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Abstract

Klein addresses the role played by "group interests" in shaping the political evaluations and behaviors of members of gender- and age-based groups. Klein finds evidence that group interests play a large role in determining the political stances of women. Assessments of how women as a group are performing economically influence evaluations of Reagan among women, but not men. Women also give greater weight to assessments of women's group economic performance than they do to assessments of individual or national economic performance. In addition, Klein finds that beliefs concerning the government's proper role in promoting sex equality shapes the candidate selection decisions of women only. Klein also undertakes an analysis of the effect of group identification in the elderly. She finds that group interests do not influence evaluations of Reagan or choices among potential candidates. Klein speculates that group interests play a less significant role in determining the political behavior of the elderly because issues relevant to that group -- such as Social Security reform -- received less media attention than women's issues at the time of the Pilot Study. Klein argues that an electoral monitoring effort would allow researchers to evaluate potential links between group interests and political information, such as the media effect hypothesis proposed in her report.

Monitoring Group Interest

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEMO IS TO ADDRESS HOW GROUP INTERESTS SHAPE POLITICAL EVALUATIONS AND BEHAVIORS. GENDER-BASED DIFFERENCES WILL BE USED TO ADDRESS THE GENERAL QUESTION OF GROUP ACTIVATION AND HOW IT CAN BE STUDIED DURING A CAMPAIGN PERIOD.

THERE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANT GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE EVALUATIONS OF PARTY, CANDIDATE, AND ISSUES SINCE THE 1980 ELECTIONS. THESE DIFFERENCES HAVE GROWN AND WOMEN'S BASIC NEGATIVE EVALUATIONS OF REAGAN COUPLED WITH POSITIVE EVALUATIONS OF THE DEMOCRATS PERSISTS INTO 1983. IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT PRIOR TO 1980, WOMEN WERE CONSIDERED APOLITICAL, OR MORE CORRECTLY (MAYBE) A SOCIAL CATEGORY THAT DID NOT DEFINE ITSELF OR APPROACH THE ELECTORAL DECISION AS A POLITICAL GROUP. THE PILOT STUDY REVEALS THAT MEN AND WOMEN ARE MAKING DIFFERENT POLITICAL ASSESSMENTS IN CANDIDATE, PARTY, AND ISSUE PREFERENCES. CURRENTLY, WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO STRONGLY DISAPPROVE OF REAGAN ($R=.18$) AND TO FAVOR BOTH MONDALE ($R=.19$) AND GLENN ($R=.17$) OVER THE INCUMBENT PRESIDENT IN GREATER PROPORTIONS THAN MEN. THEIR THERMOMETER RATINGS OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY ($R=.19$) AND DEMOCRATS IN GENERAL ($R=.22$) WERE CONSIDERABLY HIGHER AS WELL. STILL, EVALUATIONS OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AND REPUBLICANS ARE BASICALLY POSITIVE AND SIMILAR TO THOSE OF MEN.

GENDER-DIFFERENCES IN EVALUATIONS OF REAGAN'S PERFORMANCE ARE VERY PRONOUNCED. WOMEN'S EVALUATIONS OF HIS PERFORMANCE ARE CONSISTENTLY LOWER THAN MEN'S, PARTICULARLY ON HIS HANDLING OF INFLATION ($R=.26$), TAXES ($R=.24$), INTEREST RATES ($R=.17$), AND NATIONAL DEFENSE ($R=.20$). ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO SAY THAT REAGANOMICS HAS HURT THEM PERSONALLY ($R=.22$), THE NATION AS A WHOLE ($R=.20$), AND THAT THINGS, AS OF 1982, ARE NOT LIKELY TO GET BETTER IN THE FUTURE ($R=.19$). THESE GROUP DIFFERENCES ALSO PERSISTENTLY EMERGE IN BUDGET PRIORITIES AND ISSUES POSITIONS WITH WOMEN FEELING CLOSER TO THE POSITION OF THE DEMOCRATS THAN TO REAGAN ON DEFENSE

(R=.14), AID TO MINORITIES (R=.17), JOBS (R=.20), AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES (R=.17).

WHAT EXPLAINS THESE DIFFERENCES IN EVALUATIONS OF THE PARTIES, CANDIDATES, AND ISSUES? THE ROOTS OF THESE DIFFERENCES ARE EXAMINED IN TERMS OF MOTIVATIONS BASED ON SELF-INTEREST, GROUP INTERESTS, AND NATIONAL INTERESTS. HAVE REAGAN'S POLICIES BEEN PARTICULARLY DETRIMENTAL TO WOMEN'S ECONOMIC WELL-BEING CAUSING EACH INDIVIDUAL WOMAN TO REJECT REAGAN BECAUSE OF SELF-INTEREST THAT CUMULATIVELY RESULTS IN GROUP DIFFERENCES? OR, INDEPENDENT OF OR IN ADDITION TO A PERSONAL SENSE OF ECONOMIC HARM, WOMEN MAY FEEL THAT REAGAN'S POLICIES HURT THEM AS A GROUP AND THAT IT IS THIS COLLECTIVE SENSE OF GROUP INTEREST THAT INFLUENCES THEIR EVALUATIONS OF THE PARTIES, CANDIDATES, AND ISSUES? FINALLY, THESE DIFFERENCES MAY NOT BE A MATTER OF INTEREST BUT RATHER OF VALUES. MEN AND WOMEN MAY DISAGREE ON WHAT IS BEST FOR THE NATION INDEPENDENT OF WHAT IS SPECIFICALLY HAPPENING TO WOMEN AS A GROUP. THESE DIFFERENCES IN POLITICAL EVALUATIONS MAY REFLECT DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSES TO POLITICAL SYMBOLS SUCH AS PARTIES, IDEOLOGY, AND PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL EQUALITY. THE PILOT STUDY HAS DEVISED A SERIES OF QUESTIONS THAT ALLOW US, FOR THE FIRST TIME, TO TRY TO DETERMINE WHETHER GROUP INTERESTS SHAPE POLITICS.

GROUP INTERESTS AND MONITORING THE CAMPAIGN

BOTH THE DEMOCRATS AND THE REPUBLICANS HAVE ALREADY DISCUSSED GROUP ACTIVATION AS INTEGRAL TO THEIR CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES IN 1984. THE DEMOCRATS HAVE TARGETED BLACKS, WOMEN, THE ELDERLY, HISPANICS, AND LABOR WHILE THE REPUBLICANS ARE ALSO TARGETING WOMEN, IN HOPES OF DEFUSING THE "GENDER-GAP," AND TARGETING THE ELDERLY, HOPING TO MAINTAIN THE GAINS MADE AMONG THIS GROUP IN 1984, AND APPEALING TO THE "SILENT MAJORITY" AND THE MIDDLE-CLASS WHO CONTINUE TO BE THE GROUP BASIS OF THE REPUBLICAN STRATEGY. FOR THIS MEETING I

HAVE FOCUSED ON THE GROUP ACTIVATION PROCESS IN TERMS OF REAGAN APPROVAL AND TRIAL HEATS BETWEEN REAGAN AND THE TWO LEADING DEMOCRATIC CONTENDERS MONDALE AND GLENN. WHAT ROLE DO SELF-INTEREST, GROUP INTEREST, AND NATIONAL INTEREST PLAY IN DECIDING CANDIDATE EVALUATIONS AND PREFERENCES?

MEASUREMENT SELF-INTEREST: THIS IS MEASURED BY A SINGLE ITEM (V2104) ASCERTAINING HOW WELL THE INDIVIDUAL (AND FAMILY) ARE GETTING ALONG FINANCIALLY RELATIVE TO THE PAST YEAR/SIX MONTHS.

GROUP INTEREST: THIS IS MEASURED BY 4 ITEMS ADDRESSING THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF WOMEN AS A GROUP (V2161), PROXIMITY TO WORKING WOMEN AS A POLITICAL REFERENCE GROUP (V3111), THE BELIEF THAT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CONDITION OF WORKING WOMEN WOULD BENEFIT THE INDIVIDUAL DIRECTLY (V3113), AND THE BELIEF THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE SEX EQUALITY A TOP PRIORITY (V3185). WHILE WOMEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO FEEL CLOSER TO WORKING WOMEN AS A POLITICAL GROUP ($R=.16$), TO FEEL THAT THEIR FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD BENEFIT FROM IMPROVEMENTS IN CONDITIONS OF WORKING WOMEN ($R=.16$), TO FEEL THAT WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SITUATION HAS GOTTEN WORSE ($R=.20$), AND TO THINK THAT SEX EQUALITY SHOULD BE A HIGH PRIORITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT ($R=.14$), MEN ARE ALSO LIKELY TO TAKE THESE POSITIONS. THE QUESTION OF GROUP INTEREST GOES BEYOND DETERMINING AWARENESS OF AND OPINIONS ON CIRCUMSTANCES TO INCLUDE HOW THESE OPINIONS SHAPE POLITICS.

NATIONAL INTERESTS/POLITICAL SYMBOLS: EIGHT ITEMS WERE USED TO CAPTURE DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF POLITICAL ISSUES AND VALUES. PARTY (V2203) AND ISSUE PROXIMITY TO REAGAN VERSUS THE DEMOCRATS ON DEFENSE, AID MINORITIES, JOBS, SEX EQUALITY, AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES (BASED ON THE BATTERY OF ISSUE-PLACEMENT SCALES IN 1982) WERE USED TO TAP DIMENSIONS OF WHAT PEOPLE FELT THE GOVERNMENT NEEDED TO BE DOING. IN ADDITION, THE BASIC VALUE OF WHETHER PEOPLE SHOULD GET AHEAD ON THEIR OWN THAT UNDERLIES SOME OF THESE ISSUE QUESTIONS IS ALSO

ADDRESSED IN ORDER TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER SOME OF THE RESPONSE TO POLITICAL STIMULUS IS BASED ON A MORE FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF THAT PEOPLE WHO DO NOT GET AHEAD MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE THEMSELVES TO BLAME.

ANALYSIS

THE ROLE OF SELF, GROUP, AND NATIONAL INTEREST IN THE SHAPING OF POLITICAL EVALUATIONS WAS TESTED BY LOOKING AT THE DECISION CALCULUS FOR EACH GROUP SEPARATELY IN ORDER TO ADDRESS WHETHER GROUP MEMBERS PROCESS INFORMATION IN A WAY THAT IS DIFFERENT FROM OUT-GROUP MEMBERS WHO MAY SHARE THEIR CONCERNS. (IT IS POSSIBLE TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE WITHIN A SINGLE EQUATION USING INTERACTION TERMS TO SPECIFY A COVARIANCE MODEL BUT THE SMALL SAMPLE SIZE PRESENTS SEVERE COLLINEARITY PROBLEMS).

REAGAN APPROVAL

IN LOOKING AT REAGAN APPROVAL RATINGS FOR MEN WE FIND THAT PERSONAL FINANCIAL CONCERNS (BUT NOT THAT OF WOMEN'S CONDITIONS OR THE FATE OF THE NATION), PARTISANSHIP, AND PROXIMITY TO REAGAN'S POSITION ON JOBS, SERVICES, AND SEX EQUALITY ARE THE MAIN DETERMINANTS. QUESTIONS RELEVANT TO WOMEN'S CONCERNS DID ENTER THE DECISION IN THE FORM OF ISSUE PROXIMITY AND TO LESSER DEGREE WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE SEX EQUALITY A TOP PRIORITY, BUT THIS LATTER MEASURE OF GROUP INTEREST IS BARELY SIGNIFICANT AND RUNS IN THE WRONG DIRECTION-- MEN WHO FEEL THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT MAKE SEX EQUALITY A PRIORITY ARE MORE DISAPPROVING OF REAGAN. QUESTIONS OF CLOSENESS TO WORKING WOMEN POLITICALLY, FEELING THAT THEY WOULD BENEFIT IF WORKING WOMEN'S CONDITIONS WERE IMPROVED, AND EVALUATIONS OF WOMEN'S CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION DID NOT INFLUENCE THEIR ASSESSMENTS OF REAGAN.

WOMEN APPEAR TO EVALUATE REAGAN IN TERMS OF DIFFERENT CRITERIA THAN MEN. THEIR SENSE OF NATIONAL INTEREST IS CAPTURED BY THE MORE GLOBAL SYMBOLS OF

PARTY AND SYSTEM BLAME. WOMEN WHO DO NOT AGREE THAT PEOPLE WHO FAIL TO GET AHEAD HAVE ONLY THEMSELVES TO BLAME, STRONGLY DISAPPROVE OF RONALD REAGAN IN PART BECAUSE HE PROMOTES POLICIES AND ESPOUSES VALUES THAT STRESS SOCIAL DARWINISM.

WOMEN'S ASSESSMENTS OF THEIR PERSONAL FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY AND THE FINANCIAL STATE OF THE NATION DID INFLUENCE HOW THEY EVALUATED REAGAN, BUT THESE ASSESSMENT WERE NOT AS SIGNIFICANT AS HOW THEY FELT WOMEN AS A GROUP WERE DOING ECONOMICALLY. THEY, INSTEAD, POINT TO THE IMPORTANCE OF GROUP INTEREST AS WELL AS NATIONAL SYMBOLS IN INFLUENCING WOMEN'S POLITICAL ASSESSMENTS. MOREOVER, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERSONAL AND GROUP FINANCIAL WELL-BEING ($R=.14$, $N=184$) WAS BARELY SIGNIFICANT SUGGESTING THAT GROUP INTEREST IS NOT SIMPLY A PROJECTION OF SELF-INTEREST. (THIS WEAK CORRELATION ALSO CHALLENGES THE ASSUMPTION THAT GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS IS BASED ON THE FEELING THAT ONE'S PERSONAL WELL-BEING IS TIED TO THE FATE OF THE GROUP. THIS NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED FURTHER). WOMEN WHO FELT THAT THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO EXPEND A GREAT DEAL OF EFFORT TO INSURE SEX EQUALITY (37% WOMEN AND 24% MEN GAVE IT A SCORE OF SEVEN OR HIGHER) WERE MORE LIKELY TO REJECT REAGAN AS WELL. THIS SUGGESTS THAT GROUP INTERESTS NEED TO BE SEEN AS AN ISSUE OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY (PRIORITY) IF THEY ARE TO INFLUENCE POLITICS. THE OTHER MEASURES OF GROUP INTEREST (USING WORKING WOMEN AS A POLITICAL REFERENCE GROUP AND THE BELIEF THAT THE FATE OF WORKING WOMEN WILL INFLUENCE ONE'S FAMILY WELL-BEING) DID NOT HAVE A DIRECT EFFECT ON ASSESSMENTS OF REAGAN BUT DO PLAY A MORE DISTAL ROLE IN THIS PROCESS --THAT IS THEY SHAPE ISSUE POSITIONS, PARTY EVALUATIONS, AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS) THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE PRE/POST AND WILL BE DISCUSSED LATER.

TRIAL HEATS MONDALE AND GLENN.

THE ROLE OF GROUP INTEREST ON CANDIDATE SELECTION, AT THIS STAGE OF THE

CAMPAIGN, DEPENDS ON WOMEN'S ASSESSMENTS OF WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN PROMOTING SEX EQUALITY. THIS PRIORITY ITEM SHAPED WOMEN'S DECISION TO SUPPORT MONDALE AND GLENN OVER REAGAN BUT NOT MEN'S CHOICE. THIS WAS THE ONLY PRIORITY ITEM OUT OF THE WHOLE BATTERY THAT HAD A SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP WITH CANDIDATE PREFERENCE. IN LOOKING AT THE TWO POTENTIAL DEMOCRATIC RACES IT APPEARS THAT PARTY CUES PLAY A GREATER ROLE FOR WOMEN IN A REAGAN-MONDALE RACE THAN IN A REAGAN-GLENN CONTEST, WHICH MAY EXPLAIN WHY, IN THE ABSENCE OF PARTY CUES, THE BELIEF THAT SEX EQUALITY SHOULD BE A HIGH PRIORITY ISSUE HAS A MORE SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON A REAGAN-GLENN CONTEST.

THE ELDERLY

THE EIGHTIES HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS A DECADE OF THE ELDERLY. PROLONGED PERIODS OF INFLATION AND THE CRISIS IN SOCIAL SECURITY HAVE PROMPTED THE EXPANSION OF AN ELDERLY LOBBY THAT HAS SUCCESSFULLY LOBBIED CONGRESS AND DEMONSTRATED ITS POWER AT THE POLLS. IN 1980 THIS GROUP WAS ACTIVELY COURTED BY BOTH PARTIES. IN 1982, THE REPUBLICANS FEARED A STRONG BACKLASH BECAUSE OF REAGAN'S HANDLING OF SOCIAL SECURITY. IN THIS COMING ELECTION BOTH PARTIES WILL, ONCE AGAIN, COURT THE ELDERLY VOTE. YET, ARE THE AGED A POLITICAL GROUP THE WAY BLACKS HAVE LONG BEEN AND WOMEN APPEAR TO BE? THE RESULTS OF THE PILOT STUDY PROVIDE A MIXED RESPONSE. THE ELDERLY (PEOPLE SIXTY YEARS OLD AND OVER) ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE DEMOCRATS ($R=.12$) BUT THEY ARE NOT ANYMORE LIKELY TO DISAPPROVE OF REAGAN OR PREFER MONDALE OR GLENN OVER THE PRESIDENT THAN ARE PEOPLE UNDER SIXTY. THEIR THERMOMETER RATINGS OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY WERE RELATIVELY HIGH (70 VS. 61) AND THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO FEEL WARMLY TOWARDS MONDALE (65 VS. 54) BUT THEY SHARE SIMILAR POSITIONS ON BUDGET PRIORITIES AND ISSUES AS PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT NEAR RETIREMENT OR ALREADY RETIRED.

THE ELDERLY ARE DISTINCTIVE, HOWEVER, IN THEIR VALUES AND DESIGNATION OF PRIORITY ISSUES. THEY ARE MORE RESIGNED TO THE INEVITABILITY OF INEQUALITY

AND ARE MORE LIKELY TO BLAME THE INDIVIDUAL FOR THEIR FAILINGS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME THEY APPEAR TO FAVOR GOVERNMENT ACTION TO PROMOTE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND INSURE BASIC NEEDS. THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO WANT THE GOVERNMENT TO INVEST IN IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF THE POOR (R=.11), BLACKS (R=.15), AND WOMEN (R=.12). THEY SEE SCHOOL INTEGRATION (R=.17), AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR WOMEN (R=.18) AND BLACKS (R=.19), AND EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK (R=.17) AS HIGHER PRIORITY ITEMS THAN YOUNGER PEOPLE. THEIR SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT ACTIVISM IN THE AREA OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTING IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THE ELDERLY TEND TO BE MORE CONSERVATIVE ON THE QUESTION OF WOMEN'S ROLES (R=.20) AND ARE LESS WILLING TO AGREE THAT WOMEN FACE DISCRIMINATION.

PERSONAL EVALUATIONS OF THEIR OWN GROUP STATUS IS ALSO AMBIGUOUS AMONG THE OLDER COHORT. PEOPLE UNDER SIXTY ARE MORE LIKELY TO SAY THAT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS HAVE GOTTEN WORSE FOR THE ELDERLY THAN THE ELDERLY WERE IN ASSESSING THEIR OWN SITUATION--THEY WERE MORE LIKELY TO SAY THAT THINGS HAD NOT CHANGED. YET, THEIR ASSESSMENTS OF THEIR ECONOMIC CONDITION MAY PLAY A GREATER ROLE IN HOW THEY EVALUATE POLITICS. DO THE ELDERLY ACT ON GROUP INTERESTS?

AN ANALYSIS PARALLEL TO THE ONE PERFORMED TO DETERMINE WHETHER GROUP INTERESTS SHAPE WOMEN'S VIEWS WAS PERFORMED IN ORDER TO ADDRESS THIS QUESTION. THIS TIME THE EQUATION ALSO INCLUDED AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF THE ELDERLY. ONCE AGAIN, GROUP INTERESTS ARE EXAMINED IN TERMS OF THE DIFFERENT DECISION CALCULUS USED BY THOSE UNDER SIXTY AS COMPARED TO THOSE SIXTY AND OLDER.

GROUP INTEREST DID NOT PLAY A ROLE IN INFLUENCING EVALUATIONS OF REAGAN OR CHOOSING BETWEEN POTENTIAL CANDIDATES. SELF-INTEREST WAS THE MAIN FACTOR DETERMINING REAGAN APPROVAL AMONG THE ELDERLY WHILE PARTY IDENTIFICATION

PLAYED THE LEADING ROLE IN DECIDING CANDIDATE PREFERENCE. NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT GLENN SUPPORTERS, ARE ONCE AGAIN, CHARACTERIZED BY A CONCERN FOR WOMEN'S ECONOMIC WELL-BEING AND A BELIEF THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE THIS A HIGH PRIORITY. PERHAPS THIS IS BECAUSE TWO-THIRDS OF THE ELDERLY RESPONDENTS ARE WOMEN WHO, EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE LESS LIKELY TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S ISSUES AND DO NOT FEEL CLOSE TO WOMEN POLITICALLY, STILL FILTER POLITICAL INFORMATION IN TERMS OF THAT PRIMARY GROUP MEMBERSHIP--A HYPOTHESIS FOR FURTHER TESTING.

WHY MONITORING?

O THESE RESULTS NEED TO BE DISCUSSED WITHIN THE LARGER POLITICAL CONTEXT. THE PILOT STUDY WAS CONDUCTED WHEN WOMEN'S ISSUES, SPECIFICALLY THE "GENDER-GAP", WERE RECEIVING A GREAT DEAL OF MEDIA ATTENTION WHILE THE CONCERNS OF THE ELDERLY WERE NOT EVEN BACK PAGE NEWS. WHAT WOULD THIS STUDY HAVE SHOWN IF SOCIAL SECURITY WERE ON THE VERGE OF BANKRUPTCY ONCE AGAIN OR INFLATION STARTED SHOWING SIGNS OF INCREASING? SOME ARGUE THAT THIS IS LIKELY TO HAPPEN AND THE ROLLING CROSS-SECTION WILL ALLOW US TO MEASURE GROUP RESPONSE IN TERMS OF GROUP INTEREST AS WELL AS SELF-INTEREST.

IDEALLY THE PILOT STUDY COULD SERVE AS A BENCH-MARK FOR THE MONITORING, THE PRE-CAMPAIGN/ACTIVATION POINT. FOR WOMEN, THIS IS NOT THE CASE BUT FOR THE ELDERLY IT MAY VERY WELL BE SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY. ELECTORAL MONITORING PROVIDES A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY THE ACTIVATION (ELDERLY) AND MAINTENANCE (WOMEN) OF GROUP CUES AS THE LEVEL OF POLITICAL COMPETITION, INFORMATION, AND GROUP APPEALS INCREASES.

BOTH THE REPUBLICANS AND THE DEMOCRATS HAVE DESIGNATED WOMEN AS A TARGET GROUP (NOT TO MENTION INTEREST GROUPS) FOR 1984. THE REPUBLICANS PLAN TO DEFUSE THE GENDER-GAP WHILE THE DEMOCRATS AND FEMINIST GROUPS HOPE TO ACCENTUATE IT. A MAJOR PART OF THE REPUBLICAN STRATEGY WILL BE TO EDUCATE WOMEN ON THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF REAGANOMICS. WILL MEN AND WOMEN'S

EVALUATIONS OF WOMEN'S PLIGHT CHANGE IN RESPONSE TO THESE EFFORTS AND THEREBY ELIMINATE THE GAP? HOW DO CHANGES IN PERCEPTIONS OF THE ECONOMY IN GENERAL COVARY WITH PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT IS HAPPENING TO WOMEN (WOMEN CONSISTENTLY SAY THINGS HAVE NOT GOTTEN BETTER IN SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER NUMBERS THAN MEN)? HOW WILL THIS AFFECT APPROVAL OF REAGAN AND CANDIDATE PREFERENCE OVER TIME?

THE MONITORING SHOULD ENABLE US TO DETERMINE IF WOMEN CONSTANTLY FILTER POLITICAL INFORMATION IN TERMS OF GROUP INTEREST OR IF THESE CONCERNS ARE TRIGGERED BY EVENTS. IF THEY GET BLINKED ON AND OFF THEN THE ACTIVATION OF GROUP INTERESTS IS LIKELY TO BE A TOP-DOWN PROCESS AT THE CONTROL OF CANDIDATES AND THE MEDIA. SUPPOSE GENDER DIFFERENCES DISAPPEAR, WILL THIS BE A RESULT OF "CLOSING THE GAP" AS IN THE CASE OF WOODS-DANFORTH SENATE RACE OR BECAUSE OF AN ABSENCE OF MEDIA COVERAGE? A LONGER TIME FRAME OF MONITORING ALLOWS US TO ADDRESS THIS QUESTION.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE ELDERLY? WILL THEY BECOME POLITICIZED AS THE STIMULI BECOMES MORE "RELEVANT"? WILL THIS EBB AND FLOW OR DO GROUP CONCERNS, ONCE RAISED, CONTINUE TO SERVE AS A POLITICAL REFERENCE EVEN ONCE THE STIMULI ARE REMOVED AND NOT REINTRODUCED? WHAT ABOUT COMPETING APPEALS? REAGAN IS CLOSER TO THE VALUES OF THE ELDERLY ON QUESTIONS OF EQUALITY AND SYSTEM BLAME BUT THE ELDERLY ARE MORE LIKELY TO FAVOR AN ACTIVIST GOVERNMENT THAT IS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEMOCRATS. MOREOVER, THIS IS A GROUP THAT CURRENTLY HAS A RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL OF INFORMATION AND A HIGH DEGREE OF VARIANCE ON MANY ISSUE POSITIONS. WHAT WILL HAPPEN AS THE ELECTORATE AS WHOLE BECOMES MORE INFORMED?

THE FOCUS, THUS FAR, HAS BEEN ON DISADVANTAGED GROUPS. AN ANALYSIS OF HOW THE MIDDLE CLASS FILTERS POLITICAL INFORMATION IS ALSO NEEDED TO EXPAND OUR UNDERSTANDING OF HOW GROUP MEMBERSHIP SHAPES POLITICS. PEOPLE WHO FEEL THAT THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE MIDDLE-CLASS HAVE GOTTEN WORSE WERE MORE

DISAPPROVING OF REAGAN ($R=.27$) AND MORE LIKELY TO VOTE FOR MONDALE ($R=.23$) AND GLENN ($R=.24$). YET, PEOPLE WHO FEEL CLOSE TO MIDDLE-CLASS PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO THINK THAT THINGS HAVE IMPROVED AND SHOW A SLIGHT PREFERENCE FOR REAGAN OVER BOTH MONDALE ($R=-.11$) AND GLENN ($R=-.16$). FURTHER ANALYSIS IS NEEDED TO ASCERTAIN HOW THE VALUES AS WELL AS THE ISSUES POSED BY THE CAMPAIGN WILL SHAPE THE MIDDLE-CLASS RESPONSE.

IN ORDER TO PROVIDE ANSWERS TO THESE EXCITING QUESTIONS, HOWEVER, THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE NEEDED ON THE INSTRUMENT: VARIABLES 2161, 2163, AND 2166 MEASURING ECONOMIC WELL-BEING FOR WOMEN, THE ELDERLY, AND THE MIDDLE-CLASS. VARIABLE 3185, INDICATING THE DEGREE OF EFFORT THAT SHOULD BE EXPENDED ON IMPROVING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF WOMEN AND ANOTHER TWO QUESTIONS TAPPING GOVERNMENT ACTIVISM ON BEHALF THE ELDERLY AND THE MIDDLE-CLASS. THE DEMOGRAPHICS REQUESTED ARE THE STANDARD SEX, AGE, AND EDUCATION. IN ADDITION, PARTY IDENTIFICATION, ISSUES (BRODY MEMO), PERSONAL AND NATIONAL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENTS, AND SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL CLASS SHOULD BE INCLUDED.

THE PRE-POST STUDY CAN THEN BE USED TO EXPLAIN WHAT LEADS TO THESE GROUP-BASED ASSESSMENTS. IT ALSO SERVES AS A VEHICLE TO DETERMINE IF GROUP INTERESTS SHAPE OTHER FORMS OF PARTICIPATION.

TABLE 1

POLITICAL EVALUATIONS: SELF INTEREST,
GROUP INTEREST, NATIONAL INTEREST

| | REAGAN APPROVAL | | REAGAN V. MONDALE | | REAGAN V. GLENN | |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | MEN | WOMEN | MEN | WOMEN | MEN | WOMEN |
| PARTY ID | .15* (.12) | .24* (.19) | .28* (.25) | .45* (.40) | .29* (.27) | .30* (.26) |
| ECONOMY SELF | .25* (.37) | .10** (.15) | .08 (.13) | .11** (.18) | .16* (.27) | .15* (.25) |
| ECONOMY NATION | .04 (.04) | .12** (.12) | .10 (.12) | .02 (.02) | .08 (.10) | .07 (.07) |
| * ECONOMY WOMEN | .03 (.04) | .14* (.16) | .14** (.20) | .10 (.13) | .14** (.21) | .08 (.10) |
| SYSTEM BLAME | .02 (.02) | .19* (.18) | .02 (.02) | .03 (.03) | .03 (.03) | -.10 (-.11) |
| PROX JOBS | .33* (.14) | .10 (.08) | .32* (.21) | .05 (.04) | .11 (.07) | .15** (.12) |
| PROX SEX EQUAL | .16* (.14) | .08 (.08) | .05 (.05) | .00 (.00) | .13 (.01) | .02 (.02) |
| PROX SERVICE | .19* (.12) | .14** (.10) | .07 (.06) | .12 (.10) | .08 (.07) | .10 (.08) |
| * GOV'T WOMEN | -.13** (-.09) | .14* (.16) | -.05 (-.04) | .13* (.10) | .03 (.02) | .19* (.15) |
| CONSTANT | 1.37 | -.20 | .74 | -.49 | .00 | .04 |
| R | .74 | .65 | .66 | .63 | .59 | .61 |
| (N) | 130 | 184 | 130 | 184 | 130 | 184 |

*(dependent variable)*ENTRIES ARE STANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS. UNSTANDARDIZED
COEFFICIENTS IN PARANTHESES.

*SIGNIFICANT < .05

**SIGNIFICANT < .10

** group items*