

Before the Vote

Forecasting American National Elections

Since the famous 1948 Dewey/Truman election, the role of polling has taken on increasing prominence in the American electoral process. Editors James Campbell and James Garand have pulled together some of the leading figures in political science to present their forecasts of the 1996 presidential election, along with accompanying analyses which discuss their methodology. Despite the relative lack of suspense about the eventual outcome, the various contributors have some very different angles on the enterprise of forecasting. Before the Vote presents a series of critiques, from prominent political scientists who look at the forecasting enterprise. Issues include whether more accurate models of predicting voter behavior damages the political climate by making politicians increasingly enslaved by pollsters, and the effect on turnout when there is a broad consensus of who the eventual winner will be. It will be a valuable addition to the bookshelves of political scientists interested in American electoral politics and those interested in broad questions surrounding social science research methods. This book is targeted toward MSGI courses in political science, American government, American politics, parties and elections, public opinion and participation, media and politics, political analysis, and scholars who work in these areas.

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