

TELEVISION

WIEBE, G. D. "Responses to the Televised Kefauver Hearings: Some Social Psychological Implications." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1952, 16, 179-200.

Purpose: To determine what happened to the feelings aroused in citizens in opposition to municipal corruption as a result of the televised Kefauver Hearings in New York City.

Procedure: Interviews were administered to 260 male, white collar and professional people, residents of New York City, under the age of 36, who had watched parts of the Kefauver Hearings on television. The interviews were given six to nine weeks after the Hearings.

Results: (a) "Overall, 260 persons (100 percent), all citizens of voting age, expressed concern with a local social problem. Sixty-five persons (25 percent) 'felt like' doing things classified as 'problem-solving.' Thirty-three persons (13 percent) actually did things which, liberally interpreted, might be classified as behavior directed toward the solution of the problem. Thirty-eight persons (14 percent) believed without reservation that what they did made a difference, but only six of these persons actually did things that were classified above as problem-solving." (b) Membership in political parties appeared not to influence action on the problem. (c) There was a tendency to reject problem-solving behavior as hopeless, a feeling of "social impotence" in dealing with the problem. (d) However, six months or so after the hearings, Rudolf Halley, chief counsel to the Kefauver Committee, was elected to the office of president of the City Council of New York City, over the opposition of the two major party candidates. The author states that this action "illustrates the function of an alternative leadership which converts the particular dissatisfaction characteristic of social impotence into a benefit of membership without depriving members of their prior benefits of membership."—*William Allen.*