

Midsouth Political Science Journal

Proper Placement Of Independent-Leaners In The Partisan Identification Scale: Data From Two Arkansas Samples <i>Michael A. Maggiotto and Gary D. Weekin</i>	1
Policy Preferences Of Political Party Leaders And The Mass Public: A Southern Perspective <i>Mark C. Ellickson</i>	19
The Contract Clause And Supreme Court Decisionmaking: A Bicentennial Retrospective <i>Albert P. Melone</i>	41
John C. Calhoun And The Constitutional Amending Process: Article V And The Theory Of Concurrent Majorities <i>John R. Vile</i>	64
Committee Policy Making In The House: Comparing The Agriculture And Judiciary Committees <i>Robert E. Dewhirst</i>	77
Further Explorations Of Regionalism And Political Opinion In Arkansas <i>Diane D. Blair, William D. Mangold, and Robert L. Savage</i>	92

MIDSOUTH POLITICAL SCIENCE JOURNAL

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IN THIS ISSUE

Michael A. Maggiotto and Gary D. Wekkin in their "Proper Placement of Independent-Leaners in the Partisan Identification Scale: Data From Two Arkansas Samples," note that "significant controversy still surrounds the nature and measurement of independent-leaners in the partisan identification scale. Are they 'cautious' partisans, or merely independents projecting temporary electoral behavior? This paper provides an intensive look at leaners by examining patterns of stability and change of identification among leaners across levels of government, and by examining thermometer data and open-ended data for evidence of identification. The findings show that leaners are in fact less likely than pure independents to identify consistently as independents, but at the same time are more consistent in orientation than several partisan categories are as the governmental context of partisan orientation changes from national to state to local. Independent-leaners also differ from pure independents in their affect toward each of the respective independent identifiers. Consequently, students of behavior need to rethink the wisdom of recommendations that independent-leaners be aggregated with either fellow independents or partisans when scaling partisanship, as well as the wisdom of recent revisionist arguments that independent identifiers be excluded from scales of partisanship altogether."

Mark C. Ellickson's "Policy Preferences of Political Party Leaders and the Mass Public: A Southern Perspective," observes ". . .the policy preferences of southern political party elites compared with those of rank-and-file party members and Independents. The questions used include items of self-identified ideology as well as domestic and foreign policy issues. The findings are analyzed from the perspective of the responsible parties model and realignment theory."

Albert P. Melone's article "The Contract Clause and Supreme Court Decision-making: A Bicentennial Retrospective" traces ". . .the constitutional interpretation of the contract clause from John Marshall's early decisions to the opinions rendered by the Burger Court. It combines approaches of textual analysis, political jurisprudence and other approaches to understand how various modes of constitutional interpretation affect judicial decisionmaking and constitutional meaning. The resurrection of the contract clause in the late 1970's should not be exaggerated. An analysis of more contemporary decisions indicates that a return to nineteenth century jurisprudence did not take place during the Burger era."

John R. Vile in "John C. Calhoun and the Constitutional Amending Process: Article V and the Theory of Concurrent Majorities" finds ". . .Calhoun's views of the constitutional amending process stemmed from a political philosophy professing to protect all major interests in society against more numerical majorities and a view of American government that stressed states rights. Calhoun praised the amending process as a federal mechanism by which minorities were protected, but his analysis showed that, in some ways, the process did not work as he wished it did. The amending provisions could neither stop questionable constitutional interpretations accepted by the

numerical majority nor provide ironclad guarantees for minorities unable either to muster sufficient numbers to oppose the adoption of undesirable amendments or adopt amendments to defend themselves.”

Robert E. Dewhirst’s “Committee Policy Making in the House: Comparing the Agriculture and Judiciary Committees” is an inquiry into whether subcommittees have “. . .replaced committees in importance in the policy-making done by the United States House of Representatives. . .This study examines bills reported out by the Judiciary and Agriculture committees during selected years within the past decade. The subsequent findings suggest that Christopher Deering and Steven Smith were correct when they argued that Congress has been moving in the *direction* of subcommittee government. However, both of the committees studied appeared to be acting for opposite—yet politically self-serving—reasons.”

Diane D. Blair, William D. Mangold, and Robert L. Savages’ “Further Explorations On Regionalism And Political Opinion In Arkansas” expands their previous research on the subject. Evaluating data from a 1986 random digit telephone survey of 1061 Arkansans, they find regional differences in opinions but also note patterns of consistency across the state that are of importance to social scientists and policy makers. They identify several considerations that need to be observed in the conduct of any continuing survey of Arkansans’ opinions.

NOTE: The content of articles and notes herein are solely the responsibility of the authors.