

Parties and Elections in America, Fourth Edition
Chapter Three

Outline

3 Voting and Other Forms of Political Participation

I. Who Votes; Who Doesn't

A. Expansion of the Franchise

1. Property Requirements
2. Black Suffrage
3. Women's Suffrage
4. Lowering the Voting Age
5. Additional Regulations: Residency and Registration

B. Decline in Voter Participation

1. Voting by Blacks
2. Voting by Young Voters
3. Voting by Women
4. What Distinguishes Voters from Nonvoters?

II. Voters in Presidential Elections

A. Models of Voting Behavior: The American Voter

B. Critics of The American Voter Model

1. Criticism by V. O. Key Jr. and His Followers
2. Criticism from Successors in the Michigan School

C. Presidential Voting Reviewed

III. Voters in Congressional and Senatorial Elections

IV. Voting Behavior Theory Revisited

V. Participation in Politics in America

VI. Politicians View Political Participation

Key Concepts

FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT

Amendment to the US Constitution that explicitly states that individuals could not be denied the right the vote based on “race, color, or previous condition of servitude”

FRANCHISE

The right to vote

FUNNEL OF CAUSALITY

Symbolic depiction of discussion of why Americans vote as they do

IDEOLOGY

A coherent set of beliefs that structure one’s thinking about political issues

INDEPENDENTS

Those who do not identify with one major party or the other

JIM CROW LAWS

Laws designed to restrict the activities of former slaves in the South; included provisions that kept black citizens from voting

MANDATES

Instructions or directions from the electorate to adopt certain policy alternatives based on what the electorate meant to say in an election

MOTOR VOTER BILL

Legislation to increase the number of citizens who are registered to vote by expanding the availability of registration possibilities

NATIONAL ELECTION STUDIES (NES)

Series of studies of the American electorate carried out over the last half-century under the direction of a national board of scholars by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan

NINETEENTH AMENDMENT

Amendment to the US Constitution granting women the right to vote in all elections

PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Self-assessment of a person’s allegiance to one or the other of the major political parties

POLL TAX

A tax paid by each person as they exercised the right to vote; the tax weighed especially heavily on poorer citizens, as marginal dollars meant more to them

PROSPECTIVE (FUTURE) VOTING

Casting a vote based on what the voter thinks candidates for office are likely to do after the election

RELIGIOUS RIGHT

Group that believes that adherence to certain moral principles constitutes an important aspect of political life successive elections

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

Requirement that a citizen live in a community for a specified period of time before becoming eligible to vote

RETROSPECTIVE (PAST) VOTING

Casting a vote based on the records that candidates have built prior to the time of an election

SOCIALIZING ELEMENTS OF AMERICAN SOCIETY

Institutions that teach those in a social grouping its norms, expectations, values, ideas, and so on

STANDPATTERS

V O Key Jr's terms for those voters who support the candidate of the same party for two

SUFFRAGISTS

The group of political leaders, mostly women, who campaigned for more than six decades at state and federal levels to gain the right to vote for women

SWITCHERS

V O Key Jr's terms for those voters who vote for the candidate of one major party in one election and the candidate of the other party in the next election

THE AMERICAN VOTER

The classic study of American voting behavior

THE CHANGING AMERICAN VOTER

Study that built on the findings of *The American Voter* while criticizing the original study as time-bound

THE NEW AMERICAN VOTER

Last major work by political scientist Warren Miller, reaffirming his belief in the basic findings of *The American Voter*

TWENTY-FOURTH AMENDMENT

The amendment to the US Constitution that prohibited the use of the poll tax or any other tax as a requirement for voting

TWENTY-SIXTH AMENDMENT

Amendment to the US Constitution setting eighteen as the minimum age for voting

VARIABLE

The measure used to capture the variation in observations of a concept one is interested in studying

“WHITES ONLY” PRIMARIES

An example of a Jim Crow law by which southern Democratic parties established themselves as private organizations open only to whites and then nominated candidates for office in elections normally not contested by Republicans, thus effectively denying black citizens the right to vote

Questions for Discussion

1. Why wouldn't everyone favor a system in which every citizen automatically had the right to vote? Given today's computer technology that presumably can detect those who try to vote more than once, should we favor a law that permits any citizen with proof of age to vote anywhere?
2. How do you evaluate the low turnout rate in the United States? Some countries have compulsory voting. Should we require citizens to vote? If so, why? If not, why not?
3. What is implied by lower voting rates among members of racial minority groups? Does that make our democracy less legitimate?
4. Why don't young citizens turn out to vote? What could be done to stimulate turnout by people of your age? Does the government have an obligation to take such steps? Does it have an interest in doing so?

5. Are there forms of political participation that you believe are unacceptable? What are they? Why are they so tainted in your view? How would you have reacted to the type of political participation engaged in by those who dumped tea into Boston Harbor in 1775?