Voting

Dr. Patrick F. Larue

University of Texas at Dallas

Voting

Two-step process:

- Registering to vote
  - Eligibility
  - Documentation
- Voting
  - Prior to election day
  - On election day

How many people vote?

Voter turnout:

- Voting age population (VAP)
  - $VAP = \frac{\#voters}{\#citizens(18+)}$
- Voting eligible population (VEP)
  - $VEP = \frac{\#voters}{\#citizens(18+, non-felon, sufficient)}$

VAP is *always deflated* relative to VEP.

How many people vote?

Voter turnout:

- Voting age population (VAP)
- $VAP = \frac{\#voters}{\#citizens(18+)}$
- Voting eligible population (VEP)
- $VEP = \frac{\#voters}{\#citizens(18+, non-felon, sufficient)}$

VAP is *always deflated* relative to VEP.

How many people vote?

Voter turnout:

- Voting age population (VAP)
- $VAP = \frac{\#voters}{\#citizens(18+)}$
- Voting eligible population (VEP)
- $VEP = \frac{\#voters}{\#citizens(18+, non-felon, sufficient)}$

VAP is *always deflated* relative to VEP.

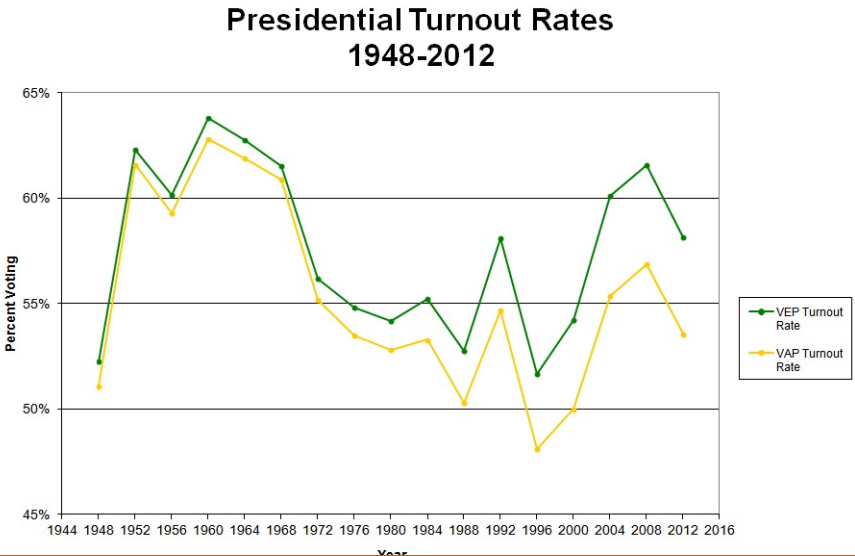
How many people vote?

Voter turnout:

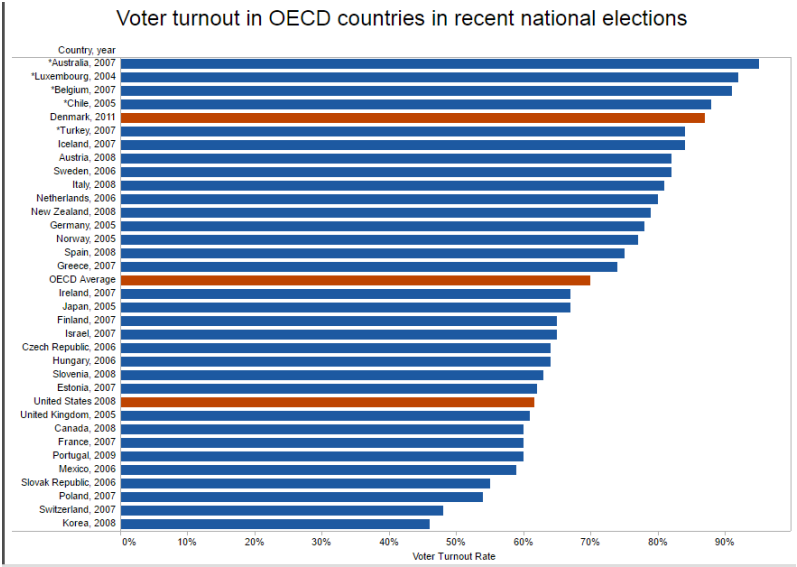
- Voting age population (VAP)
- $VAP = \frac{\#voters}{\#citizens(18+)}$
- Voting eligible population (VEP)
- $VEP = \frac{\#voters}{\#citizens(18+, non-felon, sufficient)}$

VAP is *always deflated* relative to VEP.

Turnout


Presidential Turnout Rates
1948-2012
65%
60%
55%
50%
45%
Percent Voting
1944 1948 1952 1956 1960 1964 1968 1972 1976 1980 1984 1988 1992 1996 2000 2004 2008 2012 2016
Year
VEP Turnout Rate
VAP Turnout Rate

Turnout


Voter turnout in OECD countries in recent national elections
Country, year
*Australia, 2007
*Luxembourg, 2004
*Belgium, 2007
*Chile, 2005
Denmark, 2011
*Turkey, 2007
Iceland, 2007
Austria, 2008
Sweden, 2006
Italy, 2008
Netherlands, 2006
New Zealand, 2008
Germany, 2005
Norway, 2005
Spain, 2008
Greece, 2007
OECD Average
Ireland, 2007
Japan, 2005
Finland, 2007
Israel, 2007
Czech Republic, 2006
Hungary, 2006
Slovenia, 2008
Estonia, 2007
United States 2008
United Kingdom, 2005
Canada, 2008
France, 2007
Portugal, 2009
Mexico, 2006
Slovak Republic, 2006
Poland, 2007
Switzerland, 2007
Korea, 2008
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
90%
Voter Turnout Rate

Why do people vote?

Two contrasting formulas:

- Anthony Downs

$$PB - C > 0$$

  - P: Pivotality
  - B: Benefits
  - C: Costs

Should people vote?

Why do people vote?

Two contrasting formulas:

- Riker and Ordeshook

$$PB - C + D > 0$$

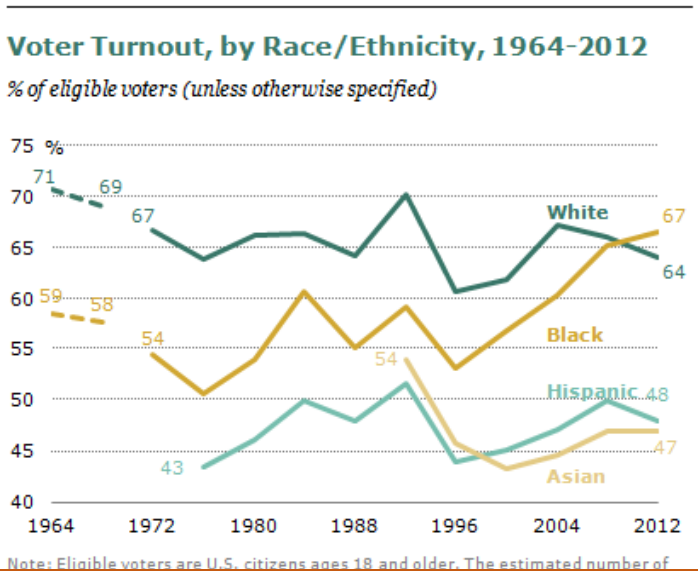
  - P: Pivotality
  - B: Benefits
  - C: Costs
  - D: Civic Duty

Should people vote?

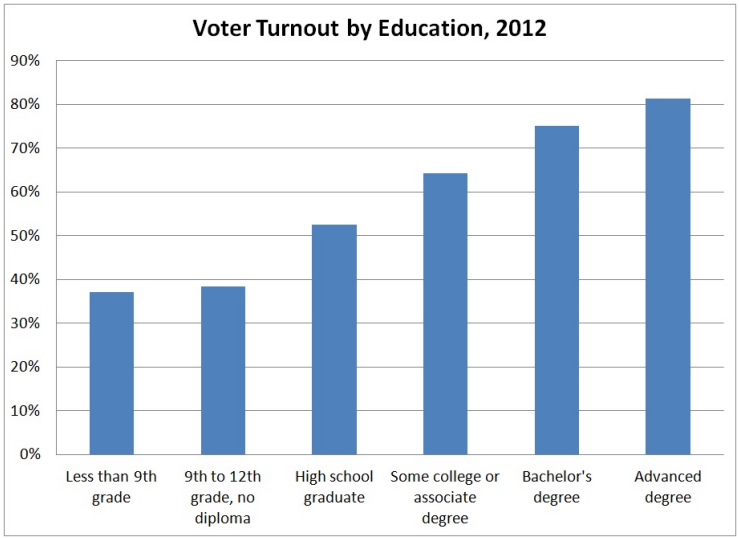
Factors that influence voting likelihood

- Demographics
- Political environment and political efficacy
- Mobilization and salience
- Electoral competition and expected vote differential
- Institutional constraints

DEMOGRAPHICS

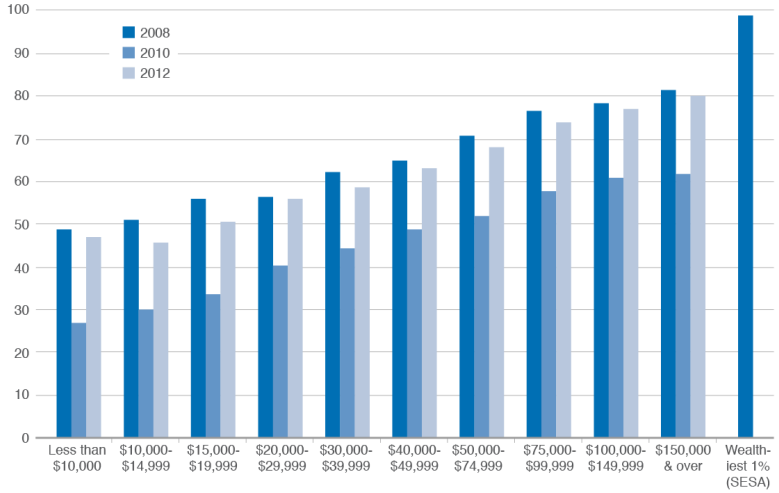


Demographics



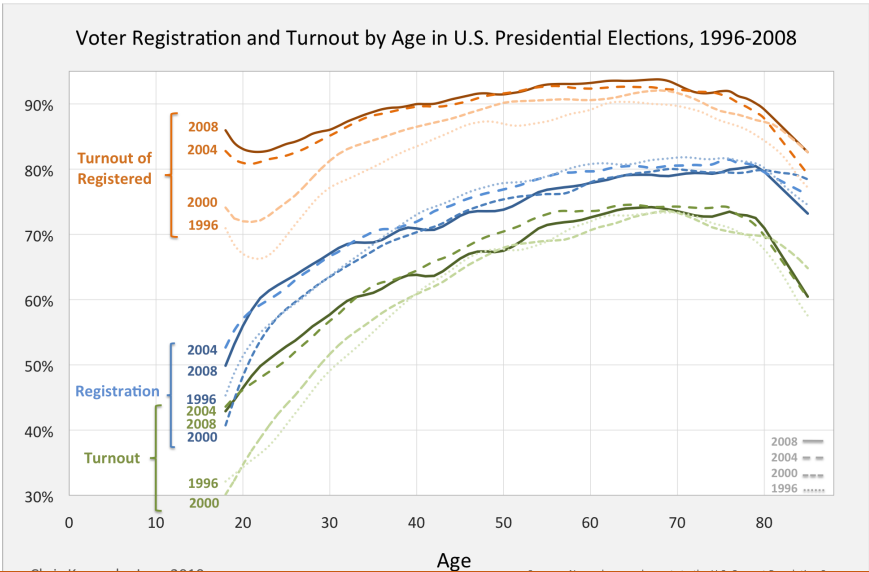
Demographics

Figure 1. Voter Turnout, by Household Income, 2008 - 2012



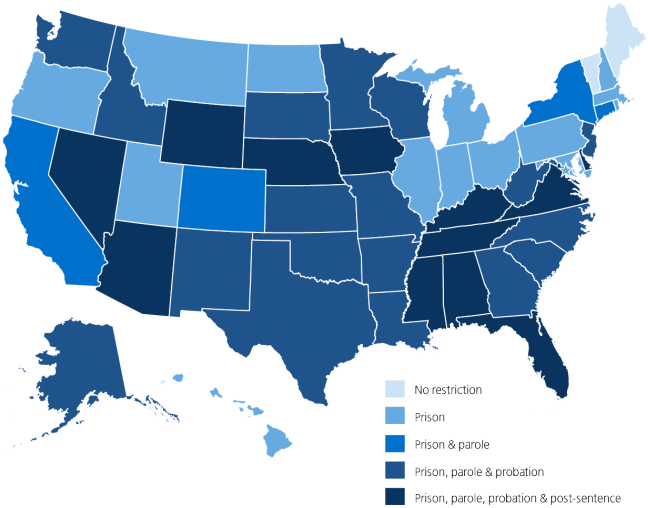
Source: Census Data, Supplemented by SESA 2013

Demographics



Institutional Barriers

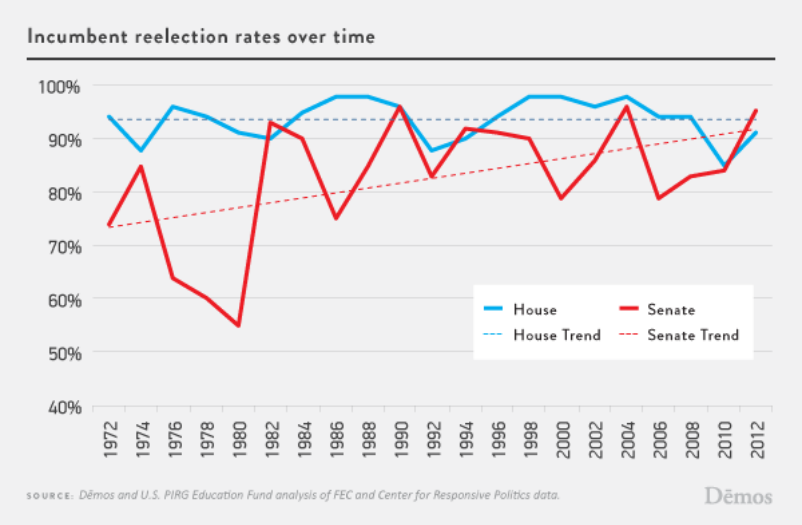
Felony Disenfranchisement



Who do people vote for?

- Retrospective voting
- Prospective voting
- Incumbents

INCUMBENCY


Incumbent reelection rates over time
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
1972
1974
1976
1978
1980
1982
1984
1986
1988
1990
1992
1994
1996
1998
2000
2002
2004
2006
2008
2010
2012
House
Senate
House Trend
Senate Trend
SOURCE: Dēmos and U.S. PIRG Education Fund analysis of FEC and Center for Responsive Politics data.
Dēmos