

American Public Opinion 08

ROBERT S. ERIKSON | KENT L. TEDIN

American Public Opinion

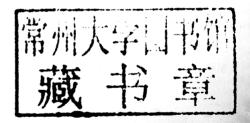
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American Public Opinion

Dedicated to the memory of Maggie Banks Tedin (1947–2008), companion and wife of Kent Tedin for 32 years, and friend of Bob Erikson and his family.

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Preface

In this eighth edition of American Public Opinion, we present an accounting of the role of public opinion in the democratic politics of the United States. As with the previous editions, this edition discusses the contemporary literature on public opinion, supplementing it with our own illustrations and analyses of contemporary public opinion data. It provides an in-depth analysis of public opinion, beginning with its origins in political socialization, the impact of the media, the extent and breadth of democratic values, and the role of public opinion in the electoral process. American Public Opinion is unique in that it goes beyond a simple presentation of data and discussion of the formation of opinion, to include a critical analysis of the role of public opinion in American democracy. As in previous editions, the eighth edition examines the relationship between public opinion and policy.

New to This Edition

Because public opinion and electoral politics are always changing, each edition of this book requires extensive revision. In this eighth edition, we strive to keep the discussion as current as possible, and professors and students will notice the following:

- The most recent data on contemporary issues such as abortion, gay rights, gun control, race relations, and health care policy
- Data on the 2008 presidential election from the American National Election Studies
- The most recent literature is updated and incorporated throughout the text
- Extensive changes in Chapter 8, "The News Media and Political Opinions," reflect the rapid transformation of American news media
- New election data has been introduced in Chapter 9

Despite the extensive rewrite of material, readers familiar with the seventh edition (including the updated version) will notice few changes in format. The chapter titles are identical to those from the seventh edition. The within-chapter headings have changed little.

Acknowledgments

As this book has evolved through multiple editions over thirty years, so too has the list of authors. The first edition (1973) was authored by Robert S. Erikson and Norman L. Luttbeg. With the second edition, Kent L. Tedin joined the team as a third author. That triumvirate held through three editions. By the time of the fifth edition, Luttbeg left the team to pursue other scholarly pursuits. This is the third edition solely authored by Erikson and Tedin. But Luttbeg's contribution to the book remains, most notably in the five linkage models which he originated.

The preparation of this volume relies heavily on the survey data of the American National Election Studies, conducted by the University of Michigan, supported by grants from the National Science Foundation, and made available by the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research. We also relied extensively on the General Social Survey (also funded by the National Science Foundation) and the data available online from the Roper Center Data Archive at the University of Connecticut. These organizations bear no responsibility for the analysis or interpretations presented here. We are greatly indebted to them for making their data available to us, and to other scholars on whose research we depend. We benefit from the assistance provided by our editor, Eric Stano, and to colleagues, students, and staff at Columbia University and the University of Houston. Our special gratitude goes to Kathleen Knight of Columbia University for her advice at many stages of this project. We would like to thank those who most recently reviewed this text: Ted G. Jelen, University of Nevada-Las Vegas; Geoff Peterson, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire; Greg Shaw, Illinois Wesleyan University; and Allen R. Wilcox, University of Nevada-Reno.

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Robert S. Erikson Kent L. Tedin

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