

- I. Introduction
- II. Turnout from 1828 through 1920
 - A. Definitions
 - 1. Voters/voting-age population (both Wayne and Abramson et al., see, endnote #8, p. 310)
 - 2. Voters/eligible voting-age population (Walter Dean Burnham)
 - 3. Voters/registered voters (local news media)
 - B. Trends Table 4-1, p. 72 (Burnham definition)
 - 1. 1828-1836: below 60%
 - 2. 1840-1900: 70-80%
 - 3. 1900-1916: 60-70%
 - C. Factors encouraging increased voter turnout:
 - 1. Rise of mass-based parties in 1830s-'40s
 - 2. Rise of partisan political-machine politics
 - D. Factors depressing voter turnout:
 - 1. Impact of Jim Crow laws in post-Reconstruction South (1876-1965)
 - a. Poll tax
 - b. Literacy test
 - c. Grandfather clause
 - 2. Progressive-Era reforms
 - a. Australian ballot
 - b. Voter registration suffrage requirement
 - c. Immigration restrictions
 - d. Citizenship suffrage requirement
 - e. Government public assistance programs
 - f. Civil service reform
 - g. Competitive bidding for government contracts
- III. Turnout from 1920 through 2000
 - A. Trends Table 4-2, p 75; Figure 4-1, p. 76 (Wayne definition)
 - 1. 1920-1960: overall increase from mid-40% to low-60%
 - 2. 1960-present: overall decrease from low-60% to low-50%
 - B. Factors encouraging increased voter turnout:
 - 1. Post-WWII class structural change from working class to middle class
 - 2. Civil rights revolution (culminating in the Voting Rights Act of 1965)
 - C. Factors depressing voter turnout:
 - 1. Women suffrage & generational replacement
 - 2. African-American suffrage in the South
 - 3. Immigration restrictions v. immigration reforms & illegal immigration
- IV. Turnout among social groups Table 4-3, pp. 79-81
 - A. Spurious correlates: these predictors of turnout are significantly reduced or eliminated when controlling for age and social class
 - 1. Race
 - 2. Gender
 - 3. Region
 - 4. Union membership
 - 5. Religion
 - B. Socio-economic status (class) and age are the best predictors of voter turnout
 - 1. Level of education is a stronger predictor than all other correlates

2. However, voter validation studies consistently show that persons with high levels of formal education *who do not vote* are more likely to falsely claim to have voted than those with lower levels of formal education – hence the correlation between education and turnout is somewhat exaggerated when not controlling for turnout validation. (Fn. 35, p. 314)

V. Why has turnout declined since 1960?

- A. Factors that have slowed the rate of decline in voter turnout since 1960:
 1. The increase in income, occupational status, and educational levels (class status)
 2. Liberalized election laws
 3. Baby boomers reaching middle age (when turnout increases)
 4. Post-baby-boomers coming of age during the Reagan years (when some were politically energized by his appealing conservatism)
- B. Factors that have accelerated the rate of decline in voter turnout since 1960:
 1. Decreased marriage/increased divorce rates
 2. Decline in church attendance
 3. Civic disengagement Table 4-4, p. 89
 - a. Erosion of party loyalties
 - b. Decline in external political efficacy (the belief that political authorities will respond to attempts to influence them)
- C. Short-term factors positively correlate with voter turnout:
 1. Increased get-out-the-vote drives by the parties
 2. Increased voter perception that the election will be close
- D. A variable *not* correlated with voter turnout: political trust or cynicism

VI. Does low turnout matter? Table 4-5, p. 92

- A. In most presidential elections, there is only a very weak relationship between turnout and the percentage of the vote won by Democratic candidates (2000 may have been an exception, since nonvoters more heavily favored Gore than Bush)
- B. Difficult goals for the parties
 1. Democrats: mobilizing African-American voters without alienating some white Democrats
 2. Republicans: mobilizing social conservatives (the Christian Right) without alienating some economic conservatives who are socially moderate to liberal (some 'country-club' Republicans)
- C. Since there is more similarity than difference in the policy preferences of voters and nonvoters, there is relatively little evidence from survey data to support the hypothesis that low turnout leads U.S. political leaders to ignore the policy preferences of nonvoters
- D. Past partisan realignments have been consistently characterized by increases in voter turnout (e.g., 1860, 1896, and 1932)