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Abstract

Leege, Kellstedt, and Wald discuss the 1989 Pilot Study experimental measures of religiosity. The authors find that the branching scheme used to measure denominational affiliation in the Pilot Study seems to make interviewers more sensitive to distinctions within religious sects, resulting in more accurate religious classifications than traditional measures. In addition, the authors' analysis indicates that the experimental measures uncover a connection between religion and partisanship that is disguised by the imprecision of the traditional NES measure. Leege, Kellstedt, and Wald also examine the Pilot Study and 1988 NES items designed to assess a respondent's level of commitment to organized religion. They find that the traditional measures overstate attachment to religious institutions. Moreover, the additional Pilot Study questions allow for much greater sensitivity of measurement of the relationship between religion and political participation. The Pilot Study also included measures of cue-giving by denominational leaders. Leege, Kellstedt and Wald find that perceptions of cue giving differ by issue, denominational family, and frequency of presence at religious services. The information obtained through the Pilot Study, however, is not complex enough to determine whether cue giving affects the political attitudes of religious adherents. The authors recommend retaining the cue-giving sequence, but argue that measures of cue direction should be added. Finally, Leege, Kellstedt, and Wald examine and rank a number of other items relating to religious exposure and participation, such as measures of church attendance and self-identification as a "Born Again" Christian. The authors prepared a supplemental report, which provides further support for adopting the experimental Pilot Study measures of religious preferences. Leege, Kellstedt, and Wald find that the new codes and "religious family" designations more accurately reflect modern religious affiliation patterns. These more sensitive measures can better uncover different patterns of political behavior, both within and across denominations. Moreover, the Pilot Study filters reduce error in the measurement of the proportion of people who claim a religious preference. The authors conclude by proposing specific question formats and coding schemes for the 1990 National Election Study.