

UNIT II
POLITICAL BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOR
AP Chapters 4-5-6

Activists

- Individuals, usually outside of government, who actively promote a political party, philosophy, or issue they care about

Americanism

- A belief that Americans consider themselves bound by common values and common hopes

Australian ballot

- A government-printed ballot of uniform size and shape to be cast is secret that was adopted by many states around 1890 in order to reduce the voting fraud associated with party-printed ballots cast in public

Campaigners

- According to Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, people who not only vote but like to get involved in campaign activities as well. They are better educated than the average voter, but what distinguishes them most is their interest in the conflicts of politics, their clear party identification, and their willingness to take strong positions

Civic Competence

- A belief that one can affect government policies

Civic Duty

- A belief that one has an obligation to participate in civic and political affairs

Class Consciousness

- An awareness of belonging to a particular socio-economic class whose interests are different from those of others
- Usually used in reference to workers who view their interests as opposite those of managers and business owners

Communitarians

- According to Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, people who tend to reserve their energies for community activities. They prefer to avoid the partisanship and conflicts that characterize campaigns. Their education and income are similar to those of campaigners.

Complete Activists

- According to Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, people who are highly educated, have high incomes, and tend to be middle-aged rather than young or old. These people participate in all forms of politics and account for 11 percent of the population

Conservative

- In general, a person who favors more limited and local government, less government regulation of markets, more social conformity to traditional norms and values, and tougher politics toward criminals
- A conservative is likely to support tax cuts, prayer in school, and restrictions on abortion
- A conservative is not likely to support affirmative actions

Culture War

- A split in the United States reflecting differences in people's beliefs about private and public morality, regarding what standards ought to govern individual behavior and social arrangements

Elite

- People with a disproportionate amount of a valued resource

Equality of Opportunity

- A value in American culture which maintains that all people should have the same opportunity to get ahead

Equality of Result

- A value in American culture which maintains that there should not be significant income disparities and that the government should guarantee a basic standard of living

External Efficacy

- See political efficacy

Fifteenth Amendment

- The constitutional amendment that guaranteed the right to vote regardless of race, color, or previous condition of slavery

Gender Gap

- Differences in the political views and voting behavior of men and women

Grandfather clause

- A clause added to registration laws allowing people who did not meet registration requirements to vote if they or their ancestor had voted before 1867 (before African Americans were allowed to vote)
- This was to exempt poor and illiterate whites from registration requirements established to keep former slaves from voting
- The Supreme Court declared the practice unconstitutional in 1915

Inactives

- According to Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, people who rarely vote, do not get involved in organizations, and do not even talk much about politics. They account for about 22 percent of the population

Internal Efficacy

- See political efficacy

John Q Public

- Colloquial term for average citizens and what they want or believe

Liberal

- In general, a person who favors a more active federal government for regulation business, supporting social welfare, and protecting minority rights, but prefers less regulation of private social conduct

Libertarians

- People who wish to maximize personal liberty on both economic and social issues
- They prefer a small, weak government that has little control over either the economy or the personal lives of citizens

Literacy test

- A requirement that citizens pass a literacy test in order to vote. It was established by many states to prevent former slaves (most of whom were illiterate) from voting
- Illiterate whites were allowed to vote by a "grandfather clause" added to the law

Middle America

- A phrase coined by Joseph Kraft in a 1968 newspaper column to refer to Americans who have moved out of poverty but are not yet affluent and who cherish traditional middle class values

Motor-voter bill

- A bill passed by Congress in 1993 and signed by President Clinton to make it easier for Americans to register to vote
- The law, which went into effect in 1995, requires states to allow voter registration by mail, when one applies for a drivers license, and at state offices that serve the disabled or poor
- It requires that states periodically review their voter lists for accuracy
- It authorizes \$50 million to help cover implementation costs
- It provides for automatic registration of eligible voters as a result of license renewal
- It does not purge from voter rolls voters who did not vote in the previous election

New Class

- People whose advantages stem not so much from their connections with business as from the growth of government

Nineteenth Amendment

- An amendment to the Constitution, passed in 1920, allowing women the right to vote

Norm

- A standard of right or proper conduct that helps determine the range of acceptable social behavior and policy options

Orthodox

- People who believe that moral rules are derived from the commands of God or the laws of nature; these rules or laws are relatively clear, unchanging, and independent of individual moral preferences
- They are likely to believe that traditional morality is more important than individual liberty and should be enforced by government and communal norms
- See progressive

Parochial Participants

- According to Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, people who do not vote and stay out of election campaigns and civic associations, but who are willing to contact local officials about specific, often personal, problems

Partisanship

- Identification with a political party

Political Beliefs

- During the course of the past fifty years (since the end of World War II), the largest percentage increase in political identification occurred among independents, rather than democrats, republicans, or those claiming to be apolitical
- The longer a president remains in office, the more likely his popularity tends to fall
- The most important role in the political socialization of children is played by the family
- The news media's greatest effect on political belief is that it determines which issues the public thinks are important
- People with higher incomes are more likely to think of themselves as conservative than are those with lower incomes
- The greatest number of American voters identify themselves as "moderate", rather than as liberal, conservative, progressive, or reactionary.

Political Behavior

- The majority of the American electorate does not vote in most elections
- Political activism increases with education levels
- Women are more likely than men to vote Democratic
- The young are least likely to vote; the young with low education levels even less likely to vote.
- The greater a citizen's education level, the more likely are the chances that he/she will vote

- The most important reason that voter turnout is lower in the United States than in most other industrial democracies is because traditionally it has been more difficult to register to vote in the US than in most other industrial democracies
- African American Democrats tend to support the more liberal candidates within their party
- Americans over the age of 65 are as, or are more, likely to vote than are members of other age groups, because they believe that they have a personal stake in government policy.
- Voters are most likely to return an incumbent member of the House to office than any other elected official. In other words, once elected to the house, a member rarely loses a reelection bid.

Political Culture

- A broadly shared way of thinking about political and economic life that reflects fundamental assumptions about how government should operate
- It is distinct from political ideology, which refers to a more or less consistent set of views about the policies government ought to follow
- Up to a point people sharing a common political culture can disagree about ideology
- See political ideology
- Important elements of the American political culture include (a) Americans believe they should be able to do pretty much as they please, (b) Americans think government officials should be accountable to the people, (c) Americans believe that individuals are responsible for their own actions; and (d) Americans feel people ought to help out their communities.
- As part of their political culture, Americans generally do not believe the government should try to equalize the property and living conditions of citizens. To the contrary, Americans generally have a widely held commitment to individuals and personal responsibility
- Although culture is preserved and transmitted by schools, friends, the media, churches, and civic organizations, the family is the primary influence in the way we think about the world.
- When it comes to such issues as abortion, legal rights of homosexuals, legalization or decriminalization of drugs, and federal funding of the arts, it can be said that there exists a culture war in America.

Political Efficacy

- A citizen's belief that he or she can understand and influence political affairs
- This sense is divided into two parts: internal efficacy (confidence in a citizen's own abilities to understand and take part in political affairs) and external efficacy (a belief that the system will respond to a citizen's demands)
- Since the 1960's, there has been a sharp drop in the sense of the external efficacy but not much change in the sense of the internal efficacy.
- Unlike the issue of mistrust, few specific events can be cited to account for the drop in efficacy. Americans may have gradually come to the conclusion government is now too big and pervasive to respond to the citizen's preference.

Political elite

- See Elite

Political Ideology

- A more or less consistent set of views as to the policies government ought to pursue

Political Subculture

- Fundamental assumptions about how the political process should operate that distinguish citizens by region, or other characteristics
- The family usually plays the largest role in political socialization and people tend to vote the same way as their parents vote
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Political Socialization*

Political Tolerance*

- Basically defined as civility in dealing with the opinions and actions of others.
- Perfect political tolerance is not required for a democracy to function, but at a minimum, citizens must allow the discussion of ideas and the selection of leaders in an atmosphere free of oppression.
- Most Americans today are willing to let people they disagree with politically have great attitude in expressing their views.
- Americans as a whole have become more tolerant, though most Americans think Americans tolerate too much.
- Most Americans believe that serious civic problems are rooted in the breakdown of moral values. Most citizens worry that the nation is becoming too tolerant of behaviors that harms society.

Poll

- A survey of public opinion
- See also random sample

Poll tax

- A requirement that citizens pay a tax in order to register to vote
- It was adopted by many states to prevent former slaves (most of whom were poor) from voting
- It is now unconstitutional

Populists

- People who hold liberal views on economic matters and conservative ones on social matters. They prefer a strong government that will reduce economic inequality, regulate businesses, and impose stricter social and criminal sanctions.
- The name and views have their origins in an agriculturally based social movement and party of the 1880s and 1890s that sought to curb the power of influential economic interests

Progressive

- A person that believes that moral rules are derived in part from an individual's beliefs and the circumstances of modern life
- Progressives are likely to favor government tolerance and protection of individual choice

Pure Conservatism

- A political ideology that is conservative on both economic and personal conduct

Pure Liberalism

- A political ideology that is liberal on both economic and personal conduct

Random sample

- A sample selected in such a way that any member of the population being surveyed has an equal chance of being interviewed

Registered voters

- People who are registered to vote
- While almost all adult American citizens are theoretically eligible to vote, only those who have completed a registration form by the required date may do so

Religious Tradition

- The normal teachings of religious institutions on religious, social, or economic issues
- All of the following are true about religion in America: (1) Americans are more likely than Europeans to believe in a higher power; (b) religiosity has increased in the past two decades; (c) religious institutions are the country's major source of volunteer and community service; (d) Americans are more likely than Europeans to pray every day.

Republicans / Democrats

Sampling error

- The difference between the results of two surveys or samples
- For example, if one random sample shows that 60 percent of all Americans like cats and another random sample taken at the same time shows that 65 percent do, the sampling error is 5 percent

Silent Majority

- A phrase used to describe people, whatever their economic status, who uphold traditional values, especially against the counterculture of the 1960's

Social Status

- A measure of one's social standing obtained by combining factors such as education, income, and occupation

Trust (political)

- Today, people have less confidence in their government than they once did. However, compared to most countries, Americans have more confidence in public and private institutions.
- Since the 1950's there has been a more or less steady decline in the proportion of Americans who say they trust the government in DC to do the right thing.

Twenty-sixth Amendment

- The 1971 constitutional amendment that lowered the voting age in both state and federal elections to eighteen. Congress had attempted to achieve this goal through legislation, but the Supreme Court ruled that the federal government had no authority to do so with respect to state elections

Twenty-third Amendment

- The 1961 constitutional amendment permitting residents of Washington, D.C., to vote in presidential elections

Voting-age populations

- The citizens who are eligible to vote after reaching a minimum age requirement
- In the United States a citizen must be at least eighteen years old in order to vote

Voting Rights Act of 1965

- The federal law that suspended the use of literacy tests in elections and authorized federal examiners to order the registration of blacks in states and counties where fewer than 50 percent of the voting-age population was registered or had voted in the last presidential election

Voting Specialists

- According to Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, people who vote but participate in little else politically. They tend not to have much schooling or income, and to be substantially older than the average person

White primary

- The practice of keeping African Americans from voting in primary elections (at the time, the only meaningful election in the one-party South was the Democratic primary) through arbitrary implementation of registration requirements and intimidation
- Such practices were declared unconstitutional in 1944

Work Ethic

- A belief in the importance of hard work and personal achievement