Voting and Elections: Who Votes and Why?
## Forms of Political Participation

- Voting
- Discussing politics & attending meetings
- Forming interest groups & PACs
- Contacting public officials
- Campaigning for party/candidate
- Contribute $ 
- Running for office
- Protesting government decisions
Elections & Democracy

- 55% (on average) of eligible voters actually vote in presidential elections = lowest of any democracy! Lower percent with mid-term elections.
- Is low voter turn out a problem in the United States?
- Can elections ensure governments will do what the people want?
- Elections are essential for democratic politics.
- Elections are the principal means by which popular sovereignty and majority rule are supposed to work.
Who Votes More?

- African-Americans: 57%
- Whites, Non-Hispanic: 62%
- Asians and Pacific Islanders: 43%
- Hispanics (any race): 45%
- Men: 58%
- Women: 61%
- Age, 18–24: 36%
- Age, 25–44: 56%
- Age, 45–64: 68%
- Age, 65–74: 72%
- Less than 9th grade education: 39%
- High school, no diploma: 38%
- High school graduate or GED: 53%
- Some college: 63%
- Bachelor’s degree: 75%
- Advanced degree: 82%
- Income, less than $35,000: 49%
- Income, $35,000 to $74,999: 66%
- Income, $75,000 and above: 75%
Who votes?
What are the main factors?

**Main Factors:**

- **Socio-Economic Status**
- **Level of Education** (more education increases likelihood of voting)
- **Efficacy** (amount of faith and impact citizens feel or believe they have upon their government)
- **Age** (the older one is, the more likely one is to vote)

**Other Interesting Stats:**

- **Regional** Northerners more than Southerners
- **People who work for the government** have the highest voting record
Reasons for Low Voter Turn Out

- Lack of “good” choices
- Eligibility rules & registration requirements
- Alienation, apathy about politics (since the 1960s)
- Lack of voter mobilization and failure of political parties to help register low-income citizens
- The weather (yes, seriously!)
- Date & time of the year (Tuesday, during the week)
- Lack of Motivation
Why has voting declined?

- Lower personal benefits
- Government is not responsive to the needs of the people
- Some elections are not very competitive
- Declining voter mobilization by political parties
- Declining social connectedness
Data Analysis:
2008 Presidential Election

Why has voter turnout been higher in presidential elections than midterm elections?
Types of Elections

• Primary Elections
  • Closed Primary
  • Open Primary
  • Blanket Primary - used only in Alaska & Washington
  • Runoff Primary

• General Elections

• Special Elections