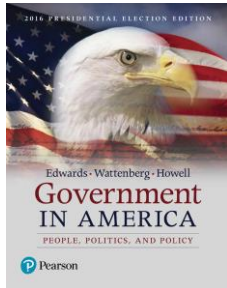


Government in America: People, Politics and Policy

Seventeenth Edition



Chapter 6

Public Opinion and Political Action

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1

Learning Objectives (1 of 2)

- 6.1 Identify demographic trends and their likely impact on American politics.
- 6.2 Explain how the agents of socialization influence the development of political attitudes.
- 6.3 Describe public opinion research and modern methods of polling.
- 6.4 Compare and contrast the principles of conservatism and liberalism

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Learning Objectives (2 of 2)

- 6.5 Assess the influence of political ideology on political attitudes and behaviors.
- 6.6 Identify the ways that people may participate in politics.
- 6.7 Analyze how public opinion about the scope of government guides political behavior.

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Learning Objective 6.1

Identify demographic trends and their likely impact on American politics.

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The American People

- ☐ The Immigrant Society
- ☐ The American Melting Pot
- ☐ The Regional Shift
- ☐ The Graying of America

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The Immigrant Society

- ☐ A nation of nations
 - 1 million legal immigrants/year
 - 500,000 illegal immigrants/year
 - 13% of residents foreign-born
- ☐ Waves of immigration
 - Northwest Europe (English, Irish, Germans, and Scandinavians)
 - Southern and Eastern Europe (Italians, Jews, Poles, Russians, and others)
 - Hispanics (Cuba, Central America, and Mexico) and Asians (Vietnam, Korea, the Philippines, and elsewhere)

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The American Melting Pot (1 of 2)

- ☐ Minority majority
 - Hispanic population growing rapidly
- ☐ African Americans descended from reluctant immigrants
 - 24% still live in poverty
 - Political power increasing
- ☐ Simpson-Mazzoli Act (1986)

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The American Melting Pot (1 of 2)

- ☐ Simpson-Mazzoli Act (1986)
- ☐ The Immigration Reform and Control Act altered U.S. immigration law by making it illegal to hire illegal immigrants knowingly and establishing financial and other penalties for companies that employed illegal immigrants. The act also legalized most undocumented immigrants who had arrived in the country prior to January 1, 1982.

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The American Melting Pot (1 of 2)

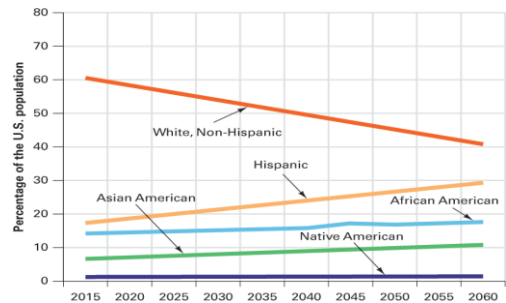
- ☐ Minority majority
 - Hispanic population growing rapidly
- ☐ African Americans descended from reluctant immigrants
 - 24% still live in poverty
 - Political power increasing
- ☐ Simpson-Mazzoli Act (1986)
- ☐ Political culture and assimilation

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Figure 6.1 The Coming Minority Majority



Source: U.S. Census Bureau estimates.

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Border Fence



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Chinese American Girl



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The Regional Shift

- ☐ Northeast most populous for most of history
- ☐ Demographic changes associated with political changes
- ☐ Reapportionment
 - Once each decade, after Census
 - States gain and lose representatives

<https://www.npr.org/2021/04/19/988659310/the-history-of-the-census-and-house-of-representatives>

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The Graying of America

- ☐ Over-65 fastest growing age group
- ☐ People living longer
- ☐ Fertility rate lower
- ☐ Implications for Social Security
 - Ratio changing
 - Politically-sensitive

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Learning Objective 6.2

Explain how the agents of socialization influence the development of political attitudes.

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Political Socialization

- The process by which individuals acquire political beliefs and attitudes
- Sources of Political Socialization
 - ▢ The Family and the Social Environment
 - ▢ Education as a Source of Political Socialization
 - ▢ Peers and Peer Group Influence
 - ▢ Opinion Leaders' Influence
 - ▢ Media Presentation of Political Issues

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How Americans Learn About Politics: Political Socialization

- ☐ The Process of Political Socialization
- ☐ Political Learning over a Lifetime

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The Process of Political Socialization

- ☐ The family
 - Central role
 - Time and emotional commitment
- ☐ The mass media
 - The new parent
 - Age gap in following politics
- ☐ School
 - Forming civic virtue

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The Family

- The most important socializing agent.
- Depends on: communication and receptivity

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School

- What do the public schools teach?
- Patriotism
- Curricula
- Kids voting
- Weekly Reader
- Civics
- How is college different? Liberalizing effects

20

Education

- From 1920s through 1960s, studies showed a college education had a liberalizing effect, possibly because of exposure to liberal elites
- Contemporary college students' opinions are more complicated

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Table 5.3:
The
Changing
College
Student

Table 5.3 The Changing College Student

Since the 1970s college freshmen have become more conservative on some issues and more liberal on others.

Issue	Percentage Agreeing	
	1970s*	1993
Abolish death penalty	33%	22%
Legalize abortion	83	62
Legalize marijuana	47	28
Increase military spending	39	23
Criminals have too many rights	52	68
Government not doing enough to:		
Control pollution	91	84
Protect consumers	77	72

Note: We have no comparable figures for college seniors. Freshmen may change their opinions on these matters while in school.

*Exact year the question was asked in 1970s varies between 1970 and 1976, depending on the question.

Sources: Richard C. Braungart and Margaret M. Braungart, "Black Colleges: Freshmen Attitudes," *Public Opinion* (May/June 1989): 14. Reprinted with the permission of the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Washington, D.C. Updated to 1993 from Alexander W. Astin, William S. Korn, and Elyne R. Riggs, *The American Freshman* (Los Angeles: UCLA Graduate School of Education, 1993), 25.

22

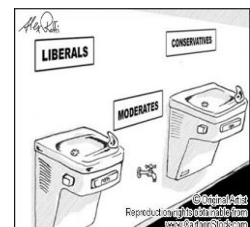
Political Socialization (cont.)

- Political events can produce a long-lasting impact on opinion formation. Example: the impact of the Great Depression on people who came of age in that period. We call such an impact a *generational effect*, or a cohort effect.

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What Americans Value: Political Ideologies

- Political Ideology:
 - A coherent set of beliefs about politics, public policy, and public purpose.



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Political Preferences and Voting Behavior

- Demographic Influences
 - Education
 - Economic Status
 - Religious Influence: Denomination
 - Religious Influence: Commitment
 - Race and Ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Geography

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POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND VOTING

By J. Gelber

26

Political Participation in the US

- Citizens try to influence the selection of political leaders or policies they pursue through activities other than voting.

EXAMPLES:

- ◆ donating money
- ◆ writing/calling representatives
- ◆ signing petitions
- ◆ volunteering on campaigns
- ◆ attending campaign events
- ◆ attending protest rallies, marches, etc.
- ◆ civil disobedience



- Paradoxically, the United States has a *participatory political culture*, but lower turnout (i.e., those who actually "turn out" to vote) than most other Western democracies.

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TABLE 6-1 | VOTES BY GROUPS IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, 1988-2004 (IN PERCENTAGES)

	1988		1992			1996		2000		2004	
	Dukakis (Dem.)	Bush (Rep.)	Clinton (Dem.)	Bush (Rep.)	Perot (Rer.)	Clinton (Dem.)	Dole (Rep.)	Gore (Dem.)	Bush (Rep.)	Kerry (Dem.)	Bush (Rep.)
Total vote	45	53	43	38	19	49	41	48	48	48	51
Gender											
Men	41	57	41	38	21	43	44	42	53	44	55
Women	49	50	46	37	17	54	38	54	45	51	48
Race											
White	40	59	39	41	20	43	46	42	54	41	58
Black	86	12	82	11	7	84	12	90	8	88	11
Hispanic	69	30	62	25	14	72	21	67	31	54	44
Educational Attainment											
Not a high school graduate	56	43	55	28	17	59	28	59	39	50	50
High school graduate	49	50	43	36	20	51	35	48	49	47	52
College graduate	37	62	40	41	19	44	46	45	51	46	52
Postgraduate education	48	50	49	36	15	52	40	52	44	54	45
Religion											
White Protestant	33	66	33	46	21	36	53	34	63	32	68
Catholic	47	52	44	36	20	53	37	49	47	47	52
Jewish	64	35	78	12	10	78	16	79	19	75	24
White fundamentalist	18	81	23	61	15	NA	NA	NA	NA	21	79
Union Status											
Union household	57	42	55	24	21	59	30	59	37	59	40
Family Income											
Under \$15,000	62	37	59	23	18	59	28	57	37	63	37
\$15,000-29,000	50	49	45	35	20	53	36	54	41	57	41
\$30,000-49,000	44	56	41	38	21	48	40	49	48	50	49
Over \$50,000	42	56	40	42	18	44	48	45	52	43	56
Size of Place											
Population over 500,000	62	37	58	28	13	68	25	71	26	60	40
Population 50,000 to 500,000	52	47	50	33	16	50	39	57	40	50	50
Population 10,000 to 50,000	38	61	39	42	20	48	41	38	59	48	51
Rural	44	55	39	40	20	44	46	37	59	39	60

NA = Not asked.
Sources: The New York Times; Voter News Service; and CBS News.

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TABLE 6-2 | PERCENTAGE OF UNION HOUSEHOLDS VOTING REPUBLICAN

Although union members are more likely to identify themselves as Democrats than Republicans and labor organizations are far more likely to support Democratic candidates, the data below show that in eight of the last fourteen presidential elections, Republicans have captured at least 40 percent of the votes from union households.

YEAR	UNION HOUSEHOLDS VOTING REPUBLICAN FOR PRESIDENT	CANDIDATES	PERCENTAGE
1952	Eisenhower vs. Stevenson		44
1956	Eisenhower vs. Stevenson		57
1960	Kennedy vs. Nixon		36
1964	Johnson vs. Goldwater		17
1968	Nixon vs. Humphrey		44
1972	Nixon vs. McGovern		57
1976	Carter vs. Ford		36
1980	Reagan vs. Carter		45
1984	Reagan vs. Mondale		43
1988	Bush vs. Dukakis		42
1992	Clinton vs. Bush		24
1996	Clinton vs. Dole		30
2000	Bush vs. Gore		37
2004	Bush vs. Kerry		40

Sources: CQ Researcher, June 28, 1996, p. 560; The New York Times, November 10, 1996, p. 16; and authors' updates.

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Voter Requirements

- An American citizen of 18 years or older may vote
- States determine registration requirements and qualifications
 - EXAMPLES:
 - Voter ID laws
 - State residency requirement of usually 30 days
 - Prisoners (current controversy in Fla over ex-felons' vote restoration)
- Motor-Voter Law (National Voter Registration Act of 1993)= federal law
 - Register to vote when applying/renewing driver's license
 - Register by mail
 - Made voter registration **easier**

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What groups of Americans tend to have higher voter turnout?

- High Level of Education
- Higher Income
- White-Collar Workers
- Older Generation
- Whites
- Women
- Religious
- Union Members
- Strong Community Members
- Strong Political Party Members
- Competitive Election Districts



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Factors influencing voter turnout

- **GENDER**- Women vote at a higher rate than men. In 2008 54% of all votes came from women
- **RELIGION**- Jews and Catholics are more likely to vote than Protestants
 - Historically, a majority of Protestants have supported Republican candidates while a majority of Jewish and Catholic voters have supported Democratic candidates
- **RACE**- Whites tend to have higher turnout rates compared to other groups in the US. Note when you remove income and education, blacks vote at a higher rate.

Election Issue	Voters Prevented or Discouraged from Voting
Voter Registration Issues	3 million (+)
Disenfranchisement of Ex-Offenders*	1 million
Election Equipment and Ballot Design	3-500,000
Unnecessarily Long Lines and other Fixable Poll Procedures	250,000 (+)
Voters with Disabilities	1 – 1.5 million
Low Literacy/Limited Language	1 million (+)
Inconvenience/ Election on Workday (including lack of convenient early voting options)	1 million (+)
Problems with Receiving, Returning or Counting Mail-in Ballots	200,000 (+)
TOTAL "LOST" VOTES	Over 8 million

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Historical Suppression of Voting Rights

WHITE SUPREMACY!

Attention, White Men!
Grand Torch-Light Procession
At JACKSON,
On the Night of the
Fourth of January, 1890.

The Final Settlement of Democratic Rule and White Supremacy in Mississippi.
GRAND PYROTECHNIC DISPLAY!
Transparencies and Torches Free for all.
All in Sympathy with the Grand Cause are Cordially and Earnestly Invited to be on hand, to aid in the Final Overthrow of Radical Rule in our State.

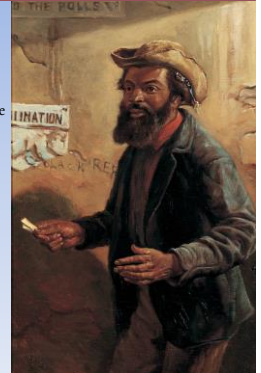
Come on foot or on horse-back; come any way, but be sure to get there.
Hrass, Bands, Cannon, Flambeaus, Torches, Transparencies, Whiskers, Etc.
A GRAND DISPLAY FOR A GRAND CAUSE.

- **Literacy Tests**- A requirement that citizens show that they can read before registering to vote
- **Poll Tax**- A requirement that citizens pay a tax in order to register to vote
- **Grandfather Clause**- A clause in registration laws that banned any person from voting if their ancestors did not vote before 1867
- **White primary**- the practice of preventing voting by black citizens through intimidation.

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Expansion of Voting Rights

- Federal laws and constitutional amendments
 - have eliminated restrictions on the right to vote, and
 - have significantly reduced the power of individual states over a citizen's right to vote
- Originally about 1 in 15 white males were able to vote in 1789
- Andrew Jackson and his supporters eliminated property qualifications of voting (1830-40s) → **"Age of the Common Man"**



34

Expansion of Voting Rights

15th Amendment (1870)

- Prohibits voting restrictions based on race, color or servitude

19th Amendment (1920)

- Removes voting restrictions based on gender

23rd Amendment (1961)

- Residents in D.C. are now allowed to vote in Presidential elections.

24th Amendment (1964)

- Poll Taxes are now Unconstitutional

26th Amendment (1971)

- Anyone who is 18 years or older may vote in any election.

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Voting Rights Act of 1965

- By 1965, efforts to break the grip of state disfranchisement had been under way, but had achieved little real success.
- **Voting Rights Act of 1965**
Prohibited any government from using voting procedures that denied a person the vote on the basis of race or color.
 - Abolished Literacy tests to anyone who has completed the 6th grade or higher.



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Preclearance

- The Civil Rights Act of 1965 was enacted as a response to the nearly century-long history of voting discrimination.
- Section 5 prohibits eligible districts from enacting changes to their election laws and procedures without gaining official authorization.
- States and local jurisdictions covered under the Act must submit all changes affecting voting and elections for preapproval by the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division or the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.



37

Shelby County v. Holder (2013)

- **Ruling:** Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act is unconstitutional.
- Its formula can no longer be used as a basis for subjecting jurisdictions to preclearance because "based on 40 year-old facts having no logical relationship to the present day"



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Suppression of Voter Rights

Some believe that voting rights are under "attack" today as state legislatures nationwide pass voting laws under the pretext of preventing voter fraud and safeguarding election integrity. Some have increased since the *Shelby* decision.

These laws disallow:

- ◆ online voting registration
- ◆ early voting
- ◆ "Souls to the Polls" Sunday voting
- ◆ same-day registration, and
- ◆ pre-registration for teens about to turn 18.
- ◆ Also requiring state-issued photo ID

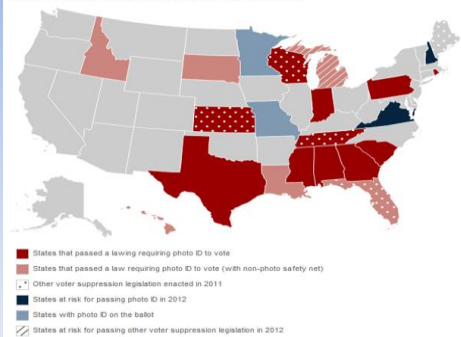


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Voter Suppression Laws

Spreading suppression

The proliferation of voter suppression laws (as of March 29, 2012)



40

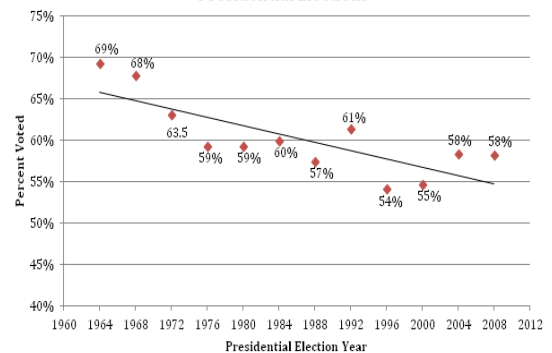
Voter Turnout Statistics

- At the present time, there are app. 252 million people of voting age in the United States
- The voter turnout rate in the United States is lower than in most other Western Democracies.
- App. 60% of Americans voted in the 2016 presidential election, and close to 50% voted in the 2016 mid-term elections (which was actually a 50-year record for mid-terms!)



41

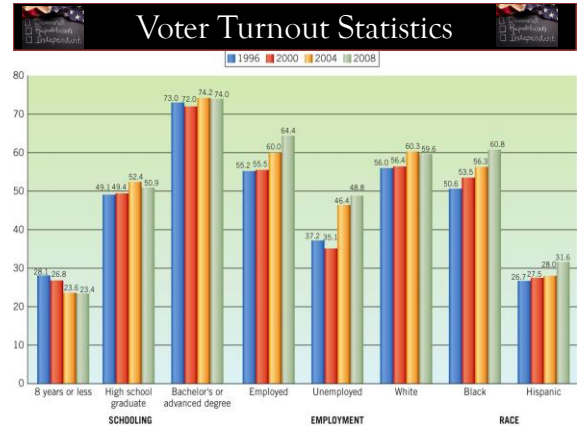
Fig. 1.1 Percent of American Citizens Who Voted in Presidential Elections



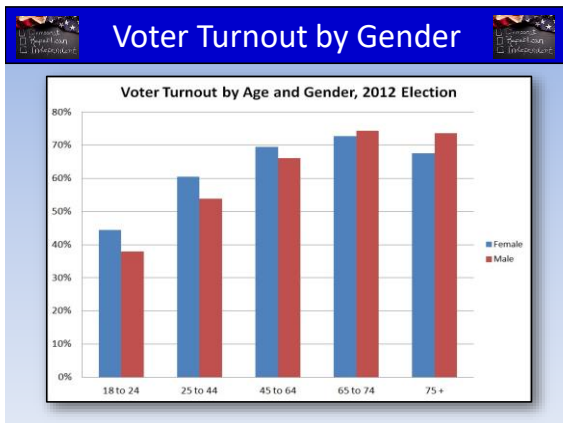
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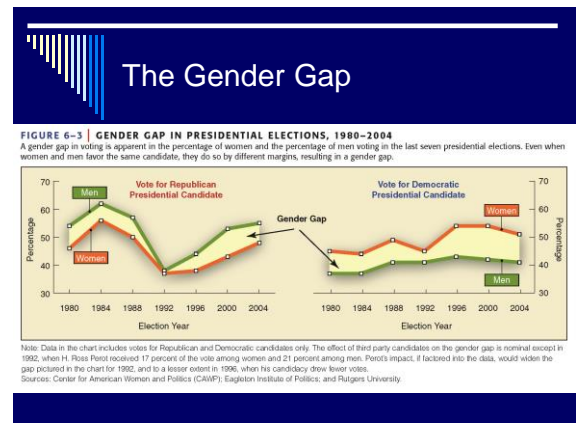
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44



45



46

The Gender Gap

- Men have become increasingly Republican since the mid-1960s
- Women have continued to identify with the Democratic Party at approximately the same rate since the early 1950s
- This reflects attitudinal differences between men and women about the size of government, gun control, social programs, and gay rights

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Table 7.3: The Gender Gap: Differences in Political Views of Men and Women

Issue	Men	Women
Federal spending for welfare programs should be increased.	8%	14%
Abortion should be permitted by law.	24	38
Sexual harassment is a very serious problem in the workplace.	24	29
This country would be better off if we just stayed home and did not concern ourselves with problems in other parts of the world.	32	44
Generally speaking, I think of myself as a Democrat.	37	26
The United States should increase defense spending.	51	63
The United States should increase spending on solving the problems of the homeless.	33	58
Ban all handguns except for the police.		

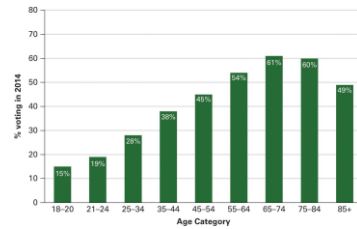
Source: ICPSR American National Election Survey, 1996, Pre- and Post-Election Surveys.

48

Political Learning over a Lifetime

- ☐ Increasing participation with age
- ☐ Party identification strengthens
- ☐ Political behavior is learned

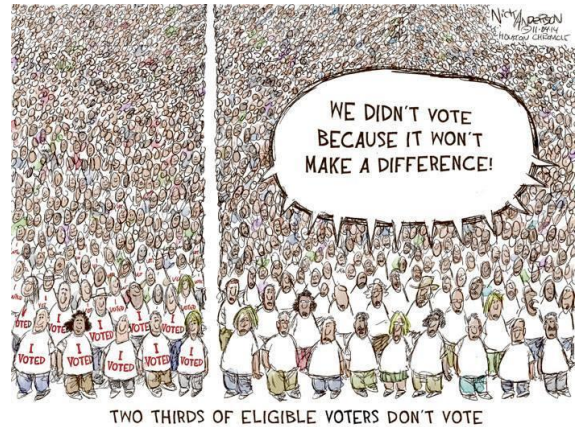
Figure 6.2 Turnout Increases with Age



Source: Authors' analysis of 2014 Census Bureau data.

Why Don't People Vote?

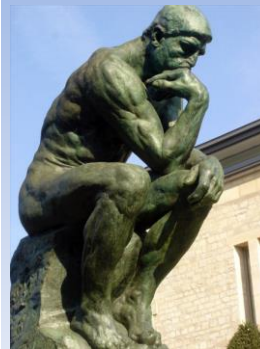
- Turned off by negative ads/campaigns
- Mistrust in government
- Lack of "political efficacy" ("nothing I do matters anyway")
- Numerous and frequent elections → Ballot fatigue
- Logistics: Weekday, non-holiday Voting
- Lack of party identification
- Similarity between candidates
- Voter registration difficulties (voter ID laws tend to negatively impact lower socioeconomic classes)



POLITICAL MODELS EXPLAINING VOTER BEHAVIOR

- *Rational-choice voting*—Voting based on what is perceived to be in the citizen's individual interest
- *Prospective voting*—Voting based on predictions of how a party or candidate will perform in the future
- *Retrospective voting*—Voting to decide whether the party or candidate in power should be re-elected based on the recent past
- *Party-line voting*—Supporting a party by voting for candidates from one political party for all public offices across the ballot

Voting Based on the Individual



- Rational choice
 - Voters choose a candidate or party based on how they and their families will benefit
 - Consider past performance, contemporary issues, and current situations, party leadership and key players
 - Not necessarily subject to factors such as age, race, gender, party identification, etc.
 - Believe parties are not very ideologically different

Voting Based on the Issues



- Prospective Voting
 - Vote based on information of issues and candidates
 - Ex. Pro-life citizen votes for Bush over Gore in 2000
- Retrospective Voting
 - Vote based on past events whether successful or failed
 - Ex. The economy suffered during Bush's (R) administration hurting McCain's (R) campaign against Obama (D) in 2008

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Voting Based on Political Party



FEDERAL OFFICES	U.S. SENATOR
<input type="radio"/> PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT VOTE FOR ONE TEAM	<input type="radio"/> DEAN BARKLEY Independence
<input type="radio"/> JOHN MCCAIN AND SARAH PALIN Republican	<input type="radio"/> NORM COLEMAN Republican
<input type="radio"/> BARACK OBAMA AND JOE BIDEN Democrat-Farmer-Labor	<input type="radio"/> AL FRANKEN Democrat-Farmer-Labor
	<input type="radio"/> CHARLES ALDRICH Libertarian
	<input type="radio"/> JAMES NIEMACKL Constitution

- Party-line voting
- Party affiliation arguably the primary determinant for a voter
- Most registered voters are Democrats, but low voter turnout
- Republicans have higher voter turnout; and more success with attracting independents and moderates
- “Split-ticket voting”

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QUESTIONS TO PONDER...

- Discuss within your group and then be prepared to discuss with the class the following questions:
1. What qualifications/restrictions/requirements if any, should be required in order to vote in any election for US citizens. Why? Should the voting age be lowered to 16 (favored by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi)?
 2. Should Americans be required to pass a civics test in order to vote?
 1. Should the government fine people for not voting? Why or why not?
(currently required in 18 countries including Argentina, Belgium, Australia, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, etc.)

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Compulsory Voting

Arguments For

- Ensures a large voter turnout
- Prevents interference with access to the vote.
 - Weather, education, economic, cultural or racial factors do not affect turnout
- If voters do not want to support any given choice, they may cast blank votes

Arguments Against

- Can be seen as infringing a basic freedom of the citizen
- it is essentially a compelled speech, act, which violates freedom of speech under 1st Amendment
- Some have no interest in politics or no knowledge of the candidates. Others may be well-informed, but have no preference for any particular candidate.

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Election-Specific Voting Behavior Factors

- Party Identification
- Perception of the Candidates
- Issue Preferences

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Learning Objective 6.3

Describe public opinion research and modern methods of polling.

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Measuring Public Opinion and Political Information

- ☐ How Polls Are Conducted
- ☐ The Role of Polls in American Democracy
- ☐ What Polls Reveal About Americans' Political Information
- ☐ The Decline of Trust in Government

How Polls Are Conducted

- ☐ Sample
- ☐ Random sampling
- ☐ Sampling error
- ☐ Random-digit dialing
 - Cell phones
- ☐ Internet polling

Defining Public Opinion

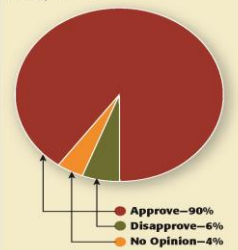
- Public opinion is the aggregate of individual attitudes or beliefs shared by some portion of adults.
- Private opinion becomes public opinion when an individual takes some type of action to express an opinion to others publicly.
- When there is general public agreement on an issue, there is said to be a *consensus*. When opinions are sharply divided, there is *divisive opinion*.

How Opinions Differ

- **Opinion saliency:** some people care more about certain issues than other people do
- **Opinion stability:** the steadiness or volatility of opinion on an issue
- **Opinion-policy congruence:** the level of correspondence between government action and majority sentiment on an issue

FIGURE 6-1 | CONSENSUS OPINION

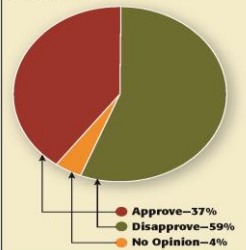
From September 21–22, 2001
Question: Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?



Source: Gallup Poll, September 21–22, 2001.

FIGURE 6-2 | DIVISIVE OPINION

From July 28–30, 2006
Question: Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?



Source: Gallup Poll, August 15, 2006.

Measuring Public Opinion

- The History of Opinion Polls
 - 1800s: Straw Polls
 - By the 1930s modern, relatively accurate polling techniques were developed by George Gallup, Elmo Roper, and others.

Measuring Public Opinion and Political Information

How Polls Are Conducted

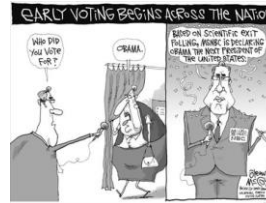


- Random Sampling: The key technique employed by sophisticated survey researchers; operates on the principle that everyone should have an equal probability of being selected for the sample
- Representative Sample: Draws from all groups
- Sample size 1500
- Sampling Error: The level of confidence in the findings of a public opinion poll, $\pm 3\%$

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Measuring Public Opinion and Political Information

Role of Polls in American Democracy



- Help politicians figure out public preferences.
- Exit Polls- used by the media to predict election day winners.
- Wording of question makes a difference.
- Polls reflect the policy agenda—problems the people inside and outside of government believe must be addressed.

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Measuring Public Opinion and Political Information

- What Polls Reveal About Americans' Political Information
 - Americans don't know much about politics.
 - Americans may know their basic beliefs, but not how that affects policies of the government.
- The Decline of Trust in Government
 - Now only about 25% of the public trust the government most of the time or always.

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Measuring Public Opinion (cont.)

- Sampling Techniques
 - Representative Sampling
 - The Principle of Randomness
 - A purely *random sample* will be representative within the stated margin of error. The larger the sample of the population, the smaller the margin of error.

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Problems with Polls

- Sampling Errors
 - The difference between a sample's results and the true result if the entire population had been interviewed.
- When can sampling errors be dangerous?

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Problems With Polls (cont.)

- Poll Questions
 - Yes/no answers are a problem if the issue admits to shades of gray. Often, people will attempt to please the interviewer.
- Push Polls
 - Attempts to spread negative statements about a candidate by posing as a polltaker.

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TABLE 6-3 | GALLUP POLL ACCURACY RECORD

YEAR	GALLUP FINAL SURVEY, PERCENTAGE		ELECTION RESULTS, PERCENTAGE		DEVIATION
2004	49.3	Bush	50.7	Bush	-1.7
2000	50.0	Bush	48.0	Bush	+2.0
1996	52.0	Clinton	49.0	Clinton	+3.0
1992	49.0	Clinton	43.2	Clinton	+5.8
1988	56.0	Bush	53.9	Bush	+2.1
1984	59.0	Reagan	59.1	Reagan	-0.1
1980	47.0	Reagan	50.8	Reagan	-3.8
1976	48.0	Carter	50.0	Carter	-2.0
1972	62.0	Nixon	61.8	Nixon	+0.2
1968	43.0	Nixon	43.5	Nixon	-0.5
1964	64.0	Johnson	61.3	Johnson	+2.7
1960	51.0	Kennedy	50.1	Kennedy	+0.9
1956	59.5	Eisenhower	57.8	Eisenhower	+1.7
1952	51.0	Eisenhower	55.4	Eisenhower	-4.4
1948	44.5	Truman	49.9	Truman	-5.4
1944	51.5	Roosevelt	53.3	Roosevelt	-1.8
1940	52.0	Roosevelt	55.0	Roosevelt	-3.0
1936	55.7	Roosevelt	62.5	Roosevelt	-6.8

Sources: The Gallup Poll Monthly; November 1992; Time, November 21, 1994; The Wall Street Journal, November 6, 1996; and authors' updates.

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Technology and Opinion Polls



- The Advent of Telephone Polling
 - Far easier and less expensive than door-to-door polling, and has become standard.
 - Too many entities are conducting "polls" and "market research."
 - Nonresponse Rates Have Skyrocketed

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Technology and Opinion Polls (cont.)

- Internet Polling
 - There are many unscientific "nonpolls" on the Internet
 - In time, nonresponse rates to Internet polling could escalate like those of telephone polls.

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Public Opinion and the Political Process

- Political Culture and Popular Opinion.
 - A set of attitudes and ideas about the nation and government. Certain shared beliefs about important values are considered the core of American political culture. Values like liberty, equality, and property; support for religion; and community service and personal achievement bind the nation together despite its highly diverse population.

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Public Opinion and the Political Process

- Political Culture and Support for Our Political System
- Political Trust



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The Roll of Polls in American Democracy

- Polling as a tool for democracy: pros and cons
 - Gauge opinion between elections
 - Following rather than leading
 - Pandering or shaping?
- Exit polls
 - Affect election results
- Question wording

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Polling in America



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Exit Polling



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What Polls Reveal About Americans' Political Information

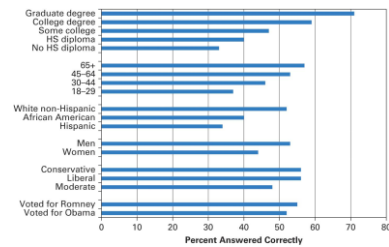
- ☐ Americans are uninformed
 - Jeffersonian faith in wisdom of common people unfounded
 - Young people most uninformed
- ☐ Who is responsible for the ill-informed electorate?
 - Is it the schools' fault?
 - Is it the media's fault?
- ☐ Paradox of mass politics

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Figure 6.3 How Political Knowledge Varies According to Demographic and Political Factors



Source: Authors' analysis of the 2012 American National Election Study.

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The Decline of Trust in Government

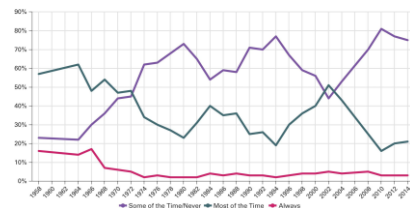
- ☐ The great slide
 - Vietnam War
 - Watergate
 - Economy/Iran hostage crisis
- ☐ Is public cynicism good?
 - Negative effect on programs for poor

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Figure 6.4 The Decline in the Trust of Government 1958–2014



Sources: Authors' analysis of 1958–2012 American National Election Study Data. As there were no election studies for 2006, 2010, and 2014, we have used the following sources for those years: December 2006 Pew Research Center poll; February 5–10, 2010 New York Times/CBS News Poll; February 2014 Pew Research Center poll.

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Trends in Political Trust

TABLE 6-4 | TRENDS IN POLITICAL TRUST

QUESTION: How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

Percentage saying:	1972	1976	1978	1980	1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2001	2002	2003	2005	2006
Always/Most of the time	53	33	29	25	32	46	42	44	27	23	20	25	34	40	64	46	33	30	32
Some of the time	45	63	67	75	64	51	55	54	75	75	79	71	66	59	35	52	58	65	64

Sources: New York Times/CBS News Surveys; University of Michigan Survey Research Center; National Election Studies; Pew Research Center for the People and the Press; Council for Excellence in Government; Washington Post poll, September 25–27, 2001; and Gallup polls, Fall 2002, 2003, 2005, and 2006.

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Public Opinion About Government

- Trust in government peaked after 9/11 but fell back thereafter. Over the years, the military and churches have been the institutions receiving the highest levels of public confidence. After 9/11, confidence in the military reached new highs. Confidence in churches was hurt in 2002 by a series of sexual abuse scandals. Banks and the Supreme Court also score highly, while the media, Congress, labor unions, and business come off more poorly.

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Confidence in Institutions

TABLE 6-5 | CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS TREND

QUESTION: I am going to read a list of institutions in American society. Would you please tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one—a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little?

	1979	1981	1983	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2002	2003	2004
Military	54	50	53	61	61	63	69	67	64	60	68	66	79	82	75
Church or organized religion	65	64	62	66	61	52	56	53	57	56	58	60	45	50	53
Banks and banking	60	46	51	51	51	42	30	38	43	41	43	44	47	50	53
U.S. Supreme Court	45	46	42	56	52	46	39	43	44	50	49	50	50	47	46
Public schools	53	42	39	48	50	43	35	39	40	40	36	38	38	40	41
Television	38	25	25	29	28	NA	24	21	33	34	34	34	35	35	30
Newspapers	51	35	38	35	31	NA	32	31	30	35	33	36	35	33	30
Congress	34	29	28	39	NA	32	18	19	21	22	26	26	29	29	30
Organized labor	36	28	26	28	26	NA	22	26	26	23	28	26	26	28	31
Big business	32	20	28	31	NA	NA	22	23	21	28	30	28	20	22	24

NA = Not asked.
Source: Gallup poll, May 21–23, 2004.

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TABLE 6-6 | MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM TREND, 1975 TO PRESENT

1975	High cost of living, unemployment	1990	War in Middle East
1976	High cost of living, unemployment	1991	Economy
1977	High cost of living, unemployment	1992	Unemployment, budget deficit
1978	High cost of living, energy problems	1993	Health care, budget deficit
1979	High cost of living, energy problems	1994	Crime, violence, health care
1980	High cost of living, unemployment	1995	Crime, violence
1981	High cost of living, unemployment	1996	Budget deficit
1982	Unemployment, high cost of living	1997	Crime, violence
1983	Unemployment, high cost of living	1998	Crime, violence
1984	Unemployment, fear of war	1999	Crime, violence
1985	Fear of war, unemployment	2000	Morals, family decline
1986	Unemployment, budget deficit	2001	Economy, education
1987	Unemployment, economy	2002	Terrorism, economy
1988	Economy, budget deficit	2003	Terrorism, economy
1989	War on drugs	2004	War in Iraq, economy

Sources: New York Times/CBS News poll, January 1996; Gallup polls, 2000, 2002, 2003, and 2004.

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Journal Prompt 6.3: How Polls Are Conducted

What are some of the best practices one should look for in a poll in order to establish that its results are reasonably accurate? What type of poll do you think is best and why would you choose this type?

Learning Objective 6.4

Compare and contrast the principles of conservatism and liberalism.

What Americans Value: Political Ideologies (1 of 2)

- ☐ Ideologies help to organize how we think about politics
- ☐ Two main American ideologies are liberal and conservative
 - 37% of Americans identify as conservative
 - 24% of Americans identify as liberal

Table 6.1 How to Tell a Liberal from a Conservative (1 of 2)

	Liberals	Conservatives
Foreign Policy		
Military spending	Believe we should spend less	Believe we should maintain peace through strength
Use of force	Less willing to commit American troops to action overseas	More likely to support American military intervention around the world
Social Policy		
Abortion	Support "freedom of choice"	Support "right to life"
Prayer in schools	Are opposed	Are supportive
Affirmative action	Favor	Oppose

Table 6.1 How to Tell a Liberal from a Conservative (2 of 2)

	Liberals	Conservatives
Economic Policy		
Scope of government	Support regulation of the market, on the grounds that it is in the public interest	Favor free-market solutions, on the grounds that regulation is not in the public interest
Taxes	Want to tax the rich more in order to make taxation more progressive	Want to cut taxes for everyone in order to stimulate economic growth
Spending	Want to spend more on benefits for the needy	Want to limit spending on the poor to no more than absolutely necessary
Crime		
How to cut crime	Believe government should address the problems that cause crime	Believe that government needs to get tougher with criminals
Defendants' rights	Believe we should guard those rights carefully	Believe that guarding those rights all too often means letting criminals off the hook

What Americans Value: Political Ideologies (2 of 2)

- ☐ Ideologies vary among groups
 - Young people tend to be more liberal
 - African Americans tend to be more liberal
 - Women tend to be more liberal (gender gap)
- ☐ Financial status and religion affect ideology
 - Social class is less predictive than it used to be
 - Religiosity is more important than religious denomination

Learning Objective 6.5

Assess the influence of political ideology on political attitudes and behaviors.

The Influence of Political Ideology on Political Behavior

- ☐ Types of voters
 - Ideologues
 - Group benefits
 - Nature of the times
 - No issue content
- ☐ Ideology of limited importance
 - The relationship between ideology and the vote is far from perfect.

Political Cartoon



"I concede that my opponent has run an intelligent campaign... which is precisely why I expect to win by a landslide."

P Pearson

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Journal Prompt 6.5: The Influence of Political Ideologies on Political Behavior

What are the key differences between liberals and conservatives in terms of their views on public policy?
Why do these differences matter so much in policymaking?

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Learning Objective 6.6

Identify the ways that people may participate in politics.

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How Americans Participate in Politics

- ☐ Conventional Participation
- ☐ Protest as Participation
- ☐ Class, Inequality, and Participation

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Conventional Participation

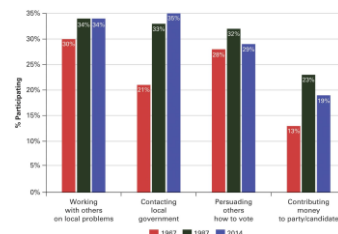
- ☐ Conventional participation
 - Voting
 - Running for office
 - Collecting signatures for a petition
- ☐ Unconventional participation
 - Protesting
 - Civil disobedience
 - Violence

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Figure 6.5 Political Participation Other Than Voting, 1967–2014



Sources: Authors' analysis of the 2014 and 1987 General Social Surveys and the 1967 Political Participation in American Study.

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Protest as Participation

- ☐ Drawing attention
 - Protests attract the media
 - Rare
- ☐ Civil disobedience
- ☐ Violence

Nonviolent Civil Disobedience



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Kent State



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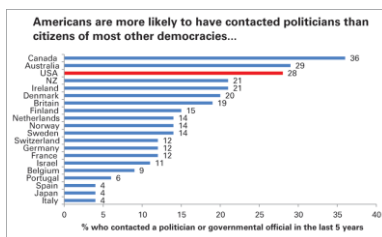
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Class, Inequality, and Participation

- ☐ Higher socio-economic status = higher participation rates
 - Minorities vote at nearly equal levels
- ☐ What are the policy implications of lower political participation?

Figure 6.6 Conventional and Unconventional Political Participation (1 of 2)



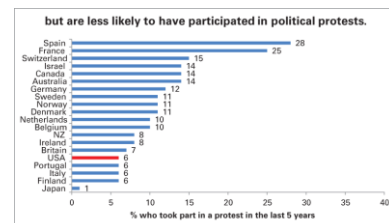
Source: Authors' analysis of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, module 2 (2001–2006).

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Figure 6.6 Conventional and Unconventional Political Participation (2 of 2)



Source: Authors' analysis of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, module 2 (2001–2006).

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Learning Objective 6.7

Analyze how public opinion about the scope of government guides political behavior.



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Understanding Public Opinion and Political Action

- ☐ Public Attitudes Toward the Scope of Government
- ☐ Democracy, Public Opinion, and Political Action



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Public Attitudes Toward the Scope of Government

- ☐ Should government do more or less?
 - In peacetime, most Americans say "less"
- ☐ But public opinion is complex and inconsistent
 - Symbolic conservatives
 - Operational liberals
 - Policy gridlock



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Democracy, Public Opinion, and Political Action

- ☐ Representative democracy
 - Decide who governs
- ☐ Is public fit to choose its leaders?
 - Yes and no



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Shared Writing 6

Democratic theory presumes that in a democracy people are well informed enough to guide the policies that their government pursues. Yet much political science research in the U.S. has uncovered shockingly low levels of public information about politics. Do you think the American public is well informed enough to guide the policies of the U.S. government?



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Chapter 6

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Public Opinion and Policymaking

The general public believes the leadership should pay attention to popular opinion. Leaders themselves are less likely to believe this.

- Setting Limits on Government Action
 - Public opinion may be at its strongest in preventing politicians from embracing highly unpopular policies.
- Taking into account the limits on polling

- Taking into account the limits on polling

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Questions for Critical Thinking

- In what ways have you been socialized politically? Compare and contrast your experiences with those of your classmates.
- In 2000, less than half of the adult population participated in the presidential election. If the public continues to have minimal involvement in the political process, can democracy continue to function? What are your thoughts on the future of democracy?

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Figure 7.1: Generational Gaps on the Issues

Social Security

Would you support or oppose a plan in which people who chose could invest some of their Social Security contribution in the stock market?

	Oppose	Support
18-29	32%	61%
30-49	47%	59%
50-64	58%	38%
65+	67%	24%

School Vouchers

Do you favor or oppose providing parents with tax money in the form of school vouchers to help pay for their children to attend private or religious schools?

	Oppose	Favor
18-29	38%	58%
30-49	34%	49%
50-64	47%	39%
65+	54%	36%

Gay Marriage

Do you think gay and lesbian should have the legal right to get married, or do think they should not be able to get married legally?

	Should have legal right	Should not be able to marry
18-29	55%	42%
30-49	45%	48%
50-64	37%	54%
65+	20%	66%

Women's Rights

If you absolutely had to choose between each of the following two values, which is more important to you, personally – working for the rights of women or preserving traditional family values?

	Rights of women	Family values
18-29	41%	56%
30-49	29%	65%
50-64	27%	67%
65+	18%	74%

Survey by Washington Post-Henry J. Kaiser Foundation/Harvard University, August 2-September 1, 2002, as reported in Elizabeth Bennet et al., "Younger Voters," *Public Perspective*, May/June 2003, p. 11.



Social Class

- Social class: ill-defined in U.S., though recognized in specific cases (e.g., truck drivers and investment bankers)
- Social class is less important in the U.S. than in Europe; the extent of cleavage has declined in both places

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Race and Ethnicity

- Similarities and differences between blacks and whites are complex, but there is some evidence that they may be narrowing
- Latinos tend to identify as Democrats, though not as strongly as African Americans

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Table 7.4: African American and White Opinion

	African American	White
Favor expanding affirmative action programs ^a	53%	22%
Believe the justice system is racially biased against blacks ^a	72	44
Favor harsher treatment of criminals by the courts ^a	78	76
Favor more spending on national defense ^a	13	18
Favor national health insurance by government ^a	39	23
Believe the U.S. Census Bureau should stop collecting information on race and ethnicity ^a	48	47
Believe abortion should be legal in all cases ^a	24	28
Approve of black/white marriages ^a	77	61
Willing to vote for a black person for president ^a	93	91
Believe that too much is made of the differences between blacks and whites and not enough of what they have in common ^a	89	92

Sources: (a) *Black/White Perspectives in the United States* (Princeton, N.J.: The Gallup Organization, June 1997), 14, 16, 23, 24; (b) Gallup Polls, 1993 and 1994; (c) American National Election Survey, 1996; (d) "The Newsweek Poll," *Newsweek* (February 13, 1995): 65; (e) *The Public Perspective* (May 1995): 19; (f) *The American Enterprise* (November/December 1998): 92, reporting results of a March–April 1998 Public Agenda survey of white and black parents or guardians of children in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

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Table 5.5: Changes in Racial Opinion

	Whites		African Americans	
	1974	1996	1974	1996
Government should help blacks	25%	16%	63%	40%
Blacks should help themselves	50	61	12	40

Source: Robert S. Erikson and Kent L. Tedin, *American Public Opinion*, 5th ed. Copyright © 1995 by Allyn and Bacon. Reprinted by permission. Updated for 1996 with National Election Survey figures.

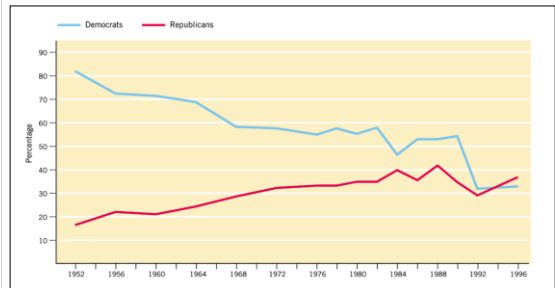
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Regional Differences

- White southerners were once more conservative than other regions regarding aid to minorities, legalizing marijuana, school busing, and rights of the accused
- Southerners are now significantly less Democratic than they were for most of the 20th century

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Figure 5.1: Whites in the South Leaving the Democrats



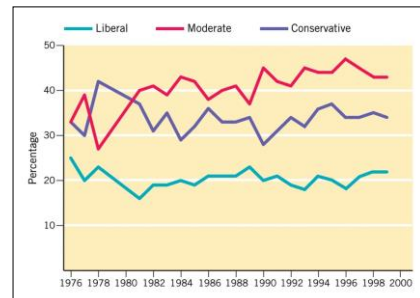
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Political Ideology

- **Political ideology:** a more or less consistent set of beliefs about what policies government ought to pursue
- The great majority of Americans do not think ideologically
- People may have strong predispositions even if they do not satisfy the condition of being "ideological"

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Figure 7.3: Ideological Self-Identification



The American Enterprise (March/April 1993): 84; Robert S. Erikson and Kent L. Tedin, *American Public Opinion* (New York: Longman, 2001), 101, citing surveys by CBS/New York Times.

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Liberals and Conservatives

- Economic policy: liberals favor jobs for all, subsidized medical care and education, increased taxation of the rich
- Civil rights: liberals favor strong federal action to desegregate schools; hiring opportunities for minorities, and strict enforcement of civil rights laws
- Public and political conduct: liberals are tolerant of protest demonstrations, favor legalization of marijuana, and emphasize protecting the rights of the accused

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Table 7.6: How Liberals and Conservatives Differ

Belief	Support Among Self-Declared Liberals	Support Among Self-Declared Conservatives
The government should provide "more services even if it means an increase in spending."	73%	32%
The government should guarantee "that every person has a job and a good standard of living."	55	21
Favor "government insurance plan which would cover all medical and hospital expenses for everyone."	82	27
The government "should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks."	55	18
The U.S. "should spend less on defense."	85	65
"Aid to (Russia) should be increased."	36	32
"Women should have an equal role in running business, industry, and government."	96	81
The United States should always permit abortion "as a matter of personal choice."	72	36
"Homosexuals should be allowed to serve in U.S. Armed Forces."	70	45
"Oppose death penalty for persons convicted of murder."	35	15

Source: Robert S. Erikson and Kent L. Tedin, *American Public Opinion*, 5th ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995), 69. Copyright © 1995 by Addison-Wesley-Longman. Reprinted with permission.

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Liberals and Conservative

- **Pure liberals:** liberal on both economic and personal conduct issues
- **Pure conservatives:** conservative on both economic and personal conduct issues
- **Libertarians:** conservative on economic issues, liberal on personal conduct issues
- **Populists:** liberal on economic issues, conservative on personal conduct issues

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Table 7.7: Policy Preferences of Democratic and Republican Voters

Issue	Preferences	
	Democrats	Republicans
Should allow people to invest part of Social Security taxes on their own.	44%	61%
For murder, penalty should be death.	46	55
Unfavorable opinion of National Rifle Association.	44	20
Abortion should be available to those who want it.	48	25
Must protect environment even if jobs are lost.	72	57
Parents should get tax-paid vouchers to help pay for children attending private schools.	41	53

Source: Adapted from New York Times/CBS News poll, New York Times, (August 14, 2000), A17. Copyright © 2000 The New York Times

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Political Elites

- **Political elites:** those who have a disproportionate amount of some valued resource
- Elites influence public opinion by framing issues and stating norms
- But elite influence only goes so far; they do not define problems that are rooted in personal experience

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Interest Groups

- Are you a member of an interest group?
- How powerful are the interest groups

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Social and Economic Class

- Where does your family fall?
- Upper-Upper? Upper, Upper-Middle, Middle, Working-Middle, Lower-Middle, Lower?
- Does the amount of money you make influence your political views?

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Religion

- 20th century: Faith based political activity. Civil Rights and Liberties. What is Patriotism?
- 70's : Activity from the right: Richard Nixon termed the citizens who wanted to return to traditional values the "silent majority"
- 80's-90's: Moral Majority social conservatives led by Jerry Falwell, and the Christian Coalitions

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Race

- Views of the President
- Social Programs
- War
- Crime and Punishment

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Gender

- Different opinions on a variety of Issues
- What are the political issues that men feel are important?
- What are the political issues that women feel are important

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Media

- Adults v. teens viewing habits
- MTV: Rock the Vote, Vote or Die
- Traditional News (Conservative? Liberal?)
- Talk Radio (Does it lean one or another)
- Political Talk shows: Can you think of a few?
- The Internet and beyond

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Region/State

- South v. North: Civil Rights ? State rights? Issues of Religion!
- South 66% Protestant v. 49% U.S.
- Church attendance is highest in the south (Bible Belt)
- Christian Coalition has significant influence on political socialization in the bible belt!!!!

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Impact of Events

- Key political and World Events play an important role in political socialization.
- Think about the following decades and their impact of how people's political beliefs and values were changed by significant events in those decades

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Theme B Discussion Questions

- How is religion related to political attitudes? The text suggests that the theologies of various religions have an important effect. Can you think of other explanations for the correlation between religion and political attitudes? For example, does it matter that, historically, Catholics tended to be blue-collar workers in northern cities? That Jews were disproportionately intellectuals? To what extent would economic self-interest explain why religious groups differ in the ways they do?
- The text contends that public opinion in the United States is split by many cleavages. Yet historian Louis Hartz argues that Americans embrace the same fundamental values. Alexis de Tocqueville concurs; he found that "Americans were agreed upon the most essential points." Does the text exaggerate the degree of cleavage in public opinion? What major disagreements exist in the United States today?

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Theme B Discussion Questions (cont.)

- What is a political elite? Do we have one unified elite, or are there different elites with radically different views on policy? How have the political attitudes of well-off Americans changed in recent years?
- How is race related to political attitudes? To what extent are the distinctive political beliefs of Blacks explained by the socioeconomic position of individual Blacks? Can they be explained by the historical experience of Blacks as a group?
- New issues always have the possibility to create new cleavages, though it may take some time before pollsters and political scientists note the existence of these cleavages. For example, there may be a substantial difference in opinion about gay marriage between homosexuals and heterosexuals. Would we as a nation be better off to know about these emerging cleavages, or should we continue to focus only on the opinions of broad demographic categories of people, ignoring these differences among them?

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Demographics and Ideology

- The Republican Party Coalition
 - Rural voters/farmers
 - White males
 - Business owners
 - Conservative Christians
 - College Educated

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Demographics and Ideology

- Democratic Coalition
 - Urban dwellers
 - Union members
 - Hispanics and African Americans
 - High School Diploma
 - Advanced Degree

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The Gender Gap

- Women vote for the Democratic candidates at higher rates than Republican candidates.

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What Americans value:

Political Ideologies

A few examples:

- Liberals:
 - More domestic spending
 - Pro-choice
 - Favor affirmative action
 - Favor progressive taxation
 - Pro gay marriage
- Conservatives:
 - More military spending
 - Pro-life
 - Oppose affirmative action
 - Keep taxes low
 - Support traditional marriage

From Table 6.3

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How Americans Participate in Politics

- Political Participation:
 - All the activities used by citizens to influence the selection of political leaders or the policies they pursue.
- Conventional Participation
 - Voting in elections
 - Working in campaigns / running for office
 - Contacting elected officials



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How Americans Participate in Politics

- Protest as Participation
 - Protest: A form of political participation designed to achieve policy changes through dramatic and unconventional tactics.
 - Civil disobedience: A form of political participation that reflects a conscious decision to break a law believed to be immoral and to suffer the consequences.



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How Americans Participate in Politics

Class, Inequality, and Participation

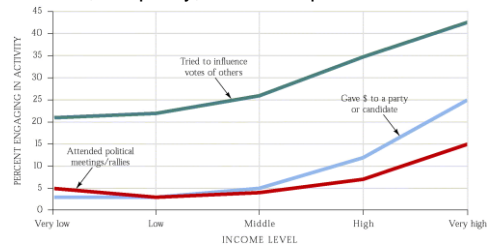


Figure 6.5

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