

TKO

To Know Objectives

3. PARTICIPATION: Public Opinion, Political Parties and Campaigns/Elections

1. Define public opinion. Explain why public policy often differs from public opinion.

What the public thinks about government and politics (T.1)
People do not have well-formed opinions on most issues (T.3)
Typical Americans do not carry around well-formed opinions about all aspects of politics (T.14)
2. Identify the factors that affect the validity of public opinion polls.

RANDOM SAMPLE: is a carefully chosen subgroup from a larger group of people (T.6)
Push poll is used to affect, rather than measure, public opinion (T.7)
Mass survey a set of questions asked of a random sample of people (T.16)
3. Describe where Americans get their political values and explain the concept of political socialization.

The influence of parents on people's values and opinions (T.4) (T.15)
TRUST in government institutions has dramatically declined since 1950 (T.10)
Americans tend to dislike government, they are relatively happy with their Congressman (T.11)
Political Socialization = political values are passed to the next generation (MT.15)
4. Define what it means to be a LIBERAL and/or CONSERVATIVE.

No significant increase among liberals, moderates, or conservatives in the last 30 years (T.8)
5. Identify which demographic groups vote consistently for Democrats and Republicans.

Most Americans are neither strongly conservative nor strongly liberal (T.2)
There are now more Independents than there are either Democrats or Republicans (T.9)
Democrat issues: global warming; tax the rich; gay marriage; guest-worker programs (T.12)
Republican issues: pro business tax policy; against gay marriage; stricter immigration policy (T.13)
African Americans most consistent DEMOCRATS (MT.1) (MT.4)
6. Identify which demographic groups have the highest voter turnout.

Must be 18 to vote (T.40)
Lowest turnout among least educated (T.57)
7. Explain the relationship between socioeconomic status and participation in politics.

The higher ones socioeconomic status, the greater the probability of active involvement (MT.6)
8. Evaluate the various forms of political participation. What are grassroots?

People with strong party identification volunteer for a party and its candidates (T.26)
Grassroots involves mobilizing local supporters; ground game (T.53)
9. Explain the relationship between increasing suffrage rights since and voter turnout.

Giving young people, 18-20, the right to vote did not translate into high turnout rates
10. Discuss voter turnout patterns in American today.

Votes cast by citizens called 'the popular vote' (T.38)
New trend is EARLY VOTING (T.42)
College graduates more likely to vote (MT.5)
Young people turn out at lower rates (MT.7)
Majority of electorate do not vote (MT.8)
Men and women vote at about the same rate (MT.9)

- Party Identification is an important influence when voting for President (MT.22)
11. Discuss the type of voters that vote in primaries compared to those that vote in general elections.
More affluent (MT.10)
 12. Explain the significance of 'split-ticket' voting.
Voting for candidates of different parties on the same ballot (MT.12)
 13. Define referendum.
Determine whether citizens support an action by their state legislature (MT.13) Vote on an issue
 14. Define political efficacy.
Citizens' belief that their vote matters; government is responsive to the will of the people (MT.14)
 15. Identify the most common form of political activity in American politics.
Voting in Presidential elections (MT.20)
 16. Identify which positions (i.e. President, Supreme Court, Senate, House of Reps) registered voters directly elect.
Original Constitution gave voters a direct choice in HOUSE elections only
President chosen by Electoral College;
Federal judges appointed
House and Senate only (MT.21)
 17. Discuss differences between elections in the US and elections in Europe. (i.e. voter turnout).
Lower than most Western democracies (MT. 11)
 18. What percentage of adults adopt the party preference of their parents and which partisan identification is most often transferred from parent to child?
Family still an important factor but less so.
 19. How has the ability of the family to promote a partisan identification changed in recent years?
Family most important factor but declining (MT.16)
 20. Explain why party identification has declined in recent years.
Party identification is loyalty that people have to one party (T.25)
 21. Explain the effect of attending college on political attitudes.
In most cases, a college degree makes one more conservative
 22. Discuss the affects of cross-cutting cleavages in public opinion.
Issues that split political party coalitions (T. 20)
 23. Explain why voters in the South have become progressively less attached to the Democratic party.
Southern Dixiecrats, conservatives who votes for Democratic candidates, dealigned in the 1960s and joined the Republican Party due to civil rights issues. States rights was an issue adopted by Republicans in the 1960s. We now talk about the "solid South" for Republican candidates.
 24. Explain the significance of the Motor Voter Bill (1993). Define critical realignments and explain why they have occurred [also known as critical elections].
Motor Voter Bill was passed to address the difficulty of voter registration; little impact. When a large number of people change from identifying with one political party to identifying with the other (T.5) (MT.35,36) When issues that divide the political parties change in a way that cuts across existing political coalitions (T.19)
The increase in people who identified as independents was initially considered as evidence of dealignment, a more recent interpretation is that many of these voters do have weak partisan attachments (T.27)
 25. Define political parties and factions. Be able to differentiate between parties and interest groups. What did the Founding Fathers think about political parties? What does the

Constitution say?

Political parties are an organization that supports candidates for public office and tries to unify elected officials behind common goals (T.17)

Parties have brand names that evoke certain positions or issues (T.21)

Loosely connected groups with similar goals (T.23)

Parties help voters keep the government accountable (T.32)

Career politicians motivated by interest in careers, policy goals, and winning office (T.36)

Party caucus is an organization within government that meets to discuss party positions on issues (T.24)

Pol. parties seek to gain control of government; interest groups seek to influence public policy (MT.29)

Voters identifying themselves as either Democrats or Republicans has been in decline (MT.38)

26. What are party platforms?

Written by delegates at national convention; party's objectives; influences party's brand name (T.31)

27. Discuss differences between political parties in the U.S. and Europe. Where would political parties be the most decentralized?

U.S. parties are loose coalitions; more decentralized

European parties, in parliamentary systems, are more centralized and rigid ideologically

28. Explain the difference between unified and divided governments.

Unified government = President and Congress from the same political party

Divided government = President and Congress from different political parties

29. Explain the primary and caucus process, as well as the shift from party control over candidates to voter control.

A primary election is a ballot vote to select a party's nominee (T.28)

Selecting presidential candidates: caucuses, primaries, nominating conventions (T.29)

Citizens vote for delegates at a national nominating convention which then selects the

candidate (T.30)

Open primary is an election in which any registered voter can participate in selecting a party nominee (T.41)

Closed primary requires registration as a party affiliate to vote (MT.32)

Increasing importance of presidential primaries rather than state conventions (MT.33)

30. Discuss the origin and function of party conventions. What is a super delegate?

Democrats nominating convention proportional; Republicans winner-take-all (T.45)

Attract attention; develop party platform; select party's presidential nomination (T.49)

31. Identify the key functions and purpose of the party chairman.

Oversee and manage party functions

32. Define party machines and explain their role in a democracy.

Spoils system rewards party supporters with benefits, like government jobs (T.18)

Organization that uses unofficial patronage to secure political power for a group of leaders and workers (T.22)

Local party organization that is tightly disciplined and well staffed and relies on patronage to create party loyalty (MT.34)

33. Discuss the two-party system. What factors dissuade third parties from influencing American politics?

Single-member districts; rules for getting on ballots; lack of clear dissatisfaction (T.35) (MT.30)

Duverger's law – only select one official per seat (T.37)

Winner-take-all elections (MT.37)

34. What is the difference between a majority and a plurality? Apply these concepts to U.S. elections. How do plurality elections and the winner-take-all system influence our two party system? What is a popular vote?

Plurality elections mean the candidate with the most votes wins (T.43) (MT.39)

35. Describe the role of third parties in U.S. elections.

Examples: Libertarian Party, Reform Party;
Green Party (T.34)

36. Explain the differences in voters in primary elections versus general elections, as well as the different approaches that candidates take to appeal to these voters. Define frontloading.

Critical players – political parties; interest groups; private consultants (T.44)
Super Tuesday = day in February when many state primaries take place (T.46)
Frontloading is the increasingly early scheduling of primaries and caucuses (T.47)
N.H. (T.48)
Frontloading is the tendency of states to choose an early date on the primary calendar (MT.31)

37. Identify the elections with the highest voter turnout.

Presidential elections

38. Summarize the differences between presidential and congressional campaigns and elections. Assess the difference between normal and nationalized elections.

In normal elections there are high reelection rates and local issues are important; in nationalized elections reelection rates are relatively low and important issues are the same across legislative districts (T.39)
House determines winner if no candidate wins a majority in the Electoral College (T.50)
Key is mobilizing supporters; ground game (T.53)
When behind momentum gained through attack ads (T.54)

39. Define presidential coattails and their impact on elections.

When a popular president generates additional support for legislative candidates and helps them gain office (T.58)

40. Define incumbency. Assess incumbency rates for the House and the Senate.

An open seat is when there is no incumbent (T.51)
Incumbency wards off competition; easier to

raise money (T.52)

Incumbent senators are less likely to be reelected than are incumbent members of the House (MT.27)

Most important factor in Congressional races (MT.28)

41. What are the potential problems for candidates with televised debates?

Verbal slip ups

42. Describe the different ways that presidential and congressional campaigns are funded.

Federal Election Commission regulates elections (T.55)

Hard Money = funds that are subject to clear limits on how much can be raised but not on how much is spent (T.56)

PACs raise campaign funds to support favored candidates; frequently represent business (MT.23,24)

Public monies are used to help finance Presidential campaigns only (MT.25)

Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (McCain-Feingold) banned soft money (MT. 26)

43. Differentiate between red and blue

Red = Republican

Blue = Democrat