

Random Thoughts 77

Persuasion

This word has two basic meanings. The first, and most common, is the action or process of making someone believe something.¹ The second meaning is a set of beliefs that are either religious or political.² There are several psychological theories of influence and persuasion³ which essentially concern the manipulation⁴ of information. Being persuasive is of the utmost importance in debate. Debate is the formal discussion of opposing ideas that usually ends in a vote to decide which argument was the more persuasive.

In our daily life we are beset by⁵ huge amounts of information designed to persuade us to think in certain ways. How we are influenced depends on several factors, our beliefs being one of them. Other factors are the influence of friends and family. Another factor is the nature of the information, that is to say, its content and how that relates to us.

Most of the news these days is focused on the pandemic. This pandemic affects everyone in one way or another. In addition to the health impact there is an economic impact and these are intertwined.⁶ Covid-19 is spread by interpersonal contact, so governments have resorted to lockdowns and other ways of discouraging people from gathering in groups. This has resulted in many businesses being forced to suspend or scale back operations which in turn results in many employees being laid off or terminated. That results in a loss of income for those individuals which directly affects their livelihoods. This in turn forces the government to find ways to help such individuals primarily through financial aid, which is a drain on government finances. The dilemma facing governments is keeping citizens safe and healthy on the one hand while trying to find ways to keep businesses operating on the other.

These are challenging times and the ability of leaders to successfully manage the handling of the response to the coronavirus will definitely influence the views and beliefs of the electorate⁷ regarding the ability of its elected officials. This, then, will be a very persuasive factor in the re-election chances of incumbents⁸. The pandemic is far from over and the daily onslaught⁹ of news about it will continue to influence us and our opinions of how well the response to it is being handled.

¹ 説得

² 信念

³ 影響と説得の心理学理論

⁴ 操作

⁵ に悩まされる

⁶ 絡み合う

⁷ 有権者

⁸ 現職

⁹ 猛攻撃