in the Measurement of Democracy: Problems of Operationalization

Paxton, P. (2000). Women's suffrage in the measurement of democracy: Problems of operationalization. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 35(3), 92–111. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02699767>

1. **Citation key:** paxton\_womens\_2000
2. **Author(s):** Pamela Paxton
3. **Year:** 2000
4. **Publication:** Studies in Comparative International Development
5. **Keywords:** democracy, women's suffrage, democratization, measurement, political participation
6. **Summary:** Paxton argues that standard measures of democracy have historically omitted women's suffrage, creating a misalignment between the theoretical definitions of democracy (which emphasize universal participation) and its empirical measurement. She demonstrates that this incorrect operationalization affects assessments of democratic transitions, descriptions of democratization waves, and explanations of democratic emergence. The article critiques several prominent studies for excluding women's suffrage in their measures and proposes that graded measures of democracy, rather than dichotomous classifications, could help reconcile this gap.
7. **Theory:** The core argument is that political science has inconsistently applied definitions of democracy by excluding women from empirical measurements. Many scholars define democracy in terms of universal suffrage and participation but operationalize it based solely on male suffrage. This results in significant distortions, such as misdated democratic transitions, misleading depictions of democratic waves, and flawed causal inferences about democratization. Paxton critiques leading studies (e.g., Muller 1988, Huntington 1991, Rueschemeyer et al. 1992) for defining democracy inclusively but measuring it restrictively. She highlights that such omissions are particularly problematic in studies using dichotomous democracy measures, which fail to capture the gradual nature of political inclusion. Paxton suggests that graded measures, which capture degrees of democracy, would better reflect historical processes and prevent systematic biases in cross-national research.
8. **Methods:** Paxton systematically reviews key studies that measure democracy, highlighting discrepancies between their conceptual definitions and empirical operationalizations. She compares various democracy indices, including those by Muller, Lipset, Huntington, and Rueschemeyer et al., identifying where they exclude women from the suffrage criteria. To demonstrate the impact of this exclusion, she recalculates democratic transition dates using female suffrage as the criterion. She then analyzes how these revised transition dates alter prevailing conceptions of democratization waves, showing that traditional models overstate early democratization in the West while underestimating democratic development elsewhere. Finally, she proposes an alternative approach that treats democratization as a continuous process rather than a binary transition, advocating for measures that account for gender inclusion explicitly.
9. **Hypotheses:** Paxton hypothesizes that excluding women's suffrage from democracy measures leads to systematic distortions in three areas:
  - If women's suffrage were included, many countries' democratic transition dates would shift significantly later.
  - The widely accepted model of democratization waves, particularly Huntington's "waves of democracy," would lose empirical support.
  - Theories of democratization that focus on economic and social factors may require revision to account for the specific conditions under which women gained suffrage.

Each of these hypotheses is supported by empirical revisions to existing datasets, revealing substantial shifts in when and where democracy is understood to have emerged.

**10. Main findings:** Paxton's findings demonstrate that incorporating women's suffrage fundamentally alters the empirical landscape of democracy studies. When suffrage is redefined to include women, transition dates to democracy shift significantly—often by decades or more—especially in Western countries. For example, France's transition moves from 1875 to 1945, and Switzerland's from 1848 to 1971. These revisions challenge the conventional wisdom that Western democracies emerged earliest. Instead, they suggest that many non-Western countries achieved full suffrage on similar timelines. Additionally, Paxton shows that Huntington's widely cited model of democratization waves is much weaker when women's suffrage is incorporated. Rather than distinct waves, democratization appears as a more continuous process. Finally, the article reveals that traditional explanations of democratization, which emphasize economic development and class conflict, may not fully explain the inclusion of women in political systems. Instead, international norms and social movements played a larger role in extending suffrage to women. This suggests that theories of democratization must be expanded to account for gender-specific political struggles.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "When women are included in measures of democracy, the notion of waves of democracy (Huntington 1991) is no longer strongly supported. Neither does the West have a hold on early democratization. And, by the new definition, some countries' transition to full democracy may have come 30 to 70 years after the traditionally accepted date" (p. 93).
- "Modern theoretical definitions of democracy stress numbers of people rather than 'types' of people. Most authors today consider the criterion for democratic inclusion to be 'all native-born adults' (Schmitter and Karl 1991: 77). This criterion implies, though it does not directly state, that women should be included" (p. 94).
- "The revised figure, simply by including women's suffrage, no longer offers strong support for Huntington's conception of waves of democracy. The revision indicates a long, continuous democratization period from 1893–1958, with only war-related reversals" (p. 102).

#### 6.2.3 Introduction: Gender and Politics: A Gendered World, a Gendered Discipline

Celis, K., Kantola, J., Waylen, G., & Weldon, S. L. (2013, March). Introduction: Gender and Politics: A Gendered World, a Gendered Discipline. G. Waylen, K. Celis, J. Kantola, & S. L. Weldon (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics* (pp. 1–26). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199751457.013.0034>

1. **Citation key:** celis\_introduction\_2013

2. **Author(s):** Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, Georgina Waylen, and S. Laurel Weldon

3. **Year:** 2013

4. **Publication:** The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics

5. **Keywords:** gender, political science, intersectionality, feminist theory, institutions

6. **Summary:** Celis, Kantola, Waylen, and Weldon introduce the concept of politics and political science as inherently gendered, demonstrating how sex-typing in institutions influences political behavior and knowledge production. They outline the evolution of gender and politics as a subfield, critique the exclusion of gender in mainstream political science, and highlight interdisciplinary and methodological pluralism as essential to understanding power and representation. The chapter emphasizes how the study of politics must account for gendered structures and norms, which shape both governance and political scholarship.

7. **Theory:** The authors argue that politics is structured by deeply embedded gender norms, affecting both real-world governance and political science as a discipline. They critique traditional political science for marginalizing gender and treating it as an auxiliary concern rather than a central analytic category. Gender structures individual opportunities, public authority, and political legitimacy, yet is often invisible in mainstream analyses of power. They highlight how the dichotomous sex-typing of institutions influences access to resources and rights, reinforcing male dominance in governance and academia. The authors also engage with feminist epistemologies, showing how gender shapes knowledge production, from defining political concepts to determining which issues warrant study. Feminist scholars have challenged the conventional boundaries of political science, expanding its focus to include issues such as domestic violence, reproductive rights, and intersectional inequalities. The chapter thus advocates for integrating gender analysis into all areas of political science, calling for both conceptual and methodological transformations.

8. **Methods:** The authors employ a critical review of political science literature, highlighting the historical exclusion of gender in mainstream theories and methodologies. They analyze how gender biases shape institutional structures, referencing feminist institutionalism and intersectionality to illustrate how power relations are embedded in political systems. They also examine empirical data on women's political representation, labor market participation, and policy influence, demonstrating gender disparities across different national contexts. Furthermore, the chapter incorporates interdisciplinary insights from sociology, anthropology, and legal studies to contextualize gender's role in shaping political behavior and institutions.

9. **Hypotheses:** The chapter advances several key arguments about gender and political science:

- Political institutions and processes are inherently gendered, structuring opportunities and constraints based on gender norms.
- The exclusion of gender from political science research has led to an incomplete understanding of political behavior and governance.

- Feminist methodologies and intersectional approaches are necessary to fully capture the dynamics of power and representation.

These claims are supported by empirical evidence on gendered disparities in political representation, policy outcomes, and scholarly recognition within the discipline.

**10. Main findings:** The authors demonstrate that gender profoundly influences political structures, yet remains marginalized in mainstream political science. Despite significant strides in gender and politics scholarship, traditional definitions of power and authority continue to exclude feminist perspectives. They argue that political science must move beyond its androcentric foundations, incorporating intersectional and feminist analyses to better understand governance and social justice. The chapter also highlights how feminist activism has influenced political outcomes, such as quota systems for women's representation and policy changes addressing gender-based violence. However, the authors caution that progress is uneven, with backlash against gender equality persisting in many political contexts. Finally, they emphasize the need for continued methodological innovation, including qualitative and critical approaches that challenge dominant paradigms.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Politics as a real-world phenomenon and political science as an academic discipline are gendered. This introduction and this volume aim to explain what this means and why it is important" (p. 1).
- "The study of politics has now broadened beyond the narrow focus on those holding formal office and the politics of distribution. It now encompasses many new groups espousing 'gender trouble' as well as new ideas about masculinity and femininity across a range of contexts" (p. 3).
- "The canonical definitions of politics that have delineated the boundaries of the discipline have been read to exclude many of the topics covered in this handbook" (p. 4).

#### 6.2.4 Can We Change How Political Science Thinks? "Gender Mainstreaming" in a Resistant Discipline

Vickers, J. (2015). Can We Change How Political Science Thinks? "Gender Mainstreaming" in a Resistant Discipline: Presidential Address delivered to the Canadian Political Science Association, Ottawa, June 2, 2015 [Publisher: [Canadian Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press, Société québécoise de science politique]]. *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique*, 48(4), 747–770. Retrieved August 20, 2024, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24810960>

1. **Citation key:** vickers\_can\_2015

2. **Author(s):** Jill Vickers

3. **Year:** 2015

4. **Publication:** Canadian Journal of Political Science

5. **Keywords:** gender mainstreaming, feminist political science, political science discipline, knowledge production, institutional resistance

6. **Summary:** In her presidential address to the Canadian Political Science Association, Jill Vickers examines why gender mainstreaming has failed to produce transformative change in political science. Despite an increase in women scholars and the development of feminist political science (FPS), conventional political science remains resistant to integrating gender as an analytical category. Vickers identifies structural, cultural, and methodological barriers that hinder gender mainstreaming, arguing that the discipline's fragmented nature and entrenched masculinist biases obstruct substantive intellectual change.

7. **Theory:** Vickers contends that political science remains structured by masculinist epistemologies that privilege traditional understandings of power, authority, and political behavior. She critiques the assumption that increasing the number of women in the field automatically leads to intellectual transformation, emphasizing that institutional resistance maintains existing power structures. Drawing from feminist institutionalism, she argues that disciplines function as "cognitive communities" that determine what counts as legitimate knowledge. Feminist political science challenges these epistemic boundaries by broadening the definition of politics to include informal political participation, gendered power relations, and intersectional analysis. However, mainstream political science remains wedded to a narrow, positivist framework that excludes feminist approaches. The chapter also explores how disciplinary "silos" reinforce exclusion, as mainstream scholars rarely engage with gendered perspectives outside of feminist subfields. Vickers ultimately argues that achieving transformative change requires not only greater representation of women but also a fundamental shift in the discipline's theoretical and methodological commitments.

8. **Methods:** Vickers employs a qualitative meta-analysis of feminist political science literature, synthesizing findings from previous studies on gender representation, disciplinary fragmentation, and institutional barriers to change. She draws on comparative data from five Anglo-American democracies—Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States—to assess variations in gender mainstreaming efforts. The article also reviews political science textbooks, journal publications, and citation practices to measure the extent to which feminist scholarship has influenced mainstream political science. Additionally, Vickers incorporates insights from feminist institutionalism and discursive institutionalism to explain why political science remains resistant to integrating gender as a central category of analysis.

9. **Hypotheses:** Vickers advances several key arguments about the limitations of gender mainstreaming in political science:

- Increasing the number of women political scientists does not automatically lead to intellectual change within the

discipline.

- Political science's institutional structure, including disciplinary silos and gatekeeping mechanisms, reinforces the marginalization of feminist perspectives.
- The positivist and empiricist orientations of mainstream political science create methodological barriers that prevent the integration of feminist epistemologies.

These hypotheses are supported by empirical data on gender representation in academia, publication trends, and the limited adoption of gender as an analytical category outside of feminist political science.

**10. Main findings:** Vickers finds that, despite the growth of feminist political science, mainstream political science remains largely resistant to incorporating gender as a central analytic category. The discipline's fragmented structure means that feminist insights often remain confined to specialized subfields rather than influencing broader theoretical debates. She documents how mainstream political science continues to define politics narrowly, privileging formal institutions and electoral processes while neglecting gendered power relations in everyday life. Furthermore, Vickers highlights how methodological incompatibilities between feminist and conventional political science—particularly the latter's preference for quantitative analysis and positivist assumptions—contribute to the marginalization of feminist scholarship. The article concludes by outlining potential strategies for achieving transformative change, including greater institutional support for feminist research, interdisciplinary collaborations, and efforts to challenge the discipline's entrenched masculinist norms.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Despite decades of feminist research, Australian political science remains 'markedly resistant' to change, especially compared to history and sociology" (p. 748).
- "More women professors and the development of politics and gender fields have had little impact on the rest of the discipline" (p. 749).
- "Transformative change requires the successful mainstreaming of gender-focused knowledge and the use of 'gender' as a category of analysis in studies of politics" (p. 750).

#### 6.2.5 Quantitative Methods and Feminist Political Science

Stauffer, K., & O'Brien, D. (2018). Quantitative Methods and Feminist Political Science. W. Thompson (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*

1. **Citation key:** stauffer\_quantitative\_2018
2. **Author(s):** Katelyn E. Stauffer and Diana Z. O'Brien
3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics
5. **Keywords:** feminist research, quantitative methods, women and politics, gender, research design
6. **Summary:** Stauffer and O'Brien examine the complex relationship between quantitative methods and feminist political science. While feminist scholars have historically critiqued the positivist underpinnings of quantitative research, many have also effectively used these methods to study gender and politics. The authors explore how feminist perspectives have influenced data production, measurement, and analysis, and they call for increased dialogue between feminist researchers and quantitative methodologists to bridge the persistent gaps in the discipline.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that feminist political science and quantitative methods are not inherently incompatible, but that tensions arise from epistemological and methodological differences. Feminist scholarship challenges traditional political science paradigms by centering gender and interrogating power structures. Historically, feminist researchers have critiqued quantitative methods for their association with positivism, objectivity, and purported neutrality, which can obscure gendered biases. However, Stauffer and O'Brien contend that feminist scholars can employ quantitative methods while remaining critical of their limitations. They highlight that feminist research often focuses on lived experiences and systemic inequalities, which can be effectively analyzed using statistical techniques if the researcher remains attuned to issues of measurement validity, variable construction, and epistemological assumptions. Furthermore, they emphasize that feminist perspectives should shape how data is collected and analyzed, advocating for gender-sensitive research designs that account for intersectionality and the complexities of political behavior.
8. **Methods:** The article employs a qualitative synthesis of feminist political science literature, examining both historical debates over quantitative methods and contemporary applications of statistical techniques in gender research. The authors review key studies that have used quantitative methods to analyze gendered aspects of political behavior, institutions, and representation. They also examine publication patterns in major political science journals to assess the extent to which feminist scholarship has influenced quantitative research. Additionally, Stauffer and O'Brien discuss the gendered composition of the political methodology subfield, highlighting the underrepresentation of women and feminist perspectives in quantitative political science.
9. **Hypotheses:** Stauffer and O'Brien advance several key arguments about the intersection of feminist political science and quantitative methods:
  - Feminist scholars have historically critiqued quantitative methods but have also used them effectively to study gender and politics.
  - The epistemological assumptions of positivist research can obscure gendered biases, necessitating critical engagement with quantitative methods.
  - Feminist perspectives should influence data production, measurement, and analysis to ensure that gendered

experiences are accurately represented.

- Increased dialogue between feminist researchers and quantitative methodologists is essential for advancing the field.

These hypotheses are supported by empirical examples of feminist scholarship that has successfully used quantitative methods to uncover gender biases in political representation, policy, and institutional structures.

- Main findings:** The article finds that while feminist scholars have effectively used quantitative methods to study gender and politics, significant challenges remain in integrating feminist perspectives into mainstream political methodology. Feminist research has contributed to methodological advancements in survey design, measurement, and statistical modeling, ensuring that gendered dimensions of political behavior and institutions are more accurately captured. However, the underrepresentation of women in political methodology and the persistence of epistemological divides between feminist and positivist scholars hinder further integration. Stauffer and O'Brien argue that methodological pluralism is necessary to bridge these divides, advocating for a research agenda that incorporates feminist critiques while leveraging the strengths of quantitative methods. They conclude that feminist scholars should actively shape the development of quantitative tools to better account for gendered power dynamics and intersectional identities.

- Key quotations:**

- "Quantitative methods are among the most useful, but also historically contentious, tools in feminist research" (p. 1).
- "Whereas some feminist scholars have embraced quantitative methods, others have questioned their underlying assumptions and the appropriateness of their application to feminist studies" (p. 2).
- "Just as quantitative methods have aided the advancement of feminist political science, a feminist perspective likewise has implications for data production, measurement, and analysis" (p. 3).

#### 6.2.6 The Prevalence and Implications of Gender Blindness in Quantitative Political Science Research

Forman-Rabinovici, A., & Mandel, H. (2023). The Prevalence and Implications of Gender Blindness in Quantitative Political Science Research. *Politics & Gender*, 19(2), 482–506. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X22000174>

1. **Citation key:** forman-rabinovici\_prevalence\_2023

2. **Author(s):** Aliza Forman-Rabinovici and Hadas Mandel

3. **Year:** 2023

4. **Publication:** Politics & Gender

5. **Keywords:** gender blindness, quantitative methods, political science, gender-sensitive analysis, research design

6. **Summary:** Forman-Rabinovici and Mandel examine the prevalence and impact of gender blindness in quantitative political science research. Gender blindness—the failure to account for gender as a meaningful analytical category—has been increasingly criticized in political science. The authors assess how this oversight affects research validity and argue that incorporating gender-sensitive analysis leads to more accurate and theoretically robust findings. They conduct a two-stage empirical analysis: first, by reanalyzing published studies to assess whether gender inclusion changes results, and second, by categorizing all quantitative articles published in *American Journal of Political Science* (AJPS) in 2018 and 2019 to estimate the prevalence of gender blindness.

7. **Theory:** The authors argue that while gender is a foundational social category, mainstream political science has been slow to integrate gender-sensitive analysis outside of gender-focused subfields. They define gender blindness as an implicit assumption that political phenomena affect men and women similarly, ignoring the ways gender socialization, roles, and opportunities shape political behavior. This neglect stems from multiple factors, including the marginalization of gender research, the dominance of positivist quantitative methodologies that prioritize supposedly neutral variables, and the perception that gender is not relevant outside of explicitly feminist political science. The authors contend that gender-sensitive analysis does not merely add a control variable for gender but fundamentally reshapes how political questions are conceptualized and operationalized. They emphasize that political science would benefit from integrating gender systematically into research designs, leading to greater validity and more policy-relevant findings.

8. **Methods:** The study is conducted in two phases. First, the authors reanalyze three published AJPS articles to test whether including gender as a variable alters the findings. They replicate the original models and then introduce gender-sensitive methods, such as sex-disaggregated data analysis and interaction terms. In the second phase, they systematically review 96 empirical quantitative articles published in AJPS in 2018 and 2019, classifying them based on whether they exhibit gender blindness. The classification considers whether gender is included in the research design, controlled for in models, or entirely omitted. The authors then estimate the prevalence of gender blindness in mainstream political science research.

9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Gender blindness is prevalent in mainstream political science research, particularly in quantitative studies.
- Accounting for gender in quantitative political science research yields different and more accurate conclusions.
- Gender-sensitive analysis is largely absent outside of explicitly gender-focused subfields.
- The neglect of gender in research design weakens explanatory power and limits the validity of findings.

These hypotheses are tested by comparing gender-sensitive versus gender-blind analyses and by estimating the prevalence of gender blindness in a leading political science journal.

- Main findings:** The analysis finds that gender blindness is widespread in mainstream political science research. Of the

96 quantitative articles published in AJPS in 2018 and 2019, 51.1% exhibited some form of gender blindness, either by failing to control for gender or by ignoring gender in research design. Only 5.2% of articles fully incorporated gender-sensitive analysis. The authors' reanalysis of three AJPS articles demonstrates that incorporating gender can substantially alter findings. In two of the three reanalyzed studies, gender-sensitive analysis produced different conclusions from the original results. These findings suggest that gender blindness is not merely an oversight but a systematic issue affecting research validity. The authors argue that greater integration of gender-sensitive methodologies would improve the explanatory power of political science research, particularly in understanding political behavior, voting patterns, and institutional dynamics.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Gender blindness refers to an unawareness of or a failure to account for the significance of gender socialization, roles, needs, opportunities, and interactions, based on the assumption that men and women react the same way or are similarly affected by a given phenomenon" (p. 482).
- "The majority of quantitative articles (51.1%) published in the AJPS in the two years under observation had some elements of gender blindness and were potentially impacted by gender blindness" (p. 499).
- "Our findings show that gender-sensitive analysis yields more accurate and useful results. In two out of the three articles we tested, gender-sensitive analysis indeed led to different outcomes that changed the ramifications for theory building" (p. 500).

## 6.3 Candidate Emergence and the Decision to Run for Office

### 6.3.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Research on female candidate emergence examines the factors that influence women's decisions to run for political office. Scholars have explored structural barriers, socialization processes, and psychological dynamics that contribute to gender disparities in candidacy. Early theories emphasized institutional and societal constraints, such as recruitment biases, voter discrimination, and role model effects. More recent studies highlight the role of personal and economic considerations, such as breadwinning responsibilities and family composition, in shaping political ambition. Additionally, experimental research has identified a distinct phenomenon of election aversion, where women are disproportionately deterred by the competitive nature of electoral selection. Overall, this literature suggests that while many women express nascent political ambition, multiple overlapping constraints reduce the likelihood of their emergence as candidates.
- **Election Aversion and Candidate Entry:** Kanthak and Woon (2015) introduce the concept of election aversion, proposing that women's reluctance to enter politics may stem from a fundamental behavioral aversion to electoral competition rather than differences in ambition or qualifications. Using a controlled laboratory experiment, they demonstrate that men and women are equally willing to volunteer for leadership roles when selection is random, but women's entry rates decline significantly when the selection mechanism involves an election. This effect persists even when accounting for ability, confidence, and risk preferences, suggesting that the strategic and competitive nature of elections disproportionately discourages women. Their findings indicate that institutional reforms, such as increasing transparency and reducing the personal costs of candidacy, may help mitigate gender disparities in candidate emergence.
- **Political Ambition and Candidate Perceptions:** Bonneau and Kanthak (2020) challenge the assumption that the presence of female candidates uniformly increases women's political ambition. Instead, they argue that political ambition is contingent upon observers' preexisting attitudes toward the candidate. Through an experimental study using Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign advertisements, they show that Clinton's candidacy inspired political ambition among her supporters but discouraged it among her detractors. Their findings suggest that role model effects are mediated by political attitudes and that candidate portrayal—such as being framed as a "fighter" or a "caregiver"—influences women's political aspirations differently depending on ideological alignment.
- **Household Constraints and Economic Considerations:** Bernhard, Shames, and Teele (2021) examine the structural barriers to candidate emergence, focusing on the economic and familial responsibilities that disproportionately affect women. Their study finds that breadwinning women, particularly mothers, are significantly less likely to run for office, even when they express strong political ambition. Through a survey of alumnae from the Emerge training program, they demonstrate that financial responsibility within a household creates a major barrier to candidacy. Women who serve as primary earners—especially single mothers—are less likely to convert nascent ambition into actual candidacy, underscoring the importance of economic independence and household support in enabling women's political participation.
- **Gendered Political Socialization and Early Ambition:** Bos et al. (2022) investigate the origins of gender disparities in political ambition, arguing that gendered political socialization begins in early childhood. Their study of over 1,600 elementary school children finds that girls increasingly perceive political leadership as a male domain, with their interest in politics declining as they age. Using the Draw a Political Leader (DAPL) task, they show that children overwhelmingly depict men as political figures, reinforcing traditional gender roles. These findings suggest that early interventions—such as increasing the visibility of female leaders in education and media—may be necessary to counteract the gendered socialization patterns that shape political ambition from a young age.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Current research on female candidate emergence continues to explore how institutional design, social norms, and personal constraints interact to shape women's political trajectories. While some scholars argue that recruitment efforts and targeted mentorship programs can increase women's political participation, others emphasize the need for broader structural reforms, such as reducing the financial and personal costs of running

for office. Future studies are likely to focus on the role of intersectionality, investigating how race, class, and sexuality intersect with gender to produce varying patterns of candidate emergence. Additionally, emerging research on digital mobilization and social media's influence on political ambition may offer new insights into how women engage with the political process in evolving electoral landscapes.

### 6.3.2 Women Don't Run? Election Aversion and Candidate Entry

Kanthak, K., & Woon, J. (2015). Women Don't Run? Election Aversion and Candidate Entry [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12158>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(3), 595–612. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12158>

1. **Citation key:** kanthak\_women\_2015
2. **Author(s):** Kristin Kanthak and Jonathan Woon
3. **Year:** 2015
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** gender and politics, candidate emergence, election aversion, political ambition, experimental methods
6. **Summary:** Kanthak and Woon investigate the role of *election aversion* in explaining the gender gap in candidate emergence. They propose that, even when men and women have equivalent qualifications, ambitions, and access to political opportunities, the mere fact that selection into office requires an election may discourage women from running. Using a laboratory experiment, they isolate the effect of elections from other potential factors influencing candidacy, demonstrating that women are significantly less likely than men to enter an electoral competition but are equally likely to volunteer for leadership roles when selection is random. Their findings suggest that institutional design plays a crucial role in shaping candidate emergence and that certain aspects of electoral competition may disproportionately deter women.
7. **Theory:** The authors introduce the concept of *election aversion*, which they define as a behavioral reluctance to enter a competitive electoral process, independent of differences in ambition, qualifications, or expected electoral success. While prior research has emphasized structural and social barriers to women's political participation—such as recruitment networks, family obligations, and voter bias—Kanthak and Woon argue that a fundamental psychological aversion to elections may also contribute to gender disparities in representation. They suggest that women, on average, may perceive elections as riskier or more contentious than men do, leading them to opt out of candidacy even when they are equally qualified. This aversion is exacerbated by the strategic and costly nature of campaigning, which the authors hypothesize will deter women more than men unless the costs of entry are fully eliminated and the campaign process is strictly truthful.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a controlled laboratory experiment to test whether women are less likely than men to enter a candidate pool when selection is determined by an election rather than a random mechanism. Participants are assigned to groups and given an arithmetic task, which serves as a proxy for their policymaking ability. The experiment features two conditions: in the first, a group representative is selected randomly from those who volunteer; in the second, the representative is chosen through an election. Participants receive monetary compensation based on their individual and group performance. By holding constant other potential explanatory factors—such as ambition, efficacy, and external recruitment—the authors isolate the effect of elections on gender differences in candidate entry. They also manipulate the electoral environment by introducing conditions in which campaigns are either fully truthful or allow for strategic misrepresentation.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Men and women will be equally likely to volunteer for leadership roles when selection is random.
  - Women will be less likely than men to enter a leadership competition when selection requires an election.
  - Gender differences in candidate entry will persist even when controlling for ability, confidence, and risk preferences.
  - Election aversion will decrease when campaigns are strictly truthful and when the private costs of running are eliminated.
10. **Main findings:** The study confirms that women and men are equally likely to volunteer for leadership roles when selection is random. However, when selection is determined by an election, women's likelihood of running decreases significantly, whereas men's remains stable. The authors find no evidence that this difference is driven by ability, confidence in ability, or general risk aversion, suggesting that election aversion is a distinct behavioral phenomenon. Furthermore, the gap in entry rates is only eliminated when campaigns are fully truthful and costless. These findings indicate that women's reluctance to run stems not from an aversion to leadership but from the competitive and strategic nature of electoral processes. The results have implications for institutional reforms aimed at increasing gender parity in political representation, such as reducing the costs of running for office and ensuring greater transparency in campaigns.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "We find that men and women are equally likely to volunteer when the representative is chosen randomly, but that women are less likely to become candidates when the representative is chosen by an election" (p. 596).
  - "The results indeed point to gender differences in election aversion. Both men and women volunteer to be the representatives of their groups at equal rates, and they are equally responsive to task ability, provided that the

selection of the representative does not involve an election. However, when selection does involve an election, women's willingness to represent decreases substantially" (p. 597).

- "Women's entry into the candidate pool increases only if we simultaneously guarantee that campaigns are completely truthful and eliminate the private costs of running for office" (p. 599).

### 6.3.3 Stronger Together: Political Ambition and the Presentation of Women Running for Office

Bonneau, C. W., & Kanthak, K. (2020). Stronger together: Political ambition and the presentation of women running for office [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2018.1528159>. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 8(3), 576–594. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2018.1528159>

- 1. Citation key:** bonneau\_stronger\_2020
- 2. Author(s):** Chris W. Bonneau and Kristin Kanthak
- 3. Year:** 2020
- 4. Publication:** Politics, Groups, and Identities
- 5. Keywords:** political ambition, role model effects, gender and elections, Hillary Clinton, experimental methods
- 6. Summary:** Bonneau and Kanthak explore the effects of female candidates on women's political ambition, focusing on the role of candidate perception rather than mere exposure. They argue that previous research on role model effects has produced conflicting results because it fails to account for the individual-level variance in how observers perceive women candidates. Using an experimental design centered on campaign advertisements from Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign, they test whether viewing a woman candidate increases or decreases political ambition among women. Their findings reveal that Clinton's presence in the election increased political ambition among her supporters but decreased it among her detractors. The study thus complicates the assumed positive role model effect of female candidates, suggesting that inspiration is contingent on preexisting political attitudes.
- 7. Theory:** The authors build upon role model theory to argue that women candidates do not automatically inspire political ambition among women; rather, the effect depends on observers' preexisting attitudes toward the candidate. Traditional role model research assumes a uniform effect, wherein exposure to women in leadership increases women's political engagement. However, Bonneau and Kanthak contend that affective evaluations—how individuals feel about a particular candidate—mediate this relationship. If a woman views a female candidate positively, she may be inspired to run for office, but if she perceives the candidate negatively, it could reduce her political ambition. Furthermore, the authors integrate psychological research on stereotype threat and political efficacy, arguing that when women candidates are framed in ways that reinforce gendered expectations, they may inadvertently deter some women from entering politics. The study also considers how different modes of candidate presentation—such as whether the candidate is depicted as a fighter or as a compassionate listener—shape these effects.
- 8. Methods:** The study employs an online survey experiment using campaign advertisements from Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential bid. Participants were randomly assigned to view one of four Clinton campaign ads, each portraying her in a different role: (1) a traditional "fighter" speech at a rally, (2) a policy discussion ("cookstoves" ad), (3) a personal and empathetic conversation with a supporter ("caregiver" ad), or (4) an anti-bullying appeal. A control group viewed an unrelated video about a bicycle-sharing program. After viewing the videos, respondents answered questions measuring their political ambition and general feelings toward Clinton. The authors analyze responses using regression models to isolate the impact of Clinton's portrayal and respondents' preexisting attitudes toward her.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Women's political ambition will increase when they view Clinton campaign ads, but only if they already hold favorable views of her.
  - Women who do not support Clinton will exhibit decreased political ambition after viewing her campaign ads.
  - Different portrayals of Clinton will elicit varying levels of political ambition, with traditionally feminine presentations (e.g., caregiver) having a greater effect on women's ambition than traditionally masculine ones (e.g., fighter).
  - The presence of a female candidate can mitigate the gender gap in political ambition, but only among her supporters.
- 10. Main findings:** The study finds that exposure to Clinton's campaign did not uniformly increase political ambition among women. Rather, the effect depended on respondents' preexisting attitudes. Women who held favorable views of Clinton were more likely to express interest in running for office after viewing her campaign ads, while those with negative perceptions of her were less likely to do so. Moreover, the results suggest that the way Clinton was framed in the ads mattered. For instance, the "fighter" ad polarized respondents the most, increasing ambition among her supporters while discouraging non-supporters. The authors also find that male respondents exhibited lower political ambition after viewing Clinton's ads, suggesting that exposure to a prominent female candidate may recalibrate men's perceptions of political leadership. Overall, the study provides evidence that candidate exposure alone does not inspire political engagement; rather, it is the interaction between candidate presentation and voter attitudes that shapes political ambition.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - "Observing Clinton running for office does indeed increase the political ambition of some of her women supporters. At the same time, though, observing her run actually decreases ambition in other women" (p. 578).
  - "Among non-supporters, the 'fight' treatment results in significantly lower ambition... This result provides mod-

- est support for [the idea] that the effect of women candidates on political ambition depends on preexisting attitudes" (p. 584).
- "Viewing campaign ads for a woman candidate (at least among her supporters) can erase the ambition gender gap. Indeed, in the 'cookstoves' treatment, the mean level of political ambition among women is actually greater than that of men" (p. 586).

#### 6.3.4 To Emerge? Breadwinning, Motherhood, and Women's Decisions to Run for Office

Bernhard, R., Shames, S., & Teele, D. L. (2021). To Emerge? Breadwinning, Motherhood, and Women's Decisions to Run for Office. *American Political Science Review*, 115(2), 379–394. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000970>

- 1. Citation key:** bernhard\_emerge\_2021
- 2. Author(s):** Rachel Bernhard, Shauna Shames, and Dawn Langan Teele
- 3. Year:** 2021
- 4. Publication:** American Political Science Review
- 5. Keywords:** political ambition, candidate emergence, gender and politics, motherhood, breadwinner effect
- 6. Summary:** Bernhard, Shames, and Teele investigate the persistent underrepresentation of women in American politics, emphasizing the final stage of candidate emergence. They theorize that while many women exhibit political ambition, household income, breadwinning responsibilities, and family composition act as key barriers to actual candidacy. Using a multimethod approach centered on a survey of alumnae from the Emerge program—an elite training organization for Democratic women—they test whether financial responsibility within a household disproportionately deters women from running for office. Their results indicate that breadwinning, particularly among mothers, significantly reduces the likelihood of candidacy, even among highly ambitious women.
- 7. Theory:** The authors challenge dominant explanations that attribute women's political underrepresentation primarily to lower levels of political ambition. Instead, they argue that structural household dynamics—such as the need to provide financially and the presence of dependents—constrain even politically ambitious women from running. Drawing on the distinction between *nascent ambition* (an interest in running) and *expressive ambition* (actual candidacy), they theorize that household constraints create a bottleneck at the point of emergence. Women who are breadwinners, they argue, may perceive running for office as financially untenable, particularly if they have children. Moreover, because women disproportionately bear the burden of household labor—even when they are primary earners—they face compounded time and financial pressures that their male counterparts do not. This theory revises prior work suggesting that domestic responsibilities no longer play a significant role in women's underrepresentation, instead demonstrating that family dynamics remain central to explaining the gender gap in candidacy.
- 8. Methods:** The study employs a multimethod research design that includes an original survey of 702 Emerge alumnae who participated in the program between 2003 and 2016, along with qualitative responses and program intake data. The authors analyze household income levels, breadwinning status (i.e., percentage of household income contributed), family composition, and political ambition. They use regression analyses to test whether these factors predict candidacy, controlling for political experience, party engagement, and psychological fears related to running for office. Additionally, they conduct qualitative coding of open-ended survey responses to assess how respondents describe their decision-making process regarding candidacy.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Women who are breadwinners will be less likely to run for office than non-breadwinners, even if they express high nascent ambition.
  - Household income alone will not significantly predict candidate emergence, but the interaction of income and breadwinning will be significant.
  - Breadwinner effects will be strongest for women with children, as they face compounded financial and caregiving responsibilities.
  - Single mothers, who lack a second household earner, will be the least likely group to convert nascent ambition into candidacy.
- 10. Main findings:** The study finds strong evidence that breadwinning reduces women's likelihood of running for office. Among Emerge alumnae, breadwinners were between 13 and 16 percentage points less likely to run compared to non-breadwinners. The impact of breadwinning was most pronounced for mothers: partnered mothers who were not primary earners had the highest rates of candidacy (60%), whereas single mothers and partnered breadwinners had significantly lower rates (32% and 38%, respectively). Contrary to expectations, total household income alone did not predict candidacy, suggesting that financial constraints operate primarily through the distribution of financial responsibilities rather than absolute wealth. The study also finds that many women cite work-life balance, financial risk, and caregiving obligations as barriers to running, reinforcing the idea that the political economy of the household is central to candidate emergence.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - "Although we do not find income effects, we provide evidence that breadwinning—responsibility for a majority of household income—negatively affects women's ambition, especially for mothers" (p. 379).
  - "Nonworking mothers with partners are the most likely to run for office, while breadwinner mothers—particularly those who are single—are significantly less likely to do so. These findings suggest that the political economy of the household imposes real constraints on even the most politically ambitious women" (p.

386).

- “Our results challenge the prevailing view that traditional family dynamics no longer shape women’s candidacies. Instead, we find that the gendered division of financial and caregiving responsibilities continues to create structural barriers to women’s emergence as candidates” (p. 390).

### 6.3.5 This One’s for the Boys: How Gendered Political Socialization Limits Girls’ Political Ambition and Interest

Bos, A. L., Greenlee, J. S., Holman, M. R., Oxley, Z. M., & Lay, J. C. (2022). This One’s for the Boys: How Gendered Political Socialization Limits Girls’ Political Ambition and Interest. *American Political Science Review*, 116(2), 484–501. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421001027>

- 1. Citation key:** bos\_this\_2022
- 2. Author(s):** Angela L. Bos, Jill S. Greenlee, Mirya R. Holman, Zoe M. Oxley, and J. Celeste Lay
- 3. Year:** 2022
- 4. Publication:** American Political Science Review
- 5. Keywords:** gender socialization, political ambition, political socialization, childhood development, political leadership
- 6. Summary:** Bos et al. investigate how children develop gendered perceptions of political leadership and the impact of these perceptions on political ambition. They argue that gendered political socialization—a process combining traditional gender socialization with political learning—leads girls to see politics as a male-dominated field and discourages them from aspiring to political roles. Using a novel dataset of over 1,600 U.S. children in grades 1–6, they demonstrate that as children age, girls increasingly view politics as a "man's world" and show declining levels of interest and ambition in politics compared to boys.
- 7. Theory:** The authors propose that gendered political socialization is the result of two intersecting processes: gender socialization, where children learn and internalize societal expectations of gender roles, and political socialization, where they develop understandings of political systems and leadership. They argue that these processes together create a perception among children that political leadership is inherently masculine. This perception, they suggest, is reinforced by a political environment that prioritizes competitive, agentic traits typically associated with masculinity while de-emphasizing communal, care-oriented traits often linked to femininity. As a result, girls internalize the belief that politics is not an appropriate or welcoming field for them. The authors also suggest that exposure to gendered depictions of political leaders in schools, media, and household discussions contributes to the growing gender gap in political ambition during childhood.
- 8. Methods:** The study uses a mixed-method approach, including surveys and structured interviews with 1,604 elementary school children in four U.S. regions. The researchers employ the *Draw a Political Leader* (DAPL) task, an innovative technique adapted from STEM research, to assess children’s perceptions of political leadership. Additionally, they measure children’s exposure to political topics, interest in political careers, and gendered occupational preferences. Data analysis includes multilevel logistic regression models to assess the relationship between age, gender, and political ambition while controlling for demographic factors such as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background.
- 9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Girls will be more likely to express interest in careers that emphasize communal, care-oriented traits (e.g., teachers, doctors), while boys will favor careers emphasizing assertiveness and leadership (e.g., business leaders, police officers).
  - Gendered occupational preferences will strengthen with age, as children become more attuned to gender norms.
  - Older children will exhibit greater awareness of political leaders and activities, consistent with political socialization.
  - Boys and girls will increasingly perceive political leadership as male-dominated as they age.
  - Girls will express lower levels of political interest and ambition than boys, with this gap widening as they grow older.
- The findings provide strong support for gendered political socialization as an explanatory framework. Girls show increasing alignment with traditional gendered occupational roles as they age, while boys’ preferences remain stable. The DAPL task reveals that most children—especially older girls—draw male political leaders. Furthermore, boys maintain steady political interest, whereas girls’ political ambition declines significantly with age.
- 10. Main findings:** The study finds that political leadership is overwhelmingly perceived as masculine, with 66% of children drawing men as political leaders and only 13% drawing women. As they age, girls become significantly more likely to depict political leaders as male, reinforcing the notion that politics is a male domain. In addition, girls express declining interest in politics and political careers over time, with their ambition dropping sharply between ages 6 and 12. While boys’ political interest remains relatively stable, girls’ interest decreases, suggesting that the gender gap in political ambition originates in early childhood and is reinforced through socialization processes.
- 11. Key quotations:**
  - “Operating together, gender socialization and political socialization produce what we call gendered political socialization, wherein children infer that politics is for men and girls infer that political roles conflict with their defined gender roles” (p. 485).
  - “As they age, girls are less likely to depict women as leaders and tend to express lower levels of political interest or ambition than do boys” (p. 486).

- “Our results demonstrate that girls are more likely to ‘opt out’ of politics at an early age, meaning that without intervention their voices will not be heard, maintaining sex-based inequality in our political system” (p. 497).

## 6.4 Political Recruitment and Party Politics

### 6.4.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of political recruitment and women’s representation has evolved from early debates over formal legal barriers to candidacy to contemporary research examining structural and social constraints that shape women’s political opportunities. While women win general elections at rates comparable to men, research demonstrates that gendered barriers emerge at earlier stages of the electoral process, particularly in candidate recruitment and primary elections. Scholars have identified multiple factors that hinder women’s entry into politics, including political ambition, party gatekeeping, elite perceptions of viability, and financial networks. These studies collectively emphasize that while explicit discrimination may have declined, institutional, cultural, and strategic considerations continue to create obstacles for female candidates, leading to persistent disparities in representation.
- **Candidate Recruitment and Political Ambition:** Early research on women’s political underrepresentation focused on individual-level ambition, arguing that women are less likely to see themselves as viable candidates and, as a result, are less likely to run for office. Lawless and Fox’s *It Takes a Candidate* (2005) demonstrated that women consistently express lower levels of political ambition than men, even when controlling for similar qualifications and political experience. This “ambition gap” has been attributed to gendered socialization, differing perceptions of qualifications, and a lack of encouragement from political elites. Subsequent research has complicated this view, showing that while ambition matters, structural factors—such as elite recruitment and party dynamics—play a more decisive role in determining women’s political prospects.
- **Primary Elections and Structural Barriers:** While women win general elections at rates similar to men, they face distinct challenges in primaries, where competition is often more intense. Lawless and Pearson’s (2008) analysis of U.S. House primaries from 1958 to 2004 found that women face significantly more challengers than men, forcing them to be exceptionally strong candidates to succeed. This structural disadvantage suggests that women’s electoral success is contingent on overcoming heightened scrutiny and more competitive conditions at the primary stage. Additionally, Republican women face greater obstacles than Democratic women due to ideological resistance within their party base, limiting their success in securing nominations.
- **Party Gatekeeping and Elite Perceptions:** Political parties play a central role in candidate recruitment, but their willingness to support female candidates varies across party lines and institutional contexts. Doherty, Dowling, and Miller’s (2019) study of local party chairs found that while women are not perceived as less viable than men, racial and ethnic minority candidates face significant skepticism regarding their electability. These perceptions influence the degree to which party elites actively recruit and support female candidates. Similarly, Fraga and Hassell’s (2021) research revealed that while Democratic women—particularly white women—receive substantial party support, Republican women and minority candidates do not experience the same level of backing, further constraining their political opportunities.
- **Donor Networks and Financial Barriers:** Beyond party gatekeeping, access to financial resources significantly shapes women’s ability to run for office. Crowder-Meyer and Cooperman (2018) introduced the concept of *women’s representation policy demanders* (WRPDs), highlighting that Democratic women benefit from well-integrated donor networks that prioritize female candidates. In contrast, Republican donor culture is less responsive to gendered recruitment efforts, making it more difficult for Republican women to secure the financial backing necessary to compete. This disparity in donor engagement underscores how financial structures reinforce partisan differences in women’s representation.
- **Field Experiments on Candidate Recruitment:** Recent experimental research has tested the effectiveness of targeted recruitment efforts in increasing women’s representation. Karpowitz, Monson, and Preece’s (2017) field experiment in a Republican-dominated state demonstrated that simple interventions—such as direct appeals from party elites—can significantly increase the number of female candidates. Their findings suggest that party leadership plays a crucial role in shaping the supply of candidates and that strategic messaging can alter both elite recruitment behavior and voter demand for female representation.
- **Women’s Candidate Recruitment Organizations:** In the absence of formal quotas or institutionalized recruitment mechanisms, external organizations have emerged to support women’s entry into politics. Kreitzer and Osborn’s (2019) analysis of nearly 600 women’s candidate recruitment groups revealed that these organizations are overwhelmingly partisan, with Democratic groups requiring a pro-choice stance and Republican groups favoring anti-abortion candidates. While these organizations expand women’s political opportunities, their ideological gatekeeping limits access for women with differing policy views. Additionally, racial and socioeconomic biases persist, as few groups explicitly focus on recruiting women of color or working-class candidates.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** The study of women’s political recruitment continues to grapple with questions of institutional bias, ideological barriers, and strategic elite behavior. While progress has been made in closing the gender gap in electoral success, women remain underrepresented in political office due to persistent structural disadvantages at the recruitment and nomination stages. Future research is likely to explore how shifting party dynamics, evolving donor strategies, and digital mobilization efforts influence the recruitment and success of female candidates. Additionally, the growing role of intersectionality in political representation will be a key area of study, as scholars examine how race, class, and gender interact to shape political opportunity structures.

#### 6.4.2 The Primary Reason for Women's Underrepresentation? Reevaluating the Conventional Wisdom

Lawless, J. L., & Pearson, K. (2008). The Primary Reason for Women's Underrepresentation? Reevaluating the Conventional Wisdom [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 70(1), 67–82. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002238160708005X>

1. **Citation key:** lawless\_primary\_2008
2. **Author(s):** Jennifer L. Lawless and Kathryn Pearson
3. **Year:** 2008
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** women's representation, congressional primaries, gender and elections, political ambition, primary competition
6. **Summary:** Lawless and Pearson reexamine conventional wisdom regarding women's electoral success, arguing that while women win congressional general elections at the same rates as men, gendered dynamics in primary elections contribute to their underrepresentation. Using a dataset covering all U.S. House primary elections from 1958 to 2004, they find that although women win primaries at similar rates to men, they face significantly more primary competition. This competitive disadvantage suggests that women must be "better" candidates to achieve equal success, highlighting the structural challenges that discourage female candidacy.
7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the prevailing notion that gender bias no longer plays a significant role in women's political representation. While studies have shown that women perform as well as men in general elections, Lawless and Pearson argue that the congressional primary process remains gendered, disadvantaging women at a critical early stage. They contend that primaries are particularly challenging for women due to three factors: (1) candidate-centered elections place a premium on traits such as assertiveness and self-promotion, which men are more likely to be socialized to exhibit; (2) women are less likely than men to have strong political networks and name recognition, leading to difficulties in securing party support; and (3) voters and political elites often perceive women as more vulnerable candidates, resulting in greater competition in primaries. The authors suggest that these barriers not only deter women from running but also require female candidates to outperform male counterparts to advance to the general election.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a quantitative analysis of all primary election candidates for the U.S. House from 1958 to 2004. The dataset includes 33,094 candidates across 19,221 primaries, coding for candidate gender, party affiliation, incumbency status, and electoral outcomes. The authors conduct multivariate analyses to test whether women face more difficult primary environments, using logistic regression to assess victory rates and vote margins while controlling for district characteristics and incumbency. Additionally, they analyze the number of opponents in primaries, comparing male and female candidates to determine whether women systematically face greater competition.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Women will win primaries at lower rates than men due to gendered challenges in candidate-centered elections.
  - Women will face more primary challengers than men, as political elites and competitors perceive them as weaker candidates.
  - The gender gap in electoral success will be more pronounced among Republican candidates, as conservative voters are less likely to support female candidates.
  - Over time, the gender gap in primary success will decrease due to increasing female political participation.The findings partially confirm these hypotheses. Contrary to expectations, women win primaries at rates similar to men, suggesting no systematic bias in electoral outcomes. However, women do face significantly greater primary competition, supporting the argument that they must be stronger candidates to achieve the same success. The expectation that Republican women would fare worse than Democratic women is also confirmed, with Republican female candidates experiencing greater challenges in primaries.
10. **Main findings:** Lawless and Pearson find that while women's primary victory rates are comparable to men's, they must navigate a more competitive primary landscape. Women in both parties face more challengers than men, with Republican women encountering particularly difficult primary conditions. Over time, Democratic women have seen improved primary success rates, but Republican women continue to struggle, likely due to gendered ideological biases within their party. The study also reveals that women are more likely to run against other women, which does not increase overall female representation but rather results in women competing against each other for limited seats. These findings suggest that while gender bias may not manifest in outright electoral discrimination, structural and institutional barriers persist, shaping women's political opportunities.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Although women generally do not win primaries at lower rates than their male counterparts, women in both parties face more primary competition than do men. Gender neutral victory rates, then, are not the result of a gender neutral primary process" (p. 67).
  - "To make it through the primary process, women must be stronger candidates, or at least candidates who are willing to endure greater challenges, and more challengers, than their male counterparts face" (p. 78).
  - "Women, in other words, have to be 'better' than men in order to fare equally well" (p. 79).

#### 6.4.3 How to Elect More Women: Gender and Candidate Success in a Field Experiment

Karpowitz, C. F., Monson, J. Q., & Preece, J. R. (2017). How to Elect More Women: Gender and Candidate Success in a Field Experiment [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12300>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 61(4), 927–943. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12300>

1. **Citation key:** karpowitz\_how\_2017
2. **Author(s):** Christopher F. Karpowitz, J. Quin Monson, and Jessica Robinson Preece
3. **Year:** 2017
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** women's representation, political ambition, party recruitment, Republican Party, field experiments
6. **Summary:** Karpowitz, Monson, and Preece examine strategies for increasing women's representation in political office, particularly within the Republican Party, where female representation has stagnated. They argue that party leaders can increase women's representation by boosting both the supply of female candidates through recruitment and the demand for female candidates by encouraging voters to elect more women. Using a field experiment in a Republican-dominated state and a national survey experiment, they test whether party elites' messages can alter candidate supply and voter demand, ultimately increasing women's election rates.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that women's underrepresentation in politics results from both supply-side and demand-side barriers. On the supply side, women are less likely than men to enter politics due to lower political ambition, weaker recruitment networks, and a reluctance to engage in competitive elections. Party recruitment efforts, however, can increase the number of women running. On the demand side, gendered voter perceptions, particularly within conservative parties, create hurdles for female candidates, as Republican women may be viewed as ideologically out of step with their party. The authors argue that party leaders can shape both supply and demand by actively recruiting women and publicly endorsing gender diversity in candidate selection. The combination of these efforts, they suggest, should have the most significant impact on increasing female representation.
8. **Methods:** The authors employ a two-pronged experimental approach. First, they conduct a field experiment in a Republican state where precinct chairs were randomly assigned to receive one of four messages: a control condition, a message urging them to recruit female candidates (Supply condition), a message encouraging voters to elect more women (Demand condition), or both messages together (Supply+Demand condition). They then measure the proportion of women elected as state convention delegates. Second, they conduct a national survey experiment with Republican primary voters, manipulating both candidate supply (by varying the number of women on a hypothetical ballot) and demand (by including messages from party elites encouraging voters to support women). This design allows them to isolate the effects of elite messages on both candidate emergence and voter behavior.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - The Supply treatment will increase the number of female candidates running for office.
  - The Demand treatment will increase the likelihood that voters elect female candidates.
  - The Supply and Demand condition will have the largest effect, as the combination of candidate recruitment and voter encouragement will reinforce each other.

The findings largely confirm these hypotheses. The Supply treatment increased the number of women running in caucus elections, while the Demand treatment increased voters' willingness to elect female candidates. However, the most substantial effects emerged in the Supply+Demand condition, which produced a significant increase in both candidate emergence and electoral success.

10. **Main findings:** The study demonstrates that simple interventions by party leaders can meaningfully increase women's representation in political office. In the field experiment, precincts in the Supply+Demand condition were significantly more likely to elect at least one woman as a state delegate, increasing the share of precincts electing women from 37.5% (control) to 45.4%. Additionally, the percentage of women among all elected delegates rose from 24.6% to 30.6% under the combined treatment. The survey experiment confirms these results in a broader national context: Republican primary voters were more likely to vote for female candidates when party elites encouraged them to do so, and the strongest effects occurred when there were multiple women on the ballot alongside elite encouragement. These findings suggest that party leaders have powerful but underutilized tools to increase gender diversity within their ranks.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "We find that messages from party elites had a potent effect on electoral outcomes. While both the Supply and Demand treatments somewhat increased the number of women elected as delegates, the Supply+Demand treatment had the largest and most statistically powerful effect on the number of women elected" (p. 928).
- "The percentage of precincts electing at least one female delegate jumped from 37.5% in the Control condition to 45.4% in the Supply+Demand condition. Further, in precincts assigned to the Control condition, women comprised 24.6% of delegates, whereas under the Supply and Demand condition, women comprised 30.6% of delegates" (p. 928).
- "Our results show that quotas, which face practical and ideological barriers in the United States, are not the only way to increase women's representation. Although our interventions were mild—a single letter sent to precinct chairs with a request from the state party chair or exposing voters to statements from party leaders—we saw significant increases in women's representation" (p. 940).

#### 6.4.4 Can't Buy Them Love: How Party Culture among Donors Contributes to the Party Gap in Women's Representation

Crowder-Meyer, M., & Cooperman, R. (2018). Can't Buy Them Love: How Party Culture among Donors Contributes to the Party Gap in Women's Representation [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 80(4), 1211–1224. <https://doi.org/10.1086/698848>

1. **Citation key:** crowder-meyer\_cant\_2018
2. **Author(s):** Melody Crowder-Meyer and Rosalyn Cooperman
3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** women's representation, political parties, campaign finance, donor networks, party culture
6. **Summary:** Crowder-Meyer and Cooperman examine the disparity in women's representation between the Democratic and Republican parties, focusing on how donor networks and party culture shape the recruitment and success of female candidates. Using an original survey of donors to party campaign committees and women's PACs, the authors introduce the concept of "women's representation policy demanders" (WRPDs)—donors and groups whose primary goal is increasing female political representation. They argue that WRPDs are significantly more integrated into the Democratic Party than the Republican Party, leading to greater financial and organizational support for Democratic women. This difference in donor culture, rather than simply candidate supply, explains why Democratic women are more likely to seek and hold elected office.
7. **Theory:** The authors contend that party culture—shaped by intense policy demanders—explains why Democratic women outnumber Republican women in elected office. While both parties contain WRPDs, these actors have greater influence within the Democratic coalition, as the party is broadly more receptive to identity-based political claims. Republican elites, on the other hand, adhere to a culture that emphasizes traditional gender roles and individual candidate quality over group-based representation. This cultural distinction affects donor behavior, as Democratic donors actively support female candidates and integrate WRPDs into their networks, while Republican donors, even those who contribute to women's PACs, are less motivated by gender considerations when making political contributions.
8. **Methods:** The study employs an original survey, the 2014 *National Supporter Survey*, which collected responses from 3,738 donors to Democratic and Republican party committees and women's PACs. The authors measure donors' familiarity with and support for WRPDs, the extent to which gender considerations motivate their political activities, and the role of gender-related organizations in their donation decisions. They use descriptive statistics, regression models, and open-ended responses to analyze how donor party affiliation shapes responsiveness to WRPDs, controlling for ideology, evangelical identification, and views on traditional gender roles.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - WRPDs will be more integrated into the Democratic coalition than the Republican coalition.
  - Republican donors will be less likely than Democratic donors to take political action motivated by WRPD concerns, even after accounting for ideology and social conservatism.
  - The Republican Party's cultural resistance to WRPDs will persist even among Republican donors who contribute to women's PACs.

The findings strongly support these hypotheses. WRPDs are far more embedded in the Democratic Party's donor network, with Democratic donors consistently more likely to recognize, support, and prioritize WRPDs in their financial and political activities. Republican donors demonstrate significantly lower awareness of WRPDs, and even those contributing to women's PACs are far less likely to be motivated by gender considerations. The results indicate that party culture, rather than mere ideological differences, drives the partisan gap in women's representation.

10. **Main findings:** The study reveals substantial partisan differences in donor attitudes toward female candidates. Democratic donors are highly familiar with WRPDs, actively support them, and are more likely to list gender-related considerations as key motivations in their political activity. In contrast, Republican donors are largely unaware of or uninterested in WRPDs, and even those who contribute to women's PACs exhibit minimal support for gender-based candidate recruitment. These patterns persist across various measures, reinforcing the idea that party culture—shaped by policy demanders—dictates elite behavior more than individual ideology. The authors conclude that this cultural divergence has significant implications for the Republican Party, as its resistance to gendered candidate recruitment strategies may hinder efforts to increase women's representation within its ranks.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "We reveal that Democratic elites' political activity and financial contributions are significantly more motivated by WRPD concerns than are Republicans. We also show that WRPDs like EMILY's List and Susan B. Anthony List are far more integrated into Democratic than Republican party coalitions" (p. 1212).
- "While WRPDs are present in both political parties, we argue there are significant differences in both their prominence in each party coalition and the degree to which each party's elites respond to their demands" (p. 1214).
- "The differences we identify in party responsiveness to WRPDs lay the foundation for significant differences in support for Republican and Democratic women, both at the candidate emergence stage and when they seek support for primary and general campaigns" (p. 1216).

#### 6.4.5 Do Local Party Chairs Think Women and Minority Candidates Can Win? Evidence from a Conjoint Experiment

Doherty, D., Dowling, C. M., & Miller, M. G. (2019). Do Local Party Chairs Think Women and Minority Candidates Can Win? Evidence from a Conjoint Experiment [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 81(4), 1282–

1297. <https://doi.org/10.1086/704698>

1. **Citation key:** doherty\_local\_2019
2. **Author(s):** David Doherty, Conor M. Dowling, and Michael G. Miller
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** candidate recruitment, gender, race, local party chairs, conjoint experiment
6. **Summary:** Doherty, Dowling, and Miller analyze how local party chairs assess the electoral viability of women and minority candidates in state legislative primaries. Using a conjoint experiment embedded in a national survey of local party chairs, they test whether chairs view women and racial/ethnic minority candidates as less likely to win. They find that while chairs do not perceive women candidates as less viable than men, they do believe that Black and Latinx candidates face significant electoral disadvantages. The study underscores the role of elite perceptions in shaping the recruitment and support of candidates from underrepresented groups.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on research suggesting that party elites play a crucial role in candidate recruitment and that their perceptions of voter biases can influence who is encouraged to run. While prior work suggests that women and minority candidates do not face systematic voter discrimination at the ballot box, the authors argue that local party chairs may still perceive them as less viable, potentially affecting their recruitment and support. They theorize that these perceptions stem from three possible mechanisms: (1) chairs may use race and gender as heuristics for other candidate attributes, such as ideology or electability; (2) personal biases of the chairs may shape their judgments; and (3) strategic considerations, including the demographic composition of the electorate, may influence how chairs assess candidate viability.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a national survey of local party chairs from both major parties, fielded in 2016. The survey included a conjoint experiment in which chairs were presented with pairs of hypothetical candidates for state legislative primaries. Candidate attributes—including race, gender, previous officeholding, and issue positions—were randomly assigned. Chairs were asked to indicate which candidate they believed would perform better in their local primary. The authors estimate the average marginal component effects (AMCEs) of race and gender on candidate selection while controlling for other randomly assigned attributes. Additional analyses examine whether these effects vary by party affiliation, demographic composition of the county, and personal characteristics of the chairs.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Women candidates will not be perceived as less viable than men.
  - Black and Latinx candidates will be perceived as less viable than white candidates.
  - Republican chairs will be more likely than Democratic chairs to perceive minority candidates as less viable.
  - The perceived disadvantages for minority candidates will be attenuated in counties with higher minority populations.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that while local party chairs do not believe women candidates face electoral disadvantages, they do perceive significant obstacles for Black and Latinx candidates. On average, chairs rated Black candidates as approximately 8.7 percentage points less viable and Latinx candidates as 9.8 percentage points less viable compared to otherwise similar white candidates. These penalties persist even when controlling for candidate experience and issue positions. The analysis suggests that chairs' perceptions of racial bias in their electorates may shape their recruitment and support decisions, potentially limiting opportunities for minority candidates. Additionally, Democratic chairs' perceptions of minority candidate viability were influenced by county demographics, with minority candidates facing smaller perceived penalties in counties with larger minority populations. However, Republican chairs' assessments of minority viability were largely insensitive to county demographics.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "We find no evidence that chairs from either party viewed women candidates as less viable. In fact, women candidates were viewed as slightly more viable than their male counterparts" (p. 1283).
  - "Both Democratic and Republican chairs viewed black and Latinx candidates as significantly less viable than white candidates. On average, chairs were approximately 10 percentage points less likely to select a candidate as more viable if the candidate's name signaled that he or she was black or Latinx, rather than white" (p. 1284).
  - "Regardless of whether this perception is correct, it is likely to affect chairs' behavior during campaign cycles. Unless chairs are sufficiently motivated to prioritize considerations other than appealing to their base, they may be reluctant to devote resources to recruiting and supporting minority candidates" (p. 1285).

#### 6.4.6 The Emergence and Activities of Women's Recruiting Groups in the U.S.

Kreitzer, R. J., & Osborn, T. L. (2019). The emergence and activities of women's recruiting groups in the U.S. [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2018.1531772>. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 7(4), 842–852. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2018.1531772>

1. **Citation key:** kreitzer\_emergence\_2019

2. **Author(s):** Rebecca J. Kreitzer and Tracy L. Osborn
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** Politics, Groups, and Identities
5. **Keywords:** candidate recruitment, women in politics, political ambition, women's organizations, abortion politics
6. **Summary:** Kreitzer and Osborn examine the landscape of women's candidate recruitment groups in the U.S., mapping their emergence, activities, and ideological composition. They argue that while these groups play a crucial role in supporting women's political participation, their structure reflects broader partisan and ideological divides—most notably, an overwhelming focus on abortion as a litmus test for support. Using a comprehensive census of nearly 600 groups, the authors analyze their distribution, recruitment strategies, and engagement in candidate training and financial support. They conclude that while these groups expand women's pathways into politics, their accessibility varies based on partisanship, race, and issue alignment.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on scholarship emphasizing the structural barriers to women's political representation, particularly the role of recruitment and support networks. They argue that in the absence of formal quotas or centralized party mechanisms for increasing female representation, women's recruiting groups serve as a crucial but informal mechanism for candidate emergence. However, these groups are not ideologically neutral: they are deeply embedded in partisan networks, with most Democratic-aligned groups requiring a pro-choice stance and Republican-aligned groups favoring anti-abortion candidates. This ideological gatekeeping, they suggest, may limit the inclusivity of women's recruitment efforts. Additionally, the authors highlight racial and socioeconomic disparities in these organizations' outreach, noting that few groups explicitly focus on recruiting women of color or working-class women. By framing women's political recruitment as both a partisan and issue-driven process, the study challenges assumptions that candidate support networks function as neutral facilitators of political ambition.
8. **Methods:** The study relies on an original census of 600 women's candidate recruitment groups in the U.S., compiled through internet searches, existing databases, and direct communication with organizations. The authors categorize these groups based on partisanship, issue focus (especially abortion stance), geographic distribution, and core activities, which include candidate recruitment, training, and financial support. They use descriptive statistics and spatial mapping to assess how these groups operate across different states and political environments. Additionally, they analyze the mission statements and eligibility criteria of these organizations to determine the extent to which they emphasize ideological and demographic exclusivity.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Women's candidate recruitment groups are predominantly partisan, aligning closely with either the Democratic or Republican parties.
  - Most Democratic-aligned recruitment groups will require candidates to be pro-choice, while most Republican-aligned groups will require candidates to be anti-abortion.
  - The distribution of recruitment groups will be uneven across states, with more organizations concentrated in populous and politically competitive states.
  - Few recruitment groups will explicitly focus on racial and socioeconomic diversity in candidate selection.The findings strongly support these hypotheses. The vast majority of recruitment groups are explicitly partisan, with 226 of 300 Democratic-aligned groups requiring a pro-choice stance and 74 of 80 Republican-aligned groups requiring an anti-abortion stance. The geographic distribution of these groups is highly uneven, with some states hosting over 20 organizations while others have only a handful. Additionally, while 135 organizations mention diversity in their mission statements, only a small fraction specifically target women of color or working-class women for recruitment.
10. **Main findings:** Kreitzer and Osborn find that women's recruitment groups function as a critical but ideologically segmented component of political candidate pipelines. These groups operate nationwide but are not equally accessible to all women. Democratic-aligned groups outnumber Republican-aligned ones, particularly in states with larger urban populations. The study also highlights the dominance of abortion as a central criterion for recruitment: most Democratic-aligned groups require candidates to be pro-choice, and most Republican-aligned groups require candidates to be anti-abortion. Furthermore, while many organizations claim to support diverse candidates, very few explicitly focus on recruiting women of color. The authors conclude that while women's candidate groups expand political opportunities, they also reinforce partisan and ideological divisions, shaping who is encouraged and supported in their political ambitions.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Despite this multitude of groups, many of the groups recruit two very specific types of women candidates: a Democratic, pro-abortion rights woman or a Republican, anti-abortion rights woman" (p. 844).
  - "The explicit pledge to diversify candidacy by roughly one-quarter of women candidate groups in our census is encouraging, but work remains to compare this pledge to the actual numbers of candidates of color" (p. 848).
  - "Though we typically think of women candidate groups as interested in elections exclusively, a strong number of groups also aim to place women in other positions of government power, such as appointments to boards and commissions" (p. 849).

#### 6.4.7 Are Minority and Women Candidates Penalized by Party Politics? Race, Gender, and Access to Party Support

Fraga, B. L., & Hassell, H. J. G. (2021). Are Minority and Women Candidates Penalized by Party Politics? Race, Gender, and Access to Party Support [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 74(3), 540–555. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0360110520930310>

1177/1065912920913326

1. **Citation key:** fraga\_are\_2021
2. **Author(s):** Bernard L. Fraga and Hans J. G. Hassell
3. **Year:** 2021
4. **Publication:** Political Research Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** political parties, race and ethnicity, gender, representation, congressional elections, campaign finance
6. **Summary:** Fraga and Hassell examine whether political parties provide differential support to minority and women candidates in general elections, thereby influencing their electoral success. They employ a difference-in-differences approach using data on over 1,000 major-party congressional nominees between 2006 and 2014. By analyzing financial and organizational party support, the authors test whether minority and women candidates receive less assistance compared to their white and male counterparts. Their findings suggest that neither Democratic nor Republican minority nominees receive less support than white candidates, though Democratic white women receive comparatively more backing than Democratic men or minority women.
7. **Theory:** The authors build upon research that identifies candidate recruitment and party support as critical factors in electoral success. They argue that past studies have focused on voter biases while neglecting the role of party elites in structuring opportunities for candidates from underrepresented groups. Party elites, as gatekeepers, can either hinder or enhance candidates' prospects by directing financial resources and organizational backing. Drawing from the literature on racial and gender disparities in political ambition and party recruitment, they suggest that party elites may discriminate against women and minorities in the allocation of general election resources. However, they also propose a competing theory that parties—particularly the Democratic Party—may strategically invest in minority and women candidates to appeal to diverse voter constituencies. They examine these competing expectations by assessing party financial contributions and donor networks.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a difference-in-differences research design to isolate the effects of race and gender on party support. The authors compile a dataset of major-party congressional nominees from 2006 to 2014, coding candidate demographics using archival sources. They construct three measures of party support: (1) the number of donors connected to the party's congressional campaign committee who contributed to a candidate, (2) the total amount of contributions from these donors, and (3) direct financial contributions from party organizations. To control for confounding variables, the authors include district-level characteristics (such as competitiveness) and candidate attributes (such as prior electoral experience). They estimate the impact of nominee race and gender by analyzing within-district changes in party support when a party shifts from nominating a white male to a woman or minority candidate. They also exploit redistricting as a natural experiment, examining how changes in district competitiveness influence party backing for different types of candidates.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Minority and women candidates receive less party support in general elections than white male candidates.
  - Democratic Party elites provide greater financial support to women candidates than to men.
  - Republican Party elites provide less support to minority candidates than to white candidates.
  - Party support is more responsive to changes in electoral competitiveness for women candidates than for men.
 The findings do not support the hypothesis that minority and women candidates receive less party support; instead, party elites appear to provide equal or greater backing in some cases. White women Democratic candidates receive significantly more support from their party networks than white men or minority women, particularly in competitive districts. Republican minority candidates do not experience lower levels of party support than white Republicans.
10. **Main findings:** Fraga and Hassell find little evidence that party elites systematically disadvantage minority or women candidates in general elections. Across both parties, minority nominees receive similar levels of support as their white counterparts. However, Democratic women—especially white women—receive more party support than Democratic men and minority women. This pattern is particularly pronounced in competitive districts, where Democratic elites increase their investment in women candidates. Republican elites do not appear to penalize minority candidates, and in some cases, minority Republican nominees receive more support than their white peers. These findings challenge narratives that attribute underrepresentation solely to voter biases or elite discrimination. Instead, they suggest that parties strategically allocate resources in ways that may help rather than hinder diverse candidates.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "We find that, all else equal, Democratic and Republican minority nominees do not receive less support than their white counterparts" (p. 541).
  - "The Democratic Party donor network provides more support to women candidates, in particular white women, compared with their male counterparts. Furthermore, Democratic Party networks are more responsive to changes in district competitiveness for women candidates, providing additional party support above and beyond the increase that normally comes when a race is more competitive" (p. 543).
  - "These findings suggest that a lack of party support for minorities and women at the general election stage is not the cause of underrepresentation of minorities and women. If anything, parties appear to be more supportive of minority and women nominees than they are of their white and male counterparts, opening up new research questions probing the origin and substance of this support" (p. 544).

## 6.5 Women Candidates and Voter Responses

### 6.5.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The scholarship on women candidates and voter responses has examined the extent to which gender influences electoral outcomes, candidate evaluations, and strategic behavior in campaigns. While early research suggested that women candidates face systemic disadvantages due to voter bias and entrenched gender stereotypes, more recent studies challenge this assumption by emphasizing the role of partisanship, electoral context, and candidate strategy. Some scholars argue that gender stereotypes create barriers to electoral success by shaping voter perceptions of candidate competence and issue ownership, whereas others find that structural and institutional factors, such as party recruitment and financial support, play a larger role in determining women's electoral viability. A growing body of work also explores how visual presentation, emotional expression, and partisan stereotypes intersect with gender to shape voter evaluations, demonstrating that the effects of gender are highly contingent on context.
- **Gender Stereotypes in Candidate Evaluations:** Foundational studies on gender and candidate evaluations distinguish between *trait stereotypes* (perceptions of personal attributes) and *belief stereotypes* (assumptions about policy positions). Research by Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) finds that voters ascribe masculine traits (e.g., toughness, rationality) to male candidates and feminine traits (e.g., warmth, compassion) to female candidates, influencing perceptions of issue competence. Women candidates are generally viewed as more adept at handling social welfare and education policy, while men are perceived as stronger on defense and economic issues. However, belief stereotypes—assumptions that women are more liberal and Democratic—play a lesser role in shaping competency evaluations compared to trait-based judgments. The persistence of these stereotypes suggests that female candidates must strategically navigate issue positioning to counteract potential disadvantages.
- **The Role of Partisanship in Voter Decision-Making:** Recent work by Dolan (2014) argues that gender stereotypes exert limited influence on voter decision-making once partisanship is accounted for. Using a nationally representative survey, Dolan finds that while voters hold gendered expectations about policy expertise, these perceptions do not systematically translate into vote choice. Instead, partisanship remains the dominant heuristic, with party identification outweighing gendered biases in candidate evaluations. This finding challenges earlier claims that gender stereotypes impose a universal disadvantage on women candidates and highlights the importance of accounting for political polarization when analyzing voter responses.
- **Visual Information and Gendered Candidate Evaluations:** Bauer and Carpinella (2018) extend the study of gender stereotypes by examining the role of visual cues in campaign messaging. They find that candidate images reinforcing traditional gender norms (e.g., women depicted in nurturing roles) sustain existing stereotypes, whereas masculine visuals (e.g., a woman in military settings) can improve perceptions of competence in male-dominated policy areas. However, such visuals also risk backlash, as voters may perceive female candidates violating gender norms as inauthentic or untrustworthy. This underscores the strategic complexity of visual presentation in electoral campaigns.
- **Stereotype-Based Attacks in Negative Campaigning:** Research by Cassese and Holman (2018) applies expectancy-violation theory to analyze how gender and partisan stereotypes shape the effectiveness of negative campaign attacks. Their findings indicate that attacks targeting a candidate's stereotypical strengths—such as questioning a woman's compassion or a man's leadership—are particularly damaging. Female candidates, especially Democratic women, are more vulnerable to trait-based attacks than their male counterparts. This highlights the role of campaign strategy in reinforcing or mitigating gendered disadvantages.
- **Candidate Strategy and Partisan Trespassing:** Bauer (2019) investigates how candidates engage in *partisan trespassing*, or the adoption of issue positions associated with the opposing party. While both male and female candidates can benefit from trespassing strategies, female candidates—particularly Democratic women—face a heightened risk of backlash when emphasizing traditionally Republican issues such as national security. This suggests that gender stereotypes constrain strategic flexibility, limiting women's ability to appeal to cross-partisan constituencies.
- **Shifting Standards in Candidate Qualification Evaluations:** In a study of voter expectations, Bauer (2020) applies shifting standards theory to demonstrate that female candidates are held to higher qualification thresholds than their male counterparts. While women may initially receive favorable assessments of their competence relative to "typical women," voters employ stricter benchmarks when evaluating their overall leadership ability. This results in a qualification premium for female candidates, where they must demonstrate greater experience or expertise to be perceived as equally viable.
- **The Impact of Emotional Expression in Debates:** Boussalis et al. (2021) explore how gender norms shape voter reactions to emotional displays in televised debates. Using facial recognition and real-time audience responses, they find that female candidates are penalized for expressing anger but rewarded for displaying happiness, whereas male candidates benefit from assertive expressions. This gendered emotional constraint further reinforces the challenges women face in presenting themselves as strong leaders without violating voter expectations.
- **Gendered Voting Patterns in Congressional Elections:** Fulton and Dhima (2021) assess whether women candidates face electoral penalties in congressional elections, finding that Democratic women suffer a gender penalty among male Republican and independent voters unless they possess a qualifications advantage. Their results suggest that partisanship and candidate experience interact to shape electoral outcomes, with gender-based disadvantages emerging primarily in ideologically conservative constituencies.
- **Candidate Aggression and Voter Backlash:** Bauer, Kalmoe, and Russell (2022) investigate how voter personality traits condition responses to aggressive political behavior. Their findings indicate that while aggressive campaign tactics may benefit male candidates, they impose a disproportionate penalty on women, particularly among high-aggression

voters who tolerate incivility from men but punish similar behavior in women. This suggests that female candidates must carefully calibrate their rhetorical approach to avoid reinforcing negative gendered perceptions. Bauer, Harman, and Russell (2024) explore whether female presidential candidates face a gendered backlash for displaying political ambition. Their panel study of the 2020 Democratic primary finds that ambitious women receive lower likability ratings and reduced anticipated vote support compared to men. However, this backlash diminishes over time, suggesting that sustained exposure to female presidential candidates may mitigate some of the initial gendered biases.

- **Intersectionality and the Evaluation of Women of Color Candidates:** Gonzalez and Bauer (2024) examine whether a distinct “women of color” stereotype exists in political evaluations. Their findings suggest that while women of color are often viewed as possessing both feminine and masculine traits, these attributes do not consistently translate into electoral advantages. Moreover, subgroup distinctions emerge, with Asian women receiving more favorable evaluations for higher office than Latina or Black women, reflecting racialized variations in gendered candidate perceptions.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Current debates in the study of women candidates and voter responses center on the persistence of gender stereotypes, the extent to which partisanship moderates gendered evaluations, and the role of campaign strategies in mitigating electoral disadvantages. Future research is likely to explore the impact of digital media on gendered political communication, the evolving role of intersectionality in voter perceptions, and the institutional barriers that shape women’s candidacy and electoral success. Additionally, as more women run for high office, scholars will continue to assess whether increased female representation normalizes ambitious women and reduces voter bias in the long term.

### 6.5.2 Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Male and Female Candidates

Huddy, L., & Terkildsen, N. (1993). Gender Stereotypes and the Perception of Male and Female Candidates [Publisher: [Midwest Political Science Association, Wiley]]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 37(1), 119–147. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111526>

1. **Citation key:** huddy\_gender\_1993
2. **Author(s):** Leonie Huddy and Nayda Terkildsen
3. **Year:** 1993
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** gender stereotypes, candidate evaluation, trait stereotypes, belief stereotypes, political competence
6. **Summary:** Huddy and Terkildsen examine the role of gender stereotypes in shaping voters’ perceptions of male and female political candidates. They differentiate between *trait stereotypes*, which ascribe gender-linked personality traits to candidates, and *belief stereotypes*, which attribute political views to candidates based on their gender. Using an experimental design, they assess how these stereotypes affect perceptions of candidate competence across different policy domains. Their findings indicate that trait stereotypes significantly shape assessments of competence in areas traditionally associated with either masculinity (e.g., defense, military) or femininity (e.g., social welfare, education), while belief stereotypes play a more limited role.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that gender stereotypes influence voter evaluations in two key ways: through assumptions about personality traits and through inferred political beliefs. *Trait stereotypes* suggest that male candidates are seen as assertive, rational, and tough, making them appear more competent on military and economic issues, while female candidates are perceived as warm, compassionate, and expressive, leading to higher competency ratings on social welfare issues. *Belief stereotypes*, on the other hand, assume that female candidates are more liberal and Democratic, whereas male candidates are more conservative and Republican. These belief stereotypes can influence competency ratings, particularly for compassion-related issues, but are less impactful than trait stereotypes. The authors contend that these stereotypes create systemic advantages and disadvantages for candidates depending on the policy area, with male candidates generally benefiting from the broader applicability of masculine traits to multiple issue domains.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a controlled experiment with 297 undergraduate participants, who were randomly assigned to evaluate a hypothetical male or female candidate. These candidates were described as possessing either masculine (e.g., tough, ambitious) or feminine (e.g., compassionate, trustworthy) traits. The participants rated the candidates’ competence on various policy issues, including military defense, economic management, social welfare, and women’s issues. The authors then used analysis of variance (ANOVA) and regression techniques to assess how gender and trait stereotypes influenced competency evaluations. The study also measured inferred political beliefs to determine whether belief stereotypes contributed independently to these assessments.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors test two competing explanations for gender-based competency assessments:
  - **H1:** Candidates described with masculine traits (regardless of gender) will be perceived as more competent on military and economic issues.
  - **H2:** Candidates described with feminine traits (regardless of gender) will be perceived as more competent on social welfare issues.
  - **H3:** Female candidates will be more strongly associated with social welfare issues, even when described with masculine traits.
  - **H4:** Male candidates will be rated as more competent on military issues, even when described with feminine traits.
  - **H5:** Belief stereotypes will influence competency assessments, but their effect will be smaller than that of trait stereotypes.

The findings confirm that trait stereotypes play a dominant role in shaping perceptions of candidate competence, with belief stereotypes exerting more limited influence.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds that gender-based *trait stereotypes* strongly influence perceptions of candidate competence. Candidates with masculine traits are rated as more competent in military and economic policy, while candidates with feminine traits are viewed as more competent in handling social welfare and education issues. However, gender alone also affects evaluations: male candidates are perceived as better at handling defense-related issues, while female candidates are seen as more capable of addressing social concerns, even when described with counter-stereotypical traits. *Belief stereotypes*—which assume female candidates are more liberal and male candidates more conservative—affect perceptions of competence in some areas, particularly social welfare, but their effects are generally weaker than those of trait stereotypes. Importantly, instrumental (i.e., masculine) traits confer broader advantages, making them politically beneficial for both male and female candidates.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “Warm and expressive candidates were seen as better at compassion issues; instrumental candidates were rated as more competent to handle the military and economic issues” (p. 120).
- “Masculine instrumental traits increased the candidate’s perceived competence on a broader range of issues than the feminine traits of warmth and expressiveness” (p. 121).
- “Women were persistently seen as more competent on compassion issues even after controlling for their perceived traits and beliefs” (p. 140).

#### 6.5.3 Gender Stereotypes, Candidate Evaluations, and Voting for Women Candidates

Dolan, K. (2014). Gender Stereotypes, Candidate Evaluations, and Voting for Women Candidates: What Really Matters? [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 67(1), 96–107. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912913487949>

1. **Citation key:** dolan\_gender\_2014
2. **Author(s):** Kathleen Dolan
3. **Year:** 2014
4. **Publication:** Political Research Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** gender stereotypes, candidate evaluations, voter decision-making, political party, women candidates
6. **Summary:** Dolan examines whether gender stereotypes influence voter evaluations of women candidates in U.S. House elections. She distinguishes between abstract gender stereotypes (general beliefs about men and women in politics) and their application to real candidates. Using a nationally representative two-wave panel survey from the 2010 midterm elections, she tests whether stereotypes affect candidate evaluations and vote choice when a woman is running against a man. She finds that while gender stereotypes exist, they have limited direct effects on voter decision-making. Instead, partisanship remains the dominant factor in shaping candidate evaluations and vote choice.
7. **Theory:** Dolan challenges the prevailing assumption that gender stereotypes significantly influence election outcomes for women candidates. While past research suggests that voters ascribe different policy competencies and personality traits to male and female candidates, Dolan argues that these stereotypes may be less influential in real-world elections than experimental research has suggested. She posits that voters may hold abstract stereotypes about gender and political leadership but do not necessarily apply them when evaluating actual candidates. Instead, partisanship and incumbency likely outweigh gendered considerations. Her study suggests that political party serves as a stronger heuristic than gender, particularly in an era of increased polarization, and that stereotypes may have little to no independent effect on vote choice.
8. **Methods:** Dolan uses data from a nationally representative two-wave panel survey conducted in 2010. The survey included 3,150 U.S. adults from twenty-nine states, stratified to include voters who experienced mixed-gender House races. In the first wave, respondents were asked about their general gender stereotypes regarding political candidates, measuring beliefs about which gender is more competent on specific policy issues (e.g., defense vs. education) and which traits (e.g., leadership, compassion) are more associated with men or women. The second wave asked respondents to evaluate the actual candidates in their House race, including perceived competence and vote choice. Statistical analyses, including logistic regression, tested whether gender stereotypes influenced evaluations and voting behavior while controlling for key political variables such as party affiliation, incumbency, and race competitiveness.
9. **Hypotheses:** Dolan tests the following expectations regarding the role of gender stereotypes in elections:
  - **H1:** Abstract gender stereotypes influence candidate evaluations, with voters rating women as stronger on “compassion” issues and men as stronger on “security” issues.
  - **H2:** Gender stereotypes influence vote choice, with voters less likely to select a woman candidate if they hold strong gendered beliefs about political leadership.
  - **H3:** The effect of gender stereotypes is moderated by partisanship, such that partisan cues override gendered expectations.

Dolan’s findings largely reject H1 and H2 but support H3, showing that while voters hold stereotypes, they do not strongly shape evaluations or decisions at the ballot box.

10. **Main findings:** Dolan finds that while voters hold abstract gender stereotypes, these attitudes do not systematically translate into their evaluations of specific candidates or their vote choices. Instead, party identification is the dominant predictor of both candidate evaluations and electoral decisions. Voters overwhelmingly rely on partisanship when choosing between male and female candidates, and gender stereotypes have only marginal effects, if any, on

their evaluations. Furthermore, incumbency status and campaign spending play more significant roles than gender stereotypes in determining electoral outcomes. This challenges the notion that voter bias against women candidates is a major driver of gender disparities in political officeholding. Instead, structural factors such as the recruitment and nomination process may be more responsible for the underrepresentation of women.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "While gender stereotypes remain a part of political life, they do not appear to exert a consistent, independent influence on candidate evaluations and vote choice" (p. 98).
- "The findings suggest that partisanship remains the dominant heuristic in shaping voter decision-making, overwhelming the potential impact of gender stereotypes" (p. 101).
- "These results point to the need to reconsider the assumption that stereotypes create a systematic disadvantage for women candidates and instead focus on the structural barriers to women's representation" (p. 104).

#### 6.5.4 Visual Information and Candidate Evaluations: The Influence of Feminine and Masculine Images on Support for Female Candidates

Bauer, N. M., & Carpinella, C. (2018). Visual Information and Candidate Evaluations: The Influence of Feminine and Masculine Images on Support for Female Candidates [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 71(2), 395–407. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912917738579>

1. **Citation key:** bauer\_visual\_2018
2. **Author(s):** Nichole M. Bauer and Colleen Carpinella
3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** Political Research Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** gender stereotypes, campaigns, visual communication, political leadership, electoral viability
6. **Summary:** Bauer and Carpinella examine how visual information influences voter evaluations of male and female candidates, particularly focusing on the effects of masculine and feminine imagery. They argue that while existing research has explored the impact of verbal and textual cues on stereotype activation, it has largely ignored the role of visual information. Using a national survey experiment, they test whether candidate images that align or conflict with gendered stereotypes affect perceptions of issue competence and electoral viability. Their findings suggest that masculine visuals negatively impact perceptions of female candidates' electoral viability, highlighting the complexity of gendered visual cues in political campaigns.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on theories of information processing and stereotype reliance to argue that visual cues can reinforce or challenge existing gender stereotypes in candidate evaluations. They contend that gendered visual information—such as images that emphasize strength, toughness, or compassion—serves as a heuristic for voters, influencing their assessments of candidates' qualifications and leadership potential. Their framework suggests that gender incongruent visuals (e.g., a female candidate in a traditionally masculine setting) are more likely to shift voter perceptions, whereas gender congruent visuals (e.g., a male candidate in a masculine setting) are less impactful. This stems from voters' reliance on implicit expectations about gender and leadership, where masculine traits are generally perceived as more politically advantageous. The authors hypothesize that masculine visuals will have a greater impact on evaluations of female candidates, either improving perceptions of their competence in male-dominated issue areas or triggering a backlash for violating traditional gender norms.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a  $2 \times 2 \times 3$  experimental design, manipulating candidate gender (male or female), partisanship (Democrat or Republican), and visual presentation (feminine, masculine, or no visuals). Participants were randomly assigned to view a campaign website featuring one of these candidate profiles, with visuals designed to emphasize either traditionally masculine (e.g., business meetings, military imagery) or feminine (e.g., children, caregiving) stereotypes. The sample, drawn from Survey Sampling International ( $N = 1,056$ ), was nationally representative. The dependent variables include perceptions of candidate issue competency in masculine (e.g., defense, economics) and feminine (e.g., education, social welfare) policy domains, as well as overall favorability and perceived electoral viability. The authors use regression analysis and difference-in-difference tests to assess the impact of visual cues across gender and partisan conditions.
9. **Hypotheses:** The study tests the following expectations regarding the effects of gendered visual information:
  - **H1:** Masculine visuals will affect evaluations of female candidates but not male candidates.
  - **H2:** Feminine visuals will affect evaluations of male candidates but not female candidates.
  - **H3:** Masculine visuals will improve female candidates' perceived competence in traditionally masculine policy areas.
  - **H4:** Masculine visuals will reduce female candidates' perceived electoral viability due to stereotype incongruence.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that gender incongruent visual cues significantly affect voter evaluations, but not always in ways that benefit female candidates. While masculine visuals improve perceptions of a female candidate's competence on military issues, they also lead to a backlash in terms of perceived electoral viability, particularly for Democratic female candidates. Feminine visuals do not significantly alter evaluations of either male or female candidates. These findings suggest that while female candidates can leverage masculine imagery to bolster their credibility

in male-dominated issue areas, doing so risks alienating voters who expect women to conform to traditional feminine norms. The authors conclude that visual messaging strategies must be carefully calibrated to avoid triggering negative stereotype-based evaluations.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "We argue that extant scholarship overlooks a critical source of stereotypic information about female candidates—the role of visual information" (p. 396).
- "Masculine visuals can improve the female candidate's issue competencies on military policy, a traditional strength of male candidates, but this boost does not extend to defense or economic policy" (p. 400).
- "Using visuals to highlight the masculine strengths of a female candidate can backfire and lead voters to see female candidates as less viable political contenders" (p. 402).

#### 6.5.5 Party and Gender Stereotypes in Campaign Attacks

Cassese, E. C., & Holman, M. R. (2018). Party and Gender Stereotypes in Campaign Attacks. *Political Behavior*, 40(3), 785–807. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-017-9423-7>

1. **Citation key:** cassese\_party\_2018
2. **Author(s):** Erin C. Cassese and Mirya R. Holman
3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** negative campaigning, stereotypes, traits, issue ownership, vote choice, gender, partisanship
6. **Summary:** Cassese and Holman analyze how partisan and gender stereotypes interact with campaign attacks to shape voter perceptions. Drawing on expectancy-violation theory, they argue that attacks on a candidate's "home turf"—traits or issues traditionally associated with their party or gender—are particularly effective in reducing voter support. Using two survey experiments (a Trait Attack Study and an Issue Attack Study), they find that female candidates are disproportionately harmed by trait-based attacks that challenge their perceived feminine strengths. Both male and female candidates are vulnerable to attacks on issue competencies traditionally associated with their party and gender, but Democratic women face the most substantial electoral penalties. The study underscores the role of stereotypes in shaping the effectiveness of negative campaigning.
7. **Theory:** The authors integrate expectancy-violation theory with research on gender and partisan stereotypes to argue that certain campaign attacks are more damaging when they challenge stereotypic strengths associated with a candidate's social identity. Expectancy-violation theory suggests that people respond more negatively when an individual fails to meet expectations tied to their group membership. Applying this logic to campaign attacks, the authors hypothesize that criticisms targeting traits or issues stereotypically linked to a candidate's gender or party will be especially detrimental. Because voters associate Democrats with compassionate leadership and social welfare policies, and Republicans with strength and national security, attacks on these domains will be more potent when directed at candidates whose party "owns" these traits or issues. Similarly, gender stereotypes dictate that women are perceived as warm, collaborative, and skilled in social issues, while men are expected to be assertive leaders with expertise in defense and economic matters. Consequently, women, particularly Democratic women, are likely to suffer greater electoral consequences when attacked for lacking interpersonal skills or mishandling social welfare policy.
8. **Methods:** The study employs two survey experiments conducted on Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). The Trait Attack Study (Study 1) and the Issue Attack Study (Study 2) use mock newspaper articles to simulate primary election contests for a state Senate seat. The experiments manipulate the gender (male or female) and party (Democrat or Republican) of the attacked candidate, as well as the nature of the attack: no attack (control), an attack on a feminine trait (e.g., lack of compassion), an attack on a masculine trait (e.g., weak leadership), an attack on a feminine policy issue (e.g., education), or an attack on a masculine policy issue (e.g., national security). The attacking candidate is always a male co-partisan. The dependent variables include voter evaluations of the candidate's traits and policy competencies, as well as overall willingness to vote for the candidate. Data analysis employs OLS regression with post-hoc contrasts to compare the effects of different attack types across candidate gender and partisan conditions.
9. **Hypotheses:** The study tests multiple hypotheses about stereotype-based attacks:
  - **H1:** Attacks on a candidate's stereotypic strengths (i.e., traits or issues linked to their party or gender) will be more effective than attacks on counter-stereotypic traits or issues.
  - **H2:** Female candidates will be more harmed by feminine trait attacks than by masculine trait attacks.
  - **H3:** Partisan expectancy violations will lead to greater punishment for candidates attacked on traits or issues associated with their party's traditional strengths.
  - **H4:** Democratic women will be the most vulnerable to stereotype-based campaign attacks, particularly on feminine traits and issues.

The results largely confirm these expectations, with Democratic women experiencing the strongest electoral penalties in response to attacks on feminine traits and issues.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds that attacks targeting a candidate's stereotypic strengths are generally more damaging than those focusing on counter-stereotypic attributes. Female candidates are particularly susceptible to trait-based attacks, with those highlighting deficiencies in traditionally feminine traits (e.g., compassion, warmth) producing the most significant declines in voter support. While both men and women suffer from issue-based attacks, Democratic women face the steepest declines in vote likelihood when criticized for mishandling stereotypically feminine issues

like education and healthcare. The study also finds little evidence of partisan expectancy violations affecting male Republican candidates, suggesting that gendered expectations may exert stronger effects than partisan stereotypes alone. Overall, the results demonstrate that stereotype-driven attacks are a potent tool in negative campaigning, disproportionately harming female candidates and reinforcing existing biases about gender and leadership.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Our results suggest that female candidates—particularly Democrats—consistently face harsher punishment from voters when attacks focus on feminine traits" (p. 786).
- "Using expectancy violation theory, we argue that attacks on a candidate's 'home turf,' or those traits or issues stereotypically associated with their party or gender, may be more effective in reducing support for the attacked candidate" (p. 787).
- "'Negative campaign attacks are an unavoidable feature of modern elections, but our findings suggest that female candidates—especially Democratic women—face unique vulnerabilities that reinforce existing gender disparities in political representation" (p. 803).

#### 6.5.6 The Effects of Partisan Trespassing Strategies Across Candidate Sex

Bauer, N. M., & Carpinella, C. (2018). Visual Information and Candidate Evaluations: The Influence of Feminine and Masculine Images on Support for Female Candidates [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 71(2), 395–407. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912917738579>

1. Citation key: bauer\_visual\_2018

2. Author(s): Nichole M. Bauer

3. Year: 2019

4. Publication: Political Behavior

5. Keywords: partisan stereotypes, gender stereotypes, candidate strategy, voter decision-making, electoral support

6. Summary: Bauer examines how partisan trespassing strategies—where candidates highlight issues and traits stereotypically associated with the opposing political party—affect electoral support for male and female candidates. Through three survey experiments, she evaluates whether these strategies influence voter perceptions of candidates' issue competencies, trait attributions, and overall favorability. While trespassing strategies expand candidates' association with the opposing party's strengths, they also erode partisan strengths and can have unintended negative consequences. Male candidates benefit more from these strategies, while female candidates, particularly Democratic women, face a backlash that diminishes their electoral support.

7. Theory: Bauer draws on theories of partisan and gender stereotyping to argue that voters evaluate trespassing strategies differently depending on candidate sex. She notes that partisanship and gender stereotypes overlap, with voters associating Democrats with feminine traits (e.g., compassion, cooperation) and Republicans with masculine traits (e.g., strength, decisiveness). Expectancy-violation theory suggests that voters penalize candidates who fail to conform to these stereotypes. As a result, female candidates who emphasize traditionally Republican issues (e.g., national security) or masculine traits (e.g., toughness) risk alienating voters who expect them to prioritize Democratic and feminine characteristics. Male candidates, however, do not face similar constraints, as masculinity is associated with both leadership and political strength across party lines. Bauer hypothesizes that partisan trespassing may increase out-partisan support for male candidates while decreasing favorability for female candidates among both co-partisan and out-partisan voters.

8. Methods: The study consists of three survey experiments, each manipulating candidate sex, partisanship, and message type. The first experiment (Issues and Traits Experiment) examines whether female candidates gain or lose support when emphasizing issues and traits stereotypically associated with the opposing party. The second experiment (Candidate Sex Experiment) expands the design to include male candidates, allowing for direct comparisons. The third experiment (Opposing Partisan Experiment) manipulates whether participants evaluate a co-partisan or an out-partisan candidate. Across all studies, participants are presented with simulated newspaper articles describing a hypothetical candidate's campaign messages. The dependent variables include the number of in-party and out-party traits and issues ascribed to the candidate, as well as favorability ratings. Data are analyzed using regression models and difference-in-differences tests.

9. Hypotheses: Bauer tests the following hypotheses:

- H1: Partisan trespassing will lead voters to associate candidates with more traits and issues linked to the opposing party.
- H2: Trespassing will erode a candidate's perceived strengths in their own party's stereotypic domains.
- H3: Female candidates will face greater electoral penalties than male candidates when engaging in trespassing strategies.
- H4: Male candidates will be more successful in using trespassing strategies to attract out-partisan support.

The findings largely support H1, H2, and H3, but provide only limited evidence for H4.

10. Main findings: Bauer finds that trespassing strategies produce a "net loss" effect for both male and female candidates, as voters attribute more qualities associated with the opposing party while simultaneously reducing in-party associations. However, the consequences of trespassing are more severe for female candidates. While both male and female candidates lose partisan strengths, female candidates—especially Democratic women—experience a significant drop in favorability when they engage in issue trespassing. Male candidates, by contrast, do not suffer comparable

losses, suggesting that gender stereotypes shape how voters interpret partisan deviations. Additionally, while partisan trespassing marginally improves male candidates' standing among out-partisans, female candidates fail to gain equivalent support, further limiting their strategic flexibility in elections.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Male candidates, unlike female candidates, can successfully attract more electoral support from out-partisan voters with trespassing strategies" (p. 898).
- "Trespassing strategies lead all voters to attribute more qualities of the opposing political party to female and male candidates, but voters also associate female candidates with fewer partisan qualities" (p. 899).
- "Female candidates must consider the intersection of partisan with gender stereotypes when developing campaign strategies" (p. 901).

#### 6.5.7 Shifting Standards: How Voters Evaluate the Qualifications of Female and Male Candidates

Bauer, N. M. (2020). Shifting Standards: How Voters Evaluate the Qualifications of Female and Male Candidates [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 82(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1086/705817>

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2. Author(s): Nichole M. Bauer

3. Year: 2020

4. Publication: The Journal of Politics

5. Keywords: gender stereotypes, candidate qualifications, electoral bias, shifting standards, voter decision-making

6. Summary: Bauer examines how voters apply different standards when evaluating the qualifications of female and male political candidates. Drawing on the theory of shifting standards from psychology, she argues that voters employ distinct comparative frameworks when assessing candidate qualifications. Specifically, female candidates benefit from "gender-typicality" standards in which they are judged relative to a "typical woman," making them appear highly qualified. However, when voters evaluate overall leadership ability, they shift to "role-typicality" standards, comparing candidates to a "typical leader," a category aligned with masculine traits. This shift creates a higher qualification bar for female candidates, disadvantaging them in electoral contests. Using multiple survey experiments, Bauer demonstrates that female candidates must meet higher thresholds to be perceived as electorally viable, limiting their ability to secure voter support.

7. Theory: Bauer applies the shifting standards framework to political candidate evaluation, proposing that voters switch between two comparative metrics when assessing female and male candidates. Gender-typicality standards involve evaluating a candidate against a stereotype of their gender group, leading to more positive assessments of female candidates' qualifications relative to "typical women." However, when asked to judge overall leadership ability, voters apply role-typicality standards, comparing candidates to a stereotypical political leader, a category historically associated with masculinity. This shift systematically disadvantages female candidates, as they are required to meet higher standards to be considered viable contenders for office. Bauer argues that these biases contribute to the underrepresentation of women in politics by deterring their candidacies and reducing voter support for equally qualified female candidates.

8. Methods: Bauer employs a series of survey experiments to test the shifting standards theory. The first experiment (Candidate Productivity Study) presents participants with profiles of male and female candidates with identical legislative records, measuring how voters assess their qualifications and leadership abilities. The second experiment (Competitive Context Study) introduces a primary election scenario in which participants evaluate two candidates of the same party, allowing for direct comparisons of perceived electoral viability. Participants are randomly assigned to conditions that vary candidate sex while keeping all other attributes constant. The dependent variables include candidate skill assessments, perceived electoral viability, and vote choice. The data are analyzed using regression models to isolate the effects of candidate sex on voter evaluations.

9. Hypotheses: Bauer tests the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Female candidates will receive more positive assessments of their qualifications compared to male candidates due to gender-typicality standards.
- **H2:** Female candidates will face a higher qualification bar when evaluated in terms of overall leadership ability due to role-typicality standards.
- **H3:** Male candidates will benefit from lower qualification expectations when voters use role-typicality standards.
- **H4:** The disadvantage imposed by role-typicality standards will be most pronounced in competitive electoral contexts, such as primary elections.

The results support H1 and H2, showing that voters initially rate female candidates highly but hold them to stricter standards in leadership evaluations. H3 is confirmed, as male candidates receive the benefit of lower expectations. H4 is partially supported, with primary elections revealing the greatest gendered disparities in viability assessments.

10. Main findings: Bauer's findings confirm that voters apply different standards to male and female candidates, leading to systematic disadvantages for women. In the Candidate Productivity Study, female candidates receive higher initial ratings for their qualifications due to gender-typicality standards. However, these positive evaluations do not translate into electoral support, as voters shift to role-typicality standards when considering leadership ability, making it harder for female candidates to be seen as viable. The Competitive Context Study further demonstrates that female candidates must demonstrate significantly more qualifications than male candidates to achieve the same perceived

level of viability. This bias is especially pronounced in primary elections, where co-partisan voters rate female candidates less favorably than equally qualified male candidates. Bauer concludes that these shifting standards contribute to persistent gender disparities in political representation, reinforcing barriers to women's electoral success.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "Voters hold female candidates, relative to male candidates, to more stringent qualification standards, and these higher standards limit the ability of female candidates to secure electoral support" (p. 1).
- "A female candidate does not need much political experience for voters to consider her more qualified than a typical woman. Conversely, being male is congruent with serving in political leadership roles, and this leads voters to see the 'typical man' as having a relatively high level of political experience" (p. 4).
- "The experimental results show that male candidates face little pressure to prove their fitness for political leadership roles, while female candidates must display more evidence of their qualifications" (p. 10).

#### 6.5.8 Gender, Candidate Emotional Expression, and Voter Reactions During Televised Debates

Boussalis, C., Coan, T. G., Holman, M. R., & Müller, S. (2021). Gender, Candidate Emotional Expression, and Voter Reactions During Televised Debates. *American Political Science Review*, 115(4), 1242–1257. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421000666>

1. Citation key: boussalis\_gender\_2021

2. Author(s): Constantine Boussalis, Travis G. Coan, Mirya R. Holman, and Stefan Müller

3. Year: 2021

4. Publication: American Political Science Review

5. Keywords: gender, candidate emotions, voter reactions, televised debates, role congruity

6. Summary: Boussalis et al. investigate how candidate gender influences the expression of emotions during televised debates and how voters react to these emotional displays. Using a unique dataset that combines computational analysis of facial, vocal, and textual emotional expression with real-time voter responses, they assess the German federal election debates from 2005 to 2017. They find that female candidates, including Angela Merkel, express less anger than their male counterparts but display similar levels of other emotions. Furthermore, voters punish female candidates for expressing anger while rewarding them for showing happiness and general emotional displays. These findings highlight the role of gendered expectations in shaping both candidate behavior and voter perceptions.

7. Theory: The authors apply role congruity theory to explain gendered patterns in emotional expression and voter reactions. They argue that voters hold gendered expectations about leadership traits, associating men with agentic qualities such as assertiveness and dominance, and women with communal traits such as warmth and empathy. These expectations constrain the emotions that female candidates can successfully display in political debates. Women who express anger violate communal norms, leading to voter backlash, whereas men are rewarded for anger as it aligns with traditional leadership traits. Conversely, happiness aligns with feminine communal expectations, leading to positive voter reactions when displayed by female candidates. The authors contend that these biases create structural barriers for women seeking political office by forcing them to navigate a narrower range of acceptable emotional expressions.

8. Methods: The study employs a multimodal analysis of candidate emotions in five German televised debates featuring Angela Merkel and her male opponents. The authors analyze over 590,000 debate frames using facial recognition software to classify emotional displays, measure vocal pitch to assess emotional intensity, and apply sentiment analysis to transcribed speech. They also use real-time response (RTR) data from live audiences to track second-by-second voter reactions to candidate emotions. The dataset includes reactions from hundreds of voters who adjusted dials in response to candidate performance. Statistical models test whether candidate gender influences emotional expression and whether voters react differently to men and women displaying the same emotions.

9. Hypotheses: The study tests four key hypotheses:

- H1: Female candidates will express more happiness than male candidates, while male candidates will express more anger than female candidates.
- H2: Female candidates will receive positive voter evaluations for expressing happiness but negative evaluations for expressing anger.
- H3: Male candidates will receive positive voter evaluations for expressing anger but neutral or negative evaluations for expressing happiness.
- H4: Voters will react positively to general emotional expression from female candidates but not necessarily from male candidates.

The findings support H2 and H3, showing that voters reward Merkel for happiness and punish her for anger, while rewarding male candidates for anger. H1 is partially confirmed, as Merkel expresses less anger but does not consistently express more happiness. H4 receives mixed support, with female candidates generally benefiting from emotional expression, though this varies by context.

10. Main findings: The results confirm that gendered expectations shape both candidate behavior and voter reactions in political debates. Merkel and other female candidates express significantly less anger than their male counterparts, while happiness and other emotions are expressed at similar levels across genders. However, voters react asymmetrically to these emotions: Merkel is penalized for expressing anger but rewarded for happiness, whereas male candidates receive the opposite treatment. Additionally, voters respond positively to general emotional expression from Merkel, while emotional expression from her male counterparts elicits more mixed reactions. These patterns are consistent

across multiple debates and are replicated in a separate analysis of a minor party debate featuring additional female candidates. The study highlights the persistent influence of gender norms on electoral politics, demonstrating that women must navigate a more restrictive emotional landscape to maintain voter support.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “Voters punish Merkel for anger displays and reward her happiness and general emotional displays” (p. 1242).
- “The easiest solution, then, for women and men seeking positions of power, is to express the emotions that are both political role and gender role consistent” (p. 1245).
- “Across our three measures of emotional intensity, voters generally reward Merkel for her emotional expression, which is consistent with our expectations that gender role congruity shapes voter evaluations” (p. 1251).

#### 6.5.9 The Gendered Politics of Congressional Elections

Fulton, S. A., & Dhima, K. (2021). The Gendered Politics of Congressional Elections. *Political Behavior*, 43(4), 1611–1637.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-020-09604-7>

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2. **Author(s):** Sarah A. Fulton and Kostanca Dhima
3. **Year:** 2021
4. **Publication:** Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** gender, partisanship, congressional elections, candidate qualifications, vote choice
6. **Summary:** Fulton and Dhima investigate whether female candidates face electoral disadvantages in congressional elections and whether these disadvantages are conditional on partisan and ideological factors. Using survey and observational data from every two-party congressional race between 2006 and 2018, they examine both individual-level and aggregate-level effects of candidate gender on vote choice and election outcomes. Their findings suggest that male Republican and male independent voters are less likely to vote for female Democratic candidates, but this gender penalty disappears when Democratic women have a qualifications advantage over their male opponents. At the aggregate level, female Democratic candidates are just as likely to win as men when they are highly qualified, but they suffer a significant disadvantage when qualifications are equal.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that gender shapes electoral outcomes through candidate qualifications and partisan biases. While traditional studies claim that female candidates perform as well as their male counterparts, Fulton and Dhima contend that this pattern results from a selection effect: only the most qualified women run for office. They assert that women face a “performance premium,” needing to be more qualified than men to achieve electoral parity. Male Republican and independent voters, who are less supportive of gender egalitarianism, are particularly likely to penalize female Democratic candidates unless those women hold a clear qualifications advantage. This penalty is not observed for female Republican candidates, suggesting that gender bias is intertwined with partisan identity rather than a general aversion to women in politics.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a large-N longitudinal analysis of congressional elections from 2006 to 2018, using data from the *Cooperative Congressional Election Study* (CCES), Gary Jacobson’s congressional dataset, and the *Center for American Women in Politics* (CAWP). The authors use logistic regression models to analyze voter preferences, controlling for candidate experience, fundraising, incumbency, and district characteristics. At the aggregate level, they model election outcomes as a function of candidate gender, relative qualifications, and the proportion of male Republican and independent voters (MR + MI) in each district. Voter ideological distance from candidates is also measured to test whether gender penalties are driven by perceived liberalism rather than sexism.
9. **Hypotheses:** The study tests several hypotheses:
  - **H1:** Female Democratic candidates will be penalized by male Republican and independent voters, while female Republican candidates will not face the same disadvantage.
  - **H2:** Female Democratic candidates will perform as well as men only when they have a qualifications advantage.
  - **H3:** The electoral penalty for female Democratic candidates will be strongest in districts with a high proportion of male Republican and independent voters.
  - **H4:** Perceived ideological distance does not explain the gender penalty; rather, it stems from gendered partisan bias.

The results strongly support H1, H2, and H3, showing that gender penalties are conditional on candidate qualifications and district composition. H4 is supported as well, as ideological distance does not fully account for the gap in voter support.

10. **Main findings:** The study reveals that candidate gender significantly influences congressional elections, particularly for Democratic women. At the individual level, male Republican and independent voters penalize female Democratic candidates unless those candidates have a qualifications advantage. At the aggregate level, female Democratic candidates are equally likely to win as men when they are highly qualified but face a notable disadvantage when qualifications are equal. The proportion of male Republican and independent voters in a district determines the severity of this penalty, with women’s electoral prospects declining as this proportion increases. The findings suggest that while women can win elections, they must be both highly qualified and strategic about where they run.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “Holding other variables constant, we show that male Republican and male independent voters are significantly less likely to vote for female Democratic candidates, but do not assess a similar penalty on female Republican

candidates" (p. 1612).

- "Female Democratic candidates can attract the support of male Republican and male independent voters when they have a qualifications advantage, but are penalized when they are merely 'as qualified'" (p. 1613).
- "Women can win, but they need to be highly qualified and strategic about the races in which they emerge" (p. 1614).

#### 6.5.10 Candidate Aggression and Gendered Voter Evaluations

Bauer, N. M., Kalmoe, N. P., & Russell, E. B. (2022). Candidate Aggression and Gendered Voter Evaluations [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/pops.12737>]. *Political Psychology*, 43(1), 23–43. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12737>

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**2. Author(s):** Nichole M. Bauer, Nathan P. Kalmoe, and Erica B. Russell

**3. Year:** 2022

**4. Publication:** Political Psychology

**5. Keywords:** aggression, incivility, female candidates, gender stereotypes, campaign strategy

**6. Summary:** Bauer, Kalmoe, and Russell explore how candidate aggression influences voter evaluations, particularly in a gendered context. They argue that aggression and incivility are typically coded as masculine traits and that voters often prefer masculine leadership characteristics. However, extreme aggression can be off-putting to many voters, particularly when displayed by female candidates. Using two survey experiments, the authors test how voters react to verbal and physical aggression in a debate setting, finding that voter responses depend on their own levels of trait aggression. While high-aggression voters are more tolerant of incivility from male candidates, they do not extend the same leniency to female candidates. The findings highlight the constraints female candidates face in adopting aggressive campaign strategies.

**7. Theory:** The authors theorize that aggression in politics is gendered, with voters associating aggressive behavior with masculinity. Political incivility, whether in the form of verbal attacks, interruptions, or physical dominance, is often perceived as an indicator of strength. However, gender stereotypes create different expectations for male and female candidates. Women, who are traditionally expected to be warm, cooperative, and communal, may face penalties when engaging in aggressive political behavior. The authors also incorporate individual differences in voter personality, arguing that those high in trait aggression are more likely to tolerate and even reward incivility. However, they propose that these high-aggression voters only extend this tolerance to male candidates, suggesting that gendered expectations of political behavior are deeply ingrained. This theory builds on prior research showing that gender stereotypes influence voter perceptions of candidate competence, warmth, and electability.

**8. Methods:** The study employs two survey experiments to test the effects of candidate aggression. Study 1, conducted with a student sample ( $N = 372$ ), presents respondents with a debate scenario featuring a male and a female candidate. The candidates are either civil, or one candidate engages in uncivil behavior such as shouting, interrupting, and physically approaching the opponent's podium. Study 2, a nationally representative survey ( $N = 801$ ) conducted via YouGov, replicates the experiment while adding conditions where both candidates engage in incivility. The authors measure candidate favorability, voter personality traits (specifically trait aggression), and reactions to candidate aggression. The main independent variable is candidate incivility, while the key moderating variable is voter trait aggression, measured using the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire. The authors use ordinal regression models to assess how different levels of voter aggression moderate responses to candidate incivility.

**9. Hypotheses:** The study tests the following hypotheses:

- **H1:** Candidate favorability will decline for all candidates when they behave aggressively relative to when they are civil.
- **H2:** Voters high in trait aggression will be less likely to punish uncivil candidates than those low in trait aggression.
- **H3:** Voters high in trait aggression will be more tolerant of incivility from male candidates but not from female candidates.

The results support H1 and H2, showing that voters generally dislike incivility but that those high in trait aggression are more forgiving of uncivil candidates. However, H3 is not supported, as high-aggression voters punish female candidates for incivility at the same rate as low-aggression voters.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that voters, on average, penalize candidates for incivility, confirming that aggression in politics carries electoral risks. However, voter personality plays a critical role in shaping responses. Those high in trait aggression are significantly less likely to penalize male candidates for incivility, while low-aggression voters react negatively to any form of aggressive behavior. Importantly, high-aggression voters do not extend this leniency to female candidates. Female candidates who behave aggressively face the same penalties from high-aggression voters as they do from low-aggression voters. This suggests that voters may perceive aggressive female candidates as violating gender norms, leading to a harsher backlash. These findings have significant implications for campaign strategy, as they indicate that while aggressive tactics may benefit male candidates, they are a riskier strategy for female candidates.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Uncivil behavior and aggressive personality traits code as masculine, and voters generally value masculinity in political candidates" (p. 24).

- “Female candidates, among voters overall, do not face a disproportionately larger punishment for incivility relative to male candidates when evaluated by copartisans. This contribution is critical because it shows that, in the context of a primary campaign, female candidates can get away with incivility” (p. 24).
- “High-aggression voters are only more tolerant of incivility from male candidates and not from female candidates. High-aggression voters levy the same type of punishment toward uncivil women as low-aggression voters” (p. 24).

### 6.5.11 Strong and Caring? The Stereotypic Traits of Women of Color in Politics

Gonzalez, S., & Bauer, N. (2024). Strong and caring? The stereotypic traits of women of color in politics [Publisher: Routledge eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2022.2144389>]. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 12(1), 124–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2022.2144389>

- 1. Citation key:** gonzalez\_strong\_2024
- 2. Author(s):** Sylvia Gonzalez and Nichole Bauer
- 3. Year:** 2024
- 4. Publication:** Politics, Groups, and Identities
- 5. Keywords:** intersectionality, political psychology, gender stereotypes, racial stereotypes, women of color, candidate evaluations, impression formation
- 6. Summary:** Gonzalez and Bauer examine whether a unified “women of color” stereotype exists in political evaluations and whether distinctions emerge across different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Using three experimental studies, they test whether women of color in politics are perceived as a distinct stereotype subtype that differs from female politicians in general. Additionally, they analyze whether subgroup stereotypes exist based on race or ethnicity (e.g., Latina, Black, Asian, Native American, and Muslim women). Their findings indicate limited support for a distinct women of color stereotype and little differentiation across racial and ethnic subgroups, with most respondents perceiving women of color in a broadly similar manner.
- 7. Theory:** The authors build on theories of stereotype subtypes and subgroups from social psychology, arguing that candidate evaluations depend on whether voters distinguish women of color as a distinct stereotype category. Traditional research suggests that women political leaders are often perceived as lacking both feminine and masculine traits, leading to a leadership disadvantage. However, some scholars propose that women of color may be uniquely advantaged because they are seen as possessing both positive feminine (e.g., warmth, empathy) and masculine (e.g., strength, determination) traits. Gonzalez and Bauer test whether a uniform women of color stereotype exists or whether differences emerge across race and ethnicity. They further evaluate whether these stereotypes translate into electoral advantages or disadvantages, particularly at different levels of office. The central theoretical contribution is an investigation into whether the concept of “women of color” is a meaningful and distinct stereotype category in political evaluations.
- 8. Methods:** The authors conduct three experimental studies using Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk).
  - **Study 1:** Participants ( $N = 562$ ) are randomly assigned to evaluate a hypothetical female candidate who is described as Black, Latina, Asian, Native American, or Muslim. Respondents choose adjectives that best describe the candidate from a predefined list of 122 stereotypic traits.
  - **Study 2:** A separate sample ( $N = 514$ ) evaluates how well 10 key stereotypic traits (identified from Study 1) describe women of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, including white women. Participants also assess the likelihood of these candidates running for different offices (House, Senate, gubernatorial).
  - **Study 3:** A third sample ( $N = 371$ ) evaluates candidates based on manipulated descriptions and images. Respondents assess the perceived qualifications of Black, Latina, and Asian female candidates running for House, Senate, and gubernatorial office.
- The authors analyze responses using t-tests and regression models to test whether stereotype perceptions vary by race/ethnicity and whether these perceptions influence evaluations of political qualifications.
- 9. Hypotheses:**
  - **H1 (Subtype Hypothesis):** Women of color candidates will be stereotyped as possessing both positive feminine and masculine traits, distinguishing them from white female politicians.
  - **H2 (Subgroup Hypothesis):** Differences will emerge in the stereotypic traits attributed to women of color based on race/ethnicity.
  - **H3 (Intersectional Strategy Hypothesis):** Candidates emphasizing both feminine and masculine traits will receive more favorable evaluations, but the strength of this effect will vary by race/ethnicity.
  - **H4 (Levels of Office Hypothesis):** Women of color will receive more positive evaluations for legislative offices (e.g., House) than for executive positions (e.g., governor), where masculine leadership traits are more valued.
- The results provide partial support for H1 and H3, weak support for H2, and strong support for H4.
- 10. Main findings:** The study finds limited evidence for a distinct “women of color” stereotype subtype. Respondents generally do not differentiate much between Black, Latina, Asian, Native American, and Muslim women in terms of stereotypic traits. However, Asian women were evaluated more favorably for higher office than Latinas or Black women, suggesting some subgroup differences. Women of color were viewed as better suited for legislative rather than executive positions, reinforcing prior research on gendered office expectations. While women of color were perceived as possessing both feminine and masculine traits, these perceptions did not consistently translate into an electoral

advantage.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "We find limited evidence of a unique women of color subtype or subgroup stereotypes as individuals make few distinctions between women belonging to different racial and ethnic categories" (p. 125).
- "Individuals see more similarities than differences between Latina and Black women, but differences emerge between Asian women and other minority women" (p. 134).
- "Women of color can capitalize on both feminine and masculine stereotypes, but these traits are not uniformly beneficial, particularly for higher levels of office where executive leadership is associated with masculinity" (p. 137).

#### 6.5.12 Do Voters Punish Ambitious Women? Tracking a Gendered Backlash Toward the 2020 Democratic Presidential Contenders

Bauer, N. M., Harman, M., & Russell, E. B. (2024). Do voters punish ambitious women? Tracking a gendered backlash toward the 2020 democratic presidential contenders. *Political Behavior*, 46(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-022-09805-2>

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2. **Author(s):** Nichole M. Bauer, Moriah Harman, and Erica B. Russell
3. **Year:** 2024
4. **Publication:** Political Behavior
5. **Keywords:** gender stereotypes, political ambition, voter evaluations, presidential candidates, gendered backlash, Democratic primary
6. **Summary:** Bauer, Harman, and Russell examine whether women displaying progressive political ambition face a gendered backlash in electoral politics. Drawing on data from a unique three-wave panel study tracking voter evaluations of candidates in the 2020 Democratic presidential primary, they assess how ambitious female candidates are perceived relative to their male counterparts. Their findings indicate that ambitious women initially receive lower ratings on likability and warmth than ambitious men, leading to diminished anticipated vote support. However, this gendered backlash diminishes over time as voter exposure to ambitious women increases, suggesting that the normalization of female presidential candidates may mitigate some of the negative effects of gendered ambition.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on theories of gendered political ambition and stereotype backlash to argue that women seeking high political office face distinct evaluative hurdles. Political ambition is traditionally associated with masculinity, while women are expected to conform to feminine stereotypes of warmth, nurturance, and communal behavior. When female candidates display ambition—especially progressive ambition for higher office—they violate prescriptive gender norms, triggering a backlash that results in lower likability ratings and reduced voter support. This backlash is driven by the perception that ambitious women lack stereotypically feminine traits, such as warmth and relatability, while failing to fully embody masculine leadership traits. However, the authors hypothesize that as voters gain repeated exposure to female candidates running for high office, the intensity of this backlash may decline. Their theoretical contribution lies in exploring the temporal nature of gendered voter evaluations, challenging static assumptions about the persistence of bias against ambitious women.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a three-wave panel survey conducted over 18 months, tracking voter attitudes toward Democratic primary candidates in the 2020 presidential election. The authors analyze a nationally representative sample drawn from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), with survey waves conducted in February 2019 (Wave 1), November 2019 (Wave 2), and June 2020 (Wave 3). The experimental design involves randomly assigning participants to evaluate one of the Democratic candidates, including both declared contenders (e.g., Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris) and high-profile figures who did not run (e.g., Michelle Obama, Oprah Winfrey). Dependent variables include candidate likability, warmth, and anticipated vote support, measured using 7-point scales. The authors employ ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models to assess gendered backlash effects, supplemented by ordinal logistic regression models for anticipated vote support.
9. **Hypotheses:**
  - **Gendered Backlash Hypothesis:** Women displaying progressive ambition will receive more negative evaluations on positive feminine qualities (e.g., warmth, likability) relative to men displaying progressive ambition.
  - **Anticipated Vote Support Hypothesis:** Women displaying progressive ambition will receive lower levels of anticipated vote support relative to men displaying progressive ambition.
  - **Normalization Hypothesis:** The gendered backlash toward ambitious women will diminish over time as voter exposure to female presidential candidates increases.

The findings strongly support the first two hypotheses, while the third hypothesis receives partial support.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds clear evidence of a gendered backlash in Wave 1, where ambitious female candidates are rated significantly lower on likability and warmth compared to their male counterparts. This backlash translates into diminished anticipated vote support, with participants being more likely to express unwillingness to vote for ambitious women. However, as the campaign progresses, these effects weaken. By Wave 2, female candidates' likability ratings improve, and by Wave 3, ambitious women receive equal or even slightly higher likability ratings than men. This pattern suggests that sustained exposure to women in high-stakes political races may help mitigate initial backlash effects. Nonetheless, the authors caution that these improvements may not fully translate into electoral advantages, as broader societal attitudes about gender and leadership remain deeply entrenched.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We find that ambitious women initially receive less positive ratings on warmth and likability relative to ambitious men, offering evidence of a gendered backlash" (p. 3).
- "Voters will see these power-seeking women as lacking in feminine qualities, and this perception can affect voting preferences through both competence perceptions and affective backlash" (p. 10).
- "These findings suggest that as more women run for high levels of political office, the gendered backlash women initially face may level off over time" (p. 16).

## 6.6 Attitudes and Opinions

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### 6.6.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Research on attitudes and opinions regarding women and politics examines how gender shapes political values, policy preferences, and ideological orientations. Early studies emphasized the existence of a gender gap in political attitudes, wherein women consistently express greater support for social welfare, egalitarianism, and liberal policy positions compared to men. Scholars initially attributed these differences to socialization processes and structural inequalities, but later research demonstrated that feminist identity, rather than gender alone, plays a crucial role in explaining political differences. Subsequent work expanded these insights by analyzing the role of ideology, political context, and partisan alignment in shaping attitudes. More recent contributions have examined how feminist consciousness interacts with broader ideological frameworks, challenging traditional assumptions about gender-based political orientations and revealing that men who identify with feminist values often share similar policy preferences with feminist women.
- **The Gender Gap in Political Attitudes:** Scholars have consistently documented a gender gap in political values and policy preferences, with women displaying stronger commitments to government intervention, social spending, and pacifism compared to men. Early explanations focused on socialization processes, arguing that traditional gender roles instill distinct political orientations in men and women. However, research by Conover (1988) refined these arguments, demonstrating that feminist identity—rather than gender alone—predicts liberal attitudes. Conover's analysis revealed that while non-feminist women resemble men in their policy preferences, feminist women exhibit significantly higher support for egalitarianism and policies benefiting disadvantaged groups. This finding underscored the importance of political identity in shaping attitudes and called into question broad generalizations about women's issue preferences.
- **Feminism and Ideological Orientation:** Cook and Wilcox (1991) challenged prior assumptions by distinguishing between feminist consciousness and feminist sympathy. Their research demonstrated that feminist values are not exclusively linked to women's socialization but rather represent a broader ideological commitment to equality that transcends gender. Using data from the 1984 American National Election Study, they found that men who identify with feminist ideals share political attitudes similar to feminist women, reinforcing the argument that feminism fosters egalitarian and liberal values rather than a uniquely gendered moral perspective. Their findings contributed to a growing body of literature suggesting that feminist identity, rather than inherent gender differences, explains much of the observed variation in political attitudes.
- **Gender, Partisanship, and Policy Preferences:** Barnes and Cassese (2017) extended these discussions by examining how gender gaps in policy preferences manifest within partisan groups. Their study revealed that while partisan sorting explains some gender differences, meaningful within-party gender gaps persist, particularly among Republicans. Republican women tend to hold more moderate policy stances than their male counterparts, especially on issues such as social spending, child care, and gun control. These findings highlight the complexity of gendered political attitudes, demonstrating that partisan identity interacts with gender to shape policy preferences in nuanced ways. Subsequent work by Barnes, Beall, and Cassese (2021) confirmed that these within-party gender differences remain stable over time, reinforcing the argument that gender and partisanship independently influence political attitudes.
- **Feminist Identity and Policy Preferences:** The relationship between feminist identity and policy preferences has been further explored in studies assessing the impact of feminist consciousness on attitudes toward social welfare, civil rights, and foreign policy. Conover (1988) and Cook and Wilcox (1991) both found that feminist identity is positively correlated with liberal policy positions, particularly in areas related to economic redistribution and government intervention. Feminists of both genders demonstrate stronger commitments to egalitarianism, opposition to militarism, and support for civil rights compared to their non-feminist counterparts. These findings suggest that feminist identity serves as a critical determinant of political attitudes, challenging the assumption that gender alone drives differences in opinion.
- **Explaining Stability and Change in Gender Gaps:** While the gender gap in political attitudes has remained a persistent feature of American public opinion, scholars continue to debate the underlying causes and potential shifts over time. Some argue that increasing gender consciousness and feminist activism contribute to widening political divides, while others emphasize the role of broader ideological shifts and party realignment. Research by Barnes et al. (2021) indicates that gender differences in policy preferences within political parties have remained stable across multiple election cycles, suggesting that these gaps are deeply entrenched in partisan and ideological identities. However, ongoing debates center on whether changes in political context—such as the heightened salience of gender issues in the 2016 election—can influence these patterns.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Future research on attitudes and opinions regarding women and politics is likely to focus on the evolving role of feminism in shaping political ideologies, the intersection of gender with

race and class in structuring political attitudes, and the impact of digital mobilization on gendered issue preferences. Additionally, scholars are increasingly investigating how shifts in party dynamics and electoral realignments influence the gender gap in political opinions. As gender and politics continue to evolve, studies will need to account for emerging forms of feminist identification, the role of conservative women in shaping political discourse, and the potential for gender to intersect with other social identities in shaping policy preferences.

### 6.6.2 Feminists and the Gender Gap

Conover, P. J. (1988). Feminists and the Gender Gap [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 50(4), 985–1010. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2131388>

1. **Citation key:** conover\_feminists\_1988
2. **Author(s):** Pamela Johnston Conover
3. **Year:** 1988
4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** gender gap, feminism, political values, public opinion, political participation
6. **Summary:** Conover examines the gender gap in public opinion by exploring how feminist identity shapes political values and issue preferences. She argues that while men and women do not significantly differ in political values overall, feminists—rather than women as a whole—drive the gender gap in policy preferences. By integrating insights from feminist theory with empirical research on political attitudes, Conover contends that feminist identity acts as a catalyst that fosters a distinctive value system, which in turn influences issue preferences and contributes to the observed gender gap in public opinion.
7. **Theory:** Conover builds upon feminist political theory to argue that differences in political values between men and women are not uniform but rather concentrated among feminists. She posits that traditional explanations of the gender gap—which attribute differences in political attitudes to socialization or structural changes—fail to account for variations among women themselves. Drawing on feminist theory, she suggests that women's values are often submerged in patriarchal societies but become politically salient when they develop a feminist identity. This identity, in turn, fosters a commitment to egalitarianism, liberalism, and sympathy for disadvantaged groups. Conover also engages with critiques of the “woman-centered perspective,” acknowledging that political values, rather than merely gender-based moral orientations, play a crucial role in shaping policy preferences.
8. **Methods:** Conover utilizes data from the 1985 National Election Study Pilot Study to empirically examine differences in political values and policy preferences between men, feminist women, and non-feminist women. She constructs a measure of feminist identity that combines self-identification with affective attachment to the feminist movement. She then assesses gender differences across multiple value orientations, including egalitarianism, individualism, symbolic racism, and moral traditionalism. Finally, she conducts regression analyses to determine the extent to which feminist identity, rather than gender alone, predicts issue preferences on foreign policy, social spending, and civil rights.
9. **Hypotheses:** Conover hypothesizes that the gender gap in public opinion is primarily driven by feminist women rather than by women as a whole. Specifically:
  - Feminists, compared to non-feminist women and men, will exhibit stronger commitments to egalitarianism and sympathy for the disadvantaged.
  - Feminist identity will be positively associated with liberal policy preferences, particularly in areas such as social spending and foreign policy.
  - Non-feminist women will resemble men in their policy attitudes, suggesting that the gender gap is largely a function of the issue preferences of feminists.
 Her findings confirm these hypotheses, demonstrating that feminists, rather than women in general, account for much of the observed gender gap in public opinion.
10. **Main findings:** Conover finds that gender differences in political values are largely concentrated among feminist women, while non-feminist women do not significantly differ from men. Feminists exhibit stronger commitments to egalitarianism, lower levels of symbolic racism, and greater sympathy for disadvantaged groups. Additionally, feminist identity strongly predicts liberal policy preferences, particularly in areas such as foreign policy, where feminists display higher opposition to military interventions and defense spending. The gender gap in issue preferences is thus largely driven by feminist women rather than by all women, suggesting that feminist consciousness—rather than gender alone—is the key explanatory factor.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “The salience of issues has increased greatly for women, and as a result differences in preferences have increased in ways consistent with the interests of women and the intentions of the women’s movement” (p. 986).
  - “Women who strongly identify themselves as feminists tend to have distinctive political and basic value orientations: as compared to nonfeminist women, they are more liberal, less racist, more egalitarian, less traditional morally and with regard to sex roles, and more sympathetic to the disadvantaged” (p. 1000).
  - “On most issues the gender gap in public opinion is a function of the liberal positions that a subset of women—feminists—consistently adopt” (p. 1004).

### 6.6.3 Feminism and the Gender Gap: A Second Look

Cook, E. A., & Wilcox, C. (1991). Feminism and the Gender Gap—A Second Look [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 53(4), 1111–1122. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2131869>

1. **Citation key:** cook\_feminism\_1991
2. **Author(s):** Elizabeth Adell Cook and Clyde Wilcox
3. **Year:** 1991
4. **Publication:** Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** feminism, gender gap, political values, political attitudes, public opinion
6. **Summary:** Cook and Wilcox reevaluate the relationship between feminism and the gender gap in political attitudes, challenging the claim that feminist identity uniquely fosters “feminine” values. Using data from the 1984 American National Election Study, they argue that feminism influences the values and policy preferences of both men and women, suggesting that feminism promotes egalitarian and liberal values rather than a distinctive gender-based moral perspective. Their analysis highlights the need to distinguish between feminist consciousness and feminist sympathy, as men who identify with feminist ideals exhibit similar political attitudes to feminist women.
7. **Theory:** The authors engage with feminist theory and political science research on gender differences in political attitudes, particularly the claim that women’s perspectives emphasize nurturance, opposition to violence, and greater sympathy for disadvantaged groups. They argue that prior research, including Conover (1988), overemphasized the role of feminist consciousness in awakening latent feminine values among women. Instead, Cook and Wilcox suggest that feminism cultivates a broader ideological shift toward egalitarian and liberal values, which are not inherently gendered. Their theoretical framework distinguishes between feminist consciousness, typically studied among women, and feminist sympathy, which can be observed in men. This distinction is crucial, as it suggests that feminist political attitudes are not merely an extension of female socialization but rather a broader ideological orientation that influences both sexes.
8. **Methods:** The study employs data from the 1984 American National Election Study, supplementing Conover’s earlier findings with an alternative measure of feminism that includes both men and women. Cook’s feminism scale combines an equal gender role scale with an adjusted feeling thermometer toward the women’s liberation movement. The authors classify respondents into three groups: feminists (who support gender equality and the women’s movement), potential feminists (who support gender equality but not the movement), and nonfeminists (who oppose gender equality). They construct scales to measure key political values, including egalitarianism, individualism, minority affect, and sympathy for the disadvantaged. Policy preferences are analyzed across a range of issues, including social welfare, foreign policy, and civil rights. Pearson correlations and partial correlations (controlling for race, education, income, partisanship, and age) are used to assess the relationship between feminism and political attitudes.
9. **Hypotheses:** Cook and Wilcox hypothesize that feminism influences political attitudes in both men and women, rather than merely awakening “feminine” values in women. Specifically:
  - Feminism will be associated with more egalitarian and liberal values for both men and women.
  - The gender gap will persist among feminists, potential feminists, and nonfeminists, rather than being confined to feminist women.
  - Feminist men will exhibit political attitudes similar to feminist women, challenging the notion that the gender gap is solely driven by feminist consciousness among women.
 Their findings confirm these hypotheses, demonstrating that feminism promotes broadly liberal and egalitarian attitudes across gender lines.
10. **Main findings:** The results challenge the claim that feminist consciousness uniquely awakens feminine values among women. Instead, feminism is strongly correlated with egalitarian and liberal political attitudes in both men and women. Feminists of both genders score higher on measures of gender equality, sympathy for the disadvantaged, and support for social welfare policies, while also opposing militarism and conservative moral traditionalism. The study also finds a persistent gender gap within all three groups—feminists, potential feminists, and nonfeminists—suggesting that gender differences in political attitudes cannot be solely attributed to feminist consciousness. While feminist men share many attitudes with feminist women, gender differences remain in some policy domains, particularly on issues related to military intervention and defense spending.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - “Using an operational definition that allows us to identify male and female feminists, we find that feminism has a similar impact on the values and policy preferences of men and women, suggesting that feminism leads to feminist, not feminine values” (p. 1111).
  - “Clearly the values and policy preferences that are associated with feminism are not uniquely feminine... feminism is not associated with a ‘women’s perspective,’ but rather with feminist values—liberal egalitarian values and policies” (p. 1116).
  - “We find that feminism is associated with distinctive values and policy preferences among both men and women, suggesting that feminism is not a catalyst for uniquely feminine values and policy preferences” (p. 1120).

### 6.6.4 American Party Women: A Look at the Gender Gap within Parties

Barnes, T. D., & Cassese, E. C. (2017). American Party Women: A Look at the Gender Gap within Parties [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 70(1), 127–141. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912916675738>

1. **Citation key:** barnes\_american\_2017
2. **Author(s):** Tiffany D. Barnes and Erin C. Cassese
3. **Year:** 2017
4. **Publication:** Political Research Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** gender gap, partisanship, public opinion, policy attitudes, partisan sorting, values
6. **Summary:** Barnes and Cassese investigate whether gender gaps in policy preferences exist within political parties, particularly among Republican and Democratic voters. They challenge conventional partisan sorting theories that suggest gender differences are primarily interparty, arguing instead that gender gaps persist even within party lines. Using data from the 2012 American National Election Study (ANES), they assess policy attitudes across ten issue areas and employ mediation analysis to explore the role of core political values, such as beliefs about government scope and gender-based inequality, in shaping Republican women's more moderate policy preferences.
7. **Theory:** The authors examine the intersection of gender and partisanship in shaping policy attitudes, arguing that conventional partisan sorting explanations do not fully account for gender gaps in public opinion. They contrast theories of partisan sorting, which suggest that men and women sort into the parties that best represent their views, with gender socialization theories, which argue that gender differences in social roles and experiences shape political attitudes independently of partisanship. The study posits that even though women in the U.S. are more likely to identify as Democrats, a significant portion remain Republicans, yet with more moderate policy stances than their male counterparts. The authors hypothesize that these differences arise due to varying beliefs about government intervention and social inequality, particularly among Republican women, who tend to hold more centrist views compared to Republican men.
8. **Methods:** The study uses survey data from the 2012 ANES to measure gender differences in policy attitudes within parties. The authors conduct mean comparisons of policy attitudes across ten issue areas—including abortion, child care, education, health care, welfare, gay rights, immigration, the millionaire tax, defense spending, and gun control—between men and women within both the Republican and Democratic parties. They employ mediation analysis to test whether gender gaps among Republicans can be explained by ideological and value-based factors, specifically support for limited government and beliefs about gender-based inequality. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is used to assess how these factors mediate gender differences in policy preferences.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors propose that partisan sorting should primarily eliminate gender gaps within parties, but if gender socialization plays a role, differences will persist, especially among Republicans. Their hypotheses are:
  - **The Party-Sorting Hypothesis:** Gender gaps in policy preferences should exist primarily between political parties, with minimal differences within parties.
  - **The Engaged Partisans Hypothesis:** Gender differences should be smaller among highly engaged partisans relative to less engaged partisans of the same party.
  - **The Mediation Hypothesis:** Political values (e.g., beliefs about government scope and gender inequality) mediate the relationship between gender and policy attitudes, explaining within-party gender gaps.
10. **Main findings:** The study finds that gender differences in policy preferences are more pronounced within the Republican Party than the Democratic Party. Republican women are significantly more moderate than Republican men on issues like child care subsidies, education spending, health care, and gun control. Mediation analysis reveals that these differences are largely attributable to Republican women's greater support for government intervention and lower levels of modern sexism compared to Republican men. The findings suggest that party sorting does not fully eliminate gender-based differences in policy attitudes and that ideological commitments to limited government and social hierarchy shape intra-party gender gaps. In contrast, Democratic men and women show fewer differences in policy preferences, indicating stronger partisan cohesion.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Although policy preferences are primarily governed by partisan identification, gender still influences opinion. In particular, Republican women exhibit significantly more moderate policy preferences than Republican men in several issue areas" (p. 128).
  - "Our findings afford new insights into the joint influence of gender and partisanship on policy preferences and carry important implications for the representation of Republican women" (p. 129).
  - "These results suggest that while partisan sorting accommodates most gender differences in policy preferences, it fails to account for all gender differences in public opinion. Within-party gender gaps persist, particularly among Republicans" (p. 130).

#### 6.6.5 American Party Women Redux: Stability in Partisan Gender Gaps

Barnes, T. D., Beall, V. D., & Cassese, E. C. (2021). American Party Women Redux: Stability in Partisan Gender Gaps. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 54(3), 406–410. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096520002012>

1. **Citation key:** barnes\_american\_2021
2. **Author(s):** Tiffany D. Barnes, Victoria D. Beall, and Erin C. Cassese
3. **Year:** 2021
4. **Publication:** PS: Political Science & Politics
5. **Keywords:** gender gap, partisanship, policy attitudes, partisan sorting, sexism, political behavior
6. **Summary:** Barnes, Beall, and Cassese investigate the stability of gender gaps in policy preferences within political

parties, particularly among Republicans, across the 2012 and 2016 U.S. presidential elections. While prior research indicates that Republican women hold more moderate policy views than Republican men, the authors assess whether these differences persist across election cycles. Using American National Election Study (ANES) data, they analyze gender-based differences within parties over time, exploring how shifts in political context, including heightened gender salience in 2016, may have affected gender gaps in public opinion.

7. **Theory:** The authors build on existing theories of partisan sorting and gender-based political differences to explore within-party gender gaps in policy attitudes. They argue that while partisan sorting accounts for many gender differences in American politics, residual gender gaps persist within both major parties—especially the Republican Party. Prior research suggests that partisan women are cross-pressured by their gender identity and party affiliation, leading to policy stances that do not always align with those of co-partisan men. The authors hypothesize that these gender gaps may be affected by changes in political context, particularly the salience of gendered issues in presidential elections. They assess whether the unique dynamics of the 2016 election—marked by Hillary Clinton’s candidacy, Donald Trump’s rhetoric, and the rise of the #MeToo movement—altered within-party gender gaps relative to 2012.
8. **Methods:** The study uses data from the 2012 and 2016 ANES to compare gender gaps within both the Republican and Democratic parties across ten policy areas: abortion, child care, education, health care, welfare, gay rights, defense spending, taxation, immigration, and gun control. The authors employ Adjusted Wald Tests to compare mean policy preferences by gender within each party and use standardized mean differences to visualize gender gaps. Additionally, they conduct mediation analyses to assess whether factors such as ideology, attitudes toward government intervention, and sexism explain observed gender differences in policy attitudes.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that within-party gender gaps will be relatively stable across election cycles, but that heightened gender salience in 2016 may produce shifts in specific issue areas. Specifically:
  - **Stability Hypothesis:** Gender gaps within parties will remain largely consistent across 2012 and 2016.
  - **Contextual Influence Hypothesis:** The 2016 election context, particularly the salience of gender-related issues, may widen or narrow gender gaps on certain policies.
  - **Mediation Hypothesis:** Gender gaps in policy preferences, particularly among Republicans, can be explained by differences in ideology, attitudes toward government scope, and sexism.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds that within-party gender gaps are relatively stable over time, with Republican women consistently holding more moderate policy preferences than Republican men across both elections. Republican women show greater support for social welfare policies, childcare spending, and gun control than their male counterparts, while Democratic men and women exhibit fewer differences. However, some shifts occur between 2012 and 2016: Republican women become more conservative on defense spending and immigration, and the gender gap on abortion narrows. Mediation analyses reveal that ideology, attitudes toward government, and sexism explain many of these differences, with sexism becoming a more significant predictor of policy attitudes in 2016. Despite the unique nature of the 2016 election, the study concludes that it did not fundamentally alter within-party gender gaps, reinforcing the argument that these gaps are largely stable across election cycles.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- “We find that gender gaps in policy preferences within political parties are fairly stable across the two electoral periods” (p. 406).
- “Despite the unique nature of the 2016 presidential campaign, our results suggest that it did not immediately open up new divisions within the Republican Party” (p. 409).
- “All told, there are more similarities than differences between the two elections. All four factors—hostile sexism, ideology, attitudes about the scope of government, and egalitarianism—are important for explaining gender gaps for four of the ten issues in 2012 and 2016” (p. 409).

#### 6.6.6 Facing Change: Gender and Climate Change Attitudes Worldwide

Bush, S. S., & Clayton, A. (2023). Facing Change: Gender and Climate Change Attitudes Worldwide. *American Political Science Review*, 117(2), 591–608. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422000752>

1. **Citation key:** bush\_facing\_2023
2. **Author(s):** Sarah Sunn Bush and Amanda Clayton
3. **Year:** 2023
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** gender, climate change, public opinion, economic development, political psychology
6. **Summary:** Bush and Clayton investigate gender differences in climate change attitudes across countries, emphasizing how economic development conditions these disparities. They argue that in wealthier countries, a gender gap emerges wherein women express greater concern about climate change than men, driven primarily by men’s declining concern as economic development increases. The authors propose a theory of perceived costs and benefits of climate mitigation to explain this pattern, suggesting that men in wealthier countries perceive greater costs to climate action—both material and psychological—due to their economic positions and identity-related concerns. Their analysis leverages data from multiple international surveys, an original 10-country survey in the Americas and Europe, and focus groups in Peru and the United States.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose a theory linking economic development, gender, and climate change attitudes through the lens of perceived costs and benefits of climate mitigation. They argue that in wealthier countries, citizens perceive

fewer benefits and greater costs to climate mitigation policies. Men, more than women, experience increasing material and psychological costs from climate action as economic development rises. Materially, men are more likely to be employed in carbon-intensive industries or engage in high-carbon consumption activities, making them more resistant to climate policies that impose economic burdens. Psychologically, men in wealthier countries tend to benefit more from existing economic hierarchies and are thus more resistant to policies that challenge these structures. Drawing on theories of loss aversion and identity protection, the authors suggest that these psychological costs contribute to men's greater skepticism toward climate action in economically developed contexts. This process, they argue, explains why gender gaps in climate attitudes are strongly correlated with GDP per capita.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a mixed-methods approach. First, it analyzes climate attitudes in 60 countries using large-scale international survey data from the AmericasBarometer and Pew Global Attitudes Survey. The authors employ mixed-effects linear models to examine the interaction between gender and economic development on climate concern. Second, they conduct an original 10-country survey ( $n = \text{approx. } 13,000$ ) across the Americas and Western Europe to test their theory's implications. Structural topic models (STMs) analyze open-ended responses regarding perceived costs of climate action. Third, they conduct eight focus groups (stratified by gender and urban/rural residence) in Peru and the United States to explore qualitative dimensions of their theory, particularly how men and women articulate material and psychological costs associated with climate mitigation.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors propose several hypotheses to test their theory:

- **Economic Development Hypothesis:** Climate concern declines as national wealth increases.
- **Gender Gap Hypothesis:** Women express greater concern for climate change than men in wealthier countries, but not in poorer countries.
- **Material Costs Hypothesis:** Men, more than women, associate climate action with increased financial and economic burdens, particularly in wealthier countries.
- **Psychological Costs Hypothesis:** Men's attachment to economic and social hierarchies increases their resistance to climate action in wealthier countries.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds strong empirical support for the proposed theory. First, large-scale survey data confirm that gender gaps in climate concern are highly correlated with economic development: in wealthier countries, women are more concerned about climate change than men, but this pattern disappears in lower-income countries. Second, topic modeling of open-ended survey responses reveals that men in wealthier countries are significantly more likely than women to mention taxes, economic burdens, and lifestyle constraints as reasons for opposing climate policies. In contrast, women in these countries are more likely to express no perceived harm from climate action. Third, focus groups in the United States and Peru highlight key psychological mechanisms: American men, more than women, frame climate action as a threat to economic security and traditional gender roles, whereas no gender differences emerge in Peru. Mediation analysis shows that ideology, attitudes toward government, and support for hierarchical social structures explain much of the observed gender differences in wealthier countries. Overall, the study concludes that gender gaps in climate attitudes are not merely an extension of ideological differences but rather reflect deeper gendered perceptions of economic and psychological costs.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We find that this gender gap in climate concern does not exist in poorer countries. In fact, gender differences in climate concern are highly correlated with gross domestic product per capita (GDPpc): when countries are wealthier, a gap emerges whereby women are more likely than men to express concern about our changing climate" (p. 591).
- "Our theory predicts that both men and women will be less concerned about climate change in wealthier countries than in poorer countries but that men's concern will decline more rapidly, creating a gender gap in climate concern" (p. 592).
- "Both climate change and decarbonization evoke considerable uncertainty about the future. Drawing on theories of loss aversion and identity protection, we posit that because men benefit most from current economic and social hierarchies, they, on average, perceive greater psychological costs to adjusting to change" (p. 592).

## 6.7 Female Politicians in Elected Office

### 6.7.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of female politicians in elected office has evolved from initial explorations of women's underrepresentation to a nuanced examination of the structural, institutional, and behavioral factors that shape their legislative effectiveness and political influence. Early scholarship focused on the barriers to women's entry into politics, emphasizing societal attitudes and institutional biases that limited their electoral success. Over time, researchers have shifted to analyzing women's legislative behavior, the conditions under which they exercise influence, and how their presence alters political institutions. Scholars have explored gendered patterns in deliberation, legislative productivity, and policy focus, demonstrating that while women often bring distinct priorities and styles of governance, they continue to face systemic challenges that shape their participation. More recent research has examined the role of gendered vulnerability, institutional constraints like term limits, and the dynamics of bipartisanship, offering insights into how women navigate political institutions that were historically dominated by men.
- **Gendered Participation and Deliberative Inequality:** Scholars have documented that female politicians often experience barriers to full participation in legislative discussions. Kathlene (1994) analyzed state legislative committee hear-

ings and found that male legislators take more speaking turns, dominate discussions, and interrupt more frequently than their female counterparts. Even when women occupy leadership roles, they tend to adopt more facilitative styles rather than assertive interventions, which can reinforce male dominance in legislative deliberation. Karpowitz, Mendelberg, and Shaker (2012) expanded on this research by demonstrating that gender disparities in deliberation are not solely the result of individual behavior but are shaped by institutional decision rules. Their experimental findings revealed that under majority rule, women's participation increases as their numbers grow, but under unanimous rule, deliberative dynamics favor men in female-majority groups, exacerbating gender gaps. These studies collectively illustrate that institutional design interacts with gender to shape patterns of participation and influence.

- **Legislative Productivity and Electoral Constraints:** Research has consistently found that female legislators engage in higher levels of legislative activity than their male counterparts, a phenomenon often attributed to their heightened electoral vulnerability. Lazarus and Steigerwalt (2018) introduced the concept of gendered vulnerability, arguing that female politicians perceive themselves to be at greater electoral risk, even when they hold relatively safe seats. As a result, they engage in more constituency service, introduce more bills, and secure greater federal spending for their districts compared to similarly situated male legislators. Holman and Mahoney (2023) tested competing explanations for women's legislative overperformance by leveraging term limits as an institutional constraint. Their findings suggest that women's productivity persists even when reelection pressures are removed, supporting the argument that female politicians enter office with higher qualifications rather than merely responding to external electoral pressures. These studies highlight the complex relationship between gender, legislative activity, and electoral security, suggesting that women's heightened engagement is both a response to systemic biases and a reflection of their political acumen.
- **Bipartisanship, Collegiality, and Institutional Constraints:** The common perception that female politicians are more bipartisan and cooperative has been scrutinized in recent empirical studies. Lawless, Theriault, and Guthrie (2018) examined whether female legislators engage in more bipartisan behavior than men and found little evidence to support this claim. While women are more likely to participate in activities that foster collegiality, such as social events and bipartisan caucuses, their legislative behavior remains constrained by partisan dynamics. Their findings suggest that party loyalty and electoral incentives shape legislative collaboration more than gender differences. This research challenges the assumption that increasing women's representation inherently reduces polarization or gridlock, instead emphasizing that institutional constraints condition legislative behavior irrespective of gender.
- **Institutional Barriers and Gendered Resistance:** Despite increasing representation, women in politics continue to face institutional resistance that shapes their ability to exercise influence. Kathlene's (1994) study found that as the proportion of women in legislative committees increased, male legislators responded with more aggressive interruptions and verbal dominance, contradicting expectations from critical mass theory. Rather than fostering gender parity, greater female representation often triggers defensive reactions from male colleagues, reinforcing entrenched power dynamics. These findings align with broader scholarship on gendered institutions, which argues that male-dominated political environments resist change by adapting exclusionary practices to maintain control.
- **Policy Priorities and Substantive Representation:** Research has consistently shown that female legislators prioritize different policy areas than their male counterparts. Thomas (1994) examined state legislatures and found that women are more likely to sponsor legislation related to education, health care, and family policy, reflecting their commitment to substantive representation. Women's legislative priorities often align with issues that disproportionately affect women and marginalized communities, suggesting that gender representation in politics has meaningful policy implications. However, studies have also highlighted structural constraints that limit women's ability to translate their policy preferences into legislative outcomes, particularly in male-dominated institutions where their influence is systematically curtailed.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** The study of female politicians in elected office continues to evolve, with scholars exploring new dimensions of gender and political representation. Key debates include the extent to which institutional reforms can mitigate gendered barriers, the role of media coverage in shaping perceptions of female politicians, and the long-term effects of increasing women's representation on political institutions. Future research is likely to focus on the intersectionality of gender with race, class, and ideology, as well as the impact of emergent political movements on women's electoral prospects. Additionally, scholars are examining how digital platforms and social media shape the political engagement and mobilization of female candidates. As the field advances, researchers will continue to assess the conditions under which female politicians can exercise meaningful influence and the structural changes necessary to foster greater gender parity in political representation.

### 6.7.2 Power and Influence in State Legislative Policymaking: The Interaction of Gender and Position in Committee Hearing Debates

Kathlene, L. (1994). Power and Influence in State Legislative Policymaking: The Interaction of Gender and Position in Committee Hearing Debates [Publisher: [American Political Science Association, Cambridge University Press]]. *The American Political Science Review*, 88(3), 560–576. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2944795>

1. **Citation key:** kathlene\_power\_1994
2. **Author(s):** Lyn Kathlene
3. **Year:** 1994
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** gender, state legislatures, committee hearings, policymaking, deliberation
6. **Summary:** Kathlene examines how gender and position within a legislative committee interact to influence partici-

pation in state policymaking. She argues that despite numerical gains, women legislators remain disadvantaged in committee hearings due to conversational dynamics that marginalize their participation. Using transcribed verbatim records of committee hearings in the Colorado State House, she finds that men dominate discussions, take more speaking turns, and interrupt more often. Furthermore, male and female committee chairs conduct hearings differently, shaping committee dynamics in ways that influence gendered patterns of participation.

**7. Theory:** The study builds on theories of gendered communication and institutional power to argue that the structure of committee hearings disadvantages women even when they hold leadership positions. Kathlene draws on previous research showing that male-dominated institutions reinforce existing power hierarchies through conversational norms that privilege men's voices. She extends this argument by suggesting that the proportion of women in a legislative setting can trigger increased resistance from male legislators, amplifying gendered disparities rather than mitigating them. Her theory incorporates the concept of *critical mass*, which posits that as women's numerical representation grows, they should gain more influence. However, she hypothesizes that instead of fostering equality, an increase in women's presence provokes defensive reactions from male legislators, resulting in greater verbal dominance by men. She also theorizes that women in leadership positions will exercise authority differently from men, with female chairs employing more facilitative and democratic styles while male chairs maintain control through assertive interventions.

**8. Methods:** Kathlene employs a qualitative and quantitative content analysis of 12 transcribed legislative committee hearings in the 1989 Colorado State House. She analyzes the distribution of speaking time, number of turns taken, and frequency of interruptions across different positional roles (chair, committee member, sponsor, witness). She also examines how these patterns vary based on the gender of the participants. The dataset includes hearings on both family policy and other legislative issues, allowing her to assess whether topic salience influences gendered participation. She uses multivariate regression models to estimate the effects of gender and position on speaking behavior, controlling for factors such as political party, seniority, and policy interest.

**9. Hypotheses:** Kathlene hypothesizes that:

- Women in legislative committees will speak less and take fewer turns than men.
- Male committee members will be more likely than female committee members to interrupt others.
- The presence of a female chair will reduce male dominance in committee discussions.
- Women will participate more actively when discussing traditionally "feminized" policy issues such as family policy.
- As the proportion of women in a committee increases, men will exhibit more verbal dominance rather than less.

The findings confirm the first four hypotheses: women spoke less, took fewer turns, and faced more interruptions than men, and female chairs exhibited a more democratic leadership style. However, the final hypothesis is particularly significant: rather than increasing women's influence, a greater presence of women led to more aggressive behavior from male legislators, supporting the *intrusiveness effect*, where traditionally male-dominated institutions resist growing female participation.

**10. Main findings:** Kathlene finds that women are consistently disadvantaged in legislative committee hearings. Male legislators take more turns, speak for longer periods, and interrupt more frequently than their female counterparts. Male chairs exhibit greater control over discussions, while female chairs facilitate more open deliberation, leading to increased male interruptions and dominance. The study also reveals that as women's representation in a committee increases, men respond by becoming more verbally assertive rather than ceding space, contradicting expectations from *critical mass* theory. Women are also less likely to engage in substantive policymaking discussions unless the issue pertains directly to family policy, where they exhibit higher engagement. Finally, male legislators scrutinize and challenge female-sponsored bills more aggressively than male-sponsored bills, reinforcing institutional barriers to women's policy influence.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "The findings suggest that as the proportion of women increases in a legislative body, men become more verbally aggressive and controlling of the hearing. Women legislators may be seriously disadvantaged and unable to participate equally in legislative policymaking in committee hearings" (p. 560).
- "Rather than reducing male verbal dominance, increasing the number of women in a legislative setting appears to provoke defensive reactions from men, exacerbating gender disparities rather than mitigating them" (p. 567).
- "Women chairs were more likely to use their position as a facilitator or moderator of committee discussion, rather than as a way to control witness testimony, direct committee discussion, and join in the substantive debates" (p. 572).

### 6.7.3 Gender Inequality in Deliberative Participation

Karpowitz, C. F., Mendelberg, T., & Shaker, L. (2012). Gender Inequality in Deliberative Participation. *American Political Science Review*, 106(3), 533–547. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055412000329>

1. **Citation key:** karpowitz\_gender\_2012
2. **Author(s):** Christopher F. Karpowitz, Tali Mendelberg, and Lee Shaker
3. **Year:** 2012
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** gender inequality, deliberation, decision rules, political participation, descriptive representation
6. **Summary:** Karpowitz, Mendelberg, and Shaker examine whether gender disparities persist in deliberative parti-

pation and influence. They argue that group gender composition and decision rules jointly shape whether women's voices are heard in deliberation. Using a controlled experimental design, they test how gender gaps in participation and influence change depending on whether decisions are made by unanimous or majority rule. Their findings suggest that gender inequality in deliberation is contingent on institutional design, with unanimous decision rules mitigating disparities when women are in the minority, but exacerbating them when women are in the majority.

**7. Theory:** The authors argue that deliberation does not necessarily diminish societal inequalities but can instead reinforce them, depending on the institutional context. They propose that decision rules interact with gender composition to structure participation and influence. Under majority rule, women's participation increases as their numbers grow, but under unanimous rule, both minority women and men are given greater voice. However, the same mechanism that elevates the voice of women in the minority under unanimous rule also advantages minority men in female-majority groups, limiting the benefits of greater representation. These findings challenge assumptions that descriptive representation alone is sufficient to mitigate inequalities in deliberation. The authors argue that participation is not just an individual characteristic but is shaped by institutional and social factors, emphasizing the need for a more nuanced approach to gender and deliberative democracy.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a  $6 \times 2$  between-subjects experimental design, randomly assigning participants to groups with varying gender compositions (ranging from 0 to 5 women) and decision rules (unanimous or majority rule). Participants deliberate on principles of income redistribution, with their speech participation and perceived influence recorded and analyzed. The experiment includes 470 individuals across 94 groups. Key measures include speech participation (measured as proportion of total discussion time spoken by each individual) and perceived influence (measured through post-discussion peer ratings). The authors employ ordinary least squares (OLS) regression and negative binomial models to analyze patterns of deliberation, controlling for individual and group characteristics.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Under majority rule, women's participation will increase as their numbers grow.
- Under unanimous rule, women in the minority will have greater participation, but men in the minority will also benefit, leading to persistent gender gaps in female-majority groups.
- Speech participation will be a key determinant of perceived influence.

The findings support these hypotheses. Women speak less than men in most conditions, but the gender gap in speech participation disappears when women are in the minority under unanimous rule. However, unanimous rule also helps minority men, reinforcing gender disparities when women are in the majority. Participation strongly predicts perceived influence, demonstrating the stakes of unequal deliberation.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that gender gaps in deliberation are contingent on both institutional rules and group composition. Women speak significantly less than men in most mixed-gender groups, but their participation improves under unanimous rule when they are the minority. However, this benefit does not extend to female-majority groups, where unanimous rule instead enhances male participation, maintaining disparities in influence. Majority rule, by contrast, allows women to gradually close the gender gap as their numbers increase. The authors also show that speech participation strongly predicts perceived influence, reinforcing the democratic stakes of these disparities. The findings challenge the idea that descriptive representation alone is sufficient to eliminate gender inequality in deliberation and highlight the importance of institutional design in fostering equal participation.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We find a substantial gender gap in voice and authority, but as hypothesized, it disappears under unanimous rule and few women, or under majority rule and many women" (p. 533).
- "Under unanimity, no voice can be overlooked because every vote is pivotal. Conversely, majority rule signals that conflict is acceptable and that some perspectives may not be included in the group's final decision" (p. 536).
- "The gender role hypothesis is largely correct under majority rule, but is largely incorrect under unanimous rule. Unanimous rule protects minority women, and under this decision rule they take up their equal share of the conversation, but it is a double-edged sword because it also protects minority men" (p. 544).

#### 6.7.4 Gendered Vulnerability: How Women Work Harder to Stay in Office

Lazarus, J., & Steigerwalt, A. (2018). *Gendered Vulnerability: How Women Work Harder to Stay in Office*. University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.9718595>

**1. Citation key:** lazarus\_gendered\_2018

**2. Author(s):** Jeffrey Lazarus and Amy Steigerwalt

**3. Year:** 2018

**4. Publication:** University of Michigan Press

**5. Keywords:** gendered vulnerability, women in politics, legislative behavior, electoral politics, representation

**6. Summary:** Lazarus and Steigerwalt examine the unique electoral and institutional pressures that shape the behavior of female legislators in the United States. They argue that women in office experience a persistent sense of electoral vulnerability, even when objective measures of electoral security suggest otherwise. This perception of gendered vulnerability leads women to work harder to stay in office by securing more federal spending for their districts, engaging in more constituent services, introducing more bills, and aligning their policy positions more closely with voter preferences. The authors employ a multi-method approach, combining quantitative analysis of congressional behavior with qualitative interviews to support their claims.

**7. Theory:** The authors introduce the concept of *gendered vulnerability*, which posits that female legislators perceive themselves to be at greater electoral risk than their male counterparts, irrespective of their actual electoral safety. This perception stems from a combination of societal gender biases, media coverage disparities, and structural disadvantages in electoral politics. Women are more likely to face stronger and better-funded challengers, receive less institutional support from their parties, and experience heightened scrutiny of their qualifications and political decisions. As a result, they adopt legislative strategies that prioritize constituent engagement and responsiveness in an effort to mitigate perceived vulnerability. The authors argue that this leads to more effective representation, as female legislators are more attentive to their districts' needs and more proactive in securing benefits for their constituents.

**8. Methods:** The book employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of legislative behavior with qualitative insights from in-depth interviews. The quantitative component analyzes congressional roll-call votes, bill sponsorship, committee assignments, federal spending allocations, and district-level casework from the 103rd to 110th Congresses (1993–2009). Using a Monte Carlo simulation, the authors assess whether female legislators' committee assignments align more closely with district priorities than those of their male counterparts. The qualitative component includes over twenty interviews with current and former members of Congress and congressional staffers, providing firsthand accounts of gendered vulnerability and its impact on legislative strategy. This multi-method approach allows the authors to capture both behavioral patterns and the underlying motivations driving female legislators' decisions.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Female legislators will engage in more constituency service and casework compared to their male counterparts, reflecting their heightened sense of electoral vulnerability.
- Women in Congress will introduce and sponsor more bills than men, particularly in areas of high district salience, as a strategy to maintain voter support.
- Female legislators will secure more federal spending for their districts than similarly situated male legislators.
- Gendered vulnerability will persist even among electorally safe female legislators, demonstrating that women's heightened legislative activity is not solely a function of electoral competitiveness.

The findings confirm each of these hypotheses. Women in Congress demonstrate significantly higher legislative productivity and engagement with their districts than men, even when controlling for electoral safety. Female legislators sponsor more bills, are more active in constituent services, and secure more federal funds for their districts. The results support the argument that gendered vulnerability is a persistent factor shaping female legislators' behavior.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds strong evidence of gendered vulnerability shaping legislative behavior. Female legislators, even those in safe districts, engage in significantly more constituency service and legislative activity than their male counterparts. Women in Congress sponsor and introduce more bills, particularly those aligned with district interests, and are more successful in securing federal funds for their constituencies. Importantly, these patterns hold even when accounting for electoral competitiveness, suggesting that women's heightened legislative engagement stems from a perceived need to continually prove their electoral viability. The findings demonstrate that women in politics adopt proactive legislative strategies to mitigate gendered electoral disadvantages, ultimately making them more effective representatives in terms of responsiveness to constituents' needs.

**11. Key Definitions:**

- *Gendered vulnerability*: The persistent perception among female legislators that they are electorally vulnerable, regardless of their actual electoral safety, due to structural and social biases.
- *Descriptive representation*: The extent to which elected officials physically resemble the demographic groups they represent, such as gender or race.
- *Substantive representation*: The degree to which elected officials advocate for and advance the policy interests of their constituents.
- *Legislative productivity*: The extent to which legislators introduce, sponsor, and pass bills, as well as secure federal spending and engage in casework for their constituents.
- *Electoral safety*: A measure of how secure an incumbent legislator is in their seat, typically assessed through vote margins, district partisanship, and financial resources.

#### 6.7.5 Nice Girls? Sex, Collegiality, and Bipartisan Cooperation in the US Congress

Lawless, J. L., Theriault, S. M., & Guthrie, S. (2018). Nice Girls? Sex, Collegiality, and Bipartisan Cooperation in the US Congress [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 80(4), 1268–1282. <https://doi.org/10.1086/698884>

**1. Citation key:** lawless\_nice\_2018

**2. Author(s):** Jennifer L. Lawless, Sean M. Theriault, and Samantha Guthrie

**3. Year:** 2018

**4. Publication:** The Journal of Politics

**5. Keywords:** gender, bipartisanship, collegiality, polarization, Congress

**6. Summary:** Lawless, Theriault, and Guthrie examine whether female members of Congress exhibit greater bipartisanship and collegiality than their male counterparts. While media narratives and anecdotal accounts suggest that women legislators are more cooperative and effective problem solvers, the authors subject this claim to empirical scrutiny. They analyze various dimensions of congressional behavior, including participation in social activities, cosponsorship patterns, procedural votes, and amendment roll-call votes. Their findings suggest that while women are more

likely than men to engage in activities that foster collegiality, they do not systematically engage in bipartisan legislative behavior at higher rates than men. The authors argue that partisan constraints—rather than gender differences—primarily shape legislative behavior.

**7. Theory:** The authors engage with the popular narrative that women in Congress are more collegial and cooperative than men, arguing that such claims lack systematic empirical validation. They propose that, while female legislators may participate in more social and relationship-building activities, this does not necessarily translate into increased bipartisan collaboration in legislative behavior. Instead, they argue that party polarization and institutional constraints, rather than gender, primarily shape how legislators engage in Congress. The authors highlight that electoral pressures, party loyalty, and strategic career considerations likely condition female legislators' behavior in ways that mirror their male counterparts. Moreover, they suggest that women, as a historically underrepresented group, may have even stronger incentives than men to demonstrate party loyalty and avoid deviating from partisan expectations. This argument challenges the assumption that increasing women's representation in Congress inherently fosters greater bipartisanship or reduces legislative gridlock.

**8. Methods:** The study utilizes multiple empirical strategies to assess gender differences in congressional behavior. The authors analyze more than a decade's worth of congressional social engagement data, legislative cosponsorship patterns, procedural votes, and amendment roll-call votes. They examine participation in bipartisan activities such as the Secret Santa Gift Exchange, Seersucker Thursday, and congressional baseball and softball games to determine whether female legislators engage in collegial activities at higher rates than men. Additionally, they analyze sponsorship and cosponsorship data to assess bipartisan collaboration in legislative initiatives, employing data from The Lugar Center's Bipartisan Index. Further, they examine procedural voting behavior, applying Poole and Rosenthal's W-NOMINATE algorithm to measure partisanship in voting patterns. Finally, they investigate amendment activity in the Senate as a measure of tactical legislative maneuvers, analyzing over 4,000 amendment roll-call votes from 1993 to 2014.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Women are more likely than men to engage in social activities that foster collegiality in Congress.
- Women do not exhibit systematically higher levels of bipartisan collaboration in legislative behavior, including cosponsorship patterns, procedural votes, or amendment behavior.
- Partisanship, rather than gender, is the primary determinant of legislative collaboration and cooperation in Congress.

The hypotheses are largely confirmed, with results showing that while women are more engaged in congressional social activities, their legislative behavior does not significantly differ from men's in terms of bipartisanship.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that female legislators are more likely than their male counterparts to participate in social activities that promote collegiality, such as the Secret Santa Gift Exchange, Seersucker Thursday, and congressional sports games. However, despite their greater engagement in these activities, women do not exhibit systematically higher levels of bipartisan behavior in legislative processes. The authors find no statistically significant gender differences in the likelihood of sponsoring or cosponsoring bipartisan legislation, participating in bipartisan congressional delegation travel, voting on procedural matters in a bipartisan manner, or engaging in amendment activity in a way that reduces partisan gridlock. Instead, they conclude that party affiliation and polarization, rather than gender, are the dominant forces shaping legislative behavior. Ultimately, the study challenges the popular belief that increasing women's representation in Congress inherently leads to greater bipartisanship and problem-solving.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We uncover almost no evidence that women's legislative behavior on fact-finding abroad, cosponsoring legislation, or engaging the legislative process differs from men's" (p. 1269).
- "In this article, we offer the first comprehensive examination of the relationship between gender and bipartisan cooperation on Capitol Hill. Using more than a decade's worth of social engagement activities, we find that women are, in fact, systematically more likely than men to participate in activities that foster a collegial work environment. But that is where gender differences in Congress seem to end" (p. 1270).
- "Although women's presence in Congress promotes democratic legitimacy and simple justice and also provides the institution with some 'social glue'—all of which are important in their own right—it does little to reduce the hyperpartisanship, gridlock, and stalemate rampant on Capitol Hill" (p. 1270).

#### 6.7.6 Take (Her) to the Limit: Term Limits Do Not Diminish Women's Overperformance in Legislative Office

Holman, M. R., & Mahoney, A. M. (2023). Take (Her) to the Limit: Term Limits do Not Diminish Women's Overperformance in Legislative Office [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/lsq.12406>]. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 48(3), 681–694. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lsq.12406>

**1. Citation key:** holman\_take\_2023

**2. Author(s):** Mirya R. Holman and Anna Mitchell Mahoney

**3. Year:** 2023

**4. Publication:** Legislative Studies Quarterly

**5. Keywords:** gender, legislative performance, term limits, state legislatures, political representation

**6. Summary:** Holman and Mahoney examine the mechanisms underlying women's legislative overperformance by leveraging term limits as an institutional constraint. They test whether women outperform men in legislative office due to higher initial candidate quality or increased electoral pressures that force them to work harder to secure

reelection. Using data from over 6,000 legislators across term-limited states, they assess how the removal of reelection incentives affects gendered patterns of legislative productivity. The findings indicate that while term limits significantly decrease men's legislative activity, women continue to outperform, suggesting that women's overperformance stems from their higher initial quality rather than external voter expectations.

**7. Theory:** The authors propose two competing explanations for why women outperform men in legislative office: (1) the *quality candidate hypothesis*, which suggests that women enter politics with superior qualifications due to higher barriers to entry, and (2) the *voter expectations hypothesis*, which posits that women must work harder to meet heightened standards for reelection. If the latter is true, women's legislative productivity should decline when term limits remove electoral incentives. If the former holds, women should continue to outperform men even when reelection is no longer a factor. The authors argue that gendered political behavior must be understood within institutional constraints, particularly term limits, which remove the accountability mechanisms associated with reelection. Prior research indicates that term-limited legislators generally shift focus from constituent service to other priorities, such as lobbying connections and policy legacy, reducing overall legislative productivity. By isolating this effect, the study provides insight into whether gendered overperformance is driven by external pressures or intrinsic differences in candidate quality.

**8. Methods:** The study analyzes roll-call votes, bill sponsorship, and committee activity among state legislators in 14 states with term limits. The authors use two empirical strategies: (1) a within-legislator analysis that compares individual lawmakers' productivity before and after they become term-limited, and (2) a between-legislator approach that contrasts the performance of term-limited legislators with their non-term-limited peers while controlling for party, chamber, and state-level factors. The authors employ fixed-effects models to account for unobserved heterogeneity across legislators and cluster standard errors at the party-chamber-state level to improve causal inference. Productivity is measured through an index combining legislative output metrics, including bill sponsorship rates, committee participation, and voting frequency.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- If voter expectations drive women's overperformance, term limits should significantly reduce their legislative productivity.
- If women's overperformance is due to their higher initial quality, term limits should have a weaker effect on their productivity compared to men.
- Term limits should generally decrease legislative productivity across all legislators, but the decline should be more pronounced among men.

The results confirm the second hypothesis: women continue to exhibit higher levels of legislative activity even when term limits remove the electoral incentives that would presumably drive overperformance under the voter expectations hypothesis.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that term limits significantly reduce legislative productivity overall, but the effect is more pronounced among men. While term-limited men sponsor fewer bills, participate less in committee work, and cast fewer votes, women's productivity remains relatively stable. This suggests that the heightened scrutiny women face in elections is not the primary driver of their overperformance. Instead, their superior qualifications upon entering office better explain their sustained productivity, even in the absence of reelection pressures. The findings contribute to broader debates on gender and political representation, showing that institutional constraints such as term limits do not eliminate women's performance advantages. These results have implications for understanding gender disparities in legislative effectiveness and for evaluating the impact of term limits on representative democracy.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "While term limits degrade men's performance in office, women officeholders continue to overperform even under this institutional constraint" (p. 681).
- "We find more evidence for the quality candidate hypothesis than the voter expectations hypothesis. Women's overperformance is more likely due to their higher quality upon entering office, rather than concerns about electoral vulnerability" (p. 682).
- "Although women's presence in Congress promotes democratic legitimacy and simple justice and also provides the institution with some 'social glue'—all of which are important in their own right—it does little to reduce the hyperpartisanship, gridlock, and stalemate rampant on Capitol Hill" (p. 691).

## 6.8 Policy Representation

### 6.8.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Scholarship on women's policy representation examines whether and how female legislators prioritize different issues and legislative approaches compared to their male counterparts. Early research explored whether increasing women's numerical representation in office led to substantive policy shifts favoring women's interests, while later studies introduced more nuanced perspectives on partisanship, institutional constraints, and intersectional representation. Foundational theories distinguish between descriptive and substantive representation, analyzing whether female legislators simply mirror women's presence in political office or actively advocate for policies that disproportionately affect women. Empirical work has shown that female legislators tend to emphasize issues such as education, healthcare, and family policies, although partisanship strongly conditions their policy priorities. Recent studies have further examined the role of institutional dynamics, agenda-setting power, and strategic issue framing in shaping

women's legislative impact, highlighting both the opportunities and constraints that female policymakers encounter in political institutions.

- **Descriptive and Substantive Representation:** Theories of representation distinguish between *descriptive representation*, which refers to women's presence in legislative bodies, and *substantive representation*, which concerns their advocacy for gendered policy issues. Early scholarship posited that increasing the number of women in legislatures would lead to policy outcomes more favorable to women's interests. Sue Thomas (*How Women Legislate*, 1994) found that female legislators are more likely than their male counterparts to focus on policy areas such as childcare, family leave, and reproductive rights. However, later research challenged the assumption that all female legislators equally prioritize gendered issues, demonstrating that partisan affiliation significantly mediates their legislative behavior.
- **Partisan Constraints on Women's Representation:** Tracy Osborn's (*How Women Represent Women*, 2012) analysis of state legislatures showed that Democratic and Republican women adopt distinct approaches to gendered policymaking. While Democratic women are more likely to advocate for workplace protections, reproductive rights, and social welfare policies, Republican women tend to emphasize family values and business-friendly approaches to gender policy. Osborn argues that partisan identity often outweighs gender identity in shaping legislators' policy priorities, with institutional structures further constraining women's ability to advance gender-related policies. This perspective challenges the assumption that electing more women automatically enhances policy responsiveness to women's interests.
- **Gendered Policy Priorities and Legislative Style:** Research has consistently shown that female legislators prioritize different policy areas than their male colleagues. Thomas (1994) observed that early female legislators were hesitant to challenge institutional norms but later cohorts became more assertive in advancing policies affecting women, children, and families. Studies of legislative behavior indicate that women legislators employ a more consensus-driven, collaborative approach to lawmaking, focusing on coalition-building and bipartisanship. However, this style does not necessarily translate into policy influence, as institutional gatekeeping mechanisms and partisan agendas shape which proposals gain traction.
- **Critical Mass Theory and Institutional Impact:** Scholars have debated whether a *critical mass* of female legislators is necessary to drive meaningful policy change. Thomas (1994) and others suggest that individual female legislators can influence policy, but a threshold of women in office enhances their ability to shift legislative priorities. Osborn's (2012) work, however, demonstrates that institutional constraints—such as party leadership, agenda-setting control, and electoral pressures—limit the extent to which female legislators can act independently to advance gendered policy concerns.
- **Conservative Women and Policy Representation:** Recent research has highlighted the role of conservative Republican women (CRW) in shaping gendered policymaking. Reingold, Kreitzer, Osborn, and Swers (*Anti-Abortion Policymaking and Women's Representation*, 2021) found that CRW are more likely than their male counterparts to sponsor anti-abortion legislation, but only when policies are framed as protecting women rather than emphasizing fetal life or religious values. This suggests that women's representation in legislatures is not inherently progressive or feminist but is instead conditioned by ideological and strategic considerations.
- **Symbolic Representation and Public Perception:** Research also examines how female legislators' presence influences public perceptions of government responsiveness to women's issues. Studies suggest that having women in office increases public trust in government and encourages political engagement among women voters. However, symbolic representation alone does not guarantee substantive policy change, as legislative institutions and partisan divisions shape the extent to which female lawmakers can effectively advocate for women's interests.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Ongoing debates in the study of women's policy representation include questions about the conditions under which female legislators influence policy outcomes, the extent to which partisanship constrains gendered policymaking, and the role of institutional structures in shaping legislative success. Future research is likely to focus on intersectionality, examining how race, class, and ideology interact with gender to influence policy advocacy. Additionally, digital mobilization and social media may alter how women legislators engage in policy debates, potentially creating new avenues for influence outside of traditional legislative channels.

### 6.8.2 How Women Legislate

Thomas, S. (1994). *How Women Legislate*. Oxford University Press

1. **Citation key:** thomas.\_how\_1994
2. **Author(s):** Sue Thomas
3. **Year:** 1994
4. **Publication:** How Women Legislate (Oxford University Press)
5. **Keywords:** gender, political representation, legislative behavior, state legislatures, policy priorities
6. **Summary:** Thomas investigates the impact of women in legislative office, focusing on whether they legislate differently from men in terms of behavior, priorities, and political impact. Using a mixed-methods approach, she examines state legislatures to determine whether female legislators adopt different styles of governance, focus on distinct policy areas, and introduce substantive changes to legislative processes. She finds that while early female legislators were hesitant to challenge institutional norms, contemporary women lawmakers demonstrate increasing engagement in policy areas affecting women, children, and families.
7. **Theory:** The book advances a typology of expectations regarding women's legislative behavior. Thomas explores whether female legislators simply adapt to existing institutional norms or work to reform them. She argues that

societal attitudes toward women's role in the public sphere shape their legislative engagement, with early female legislators operating cautiously within male-dominated environments while later cohorts gradually expand their policy influence. Drawing on theories of substantive and symbolic representation, Thomas theorizes that increased female representation leads to the prioritization of gendered policy issues. She also considers whether a critical mass of women in office is necessary for legislative change or if individual legislators can shape policy independently of broader demographic shifts. The study ultimately suggests that while women legislators initially assimilate into established norms, they later assert distinct policy priorities as their presence in legislatures grows.

**8. Methods:** Thomas employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including interviews with legislators, legislative record analysis, and survey data from multiple states. She tracks historical trends in female representation and compares the policy behaviors of male and female legislators across different political contexts. Committee assignments, bill sponsorship, and voting records are analyzed to assess gendered differences in legislative focus. Additionally, Thomas incorporates longitudinal data to evaluate changes over time in the legislative engagement of women, distinguishing between early and contemporary cohorts.

**9. Hypotheses:** The book investigates several hypotheses:

- Women legislators are more likely than men to prioritize issues related to education, healthcare, and social welfare.
- Women are initially less likely than men to engage in floor debates and high-profile legislative battles but become more active as they gain experience.
- Women legislators are more likely to support feminist policy initiatives, including child care programs, reproductive rights, and workplace protections.
- A critical mass of female legislators is necessary to influence legislative priorities significantly.

Findings indicate that while women initially focus on consensus-building and constituent services, they later assert distinct policy agendas that reflect gendered policy concerns.

**10. Main findings:** Thomas finds that women legislators display different policy preferences and legislative styles compared to their male counterparts. Early female legislators were reluctant to challenge procedural norms, often focusing on constituency service rather than policy change. However, over time, women became more engaged in policy advocacy, particularly in areas affecting women, children, and social welfare. Committee assignments and bill sponsorship patterns reveal that women disproportionately engage with issues such as healthcare, education, and family policy. Additionally, Thomas identifies a gender gap in legislative priorities, with women emphasizing social equity and men focusing more on economic and business-related policies. The study also suggests that a critical mass of women in legislatures strengthens their ability to shape policy, but even small numbers of female legislators introduce gendered policy concerns to legislative agendas. These findings contribute to broader debates on gender and representation, illustrating how institutional norms and societal expectations shape the legislative behavior of women.

**11. Key Definitions:**

- *Symbolic representation:* The presence of women in political office as a means of signaling greater gender inclusivity, regardless of substantive policy impact.
- *Substantive representation:* The advocacy and legislative prioritization of issues that uniquely or disproportionately affect women and marginalized groups.
- *Critical mass theory:* The idea that women must reach a certain threshold of representation in legislative bodies before they can significantly influence policy outcomes.
- *Gendered policy priorities:* Legislative issues that disproportionately affect women, including childcare, reproductive rights, and workplace protections.
- *Legislative adaptation:* The process by which female legislators conform to existing institutional norms rather than seeking procedural reform.

#### 6.8.3 How Women Represent Women: Political Parties, Gender, and Representation in the State Legislatures

Osborn, T. L. (2012, March). *How Women Represent Women: Political Parties, Gender and Representation in the State Legislatures* [Google-Books-ID: KL3UkotYeqgC]. OUP USA

1. **Citation key:** osborn\_how\_2012

2. **Author(s):** Tracy L. Osborn

3. **Year:** 2012

4. **Publication:** How Women Represent Women: Political Parties, Gender, and Representation in the State Legislatures (Oxford University Press)

5. **Keywords:** gender, representation, political parties, state legislatures, policy responsiveness

6. **Summary:** Osborn examines the relationship between gender, political parties, and legislative representation in state legislatures. She explores how party identity structures the way women legislators represent women's issues and whether partisanship influences their legislative behavior. The book interrogates whether women legislators act as representatives of women's interests independently or if their legislative actions are primarily shaped by partisan considerations. Osborn finds that party identity significantly mediates how women in office address policy issues, with Democratic and Republican women prioritizing different aspects of women's policy concerns.

7. **Theory:** Osborn builds on theories of descriptive and substantive representation to argue that political parties fundamentally shape how women legislators engage with women's issues. She contends that while scholars often assume

that increasing the number of women in legislatures will enhance representation for women's interests, the reality is more complex due to partisan divisions. According to Osborn, Democratic and Republican women share some common concerns but approach solutions in ideologically distinct ways, mirroring broader partisan divisions. She also highlights the institutional constraints that parties impose on legislators, arguing that party structures and agenda-setting powers condition the extent to which women can advance policies related to gender. Additionally, Osborn critiques previous scholarship for treating women's representation as a uniform concept, arguing instead for a more nuanced approach that accounts for party identity and legislative institutions.

**8. Methods:** Osborn employs a mixed-methods approach, combining legislative bill sponsorship data, interviews with legislators, and historical analysis of women's representation across multiple U.S. state legislatures. She analyzes legislative records to compare the sponsorship patterns of Democratic and Republican women, focusing on differences in policy priorities. The study includes case comparisons of ten state legislatures, allowing her to assess variation in the partisan effects of women's representation. Osborn also incorporates survey data from state legislators to understand their motivations and decision-making processes regarding gender-related policies. Through this empirical analysis, she identifies the role of partisanship in shaping legislative behavior and evaluates whether institutional factors such as party control influence the ability of women legislators to pursue their policy goals.

**9. Hypotheses:** Osborn investigates several hypotheses:

- Women legislators are more likely than men to sponsor legislation related to women's issues.
- Partisan affiliation strongly mediates the types of women's issues prioritized by legislators, with Democratic women focusing more on social welfare and workplace protections, while Republican women emphasize family values and economic freedom.
- Women's representation in state legislatures does not necessarily translate into a uniform feminist policy agenda but is instead shaped by partisan considerations.
- Institutional party control affects the legislative success of women's issues bills, with Democratic women advancing more gender-related policies under Democratic-controlled legislatures.

Her findings support the hypothesis that partisan identity is a stronger determinant of legislative behavior than gender alone.

**10. Main findings:** Osborn's findings challenge the assumption that electing more women to office automatically leads to greater representation of women's interests. She shows that Democratic and Republican women legislators prioritize different types of women's issues and that partisanship constrains their ability to act outside of party lines. While Democratic women are more likely to introduce and advocate for policies on reproductive rights, equal pay, and childcare, Republican women tend to focus on family values, business-friendly approaches to gender policy, and anti-regulatory measures. Additionally, Osborn finds that institutional factors, such as party control and agenda-setting authority, play a crucial role in shaping the policy outcomes of women legislators. Her analysis of bill sponsorship reveals that while women are generally more active in introducing gender-related policies, the content of these policies reflects partisan cleavages rather than a unified women's agenda. Furthermore, she highlights the role of institutional partisanship in structuring legislative priorities, showing that women's ability to influence policy is contingent on the party leadership and chamber control.

**11. Key Definitions:**

- *Descriptive representation:* The idea that women's numerical presence in legislatures leads to increased representation of women's interests.
- *Substantive representation:* The extent to which legislators advocate for policies that address the needs and concerns of women.
- *Partisan mediation:* The process by which party identity influences how legislators prioritize and frame women's issues.
- *Institutional partisanship:* The ways in which party control and legislative structures shape policy outcomes and constrain individual legislators.
- *Agenda-setting power:* The ability of legislative leaders to determine which issues receive attention and which bills are advanced through the policymaking process.

#### 6.8.4 Pitch Perfect: Vocal Pitch and the Emotional Intensity of Congressional Speech

Dietrich, B. J., Hayes, M., & O'Brien, D. Z. (2019). Pitch Perfect: Vocal Pitch and the Emotional Intensity of Congressional Speech. *American Political Science Review*, 113(4), 941–962. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055419000467>

**1. Citation key:** dietrich\_pitch\_2019

**2. Author(s):** Bryce J. Dietrich, Matthew Hayes, and Diana Z. O'Brien

**3. Year:** 2019

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** vocal pitch, emotional intensity, congressional speech, descriptive representation, legislative behavior

**6. Summary:** Dietrich, Hayes, and O'Brien introduce a novel method for assessing legislators' emotional intensity by analyzing vocal pitch variations in congressional floor speeches. They argue that vocal pitch, which is difficult to consciously control, serves as an indicator of legislators' emotional investment in an issue. Using an extensive dataset of 74,158 U.S. House floor speeches from 2009 to 2014, they examine whether female legislators speak with greater emotional intensity when discussing women's issues. The authors find that female members of Congress (MCs) ex-

hibit significantly higher vocal pitch when talking about women compared to their male counterparts and their own speeches on other topics.

7. **Theory:** The authors build on research in psychology and political communication to argue that vocal pitch is a reliable indicator of emotional intensity. Drawing from studies on emotional arousal, they contend that subtle variations in vocal pitch reflect a speaker's affective state. In legislative settings, where speech is often highly strategic, vocal pitch provides a nonverbal cue of a legislator's genuine investment in an issue. They propose that descriptive representation extends beyond verbal content, influencing how legislators communicate about policy concerns. Since women legislators have been shown to be more likely to advocate for women's issues, they hypothesize that female MCs will exhibit greater emotional intensity when discussing women's topics. Furthermore, they argue that emotional intensity in speech may signal commitment to an issue and influence legislative behavior, such as the responses of male legislators.
8. **Methods:** The study employs an extensive corpus of House floor speeches from the *HouseLive* database, covering over 6,400 hours of congressional debate. The authors extract audio and text data, using closed-caption transcripts to identify speeches referencing women and Praat software to measure fundamental frequency (F0) as a proxy for vocal pitch. To control for variation in baseline pitch between speakers, they standardize pitch relative to each speaker's average. They then use multilevel linear and logistic regression models with legislator random effects to analyze whether female MCs exhibit greater deviations from their baseline pitch when discussing women. The analysis also includes supplementary tests: (1) examining whether emotional intensity correlates with legislators' voting records on women's issues and (2) assessing whether emotional intensity is higher when MCs speak on partisan-owned issues.

9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Female MCs will exhibit higher-than-baseline vocal pitch when discussing women compared to other topics.
- Male MCs will not exhibit significant deviations in vocal pitch when discussing women's issues.
- Female MCs with higher vocal pitch when discussing women will also receive stronger ratings from women's interest groups.
- Legislators will exhibit greater emotional intensity when speaking on issues owned by their respective parties.

The findings support these hypotheses, with strong evidence that vocal pitch serves as a measure of legislators' emotional commitment to a topic.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds that female legislators speak with significantly higher vocal pitch when discussing women's issues, while male legislators show no comparable increase. This effect is robust across different modeling specifications and alternative definitions of women-related topics. Furthermore, female MCs who exhibit the highest vocal pitch when discussing women receive more favorable ratings from women's interest groups, suggesting a connection between emotional intensity and legislative behavior. Additional analysis of partisan issue ownership reveals that Democratic and Republican legislators exhibit greater emotional intensity when discussing topics traditionally associated with their parties, reinforcing the argument that vocal pitch serves as an indicator of issue commitment. The study concludes that nonverbal aspects of speech provide valuable insights into legislators' priorities and emotional engagement with policy issues.

11. **Key quotations:**

- "We posit that it is not only what legislators say that matters but also how they say it" (p. 942).
- "Female MCs speak with greater emotional intensity when talking about women as compared with both their male colleagues and their speech on other topics" (p. 944).
- "Even when controlling for a myriad of other factors, female MCs are more likely to speak with above-average vocal pitch when referencing women than when referencing other issues and as compared with their male counterparts" (p. 947).

#### 6.8.5 Anti-abortion Policymaking and Women's Representation

Reingold, B., Kreitzer, R. J., Osborn, T., & Swers, M. L. (2021). Anti-abortion Policymaking and Women's Representation [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 74(2), 403–420. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912920903381>

1. **Citation key:** reingold\_anti-abortion\_2021
2. **Author(s):** Beth Reingold, Rebecca J. Kreitzer, Tracy Osborn, and Michele L. Swers
3. **Year:** 2021
4. **Publication:** Political Research Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** abortion, representation, conservative women, Republican women, U.S. state legislators
6. **Summary:** Reingold, Kreitzer, Osborn, and Swers examine the role of conservative Republican women (CRW) in anti-abortion policymaking in U.S. state legislatures. They investigate the extent to which CRW lead efforts to restrict abortion access and identify the conditions under which their leadership is most pronounced. Using bill sponsorship data from 21 state legislatures between 1997 and 2012, they argue that while CRW are more likely than their male counterparts to sponsor anti-abortion legislation, their leadership is contingent on issue framing and partisan competition. Specifically, CRW are most active when anti-abortion policies are framed as protecting women rather than fetal life or moral principles, and when state partisan competition is high.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that women's substantive representation is contingent on ideological, partisan, and strategic factors. While much research on women's representation suggests that women in office are more likely than men to advocate for women's interests, prior work has primarily focused on feminist or ideologically inclusive issues.

Conservative women's issues, such as anti-abortion policy, have often been led by Republican men. The authors argue that CRW's leadership on anti-abortion policy is conditional on three factors: (1) their ideological conservatism, which aligns with the broader Republican Party's opposition to abortion; (2) the ability to frame abortion restrictions as "pro-woman" rather than religious or fetal-centric; and (3) the strategic value of women's leadership in partisan competition, as Republican women can counter Democratic claims that abortion restrictions harm women. The study positions conservative women's representation within the broader context of partisan polarization, demonstrating that women's advocacy is not exclusively liberal but deeply embedded in party strategy.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a dataset of 21 state legislatures from 1997 to 2012, focusing on abortion-related bill sponsorship. Using Lexis-Nexis State Capital and state legislative websites, the authors identify all abortion bills introduced and categorize them based on ideological orientation (pro-choice or anti-abortion) and framing (pro-woman, fetal-centric, or moral/religious). The dependent variable is whether a legislator sponsors at least one anti-abortion bill, and independent variables include gender, party affiliation, ideology, and state-level partisan competition. The authors use logistic regression models to estimate the likelihood of sponsorship while controlling for legislative experience, overall bill sponsorship, and Republican control of the chamber. They also examine the interaction between party competition and legislator gender to determine whether Republican women's leadership is more pronounced in competitive partisan environments.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors propose the following hypotheses:

- Conservative Republicans are most likely to sponsor anti-abortion legislation, while liberal Democrats are most likely to sponsor pro-choice legislation.
- CRW are more likely than conservative Republican men to sponsor anti-abortion legislation, and liberal Democratic women are more likely than liberal Democratic men to sponsor pro-choice bills.
- CRW will be more likely to sponsor anti-abortion bills framed as protecting women's health than those framed as protecting fetal life or moral values.
- Sponsorship of abortion bills increases as state legislative competition rises, particularly among women legislators.

The findings largely confirm these hypotheses, demonstrating that conservative women's representation is strategically shaped by partisan and ideological dynamics.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that CRW in state legislatures are significantly more likely than their male counterparts to sponsor anti-abortion bills, but only under specific conditions. Women-centered issue frames—those that present abortion restrictions as protecting women's health and safety—are the most effective in mobilizing CRW sponsorship. Fetal-centric and moral/religious framing does not exhibit the same gendered effect, indicating that CRW selectively engage in anti-abortion policymaking when they can position themselves as advocating for women. Additionally, the influence of gender on bill sponsorship is heightened in competitive partisan environments. When state legislative control is closely contested, CRW are even more likely to introduce anti-abortion legislation, reinforcing the argument that their leadership is both ideologically driven and strategically valuable to the Republican Party. The study highlights how partisan polarization has shaped women's representation in conservative policymaking, demonstrating that gender and ideology interact in complex ways in legislative behavior.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Our results indicate CRW in state legislatures are more likely than their male counterparts to sponsor anti-abortion measures, but this link between women's descriptive and substantive representation is observable only under certain conditions" (p. 404).
- "Gender gaps in anti-abortion bill sponsorship are most pronounced when the legislation is framed in terms of protecting women's health and safety rather than fetal life or religious/moral principles" (p. 405).
- "Our study provides further evidence that women's representation is not only deeply gendered, but also deeply embedded in the strategic interplay of polarized, partisan politics" (p. 406).

## 6.9 Gender Egalitarianism and Symbolic Representation

### 6.9.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Scholarship on gender egalitarianism and symbolic representation examines how the presence of women in elite political positions influences broader political engagement, candidate emergence, and perceptions of democratic legitimacy. Building on theories of descriptive and symbolic representation, this body of work investigates whether increased female representation fosters a more inclusive political environment and challenges prevailing gender norms. Early contributions emphasize the significance of women's presence in legislatures, finding that their inclusion signals legitimacy and encourages political participation among women. Subsequent research explores the mobilizing effects of prominent female politicians, demonstrating that high-profile role models increase the likelihood of women running for office. Additional studies address the implications of gender representation in decision-making bodies, revealing that gender-balanced institutions enhance perceptions of procedural fairness and institutional trust. Across these perspectives, scholars highlight the broader effects of gender representation beyond substantive policymaking, showing that women's presence in politics shapes public attitudes, electoral dynamics, and the legitimacy of democratic governance.
- **Descriptive and Symbolic Representation:** Foundational theories of political representation, particularly those of Hanna Pitkin, distinguish between descriptive and symbolic representation. Descriptive representation posits that

elected officials should reflect the demographic composition of the electorate, while symbolic representation suggests that such alignment fosters political engagement and institutional trust. Scholars argue that the presence of women in elite political positions serves a symbolic function by signaling inclusion and challenging gendered perceptions of politics. Research demonstrates that increased female representation in legislatures reduces the gender gap in political engagement, as women become more likely to discuss politics, attend demonstrations, and contact elected officials. These findings indicate that descriptive representation extends beyond policy influence, shaping broader patterns of political participation and reinforcing democratic norms of inclusivity.

- **Role Models and Candidate Emergence:** Prominent female politicians can act as role models, inspiring other women to enter politics. Studies examining the impact of high-profile female politicians, such as governors and U.S. senators, find that their presence increases the number of women running for state legislative office. This effect operates through both symbolic and recruitment mechanisms: visible female leaders inspire potential candidates by demonstrating the viability of women in politics, while established female politicians actively encourage women to run for office. Empirical analyses of U.S. state elections reveal that electing a female governor or senator leads to a measurable increase in the proportion of female candidates in subsequent election cycles. Further research suggests that the mobilizing effect persists beyond the tenure of individual female politicians, creating a lasting impact on gender representation in electoral politics.
- **Democratic Legitimacy and Institutional Trust:** The composition of decision-making bodies influences public perceptions of democratic legitimacy. Studies utilizing survey experiments find that gender-balanced committees enhance citizens' trust in political institutions and increase perceptions of procedural fairness. Notably, research shows that the presence of women on legislative committees legitimizes policy decisions, even when those decisions curtail women's rights. This effect is particularly pronounced among male respondents, who exhibit higher trust in institutions when women are included in decision-making processes. Scholars argue that gender representation in political bodies operates through both substantive and symbolic mechanisms, reinforcing institutional credibility while also shaping policy discourse. These findings underscore the complexities of symbolic representation, demonstrating that women's presence in governance structures can both empower marginalized groups and serve as a legitimizing force for existing power structures.
- **Gender and Affective Polarization:** Recent scholarship examines whether women's representation mitigates affective polarization in democratic systems. Empirical studies analyzing cross-national survey data find that partisans evaluate out-parties more favorably when those parties have a higher proportion of female legislators. This effect is attributed to gendered perceptions of political behavior, as women politicians are often viewed as less adversarial and more consensus-driven. The findings suggest that increasing women's representation in legislatures can reduce inter-party hostility, fostering a more cooperative political environment. However, scholars also highlight the challenges female politicians face, including heightened scrutiny and political violence, which may offset some of the benefits of increased representation.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Contemporary research continues to explore the implications of gender representation for democratic participation, candidate recruitment, and institutional legitimacy. Scholars debate the extent to which gender quotas effectively increase women's substantive representation, with some arguing that quotas primarily serve a symbolic function unless they result in substantial numerical gains. Other lines of inquiry focus on the intersectionality of gender representation, investigating how race, class, and partisanship shape the experiences of female politicians. Future research is likely to examine the role of digital mobilization in increasing women's political engagement, as well as the impact of emerging institutional reforms on gender parity in governance. As democratic systems grapple with shifting political dynamics, the study of gender egalitarianism and symbolic representation remains central to understanding the evolving nature of political inclusion and representation.

#### 6.9.2 “Engendering” Politics: The Impact of Descriptive Representation on Women’s Political Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa

Barnes, T. D., & Burchard, S. M. (2013). “Engendering” Politics: The Impact of Descriptive Representation on Women’s Political Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Comparative Political Studies*, 46(7), 767–790. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414012463884>

1. **Citation key:** barnes\_engendering\_2013
2. **Author(s):** Tiffany D. Barnes and Stephanie M. Burchard
3. **Year:** 2013
4. **Publication:** Comparative Political Studies
5. **Keywords:** sub-Saharan Africa, women, political engagement, descriptive representation, symbolic representation
6. **Summary:** Barnes and Burchard examine how the presence of women in elite political positions influences women's political engagement at the mass level in sub-Saharan Africa. Drawing on Afrobarometer survey data from 20 African countries over a ten-year period (1999–2008), they use an interactive multilevel model to test the impact of women's descriptive representation on the gender gap in political participation. They find that as the percentage of women in national legislatures increases, the gender gap in political engagement decreases. The results are robust across multiple measures of political engagement, suggesting that incorporating women into political institutions enhances women's participation in politics.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on theories of political representation, particularly Hanna Pitkin's conceptualization of descriptive and symbolic representation. They argue that descriptive representation—where women in politics reflect

the demographics of the population—generates symbolic representation, increasing women's political engagement by signaling inclusion and legitimacy. The presence of women in elite positions challenges implicit gender norms that politics is a male domain and fosters political efficacy among women. They reference existing scholarship demonstrating that women legislators often prioritize women's issues, though they contend that the effect of descriptive representation on engagement is distinct from substantive representation. The authors hypothesize that increasing the proportion of women in the legislature sends a signal that politics is an arena for women, thereby increasing their participation in political discourse and activism.

**8. Methods:** The study employs Afrobarometer survey data from 20 sub-Saharan African countries, covering four waves of surveys from 1999 to 2008. The dependent variable is political engagement, measured through self-reported behaviors including discussing politics, attending demonstrations, contacting elected officials, and expressing interest in politics. The key independent variable is the percentage of women in the national legislature, obtained from the Inter-Parliamentary Union's archives. The authors utilize a multilevel logistic regression model with country and survey-year random intercepts to account for hierarchical data structures. They also interact women's descriptive representation with respondent gender to test whether increased representation reduces the gender gap in engagement. Additional controls include economic development (GNI per capita), democratic duration, political rights, civil liberties, and gender-related development indices.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors propose that increases in women's descriptive representation will be associated with decreases in the gender gap in political engagement.

- Women are significantly less likely than men to engage in political activities.
- As the percentage of women in the national legislature increases, the gender gap in political engagement will decrease.
- The effect of women's descriptive representation on engagement will be distinct from the effects of gender quotas or substantive representation.

**10. Main findings:** The results strongly support the hypothesis that women's descriptive representation reduces the gender gap in political engagement. Across various measures, women are significantly less likely than men to engage in political behaviors, but this gap narrows as the percentage of women in the legislature increases. The effect is robust to multiple specifications and persists when controlling for economic and political factors. The authors find that when women's representation in the legislature reaches approximately 25–35%, the gender gap in political engagement disappears. Notably, while women's legislative presence affects mass-level political engagement, merely adopting gender quotas does not produce the same effect unless those quotas result in substantial numerical representation. The findings highlight that descriptive representation, rather than gender quotas alone, plays a critical role in shaping women's political behavior.

#### 11. Key quotations:

- "The exclusion of women from politics at an elite level sends the implicit message that politics is a 'man's game'... the inclusion of women in politics at an elite level sends messages to women that politics is a woman's game too" (p. 770).
- "Once women occupy somewhere between 25% and 35% of the legislative chamber, the predicted probability of the average woman's political engagement is not statistically different from the predicted probability of the average man's political engagement" (p. 783).
- "Our results provide strong evidence that increases in the percentage of women in the national legislature are associated with increases in women's political engagement relative to that of men, effectively decreasing the size of the political engagement gender gap in sub-Saharan Africa" (p. 784).

#### 6.9.3 Prominent Role Models: High-Profile Female Politicians and the Emergence of Women as Candidates for Public Office

Ladam, C., Harden, J. J., & Windett, J. H. (2018). Prominent Role Models: High-Profile Female Politicians and the Emergence of Women as Candidates for Public Office [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12351>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62(2), 369–381. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12351>

1. **Citation key:** 1adam\_prominent\_2018
2. **Author(s):** Christina Ladam, Jeffrey J. Harden, and Jason H. Windett
3. **Year:** 2018
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** women in politics, role models, candidate emergence, descriptive representation, U.S. state politics
6. **Summary:** Ladam, Harden, and Windett investigate whether the presence of high-profile female politicians influences other women to enter politics. The authors argue that female governors and U.S. senators serve as role models, inspiring more women to run for state legislative office. Using data from the American states spanning 1978–2012, they employ an inverse probability of treatment weighting (IPTW) approach to estimate the causal effect of a female governor or senator on the proportion of female candidates. Their findings suggest that prominent female politicians exert a substantively large positive effect on the number of female candidates, with approximately seven additional women running for state legislative office following the election of a female governor or U.S. senator.
7. **Theory:** The authors build upon theories of descriptive and symbolic representation to argue that high-profile female politicians serve as role models, encouraging other women to run for office. Drawing from Pitkin's conceptualization

of representation, they posit that descriptive representation—where elected officials resemble the demographic characteristics of the represented—can generate a symbolic effect by increasing women's political efficacy and perceived legitimacy in the political arena. They also discuss how female role models may inspire women through two primary mechanisms: (1) a symbolic mechanism, whereby women are inspired to run by the visibility of a successful female politician, and (2) a recruitment mechanism, wherein prominent women actively work to encourage other women to enter politics. By highlighting the broader gendered patterns of candidate emergence, the authors link their argument to previous scholarship on the barriers to women's candidacies, such as political ambition gaps and partisan recruitment disparities.

8. **Methods:** The study employs a time-series cross-sectional dataset covering U.S. state legislative elections from 1978 to 2012. The key independent variable is whether a state has a female governor or U.S. senator, while the dependent variable is the proportion of state legislative candidates who are women. The authors use an inverse probability of treatment weighting (IPTW) approach to estimate the causal effect of a prominent female politician, controlling for factors such as state political ideology, legislative professionalism, term limits, and political culture toward women. Additionally, they conduct a series of robustness checks, including tests for partisan asymmetries and spillover effects from neighboring states. The authors also explore whether their findings are driven by symbolic inspiration or active recruitment by analyzing the effect of prominent female politicians in adjacent states and the impact of losing female candidates.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors propose that the presence of a female governor or U.S. senator will increase the proportion of women running for state legislative office.
  - The presence of a female governor or U.S. senator increases the proportion of women who run for state legislative seats.
  - The effect of a female governor or U.S. senator on candidate emergence is stronger in lower chambers than in upper chambers of state legislatures.
  - The influence of high-profile female politicians occurs through a symbolic mechanism rather than an active recruitment mechanism.
10. **Main findings:** The results provide strong support for the hypothesis that prominent female politicians increase the number of women running for office. The authors find that electing a female governor or U.S. senator leads to an increase of approximately 2.6–2.7 percentage points in the proportion of female candidates, translating to about seven additional women per election cycle. They also find evidence of a legacy effect, where the influence of a female governor or senator persists beyond their tenure. However, contrary to expectations, the effect is not consistently stronger in lower chambers compared to upper chambers. To assess the causal mechanism, the authors examine neighboring-state effects and partisan recruitment patterns. They find that female politicians in adjacent states also inspire more women to run, which suggests that the primary mechanism is symbolic rather than recruitment-based. Additionally, they find no evidence that partisan alignment moderates the effect, meaning that high-profile female politicians mobilize women from both parties.
11. **Key quotations:**
  - "A woman occupying a high-profile office directly impacts women's substantive representation through her policy actions. Here, we consider whether these female leaders also facilitate a mobilization effect by motivating other women to run for office" (p. 369).
  - "We demonstrate that, for an average election, a female governor or senator adds about seven female candidates for office. We also assess how this effect occurs, finding the most support for the contention that high-profile female politicians play a symbolic role in motivating other women to run" (p. 370).
  - "Beyond their direct influence on policy, high-profile female politicians also have an indirect, but lasting legacy: They motivate more women to enter politics, thereby amplifying the political voice of women" (p. 380).

#### 6.9.4 All-Male Panels? Representation and Democratic Legitimacy

Clayton, A., O'Brien, D. Z., & Piscopo, J. M. (2019). All Male Panels? Representation and Democratic Legitimacy [*\_eprint: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12391*]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(1), 113–129. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12391>

1. **Citation key:** clayton\_all\_2019
2. **Author(s):** Amanda Clayton, Diana Z. O'Brien, and Jennifer M. Piscopo
3. **Year:** 2019
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** descriptive representation, democratic legitimacy, symbolic representation, gender and politics, survey experiments
6. **Summary:** Clayton, O'Brien, and Piscopo examine how the presence of women in political decision-making bodies affects citizens' perceptions of democratic legitimacy. Using survey experiments on a nationally representative sample of U.S. citizens, they test whether the gender composition of decision-making bodies influences views on the legitimacy of policy outcomes and the fairness of decision-making procedures. Their findings indicate that gender-balanced committees enhance perceptions of procedural legitimacy and, notably, that the presence of women can legitimize decisions that curtail women's rights. The results underscore the complex symbolic effects of women's inclusion in governance.

**7. Theory:** The authors build on theories of descriptive and symbolic representation to argue that women's presence in political decision-making bodies influences how citizens perceive both policy outcomes and procedural legitimacy. They posit that descriptive representation functions through two mechanisms: substantive legitimacy, where citizens view decisions as more legitimate when members of affected groups are included in the deliberations, and procedural legitimacy, where inclusive decision-making bodies foster institutional trust and perceptions of fairness. Drawing from Mansbridge's (1999) theory of uncrystallized interests, the authors argue that men, who may have less defined views on women's rights issues, are particularly susceptible to symbolic cues signaled by women's presence. The authors hypothesize that descriptive representation should matter more in cases where policy decisions restrict women's rights, as the inclusion of female representatives may mitigate perceptions of exclusion and increase public acceptance of adverse policy outcomes.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a survey experiment embedded in the 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) and an additional sample from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Respondents were randomly assigned to vignettes describing a hypothetical state legislative committee making decisions on sexual harassment policy. The experimental treatments varied both the gender composition of the committee (all-male vs. gender-balanced) and the policy decision (expanding or restricting protections against workplace sexual harassment). The dependent variables measured respondents' perceptions of the decision's substantive legitimacy (i.e., whether it was fair and correct) and procedural legitimacy (i.e., whether the decision-making process was fair and trustworthy). The authors also conducted additional experiments testing whether similar effects occurred in a non-gendered policy domain (animal mistreatment) to establish scope conditions.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Women's presence in political decision-making bodies enhances perceptions of procedural legitimacy, regardless of the policy outcome.
- The inclusion of women in decision-making bodies increases the perceived legitimacy of anti-feminist policy decisions.
- The effect of descriptive representation on substantive legitimacy is stronger for men than for women.
- The effect of descriptive representation is contingent on the policy domain; gender representation should not influence legitimacy perceptions in non-gendered policy areas.

The findings support the first three hypotheses: women's presence consistently increased perceptions of procedural legitimacy, and gender-balanced committees increased the legitimacy of decisions that rolled back women's rights, particularly among male respondents. However, in non-gendered policy areas, descriptive representation had no effect on substantive legitimacy, confirming the fourth hypothesis.

**10. Main findings:** The results indicate that citizens attach greater legitimacy to decision-making processes when women are present, even when policies negatively impact women's rights. Gender-balanced committees increased perceptions of procedural fairness, trust in the decision-making process, and institutional legitimacy. Surprisingly, women's inclusion also increased the perceived legitimacy of decisions that restricted women's rights, an effect that was particularly pronounced among men and among those with less crystallized views on gender issues. The findings suggest that descriptive representation operates through a symbolic mechanism, legitimizing both processes and outcomes even when substantive representation does not occur. The authors conclude that while gender diversity in political bodies enhances public trust in institutions, it may also be strategically used to legitimize adverse policy outcomes.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We find that women's equal presence legitimizes decisions that go against women's interests. We show suggestive evidence that this effect is particularly pronounced among men, who tend to hold less certain views on women's rights" (p. 113).
- "Citizens, both men and women, strongly prefer inclusion. Yet, we observe important differences depending on the measure of legitimacy (substantive or procedural), the decision the group reaches, and respondent gender" (p. 119).
- "We conclude by discussing the mixed normative implications of both sets of findings; on the one hand, that women's equal presence legitimizes anti-feminist outcomes, perhaps particularly for men, and, on the other hand, that women's equal presence confers legitimacy on democratic procedures more broadly" (p. 124).

#### 6.9.5 Can't We All Just Get Along? How Women MPs Can Ameliorate Affective Polarization in Western Publics

Adams, J., Bracken, D., Gidron, N., Horne, W., O'Brien, D. Z., & Senk, K. (2023). Can't We All Just Get Along? How Women MPs Can Ameliorate Affective Polarization in Western Publics. *American Political Science Review*, 117(1), 318–324. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422000491>

**1. Citation key:** adams\_cant\_2023

**2. Author(s):** James Adams, David Bracken, Noam Gidron, Will Horne, Diana Z. O'Brien, and Kaitlin Senk

**3. Year:** 2023

**4. Publication:** American Political Science Review

**5. Keywords:** affective polarization, women in politics, descriptive representation, interparty hostility, partisan bias

**6. Summary:** Adams et al. examine whether the presence of women in parliamentary delegations reduces affective polarization in Western democracies. They argue that partisans evaluate out-parties more favorably when those parties have higher proportions of women MPs. Using an original dataset covering 125 political parties in 20 Western democ-

racies from 1996 to 2017, combined with Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) survey data, they test the relationship between women's representation and partisan hostility. Their findings suggest that as the proportion of women MPs in an out-party increases, partisan hostility toward that party decreases. Both male and female partisans react positively to out-party women MPs, with particularly strong effects among ideologically distant partisans.

**7. Theory:** The authors build on theories of descriptive representation and affective polarization to argue that women's presence in legislative bodies fosters more positive partisan attitudes. They identify two key mechanisms: (1) women legislators are perceived as less adversarial and more cooperative, fostering warmer interparty relations, and (2) gender stereotypes frame women as more compassionate, consensus-driven, and less ideologically rigid, leading partisans to view out-parties with more women MPs in a less hostile manner. They cite prior studies demonstrating that women legislators exhibit more collaborative behaviors, including bipartisan cosponsorship and consensus-building strategies. Furthermore, they argue that citizens hold gendered expectations of political behavior, leading them to evaluate parties with more women legislators more favorably. Importantly, they distinguish their argument from traditional theories of substantive representation, emphasizing that the effects they identify arise not from policy outcomes but from the symbolic role of women's presence in politics.

**8. Methods:** The study utilizes a cross-national dataset linking CSES survey data to information on women's representation in 125 political parties across 20 Western democracies from 1996 to 2017. The dependent variable is the mean feeling thermometer score that partisans assign to out-parties, measured on a 0–10 scale. The primary independent variable is the proportion of women MPs in the out-party, lagged by one year. The authors employ an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model with country-year fixed effects, controlling for ideological distance between parties, governing coalitions, and opposition alignments. To account for potential endogeneity, they conduct robustness checks, including analyses stratified by gender and electoral system type, and find consistent effects across subsamples. Additional models examine whether the women MPs' effect is stronger in multiparty versus majoritarian systems, whether it depends on the presence of female party leaders, and whether it persists over time.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Partisans will evaluate out-parties with higher proportions of women MPs more favorably.
- The effect of women MPs on affective polarization will be independent of partisan ideology and apply across both left- and right-wing parties.
- The effect of descriptive representation on affective polarization will persist across different electoral systems.

The findings strongly support these hypotheses. Out-parties with a higher proportion of women MPs receive significantly higher feeling thermometer ratings from partisans. The effect remains robust across ideological contexts, with both left- and right-wing partisans displaying warmer attitudes toward out-parties with more women legislators. Additionally, the effect holds across majoritarian and proportional representation systems, indicating that it is not contingent on institutional factors.

**10. Main findings:** The results indicate that increasing the proportion of women MPs in an out-party significantly reduces partisan hostility. On average, moving from a party with no women MPs to a party where women constitute half of the parliamentary delegation increases feeling thermometer ratings by approximately 1.73 points on a 10-point scale. The effect is strongest for ideologically distant partisans, suggesting that women's representation mitigates polarization even among those most inclined to dislike the out-party. Contrary to expectations, the presence of female party leaders does not amplify the effect, suggesting that descriptive representation at the legislative level is more influential than leadership positions in shaping mass-level attitudes. The findings have important implications for reducing affective polarization, as they suggest that increasing women's representation in legislatures could help foster more constructive interparty relations.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "All else being equal, partisans evaluate out-parties with higher proportions of women MPs more warmly, suggesting that descriptive representation can mitigate cross-party hostility" (p. 319).
- "We demonstrate that the women MPs affective bonus persists across institutional contexts, political ideologies, and gendered expectations, reinforcing the idea that women's presence in legislatures has broad symbolic effects beyond policy outcomes" (p. 321).
- "Although women MPs provide an affective bonus to their parties, we must acknowledge the costs these legislators bear, as high-profile women politicians face disproportionate levels of incivility and political violence" (p. 324).

## 6.10 Women and Law and the Courts

### 6.10.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Research on women and the judicial system explores the structural, institutional, and behavioral dynamics that shape gendered patterns in judicial selection, decision-making, and public perceptions of judicial legitimacy. Scholars have examined how selection processes, qualification ratings, and judicial replacement trends influence the descriptive representation of women in the judiciary, while others have investigated the impact of personal characteristics, such as having daughters, on judicial rulings. Additionally, public attitudes toward female judges reveal the extent to which gendered heuristics influence perceptions of impartiality and judicial bias. Collectively, this body of research underscores the ways in which gender interacts with legal institutions to shape judicial outcomes, professional opportunities, and public trust in the courts.

- **Judicial Selection and Structural Barriers:** Studies on judicial selection highlight systemic biases that disadvantage women in the nomination and appointment process. Sen (2014) demonstrates that the American Bar Association (ABA) qualification ratings systematically disadvantage female and minority judicial nominees, even when controlling for credentials such as education, legal experience, and clerkship backgrounds. These lower ratings, in turn, affect confirmation probabilities, reinforcing structural barriers to achieving gender parity in the judiciary. Arrington (2018) examines gendered replacement patterns in state supreme courts, finding that women are more likely to be replaced by other women than men are. While this pattern does not systematically disadvantage female candidates, it reflects implicit expectations regarding diversity in judicial appointments.
- **Personal Characteristics and Judicial Decision-Making:** Scholars have explored how personal relationships and life experiences influence judicial rulings, particularly in gender-related cases. Glynn and Sen (2015) investigate whether judges with daughters rule differently on women's issues, leveraging a quasi-experimental design based on the gender of judges' children. Their findings suggest that having a daughter increases the likelihood that a judge will rule in a feminist direction, particularly among Republican judges. This research highlights the role of personal identity in shaping judicial behavior and challenges the notion that judicial decision-making is purely ideological or constrained by legal formalism.
- **Public Perceptions of Judicial Bias:** Public attitudes toward the judiciary are shaped by gendered assumptions about judicial competence and impartiality. Ono and Zilis (2022) examine how race and gender influence public perceptions of judicial bias, demonstrating that Americans use these demographic characteristics as informational shortcuts to assess a judge's potential favoritism. Their experimental findings show that conservatives are more likely to view female judges as biased, particularly in cases related to abortion, while Hispanic judges are perceived as less impartial in immigration cases. These results suggest that increasing judicial diversity may heighten polarization in public attitudes toward the courts, raising concerns about the legitimacy of an increasingly diverse judiciary.
- **Gender and Law Enforcement:** Beyond the judiciary, scholars have investigated gendered differences in policing, particularly in discretionary law enforcement decisions. Shoub, Stauffer, and Song (2021) analyze traffic stop data from the Florida State Highway Patrol and the Charlotte Police Department, finding that female officers conduct discretionary searches at lower rates than male officers but have a higher success rate in finding contraband. These findings suggest that gendered approaches to discretion and decision-making exist within legal institutions more broadly, with implications for public trust in law enforcement and the administration of justice.
- **Future Directions in the Study of Gender and the Courts:** Research on gender and the judicial system continues to evolve, with ongoing debates about the role of institutional structures, personal identity, and public perception in shaping judicial behavior and legitimacy. Future studies are likely to further explore the effects of implicit bias in judicial selection, the intersectionality of race and gender in court decisions, and the impact of gender diversity on legal outcomes. Additionally, as female representation in the judiciary increases, scholars will continue to assess how descriptive and substantive representation interact in shaping legal institutions and public confidence in the rule of law.

#### 6.10.2 How Judicial Qualification Ratings May Disadvantage Minority and Female Candidates

Sen, M. (2014). How Judicial Qualification Ratings May Disadvantage Minority and Female Candidates. *Journal of Law and Courts*, 2(1), 33–65. <https://doi.org/10.1086/674579>

1. **Citation key:** sen\_how\_2014
2. **Author(s):** Maya Sen
3. **Year:** 2014
4. **Publication:** Journal of Law and Courts
5. **Keywords:** judicial selection, American Bar Association, judicial diversity, racial bias, gender bias
6. **Summary:** Sen examines how the American Bar Association (ABA) qualification ratings systematically disadvantage minority and female judicial nominees. Using newly collected data on 1,770 district court nominees from 1960 to 2012, she finds that African American and Hispanic nominees, as well as female nominees, receive significantly lower ratings from the ABA than white and male nominees, even after controlling for education, legal experience, and partisanship. Moreover, these ratings are consequential, as lower-rated nominees face higher rates of confirmation failure despite little evidence that ABA ratings predict judicial performance. These findings suggest that the ABA's role in judicial nominations may reinforce structural barriers to increasing diversity in the federal judiciary.
7. **Theory:** Sen theorizes that the ABA ratings process introduces implicit biases against minority and female judicial nominees, potentially due to unmeasured professional experiences, subjective evaluation criteria, or systemic disparities in legal career trajectories. She situates her argument within broader research on implicit bias in elite professions, arguing that institutions such as the ABA play a gatekeeping role in shaping the demographic composition of the judiciary. Drawing on research from psychology, business, and sociology, she posits that professional organizations tend to evaluate women and minorities more harshly due to entrenched norms regarding leadership, competence, and experience. Furthermore, she argues that because ABA ratings are highly predictive of judicial confirmation outcomes, the differential treatment of minority and female candidates constitutes a significant barrier to achieving a descriptively representative judiciary.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a quantitative analysis of ABA ratings for 1,770 individuals nominated to U.S. district courts from 1960 to 2012. The dependent variable is the ABA rating received, categorized as "not qualified," "qualified," or "well qualified." Independent variables include nominee race, gender, law school attended, legal experience,

clerkship experience, prior judicial experience, and partisanship of the appointing president. Sen utilizes logit regression models and coarsened exact matching (CEM) to estimate the effect of race and gender on ABA ratings while holding professional qualifications constant. She also conducts robustness checks, including sensitivity analyses to omitted variable bias and an examination of selection effects stemming from the ABA's confidential preclearance process. Finally, she assesses whether ABA ratings predict judicial performance using reversal rates from appellate courts as an outcome measure.

**9. Hypotheses:** The author hypothesizes that:

- Minority and female nominees receive lower ABA ratings than their white and male counterparts, even after controlling for qualifications.
- Lower ABA ratings decrease the likelihood of a nominee being confirmed by the Senate.
- ABA ratings do not significantly predict judicial quality, as measured by reversal rates.

The results provide strong support for the first two hypotheses. Minority and female nominees are substantially less likely to receive high ratings, and lower ratings correlate with a higher probability of nomination failure. The third hypothesis is also confirmed—Sen finds no statistically significant relationship between ABA ratings and judges' reversal rates, suggesting that the ratings do not reliably capture judicial competence.

**10. Main findings:** Sen's analysis reveals that African American nominees are 42 percentage points less likely than similarly qualified white nominees to receive a high ABA rating, while female nominees are 19 percentage points less likely than their male counterparts. These disparities persist even when controlling for educational and professional qualifications. Furthermore, ABA ratings strongly predict confirmation success: nominees with lower ratings face significantly higher rates of rejection or withdrawal. Finally, the study finds no evidence that ABA ratings predict judicial performance, as there is no statistically significant relationship between ABA ratings and reversal rates on appeal. This calls into question the justification for using ABA ratings in the judicial nomination process, particularly given their potential to disadvantage historically underrepresented groups.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Receiving poor ABA ratings is correlated with confirmation failure. Second, I demonstrate that ABA ratings do not actually predict whether judges will be 'better' in terms of reversal rates" (p. 33).
- "Looking at newly collected data on the professional and educational backgrounds of the 1,770 individuals nominated to the U.S. district courts since 1960, I find that black and female judicial nominees are indeed more likely to be awarded lower qualification ratings by the ABA, which in turn increases the likelihood that their nominations will fail" (p. 35).
- "Taken together, these findings raise questions about why political actors rely on ABA ratings at all. Indeed, the strong reliance on ratings that have little meaningful predictive value of judicial performance suggests that they are used for other reasons" (p. 36).

#### 6.10.3 Identifying Judicial Empathy: Does Having Daughters Cause Judges to Rule for Women's Issues?

Glynn, A. N., & Sen, M. (2015). Identifying Judicial Empathy: Does Having Daughters Cause Judges to Rule for Women's Issues? [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12118>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(1), 37–54. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12118>

1. **Citation key:** glynn\_identifying\_2015
2. **Author(s):** Adam N. Glynn and Maya Sen
3. **Year:** 2015
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** judicial decision-making, empathy, gender, personal relationships, federal courts
6. **Summary:** Glynn and Sen investigate whether judges' personal relationships, specifically having daughters, influence their judicial decision-making. The authors leverage a natural quasi-experiment based on the gender of judges' children to test whether having daughters increases the likelihood that judges rule in favor of women's issues. Using a novel dataset of U.S. Courts of Appeals judges' family lives and nearly 1,000 gender-related cases, they find that having at least one daughter makes judges more likely to vote in a feminist direction, particularly among Republican judges. These results provide empirical support for the idea that personal experiences shape judicial behavior.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that judicial decision-making is not solely dictated by ideology and legal principles but can also be influenced by personal experiences and relationships. They theorize that having daughters could affect judges' rulings through four potential mechanisms: (1) *learning*, wherein judges gain exposure to gender-related issues through their daughters, (2) *protectionism*, wherein judges develop a vested interest in safeguarding women's rights, (3) *lobbying*, wherein daughters actively influence their parents' views, and (4) *preference realignment*, wherein judges' personal investments in their daughters' futures shift their ideological stance. The authors emphasize that these mechanisms are not mutually exclusive and that personal relationships should be incorporated into broader theories of judicial behavior.
8. **Methods:** The study employs an original dataset combining information on the personal lives of 224 U.S. Courts of Appeals judges with their votes on gender-related cases from 1996 to 2002. The independent variable is whether a judge has at least one daughter, and the dependent variable is the proportion of cases in which the judge ruled in a feminist direction. The authors use weighted least squares (WLS) and logistic regression models, conditioning on the total number of children a judge has to account for fertility stopping rules. They also include controls for partisanship,

gender, age, race, and religious affiliation. Additional robustness checks include ordered logit models and case-level clustering.

**9. Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- Judges with daughters will be more likely to rule in favor of women's rights in gender-related cases.
- The effect of having daughters will be stronger for Republican judges, as Democrats are already more likely to support feminist rulings.
- The daughters effect will not extend to non-gender-related cases, as the mechanisms of learning, protectionism, and lobbying are issue-specific.

The findings provide strong support for the first hypothesis: judges with daughters are significantly more likely to rule in a feminist direction. The second hypothesis is also confirmed, with the daughters effect being most pronounced among Republican judges. However, the third hypothesis is upheld, as the effect does not generalize to other issue areas such as criminal law or First Amendment cases.

**10. Main findings:** The authors find that having at least one daughter increases the probability that a judge will rule in a feminist direction by approximately 7%. The effect is strongest for Republican judges, who exhibit a 9% increase in feminist rulings when they have a daughter, whereas the effect for Democratic judges is smaller and not statistically significant. These results hold across multiple model specifications and are robust to various controls, including judge demographics and circuit fixed effects. Importantly, the study finds no evidence that the daughters effect extends beyond gender-related cases, suggesting that the mechanism is issue-specific rather than a general liberalizing influence. The findings provide empirical evidence that personal relationships, rather than ideology alone, shape judicial decision-making.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Using new data on the family lives of U.S. Courts of Appeals judges, we find that, conditional on the number of children a judge has, judges with daughters consistently vote in a more feminist fashion on gender issues than judges who have only sons" (p. 37).
- "The effect is robust and appears driven primarily by Republican judges. More broadly, this result demonstrates that personal experiences influence how judges make decisions, and this is the first article to show that empathy may indeed be a component in how judges decide cases" (p. 38).
- "These results suggest that judicial behavior cannot be fully understood without considering the role of personal relationships, particularly those that expose judges to gender-related issues in a meaningful way" (p. 50).

#### 6.10.4 Gender and Judicial Replacement: The Case of U.S. State Supreme Courts

Arrington, N. B. (2018). Gender and Judicial Replacement: The Case of US State Supreme Courts. *Journal of Law and Courts*, 6(1), 127–154. <https://doi.org/10.1086/695634>

**1. Citation key:** arrington\_gender\_2018

**2. Author(s):** Nancy B. Arrington

**3. Year:** 2018

**4. Publication:** Journal of Law and Courts

**5. Keywords:** judicial selection, gender diversity, state supreme courts, descriptive representation, judicial appointments

**6. Summary:** Arrington examines gendered patterns of judicial replacement on U.S. state supreme courts from 1970 to 2016, arguing that judicial vacancies created by women are more likely to be filled by women than those created by men. Using a matching design, she tests whether these gendered patterns of replacement systematically suppress or promote the inclusion of women on state high courts. The study finds that while gender is a relevant criterion in judicial selection, the overall effect does not systematically disadvantage women, as the rate of female judicial appointments generally aligns with the gender diversity of the legal profession.

**7. Theory:** The author situates the study within broader debates on gender diversity in political and judicial institutions, emphasizing the importance of descriptive representation in shaping perceptions of legitimacy, participation, and substantive outcomes. Arrington argues that judicial selection processes may exhibit implicit gender biases even in the absence of formal quotas. Specifically, she presents two competing perspectives: one suggesting that gendered replacement patterns reinforce tokenism by limiting women's access to judicial positions, and another proposing that such patterns actively sustain diversity by ensuring the continued presence of women on state supreme courts. She highlights the normative tension in the U.S. judicial selection process, where gender diversity is often valued yet rarely acknowledged as an explicit selection criterion.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a matching design to compare judicial vacancies and replacements across U.S. state supreme courts from 1970 to 2016. The key independent variable is the gender of the vacating judge, while the dependent variable is the gender of the replacement. Using Coarsened Exact Matching (CEM), Arrington balances cases on factors such as court size, number of vacancies, selection method, and the number of women already serving on the court. She then applies a Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel (CMH) test to determine whether gendered selection patterns are statistically significant. The analysis also compares judicial replacement trends to the gender composition of lawyers over time to assess whether women are being appointed at rates commensurate with their presence in the legal profession.

**9. Hypotheses:** Arrington tests the hypothesis that vacancies created by women judges are more likely to be filled by women than those created by men.

- Women judges are more likely to be replaced by other women than men judges are.
- If gender is not a selection criterion, the gender distribution of replacement judges should mirror the broader candidate pool (i.e., the gender composition of lawyers).
- Gendered patterns of replacement may either facilitate or hinder gender diversity, depending on whether they serve to entrench tokenism or promote long-term diversification.

The findings confirm that gender is a relevant factor in judicial selection, as vacancies created by women judges are significantly more likely to be filled by women. However, there is no evidence that this pattern systematically disadvantages or advantages women in the aggregate; rather, the rate of female judicial appointments aligns with the gender composition of lawyers over time.

**10. Main findings:** The results indicate that gendered patterns of judicial replacement are real and statistically significant, with women more likely to replace other women on state supreme courts. However, contrary to concerns that these patterns might restrict female representation by relegating women to specific seats, the overall appointment trends do not systematically disadvantage women. The proportion of female judges selected generally aligns with the gender composition of the legal profession, suggesting that women are neither unfairly excluded nor given disproportionate preference in judicial appointments. Additionally, the study finds that gendered patterns of replacement are not concentrated in courts with minimal diversity, indicating that such trends do not necessarily reinforce tokenism. Instead, the evidence suggests that implicit expectations about diversity may encourage selectors to replace women judges with other women, thereby sustaining judicial gender diversity.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "I demonstrate that patterns of judicial replacement are gendered. Vacancies made by women are filled by women at a greater rate than vacancies made by men, and vacancies made by men are filled by men at a greater rate than vacancies made by women" (p. 128).
- "If gender is irrelevant in the selection process, we would only rarely observe women judges replacing women judges: given slow turnover and the historical dearth of women on state supreme courts, women replacing women by chance would be uncommon" (p. 129).
- "The selection of women judges to state supreme courts mirrors a pattern in which judges are randomly selected from the population of attorneys. Women are selected to state supreme courts about as often as expected, given the composition of the candidate pool" (p. 139).

#### 6.10.5 Do Female Officers Police Differently? Evidence from Traffic Stops

Shoub, K., Stauffer, K. E., & Song, M. (2021). Do Female Officers Police Differently? Evidence from Traffic Stops [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12618>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 65(3), 755–769. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12618>

1. **Citation key:** shoub\_female\_2021
2. **Author(s):** Kelsey Shoub, Katelyn E. Stauffer, and Miyeon Song
3. **Year:** 2021
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** gender and policing, representative bureaucracy, police-citizen interactions, discretion, traffic stops
6. **Summary:** Shoub, Stauffer, and Song examine whether female police officers engage in different behaviors compared to their male counterparts, focusing on the likelihood of discretionary searches following traffic stops. Using a dataset of over four million traffic stops conducted by the Florida State Highway Patrol and the Charlotte (North Carolina) Police Department, they find that female officers are significantly less likely than male officers to conduct discretionary searches. Despite this, when female officers do conduct searches, they have a higher success rate in finding contraband, suggesting a more judicious use of discretion.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on theories of *representative bureaucracy*, arguing that bureaucrats' personal characteristics influence their decision-making, particularly in discretionary contexts. They consider two competing perspectives: (1) the *differential behavior* hypothesis, which suggests that women, due to distinct socialization experiences and greater community-oriented approaches, will exercise discretion differently from men; and (2) the *bureaucratic socialization* hypothesis, which posits that the organizational culture of policing minimizes gender-based differences, leading female and male officers to behave similarly. The authors propose that if gendered socialization matters, female officers should engage in fewer discretionary searches, reflecting a preference for minimizing negative interactions with citizens. Conversely, if bureaucratic norms dominate, there should be no significant behavioral differences between male and female officers.
8. **Methods:** The study analyzes over four million traffic stops conducted by two agencies: the Charlotte Police Department (2016–2020) and the Florida Highway Patrol (2010–2015). The key dependent variable is whether a discretionary search occurs following a traffic stop. The primary independent variable is officer gender. The authors employ an *ordinary least squares* (OLS) regression framework with robust standard errors and fixed effects for year, county, and policing division to control for local contextual factors. They also use an inverse probability of treatment weighting (IPTW) approach to estimate the causal effect of officer gender on search rates. Additional models examine whether female officers' lower search rates come at the expense of effectiveness, measuring the rate at which officers find contraband during searches.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors propose the following hypotheses:

- Female officers will conduct discretionary searches at lower rates than male officers.
- Female officers will have higher contraband hit rates when they do conduct searches.
- The gender difference in search rates will persist even after controlling for officer experience and agency-level factors.

The findings strongly support the first two hypotheses. Female officers conduct significantly fewer discretionary searches, yet they find contraband at a higher rate when they do search. The third hypothesis is also confirmed, as gender differences in search behavior remain robust even after accounting for experience and local policing contexts.

**10. Main findings:** The results indicate that female officers search drivers at significantly lower rates than their male counterparts, a pattern observed across both police agencies studied. In the Florida Highway Patrol dataset, male officers were 272% more likely to conduct a discretionary search than female officers. However, when female officers did conduct searches, they were more likely to find contraband than male officers, suggesting greater precision in their decision-making. The study finds no evidence of a trade-off between lower search rates and effectiveness—female officers confiscate contraband at roughly the same overall rate as male officers. These findings support the idea that female officers exercise discretion in a manner that minimizes negative police-citizen interactions while maintaining, or even improving, policing effectiveness.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “Despite conducting fewer searches, we observe that female officers find contraband at a higher rate than male officers when they do search (i.e., they are more accurate and carry out fewer fruitless searches) and find just as much contraband in raw terms” (p. 756).
- “These results indicate that female officers are able to minimize negative interactions with civilians without compromising their effectiveness” (p. 756).
- “At a time when trust in the police is at an all-time low, our findings indicate that improving women’s representation on forces could lead to fewer negative police–citizen interactions and have downstream benefits for the trust and legitimacy the public places in law enforcement, and government institutions more broadly” (p. 756).

#### 6.10.6 Ascriptive Characteristics and Perceptions of Impropriety in the Rule of Law: Race, Gender, and Public Assessments of Whether Judges Can Be Impartial

Ono, Y., & Zilis, M. A. (2022). Ascriptive Characteristics and Perceptions of Impropriety in the Rule of Law: Race, Gender, and Public Assessments of Whether Judges Can Be Impartial [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12599>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 66(1), 43–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12599>

1. **Citation key:** ono\_ascriptive\_2022
2. **Author(s):** Yoshikuni Ono and Michael A. Zilis
3. **Year:** 2022
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** judicial bias, ascriptive characteristics, race, gender, public opinion, rule of law
6. **Summary:** Ono and Zilis examine how the ascriptive characteristics of judges—specifically race and gender—affect public perceptions of judicial impropriety and bias. They argue that Americans use these demographic traits as informational shortcuts to infer whether judges will act impartially. Using two survey experiments, the authors demonstrate that perceptions of judicial bias are conditioned by partisan identity, with conservatives more likely to view female and Hispanic judges as biased, particularly in abortion and immigration cases. The findings suggest that increased diversity in the judiciary may exacerbate polarization in public support for courts and the rule of law.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on theories of procedural fairness and judicial legitimacy, arguing that ascriptive characteristics such as race and gender influence public assessments of judicial bias. They posit that citizens rely on cognitive heuristics to evaluate judicial fairness, using gender and racial cues to infer potential favoritism. These evaluations are shaped by partisan predispositions: conservatives are more likely to perceive minority and female judges as biased, particularly in cases that align with gendered or racialized issue domains, such as abortion or immigration. The authors also theorize that increasing judicial diversity could lead to greater polarization in perceptions of judicial legitimacy, as attacks on judges based on ascriptive traits may find a receptive audience among certain segments of the public. Additionally, they suggest that these perceptions may create strategic incentives for political elites to undermine judicial authority by questioning the impartiality of judges from underrepresented groups.
8. **Methods:** The study employs two survey experiments to assess how race and gender influence perceptions of judicial bias. In the first experiment, respondents read a vignette about a judge ruling on either an abortion or an immigration case, with the judge's name randomly assigned to signal race and gender. The second experiment uses a conjoint design, presenting respondents with randomized judge profiles that vary across multiple attributes, including gender, race, party affiliation, legal experience, and education. Both studies measure perceptions of judicial impropriety through Likert-scale questions on bias, recusal, and perceived political influence. The authors use logistic regression and interaction models to examine the conditioning role of partisanship in shaping these evaluations.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Conservative respondents will be more likely than liberal respondents to perceive female judges as biased.
  - Conservative respondents will be more likely than liberal respondents to perceive Hispanic judges as biased.
  - The perceived bias of female judges will be higher in abortion cases than in other issue areas.

- The perceived bias of Hispanic judges will be higher in immigration cases than in other issue areas.

The findings confirm that partisan polarization shapes perceptions of judicial bias. Conservative respondents were significantly more likely to perceive female judges as biased in abortion cases and Hispanic judges as biased in immigration cases. These patterns did not extend to Black judges, suggesting that public evaluations of judicial bias are contingent on issue salience and perceived ingroup favoritism.

**10. Main findings:** The results provide strong support for the argument that public perceptions of judicial impropriety are shaped by partisan identity and issue context. Conservative respondents were more likely to view female and Hispanic judges as biased, especially when ruling on abortion and immigration cases. Meanwhile, liberal respondents were more likely to perceive white male judges as biased. The conjoint experiment further demonstrated that race and gender were among the most influential attributes shaping perceptions of bias, second only to partisan affiliation. The authors also found that ascriptive traits influenced perceptions of judicial competence and fairness, raising concerns about the legitimacy of an increasingly diverse judiciary. Importantly, these findings suggest that the diversification of the bench may exacerbate partisan polarization in public attitudes toward the courts, potentially undermining the rule of law.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We find that Americans use a judge's race and gender to make inferences about which groups the judge favors, whether she is inherently biased, and whether she should recuse" (p. 43).
- "Citizens perceive more impropriety among female judges in abortion cases and among Hispanic judges in immigration cases. This finding suggests a pernicious appeal to the accusation that Hispanic judges cannot fairly adjudicate immigration cases" (p. 47).
- "Our results imply that there may exist an appetite for race- and gender-based attacks aimed at judges. One implication of this is that increasing diversification of the bench might polarize support for the rule of law" (p. 45).

## 6.11 Women in Executive Politics

### 6.11.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** Research on women in executive politics examines the structural, institutional, and cultural barriers that shape female representation in executive office, highlighting the influence of gender stereotypes, recruitment processes, and political opportunity structures. Scholars find that while women have increasingly entered executive roles, their distribution across office types is highly gendered, with persistent disparities in access to high-prestige positions such as governor, defense minister, and finance minister. Early studies emphasized voter bias as a primary obstacle to female candidates, but more recent work demonstrates that barriers emerge primarily in recruitment and self-selection stages rather than in electoral outcomes. Scholars also explore how female executives navigate gendered expectations, particularly in policy domains traditionally associated with masculinity, and how their presence influences governance and policy priorities. Recent research further considers the conditions under which women are strategically appointed to executive positions, particularly in response to political crises or efforts to signal reform.
- **Gender Stereotyping and Candidate Selection:** A foundational body of research examines how gender stereotypes influence both candidate emergence and electoral success. Fox and Oxley (2003) argue that gendered perceptions shape candidate selection more than election outcomes, as women are more likely to run for executive offices associated with "feminine" policy domains such as education or consumer protection, while men dominate finance and law enforcement positions. They distinguish between belief stereotypes, which associate women with social policy issues, and trait stereotypes, which frame them as compassionate but less competent in traditionally masculine policy areas. Their analysis of state executive elections from 1978 to 1998 confirms that women disproportionately contest positions perceived as aligned with feminine strengths, though they win at rates comparable to men once they enter a race. This finding suggests that gendered barriers to executive representation are most pronounced in the pre-election phase, shaping both recruitment and self-selection.
- **Institutional and Structural Determinants of Women's Representation:** Scholarship on variation in women's representation across states emphasizes institutional factors such as political party recruitment, candidate supply, and gatekeeper influence. Oxley and Fox (2004) apply Norris' candidate recruitment model to state executive offices, arguing that women are more likely to seek and secure executive positions where party recruitment practices and political culture are supportive. Their analysis of elections from 1979 to 1998 finds that candidate supply—measured by the proportion of women in law, business, and legislatures—is the strongest predictor of female candidacies. Party recruitment also plays a crucial role, with Republican-dominated states showing higher rates of female executive candidates, while Democratic states lag in recruitment. Additionally, women are more likely to be elected in states where party elites and donors actively support female candidates, though structural constraints continue to limit their presence in high-power offices.
- **Gendered Communication and Leadership Strategies:** Studies on women in executive politics also explore how female leaders navigate gendered expectations in communication and leadership styles. Jones (2016) analyzes the linguistic strategies of Hillary Clinton from 1992 to 2013, demonstrating how her rhetorical style became increasingly masculine over time in response to institutional norms. Using computational text analysis of speeches and interviews, Jones finds that Clinton employed more assertive and policy-focused language as she moved from first lady to senator and secretary of state. Her study underscores the pressures female executives face to conform to masculine-coded leadership norms in order to establish credibility in male-dominated institutions.

- **Women in High-Prestige Executive Positions:** Women's access to high-prestige executive offices, such as defense and finance ministries, is a growing area of inquiry. Barnes and O'Brien (2018) analyze the appointment of female defense ministers worldwide, finding that women remain excluded from these roles when the portfolio retains traditional associations with military power. However, their cross-national study identifies conditions that facilitate female appointments, including the presence of female chief executives, high levels of women's legislative representation, and shifts in defense priorities toward peacekeeping. Similarly, Armstrong et al. (2022) investigate the appointment of female finance ministers, arguing that under conditions of high political accountability, corruption creates incentives for executives to appoint women as a strategic signal of reform. Their findings suggest that women's presence in elite executive roles often reflects political calculations rather than genuine shifts toward gender equality.
- **Strategic Appointments and Political Context:** Scholars increasingly explore the strategic motivations behind women's appointments to executive positions. Research suggests that female executives are often appointed in moments of crisis or transition, reflecting broader political incentives rather than institutional commitments to gender parity. Barnes and O'Brien (2018) find that female defense ministers are more likely to emerge when left-wing governments seek to break from prior military rule, while Armstrong et al. (2022) argue that corruption scandals can lead to increased female representation in finance ministries as a reputational safeguard for incumbents. These findings highlight the importance of institutional context in shaping women's access to executive power, emphasizing the role of political incentives in shaping patterns of inclusion.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** Current debates in the field focus on whether the increased presence of women in executive politics translates into substantive policy shifts, as well as the extent to which strategic appointments reinforce gendered constraints. While some scholars argue that female executives bring distinct policy priorities, particularly in social welfare and education, others caution that institutional constraints limit their ability to effect change. Future research is likely to examine how gendered expectations shape executive decision-making, the role of intersectionality in women's leadership experiences, and the long-term effects of political recruitment strategies on gender representation in executive office.

### 6.11.2 Gender Stereotyping in State Executive Elections: Candidate Selection and Success

Fox, R. L., & Oxley, Z. M. (2003). Gender Stereotyping in State Executive Elections: Candidate Selection and Success [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 65(3), 833–850. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2508.00214>

1. **Citation key:** fox\_gender\_2003
2. **Author(s):** Richard L. Fox and Zoe M. Oxley
3. **Year:** 2003
4. **Publication:** *Journal of Politics*
5. **Keywords:** gender stereotyping, candidate selection, state executive elections, descriptive representation, political ambition
6. **Summary:** Fox and Oxley investigate how gender stereotypes influence both candidate selection and electoral success in state executive elections. While prior studies have focused primarily on voter decision-making, the authors analyze how stereotypes affect the types of offices women choose to run for and their likelihood of winning. Using electoral data from 1978 to 1998 across all U.S. states, they examine whether women are more likely to seek and win positions that align with stereotypical gender expectations, such as education-related offices. They find strong evidence that gender stereotypes shape candidate selection, with women more likely to run for executive offices associated with "feminine" policy issues. However, their findings suggest that gender does not significantly impact electoral success—women who run for office win at comparable rates to men.
7. **Theory:** The authors build on existing research on gendered political ambition and descriptive representation, emphasizing the role of stereotypes in shaping political candidacies. They distinguish between *belief stereotypes*—which associate women with certain policy issues, such as education and healthcare—and *trait stereotypes*, which frame women as more compassionate and cooperative but less assertive and competent in areas like finance and crime policy. These stereotypes, they argue, systematically influence both recruitment and self-selection into electoral contests. Women are more likely to run for positions that align with traditionally feminine competencies and less likely to compete for offices perceived as requiring masculine traits. The authors also consider whether these stereotypes persist over time and whether they have a greater impact at the candidate selection stage rather than during the electoral process itself. They suggest that while gender biases may shape the emergence of female candidates, they do not necessarily hinder their ability to win once they enter a race.
8. **Methods:** The study employs an observational analysis of election results from all U.S. state executive offices between 1978 and 1998. The dataset includes 1,392 partisan races, covering positions such as governor, attorney general, state treasurer, and superintendent of education. The authors categorize offices as "masculine," "feminine," or "neutral" based on their primary policy responsibilities, following established classifications in gender and politics research. The analysis proceeds in two steps: first, they examine the likelihood that a woman will run for a given office using logistic regression models, controlling for incumbency, political competition, and state political culture. Second, they assess the probability of female candidates winning elections, comparing success rates across office types. Their statistical models account for historical trends and variations across states.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Women will be more likely to run for state executive offices associated with stereotypically feminine policy areas (e.g., education, consumer protection).

- Women will be less likely to run for offices associated with masculine policy areas (e.g., finance, law enforcement).
- Women will be more successful in elections for offices associated with feminine policy areas than in those associated with masculine areas.

The findings strongly support the first two hypotheses: women are significantly more likely to run for offices that align with stereotypically feminine strengths and less likely to compete for positions associated with masculine policy domains. However, the third hypothesis is not confirmed—women's success rates do not vary significantly across office types. Women who enter races are just as likely as men to win, regardless of the office's gendered policy focus.

**10. Main findings:** Fox and Oxley demonstrate that gender stereotypes play a critical role in shaping candidate selection but do not appear to disadvantage women in electoral outcomes. Women are far more likely to run for positions tied to traditionally feminine policy areas, such as education and consumer affairs, and are significantly underrepresented in contests for masculine-coded offices like attorney general or treasurer. This trend persists even as more women enter state executive races over time. Despite these disparities in candidacy patterns, however, the study finds no evidence that female candidates are less successful than male candidates once they decide to run. Women win elections at comparable rates to men across all office types. These results suggest that gendered barriers to representation arise primarily in the recruitment and self-selection stages, rather than through voter discrimination at the ballot box.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We find considerable support for our expectation that women are not equally likely to run for all types of state executive offices. Our primary finding is that women are less likely to run for masculine offices across the entire time period that we examine" (p. 846).
- "The evidence of stereotyping is considerably stronger in the selection stage of elections than in the success of candidates who run for office. This suggests that the major barrier to women's representation in state executive office lies not in voter discrimination, but in the types of offices for which women choose or are recruited to run" (p. 847).
- "Despite the continued prevalence of gender stereotypes, we find that when women do run, they are just as likely to win as men. The real challenge, then, is increasing the pool of female candidates for a wider range of executive positions" (p. 849).

#### 6.11.3 Women in Executive Office: Variation Across American States

Oxley, Z. M., & Fox, R. L. (2004). Women in Executive Office: Variation Across American States [Publisher: SAGE Publications Inc]. *Political Research Quarterly*, 57(1), 113–120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/106591290405700109>

1. **Citation key:** oxley\_women\_2004
2. **Author(s):** Zoe M. Oxley and Richard L. Fox
3. **Year:** 2004
4. **Publication:** Political Research Quarterly
5. **Keywords:** women in politics, executive office, state politics, candidate recruitment, political parties
6. **Summary:** Oxley and Fox examine the variation in the number of women serving in state-level executive offices across the United States. Utilizing Pippa Norris' candidate recruitment framework, they assess how political systems, party recruitment processes, candidate supply, and gatekeeper demands affect the likelihood that women run for and win executive office. Their analysis of elections from 1979 to 1998 suggests that women are more likely to run in states with a larger eligibility pool and where party recruitment and gatekeeper preferences are more favorable. Additionally, the factors influencing women's electoral success have shifted over time, with their models explaining state variation more effectively before 1991.
7. **Theory:** The authors apply Norris' (1997) model of candidate recruitment, which identifies four factors shaping electoral outcomes: the political system, political party recruitment processes, the supply of candidates, and the demands of gatekeepers. They argue that electoral structures, such as multimember districts and small district populations, historically facilitated women's election to state legislatures. However, state executive offices present a distinct institutional landscape. Women's likelihood of running for executive office is influenced by the presence of other women in political pipelines (e.g., law or business), party recruitment practices, and cultural attitudes toward gender and leadership. They further suggest that gender stereotypes about policy competencies (e.g., education vs. law enforcement) influence both candidate emergence and electoral success. The theory builds upon prior research that identifies political culture, party dominance, and institutional power as structural determinants of women's representation. Finally, the authors hypothesize that these determinants have changed over time, requiring a temporal analysis of women's success in executive elections.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a pooled cross-sectional design using election data from all 50 states between 1979 and 1998, covering approximately 1,500 races for various executive offices, including governor, attorney general, and state treasurer. The dependent variables are the percentage of candidates who were women and the percentage of elections won by women in each four-year electoral cycle. Independent variables include state political culture, party dominance, the number and type of executive offices, the percentage of women in law and state legislatures, and ideological measures such as state-level feminism and liberalism. The authors use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression with robust standard errors to control for serial correlation and estimate the influence of these factors on the likelihood of female candidacies and electoral success.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors propose that:

- Women are more likely to run for executive office in states with larger candidate pools (e.g., higher percentages of women lawyers and legislators).
  - Women are less likely to run in states with a strong one-party dominance, particularly where party elites exert high control over nominations.
  - Women are more likely to be elected in states where gatekeepers (voters, donors, party leaders) are more supportive of female candidates.
  - States with more offices associated with feminine policy competencies (e.g., education) elect more women, whereas those with masculine policy associations (e.g., law enforcement) elect fewer.
  - Over time, the factors influencing women's representation in executive office have changed, with more significant barriers emerging in the post-1990 period.
- 10. Main findings:** The study finds that candidate supply is the strongest determinant of the percentage of women running for executive office. Women are more likely to run in states where more women hold professional degrees or legislative positions. Party recruitment also matters: Republican-dominated states have more female candidates, while Democratic-dominant states lag in candidate recruitment. Women are less likely to run in states with stronger executive power and larger state populations. Regarding electoral success, the most influential factor is the percentage of women candidates: where more women run, more women win. Additionally, states with more offices associated with feminine policy domains (e.g., education) elect more women, while those with powerful executive offices or more masculine policy domains elect fewer. Importantly, the study finds that explanations for women's success in executive office are more robust for elections before 1991 than for later elections, suggesting that the political environment has evolved in ways that require further investigation.
- 11. Key quotations:**
- "Women are more likely to run for executive office in states where more women are found in the eligibility pool of candidates and where the demands of gatekeepers and recruiting practices of political parties favor women's candidacies" (p. 113).
  - "The most important reason why women's presence in executive office varies by state is the supply of candidates. Women are more likely to run in states where more women are found in the eligibility pool of candidates (such as in the legal profession). And, states that have a larger percentage of women who actually do run for executive office also have more women serving in these offices" (p. 117).
  - "A critical aspect of our findings, however, is the degree to which women's experiences differ in candidate emergence versus the likelihood of winning election. This finding suggests that it is important to view the role of gender not only in terms of Election Day outcomes, but also with regard to the process by which women become candidates" (p. 118).

#### 6.11.4 Talk "Like a Man": The Linguistic Styles of Hillary Clinton, 1992–2013

Jones, J. J. (2016). Talk "Like a Man": The Linguistic Styles of Hillary Clinton, 1992–2013. *Perspectives on Politics*, 14(3), 625–642. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592716001092>

1. **Citation key:** jones\_talk\_2016
2. **Author(s):** Jennifer J. Jones
3. **Year:** 2016
4. **Publication:** Perspectives on Politics
5. **Keywords:** gender and politics, linguistic style, Hillary Clinton, political communication, self-presentation, leadership
6. **Summary:** Jones examines the linguistic strategies Hillary Clinton employed throughout her political career, analyzing how her self-presentation shifted in response to institutional norms and electoral pressures. Using a quantitative textual analysis of 567 interview transcripts and debate performances from 1992 to 2013, Jones finds that Clinton's language became increasingly masculine as she ascended the political hierarchy. The study identifies fluctuations in her linguistic style, particularly during the 2008 presidential campaign, when Clinton briefly adopted a more feminine rhetorical approach before returning to a more masculine tone. The findings highlight how gendered expectations shape female politicians' communication strategies within male-dominated institutions.
7. **Theory:** The study builds on political psychology, gender studies, and linguistic research to argue that female politicians must navigate a "double bind"—balancing the need to appear competent within masculine-coded political institutions while avoiding penalties for violating gender norms. Drawing from social identity and self-categorization theories, Jones posits that linguistic style serves as an implicit form of self-presentation shaped by institutional pressures and public expectations. She argues that women in politics often adopt masculine speech patterns, including fewer personal pronouns, increased use of articles and prepositions, and a more assertive tone. Clinton's case provides a unique opportunity to examine how these dynamics play out over time, as her roles shifted from first lady to senator, presidential candidate, and secretary of state. Jones further contends that gendered expectations fluctuate across contexts, influencing how female politicians adjust their rhetorical strategies.
8. **Methods:** Jones conducts a computational text analysis using Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software to examine the frequency of feminine and masculine linguistic markers in Clinton's speech. The dataset consists of 567 interview and debate transcripts spanning over two decades. The analysis identifies trends in Clinton's use of first-person singular pronouns, auxiliary verbs, social references, and emotional language (feminine markers) versus articles, prepositions, big words, and anger-related terms (masculine markers). The study calculates a "feminine-to-

masculine" ratio and models changes in Clinton's linguistic style over time, assessing how her rhetoric evolved across different political roles and campaign cycles.

**9. Hypotheses:** Jones hypothesizes that:

- Clinton's linguistic style became more masculine as her political power increased.
- Clinton's self-presentation varied in response to role-based expectations, adopting a more feminine style when serving as first lady and a more masculine tone in her Senate and State Department roles.
- Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign featured a brief shift toward a more feminine linguistic style before returning to a masculine presentation.
- Institutional norms of political leadership reinforce masculine communication styles, leading female politicians to adjust their rhetoric accordingly.

The findings strongly support the argument that Clinton's linguistic style became increasingly masculine as her career advanced. The study confirms that she initially adopted a more feminine tone as first lady but shifted toward masculine language as she assumed independent political roles. Additionally, the brief adoption of a feminine linguistic style during the 2008 campaign aligns with the hypothesis that gendered self-presentation is strategically adjusted in response to electoral pressures. The results reinforce the broader claim that political institutions reward masculine-coded communication styles.

**10. Main findings:** The analysis reveals that Clinton's language conformed to masculine norms as she ascended the political ladder. As a first lady, she exhibited a more feminine linguistic style, but this changed dramatically when she became a Senate candidate in 2000, adopting a more assertive and policy-focused rhetoric. Clinton's time in the Senate and as secretary of state further solidified this masculine linguistic pattern, with increased use of articles, prepositions, and anger-related terms. During the 2008 presidential campaign, her rhetoric briefly softened—likely in response to strategic advice urging her to appear more relatable—but this shift was short-lived. By 2009, as secretary of state, Clinton's speech was more masculine than at any previous point in her career. Jones concludes that Clinton's evolving rhetorical style reflects broader institutional norms that implicitly encourage female politicians to adopt masculine communication styles to establish credibility and authority.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Results on Clinton's linguistic style suggest her language grew increasingly masculine over time, as her involvement and power in politics expanded" (p. 625).
- "Throughout the 2008 campaign period, Clinton's language fluctuated dramatically from one interview to the next, reflecting a candidate—and campaign—in crisis" (p. 626).
- "The findings strongly suggest that Clinton's evolving linguistic style was not merely a personal preference but rather a strategic adaptation to the masculine norms that permeate political institutions" (p. 637).

#### 6.11.5 Defending the Realm: The Appointment of Female Defense Ministers Worldwide

Barnes, T. D., & O'Brien, D. Z. (2018). Defending the Realm: The Appointment of Female Defense Ministers Worldwide [Leprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/ajps.12337>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 62(2), 355–368. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12337>

**1. Citation key:** barnes\_defending\_2018

**2. Author(s):** Tiffany D. Barnes and Diana Z. O'Brien

**3. Year:** 2018

**4. Publication:** American Journal of Political Science

**5. Keywords:** gender and politics, executive appointments, defense ministers, political representation, cabinet selection

**6. Summary:** Barnes and O'Brien analyze the conditions under which women are appointed as defense ministers, a traditionally male-dominated position within executive cabinets. Using a comprehensive cross-national dataset from the post-Cold War era, they examine how political, institutional, and security-related factors shape women's access to this high-prestige portfolio. The study finds that women remain excluded when defense ministries maintain strong associations with masculinity, particularly in states engaged in military conflict, governed by military dictatorships, or with high military spending. Conversely, female defense ministers are more likely to be appointed when politics becomes more feminized—such as in countries with female chief executives and high proportions of female legislators—or when the portfolio itself shifts in meaning, particularly in states engaged in peacekeeping or governed by left-wing parties following military rule.

**7. Theory:** The authors argue that the appointment of female defense ministers is shaped by both the entrenched masculinity of the defense portfolio and broader shifts in political and institutional gender norms. They build on theories of political representation and gendered institutions to suggest that male dominance persists when the defense ministry retains traditional, security-focused functions. However, as the political landscape evolves, women gain access to these positions under two conditions: first, when female representation increases in other executive and legislative roles, and second, when the defense portfolio undergoes a transformation—such as prioritizing peacekeeping over military aggression. This framework emphasizes how gendered expectations interact with institutional constraints, demonstrating that women's inclusion in high-prestige posts depends on broader structural changes rather than individual qualifications alone.

**8. Methods:** The study employs a discrete-time duration model to analyze the time until a country appoints its first female defense minister between 1992 and 2012. The authors compile an original dataset covering 163 countries,

drawing from sources including the Database of Political Institutions, the CIA's Directory of Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members, and the Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership. Key independent variables include military conflict involvement, military expenditures, regime type (military vs. civilian dictatorship), the proportion of female legislators, the presence of a female chief executive, and engagement in peacekeeping operations. Interaction terms assess whether peacekeeping moderates the relationship between military spending and female appointments.

**9. Hypotheses:** Barnes and O'Brien hypothesize that:

- States engaged in military conflict are less likely to appoint female defense ministers.
- Military dictatorships are less likely to appoint female defense ministers.
- Countries with higher military expenditures are less likely to appoint female defense ministers.
- Countries with higher proportions of female legislators are more likely to appoint female defense ministers.
- Female chief executives are more likely to appoint female defense ministers.
- Left-wing governments in former military states are more likely to appoint female defense ministers.
- Countries engaged in peacekeeping operations are more likely to appoint female defense ministers.
- Peacekeeping moderates the negative relationship between military expenditures and female defense appointments.

The findings strongly support the argument that women remain excluded from the defense portfolio when it retains traditional masculine associations, particularly in states engaged in conflict or military rule. The results confirm that female defense ministers are more likely to emerge when the political environment shifts toward greater female representation and when the ministry itself undergoes substantive changes. The study also finds that peacekeeping mitigates the negative impact of military spending on female appointments, suggesting that institutional context significantly shapes gendered patterns of cabinet selection.

**10. Main findings:** The study finds that women are significantly less likely to be appointed as defense ministers in countries engaged in international military conflict, governed by military dictatorships, or with high levels of military spending. Conversely, female appointments are more likely in states with strong female political representation and those where defense priorities have shifted toward peacekeeping and diplomacy. The presence of female chief executives increases the likelihood of female defense ministers, though this effect is largely driven by self-appointments. Notably, left-wing governments in former military states are particularly likely to appoint women to the defense ministry, signaling a break from past military rule. The findings highlight how both gendered institutional norms and evolving conceptions of national security influence women's access to executive power.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "Women remain excluded when the portfolio's remit reinforces traditional beliefs about the masculinity of the position, particularly in states that are engaged in fatal disputes, governed by military dictators, and large military spenders" (p. 355).
- "By contrast, female defense ministers emerge when expectations about women's role in politics have changed—that is, in states with female chief executives and parliamentarians" (p. 356).
- "Although women's appointment represents an important break from historical patterns of exclusion, women also tend to access these positions only when their meanings have fundamentally changed" (p. 357).

#### 6.11.6 Corruption, Accountability, and Women's Access to Power

Armstrong, B., Barnes, T. D., O'Brien, D. Z., & Taylor-Robinson, M. M. (2022). Corruption, Accountability, and Women's Access to Power [Publisher: The University of Chicago Press]. *The Journal of Politics*, 84(2), 1207–1213. <https://doi.org/10.1086/715989>

1. **Citation key:** armstrong\_corruption\_2022
2. **Author(s):** Brenna Armstrong, Tiffany D. Barnes, Diana Z. O'Brien, and Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson
3. **Year:** 2022
4. **Publication:** The Journal of Politics
5. **Keywords:** corruption, gender and politics, executive appointments, accountability, women in power
6. **Summary:** Armstrong et al. investigate the relationship between corruption and women's access to high-profile executive positions, particularly the finance ministry. The authors challenge the conventional assumption that corruption reinforces male political dominance by arguing that under conditions of high political accountability, corruption can actually increase women's inclusion in elite political positions. Using a dataset covering over 150 countries from 2001 to 2017, they find that increases in corruption predict a greater likelihood of women's appointment as finance ministers, particularly in democratic settings where executives face electoral accountability. The findings suggest that leaders strategically use women as signals of anti-corruption efforts when they are at risk of political punishment for economic mismanagement.
7. **Theory:** The authors theorize that corruption and gendered political dynamics are interconnected through institutional accountability mechanisms. They argue that while corruption is often sustained by male-dominated political networks, it also creates incentives for executives to signal reform. Because women are widely perceived as more honest and less corrupt than men, leaders may strategically appoint women to highly visible cabinet positions—particularly the finance ministry—to communicate a commitment to clean governance. This effect is conditional on institutional accountability: when executives anticipate electoral punishment for corruption, they are more likely to use female appointments as a reputational safeguard. The finance portfolio is a particularly salient choice, as finance ministers

oversee government budgets, economic policy, and financial regulation, making them central to perceptions of economic integrity. The study builds on prior research on gendered expectations in political leadership and the strategic use of women as symbolic figures in governance, emphasizing that these appointments do not necessarily reflect a genuine commitment to gender equality but rather a calculated response to political incentives.

**8. Methods:** The authors use a logistic regression model with country-year observations from 2001 to 2017, assessing the likelihood of a woman serving as finance minister. Their key independent variable is an increase in corruption, measured using Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), operationalized as the five-year difference in a country's inverse CPI score. To test the conditional relationship between corruption and accountability, they incorporate interaction terms for free and fair elections and presidential versus parliamentary systems. Control variables include GDP per capita, GDP size, women's cabinet representation, and government type (unified vs. divided). The dataset is compiled from multiple sources, including the CIA's *Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments* and prior datasets on global cabinet appointments. The authors further conduct robustness checks using alternative corruption measures and time lags to address endogeneity concerns.

**9. Hypotheses:** Armstrong et al. hypothesize that:

- Women are more likely to occupy the finance ministry when countries experience increasing levels of corruption.
- Conditional on the presence of free and fair elections, women are more likely to occupy the finance ministry when countries experience increasing levels of corruption.
- Among countries with free and fair elections, women are more likely to occupy the finance ministry in presidential systems experiencing increasing levels of corruption.

The findings provide strong support for these hypotheses. The results confirm that increases in corruption significantly predict female finance minister appointments, but only in contexts where electoral accountability mechanisms are strong. In countries without free and fair elections, corruption has no effect on women's presence in the finance ministry. Additionally, in democratic settings, the effect is stronger in presidential systems, where executives are more directly accountable for economic governance than in parliamentary systems.

**10. Main findings:** The study demonstrates that corruption creates strategic incentives for leaders to appoint women to high-profile cabinet posts, particularly when they anticipate electoral repercussions for corruption. The probability of a woman serving as finance minister increases significantly following a rise in corruption in countries with free and fair elections, but this effect does not hold in autocratic or weakly democratic regimes. The effect is also stronger in presidential systems, where executive accountability for economic policy is clearer. The authors interpret these findings as evidence that women's inclusion in the finance ministry serves as a symbolic response to public concern over corruption rather than a fundamental shift in gender equality in political leadership. They caution that this trend may reinforce a "glass cliff" phenomenon, where women are appointed in moments of crisis but face heightened expectations and risks of failure.

**11. Key quotations:**

- "We show that increases in corruption bolster women's presence, particularly in countries with free and fair elections and presidential systems. That our results hold only in contexts of high accountability suggests this relationship is not endogenous but reflects chief executives' efforts to preempt punishment" (p. 1207).
- "Although women's appointment represents an important break from historical patterns of exclusion, women also tend to access these positions only when their meanings have fundamentally changed" (p. 1208).
- "That our results hold only where accountability is high—and not otherwise—indicates that the relationship between women's inclusion and corruption is not an artifact of unmeasured variable bias but instead reflects a signal used by the chief executive to preempt punishment" (p. 1212).

## 6.12 Gender and Participation

### 6.12.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The study of gender and political participation examines the structural and institutional factors that shape women's engagement in political life. Early research emphasized individual-level explanations, such as socioeconomic status and education, as primary determinants of women's participation. However, contemporary scholarship has shifted toward institutional and contextual explanations, recognizing that labor market structures, welfare policies, and electoral systems shape gendered patterns of participation. Scholars have demonstrated that the gender gap in political participation is not uniform across contexts; rather, it is contingent on national labor market structures, welfare regimes, electoral institutions, and social norms. Research in this area has also highlighted how gendered socialization and civic skill acquisition shape women's engagement in formal and informal political activities.
- **Labor Market Structures and Gendered Political Preferences:** Iversen and Rosenbluth's *The Political Economy of Gender* (2006) challenges traditional economic models that assume a unitary household and instead proposes a bargaining framework where women's labor market opportunities influence their intra-household bargaining power and, by extension, their political preferences. They argue that in economies with flexible, general-skills labor markets, women are more likely to participate in the workforce, leading to more egalitarian divisions of household labor and distinct political preferences. In contrast, economies reliant on specific skill investments reinforce traditional gender roles, thereby narrowing the gender gap in political attitudes. Their findings suggest that women in economies with strong public sector employment tend to favor redistributive policies that enhance economic security, such as childcare support and labor protections, whereas those in more constrained labor markets exhibit political preferences more closely aligned

with men's.

- **Institutional Barriers and Political Participation:** Burns, Schlozman, and Verba's *The Private Roots of Public Action* (2009) expands on the structural determinants of political participation by examining how social institutions, family roles, and workplace experiences create gendered disparities in civic engagement. They argue that political participation is shaped by a "stockpile of participatory factors" accumulated over an individual's lifetime, with men benefitting disproportionately from workplace-based civic skill acquisition and recruitment networks. Their findings highlight that while educational attainment is a key predictor of participation, gendered socialization and workplace hierarchies systematically advantage men in acquiring the resources and networks necessary for political engagement. Additionally, they explore the mobilizing effects of discrimination, showing that while some experiences of gender bias reduce political efficacy, others serve as catalysts for increased political engagement.
- **Electoral Institutions and Gendered Political Engagement:** Kittlson and Schwindt-Bayer's *The Gendered Effects of Electoral Institutions* (2012) investigates how electoral systems influence political participation differently for men and women. They argue that proportional representation systems and gender quotas increase women's political engagement by creating institutional incentives that encourage female participation. Their cross-national analysis reveals that proportional representation does not significantly alter voting patterns but does increase women's involvement in more labor-intensive activities such as campaigning and advocacy. The introduction of gender quotas, while effective in enhancing women's descriptive representation, has a more limited effect on voter turnout. Their findings underscore the role of institutional design in shaping political engagement, particularly by signaling inclusivity and enhancing the visibility of women in political office.
- **Historical Patterns of Women's Voting Behavior:** Corder and Wolbrecht's *Counting Women's Ballots* (2016) examines the voting behavior of women in the United States following the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment. Using historical electoral data and Bayesian ecological inference techniques, they challenge the assumption that early female voting behavior was politically inconsequential. Their findings reveal that women's turnout and vote choice varied significantly across regions and electoral contexts, influenced by state-level electoral laws and party mobilization efforts. While women's initial partisan attachments were fluid, they became increasingly structured over time, with a significant shift toward the Democratic Party by the New Deal era. Their study highlights the importance of institutional and contextual factors in shaping the trajectory of women's political incorporation.
- **Contextual Factors in the Gender Turnout Gap:** Stauffer and Fraga's *Contextualizing the Gender Gap in Voter Turnout* (2022) analyzes how electoral competition, candidate gender, and racial/ethnic composition influence the gender turnout gap in the United States. Using voter file data from 2008 to 2018, they find that while women generally turn out at higher rates than men, this advantage is contingent on electoral context. The gender turnout gap is largest in presidential elections but diminishes in competitive congressional districts, where men are mobilized at higher rates. Their findings also reveal that racial and ethnic diversity shapes turnout disparities, with the gender gap being most pronounced among Black and Latina/o voters. Contrary to expectations, they find no significant effect of female candidates on women's turnout, suggesting that institutional and contextual factors play a more decisive role in shaping voter participation than candidate gender alone.
- **Ongoing Debates and Future Directions:** The study of gender and political participation continues to evolve, with ongoing debates focusing on the impact of digital mobilization, intersectionality, and policy responsiveness. Scholars are increasingly examining the role of online activism and social media in shaping participatory patterns, as well as how intersecting identities—such as race, class, and sexuality—compound gendered disparities in engagement. Additionally, research is shifting toward policy-centered approaches that analyze how institutional structures create or mitigate gendered barriers to participation. Future studies are likely to explore the effects of shifting labor market dynamics, the role of gendered party recruitment strategies, and the long-term impact of electoral reforms on women's political engagement.

#### 6.12.2 The Political Economy of Gender: Explaining Cross-National Variation in the Gender Division of Labor and the Gender Voting Gap

Iversen, T., & Rosenbluth, F. (2006). The Political Economy of Gender: Explaining Cross-National Variation in the Gender Division of Labor and the Gender Voting Gap [eprint: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2006.00166.x>]. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2006.00166.x>

1. **Citation key:** iversen\_political\_2006
2. **Author(s):** Torben Iversen and Frances Rosenbluth
3. **Year:** 2006
4. **Publication:** American Journal of Political Science
5. **Keywords:** gender division of labor, political economy, labor market, bargaining power, gender voting gap, welfare state
6. **Summary:** Iversen and Rosenbluth argue that variations in women's labor market opportunities across countries explain cross-national differences in the gender division of labor and the gender gap in political preferences. They critique the traditional economic efficiency model of the family, which assumes a unitary household, and instead propose a bargaining model where the division of labor within families is shaped by women's outside employment options. These options are influenced by labor market institutions, the welfare state, and the structure of the international economy. The authors test their theory using cross-national survey data and find that where women have stronger labor market opportunities, they perform less household labor and exhibit distinct political preferences from men.

7. **Theory:** The authors challenge the traditional economic efficiency model of the family, which posits that the gendered division of labor emerges due to comparative advantages in human capital and child-rearing. Instead, they propose a bargaining model, wherein women's outside options in the labor market determine their intra-household bargaining power. They argue that women's employment prospects depend on national labor market structures and welfare state policies, which influence their ability to secure independent economic resources. When women have stronger outside options—such as through general skills economies, high female labor force participation, or strong public sector employment—the gender division of labor within households is more equal. Moreover, in such contexts, women are more likely to develop distinct political preferences, supporting policies that enhance their autonomy, such as publicly funded childcare and labor protections. In contrast, in economies reliant on specific skill investments, women face greater labor market disadvantages, reinforcing traditional gender roles within families and limiting the gender gap in political attitudes.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a multilevel modeling approach using survey data from the 1994 International Social Survey Program (ISSP) on family and gender relations. The dataset includes established democracies with varying labor market structures and welfare regimes. The authors measure the gender division of labor using an index based on household task allocation (e.g., laundry, grocery shopping, caregiving). They then assess labor market participation and political preferences across gender, controlling for income, education, religiosity, age, and marital history. At the national level, they incorporate variables such as skill specificity (whether a country's economy relies on specific or general skills), the extent of public sector employment, part-time employment opportunities, and divorce rates. The empirical strategy involves estimating how these macro-level factors interact with individual labor force participation to shape the household division of labor and political attitudes.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Women's labor market participation is lower in economies that emphasize specific skills, but this effect is mitigated where the public sector provides general skills employment.
  - The division of household labor is more unequal in economies that rely on specific skills, except where the public sector is large enough to compensate for private sector gender disparities.
  - Women are more likely to have political preferences distinct from men when they participate in the labor force and when divorce rates are high.
  - The gender gap in political preferences is smaller in specific skills economies and larger in general skills economies.

The findings confirm these hypotheses. In economies with strong reliance on specific skills, women's labor market participation is lower, reinforcing a traditional division of labor. However, where the public sector is large, this effect is mitigated. Additionally, the gender gap in political attitudes is more pronounced where women have strong labor market opportunities and where divorce is more common.

10. **Main findings:** The study finds that the gender division of labor and political preferences are shaped by labor market structures and welfare state policies. In countries with flexible, general skills labor markets (e.g., the United States, Canada), women participate in the labor force at higher rates and perform less household labor. In contrast, economies reliant on specific skill investments (e.g., Germany, Japan) exhibit more traditional household divisions of labor, with women assuming the bulk of unpaid domestic work. The public sector can mitigate these inequalities by offering general skills employment for women, as seen in Scandinavian welfare states. Regarding political preferences, the gender gap is largest where women have strong labor market opportunities and highest risk of divorce. In these contexts, women are more likely than men to support redistributive policies, public childcare, and employment protections. Conversely, where female labor market participation is constrained, women's political preferences align more closely with men's.

11. **Key quotations:**
  - "Somewhat paradoxically, we find that it is where women are in the weakest position in the economy that their preferences are the least distinct from men's" (p. 2).
  - "When the public sector is small, the effect of skill specificity is to notably reduce the participation of women in paid work... This disadvantage, however, is attenuated by a large public sector" (p. 9).
  - "If household bargaining matters, as our previous results suggest, then working women gain bargaining power at home from the partial socialization of family work such as child care and elderly care, and these are precisely the sorts of policies that parties on the left are more likely to espouse" (p. 12).

#### 6.12.3 The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation

Burns, N., Schlozman, K. L., & Verba, S. (2009, July). *The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation* [Google-Books-ID: uW7sYFhAGr4C]. Harvard University Press

1. **Citation key:** burns\_private\_2009
2. **Author(s):** Nancy Burns, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Sidney Verba
3. **Year:** 2009
4. **Publication:** Harvard University Press
5. **Keywords:** gender and politics, political participation, civic engagement, political institutions, gender inequality
6. **Summary:** Burns, Schlozman, and Verba explore the gendered nature of political participation in the United States, analyzing how social institutions, family dynamics, workplace experiences, and civic organizations shape the partic-

ipation gap between men and women. They argue that participation is conditioned by a combination of individual resources, institutional settings, and gendered social norms, which systematically favor men's access to participatory factors. Using a comprehensive survey-based methodology, they demonstrate how women's lower participation is not a simple function of individual characteristics but emerges from deeply embedded structural inequalities in institutions that shape civic engagement.

**7. Theory:** The authors posit that gender differences in political participation are not simply a product of individual choices or motivations but are deeply rooted in institutional and structural inequalities. They argue that differences in civic engagement emerge from a "stockpile of participatory factors" that individuals accumulate over their lifetimes, which are themselves shaped by the institutions in which they are embedded. Schools, workplaces, religious organizations, and familial structures create and reinforce these gendered differences by influencing access to political skills, recruitment networks, and exposure to participatory experiences. While education is identified as a crucial determinant of political engagement, the authors emphasize that men's higher accumulation of participatory resources—particularly through workforce participation and organizational involvement—explains much of the gender gap. They also highlight the complex role of discrimination, noting that while experiences of gender discrimination may depress political efficacy, they can also serve as a mobilizing force for women's participation. Ultimately, the book challenges individualistic explanations of gendered participation gaps, arguing instead for an institutional perspective that accounts for how political engagement is structured by gendered access to participatory resources.

**8. Methods:** The authors employ a mixed-methods approach, with their primary data source being the *Citizen Participation Study*, a national survey designed to examine the determinants of political engagement. They use multivariate regression models to assess the relative influence of various participatory factors, estimating separate models for men and women to examine how these processes differ by gender. Their methodology incorporates feminist theoretical insights, particularly the recognition that men and women do not necessarily experience political socialization or institutional interactions in the same way. By decomposing the participatory process into multiple institutional domains—such as workplaces, churches, and voluntary associations—their analysis disentangles the effects of differential selection into institutions from the effects of differential treatment within them. Additionally, they conduct an "outcomes analysis" to assess how gender disparities in participatory resources translate into political activity, providing a comprehensive assessment of the cumulative effects of gendered social structures.

**9. Hypotheses:** The book examines several key hypotheses about gender and political participation:

- **H1:** Men are more politically active than women across most forms of participation, except for certain community-based activities.
- **H2:** The gender gap in participation is primarily a function of differences in participatory resources, particularly education, workplace experiences, and organizational involvement.
- **H3:** Workplaces provide the most opportunities for the development of civic skills, while religious institutions provide the least, leading to an institutional advantage for men.
- **H4:** Gender differences in civic skill acquisition and recruitment explain a significant portion of the participation gap.
- **H5:** Perceived experiences of gender discrimination can either depress political engagement by undermining efficacy or increase participation by mobilizing women through grievances.

**10. Main findings:** Burns, Schlozman, and Verba find that gender disparities in political participation are largely attributable to differential access to participatory resources. Men accumulate more civic skills in the workplace, where they are more likely to hold leadership positions, engage in political discussions, and receive direct recruitment into political activities. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to be involved in religious organizations, but these institutions offer fewer participatory opportunities. The book's analysis also highlights the role of discrimination: while women are significantly more likely to report experiences of gender discrimination, those who do report discrimination tend to be more politically active, suggesting that discrimination may serve as a mobilizing force rather than simply a deterrent. The authors estimate that men's institutional advantages in accumulating participatory skills contribute to approximately half of the observed gender gap in political engagement. Moreover, their findings show that while education is a powerful predictor of participation for both men and women, the gender gap persists even among highly educated individuals, reinforcing the argument that institutional structures, rather than individual differences, drive participatory inequalities.

**11. Key Definitions:**

- *Stockpile of participatory factors:* The cumulative set of skills, resources, and experiences that individuals acquire over their lifetimes, which shape their likelihood of engaging in political activities.
- *Civic skills:* The abilities necessary to engage in political participation, such as public speaking, writing, organizational leadership, and networking, which are often cultivated through workplaces, voluntary organizations, and educational institutions.
- *Recruitment networks:* The social channels through which individuals are invited or encouraged to participate in politics, often structured by institutions such as workplaces, unions, and civic organizations.
- *Institutional selection:* The process by which individuals enter different social institutions (e.g., workplaces, churches, voluntary organizations), which in turn shape their access to participatory resources.
- *Institutional treatment:* The differential experiences men and women face once they enter an institution, which influence their opportunities for civic engagement.

#### 6.12.4 The Gendered Effects of Electoral Institutions: Political Engagement and Participation

Kittilson, M. C., & Schwindt-Bayer, L. A. (2012, October). *The Gendered Effects of Electoral Institutions: Political Engagement and Participation* [Google-Books-ID: pABREAAAQBAJ]. Oxford University Press

1. **Citation key:** kittilson\_gendered\_2012
2. **Author(s):** Miki Caul Kittilson and Leslie A. Schwindt-Bayer
3. **Year:** 2012
4. **Publication:** Oxford University Press
5. **Keywords:** gender and politics, electoral institutions, political participation, political engagement, gender quotas
6. **Summary:** Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer investigate how electoral institutions affect political engagement and participation differently for men and women. They focus on the impact of inclusive electoral rules—such as proportional representation and gender quotas—on reducing gender disparities in political involvement. Their central argument is that these electoral institutions do not affect all citizens equally; instead, they create different participatory incentives for women and men. By conducting a comprehensive cross-national analysis, the authors demonstrate that political systems that incorporate inclusive rules can reduce barriers to women's political engagement, ultimately narrowing the gender gap in political participation.
7. **Theory:** The authors propose that electoral institutions are not gender-neutral; rather, they have gendered effects that shape the political behavior of men and women differently. Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer argue that women, as a historically marginalized group in politics, are particularly sensitive to institutional signals of inclusivity, such as proportional representation and gender quotas. These institutions provide incentives that encourage women to engage more actively in political processes, thus counteracting historical patterns of exclusion. The theory suggests that inclusive institutions alter the political environment by increasing the visibility and representation of women in politics, thereby encouraging greater political involvement among female citizens. Moreover, the authors challenge the assumption that institutional changes uniformly affect all citizens, emphasizing that women, due to their unique social and political experiences, may respond more positively to inclusive electoral rules. This perspective underlines the importance of institutional design in addressing gender disparities in political engagement.
8. **Methods:** Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer employ a mixed-methods approach, combining large-N cross-national statistical analyses with detailed case studies. The statistical analyses draw from survey data across multiple countries, assessing the effects of proportional representation, district magnitude, and gender quotas on women's levels of political engagement and participation. They use multivariate regression models to evaluate how changes in these electoral institutions influence political behavior, focusing on various measures of political activity, such as voting, campaigning, and political discussions. Additionally, the authors incorporate case studies of electoral reforms in New Zealand and Russia, as well as the introduction of gender quotas in France and Uruguay. These case studies serve to contextualize the broader statistical findings, allowing for an examination of the mechanisms through which institutional changes impact gender differences in political involvement.
9. **Hypotheses:** The book explores several key hypotheses about the effects of electoral institutions on gender disparities:
  - **H1:** Proportional representation systems are associated with higher levels of political engagement among women compared to majoritarian systems.
  - **H2:** The introduction of gender quotas increases women's political participation by signaling greater inclusivity in the political system.
  - **H3:** Higher district magnitudes correlate with reduced gender gaps in political engagement.
  - **H4:** The effects of inclusive electoral institutions are more pronounced among women than among men, leading to a narrowing of the gender gap in political activity.
  - **H5:** Men may react negatively to institutional changes that increase women's representation, potentially reducing their own levels of political engagement.
10. **Main findings:** Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer find that electoral institutions significantly influence gender differences in political engagement. Proportional representation systems and gender quotas are shown to enhance women's participation in various political activities, thereby narrowing the gender gap. However, the effects are not uniformly positive. The authors uncover unexpected results, such as limited impacts of gender quotas on voting behaviors and instances where men's political engagement declines in response to more inclusive institutions. Their analysis of proportional representation systems reveals that while these systems do not affect voting disparities, they do significantly increase women's involvement in more resource-intensive activities, like campaigning. The case studies highlight the nuanced ways in which institutional reforms can reshape political dynamics over time, emphasizing that while inclusive rules create opportunities for greater female participation, they also generate complex interactions with existing social and political structures.
11. **Key Definitions:**
  - *Proportional representation:* An electoral system in which parties gain seats in proportion to the number of votes received, often associated with higher levels of inclusivity in political representation.
  - *Gender quotas:* Institutional rules that require a certain percentage of political candidates or officeholders to be women, aimed at increasing women's representation in politics.
  - *District magnitude:* The number of representatives elected from a single electoral district, with higher magnitudes generally providing more opportunities for diverse representation.
  - *Political engagement:* Activities that involve individuals in the political process, including voting, campaigning,

and political discussions.

- *Political participation:* The broader spectrum of actions that individuals take to influence government and policy, including both formal and informal activities.

#### 6.12.5 Counting Women's Ballots: Female Voters from Suffrage through the New Deal

Corder, J. K., & Wolbrecht, C. (2016, May). *Counting Women's Ballots: Female Voters from Suffrage through the New Deal* [Google-Books-ID: NAmpDAAAQBAJ]. Cambridge University Press

1. **Citation key:** corder\_counting\_2016

2. **Author(s):** J. Kevin Corder and Christina Wolbrecht

3. **Year:** 2016

4. **Publication:** Cambridge University Press

5. **Keywords:** women's suffrage, voting behavior, political participation, electoral history, gender and politics

6. **Summary:** Corder and Wolbrecht investigate the voting behavior of women in the United States following the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, which enfranchised women nationwide in 1920. Challenging the conventional wisdom that women's early voting behavior was politically inconsequential, they employ new empirical techniques to estimate female voter turnout and vote choice in presidential elections from 1920 to 1936. The authors argue that early women's voting patterns were contingent on local political and institutional contexts and that women's participation evolved in response to shifting political dynamics rather than following a uniform trajectory.

7. **Theory:** The authors propose that the impact of women's enfranchisement on electoral outcomes and political participation was not immediate or uniform across time and space. Rather than assuming that the inclusion of women doubled the electorate overnight, they emphasize that female voter turnout and partisan preferences were shaped by state-level electoral institutions, party mobilization efforts, and legal barriers such as literacy tests and residency requirements. They argue that early female voters did not behave as a monolithic bloc but were instead responsive to local political conditions, just as male voters were. The authors also challenge the notion that early women voters were predominantly swing voters, arguing instead that their partisan attachments and voting patterns, while initially fluid, became increasingly structured over time. By the New Deal era, women had developed stable partisan affiliations, with significant movement toward the Democratic Party. This challenges earlier claims that women's voting was either irrelevant or simply an extension of male voting patterns.

8. **Methods:** Corder and Wolbrecht employ a combination of historical electoral data, census records, and Bayesian ecological inference techniques to estimate women's turnout and vote choice across ten states from 1920 to 1936. Since individual-level voting data by gender were not systematically recorded during this period, they rely on aggregated election returns and demographic data to infer women's voting behavior. They validate their estimates using unique historical cases, such as Illinois, which recorded separate male and female ballots in the 1916 and 1920 elections. Their approach allows them to analyze trends in female political participation across diverse institutional and political contexts while accounting for missing or incomplete data.

9. **Hypotheses:** The book tests several key hypotheses regarding early women's voting behavior:

- **H1:** Women's voter turnout was lower than men's in the first elections following suffrage but increased over time as political experience and mobilization efforts expanded.
- **H2:** Women's vote choice was not uniform but varied significantly by region, election, and partisan competition.
- **H3:** Institutional barriers, such as literacy tests and residency requirements, had a disproportionately negative effect on women's turnout.
- **H4:** Contrary to the "peripheral voter" thesis, women's partisan attachments stabilized over time rather than remaining volatile or election-specific.
- **H5:** Women's early voting patterns contributed to the Republican advantage in the 1920s but shifted toward the Democratic Party by the 1930s.

10. **Main findings:** Corder and Wolbrecht find that early women's voting behavior was highly contingent on local electoral conditions, rather than following a singular national pattern. Women's turnout was initially lower than men's, but it increased steadily over time as social norms evolved and political parties adjusted their mobilization strategies. Institutional barriers disproportionately suppressed female participation, with restrictive voting laws deterring women more than men. The authors also find that women's vote choice varied by state and election, challenging the assumption that they simply mirrored male voting patterns. While the Republican Party initially benefitted from women's enfranchisement, by the New Deal era, a significant portion of women had shifted toward the Democratic Party. The authors also reject the notion that women were "peripheral voters" who swung unpredictably from election to election. Instead, they find that women's partisan attachments became increasingly stable over time, resembling those of male voters.

11. **Key Definitions:**

- *Ecological inference:* A statistical method used to estimate individual-level behavior from aggregate data, particularly useful for historical analyses where direct survey data is unavailable.
- *Peripheral voter thesis:* The theory that newly enfranchised groups, such as women in the 1920s, are more likely to be swing voters who respond primarily to short-term election dynamics rather than long-term partisan affiliations.
- *Turnout gap:* The difference in voter turnout rates between men and women, particularly in the early years fol-

lowing women's enfranchisement.

- *Political incorporation:* The process by which a newly enfranchised group becomes fully integrated into the political system, including the development of stable voting habits and partisan attachments.
- *Institutional barriers:* Legal and structural obstacles, such as literacy tests, poll taxes, and residency requirements, that disproportionately affected women's ability to vote in the early twentieth century.

#### 6.12.6 Contextualizing the Gender Gap in Voter Turnout

Stauffer, K. E., & Fraga, B. L. (2022). Contextualizing the gender gap in voter turnout [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2021.1893195>]. *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, 10(2), 334–341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21565503.2021.1893195>

1. **Citation key:** stauffer\_contextualizing\_2022

2. **Author(s):** Katelyn E. Stauffer and Bernard L. Fraga

3. **Year:** 2022

4. **Publication:** Politics, Groups, and Identities

5. **Keywords:** voter turnout, gender gap, elections, race, American politics, representation

6. **Summary:** Stauffer and Fraga examine the gender gap in voter turnout in the United States, focusing on how contextual factors such as electoral competition, candidate gender, and racial/ethnic demographics shape this gap. They use voter file data from 2008 to 2018 to analyze turnout patterns at national, state, and congressional district levels. Their findings highlight that while women generally turn out at higher rates than men, this advantage is not uniform across electoral contexts. The gender turnout gap is largest in presidential elections and diminishes in highly competitive congressional districts. Furthermore, race and ethnicity play a crucial role in shaping gendered turnout patterns, underscoring the need for an intersectional approach to studying political participation.

7. **Theory:** The authors argue that the gender turnout gap is not a static phenomenon but varies significantly depending on electoral context. While previous research has established that women have voted at higher rates than men since the 1980s, Stauffer and Fraga challenge the assumption that this pattern holds uniformly across elections and demographic groups. They theorize that the turnout gap is shaped by structural factors such as district competitiveness, partisan composition, and racial/ethnic diversity. Specifically, they posit that competitive elections mobilize men at higher rates than women, thereby reducing the turnout gap. Additionally, they argue that race and ethnicity are central to understanding gendered patterns of participation, as women of color exhibit different turnout dynamics compared to white women. The authors also assess whether the presence of women candidates influences the turnout gap, testing the hypothesis that women candidates mobilize women voters. By situating their study within broader debates on gender and political behavior, they emphasize the importance of considering intersectional factors when analyzing voter turnout patterns.

8. **Methods:** The authors employ a quantitative analysis using voter file data from Catalist, a national voter database, to estimate gender differences in turnout from 2008 to 2018. Their dataset includes state- and district-level turnout rates, allowing them to assess variations in the gender gap across different electoral contexts. They use regression models to examine the impact of electoral competitiveness, district partisanship, racial/ethnic composition, and the presence of women candidates on the turnout gap. To account for variation across election cycles, they separately analyze midterm and presidential elections. Additionally, they construct measures of state-level and district-level turnout gaps and incorporate race-specific models to explore how turnout disparities differ among white, Black, Latina/o, and Asian voters.

9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:

- **H1:** The gender turnout gap is larger in presidential elections than in midterm elections.
- **H2:** The gender turnout gap decreases as electoral competition increases.
- **H3:** The presence of a woman candidate on the ballot increases women's turnout relative to men's.
- **H4:** The gender turnout gap varies by racial and ethnic composition, with larger gaps in more diverse districts.

The findings confirm that the gender turnout gap is larger in presidential elections, supporting H1. The results also show that competition reduces the gender turnout gap, supporting H2. However, H3 is not supported, as the presence of women candidates does not significantly impact the gender turnout gap. Finally, H4 is strongly supported, as racial and ethnic diversity is found to be a key factor shaping turnout disparities, with the gender gap being smallest in predominantly white districts and largest among racial and ethnic minorities.

10. **Main findings:** Stauffer and Fraga find that the gender turnout gap is not uniform across electoral contexts but varies significantly based on competition, partisanship, and racial/ethnic composition. They show that the gap is largest in presidential elections and decreases in competitive congressional districts, where men are mobilized at higher rates. While previous research has suggested that the presence of women candidates might increase women's participation, the authors find no evidence to support this claim. Instead, they highlight the critical role of race and ethnicity in shaping the gender turnout gap. The gap is smallest in heavily white districts, whereas it is largest among Black and Latina/o voters. Their results suggest that race and electoral dynamics interact in complex ways to structure gendered patterns of political participation, reinforcing the need for an intersectional perspective in the study of voter turnout.

11. **Key Quotations:**

- "While we find no relationship between women candidates and the turnout gap, we do find that the gap is largest in presidential election years, and shrinks in the most competitive congressional districts" (p. 335).

- “Ignoring race and ethnicity in our analysis would lead to quite different conclusions. Indeed, as we discuss in greater detail below, ignoring race and ethnicity in our analysis would mean centering whiteness and the experiences of white women in both theoretical and empirical terms” (p. 336).
- “While women do turn out in greater numbers than men in presidential elections, overall our findings indicate that women’s turnout advantage is smallest – even nonexistent – in the most pivotal elections” (p. 339).

## 6.13 Intersectionality

### 6.13.1 Subject Area Summary

- **Overview:** The concept of intersectionality—despite me, perhaps, giving it short shrift in this guide through a lack of included texts—has reshaped discussions on political representation, institutional bias, and policy analysis by emphasizing the interconnected nature of social identities and structures of power. Originating in Black feminist thought, intersectionality critiques single-axis frameworks that analyze social inequalities in isolation, instead arguing that race, gender, class, and other identities mutually constitute and shape experiences of marginalization. Scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins, Ange-Marie Hancock, and Mary Hawkesworth have expanded the framework within political science, demonstrating that intersectionality is not merely a descriptive tool but a critical research paradigm. Political institutions, legislative processes, and policy outcomes are deeply structured by these intersecting hierarchies, which systematically constrain access, participation, and representation for historically marginalized groups.
- **Origins and Theoretical Foundations:** The origins of intersectionality can be traced to legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw's seminal work on the compounded discrimination faced by Black women in the legal system. Crenshaw argued that traditional anti-discrimination frameworks failed to account for the simultaneous effects of race and gender, leading to an incomplete understanding of structural oppression. Building on this insight, Patricia Hill Collins introduced the “matrix of domination” framework, which conceptualizes power as operating across multiple, interlocking axes rather than through a single dominant hierarchy. These early formulations emphasized that identity categories cannot be analyzed in isolation; rather, they function as relational constructs that shape political behavior, institutional norms, and policy implementation. Within political science, intersectionality has challenged the discipline's tendency to separate race, gender, and class as distinct analytical variables, instead proposing a more integrated approach to understanding political and policy processes.
- **Institutional Marginalization and Raced-Gendered Power Structures:** Mary Hawkesworth's work on raced-gendered institutions extends intersectionality into the study of Congress, illustrating how legislative norms systematically disadvantage Congresswomen of color. Through an analysis of the 103rd and 104th Congresses, Hawkesworth documents how formal and informal institutional mechanisms produce exclusion, stereotype Congresswomen of color, and limit their substantive representation. This research challenges the assumption that legislative institutions are neutral arenas, instead demonstrating that power within these spaces is actively structured by race and gender hierarchies. The theory of “racing-gendering” emerges from this work, highlighting how political institutions maintain and reproduce inequalities even as they purport to be representative bodies.
- **Intersectionality as a Research Paradigm:** Ange-Marie Hancock's scholarship advances intersectionality beyond its theoretical origins by proposing a structured research paradigm for political science. She critiques traditional identity-based frameworks for their failure to capture within-group diversity and argues that intersectionality provides a more accurate lens for analyzing political behavior and policy outcomes. Hancock distinguishes intersectionality from unitary and multiple-category approaches, arguing that the former treats identity categories as dynamic and interdependent, while the latter simply aggregates discrete variables without considering their interactions. She also calls for methodological advancements, advocating for mixed-methods approaches that incorporate qualitative narratives with quantitative analysis, such as fuzzy-set logic and configurational comparative methods, to better capture the complexity of intersecting social identities.
- **Empirical Applications and Political Representation:** Empirical research on intersectionality has expanded across various domains of political science, including legislative behavior, voter participation, and public policy. Studies on Black women in Congress, such as those by Nadia Brown, Christopher Clark, and Anna Mahoney, highlight the unique pathways and constraints that Black Congresswomen navigate in legislative institutions. Their research demonstrates that these lawmakers are more likely to emerge from activist and community-based backgrounds, yet they remain underrepresented in leadership positions and face additional scrutiny compared to their white and male counterparts. Beyond elite representation, intersectionality has also been applied to studies of voter behavior, where scholars examine how race and gender interact to shape turnout patterns, candidate evaluations, and issue prioritization. These studies consistently reveal that intersectional identities influence political engagement in ways that traditional models fail to capture.
- **Intersectionality in Public Policy and Social Movements:** Beyond institutional politics, intersectionality has played a critical role in shaping public policy analysis and advocacy. The framework has been instrumental in examining disparities in education, healthcare, criminal justice, and labor policy, revealing how intersecting identities structure access to resources and state power. In social movement research, intersectionality provides a lens for understanding coalition-building and political mobilization, particularly among marginalized communities. Scholars have shown that intersectional advocacy often faces tension within broader movements, as mainstream feminist and civil rights organizations have historically centered the experiences of their most privileged members while neglecting the concerns of those facing compounded oppression. This tension underscores the challenge of achieving substantive representation within progressive political movements.

- **Methodological Challenges and Future Directions:** As intersectionality gains broader recognition in political science, scholars continue to debate the best methods for incorporating it into empirical research. While qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and case studies remain central to intersectional analysis, there is growing interest in quantitative approaches that can systematically measure intersecting inequalities. However, scholars caution against reductive applications that treat intersectionality as merely a checklist of identity categories rather than a framework for understanding power structures. Future research is likely to explore intersectionality's implications for comparative politics, international relations, and policy diffusion, as well as its role in emerging digital and algorithmic forms of governance.
- **Ongoing Debates and Theoretical Expansions:** Despite its widespread influence, intersectionality remains a contested concept, with ongoing debates about its theoretical boundaries and practical applications. Some scholars argue that intersectionality should be confined to the study of marginalized groups, while others advocate for its broader application to power relations more generally. Additionally, as intersectionality becomes institutionalized within academic disciplines and public policy, there is concern that its radical origins may be diluted. To maintain its critical edge, scholars emphasize the need to remain attentive to intersectionality's activist roots while continuing to develop rigorous methodological tools for analyzing political inequalities.

### 6.13.2 Congressional Enactments of Race–Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced–Gendered Institutions

Hawkesworth, M. (2003). Congressional Enactments of Race–Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced–Gendered Institutions. *American Political Science Review*, 97(4), 529–550. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055403000868>

1. **Citation key:** hawkesworth\_congressional\_2003
2. **Author(s):** Mary Hawkesworth
3. **Year:** 2003
4. **Publication:** American Political Science Review
5. **Keywords:** raced-gendered institutions, Congress, intersectionality, marginalization, representation
6. **Summary:** Hawkesworth examines how race and gender shape legislative practices in the U.S. Congress, particularly by analyzing the experiences of Congresswomen of color during the 103rd and 104th Congresses. She argues that legislative institutions are structured by race and gender hierarchies, producing forms of exclusion, stereotyping, and epistemic marginalization. Through the concept of *racing–gendering*, she contends that these processes function as institutional biases that constrain the participation and substantive representation of Congresswomen of color. This analysis challenges conventional institutionalist perspectives that do not account for race and gender as integral to legislative power dynamics.
7. **Theory:** Hawkesworth advances the concept of *racing–gendering*, which views race and gender as politically constructed through legislative norms, interpersonal interactions, and institutional practices. Rather than treating race and gender as static demographic attributes, she argues that they are actively reproduced in Congress through exclusionary mechanisms that render Congresswomen of color invisible or stereotype them in ways that undermine their authority. She builds on intersectionality theory to demonstrate that these women experience both racial and gendered marginalization simultaneously, and that this marginalization is distinct from what white women or men of color face. Hawkesworth critiques mainstream legislative studies for neglecting these dynamics, which she contends are central to understanding power relations within political institutions.
8. **Methods:** Hawkesworth employs a multi-method approach that combines textual analysis of interview data with a case study of welfare reform debates in the 103rd and 104th Congresses. She draws from interviews with 81 Congresswomen, including 15 Congresswomen of color, to document narratives of marginalization, exclusion, and resistance. These accounts are supplemented with legislative transcripts and Congressional Record debates to illustrate raced-gendered interactions in committee deliberations, floor debates, and institutional rule changes. Hawkesworth also engages in interpretive analysis, drawing from feminist and critical race theory to contextualize her empirical findings.
9. **Hypotheses:** Hawkesworth posits that:
  - Congress is not a neutral institution but rather one that actively reproduces race and gender hierarchies through its rules, norms, and practices.
  - Congresswomen of color experience systemic marginalization, including exclusion from leadership positions, erasure from policy debates, and the questioning of their epistemic authority.
  - These raced-gendered barriers persist regardless of partisan control of Congress, as they are embedded in institutional structures rather than being contingent on party dynamics.
- Her findings confirm these hypotheses. She demonstrates that Congresswomen of color frequently report invisibility and stereotyping, even when they hold senior positions. The barriers they face persist across both Democratic and Republican-controlled Congresses, suggesting that racing–gendering is an enduring institutional phenomenon rather than a function of partisan shifts.
10. **Main findings:** Hawkesworth finds that Congresswomen of color experience a form of structural marginalization that shapes their legislative influence and policy priorities. They face frequent exclusion from leadership roles, often struggle to gain recognition for their legislative work, and encounter resistance when attempting to advance policies that prioritize racial and gender equity. She documents how these dynamics played out in the debates over welfare reform in the 1990s, where the policy concerns of Congresswomen of color were largely ignored or actively suppressed. Addi-

tionally, she highlights how procedural changes, such as the elimination of legislative service organizations (LSOs) in the 104th Congress, disproportionately undermined the ability of racial minorities and women to organize collectively within the institution. Hawkesworth argues that these findings challenge dominant theories of legislative behavior, which often assume that formal rules and norms ensure equal participation.

### 11. Key quotations:

- “Racing–gendering constitutes a form of interested bias operating in Congress, which has important implications for understandings of the internal operations of political institutions, the policy priorities of Congresswomen of color, the substantive representation of historically underrepresented groups, and the practice of democracy in the United States” (p. 529).
- “Congresswomen of color can be rendered invisible even when they are not deploying tactical invisibility to accomplish their legislative goals. In the 104th Congress, Representative Cardiss Collins [D-IL] was not allowed to get anything passed, nothing. And many times, she and I were not even recognized to speak” (p. 536).
- “Virtually all the Congresswomen of color described the Speaker’s institutional reforms in terms of a frontal assault on their persons, their status in Congress, and their power that went well beyond partisan politics” (p. 538).

#### 6.13.3 When Multiplication Doesn’t Equal Quick Addition: Examining Intersectionality as a Research Paradigm

Hancock, A.-M. (2007). When Multiplication Doesn’t Equal Quick Addition: Examining Intersectionality as a Research Paradigm. *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(1), 63–79. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592707070065>

1. **Citation key:** hancock\_when\_2007
2. **Author(s):** Ange-Marie Hancock
3. **Year:** 2007
4. **Publication:** Perspectives on Politics
5. **Keywords:** intersectionality, research paradigms, race, gender, political science, empirical methods
6. **Summary:** Hancock critically examines the status of intersectionality as a research paradigm within political science. While intersectionality has been widely acknowledged in feminist theory, social movements, and public policy, its adoption as a systematic empirical approach remains limited. The article delineates intersectionality from related approaches, such as unitary and multiple-category frameworks, and presents an analytical structure that incorporates dynamic interactions among race, gender, class, and other identity categories. Hancock argues that intersectionality should be recognized as a distinct paradigm that not only theorizes social identities but also offers a rigorous empirical methodology for studying politics.
7. **Theory:** Hancock contends that intersectionality provides a necessary corrective to traditional identity politics by rejecting static, single-axis conceptions of political identity. She distinguishes between three approaches to studying difference in political science: unitary, multiple, and intersectional. The unitary approach treats one category (e.g., race or gender) as primary, while the multiple approach considers several categories but maintains them as separate and independent. In contrast, intersectionality asserts that these categories interact in complex ways, shaping political access, public policy, and social justice outcomes. Hancock emphasizes that intersectionality does not simply add together categories but rather examines their interdependent and mutually constitutive nature. She further argues that empirical political science must move beyond treating intersectionality as a purely normative concept and develop robust methodological tools for measuring and analyzing these interactions.
8. **Methods:** Hancock proposes an analytical framework for conducting empirical intersectional research. She critiques traditional survey methods for their failure to capture within-group diversity and instead advocates for approaches that incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data. One such approach is fuzzy-set logic, which allows researchers to account for varying degrees of category membership and the interactions between social identities. Additionally, she highlights the need for multi-method research designs that integrate case studies, ethnography, and large-N quantitative analyses. Hancock provides concrete examples of how intersectionality has been successfully applied in studies of public policy, particularly in areas like education and welfare policy, where race, gender, and class interact to shape political outcomes.
9. **Hypotheses:** Hancock hypothesizes that:
  - Intersectionality functions as a distinct research paradigm, not merely a theoretical concept or content specialization.
  - Empirical studies that incorporate intersectionality will provide deeper and more accurate explanations of political behavior and policy outcomes than unitary or multiple-category approaches.
  - Traditional political science methodologies, which assume independent and static identity categories, systematically overlook the complexities of social stratification and marginalization.
10. **Main findings:** Hancock finds that intersectionality challenges the dominant frameworks in political science by exposing the limitations of traditional identity-based analyses. She demonstrates that unitary approaches, which prioritize one identity category over others, obscure the experiences of individuals at the intersection of multiple marginalized

identities. Similarly, multiple-category approaches fail to account for the ways in which identity categories interact rather than simply coexist. By proposing a structured framework for empirical intersectionality research, Hancock provides a pathway for political scientists to incorporate intersectionality into their methodologies. She argues that adopting intersectionality as a research paradigm will lead to more comprehensive and accurate understandings of political behavior, policy formation, and social justice.

### 11. Key quotations:

- "Intersectionality argues for new conceptualizations of categories and their role in politics, rather than seeking an abolition of categories themselves" (p. 64).
- "The rule of parsimony, so the argument goes, would be violated with little to no gain in explanatory power for political problems such as persistent poverty or discrimination" (p. 66).
- "Intersectionality as a research paradigm can generate problem-driven research: it takes a problem in the world, analyzes and moves beyond earlier approaches to studying the problem, and develops a more powerful model to test for its effectiveness in addressing the problem" (p. 74).

#### 6.13.4 Intersectionality

Collins, P. H., & Chepp, V. (2013, March). Intersectionality. G. Waylen, K. Celis, J. Kantola, & S. L. Weldon (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics* (pp. 57–87). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199751457.013.0002>

1. **Citation key:** collins\_intersectionality\_2013
2. **Author(s):** Patricia Hill Collins and Valerie Chepp
3. **Year:** 2013
4. **Publication:** The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics
5. **Keywords:** intersectionality, multidimensionality, sociology of knowledge, American political arena, gender scholarship
6. **Summary:** Collins and Chepp examine the development, conceptual foundations, and political implications of intersectionality as an analytical framework. They argue that while intersectionality has been widely accepted in disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and political science, its definition remains contested. The authors present intersectionality as both a knowledge project and a theoretical paradigm that insists on understanding race, gender, class, and other social identities as interlocking systems of power rather than as separate or additive factors. The chapter also explores how intersectionality has shaped gender studies, public policy, and democratic discourse.
7. **Theory:** The authors theorize intersectionality as a dynamic and evolving construct that challenges traditional disciplinary boundaries. Rather than treating categories such as race, gender, and class as separate axes of analysis, intersectionality posits that these systems of power are mutually constructing and co-constitutive. Collins and Chepp build upon Bonnie Thornton Dill's insight that intersectionality examines the multidimensionality of human experience and links theory with practice to empower marginalized communities. They emphasize that intersectionality functions as both an analytical strategy and a sociological knowledge project, shaped by the power relations it seeks to analyze. The authors also highlight the paradox of intersectionality's broad acceptance alongside persistent definitional ambiguity, arguing that this reflects its status as an emergent and still-contested framework. Importantly, they critique simplistic applications of intersectionality that reduce it to identity politics rather than a rigorous method for understanding systemic inequalities. They contend that intersectionality should not be confined to feminist theory alone but should be seen as a broader epistemological shift with implications for democratic governance and political representation.
8. **Methods:** The chapter adopts a conceptual and theoretical approach, synthesizing existing literature to outline key themes in intersectional scholarship. Collins and Chepp situate intersectionality within a sociology of knowledge framework, examining how it has been legitimated and institutionalized across disciplines. They discuss its applications in various fields, including legal studies, public policy, and health disparities research, drawing on works from critical race theory, feminist theory, and social movement scholarship. The authors also analyze empirical studies that employ intersectionality to understand patterns of discrimination, policy outcomes, and political participation. Additionally, they engage with debates over methodological approaches, highlighting the challenges of operationalizing intersectionality in quantitative research while emphasizing the value of qualitative and mixed-methods approaches.
9. **Hypotheses:** The authors hypothesize that:
  - Intersectionality is best understood as a knowledge project that reflects and reproduces power relations within academic and political contexts.
  - Intersectional analyses provide a more accurate understanding of social inequality than single-axis or additive models.
  - The institutionalization of intersectionality within gender studies and political science has both expanded and constrained its application, leading to tensions between academic theory and activist praxis.

The findings support the argument that intersectionality is an indispensable tool for analyzing power and inequality. The authors demonstrate that intersectional research offers deeper insights into social stratification and political representation but also faces challenges in maintaining its critical edge amid institutionalization.

10. **Main findings:** Collins and Chepp find that intersectionality has transformed the study of power relations by emphasizing the interconnected nature of oppression. They argue that the framework has influenced legal and policy debates,

particularly in areas such as affirmative action, healthcare disparities, and democratic participation. However, they caution that the institutionalization of intersectionality within academia risks depoliticizing its radical potential. While the concept has gained legitimacy, it has also been co-opted in ways that prioritize identity politics over structural analysis. The authors highlight the tension between intersectionality's original goal of linking theory and practice and its increasing abstraction within academic discourse. They conclude that for intersectionality to remain a transformative framework, scholars must remain attentive to its activist roots and the real-world implications of intersecting systems of power.

### 11. Key definitions:

- *Intersectionality*: A theoretical and methodological approach that examines how multiple systems of power, such as race, gender, class, and sexuality, interact to produce unique forms of inequality.
- *Multidimensionality*: The idea that social identities and experiences are shaped by the simultaneous and interrelated effects of multiple systems of oppression.
- *Sociology of knowledge*: An analytical perspective that examines how knowledge is produced, legitimized, and institutionalized within social structures.
- *Matrix of domination*: A conceptual framework that describes how different forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, and classism, interact to structure social hierarchies and lived experiences.
- *Standpoint epistemology*: A perspective that argues knowledge is shaped by social position and that marginalized groups possess unique insights into systems of power due to their lived experiences.

#### 6.13.5 The Black Women of the US Congress: Learning from Descriptive Data

Brown, N. E., Clark, C. J., & Mahoney, A. (2022). The Black Women of the US Congress: Learning from Descriptive Data [Publisher: Routledge \_eprint: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1554477X.2022.2074757>]. *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, 43(3), 328–346. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1554477X.2022.2074757>

1. **Citation key:** brown\_black\_2022
2. **Author(s):** Nadia E. Brown, Christopher J. Clark, and Anna Mahoney
3. **Year:** 2022
4. **Publication:** Journal of Women, Politics & Policy
5. **Keywords:** descriptive data, intersectionality, black women, political elites, congress
6. **Summary:** Brown, Clark, and Mahoney analyze the representation of Black women in the U.S. Congress through a descriptive study, documenting their demographic characteristics, professional backgrounds, and institutional roles. By examining the experiences of the 52 Black women who have served in Congress since 1969, they argue that Black Congresswomen have historically navigated a legislative institution shaped by White male dominance. Their analysis highlights the barriers these lawmakers have faced, the pathways they have taken to national office, and the broader implications for legislative studies and diversity in political representation.
7. **Theory:** The authors argue that Black women in Congress must be understood within the broader historical and institutional context of racial and gender exclusion. Traditional studies of Congress have centered on White male lawmakers, failing to account for how intersectional identities shape institutional experiences and political representation. Drawing on gender and race scholarship, the authors contend that Black Congresswomen disrupt conventional understandings of legislative behavior by entering Congress through pathways that differ from their White and male counterparts. Their participation offers a unique perspective on congressional norms, highlighting both structural barriers and opportunities within a diversifying legislature. The study challenges androcentric and race-neutral frameworks in political science, advocating for an expanded research agenda that accounts for the experiences of marginalized lawmakers.
8. **Methods:** The study employs a descriptive research design, compiling data on Black Congresswomen from congressional archives, biographies, government documents, and secondary sources. The dataset includes variables such as partisan affiliation, educational attainment, occupational background, years of service, committee assignments, leadership roles, and involvement in organizations like the Congressional Black Caucus and Black Greek Letter organizations. The authors also provide a historical overview, detailing the emergence of Black women in Congress beginning with Shirley Chisholm's election in 1968. Rather than testing causal relationships, the study focuses on classification, comparison, and pattern identification, offering a foundation for future research on diversity in Congress.
9. **Hypotheses:** While the study does not explicitly test hypotheses, the authors suggest several key claims:
  - Black women in Congress have historically been underrepresented due to institutional and structural barriers.
  - Descriptive representation of Black women has increased since the passage of the Voting Rights Act, often in districts with sizable Black populations.
  - Black Congresswomen take distinct pathways to office, frequently emerging from professional backgrounds in education, law, and community activism.
  - Despite their increasing presence, Black women continue to be underrepresented in congressional leadership positions.
10. **Main findings:** The authors find that Black women remain significantly underrepresented in Congress, comprising less than one-half of one percent of all congressional members throughout U.S. history. Their pathways to office have often been shaped by racial and gendered barriers, but also by opportunities created by district demographics, voting rights legislation, and community engagement. The analysis reveals that Black Congresswomen are more likely

to have backgrounds in public service and advocacy, with a significant number emerging from education and legal professions. The study also highlights disparities in institutional power, noting that while Black women have gained committee assignments and caucus leadership roles, they have rarely been appointed to high-ranking leadership positions within Congress. The findings emphasize the need for continued research on how race and gender intersect to shape legislative behavior and institutional access.

**11. Key quotations:**

- “We argue that this descriptive data will prompt new questions for legislative scholars and open conversations about disciplinary norms and assumptions which may need revision in light of Congress’ increasing diversification” (p. 328).
- “By centering Black women, we learn about the pathways that they take to Congress which helps to broaden the scholarly scope of which members are elected to this body” (p. 330).
- “This descriptive research should enable scholars to refine and clarify the nature of the problem, namely the lack of diversity in Congress” (p. 332).

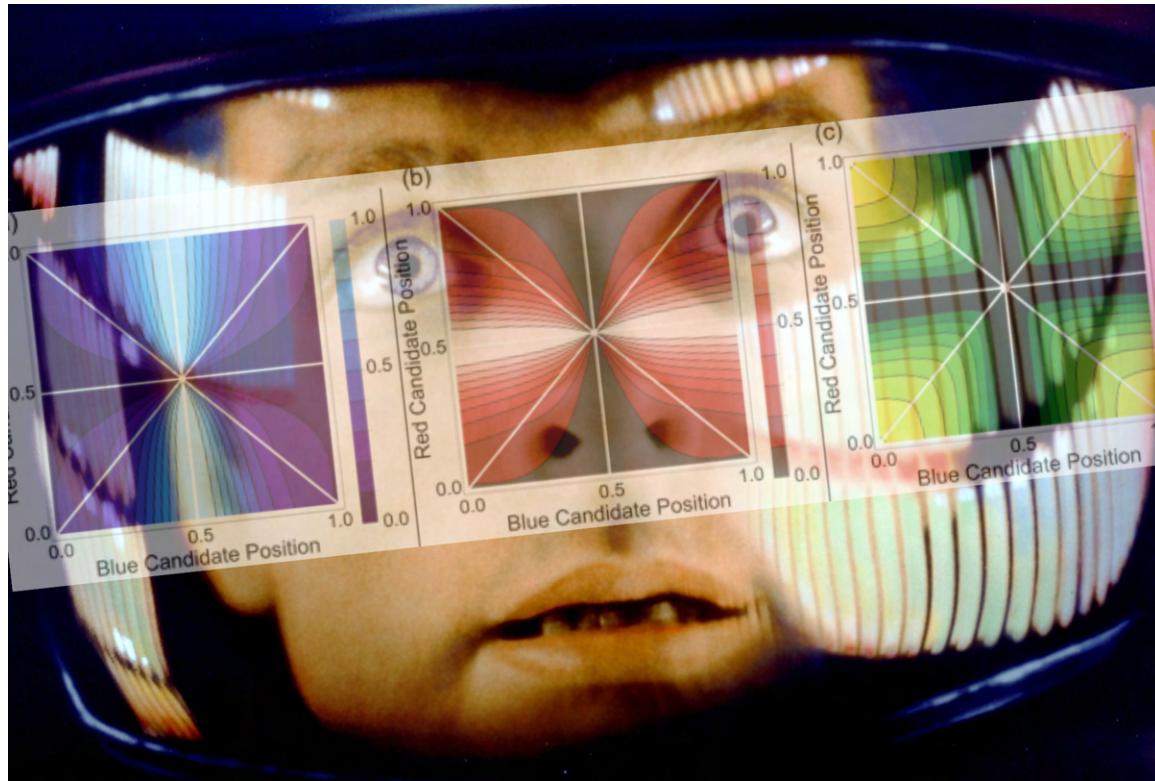


Figure 6.1: “Oh my God... It’s full of stars!”



## Index of Keywords

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### Symbols

1896 election, 368  
2016 election, 485

### A

abortion, 328, 331, 658  
abortion debate, 434  
abortion policy, 227  
abortion politics, 629  
accessibility, 15, 210  
accountability, 55, 207, 598, 675  
acculturation, 111  
active representation, 100  
activists, 372  
adaptive behavior, 313  
administrative law, 589  
administrative reform, 318  
adversarial legalism, 136  
adverse selection, 88, 418  
advertising effects, 45  
advocacy, 82, 84  
advocacy politics, 327  
affect, 220  
affective calculus, 218  
affective intelligence, 68, 498  
affective intelligence theory, 179  
affective polarization, 57–60, 69, 189, 256, 442, 501, 523, 524, 663  
affective reasoning, 24  
affective response, 218  
affective responses, 222  
affirmative action, 241  
African-American politics, 387  
agency design, 150  
agenda-setting, 268, 435, 474, 507  
agenda-setting models, 125  
agenda control, 122, 124, 396, 555  
agenda setting, 272, 278, 471, 563  
aggregate analysis, 373  
aggregate partisanship, 358  
aggregate public opinion, 297  
aggression, 640  
algorithmic curation, 500  
alternative health media, 280  
ambition, 598  
ambivalence, 15, 53, 226–230, 232  
American Bar Association, 665  
American democracy, 49, 158, 161, 309  
American Dream, 282  
American electorate, 337, 343  
American exceptionalism, 136, 157  
American political arena, 686

American political development, 147  
American political parties, 90  
American political system, 308  
American politics, 86, 89, 236, 283, 324, 339, 344, 368, 524, 682  
anger, 496  
anti-Blackness, 246  
anticipatory representation, 100  
antipartyism, 321  
antipoverty programs, 108  
antiterrorism policies, 222  
anxiety, 219, 222  
appropriations, 128, 562  
Arab Spring, 484  
arousal, 222  
ascriptive characteristics, 669  
Asian Americans, 238, 389, 394  
assimilation, 246  
attention economy, 502, 503  
attitude accessibility, 190  
attitude attribution, 218  
attitude change, 15, 224  
attitudes, 227  
attitude stability, 15, 228  
attitude strength, 23  
attitude structure, 183  
attitudinal consistency, 184  
attitudinal model, 133, 134  
audience fragmentation, 432  
audience selectivity, 435  
authoritarianism, 532  
authoritarian regimes, 260, 488  
automaticity, 24  
autonomy, 598  
avoidance, 450

### B

backsliding, 152  
ballot propositions, 212  
Barack Obama, 112  
bargaining power, 677  
Bayesian hierarchical models, 597  
Bayesian learning, 201, 379  
Bayesian methods, 314  
Bayesian updating, 345, 455  
behavioral genetics, 25  
behavioral revolution, 180  
belief importance, 211  
belief stereotypes, 632  
belief systems, 10–12, 21, 183, 185–187  
biased information, 201  
biases, 200

bicameralism, 565  
 bill sponsorship, 129, 565, 567  
 bipartisanship, 652  
 black-and-white model, 12  
 Black feminism, 448  
 Black Lives Matter, 486, 526, 538  
 Black Nationalism, 387  
 Black press, 538  
 Black utility heuristic, 106  
 black women, 687  
 blame-game politics, 559  
 blame attribution, 243  
 blue slips, 586  
 Blumer's theory, 240  
 bounded rationality, 173, 175, 176, 202  
 breadwinner effect, 622  
 British politics, 328  
 budgetary appropriations, 150  
 bureaucracy, 149, 318  
 bureaucratic control, 585, 587, 589  
 bureaucratic responsiveness, 577  
 bureaucratization, 88

**C**

cabinet selection, 674  
 cable television, 148  
 calcification, 69  
 campaign activism, 330  
 campaign ads, 45  
 campaign advertising, 520  
 campaign contributions, 156  
 campaign coverage, 464, 515  
 campaign dynamics, 273  
 campaign effects, 46  
 campaign finance, 86, 93, 581, 603, 627, 630  
 campaign finance reform, 229  
 campaign intensity, 513  
 campaign involvement, 56, 219  
 campaigns, 19, 121, 634  
 campaign spending, 46  
 campaign strategies, 311  
 campaign strategy, 39, 66, 436, 446, 640  
 candidate-centered campaigns, 90  
 candidate emergence, 64, 600, 620, 622, 661  
 candidate emotions, 638  
 candidate entry, 546  
 candidate evaluation, 209, 220, 338, 378, 518, 632  
 candidate evaluations, 633, 641  
 candidate experience, 605  
 candidate nomination, 91  
 candidate positioning, 31, 316  
 candidate qualifications, 637, 639  
 candidate recruitment, 323, 628, 629, 672  
 candidate selection, 671  
 candidate strategy, 372, 636  
 candidate viability, 603  
 carceral state, 47, 158  
 career ambition, 584  
 causal inference, 138, 195  
 censorship, 488  
 census-based measures, 261  
 certiorari, 592  
 challenger success, 93  
 chaos theory, 400

childhood development, 623  
 China, 536  
 circuit courts, 584  
 citation analysis, 449  
 citizen attitudes, 10  
 citizen competence, 204–206, 210  
 citizen decision-making, 497  
 citizen groups, 75  
 citizen participation, 437  
 civic competence, 216  
 civic culture, 534  
 civic duty, 32  
 civic engagement, 40, 47, 49, 154, 431, 678  
 civic participation, 16  
 civic skills, 41, 48  
 civic voluntarism, 41, 329  
 civil liberties, 22, 233, 237  
 civil rights, 84, 137, 235  
 civil rights movement, 81  
 civil rights policy, 576  
 civil society organizations, 470  
 class, 106, 236, 244, 582  
 classification models, 411  
 climate change, 647  
 cloture, 566, 573  
 cloture rule, 568  
 coalition-building, 80  
 coalition behavior, 398  
 coalition building, 79, 91  
 coalition dynamics, 332  
 coalition formation, 315, 568  
 cognitive complexity, 186, 187  
 cognitive efficiency, 202  
 cognitive effort, 281  
 cognitive engagement, 513  
 cognitive evaluations, 285  
 cognitive heuristics, 25  
 cognitive psychology, 19, 173, 180, 200, 477  
 cohort replacement, 347  
 collective action, 71, 72, 81, 260, 532  
 collective conservatism, 292  
 collective representation, 384  
 collegiality, 652  
 committee assignments, 128  
 committee hearings, 601, 649  
 committee membership, 567  
 committee system, 119, 400  
 communication effects, 23, 441  
 communication pedagogy, 451  
 communication resource mobilization, 494  
 communication technology, 432  
 communism, 233  
 community nationalism, 387  
 community participation, 49  
 comparative politics, 397  
 comparative research, 442, 443  
 competition, 102, 455  
 competitive democracy, 514  
 computational methods, 486  
 conditional party government, 126, 401, 403  
 Confederate Congress, 407  
 confidence in institutions, 287  
 confirmation process, 586  
 conflict, 415

conflict expansion, 78  
 conflicting information, 497  
 Congress, 79, 116, 119–121, 123, 126, 128, 285, 402, 408, 541, 591, 598, 599, 601, 652, 684  
 congress, 687  
 congressional behavior, 110, 561  
 congressional committees, 118, 399, 401  
 congressional communication, 597  
 congressional constraint, 592  
 congressional constraints, 595, 596  
 congressional decision-making, 120  
 congressional diversity, 84  
 congressional dysfunction, 601  
 congressional elections, 101, 103, 230, 358, 546, 605, 630, 639  
 congressional influence, 593  
 congressional inquiries, 577  
 congressional institutions, 126, 403, 404  
 congressional investigations, 594  
 congressional leadership, 574  
 congressional organization, 86  
 congressional parties, 555  
 congressional politics, 384  
 congressional primaries, 603, 625  
 congressional productivity, 565  
 congressional responsiveness, 578  
 congressional roll call votes, 383  
 congressional rules, 405, 406, 409  
 congressional speech, 657  
 congressional strategy, 562  
 congressional voting, 410–413, 552  
 congressional voting patterns, 395  
 conjoint experiment, 628  
 connective action, 483, 486  
 consensus, 213  
 conservatism, 293  
 conservative women, 658  
 constituencies, 117  
 constituency influence, 383  
 constituency service, 397  
 constituent opinion, 578  
 constitutional design, 142  
 constitutional interpretation, 136  
 constitutional norms, 560  
 constitutional specificity, 142  
 constrained court view, 137  
 constraint, 186, 188  
 constructionism, 440  
 consumer demand, 455  
 consumer sentiment, 359, 360  
 contentiousness, 534  
 contentment, 265  
 context effects, 111  
 contextual effects, 259, 261, 263  
 contextualism, 443  
 contextual uncertainty, 258  
 conversion, 368, 374  
 conversion hypothesis, 367  
 core affect, 222  
 core beliefs, 225, 227  
 corporate influence, 452  
 correction, 197  
 corruption, 675  
 counteractive lobbying, 77

counterarguments, 215  
 court curbing, 591  
 Courts of Appeals, 141  
 COVID-19, 421, 494  
 crafted talk, 98  
 crime news, 508  
 criminal justice, 158  
 criminal justice system, 47  
 crisis, 439  
 critical elections, 63, 182, 363, 365, 368  
 critical realignment, 371  
 critical realignments, 357, 374  
 critical theory, 451  
 cross-cutting conversations, 250, 251  
 cross-cutting discourse, 252  
 cross-cutting relationships, 539  
 cross-cutting views, 249  
 cross-national analysis, 525  
 cross-national studies, 443  
 cross-pressures, 248, 250  
 cultural capital, 448  
 cultural diversity, 482  
 curated flows, 500, 505

**D**

Dahl, 132  
 Dear Colleague letters, 599  
 death penalty, 140  
 decision-making, 27, 45, 173, 175, 176, 206  
 decision making, 25  
 decision rules, 650  
 deep involvement, 457  
 defense ministers, 674  
 delegation, 150  
 deliberation, 107, 213, 214, 216, 250, 649, 650  
 deliberative democracy, 192, 215, 249, 250, 252, 335, 531, 537  
 demobilization, 45, 374  
 democracy, 11, 29, 73, 107, 131, 152, 191, 192, 415, 416, 529, 530, 532, 614  
 democratic accountability, 53, 90, 100, 194, 291  
 democratic backsliding, 153  
 democratic citizenship, 156  
 democratic engagement, 16  
 democratic governance, 159  
 democratic inclusion, 154  
 democratic institutions, 80  
 democratic legitimacy, 535, 662  
 democratic norms, 237, 309  
 democratic participation, 270  
 Democratic Party, 86, 391  
 Democratic primary, 642  
 Democratic realignment, 366  
 democratic representation, 297  
 democratic responsiveness, 98  
 democratic theory, 183, 187, 214, 373  
 democratization, 614  
 demographic alignment, 59  
 demographic change, 44  
 descriptive data, 687  
 descriptive representation, 107, 243, 246, 385, 386, 577, 650, 657, 660–663, 667, 671  
 diffuse support, 284  
 diffusion of information, 487

digital divide, 448, 482  
 digital journalism, 538  
 digital media, 432, 433, 483, 496, 502, 503, 505, 535  
 digital profiteering, 494  
 digital transformation, 472  
 dimensionality, 554  
 direct democracy, 212  
 directional motives, 197  
 directional theory, 310  
 directional voting, 314  
 disadvantaged subgroups, 82  
 disagreement, 498  
 discharge petitions, 407  
 discourse, 439, 470  
 discretion, 145, 668  
 discussion, 245  
 discussion networks, 450  
 disenfranchisement, 86  
 disinformation, 547  
 distributive policies, 286  
 distributive politics, 96, 97, 118, 128, 156  
 distrust, 287  
 divided government, 417, 558, 559, 563, 565  
 Dobbs decision, 143  
 domain-specific reasoning, 188  
 domestic policy, 150  
 dominant group identity, 114  
 don't know responses, 193  
 donor networks, 627  
 Downsian theory, 74  
 Downsian voting, 312  
 Dr. Oz, 280  
 dual-process models, 180, 378  
 dual-process theory, 24  
 duration models, 587  
 duration of communication effects, 441  
 dyadic representation, 97, 384  
 dynamic court view, 137  
 dynamic measures, 263  
 dynamic modeling, 315  
 dynamic models, 331  
 dynamic public opinion, 23  
 dynamic representation, 95, 297

**E**

early republic, 560  
 East Germany, 260  
 echo chambers, 489  
 economic competition, 420  
 economic conditions, 35  
 economic context, 36  
 economic development, 647  
 economic elites, 83, 579  
 economic evaluations, 354  
 economic individualism, 225  
 economic mobility, 282  
 economic shocks, 360  
 economic voting, 436  
 education, 511, 582  
 efficiency, 400  
 egalitarianism, 276  
 election 2016, 472  
 election aversion, 620  
 election coverage, 479, 480

election dynamics, 358  
 election news, 453  
 election outcomes, 273  
 election polls, 62  
 election reforms, 89  
 elections, 46, 95, 121, 243, 507, 521, 522, 682  
 electoral accountability, 28, 338, 373, 576  
 electoral behavior, 17, 269, 341, 371  
 electoral bias, 637  
 electoral change, 357, 368  
 electoral choice, 43  
 electoral competition, 413, 546, 603  
 electoral connection, 116  
 electoral decision-making, 34, 228  
 electoral discrimination, 110  
 electoral dynamics, 62, 374  
 electoral engagement, 38  
 electoral equilibrium, 332  
 electoral geography, 262  
 electoral goals, 117  
 electoral history, 681  
 electoral incentives, 561  
 electoral institutions, 680  
 electoral landscapes, 313  
 electoral laws, 101  
 electoral mandate, 29  
 electoral mobilization, 319  
 electoral outcomes, 66  
 electoral participation, 250, 339  
 electoral politics, 51, 91, 236, 433, 651  
 electoral preferences, 310  
 electoral psychology, 66  
 electoral realignment, 363  
 electoral realignments, 63  
 electoral reform, 560  
 electoral reforms, 129  
 electoral responsiveness, 31  
 electoral settings, 324  
 electoral support, 636  
 electoral systems, 344  
 electoral trends, 363, 364  
 electoral viability, 634  
 elite-mass dynamics, 370  
 elite behavior, 333, 334  
 elite competition, 54, 214  
 elite cues, 205, 377, 497  
 elite domination, 83  
 elite influence, 15, 22, 211, 250, 290, 434, 468, 514  
 elite polarization, 346, 347  
 elite press, 270  
 elite public, 183  
 elitism, 214  
 emotion, 179, 501  
 emotional arousal, 272  
 emotional intensity, 657  
 emotional reactions, 285  
 emotion in politics, 218, 219  
 emotions, 68, 180, 221, 498  
 emotions in politics, 496  
 empathy, 666  
 empirical methods, 685  
 endogeneity, 273  
 endogenous beliefs, 438  
 endorsements, 89

engaged public, 52  
 enlightened preferences, 62  
 enlightenment, 213  
 entertainment, 538  
 entertainment media, 282  
 entertainment preferences, 195  
 enthusiasm, 68, 219, 221  
 entrenchment, 142  
 environmental constraints, 76  
 environmental health, 258  
 environmental selection, 75  
 equality of opportunity, 225  
 equity, 145  
 equivocation, 232  
 ESA model, 76  
 ethnic identity, 111, 391  
 ethnocentrism, 111  
 ethnography, 253  
 evaluative bias, 376  
 evaluative space, 227  
 evangelicals, 390  
 everyday political talk, 536  
 executive-legislative relations, 558, 560  
 executive appointments, 587, 674, 675  
 executive branch, 146  
 executive decrees, 151  
 executive nominations, 585  
 executive office, 672  
 expected utility, 175  
 experiential knowledge, 216  
 experiment, 524  
 experimental design, 275  
 experimental methods, 177, 620, 621  
 experimental research, 245  
 experiments, 450  
 expertise, 421, 519  
 expert opinion, 205  
 expert surveys, 554  
 expressive partisanship, 56  
 Extended Party Network, 93  
 external validity, 177  
 extremism, 66  
 extremists, 317  
 eye tracking, 524

**F**

Facebook, 490  
 facial dominance, 522  
 fact-checking, 521  
 factionalism, 67  
 fake news, 442, 485, 490  
 farsighted voting, 315  
 fear, 68, 206, 221  
 federal courts, 138, 666  
 federal funds, 96, 97  
 federalism, 136, 152, 153, 156, 161, 418, 420  
 female candidates, 640  
 feminism, 332, 644, 645  
 feminist identity, 393  
 feminist policy, 109  
 feminist political science, 616  
 feminist research, 617  
 feminist theory, 615  
 field experiment, 32, 33, 45, 198

field experiments, 39, 626  
 filibuster, 120, 566, 568, 571, 573  
 First Amendment, 530  
 flexibility, 142  
 folk theory of democracy, 29  
 followership psychology, 522  
 foreign affairs, 190  
 foreign policy, 150, 469, 509  
 formal theory, 125  
 Fox News, 381, 546  
 fractional integration, 358, 361  
 framing, 23, 460, 470, 471, 514  
 framing effects, 19, 54, 176, 211, 214, 250, 516  
 free-rider problem, 72  
 free enterprise system, 225  
 fundraising, 603, 605

**G**

G.I. Bill, 154  
 gains from exchange, 400  
 game frame, 274, 476, 480  
 game theory, 206, 315, 438  
 gatekeeping, 472, 545  
 gender, 64, 100, 113, 138, 243, 245, 615, 617, 628, 630, 635, 638, 639, 647, 649, 652, 653, 655, 656, 666, 669, 685  
 gender-sensitive analysis, 618  
 gender and elections, 621, 625  
 gender and policing, 668  
 gender and politics, 620, 622, 662, 673–675, 678, 680, 681  
 gender bias, 449, 665  
 gender blindness, 618  
 gender diversity, 604, 667  
 gender division of labor, 677  
 gendered backlash, 642  
 gendered vulnerability, 651  
 gender gap, 115, 196, 242–244, 600, 644–646, 682  
 gender identity, 390  
 gender inequality, 650, 678  
 gender mainstreaming, 616  
 gender politics, 386, 393  
 gender quotas, 680  
 gender representation, 109, 110, 246, 323  
 gender scholarship, 686  
 gender socialization, 623  
 gender stereotypes, 632–634, 636, 637, 640–642  
 gender stereotyping, 671  
 gender voting gap, 677  
 general-interest policies, 163  
 general knowledge, 295  
 genetic predisposition, 349  
 genetics, 25  
 geographic disparities, 156  
 geographic distribution, 96  
 geographic sorting, 350  
 geographic units, 259  
 geography, 478  
 geolocation data, 263  
 gerrymandering, 101, 152  
 going public, 593  
 GOTV (Get Out The Vote), 33  
 government liberalism, 420  
 government spending, 286  
 government structure, 71

graduate education, 451  
 Granger causality, 361  
 grassroots activism, 93  
 Great Firewall, 488  
 gridlock, 120  
 gridlock interval, 553  
 grievance, 265  
 group-based affect, 267  
 group-based emotions, 179  
 group attachment, 229  
 group competition, 240  
 group conflict, 105, 237  
 group consciousness, 48, 114  
 group dynamics, 248  
 group formation, 75  
 group identity, 57  
 group interests, 107  
 group maintenance, 75  
 group perceptions, 393  
 group theory, 72  
 group threat, 240  
 group threat theory, 508  
 gun control, 288  
 gyroscopic representation, 100

**H**

health care policy, 156  
 heritability, 349  
 heterogeneous groups, 254  
 heteroskedastic probit, 227  
 heuristics, 178, 192, 200, 202–207, 210, 214  
 heuristic voting, 17  
 hierarchical model, 185  
 Hillary Clinton, 621, 673  
 historical persistence, 388  
 horse race, 472  
 horserace journalism, 453, 464  
 hostile media perception, 517  
 hostile sexism, 115, 244, 390  
 hot cognition, 220  
 House of Representatives, 31, 403–406, 409  
 hybrid field, 440  
 hybrid media, 494  
 hybrid media system, 547  
 hybrid model, 518

**I**

ideal point estimation, 125, 314  
 identity, 59  
 identity politics, 69  
 identity switching, 59  
 identity threat, 394  
 ideological awareness, 182  
 ideological balance, 409  
 ideological conflict, 43  
 ideological consistency, 215  
 ideological constraint, 21, 185  
 ideological divergence, 31  
 ideological divisions, 334  
 ideological exposure, 489  
 ideological influence, 141  
 ideological orientation, 210  
 ideological polarization, 93, 266, 337, 381, 581  
 ideological slant, 454

ideological sorting, 52, 347, 348  
 ideology, 13, 123, 134, 139, 226, 286, 311, 408, 522, 524, 552  
 immigration, 114, 246  
 immigration courts, 143  
 imperialism, 451  
 impersonal influence, 271  
 implementation, 163  
 implicit bias, 57  
 impression-driven processing, 209  
 impression formation, 641  
 incidental exposure, 505, 527  
 incivility, 20, 272, 537, 640  
 income-based voting, 36  
 income inequality, 74, 157, 287  
 incumbency, 102, 358  
 incumbency advantage, 103, 397  
 incumbents, 284  
 independent agencies, 589  
 independents, 351  
 indexing, 469  
 indexing hypothesis, 460, 474  
 India, 198  
 individualism, 106, 276  
 inequality, 16, 52, 156, 161, 191  
 informal groups, 253  
 information, 204  
 informational lobbying, 80  
 informational theory, 118  
 information asymmetries, 126  
 information cascades, 484  
 information costs, 27, 34  
 information demand, 456  
 information effects, 297, 299  
 information environment, 18, 505, 511, 512  
 information flows, 377  
 information inequality, 195  
 information networks, 500, 519  
 information processing, 25, 180, 376, 378, 504  
 information search, 206  
 information sharing, 501  
 information shortcuts, 27, 202, 292  
 infotainment, 510  
 institutional change, 126, 409, 572  
 institutional context, 100  
 institutional design, 130, 287, 396  
 institutional legitimacy, 143, 284  
 institutional path dependence, 432  
 institutional reform, 601  
 institutional resistance, 616  
 institutional structure, 565  
 institutions, 615  
 instrumental values, 224  
 insurgent campaigns, 436  
 integration, 534  
 interbranch conflict, 594  
 interdisciplinary research, 178  
 interest group coalitions, 93  
 interest groups, 71, 74–80, 82, 83, 91, 123, 207, 578, 599  
 intergovernmental relations, 418  
 intergroup relations, 246  
 internal validity, 177  
 international relations, 180  
 Internet, 484  
 Internet diffusion, 482

- internet freedom, 488  
 interparty competition, 88  
 interparty hostility, 663  
 interpersonal influence, 269  
 interpersonal relationships, 256  
 interpretive effects, 154  
 interrupted time-series, 357  
 intersectionality, 82, 113, 115, 244, 615, 641, 684–687  
 intraparty conflict, 328  
 intraparty democracy, 86, 308  
 investment theory of voting, 34  
 invisible primary, 65, 67, 89  
 Iraq War, 380, 469  
 Islam, 470  
 issue attention, 278, 563, 567  
 issue coalitions, 327  
 issue conversion, 328  
 issue evolution, 235, 370  
 issue framing, 210  
 issue ownership, 635  
 issue proximity, 376  
 issue publics, 194  
 issue salience, 595  
 issue uptake, 121  
 issue voting, 182, 184, 190, 310, 337
- J**  
 journalism, 439, 447, 459, 461, 463, 467, 468, 472, 479, 542, 547  
 journalism norms, 476  
 journalistic behavior, 477  
 journalistic norms, 460, 547  
 judging, 139  
 judgment, 200  
 judicial appointments, 588, 667  
 judicial authority, 143  
 judicial behavior, 133, 134, 138, 139, 584, 596  
 judicial bias, 669  
 judicial constraint, 141  
 judicial decision-making, 133, 134, 666  
 judicial diversity, 665  
 judicial independence, 132, 136, 140, 143  
 judicial legitimacy, 591  
 judicial limitations, 137  
 judicial nominations, 586, 604  
 judicial power, 137  
 judicial review, 131, 136  
 judicial selection, 140, 592, 665, 667
- K**  
 knowledge gap, 511  
 knowledge production, 616  
 Kosovo crisis, 19  
 Ku Klux Klan, 22
- L**  
 laboratory experiments, 177  
 labor market, 677  
 labor policy, 420  
 Latino politics, 111, 246, 391  
 Latinos, 394  
 lawmaking, 120, 553, 574  
 leadership, 146, 673
- learning, 19, 255, 419, 524  
 legal culture, 136  
 legal doctrine, 141  
 legal model, 133, 134  
 legal realism, 133  
 legislative accountability, 86  
 legislative bargaining, 315, 558, 562  
 legislative behavior, 66, 109, 116, 124, 125, 127, 130, 314, 317, 383, 384, 395, 397, 402, 407, 408, 410, 412, 413, 567, 651, 655, 657  
 legislative choice, 396  
 legislative decision rules, 568  
 legislative effectiveness, 130  
 legislative entrepreneurship, 129, 565  
 legislative gridlock, 565  
 legislative influence, 77, 80  
 legislative institutions, 119, 400, 406  
 legislative leadership, 126  
 legislative norms, 120  
 legislative obstruction, 566  
 legislative organization, 118, 122, 399–401, 405  
 legislative oversight, 577  
 legislative participation, 120  
 legislative performance, 110, 653  
 legislative polarization, 91  
 legislative procedure, 571  
 legislative process, 79, 593, 599, 601  
 legislative processes, 574  
 legislative productivity, 417  
 legislative representation, 597  
 legislative responsiveness, 121, 278  
 legislative rules, 404  
 legislative signaling, 559  
 legislative staff, 578  
 legislative strategy, 595  
 legislative subsidy, 80, 123  
 legislative success, 84  
 legislative voting, 80  
 legitimacy, 132  
 legitimacy of opposition, 272  
 liberalism, 185, 293  
 likability heuristic, 218  
 linguistic style, 673  
 linked fate, 106, 262, 391  
 LISREL modeling, 97  
 list experiment, 241  
 Literary Digest, 367  
 litigation, 136, 137  
 lobbying, 77, 79, 80, 123  
 local elections, 206, 323  
 local government, 287  
 local media, 277, 541  
 local party chairs, 628  
 local TV news, 279  
 longitudinal experiments, 516  
 loss aversion, 174, 176  
 loyalty, 55
- M**  
 machine politics, 322  
 macroeconomic conditions, 242  
 macroideology, 294, 361  
 macropartisanship, 294, 354–361  
 macro polity, 297

- mainstream media, 495  
 majoritarian democracy, 83  
 majoritarian exceptions, 571  
 majority control, 127  
 majority party, 404, 405, 407  
 majority party power, 556  
 majority rule, 131, 308, 396, 415  
 marginalization, 684  
 market competition, 464  
 market incentives, 456  
 mass-elite linkages, 97  
 mass collectives, 271  
 mass communication, 432, 441  
 mass incarceration, 158  
 mass media, 249, 260, 276, 290, 515, 529  
 mass partisanship, 348  
 mass public, 183, 278  
 mass publics, 11  
 material concerns, 353  
 Matilda effect, 449  
 MAUP, 264  
 McCarthyism, 233  
 measurement, 111, 186, 278, 614  
 measurement error, 183, 343  
 measurement theory, 342  
 measurement validity, 193, 264  
 media, 255, 470, 471  
 media attention, 479  
 media bias, 453–455, 459, 465, 467–469, 474, 475, 477, 542  
 media choice, 195  
 media commercialization, 461  
 media consolidation, 463, 464  
 media consumption, 381, 478, 502  
 media convergence, 432  
 media coverage, 18, 195, 196, 212, 504, 523  
 media deliberation, 270  
 media economics, 456  
 media effects, 19, 20, 55, 268, 271, 273, 275, 278–282, 285,  
     433, 440, 443, 457, 507, 509–512, 514, 516, 530,  
     537, 544, 545  
 media engagement, 472  
 media environment, 52, 533  
 media exposure, 269, 500  
 media fragmentation, 148, 435, 517, 533, 535  
 media frames, 19  
 media framing, 22, 176, 276, 434, 476, 480, 526  
 media history, 432  
 media independence, 462  
 media influence, 62, 298  
 media literacy, 198  
 media logic, 437, 447  
 media malaise, 431  
 media management, 446  
 media markets, 478  
 median voter theorem, 392  
 media ownership, 452, 464, 530  
 media power, 529  
 media representation, 108  
 media skepticism, 495  
 media slant, 465  
 media sociology, 468  
 media studies, 439  
 media supply, 478  
 media systems, 461  
 mediatisation, 437  
 mediatization, 447, 529  
 media trust, 272, 517  
 Medicaid, 156  
 member-constituent relationship, 385  
 member motivations, 401  
 memory, 209  
 memory-based processing, 518  
 memory bias, 376  
 methodology, 278  
 microtargeting, 39  
 midterm elections, 62  
 migration, 350  
 minimal effects, 435  
 minimal effects model, 440  
 minority interest groups, 84  
 minority rights, 308, 402  
 misinformation, 180, 192, 280, 485, 487, 490, 494, 527  
 misperceptions, 59, 199  
 mistrust, 107  
 mobile devices, 503  
 mobile news, 281  
 mobilization, 330, 366, 368, 374  
 moderates, 317  
 moderation, 333  
 modern presidency, 146  
 moral hazard, 88  
 moral polarization, 143  
 Moran's I, 262  
 motherhood, 622  
 motion to table, 556  
 motivated reasoning, 24, 55, 92, 220, 254, 380, 520, 544  
 motivation, 204  
 motive attribution, 234  
 motives, 139  
 multidimensionality, 686  
 multilevel analysis, 287  
 multiparty systems, 340  
 multiracial dynamics, 240
- N**
- nationalization, 103, 352  
 nationalization of news, 279  
 national parties, 31  
 national party structure, 86  
 natural experiment, 260, 407  
 negative agenda control, 556  
 negative campaigning, 45, 66, 521, 635  
 negative partisanship, 352  
 negativity, 376  
 negativity bias, 227, 504, 525  
 neighborhood effects, 258, 262  
 networked activism, 483  
 network television, 475  
 New Deal coalition, 366  
 New Deal realignment, 367  
 new institutionalism, 462, 463  
 new media environment, 432  
 news avoidance, 538  
 news bias, 452  
 news consumption, 453, 478, 503–505, 539  
 news content, 456  
 news content analysis, 454  
 news coverage, 460, 469

news decisions, 477  
 news discourse, 512  
 news diversity, 533  
 news engagement, 502  
 news exposure, 478, 495  
 news generation, 471  
 news media, 272, 459, 462, 463, 542  
 newspaper demand, 465  
 newspapers, 277  
 newspaper strike, 269  
 news portal, 275  
 news production, 468, 472  
 news reporting, 467  
 news website, 524  
 nineteenth-century politics, 320, 322  
 NOMINATE, 408, 552  
 nonattitudes, 12  
 nonmainstream media, 495  
 nonpartisan elections, 140  
 nonpartisanship, 342  
 nonverbal cues, 522  
 normal vote, 357, 371, 373  
 normative theory, 537  
 norm compliance, 32  
 nuclear option, 573

**O**  
 OECD, 419  
 on-line processing, 518  
 one-party system, 86  
 online deliberation, 536  
 open-minded thinking, 513  
 opinion change, 19, 45  
 opinion formation, 248, 380, 516  
 opinion leaders, 519  
 opinion surveys, 297  
 opposition to welfare, 239  
 organizational adaptation, 75  
 organizational analysis, 467  
 organized interests, 79  
 outside lobbying, 78  
 ownership structure, 465

**P**  
 Pan-Asian hypothesis, 238  
 panethnic identity, 394  
 paradox of objectivity, 475  
 paradox of participation, 328  
 participatory democracy, 252  
 participatory stratification, 329  
 partisan attitudes, 523  
 partisan behavior, 60, 382  
 partisan bias, 18, 92, 379, 380, 663  
 partisan biases, 197  
 partisan change, 331  
 partisan cleavages, 347  
 partisan competition, 152  
 partisan conflict, 127, 398  
 partisan cues, 54  
 partisan discrimination, 57  
 partisan donors, 581  
 partisan dynamics, 354  
 partisan elections, 140  
 partisan homogeneity, 231

partisan identification, 210  
 partisan identity, 56, 58, 59  
 partisan loyalty, 320  
 partisan media, 55, 275, 279, 381, 517, 544, 546  
 partisan news media, 501  
 partisan polarization, 74, 102, 153, 262, 265, 347, 348, 351  
 partisan politics, 418, 604  
 partisan realignment, 367, 372  
 partisan reasoning, 198  
 partisan schema, 376  
 partisanship, 51–53, 55, 57, 59, 230, 242, 243, 254–256, 266, 277, 297, 335, 338, 343, 345–347, 349–351, 379, 389, 390, 395, 399, 413, 421, 524, 534, 574, 579, 635, 639, 646  
 partisanship stability, 355  
 partisan sorting, 646  
 partisan stability, 394  
 partisan stereotypes, 378, 636  
 partisan theories, 409  
 party-defining issues, 97  
 party activism, 326, 328  
 party activists, 331, 332  
 party agents, 322  
 party alignment, 123  
 party attachment, 51  
 party canvassing, 319  
 party cleavages, 326  
 party coalitions, 65, 67, 89, 369  
 party cohesion, 327  
 party competition, 127, 402  
 party complexity, 88  
 party composition, 59  
 party cues, 22, 441  
 party culture, 627  
 party development, 322  
 party differential, 27  
 party discipline, 88, 410, 412  
 party effects, 407  
 party government, 400, 406, 413  
 party identification, 13, 14, 42, 182, 338–343, 345, 346, 354–356, 359, 360, 391  
 party influence, 410, 411, 553, 555  
 party labels, 88  
 party leadership, 126, 401, 403, 555  
 party loyalty, 103, 352  
 party mobilization, 320  
 party networks, 323  
 party organization, 88  
 party organizations, 321  
 party ownership, 382  
 party platforms, 332  
 party polarization, 90, 370, 386, 555  
 party politics, 73  
 party power, 122, 124  
 party realignment, 235, 236, 243, 337, 368  
 party recruitment, 626  
 party reform, 309  
 party responsiveness, 417  
 party resurgence, 347  
 party sorting, 333  
 party strength, 88, 321, 395  
 party system, 363  
 party systems, 363, 364, 366, 416  
 party unity, 67, 413

- passive representation, 100  
 path dependence, 573  
 patronage, 322  
 peer influence, 33  
 peer networks, 42  
 penal policy, 158  
 perceptions of polarization, 523  
 perceptual bias, 18  
 performance assessment, 28  
 periodicity, 63  
 Persian Gulf crisis, 460  
 persistence, 358  
 personal experience, 216  
 personalized measures, 261  
 personal registration, 365  
 personal relationships, 666  
 personal vote, 129, 397  
 persuasion, 146, 441, 521, 522  
 persuasion effects, 520  
 pivotal politics, 561, 566  
 pivot theory, 553  
 place attachment, 265  
 platforms, 524  
 pluralism, 71, 73, 83  
 pocketbook voting, 35  
 polarization, 43, 52, 54, 55, 58, 66, 69, 103, 152, 272, 288, 309, 328, 331, 335, 382, 390, 392–394, 408, 450, 457, 489, 519, 523, 531–534, 539, 544, 652  
 polarization dynamics, 60  
 police-citizen interactions, 668  
 policy-focused political science, 74  
 policy-making, 80, 131, 132  
 policy-specific information, 295  
 policy-specific knowledge, 195  
 policy adoption, 28  
 policy attention, 471  
 policy attitudes, 646  
 policy change, 369  
 policy debates, 270  
 policy delegation, 418  
 policy demands, 91  
 policy design, 159, 160  
 policy diffusion, 153, 419  
 policy disagreement, 205  
 policy drift, 74  
 policy evaluation, 155  
 policy feedback, 154–156, 163, 291  
 policy implementation, 145, 149  
 policy influence, 40  
 policy information, 22  
 policy making, 151  
 policymaking, 97, 98, 120, 123, 126, 148, 649  
 policy mood, 293, 297  
 policy opinions, 213  
 policy outcomes, 156, 312, 419  
 policy positions, 554  
 policy preferences, 290, 295, 298, 317, 565  
 policy principles, 17  
 policy priorities, 655  
 policy reauthorization, 595  
 policy reform, 163  
 policy responsiveness, 95, 293, 656  
 policy satisfaction, 283  
 policy signals, 599  
 policy variation, 161  
 policy voting, 338, 515  
 political accountability, 383, 541  
 political activism, 40  
 political ads, 221  
 political advertising, 66, 68, 515, 521  
 political advice, 201  
 political alienation, 365  
 political alignment, 346  
 political ambition, 64, 113, 600, 620–623, 625, 626, 629, 642, 671  
 political anger, 256  
 political arguments, 215  
 political attitudes, 21, 25, 180, 183, 185, 189, 222, 234, 266, 271, 279, 345, 388, 645  
 political awareness, 15, 212, 251, 377  
 political behavior, 22, 35, 42, 44, 48, 51, 53, 58, 74, 106, 173, 179, 187, 193, 240, 242, 253, 254, 256, 267, 278, 310, 343, 349, 355, 356, 363, 379, 393, 488, 490, 646  
 political belief systems, 189  
 political brand, 88  
 political campaigns, 23, 202, 513  
 political change, 183, 371  
 political choice, 311  
 political cognition, 376  
 political communication, 55, 148, 176, 192, 221, 249, 278, 290, 433, 435, 437, 440, 442, 443, 446, 447, 453, 454, 461–463, 472, 474–476, 479, 489, 496, 497, 501, 507, 509, 519, 527, 529, 530, 532, 533, 535, 537, 539, 544, 673  
 political communications, 431  
 political competence, 632  
 political conflict, 73  
 political constraints, 565  
 political culture, 322, 534  
 political cynicism, 283  
 political decision-making, 10, 174, 203, 220, 438  
 political development, 158, 432  
 political disaffection, 148, 283  
 political disagreement, 250  
 political discontent, 344  
 political discourse, 251, 434, 440  
 political discussion, 253, 269, 450, 498, 539  
 political economy, 459, 465, 677  
 political efficacy, 246, 339  
 political elites, 235, 582, 687  
 political emotions, 56  
 political engagement, 48, 457, 660, 680  
 political environment, 204  
 political equilibrium, 372  
 political expertise, 192  
 political factions, 86  
 political geography, 36, 264  
 political heuristics, 378  
 political identity, 48, 189, 389  
 political ideology, 10, 11, 17, 183, 236, 265, 525  
 political ignorance, 292, 295  
 political imagination, 572  
 political inaction, 351  
 political independence, 342  
 political inequality, 160, 296, 579  
 political information, 194, 255, 464, 502, 503, 533  
 political institutions, 90, 157, 318, 459, 462, 463, 542, 678

- political journalism, 545  
 political knowledge, 16, 52, 191–193, 195, 196, 210, 214, 216, 230, 272, 297, 299, 510, 511, 515, 516, 527  
 political leadership, 369, 623, 634  
 political learning, 203, 219, 281  
 political logic, 447  
 political manipulation, 98, 206  
 political marketing, 446  
 political memory, 520  
 political messaging, 436  
 political misinformation, 197–199  
 political mobilization, 39, 46, 93  
 political network analysis, 93  
 political news, 487  
 political orientations, 25  
 political outcomes, 419  
 political outsiders, 605  
 political parallelism, 461  
 political participation, 32, 38, 40, 41, 43, 47, 48, 86, 154, 156, 159, 160, 191, 238, 252, 262, 296, 326, 329, 330, 480, 482, 483, 614, 644, 650, 678, 680, 681  
 political parties, 63, 65, 88, 89, 91, 92, 309, 313, 319–324, 332, 368, 386, 400, 415, 416, 529, 627, 630, 656, 672  
 political party, 633  
 political patronage, 75  
 political perception, 218, 376  
 political perceptions, 379, 380  
 political polarization, 14, 112, 277, 333, 334, 350, 484, 485  
 political preference, 218  
 political preferences, 465  
 political process, 71  
 political psychology, 13, 14, 24, 25, 27, 45, 55, 92, 111, 175, 178–180, 209, 214, 513, 525, 641, 647  
 political realignment, 348, 364, 370  
 political reasoning, 218  
 political representation, 28, 52, 243, 531, 653, 655, 674  
 political responsiveness, 143  
 political rhetoric, 222, 382  
 political science, 177, 433, 615, 618, 685  
 political science discipline, 616  
 political socialization, 341, 347, 623  
 political sociology, 363  
 political sophistication, 11, 184, 186–188, 206, 215, 294, 337, 343, 376, 497  
 political stability, 341, 343  
 political strategy, 572  
 political support, 117, 136  
 political sustainability, 163  
 political systems, 340  
 political talk, 534  
 political theory, 116, 119  
 political time, 147  
 political tolerance, 237, 249, 251, 252  
 political trust, 20, 111, 283–287, 431  
 political understanding, 19  
 political values, 231, 382, 644, 645  
 politicization, 149, 274  
 polling, 545  
 polling places, 322  
 popular control, 29  
 population ecology, 75, 76  
 pork-barrel spending, 128  
 positivity, 376  
 positivity bias, 143  
 positivity offset, 227  
 postmodern campaigns, 431  
 postmodern democracy, 437  
 poverty, 262  
 poverty politics, 155  
 preclearance, 576  
 preference falsification, 292, 484  
 preference formation, 214  
 preferences, 407  
 prejudice, 105, 106, 236  
 premodern House of Representatives, 129  
 presidential agenda, 595  
 presidential appointments, 149, 585  
 presidential approval, 354, 359, 360, 512, 559, 594  
 presidential campaigns, 248, 472  
 presidential candidates, 228, 642  
 presidential coattails, 101  
 presidential communication, 148  
 presidential elections, 190, 292, 312, 316, 436  
 presidential leadership, 147, 148  
 presidential nominations, 65, 67, 89, 587  
 presidential parties, 327  
 presidential penalty, 62  
 presidential power, 146, 150, 151, 561–563, 570, 588, 589, 593  
 presidential speeches, 593  
 presidential veto, 558, 560  
 press-government relations, 542  
 press-state relations, 474  
 press coverage, 479  
 press freedom, 432, 461  
 press independence, 460  
 press institutions, 535  
 pressure groups, 73  
 primary competition, 625  
 primary elections, 66, 581  
 priming, 19, 178, 268, 272, 512  
 principal-agent theory, 203  
 printed newspaper, 524  
 probabilistic voting, 411  
 probit analysis, 292  
 procedural cartel, 122  
 procedural choice, 402  
 procedural coalitions, 405, 406  
 procedural motions, 556  
 procedural politics, 572  
 professionalization, 446  
 professional norms, 477  
 programmatic capacity, 88  
 Progressive Era, 318, 322  
 projection, 209  
 promissory representation, 100  
 propaganda, 11  
 proportional representation, 416  
 prospect theory, 174, 176  
 protest, 486  
 protest paradigm, 526  
 proximity model, 310, 316  
 proximity voting, 314  
 pseudo-environment, 11  
 pseudoenvironments, 111, 259  
 psychological biases, 207  
 psychological mechanisms, 176

psychological realism, 206  
 psychophysiological methods, 281  
 psychophysiology, 525  
 public accountability, 151  
 public administration, 145, 149  
 public debate, 531  
 public goods, 72, 81  
 public health compliance, 421  
 public housing, 44  
 public interest, 415  
 public opinion, 10–13, 15, 16, 22, 54, 78, 92, 95, 98, 108, 140, 148, 155, 176, 178, 183, 188, 190–192, 194, 196, 197, 199, 202, 205, 210, 211, 213, 218, 222, 225–229, 232, 233, 236, 237, 239–241, 246, 250, 268, 270, 271, 274–276, 284, 285, 287, 288, 290–299, 333–335, 347, 358, 377, 385, 434, 442, 457, 504, 507, 509, 510, 514, 530, 541, 545, 594, 644–647, 669  
 public policy, 83, 96, 159, 324, 417, 476  
 public sphere, 535, 536  
 public support, 321  
 punctuated equilibrium, 471

**Q**

quality candidates, 605  
 quantitative methods, 617, 618  
 quasi-experiments, 124  
 question wording, 184, 356  
 quota policy, 143

**R**

race, 36, 106, 235, 236, 451, 628, 669, 682, 685  
 race and ethnicity, 630  
 race and gender identity politics, 421  
 race and media, 508  
 raced-gendered institutions, 684  
 race relations, 86, 106  
 racial alienation, 240  
 racial and ethnic context, 263  
 racial and ethnic identity, 262  
 racial attitudes, 105, 106, 108, 112, 155, 236, 239, 241, 261, 276, 387, 508  
 racial bias, 665  
 racial consciousness, 40  
 racial context, 36, 44, 111  
 racial desegregation, 370  
 racial disparities, 47  
 racial diversity, 287  
 racial hegemony, 105  
 racial heterogeneity, 157  
 racial identity, 113, 385  
 racialization, 112  
 racial microaggressions, 389  
 racial policies, 240  
 racial politics, 114  
 racial prejudice, 234, 241  
 racial representation, 576  
 racial resentment, 240, 388  
 racial stereotypes, 239, 641  
 racial threat, 44, 259  
 rags-to-riches narratives, 282  
 RAS model, 15  
 rational anticipation, 95

rational choice, 34, 118–120, 126, 174, 201, 326, 328, 338, 341, 438  
 rational choice theory, 27, 81, 148, 175, 202  
 rational expectations, 329  
 rationality, 180, 298  
 realignment, 332  
 realignments, 369  
 reappointment, 140  
 recess appointments, 570  
 reciprocal causation, 338  
 reconciliation process, 571  
 reconstructive presidents, 147  
 recruitment, 329, 467  
 redistribution, 157  
 redistributive policies, 286  
 redistricting, 102  
 reelection, 116  
 reference points, 174  
 reform era, 65  
 regime cycles, 147  
 regionalism, 86  
 regression to the mean, 62  
 regular order, 574  
 regulation, 136  
 regulatory politics, 452  
 religious identity, 390  
 replication study, 359  
 representation, 40, 82, 100, 317, 383, 384, 541, 578, 579, 582, 604, 630, 651, 656, 658, 682, 684  
 representation distortion, 41  
 representation theory, 97  
 representative behavior, 117  
 representative bureaucracy, 100, 421, 668  
 representativeness, 40  
 Republican conservatism, 93  
 Republican Party, 391, 626  
 Republican Revolution, 403  
 Republican women, 600, 658  
 reputation, 139, 455  
 research design, 617, 618  
 research methodology, 77  
 research paradigms, 685  
 residential mobility, 350  
 resource effects, 154  
 resource model, 48  
 response stability, 12  
 response variability, 232  
 responsible parties, 86  
 responsible party government, 122  
 responsible party system, 308  
 responsiveness, 598  
 retrospective voting, 29, 35, 338  
 revisionist model, 343  
 revolutions, 292  
 Rice index, 413  
 role congruity, 638  
 role congruity theory, 449  
 role model effects, 621  
 role models, 661  
 roll-call voting, 407, 410–413, 554  
 roll call voting, 123, 125, 314, 398, 408, 552, 553  
 Ross Perot, 330  
 rule breaking, 572  
 rule changes, 404

rule of law, 669  
 rural consciousness, 48, 353  
 rural Democrats, 266  
 rural identity, 267, 353  
 rurality, 264  
 rural politics, 156

**S**  
 scandal, 472  
 Schattschneider, 74  
 scholarly communication, 449  
 screening, 88  
 secular realignment, 363  
 selection, 75  
 selective exposure, 55, 381, 490, 496, 500, 517  
 selective incentives, 72, 328  
 selective learning, 18  
 self-care, 538  
 self-conception, 224  
 self-monitoring, 60, 256, 351  
 self-presentation, 231, 673  
 semantic judgments, 218  
 semiparametric matching, 138  
 Senate, 565–568, 573, 604  
 Senate apportionment, 96  
 Senate confirmation, 587, 588  
 Senate coverage, 475  
 Senate Judiciary Committee, 586  
 Senate procedures, 556, 570  
 Senate representation, 97  
 senatorial courtesy, 586  
 senatorial delay, 585  
 separation of powers, 151, 312, 558, 570, 591, 592, 594, 596  
 separatist nationalism, 387  
 sex-based selection, 110  
 sex-role socialization, 64  
 sex discrimination, 138  
 sexism, 646  
 shifting standards, 637  
 signaling, 78  
 simultaneous equation models, 338  
 Sinclair Broadcasting, 279  
 single-party systems, 416  
 slavery, 388  
 slippery slope, 288  
 social capital, 49, 482  
 social change, 137, 292  
 social communication, 255  
 social construction, 159  
 social constructionism, 11  
 social contact theory, 508  
 social contagion, 33  
 social desirability, 60, 256  
 social exclusion, 389  
 social groups, 21  
 social identity, 29, 51, 243, 253, 335, 524  
 social identity theory, 56, 267  
 social inequality, 41  
 social influence, 42, 231, 245  
 social information seeking, 498  
 socialization, 467  
 social media, 278, 472, 485, 487, 489, 490, 500, 501, 527, 532, 534  
 social movements, 81, 93, 483, 486, 526

social networks, 38, 39, 192, 250, 470  
 social polarization, 256  
 social pressure, 32, 42  
 Social Security, 160  
 Social Security reform, 213  
 social settings, 254  
 social sorting, 58, 59, 390  
 social structure, 319  
 social trust, 49  
 social validation, 477  
 social welfare, 109, 226  
 social welfare policy, 156, 296  
 socioeconomic inequality, 48  
 socioeconomic status, 40, 48, 238  
 sociology of knowledge, 686  
 sociotropic voting, 35  
 soft news, 456, 509, 510  
 source credibility, 211  
 source cues, 202, 522  
 Southern politics, 86, 388  
 spatial analysis, 258, 420, 478  
 spatial data, 478  
 spatial demography, 262  
 spatial econometrics, 262  
 spatial model, 311, 326  
 spatial modeling, 554  
 spatial models, 123, 313, 314, 332, 413, 588  
 spatial theory, 399, 552  
 spatial theory of elections), 31  
 spatial voting, 312, 316  
 spatial voting models, 412  
 spending preferences, 291  
 spillover effects, 112  
 spiral of silence, 534  
 split-ticket voting, 277  
 stability, 298, 400  
 stability of opinion, 21  
 stare decisis, 141  
 state-building, 318  
 state-media relations, 547  
 state constitutions, 142  
 state equality, 97  
 state executive elections, 671  
 State Legislative Effectiveness Scores (SLES), 130  
 state legislatures, 124, 130, 649, 653, 655, 656  
 state politics, 76, 88, 152, 153, 672  
 state power, 161  
 state supreme courts, 667  
 static measures, 263  
 statistical analysis, 314  
 statistical imputation, 299  
 stereotype, 11  
 stereotypes, 59, 393, 635  
 stereotype threat, 113  
 stereotyping, 209  
 straight-ticket voting, 352  
 strategic accounts, 139  
 strategic behavior, 438  
 strategic candidate positioning, 392  
 strategic decision-making, 584, 596  
 strategic interaction, 413  
 strategic mobilization, 38  
 strategic news coverage, 476  
 strategic obstruction, 585

street-level bureaucracy, 145  
 structural equation modeling, 188  
 structural inertia, 75  
 structure-induced equilibrium, 396  
 sub-Saharan Africa, 660  
 subjective context, 261  
 subjective perceptions, 259  
 subnational analysis, 371  
 substantive rationality, 173  
 substantive representation, 577  
 supermajority, 120  
 supply and demand, 113  
 Supreme Court, 131, 132, 134, 136, 143, 588, 591, 592  
 supreme court, 274, 596  
 Supreme Court nominations, 584  
 surge and decline, 62  
 surrogate representation, 100  
 survey bias, 296  
 survey data, 98  
 survey design, 193  
 survey experiments, 662  
 survey methodology, 184, 355, 356  
 survey methods, 287  
 survey research, 343  
 survey response, 15, 183, 210  
 survey responses, 199  
 symbolic concerns, 353  
 symbolic racism, 105, 106, 234, 240  
 symbolic representation, 246, 660, 662  
 system justification theory, 115, 244

**T**

target populations, 159  
 Tea Party, 93  
 technical capital, 448  
 telecommunications policy, 452  
 televised conflict, 20  
 televised debates, 638  
 televised discourse, 272  
 television media, 274  
 television news, 268, 472, 480  
 temporal-topical framework, 196  
 temporal stability, 199  
 terminal values, 224  
 term limits, 653  
 terrorism, 222  
 text analysis, 554  
 thermostatic model, 291  
 think tanks, 454  
 third-party candidates, 330, 392  
 third parties, 344  
 third spaces, 536  
 threat perception, 222  
 time-series analysis, 294  
 time series, 358, 361  
 time series analysis, 242  
 tolerance, 22, 233, 534  
 topic modeling, 597  
 tradeoffs, 204  
 trade war, 156  
 traditionalism, 353  
 traditional party organizations, 324  
 traditional values, 234  
 traffic stops, 668

traits, 635  
 trait stereotypes, 632  
 transparency, 531  
 true believers, 327  
 Trump, 479  
 Trump administration, 69, 143  
 Trump support, 353  
 trust, 385, 495  
 trust in government, 288, 421  
 turnout, 27  
 turnout decline, 38  
 twin studies, 25, 349  
 Twitter, 486, 487  
 two-dimensional politics, 372  
 two-party systems, 340  
 two presidencies, 150

**U**

U.S. Congress, 117, 127, 399, 400, 407  
 U.S. elections, 64, 352  
 U.S. House, 407  
 U.S. House Elections, 93  
 U.S. House elections, 102  
 U.S. House of Representatives, 126, 369, 395, 398, 581  
 U.S. Senate, 571, 579  
 U.S. state legislators, 658  
 U.S. state politics, 661  
 uncertain geographic context problem, 258  
 uncertainty, 200, 232, 439  
 unemployment benefits, 419  
 unified government, 101, 417  
 unilateral action, 151  
 unilateral executive action, 570  
 union strength, 420  
 unitary executive theory, 589  
 universalism, 398  
 unsupervised learning, 597  
 urban-rural divide, 264–267  
 utility maximization, 201

**V**

vaccine attitudes, 280  
 vaccines, 494  
 valence, 222, 332  
 value change, 231  
 value conflict, 226, 229  
 values, 224, 225, 646  
 veto, 120  
 veto bargaining, 559, 561  
 veto threats, 562, 563  
 videomalice, 20  
 Vietnam War, 377  
 visual communication, 526, 634  
 vocal pitch, 657  
 vote choice, 518, 635, 639  
 vote predictability, 62  
 voter abstention, 392  
 voter attitudes, 340  
 voter behavior, 14, 28, 34, 46, 52, 62, 66, 68, 194, 202, 221, 230, 292, 311, 314, 320, 338, 342–344, 363, 364, 366, 368, 373  
 voter competence, 17, 206, 207, 214  
 voter decision-making, 53, 633, 636, 637  
 voter engagement, 334

- voter evaluations, 642  
voter fatigue, 212  
voter ideology, 316  
voter knowledge, 27, 91, 203  
voter learning, 345, 520  
voter mobilization, 38, 156  
voter persuasion, 45  
voter preferences, 45, 273, 313  
voter reactions, 638  
voter satisfaction, 317  
voter turnout, 32, 33, 39, 43, 45, 63, 195, 319, 339, 364, 365, 682  
voting, 178  
voting behavior, 13, 25, 27, 36, 42, 44, 115, 182, 238, 243–245, 248, 299, 322, 346–348, 365, 367, 374, 391, 681  
voting decision, 14  
voting process coverage, 480  
voting rights, 152  
Voting Rights Act, 576
- welfare policy, 108, 239  
welfare reform, 155  
welfare state, 157, 160, 677  
white identity, 114  
whiteness, 115, 244  
women, 660  
women's representation, 625–627  
women's suffrage, 681  
women and politics, 617  
women candidates, 633  
women in Congress, 109  
women in politics, 629, 651, 661, 663, 672  
women in power, 675  
women of color, 641  
women's issues, 386  
women's organizations, 629  
women's representation, 600  
women's rights, 332  
women's suffrage, 614  
workplace, 251

**W**

- wealth, 582  
weblogs, 448

**X**

- xenophobia, 111