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Abstract

Franklin examines four specific issues addressed in the 1993 Pilot Study: the effect of question order on perceptions of ideology, perceptions of roll-call voting behavior of members of Congress, the measurement and impact of "uncertainty," and the nature of the evolving Clinton coalition. Franklin finds no evidence to suggest that question order serves to frame the liberal-conservative placement of political objects by respondents. This result suggests that respondents have substantial notions of their own position and these positions define, in significant part, the relative location of political objects. Turning to members of Congress, Franklin finds that respondents are more likely to rely on heuristics and generalizations than on objective member behavior, when determining how often their representative has supported the President. But while specific actions of members might not be known to respondents, it appears that perceptions of members are structured in reasonable and substantial ways, reflecting the member's actual behavior and party affiliation. Franklin then reports on the experimental measures of uncertainty concerning ideological placement of the respondent, Perot, Clinton, and the respondent's representative. Franklin finds that the uncertainty measures capture real variation in the clarity of opinion among respondents. He also finds that the measures vary across political objects in reasonable ways. Furthermore, the measures are substantially independent of one another to suggest that they do not represent a single measure of uncertainty, but are instead particular to the object of evaluation. Low correlations between measures of uncertainty and political information imply that uncertainty is not simply a direct result of ignorance or inattention to politics. Franklin also finds that uncertainty is potentially damaging to candidate support because greater uncertainty lowers support for candidates, as theories of risk-averse voting behavior predict. Finally, Franklin reports on the emerging Clinton coalition. He finds clear evidence that support for Clinton is undergoing significant change, driven by: the issues which the President has chosen to emphasize, reactions to Clinton as a person, and respondent beliefs concerning the proper role of the federal government in the economy.