

# Design and Analysis of Sample Surveys

Andrew Gelman

Department of Statistics and Department of Political Science  
Columbia University

Class 10a: Political participation

- ▶ Vote choice
- ▶ Voter turnout
- ▶ Other forms of political participation
- ▶ Motivations for voter turnout and vote choice

# Different sorts of elections

- ▶ General election for U.S. president
- ▶ Presidential primary
- ▶ U.S. Congress
- ▶ State and local races
- ▶ Referenda
- ▶ Other countries

# Who cares about all this?

- ▶ Political scientists, sociologists, economists, . . .
- ▶ News media
- ▶ Political campaigns
- ▶ Interest groups

- ▶ Survey questions
  - ▶ “How would you vote if the election were held today?”
  - ▶ “How do you plan to vote?”
  - ▶ “How did you just vote?”
  - ▶ “How did you vote last month?”
  - ▶ “How did you vote two years ago?”
- ▶ Can calibrate to actual election results
- ▶ But you need surveys to get demographic breakdowns

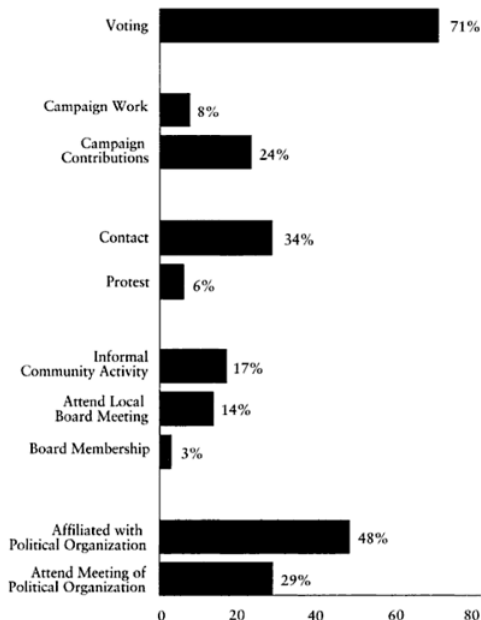
# Voter turnout

- ▶ Direct measurement
  - ▶ “Do you plan to vote?”
  - ▶ “Did you vote last month?”
  - ▶ “Did you vote two years ago?”
  - ▶ Check the public records
- ▶ Registered voters
- ▶ Likely voters

# Other forms of political participation

- ▶ Vote
- ▶ Campaign work
- ▶ Campaign contribution
- ▶ Contact an official
- ▶ Protest
- ▶ Informal community work
- ▶ Member of a local board
- ▶ Affiliation with a political organization
- ▶ Contribution to a political cause

# From Verba, Schlozman, Brady, *Voice and Equality* (1995)





# Motivations for voter turnout and vote choice

- ▶ So-called paradox of voting,  $\Delta U = pB - c$
- ▶ Rationality of altruistic voting; irrationality of selfish voting:  
$$B = B_{\text{self}} + \alpha NB_{\text{soc}}$$
- ▶ People vote for the general good
- ▶ Difficulty of voter registration and voting
- ▶ Differences between voters and nonvoters