



POLS 4600  
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 9/7/17

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**9/7/17 Outline**



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|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| <b><u>I. Introduction</u></b> | <b><u>II. Who Votes?</u></b> | <b><u>III. How Do Voters Decide?</u></b> | <b><u>IV. Conclusion</u></b> |
| a. clips                      | a. Freerider problems        | a. Past performance                      | a. thoughts?                 |
| b. paper                      | b. Community roots           | b. Opinion Leaders                       | b. Angry rants?              |
| c. news                       | c. Partisans                 | c. Personal Characteristics              |                              |
| d. sign-in                    | d. Low costs                 | d. Party Label                           |                              |
| e. Today                      | e. Turnout Varies            |  |                              |

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**Elections Clips**

[Martin Attacks Chambliss](#)  
[Chambliss Attacks Martin](#)  
[Clinton – Its 3 am](#)  
[SNL – 3 am](#)  
[Clint Webb for Senate](#)  
[SNL – Undecided Voters](#)  
[Daily Show – McConnelling](#)  
[Lying Ted](#)



[Daisy Girl](#)  
[Daily Show – Not Coordinating with Colbert](#)  
[Dale Peterson – We are better than that!](#)  
[Thomas Jefferson Attack Ad](#)  
[McCain Approves](#)  
[Daily Show: Our New Election Economy](#)  
[Demon Sheep](#)

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### Who Uses the Right to Vote?

Amazing outcome is that so many people actually do turn out to vote!

- Freerider problems are overcome.

Same logic applies to gathering information about the competing candidates and parties if a person chooses to vote.



The share of eligible voters who go to the polls has varied widely over American history.

The most important contemporary change was the sharp decline in voter turnout between 1960 and 1972:

- since then, an average of only about 58 percent of the eligible electorate has bothered to register and vote in presidential elections
- even the hotly contested 2008 race inspired a turnout of only about 61 percent

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### Who Uses the Right to Vote?



A word of caution: the measure matters!

What's wrong with simply calculating voter turnout by dividing the total number of votes cast by the total number voting age residents? What affect would this have?

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### Who Uses the Right to Vote?

Age and education have the strongest influence on voting.

African Americans and Hispanics are less likely to vote (taking other factors into account), as are people who live in southern states or those that border southern states.



People with deeper roots in their community vote more often as do those with internal and external efficacy.



Turnout is higher in areas where there are fewer barriers to registration.

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### Who Uses the Right to Vote?

Turnout is higher among people with stronger partisan views and electoral preferences.

If one lives in an area with more active parties and more competitive elections, there is also an increased probability of voting.

In terms of gender, men and women are equally likely to turn out and vote.

The cynical and distrustful are as likely to vote as anyone else

- contradicts a popular explanation for the decline in participation—that it resulted from an increase in public cynicism and mistrust since 1960

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### Who Uses the Right to Vote?

Voting and other forms of political participation incur costs but produce benefits.

People participate when they can meet the costs and appreciate the benefits.

Those with money, education, experience, free time, and self-confidence find it easier to meet the costs, while those with a greater psychological stake receive greater benefits.

Voting therefore rational for those who derive personal satisfaction from going to the polls. Expressing themselves through voting typically outweighs the modest costs of casting a ballot

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### Who Uses the Right to Vote?

Source: Pew Research Center

Differences in participation cannot be explained completely by individual differences in resources and psychological involvement, however.

Institutional contexts (variation in registration laws, for example) affect turnout as well.

Social circumstances also play a crucial part in stimulating turnout:

- social connections help with efficacy levels, information, and contact with activists.
- often people participate because they have been asked to do so.

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### Voter ID Laws

"Do Voter ID Laws Depress Turnout?" John Sides, [theMonkey Cage](#), 10/3/2011

A new Brennan Center study—which is getting front-page news coverage—attempts to count the number of citizens that could be adversely affected by new laws requiring voters to have photo identification. But do these laws actually reduce voter turnout?

In my 2007 post on this subject, I noted two studies. One determined that immigrants and ethnic minorities would be less likely to have these forms of identification. A second—available here at the Brennan Center's website—found that citizens in states that required photo identification reported turning out at a rate 2 points lower than citizens in other states.

But other studies do not find any negative effect of identification laws on turnout. Here is a one. And here is another, by Robert Erikson and Lorraine Minnite. I'll quote from their conclusions:

The moral is simple. We should be wary of claims—from all sides of the controversy—regarding turnout effects from voter ID laws. The effects may be there. By all tests there is nothing to suggest otherwise. But the data are not up to the task of making a compelling statistical argument. The Brennan Center has a list of studies here.

None of this is to say that voter identification laws are unproblematic. It is just difficult to prove that they are associated with lower turnout.



"Voter ID, which is gonna allow Governor Romney to win the state of Pennsylvania, done." —*Pennsylvania House Majority Leader Mike Turzai (R)*

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### How Do Voters Decide?



Acquire information to reduce uncertainty. Cues and shortcuts through:

- Past performance
- Opinion leaders
- Personal characteristics of the candidate
- Party label

Free information through the press, social media and friends.

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### How Do Voters Decide?



Assessing past performance.

- Evaluating incumbents. "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?"
- Role of the economy.
- Utilize direct experience/experience of others via the media

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### How Do Voters Decide?




2008 Election—Family's financial situation?

Total	Obama (D)	McCain (R)
Better (37%)	37%	60%
Worse (42%)	71%	28%
Same (34%)	45%	53%

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### How Do Voters Decide?

Comparing future policy options.

- Focus on issues: Guns, abortion, tax cuts, civil rights, etc.

Depends (single-issue voters versus those who make decisions based on bundles of issues).

Voters may take cues from opinion leaders.

Voters also make predictions based on the candidates' personal characteristics:

- one set of personal considerations includes qualities such as competence, experience, honesty, knowledge, and leadership skills



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### How Do Voters Decide?

The most important information shortcut voters use to make predictions is party label.

The party label provides useful information for both: performance voting (voting for the party in control, or "in-party" when one thinks the government is performing well; voting for the outs when one thinks the government is performing poorly) and issue voting (the typical positions of Republicans and Democrats; the parties differ in predictable ways on many issues).



Most voters simplify their electoral evaluations and decisions by developing a consistent bias in favor of the candidates of one of the major parties, making the party label the most influential "endorsement" of all.

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### How Do Voters Decide?

2008 Election—By party affiliation

Total	Obama (D)	McCain (R)
Democrat (39%)	89%	10%
Republican (32%)	9%	90%
Independent (29%)	52%	44%




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### Partisanship



Gallup has an interesting finding on confidence in Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke. It seems that perceptions of this ostensibly nonpartisan official depend heavily on which President he happens to be working for. – fivethirtyeight.com

Percent Expressing Great Deal/Fair Amount of Confidence in Ben Bernanke:

	Democrats	Independents	Republicans
2008	40	43	61
2009	64	44	36

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### Elections Revisited

Does money contributed to elections provide benefits to those who give?

- Access: yes.
- Policy favoritism: no indisputable evidence, but plenty of suggestive evidence.

Suggested reforms:

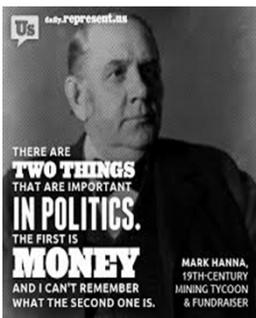
- Spending ceilings.
- Limiting donations and eliminating PACs.
- Public funding.

These all have their own problems, trade-offs.

And there is no consensus on what would be best reform.

- Ultimate barrier: First Amendment.

Politicians HATE raising money.




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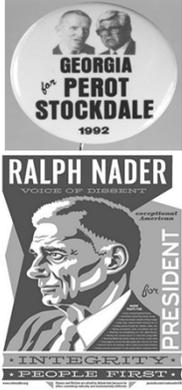
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### Third Parties and Partisan Realignment



What drives the ideological movement of parties?

What effects do third parties have in American elections?

Miller and Schofield (2003, 245): "Politics may appear to be characterized by a single cleavage, but this is because the two parties [led by ideological activists] themselves 'organize' politics along the dimension that separates them. Party disagreement on one dimension of politics makes that dimension more salient, while the other dimension is obscured by tacit party agreement."

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### Third Parties and Partisan Realignment

TABLE 1. Reversal of Partisan Presidential Coalitions, 1896 to 2000

	Democratic 1896		Republican 1896	
Democratic 2000	Washington		Connecticut Delaware Illinois Maryland Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota New Jersey New York Pennsylvania Rhode Island	California Iowa Maine Oregon Vermont Wisconsin
Republican 2000	Colorado Florida Idaho Kansas Kentucky Montana Nebraska S. Dakota Tennessee Utah Virginia Wyoming	Alabama Arkansas Georgia Louisiana Mississippi <sup>1</sup> Missouri Nevada N. Carolina S. Carolina Texas	W. Virginia	Indiana New Hampshire N. Dakota Ohio
	23		22	

Note: Italicized states are those that were Republican in 1896. Boldfaced states are those that were Democratic in 1896.  $\chi^2 = 24.91$  with 3 df ( $p < .005$ );  $r^2 = .55$ .  
<sup>1</sup> Although Kennedy outpolled Nixon in Mississippi (31% to 25%), a plurality voted for electors who cast their electoral votes for segregationist Harry Byrd.

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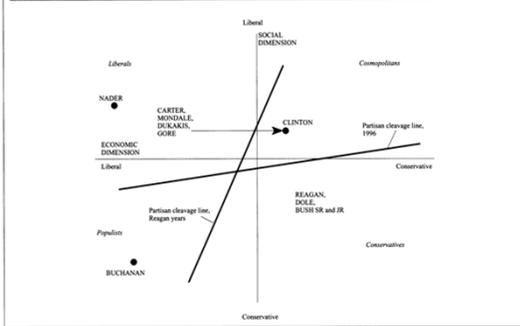
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### Third Parties and Partisan Realignment

FIGURE 3. Possible Candidate Positions, 1976-2000




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### Third Parties and Partisan Realignment

To maximize their vote share relative to their opponents, parties engage in “flanking” maneuvers.

For the modern Republican party, this would mean picking up economic liberals/social moderates.

Third parties – two types:

Dragging (like Ralph Nader) – encourage the party to move back to an old position.

Leading (like George Wallace) – encourage the party to adopt a new position.



“There’s not a dime’s worth of difference between the Democrat and Republican parties.” – *Former Governor and Presidential Candidate George Wallace (D-AL)*

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### Conclusion



Questions? For Monday: Chapter 6 and the Boehner reading.

Enjoy the rest of your day!

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