



PROJECT MUSE®

Beyond Endorsements and Partisan Cues: Giving Voters Viable Alternatives to Unreliable Cognitive Shortcuts

John Gastil

The Good Society, Volume 23, Number 2, 2014, pp. 145-159 (Article)

Published by Penn State University Press



➔ For additional information about this article

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/gso/summary/v023/23.2.gastil.html>

Beyond Endorsements and Partisan Cues: Giving Voters Viable Alternatives to Unreliable Cognitive Shortcuts

JOHN GASTIL

Abstract

Voters often rely on cognitive shortcuts and partisan cues under low-information conditions. But it would be preferable for voters to adopt deliberative cues so that their low-information vote at least follows the judgements of similar high-information voters. One such deliberative cue is the Oregon Citizens Initiative Review, where citizen panels exhaustively review policy initiatives and report their findings for voters. When exposed to documents produced by the panels, readers become more informed voters and can use their new knowledge to make independent voting choices, rather than relying on judgmental shortcuts and voting cues.

Keywords: *ballot initiatives, deliberative democracy, partisanship, political knowledge, voting cues*

Among the many roles assigned citizens in modern democracies, voting remains paramount. Other civic duties abound, to be sure. Paying taxes counts as a vital legal obligation, and those countries with compulsory military service ask, in times of war, for lives to be laid on the line. The jury system occasionally requires a few days, or weeks, at the courthouse, and newer institutions, like Citizens' Assemblies or participatory budgeting, might request a citizen's sustained attention for a weekend or more.

But when one tallies up local contests and primaries, elections normally call on citizens twice a year to resolve legislative questions, take out municipal bonds, and elect or reelect people to offices large and small. Governments that fail to conduct fair elections put their own legitimacy at risk, and in the United States, partisan battles are fought over the exact definition of voting rights, as it pertains to drawing districts, registering voters, and putting up barriers at the polls in a (disingenuous) campaign to limit voting fraud.

Nevertheless, one cannot assume the efficacy of modern voting systems without taking seriously the difficulty voters have completing ballots in a way that captures their reflective understanding of the candidates and issues placed before them. In this essay, I review the research on this question and focus on one particular reform—the Citizens’ Initiative Review. Though hardly a panacea to all that ails elections, the Review demonstrates one way of moving beyond voters’ overreliance on endorsements and partisan cues.

The Case for Cognitive Shortcuts

A popular view in political science holds that voters cope with the complexity of detailed ballots by finding “shortcuts” to trudging through the swamp of information that forms around them during elections. Following the signals given by one’s political party or by the cultural elites with which one identifies, a voter might approximate the same judgments that he or she would have reached after hours of careful study.¹

By this logic, our only failing might be insufficiently partisan campaigns. A famous expression of this view comes in Samuel Popkin’s book, *The Reasoning Voter*. Rejecting calls for more deliberative elections, or calls for candidates to refrain from “negative campaigning,” Popkin argues that “there is no electoral problem in America that would be solved by restricting television news to the MacNeil-Lehrer format and requiring all the candidates to model their speeches on the Lincoln-Douglas debates.”²

Many public opinion and media scholars share the view that public ignorance and alienation is no bother so long as there are ongoing disagreements among the political and media elites who shape public opinion. Liberal and conservative citizens’ voting choices will remain rational in the aggregate if they hew to the positions advocated by their respective elites.³ As one team of heuristic theorists put it,

“The choices of voters can be approximately rational because of, not merely despite, their shortfalls in information.”⁴

Such views held sway at the start of this century, but they sound shopworn as the United States remains mired in a high-stakes partisan politics that has paralyzed the nation in times of divided government. When the Presidency and Congress view each budget and policy debate as an opportunity for political advantage, regardless of its cost in terms of rational policymaking, elite cues cannot suffice.

The Irrationality of the Low-Information Voter?

A deeper problem with the sanguine view of voter heuristics concerns the actual ability of voters to guess at what would be their more reflective judgments, if they had the time and information necessary to reach them.

Think about the last election in which you participated. On what basis did your fellow voters choose which candidates to support? Did they weigh the issues carefully, listen attentively to both sides of every debate, and make judicious selections? If there were local ballot measures or statewide initiatives, did voters support or oppose laws on their merits? Based on the research collected to date, the likely answers to these questions are “no.” Or, to be kind, “not so much.”

Consider the model of voter behavior constructed by political scientists Richard Lau, at the Whitman Center for the Study of Democracy at Rutgers University, and David Redlawsk, at the University of Iowa.⁵ Lau and Redlawsk collaborated for years on a series of studies, determined to better understand how voters make use of the information they obtain from media, campaigns, and fellow voters. Following the experimental tradition, they manipulated the messages available to voters, then measured whether candidate choices meshed or clashed with voters’ core values.

If you participate in one of these experiments, you are asked to make a voting choice after studying rival hypothetical presidential candidates under significant time pressure. On your computer monitor, you see an ever-shifting menu of information categories. Want to learn the Republican nominee’s view on abortion? Click on the “Abortion Views” button on your monitor before that tidbit of information disappears. Want to know where the Democratic nominee grew up? Hurry up and click “Hometown.” Suddenly, the virtual campaign ends. Time to mark your ballot.

Before you get up to leave the lab, the experimenters give you a chance to reconsider your vote. They lay before you all the available candidate information and give you plenty of time to study more carefully the two candidates. If this second vote deviates from the first, Lau and Redlawsk code this as voting “incorrectly” the first time. In such cases, a hurried analysis of limited facts yielded a choice that, on reflection, didn’t match a more considered judgment of who would best represent the your views.

By the time Lau and Redlawsk compiled their findings in *How Voters Decide*, they had brought through their lab large student samples and more representative cross-sections of the U.S. public. Those satisfied with a Ralph’s Pretty Good Grocery Store version of democracy might hail the fact that, overall, seven out of every ten experimental participants got their vote right on the first try.

Seventy percent accuracy sounds less impressive when one remembers that half the experimental subjects would have voted correctly in these hypothetical two-party contests by flipping a coin. Also, the thirty percent who erred in their judgment represent a proportion larger than the margin of victory in every presidential election in the past two centuries. Even the Reagan landslide was roughly half that, at 18.2 percent.

This finding was no quirky laboratory anomaly. Lau and Redlawsk found a similar result in a careful analysis of the historic 2000 Presidential contest between Republican nominee George W. Bush and the Democratic Vice President Al Gore. That election came down to the interpretation of hanging, dimpled, and “pregnant” chads on ballots across Florida. Had voters fully understood those two candidates’ positions, like the experimental subjects who got a second chance, the result would have been quite different. Lau and Redlawsk took stock of voters’ policy preferences, their underlying value commitments, and the information about Bush and Gore readily available in the course of the campaign. Crunching those numbers showed that if voters had accessed all that data about the two candidates, Gore’s share of the popular vote would have risen from 52 to 57.1 percent, an easy victory that neither chads nor third-party challenger Ralph Nader could have stopped.

Far from a case of partisan sour grapes, Lau and Redlawsk’s analysis found voting errors all across the political spectrum. Vice President Gerald Ford’s share of the vote in 1976 fell a critical 3.9 percent against Georgia governor Jimmy Carter, who benefitted from voters’ limited deliberation in that post-Watergate election. Ross Perot’s independent candidacy in 1992 suffered more than any other. By Lau and Redlawsk’s reckoning, the

maverick candidate lost 20.7 percent of the national vote to confusion or ignorance.

Reconsidering the Wisdom of Voting the Party Ticket

These findings led Lau and Redlawsk to question whether party membership provides a reliable shortcut to reaching voting decisions. The “partisan heuristic,” also known as the “partisan cue,” tells busy voters what to say when answering political surveys or marking their ballots, just as cue cards guided candidates through their lines before the invention of the teleprompter.

In some states, voters can still cast their ballots by choosing a “straight party ticket.” Different ballot designs and voting machines have encouraged this behavior over the years. The blanket ballot developed in South Australia in the 1850s listed all the candidates for all offices, each lined up in columns within their respective parties. A circle atop each column invited one to “vote the ticket” by making a single mark. Mechanical gear-and-lever machines gave one the option of either flicking a dozen or more separate levers or simply “pulling the party lever” to support one party’s nominees in each election.

Voters cannot so easily follow the lead of their party when they mark ballots during primaries, in nonpartisan contests, or for ballot measures. Even in high-profile primary elections, voters have difficulty identifying the candidate that best matches their underlying policy preferences. In the 2008 presidential primaries, for example, voters’ guesses as to who best represented their views were only slightly better than chance.

The partisan cue holds no meaning at all for many nonpartisan voters. In presidential and partisan general elections, a growing proportion of American voters identify themselves as independents. Figure 1 shows that in 1990, the public divided evenly between Democrats, Republicans, and non-partisans, but 2012 Gallup polls of over 18,000 interviewees showed 42 percent of Americans rejecting both party labels. Some of those independents lean left or right, but neither party can take their support for granted.⁶

Even partisan voters sometimes enter the voting booth knowing close to nothing about candidates, such as in a local nonpartisan election. In those cases, voters must either make random choices or respond to the scant

Even in high-profile primary elections, voters have difficulty identifying the candidate that best matches their underlying policy preferences.

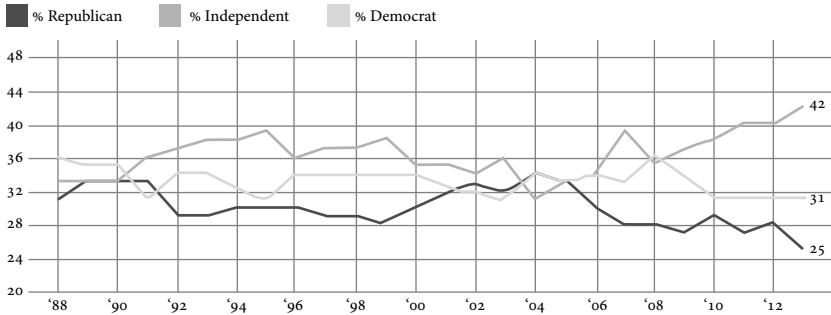
Party Identification, Yearly Averages, 1988-2013

FIGURE 1 The Rise of Nonpartisan Voters

information that appears on the ballot itself. This could mean voting for a person because their first name sounds male or female, or because their last name suggests a particular ethnic background.⁷ It can also mean reelecting the more recognizable name of the incumbent, or giving preference to the name listed first—a seemingly trivial factor that can earn a candidate a two- or three-percent edge.⁸

Worse still can be the odd scrap of information on which a voter hangs a choice—a fact well understood by campaign staff who design “voter guides” and other spurious mailings and websites to mislead voters toward a choice they would not otherwise make.⁹

Building a Better Voting Cue

Political scientist Arthur Lupia considered this problem in a study of insurance reform elections in California. Lupia found that some unsophisticated voters were able to make complex judgments by relying on cues from like-minded elites. Transferring the lesson of that election to the larger political process, Lupia recommends improving the quality of cues rather than pursuing wholesale civic education:

While scholars and pundits propose that we educate the public about politics in order to lessen the impact of uninformed votes on the responsiveness of democratic decision-making institutions . . . directing our efforts into the provision of credible and widely accessible ‘signals’

may be a more effective and cost-efficient way to ensure the responsiveness of electoral outcomes.¹⁰

This was precisely my goal when I wrote *By Popular Demand* in 2000. In that book, I argued for creating a deliberative voting cue. In the case of elections to public office, I suggested that each ballot should provide simple numerical ratings that showed the extent to which each candidate's unofficial and official votes corresponded to those of deliberative citizen panels. The randomly-selected citizen panels would establish a baseline for reasoned public judgment, and both incumbents and opponents would earn a "legislative batting average" based on how well their public votes (or pledges, in the case of challengers) match the votes of deliberative panels.

This rating system would put even more pressure on candidates to take both official and unofficial votes because abstentions would count as a non-match. Candidates who dodged this rating process altogether would have ratings of zero beside their names on the ballot.

As I envisioned it, this deliberative cue would be as simple and prominent as any other cue, but it would carry far more information. When one candidate has a rating well above all opponents, that signals a far greater chance of representing the public's interests. At the very least, it stands as a more reliable indicator than the alternatives typically put before voters.

Oregon's Experiment with Deliberative Citizen Panels

When one writes political theory, one must be wary of the risk that what one advocates may be put into practice. In the case of deliberative voting cues, I had concocted this idea while in a decades-long dialogue with civic reformer Ned Crosby, who had developed the Citizens' Juries process in the 1970s.¹¹ Crosby sought to implement deliberative citizen panels to help voters reach better judgments not only on candidates, but also on ballot measures. Shifting the focus to such issues had the distinct advantage of appealing to the self-interest of state legislators, who often see the initiative process as curtailing their authority to set budgets and make laws.

Crosby found traction for his idea in the state of Oregon, where he supported a team of citizen activists who convinced the state legislature to implement, on a trial basis, the Citizens Initiative Review. Oregon's unique process convenes a demographically balanced random sample of twenty-four citizens for weeklong deliberations on state ballot measures. The two

dozen citizen panelists interrogate advocates, opponents, and experts on each initiative. They then examine the evidence and arguments to produce a one-page analysis, which appears in the official Voters' Pamphlet that the Oregon Secretary of State mails to all registered voters.

With funding from the National Science Foundation and Kettering Foundation, I have worked closely with colleagues to study this process in Oregon's initiative elections, from 2010–2014. Our research combines intensive direct observation, in-depth interviews with citizen panelists, and online and phone surveys of Oregon voters. In each case, the reviews have met a high standard for deliberation,¹² and they have had a significant impact on the wider electorate by helping voters sort through complex ballot questions.¹³

To better understand the Citizens' Initiative Review, consider the first Review, held in August, 2010. That initial citizen panel showed what happens when conventional political messaging strategies go through the gauntlet of a five-day process. Proponents of a measure to establish mandatory minimum sentencing laws began with a strong case. They presented victims of the two crimes in question—drunk driving and sexual assaults. Panelists heard compelling personal testimony, but shortly thereafter, the opposition brought forward its own crime victims, who testified *against* the ballot measure. As the proponents' case unraveled, owing to shaky evidence and unpersuasive arguments, the panelists became increasingly skeptical of the ballot measure, which nearly three-quarters of Oregonians had favored before the Review began.

The initiative's advocates grew desperate. In the staff room, they threatened the Review's organizers with a walkout. They issued a critical press release. In their final rebuttal, they chided the citizen panelists as incapable of understanding the complexity of the issue. The irony of asking the public to vote on legislation that one believed citizens could not understand was obvious to everyone present. In the end, the panelists wrote a strong recommendation against the widely popular measure.

What was the impact of that deliberative voting cue? In the middle of a crowded Voters' Pamphlet, it offered voters a full page of analysis. To estimate the impact of reading that page, my colleagues and I followed in the footsteps of Lau and Redlawsk by conducting an experiment of our own in the final weeks before Oregon voters decided the fate of the proposed mandatory minimum sentencing law.¹⁴ An online survey used 431 Oregonians who had not yet voted, nor even read the official Pamphlet mailed by the Secretary of State. Before those respondents answered the main survey

questions about the sentencing law initiative, they were placed randomly in one (and only one) of the following four groups:

1. a control group that received no further instruction;
2. a modified control group that read a bland letter from the Secretary of State that describes the Voters' Pamphlet;
3. a standard Pamphlet exposure group that read official summary and fiscal statements; and
4. the main treatment group, which saw the Review's one-page statement.

After receiving their experimental treatment, respondents answered the following question: "One of the issues in this year's general election is state-wide Initiative Measure 73, which would increase mandatory minimum sentences for certain sex crimes and DUI charges. Do you plan to vote YES or NO on Measure 73, or have you NOT DECIDED yet?" Figure 2 shows the stark difference in results across the four experimental groups. In three groups, roughly two-thirds of voters intended to vote for Measure 73, but in the group that read the Review statement, only 40.5% of voters said they planned to vote for the measure.

These data came from a two-wave panel survey, which meant that a large subset of the experiment's participants had given us answers to the same

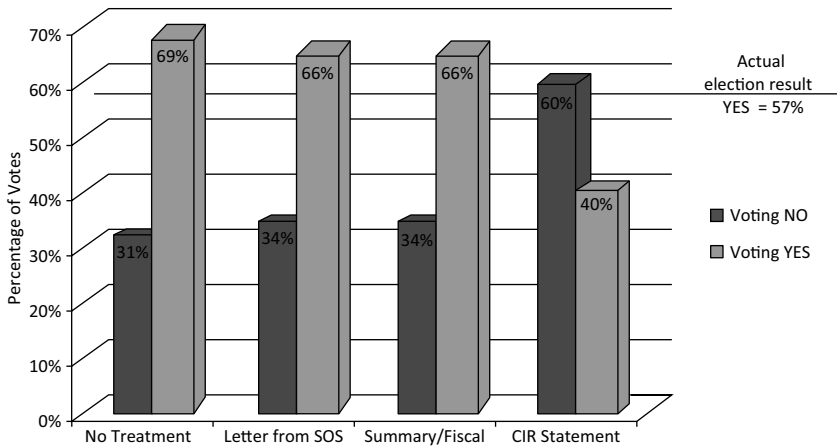


FIGURE 2 Experimental Measurement of the Effect of Reading the Citizens' Initiative Review Analysis of a Proposed Mandatory Minimum Sentencing Law in 2010

question about the sentencing initiative back in August, months before Election Day. Among those initially opposed to the measure, 93 percent remained opposed across the four experimental conditions. Of those initially inclined to vote for the measure, only 71 percent still held that position after reading the Review statement (compared to 88 percent of supporters who stuck with that position across all other experimental conditions).

The key group was that significant proportion of Oregon voters who reported in August that they were unsure how they would vote on the measure. The initially undecided respondents in the first three experimental conditions split nearly 50/50, with a bare majority of 53 percent ultimately supporting it. What happened to the quarter of the undecided voters randomly assigned to reading the Review's statement? More than three quarters—fully 78 percent of those who saw the Review statement ended up opposing the measure.

Voter Perceptions of the Citizens' Initiative Reviews

Even if an experiment shows that a Citizens' Initiative Review can influence voters, what of the larger public, not subjected to the online survey we conducted? First, consider the words of one of the voters we interviewed in depth after the 2012 election, in which the Review once again provided Oregon voters with analysis of two ballot measures. The experience of Janelle Pasco may be typical. She first learned of the Review while reading the *Oregonian*, the state's largest circulation newspaper based in Janelle's hometown of Portland. Janelle recalled that the article came out "shortly after the process was initiated, just letting the world know that this was happening."

When she read her first Review statement, she liked that "it cuts to the chase." The one-page statement "gets a lot of good information out but is concise and well-thought-out and well-formatted." It doesn't necessarily include any unique information, but thanks to the Review, "each of us individually doesn't have to go through and do it on our own."

How many voters, like Janelle, learned about the Review and came to appreciate it as a supplement to other information sources? When the Review was still a novelty in 2010, a statewide phone survey found that a majority of Oregon voters (sixty percent) didn't even learn of its existence. By 2012, the tables had turned, with fifty-two percent learning of the Review by the time they completed their ballots.¹⁵

Those who found their way to the Review statements generally liked what they saw, and the Review’s reputation improved from 2010–2012. In its first year, two-thirds of Review statement readers found its analysis of mandatory sentencing useful, with a near-majority (forty-seven percent) rating a 2010 Review statement on medical marijuana statement as at least “somewhat useful.” Two years later, two-thirds or more found both Review statements useful, with at least a quarter of all readers finding them “very useful.”

Those statistics square with the in-depth interviews we conducted in Oregon. Voters generally see the Review statements as a useful complement to what they already get in the course of an election. The key idea is that the Review *adds* to what voters have, rather than replacing it. For instance, when we asked about how much voters “trusted” the Review in 2012, thirty-six percent of voters placed “a lot” of trust in the Review or trusted it “completely.” Another fifty-four percent placed “a little” trust in it, with just one-in-ten giving it no credence whatsoever. Voters give equivalent amounts of trust to the other official elements of the Voters’ Pamphlet—the fiscal impact statement and explanatory statements written by Oregon officials.

Two years later, two-thirds or more found both Review statements useful, with at least a quarter of all readers finding them “very useful.”

More than a Cognitive Shortcut

Though I set out to create the ultimate voting cue, the Oregon Citizens’ Initiative Review suggests the viability of a more powerful alternative. On issue after issue, our research finds that voters who read the Review’s statements become more knowledgeable about ballot measures. In other words, when presented with a simple cognitive shortcut (How did a body of my peers vote on this issue?), voters read past that voting cue to see the substance of what the Review panels have to say.

Sometimes, the panel’s statement even deviates in interesting ways from the balance of its votes. In 2010, the panel voted 13–11 in favor of establishing medical marijuana dispensaries in Oregon, but it began the Key Finding section of its statement with this cautionary note: “The language of the measure lacks clarity on regulation, operation, and enforcement.”

In 2012, a Review panel voted 19–5 in favor of a tax reform, but opened its statement with an overt criticism of the measure, which the Review determined to have made a false promise. The corporate taxes the measure would

recoup, the panelists explained, cannot be “guaranteed to increase K-12 funding because of the Legislature’s discretionary spending of the General Fund. This ballot measure earmarks the [surplus revenue] to fund K-12 education, but does not prevent the redirecting of current funding resources to other non-education budgets.”

Such subtleties are not the sort of detail a voter is likely to learn from corporate tax reformers nor education advocates, yet they are important facts that voters need to weigh. In the end, this was not enough to sway the Review panel against the tax measure, yet they thought it should be one of the first things a voter should know. When critics of a measure make such an argument, which involves understanding the intricacies of state funding rules, it likely falls on deaf ears, as the critics lack the public trust necessary to warrant voters’ full attention.

A survey experiment with Oregon voters in that same year found that reading the CIR Statement produced the highest knowledge-scores among voters randomly assigned to reading the Review statement, as opposed to those who read paid pro-con arguments, an official summary statement, or nothing at all.¹⁶ One cannot infer from these data a direct effect on voting choice, but the evidence is strong that the Review gives voters the opportunity to better understand the facts of the issues on their ballot.

What the Review provides, then, is not so much a voting cue as a voting *aid*. As for the cognitive shortcut metaphor, one might say that the Review provides a direct path to one’s destination. The Review may serve as a monorail, which rises above the falsehoods, manipulations, and chatter of a campaign to take voters through what, after a full week of study, their peers consider the key facts and arguments on an issue. By contrast, partisan cues and traditional shortcuts offer voters a *promise* that they will arrive at the same decisional destinations they would have reached after careful study.

The research to date on the Review statements themselves has found them to be factually accurate and well-balanced.¹⁷ Those results are likely to continue, owing to the design of the Reviews themselves. Their deliberative process avoids the structural faults that can induce groupthink and skewed judgments generally: Stratified random samples produce diverse sets of panelists; panel meetings in a public space with regular external critique from pro and con advocates prevents panel insulation; a multi-day, facilitated process gives the panel time to learn about the issue in-depth and to refine its final written statements; a final statement that includes separate sections for key findings, pro arguments, and con arguments avoids forcing

a false consensus on the panelists. Thus, it is not surprising that the Review panels have features precisely the opposite of those small groups that end up polarized in laboratory experiments.¹⁸

What Can We Expect of Voters?

When given the chance to use something like the Citizens' Initiative Review, I expect that many voters will follow the lead of Oregonians and embrace the chance to make more informed choices on Election Day. The heuristic theorists warned us that voters are cognitive misers, unwilling to tax themselves when simple shortcuts abound. What Oregon shows us is that voters may be in a hurry, but they *can* be bothered to stop and read a page before they vote.

But what if we asked voters to read such a page for every item on their ballot—every initiative, referendum, bond measure, and elected office? Would the public bear the cost of holding so many panels, and would voters choose to use them all? The case of Oregon suggests that those are the wrong questions. One need only take an incremental approach by introducing voters with one more opportunity after another for efficient quasi-deliberation. When the point of diminishing marginal returns arrives, we will recognize it.

... what if we asked voters to read such a page for every item on their ballot - every initiative, referendum, bond measure, and elected office?

In the meantime, we now have solid proof that voters appreciate hearing concise issue summaries from their peers. People reading those learn new information that may shape their choices in unpredictable ways, but can we doubt that a better informed citizen makes better voting choices? The fully-enlightened voter may be an idealization unachievable in a busy world, but we now know at least one more way we can move closer to that aspiration.

John Gastil is a professor of Communication Arts & Sciences and Political Science at the Pennsylvania State University, where he directs the McCourtney Institute for Democracy. Most recently, he is co-author of *The Jury and Democracy* (2010) and co-editor of *The Australian Citizens'*

Parliament and the Future of Deliberative Democracy (2013) and *Democracy in Motion: Evaluating the Practice and Impact of Deliberative Civic Engagement* (2012).

NOTES

Portions of this essay have been adapted from John Gastil, *By Popular Demand: Revitalizing Representative Democracy through Deliberative Elections* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2000), as well as a draft book manuscript entitled *Experimental Democracy*, co-authored by Katie Knobloch.

1. An example of the strength of the heuristic perspective comes in a study by Jeffrey J. Mondak, "Public Opinion and Heuristic Processing of Source Cues." *Political Behavior* 15 (1993), 167–92. For a more skeptical view, see Larry M. Bartels, "Uninformed Votes: Information Effects in Presidential Elections," *American Journal of Political Science* 40 (1996), 194–230. On cultural cues in political judgment, see John Gastil, Don Braman, Dan Kahan, and Paul Slovic, "The Cultural Orientation of Mass Political Opinion." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44:4 (2011), 711–14.

2. Samuel Popkin, *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994), 225. More refined suggestions for improving political information flows comes from James H., Kuklinski, Paul-J.-Quirk, Jennifer Jerit, and Robert F. Rich. 2001. "The Political Environment and Citizen Competence." *American Journal of Political Science* 45: 410–24. A more theoretical argument for the rationality that can occur from the aggregation of imperfect judgments appears in Helene Landemore, *Democratic Reason: Politics, Collective Intelligence, and the Rule of the Many* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

3. For classic examples of this view, see Benjamin I. Page, *Who Deliberates? Mass Media in Modern Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), and John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

4. Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody, and Philip E. Tetlock, *Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 178.

5. Richard R. Lau and David P. Redlawsk, *How Voters Decide: Information Processing during Election Campaigns* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Also see Richard R. Lau, "Correct Voting in the 2008 U.S. Presidential Nominating Elections," *Political Behavior* 35 (2013), 331–55.

6. The figures come from a Gallup report released in January, 2014, "Record-High 42% of Americans Identify as Independents." For a skeptical view of supposedly nonpartisan voters, see Bruce Keith, David Magleby, and Candice Nelson, *The Myth of the Independent Voter* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996).

7. Ellen D. Riggie, in her article "Cognitive Strategies and Candidate Evaluations," *American Politics Quarterly* 20 (1992), 227–46, argues that voters respond to simple cues in the full spectrum of elections. In moderate- and high-intensity races, voters might use cues because of the opposite problem: a media-saturated campaign can create "an information overload such that citizens resort to the use of party or image heuristics in order to cope with the overabundance of campaign trivia." See also Eric Plutzer and John F. Zipp, "Identity Politics, Partisanship, and Voting for Women Candidates," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60 (1996), 30–57.

8. Many candidates believe that the order of names on the ballots influences the outcome of elections by a small percentage. A rigorous study of this problem found name-order effects in 48% of 118 Ohio elections. In races where there was an ordering effect, the candidate listed first almost always benefited, and the average impact was 2.5%. Partisan races and elections in counties with higher levels of political information were less likely to demonstrate ordering effects. Joanne M. Miller and Jon A. Krosnick, "The Impact of Candidate Name Order on Election Outcomes," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 62 (1998), 291–294.

9. Voters can be led astray even by what they think are recognizable endorsements, as shown in Mark Forehand, John Gastil, and Mark A. Smith, "Endorsements as Voting Cues: Heuristic and Systematic Processing in Initiative Elections," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 34 (2004), 2215–33.

10. Arthur Lupia, "Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections," *American Political Science Review* 88 (1994), 72.

11. Ned Crosby and Doug Nethercutt, "Citizens Juries: Creating a Trustworthy Voice of the People," in *The Deliberative Democracy Handbook*, edited by John Gastil and Peter Levine (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 111–119.

12. Katherine R. Knobloch, John Gastil, Justin Reedy, and Katherine Cramer Walsh, "Did They Deliberate? Applying an Evaluative Model of Democratic Deliberation to the Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review," *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 41 (2013), 105–25.

13. John Gastil, Robert Richards, and Katherine R. Knobloch R., "Vicarious Deliberation: How The Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review Influenced Deliberation in Mass Elections," *International Journal of Communication*, 8 (2014). Available online at <http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/2235>.

14. Results of this experiment, along with methodological details, appear in John Gastil and Katherine R. Knobloch, *Evaluation Report to the Oregon State Legislature on the 2010 Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review* (2010), available online at <http://www.la.psu.edu/cas/jgastil/CIR/OregonLegislativeReportCIR.pdf>.

15. This and other statistics from the 2012 election (including comparisons with 2010) appear with methodological details in Katherine R. Knobloch, John Gastil, Traci Feller, and Robert Richards, *Evaluation Report on the 2012 Citizens' Initiative Reviews for the Oregon CIR Commission* (2013), available online at <http://www.la.psu.edu/cas/jgastil/CIR/ReportToCIRCommission2012.pdf>.

16. These results come from an online survey conducted in October, 2012. The overall difference among the mean knowledge scores in the conditions was significant, $F(3, 329) = 12.8, p < .001$. The test used a ten item knowledge battery, with the mean scores for Review readers being roughly twice that of the control group (i.e., roughly four correct answers for Review readers versus half that for those in the control group).

17. See Gastil et al., "Vicarious Deliberation," and Knobloch et al., "Did They deliberate?"

18. For an example of a study that uses relatively homogenous samples, brief unstructured deliberation, and no outside critique, see David Schkade, Cass R. Sunstein, and Reid Hastie, "What Happened on Deliberation Day?" *California Law Review*, 95 (2007), 915–40. More generally, the phenomenon of groupthink constitutes an unusual result of group processes that requires a number of structural faults; see Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decision and Fiascoes, 2nd Ed* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982).