

VOTER TURNOUT & BEHAVIOR

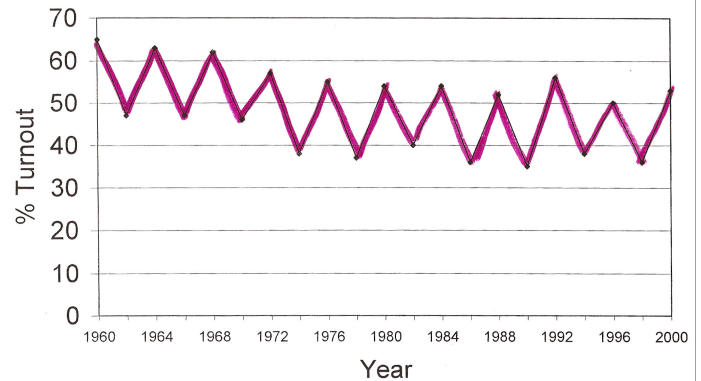
"Half the American people never read a newspaper. Half never vote for President. One hopes it is the same half."
 -- Gore Vidal

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

- 🗳️ Set by individual states; qualifications of
- 🗳️ California voters must be:
 - 🗳️ or older
 - 🗳️ Official residents of the state ()
 - 🗳️ to vote

(all states except ND),

Voter Turnout in Federal Elections



HISTORICAL VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

- 🗳️ (eliminated by state legislatures)
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- 🗳️ (eliminated by Amendment)
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- 🗳️ (eliminated by Amendment poll tax ban)
- 🗳️ (eliminated by)
- 🗳️ Free (outlawed in *Guinn v US* 1915)
- 🗳️ Minimum Age (eliminated by Amendment)

WHO DOESN'T VOTE (BOO!)

- 🗳️ Nonvoters are divided into two categories:
 - 🗳️ CAN-NOT voters are to vote (in labor, in jail, etc.)
 - 🗳️ WILL-NOT voters to vote (apathy, inefficacy, laziness)...DON'T BE ONE!!
- "Bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote"

AMERICAN VS. FOREIGN TURNOUT

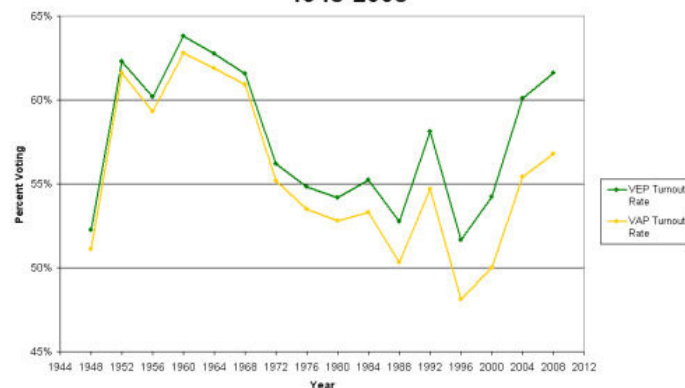
- 🗳️ U.S. averages in elections, congressional elections; turnout has declined since
- 🗳️ Comparable industrialized Western nations have turnout as high as ~90%. BUT, many other countries impose for nonvoting (fines, government papers stamped "DID NOT VOTE")
- 🗳️ Have systems - more choice in elections, maybe a more meaningful vote
- 🗳️ Have registration

WHY DON'T PEOPLE ROCK THE VOTE?

INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS

- 🗳️ (easing or eliminating would likely add points to turnout)
- 🗳️ National Voter Registration Act of 1993 ("Bill" was designed to increase turnout
 - 🗳️ Allows people to register to vote when
 - 🗳️ Registration forms offered at
 - 🗳️ States required to allow
 - 🗳️ Has not significantly increased turnout
- 🗳️ "Ballot"
 - 🗳️ Excessive
 - 🗳️ Excessive number of on ballot (Down-Ticket Dropoff: many voters stop after POTUS, Congress, Governor - famous-name races)

Presidential Turnout Rates 1948-2008



INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS (CONT.)

Type of election

election turnout >

turnout

turnout >

turnout

election turnout >

election turnout

Difficulties in obtaining

ballots

Demographics

registrants have lowest turnout; when 26th Amendment ratified, turnout "naturally" declined

POLITICAL REASONS

Lack of

Dissatisfaction with

Lack of strong

Weakness of

in

voters

WHO VOTES? WHO DOESN'T? WHO CARES?

CHARACTERISTICS OF LIKELY VOTERS:

Level of

(the

OF VOTING): cuts across all

other factors – those with high levels of education, regardless of race, gender, income, age, are more likely to than those with low levels of education

: more \$, more vote

: more gray, more vote (except very old/infirm)

: whites more likely than more likely than

: are more likely to vote than

– turnout for both genders has decreased over the past 40 years, but much more dramatically for men – 72% turnout for men in 1964, 56% in 2004

Men are less likely than women to

consume

and believe that people are

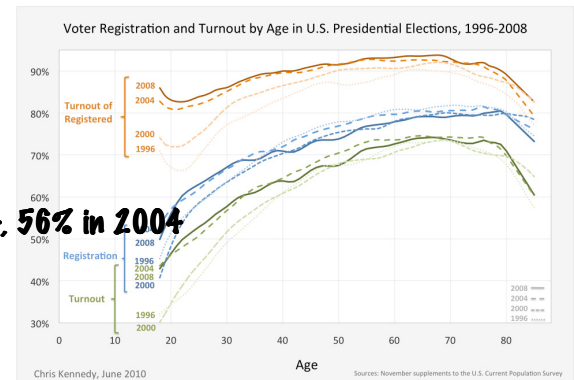
Fewer men than women

of

Extended

(who are barred from voting) are male

men are more likely to vote than single men



DOES LOW TURNOUT MATTER?

IF voters represented accurate

, low turnout would of course be relatively unimportant are overrepresented – creates CLASS BIAS in elections

BUT

SO GET OUT AND VOTE!!

(although some studies show that nonvoters may be demographically different from voters, but are not politically different, and therefore would not vote in a different way...but WHY TAKE THAT CHANCE?!!)

FACTORS AFFECTING VOTER BEHAVIOR

1.

: traditionally Dem; now increasingly GOP

: GOP trend (Whatsa Matta w/ Toto?)

Rocky Mountain region: trend

: traditionally GOP, increasingly Dem

Great Lakes region: Democratic trend, but several (e.g. Ohio)

Far : trend ("Left Coast Liberals")

Republicans have " – Rocky Mountains to & through South

VOTER TURNOUT RATE IN 2000 BY GROUPS (IN PERCENTS)

Age

18-20:	29
21-24:	35
25-44:	50
45-64:	65
Over 65:	68

Race

White:	56
Black:	44
Hispanic:	45
Asian:	43

Education Level

No HS diploma:	31
HS diploma:	49
Some college:	60
College grad:	72

Gender

Men:	53
Women:	56

Union Membership

Union member:	65
Not union member:	53

2. PRESENCE OF ESPECIALLY STRONG

:

EFFECT

3. TIMING

- ☞ elections: Political alignment (1960, 1964)
- ☞ elections: change in political alignment (1952, 1956)
- ☞ elections: in political alignment (1860, 1896, 1932)
- ☞ elections: party in power has seats in Congress in every midterm since 1938 but 98 & 02

4. POLITICAL PARTY IDENTIFICATION: PSYCHOLOGICAL

TO A POLITICAL PARTY

- ☞ Probably of voting behavior
- ☞ BUT, more people now "
- ☞ voting: decline in recent years (encouraged by party-column ballot)
- ☞ voting: increase in recent years (encouraged by office-group ballot)
- ☞ Some party members classified as "strong;" others as "weak"
- ☞ Independents:
 - ☞ (~): decline in GOP, Dem members
 - ☞ Some " - Independent Reps or Indie Dems
 - ☞ Some " (~) - no pattern of voting behavior
 - ☞ Many tend to be with

Incomes

CHANGING PATTERNS IN VOTING BEHAVIOR, 1960 AND 2000

5. DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS (A RECAP):

- ☞ Gender Gap -
 - ☞ Males more likely to vote ; females,
- ☞ Race
 - ☞ Whites more likely ; nonwhites more likely
 - ☞ are most loyal Dem voters
- ☞ Socioeconomics
 - ☞ strata more likely Dem; upper more likely
- ☞ Religion
 - ☞ more likely GOP; more likely Dem

	Kennedy	Nixon	Gore	Bush
Protestant	36	63	47	50
Catholic	83	17	48	49
Jewish	89	11	90	10
White	48	52	44	53
Black	71	29	89	8
Hispanic	NA	NA	57	34
Male	52	48	44	51
Female	47	53	54	42
18-34	52	48	50	43
35-64	50	49	49	48
65+	39	60	52	46
Lowest income 3 rd	45	54	63	34
Middle income 3 rd	55	45	48	47
Upper income 3 rd	48	52	46	50
Union member	63	37	58	36
Not union member	44	56	48	48

6. ISSUES

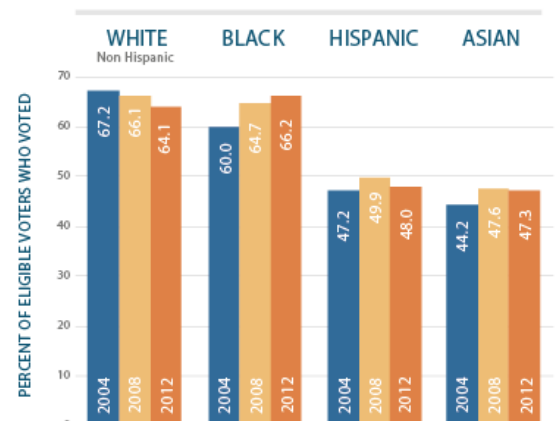
- ☞ Especially state of the
 - ☞ "It's the economy, stupid" (1992)
 - ☞ Tax cuts to pull nation out of recession (Dubya)
- ☞ voting ("Ask yourself, are you better off now that you were four years ago?"
- ☞ voting (predicting, based on candidate , how they will handle office if elected)

7.

OH, THOSE WACKY FLORIDIANS - A new spin on "Vote Early and Often":
In the 2000 election in Florida...

- ☞ 1000 voters voted for all ten presidential candidates
- ☞ 3600 voted for all ten candidates except Bush
- ☞ 700 voted for all ten candidates except Gore
- ☞ 7000 voted for both Bush & Gore

Turnout Rates



Source: Current Population Survey November 2004, 2008, and 2012 Supplements