

whelmed by the rise in interest articulation.²⁵ Moreover, if the scope of government has expanded, so that expectations are higher than in the past, the problem would be compounded.²⁶ Although the relevant evidence is mostly circumstantial, this explanation has a good deal of plausibility.²⁷

More recently, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse have resurrected Bismarck's caution against watching the production of sausages or laws.²⁸ Considering the low standing of Congress in relation to the presidency and the Supreme Court, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse argue that Congress is despised precisely because of its openness. Congress allows citizens to see democracy in all its messiness—interest groups lobbying, parties posturing, members dealing and compromising. Generalizing this argument, the more open American politics becomes, the less citizens can maintain the fiction of public-spirited officials working cooperatively to solve social problems and defuse social conflicts. Again, this explanation certainly is plausible.

While seeing merit in both of the preceding hypotheses, I propose a third that is not inconsistent with either: the transition to a more participatory democracy increasingly has put politics into the hands of unrepresentative participators—extreme voices in the larger political debate. Consider another brief listing of research findings.

Back in the 1960s political science students studied Anthony Downs's exposition of the centrist logic of two-party competition.²⁹ A generation later intellectual inheritors of the Downsian tradition were working to develop models in which the candidates did *not* converge to the center.³⁰ A changed reality caused this shift in the modeling agenda.³¹ During the 1980s pundits and scholars alike remarked on the (electorally) unhealthy influence of "cause groups" in the Democratic primaries who exerted a "left shift" on popular perceptions of Democratic candidates.³² With a "new Democrat" in titular control of his party for most of the 1990s, the problem has become more serious in the Republican Party, where observers

25. Crozier, Huntington, and Watanuki (1975) offer a representative statement.

26. As noted by May (1997).

27. I indicated some sympathy for this position in an earlier article: "Through a complex mixture of accident and intention we have constructed for ourselves a system that articulates interests superbly but aggregates them poorly"; Fiorina (1980, p. 44).

28. See Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (1995).

29. Downs (1957, chap. 8).

30. For examples, see Alesina and Rosenthal (1995, chap. 2).

31. For recent empirical work on the divergent nature of candidate competition see Ansolabehere and Snyder (1988), and King (1988).

32. Brady and Sniderman (1984). Regrettably, this fascinating study never has been published.