PLS 302 PUBLIC OPINION

Outline

Chapter 6

Public Opinion and Democratic Stability

I.	Support	for den	nocratic	values	(procea	<i>lural</i> norm	ıs)

- A. Location: Needed in both elites and masses
- B. Definition: procedural norms -- rules of the game -- within which conflict over substantive issues takes place
- C. Content:
 - 1. Majority rule
 - 2. Minority (individual) rights
- D. Measurement
 - 1. Abstract norms -- Table 6.1, p. 163
 - 2. Concrete applications -- Table 6.2, p. 164
- E. A growth in democratic tolerance?
 - 1. Trends Table 6.3, p. 165
 - 2. Interpretations
 - a. Social-learning theory:
 - (1) Theory: increased exposure to social/cultural diversity and formal education both generate higher levels of political tolerance
 - (a) Education
 - (b) Urban residence
 - (2) Evidence is contradictory, e.g., more educated can simply be more sophisticated in their rationalizations for intolerance
 - b. Stable intolerance
 - (1) Decrease in perceived threat from groups on left
 - (2) Stable intolerance of 'least-liked' groups Table 6.4, p. 167
- F. Democratic values and 9/11 | Figure 6.1, p. 169 | Civil liberties v. personal/national security
- G. How democracy survives with mass intolerance
 - 1. Theory of democratic elitism:
 - a. Theory: elites are more tolerant than the masses because of differences in
 - (1) Formal education
 - (2) Subcultural values
 - (3) Relationship between apathy and intolerance
 - b. Evidence is contradictory:
 - (1) Elites sometimes more enlightened: e.g., Marshall Plan
 - (2) Elites sometimes not more enlightened
 - (a) Slavery
 - (b) Mistreatment of American Indians
 - (c) Internship of Nisei
 - (d) PC movement
 - 2. Theory of pluralist intolerance:
 - a. Theory: the lack of consensus in the mass public on whom to be intolerant of allows elites greater flexibility in policy making
 - b. Evidence is contradictory
 - (1) Demagogues can mobilize intolerance in masses
 - (2) Intolerance *attitudes* do not always translate into intolerant *behavior* for either elites or the mass public

II. Political consensus (on *substantive* issues)

- A. Fundamental issues on which there is consensus
 - 1. Political
 - a. Constitutional order
 - b. Legal processes of change
 - 2. Economic
 - a. Free enterprise system
 - b. Individual opportunity
 - 3. Social
 - a. Class
 - b. Region
 - c. Religion
- B. Racial polarization
 - 1. Intensified by class differences
 - 2. Yet, blacks support democratic values
- C. War and public opinion
 - 1. WWII
 - 2. Korea
 - 3. Vietnam
 - 4. Iraq I & II

III. Political support: trust and efficacy pp. 176-83

- A. Political trust
 - 1. Definition: affective component -- evaluation of leadership: institutions, personalities, policies
 - a. Honesty & fairness
 - b. Competence
 - 2. Positive consequences:
 - a. Trust allows
 - (1) Long-term perspective on policy choices especially important in domestic-economic and foreign-policy domains
 - (2) Hence, flexibility for leadership
 - b. Distrust causes needed reforms
 - 3. Negative consequences
 - a. Short-term perspective
 - b. Political deadlock and/or disorder
 - 4. Trends | Figure 6.2, p. 178
 - a. 1950s
 - b. 1960s-70s: decline on both left & right
 - c. 1980s: partial rebound on both left & right until Iran-Contra scandal caused new decline
 - d. 1990s: peace & prosperity caused partial rebound
 - e. 2001: increase since 9/11
 - 5. Key social location -- middle class, white, non-Southern, non-Jewish, middle-aged
 - 6. Weak relation to participation
- B. Political efficacy
 - 1. Definition: cognitive component -- evaluation of
 - a. Comprehension
 - Potential influence
 - 2. Strong relation to participation
- C. Social trust
 - 1. Nature of difference from political trust
 - 2. Trend: decline
 - 3. Causes
 - a. Decline of social engagement
 - b. Re-emergence of yellow journalism
- D. Citizen roles: combinations of trust and efficacy
 - 1. Subject culture: high trust, low efficacy docile & loyal
 - 2. Civic culture: high on both potentially high participation
 - 3. Mass culture: low on both alienated & cynical, but lack self-confidence
 - 4. Volatile culture: low on trust, high on efficacy violent, anti-democratic, easily mobilized by demagogues to unconventional participation

IV. Personality and democratic citizenship

- A. Authoritarian personality
 - 1. Cause: deep-seated hatred of authority rooted in authoritarian child-rearing practices
 - 2. Consequence: displacement of repressed hostility toward parental authority
 - a. Subservience to superiors (low self-esteem and ego strength)
 - b. Exploitation of subordinates
 - c. Non-introspective
 - d. Inflexible, intolerant of ambiguity
 - e. Superstitious
 - 3. Measures
 - a. F-scale: authoritarianism of right
 - b. D-scale: authoritarianism of right or left
- B. Democratic personality
 - 1. Cause: well-balanced relationship to authority rooted in egalitarian childrearing practices
 - 2. Traits
 - a. Supportive of but evaluative of superiors (high self-esteem, ego strength)
 - b. Nurturing of subordinates
 - c. Introspective
 - d. Flexible, tolerant of ambiguity
 - e. Pragmatic

V. Conclusion: prerequisites for stable democracy

- A. Economic opportunity
- B. Social pluralism
- C. Political dispersion of power
- D. Psychological fewer authoritarian personalities, more democratic personalities