



Unit 4

Ideology, Political Parties and Elections

“Political Ideologies”

Mr. Ahlberg

Notes #1



US Voter Turnout

- 57.5% of eligible voters voted in 2012
 - It was only 41% in 2010
 - Why?
- US Voter Turnout is lower than most other Western Democracies



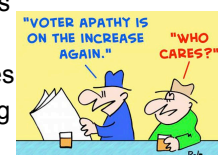
Factors That Impact Voting

- Education
 - more education=more voting
 - MOST IMPORTANT INDICATOR
- Religious involvement
- Race and Ethnicity
 - Whites vote better than minorities (economic?)
- Age
 - 18-24 is the lowest and over 60 is the highest
- Gender
 - men traditionally voted more, now it is usually equal



Why People Don't Vote

- Don't feel their vote matters
- Too busy
- Don't understand the issues
- Difficulty of Absentee Voting
- Number of Offices to Elect too high
- Weekday, non-holiday voting
- Weak political parties – less “get-out-the-vote campaigns”



Expanding Suffrage

1. Lifting of property restrictions (1830)
 - “universal manhood suffrage” gave voting rights to all white males
2. 15th Amendment (1865)
 - Voting Rights to all former Slaves (Men only)
3. 17th Amendment (1913)
 - Direct election of Senators by popular vote
4. 19th Amendment (1920)
 - Woman can vote
5. 24th Amendment (1964)
 - Banned Poll Taxes
6. 26th Amendment (1971)
 - Lowered voting age to 18



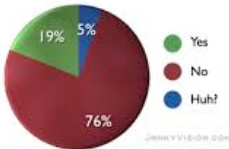
How to Increase Voter Turnout

- Compulsory Voting
- Reward Voting
- Easier Voter Registration
 - Difficult registration process is seen as one of the causes of low turnout
 - “Motor-Voter” – Registration Act – allowed people to register to vote while they get license
- Easier methods to vote
 - Early voting
 - Vote by Mail
 - Online voting (do you think this is a good idea)

A.P. GOVERNMENT **Public Opinion**

- The distribution and collection of individual attitudes about a particular issue, candidate, government institution, etc.


Do you trust public opinion?



Response	Percentage
Yes	76%
No	19%
Huh?	5%

A.P. GOVERNMENT **Measuring Public Opinion**

- Do Elections measure Public Opinion?
 - Give an indirect measure
- Public Opinion Polls
 - Used to directly measure the public's opinion
 - Scientific
 - George Gallup (1st Pollster)
 - Developed Gallup Polls
 - Has only picked one general election result incorrectly since 1936



A.P. GOVERNMENT **Public Opinion Polls**

- Random Sampling
 - Allows for polling of a cross-section of the public
- Exit Polls
 - Random selection of voters polled as they leave voting locations (this prevents bias)
- Straw poll
 - Unreliable polling technique
- Sampling Error
 - Tells how accurate the poll results are
 - +/- 4 means that if the poll shows 60% in favor then the actual range is between 56-64%

A.P. GOVERNMENT **Hard To Measure**

- Saliency (aka-Relevance)
 - The degree to which an issue is important
 - EX-Social Security has a low saliency for teens
- Intensity
 - How strong people's opinions are about an issue
 - EX-Members of the NRA have higher intensity about gun control than most Americans
 - If the intensity is high enough, minority opinions can override an opinion held by the majority
- Stability
 - How likely the opinion expressed at the time of the poll remains the same given time. (Presidential Approval)

A.P. GOVERNMENT **How to Conduct a Poll**

- Define the Universe
 - Whose opinion do you want to know
- Select a Sample
 - A small sub-section of the Universe
- Develop good questions
 - Avoid bias
- Interview/Ask the question
- Analyze the Results
 - Interpret the data and make it say what you want it to say

