**Lecture notes for exam 2**

From Joiners to Loners

**Robert Putnam’s “Bowling Alone”**

* Subtitle “The Collapse and Revival of American Community”
* The collapse: last quarter of the 20th century
* The revival: online? If so: implications

**The 1950’s and 60’s**

* Post-depression, post WW2: number of community groups increases each year
* Increasing affluence and education as well
* Church attendance booms
* The “threat of leisure”
* Heeding the call of Kennedy…”the torch has been passed”
* Number of parents who would like to see children go into politics doubles

**A Result: Problem Solving**

* Segregation still the norm
* New –isms rise (feminism, environmentalism)
* Community improvement takes off (proactive versus reactive)

**Social Capital: What is it?**

* Connections between individuals
* Norms of reciprocity and trust that arise from connections
* 1916: “the individual is helpless socially, if left to himself”
* Benefits our personal interests (“private good”)
* Benefits the world around us (“public good”)

**Participation Transformation Post 1970’s**

* Serving as an officer in a club/organization down 42%
* Served on a committee down 39%
* Attending a town meeting down 35%
* Attending a political rally down 34%
* Signed a petition down 22%

Social Capital and Lobbying

**Apolitical Changes in the 1970’s and 80’s**

* Social visiting declines
* Family dinners less common
* Fast food restaurants up, sit down restaurants down
* Card playing down, casino gambling up
* Decline in spending time with neighbors
* League bowling down (thus the “bowling alone” metaphor Robert Putnam uses)
* Charitable giving down

**What Happened?**

* Disillusionment (war, scandal)?
  + Vietnam war pentagon papers
  + Watergate scandal
* Evolution (new ways of doing things)?
* Too much bonding (within groups), not enough bridging (across groups)?
  + Bonding: really tight knit groups of friends
  + Bridging: meeting with and getting involved in a lot of varying groups

**Consequences**

* “Do you think people in general today lead as good lives (honest and moral) as they used to?
* From 50 % in 1952 to 27 % in 1998
* Trust in others declines (especially among young people)

**Is Social Capital Disappearing?**

* Answer: probably not as much as we think
  + We are just getting rid of old groups and forming new ones in new ways. (i.e. Times are a’changin)
  + These might need new measures
* Example: explosion of single-issue interest groups
* Example: technology effects
* That said: still implications on political world

**USA Today/Gallup questions**

* “Would you say that government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?”
* “Do you think that quite a few of the people running the government are crooked, not very many are, or do you think hardly any of them are crooked?”

**Today’s Goal**

* Get beyond these stereotypes (while recognizing that occasionally, they exist)
* Develop a broader sense of how lobbying works

**Beyond Direct Contact**

* Baumgartner and Leech: many think of lobbying as direct contact (two people in a room)
* Another assumption: lobbying is about getting elected officials to vote a certain way
* Reality: these instances do exist, but lobbying more regularly involves many players, many moments

**Berry’s Four Strategies of Lobbying**

* Information sharing
* Constituency influence
  + Lobbyist getting the general public involved
* Confrontation
  + Holding protests
* Law
  + Interest groups are really involved in coming up with new ideas for laws

**Berry’s four ways of lobbying**

* Information
* Constituency
* Confrontation
* Law

**Lobbying as Information**

* Testifying at legislative or agency hearings
* Conducting and publishing research
* Holding press conferences

**Lobbying as Constituency Influence and Confrontation**

* Building coalitions with other groups
* Harnessing membership to channel passion toward specific individuals
* Protests and boycotts

**Lobbying as Law**

* Filing lawsuits or amicus briefs for court cases
* Drafting legislation or regulations

**The Roadblock of Collective Action**

* The NRA says it has 4.5 million members
* Let’s say the NRA wanted to lobby someone/something: how many of those members would be willing to do something?
* If everyone did a little, the action could be successful
* Problem of collective action: many have disincentives (can’t or won’t do a little, even though they want the end result)
* Burden of creating change shared by few, benefits shared by many more (so-called “free riders”)

**Minimize Disincentives?**

* Many disincentives: time related
* Solution: simpler ways to participate
* Other disincentives: passion related
* Solution: find new arguments

**Ideologies**

* Ideology: related set of beliefs about goals of society
* Also: about how to achieve that order
* Liberal-conservative spectrum: often used in shorthand by elites

**Survey Findings on Defining Liberal and Conservative**

* 1 in 4: spending related answer ($)
* 1 in 4: capitalism vs. social programs answer
* 1 in 4: change vs. status quo answer
* 1 in 7: abortion answer, morality/religion answer, working/business answer

Independents and Third Parties

**Party identification**

* An attachment to a political party
* Term originated with Michigan school

**Where does party ID come from?**

* Socialization
* Group identification
* “Running Tally” of recent outcomes

**Why does it change?**

* The tally might change
* An issue might topple it
* Who leads the party might cause you to rethink

**What party ID does**

* Serves as a screen for information (causing selective exposure? Changing relationships with those around us?)
* Strong predictor of issue positions
* Serves as strong cue in voting (CCMS “funnel …” )

**4 20th century independent “successes”**

* 1912: Theodore Roosevelt gets 27.4%, 88 EV
* 1924: Robert Lafollette gets 16.6%, 13 EV
* 1968: George Wallace gets 13.5%, 16 EV
* 1992: Ross Perot gets 19%, 0 EV
* So general trend is that there are increasingly less support for third party candidates

**Why did they “succeed”?**

* Name recognition
* Coherent message/movement
* Money to spend

**Roadblocks to Third Party Success**

* Public attachment and record of voting for 1 of 2 parties
* Voters must see third party as a credible alternative (and not just a spoiler)
* Ballot access laws drain time, money
* New party is a start-up (needs candidate, organization, media, and tons of money)
* Co-optation of their ideas by existing parties
* What would the message be (beyond the existing parties’ woes)?

**Pure Independence and Leaning Independence: The Question**

* Traditional 7 point question asked by ANES reveals much
* “Do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?”
* For those who claim a party: “Would you consider yourself a strong or a not very strong Republican/Democrat?”
* For independents: “Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?”
* Gives us 7 points: SD, WD, LD, I, LR, WR, SR
  + Shows that only about 10-15% are true independents
* Number who initially say they’re independent: rising
* However: most of these people say they lean

**Two Types of Independents**

* Some are educated and have interest: Dalton’s apartisans
* Some aren’t as educated, have little interest: Dalton’s apoliticals
* Apartisans: more political knowledge, constantly gathering information, active on issues
* Apoliticals: opting out entirely

**The Question**

* Where do you get most of your news?
  + Website that doesn’t do original reporting but has useful links
  + Social media to push info into your life, allowing Twitter to be gatekeeper
  + Newspaper

Media Usage and Bias

**Feelings about “Old Media”**

* What do we like and dislike about television news?
* What do we like and dislike about newspapers (physical copies)?

**Broader “Old Media” Trends**

* Television, radio, newspaper business sharply down (across many metrics) over the past 20 years
* By “many metrics” we’re talking usage, advertising dollars, revenue
* Internet usage for news more than doubled since 2006

**The How of New Media**

* 82 percent used a desktop or laptop to get news
* 54 percent used a mobile device (phone/tablet)
* Most Americans: using new technology to access “old media” sites online
  + People are going to *The New York Times* websites, flocking to what we know
* 20 of the top 25 news destinations online: have an “old media” legacy

**Digital-Only Sites**

* Small on economics, big on visitors
* Huffington Post: 45 million unique visitors monthly
* Buzzfeed: 17 million unique visitors monthly
* A comparison: Washington Post’s website at 19 million

**Why Do We Care?**

* Rapidly changing marketplace
* Unequal access to marketplace
* Fears about information quality in some venues
* Result: how well equipped are Americans to develop attitudes, make decisions?

**Second Screen Phenomenon**

* Internet and television usage simultaneously
* Popular not just in news
* Especially popular during live news events (debates, elections, SOTU)
* Example: over 1 in 4 Americans did this Election Night 2012
* Different Purpose?
  + Example: debate viewers report using internet to fact check, get media/friend opinions

**Information Democratizations**

* The increasing involvement of private citizens in the creation, distribution, exhibition, and curation of civically relevant information

**Historical Patterns**

* Information is top-down
* Public as weak players, receivers only

**Changing the Model**

* Messages increasingly bottom-up
* Technology facilitates this cost-wise
* Creates greater diversity in messages
* What “active citizenship” means is changing
* Concern: does it lead to misinformation at times?

Media Bias; Should you Run?

**News as Mirror?**

* News reflecting reality is unrealistic
* Outliers / deviations get coverage, negativity over-covered, positivity under-covered
* Practical considerations keep some things from being covered
* Practice of journalism: rests on judgements by humans (as such, subjectivity reigns)
* Producers, editors, publishers: “what is newsworthy?” (but also “what will attract audiences?”)
* Lippmann: news is more like “searchlight” (picture a lighthouse – i.e. focusing intently on a specific area)
  + Fear: a consistently skewed searchlight

**Graber’s 5 Elements of Newsworthiness**

* Strong impact (make you identify)
* Violence / conflict / disaster / scandal (excite you)
  + Short hand way to say this – media operates by saying “if it bleeds, it leads”
* Familiarity (make you understand)
* Proximity (close to home)
* Timely and novel (freshness, originality)

**Bennett’s Potential Media Biases**

* Political: allowing personal views to affect which stories are being told, how stories are being reported
* Personalization: downplay the big picture/system, focus on human element/individual actors
* Dramatization: crises, emotions get more play
* Fragmentation: immediate gets play, stories fade quickly
* Authority-Disorder: negativity, threats to system get attention

**In, Out, or On the Fence?**

* Do we think Joe Biden will run for President? Why or why not?
  + Take into account recent emotional issues with his sons passing
  + He would have the infrastructure to run if he wanted to
* Media has the ability to destroy candidates running for presidency

**Questions**

* Do you want this, or are you being dragged in?
* Does your family want this too?
* Can you handle the 24/7 nature of campaigning?
* Can you raise money?
* Do you have credentials?
* Do you have time?
* Do you have bases of support?
* Can you get endorsements?

Running and Navigating

**Questions of Organization**

* How would you assemble a staff?
* What about access to outside help (pollsters, consultants, media, field, organizers)?
* Am I regional? National?

**Questions of History**

* What about my political past might haunt me?
* What about my personal past might haunt me?
* Is your past fair game? If so, what’s fair game?
* Do you think your social media presence may come back to haunt you someday?

**Questions of Opportunity**

* Is this the right year?
* Is this the right electorate?
* Who might be my challengers?
* What do my challengers already have going for them?
* How might national conditions play a role?

**Answers of Opportunity**

* Potential or actual politicians consider damage to reputation with loss
* Look for weak or retiring incumbents
* Look for districts where the message will resonate
* Look for cycles where tides/issues will buoy them
* Keep in mind: not all candidates follow these rules (the issue-promoters, the party placeholders)

**A Concern: the permanent campaign?**

* President Obama: thinks about how to help his legacy, also the party brand
* Democrats in Congress: how can they take back the House, hold the Senate, help presidential candidates?
* Republicans: how can they hold onto the House, win the Senate, win back the White House?
* Definition of the permanent campaign: melding of government and campaigning
* Politicians govern not necessarily to help society, but to hold onto power

**The Good and Bad of Permanent Campaign**

* Good:
  + Does it force politicians to listen more?
  + Does it offer more opportunities to participate?
* Bad:
  + Too much short term thinking?
  + Rise in combativeness?

**The 2016 Presidential Calendar**

* February 1: Iowa caucuses; February 9: New Hampshire primary
* Goal: capture, as George H W Bush called it, “The Big Mo” (momentum)
* How? Start early
* Not just potential candidates who care…elites (of all sorts) do too
* Result: Invisible Primary throughout 2015
* Invisible Primary: networking between candidates and elites to potentially build electorally useful relationships