POLICY SALIENCE AND VOTER TURNOUT: AN ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of policy salience on voter turnout. It is built on a conceptual framework that fuses policy salience and rational choice theories, and is guided by the hypothesis that the higher the policy salience during elections, the higher the voter turnout. The study used aggregate data on U.S. presidential elections, as well as the American National Election Studies’ (ANES) poll data from 1972 to 2000. The data has been analyzed using some basic correlation tests, namely Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings sustain the hypothesis that there is a very strong positive correlation between policy salience and voter turnout.