Bellwork

– Where do you think your political beliefs come from? What factors influence your beliefs?
Unit 4: Political Beliefs and Behaviors
1. **What is the difference between political culture and political ideology?**

   **Political culture** is comprised of attitudes, values, beliefs that individuals in society have about their political system.
   
   - Individual rights v. collective good

   **Political ideology** is more of an opinion or belief set on political issues.
   
   - Liberals v. conservatives

2. **What are America’s shared cultural values?**

   **Liberty**
   - Ability to rise through ranks
   - Right to speak our views
   - Freedom from government intrusion

   **Equality**
   - Equal treatment under the law
   - Equality in economic opportunity NOT economic equality

   **Individual Responsibility**
   - Focus on self reliance or climbing the ladder
   - Protestant work ethic of working hard, saving money, and giving back.
   - Help only those that are truly in need

   **Civic Duty**
   - Americans have a duty to participate and serve their country
Political Culture

3. How is one’s political culture affected by their political efficacy?

The amount of civic duty and political participation is based on an individual’s sense of internal and external efficacy.

   a. Internal efficacy – confidence in one’s own ability to understand and take part in political affairs.
      
      ex. I can understand what’s going on, therefore I can make an informed decision and vote.

   b. External efficacy – the belief that the political system will respond to its citizens.
      
      ex. I can impact what’s going on; I can take on City Hall.

4. It has created a culture war over values and what kind of country we ought to live in. There are 2 views on this:

   a. Orthodox – traditional, maintain values; dominated by rural, moderate to low education, common view among those with high church attendance.

   b. Progressive – forward thinking, expand rights, accept alternate lifestyles, dominated by high income highly educated, weak religious affiliation.
Bellwork

1. Explain the difference between political culture and political ideology.
2. Give 2 examples of internal efficacy and 2 examples of external efficacy (cannot use ones from notes)
3. Define Cleavages.
Politics and Economics

[Diagram showing a bell curve with 'VOTER PREFERENCE' in the center, 'MORE GOVERNMENT' to the left, and 'LESS GOVERNMENT' to the right. The x-axis is divided into 'Far Left', 'Left', 'Middle', 'Right', and 'Far Right', with 'COMMUNISM', 'SOCIALISM', and 'CAPITALISM' labeled accordingly.]
The Issues

Republicans

– Conservative
– Pro spending on military
– Pro life
– Pro traditional marriage
– Allow religion in public life
– Border control
– Second Amendment rights
– Individualism
– Economic freedom on campaigns
– Pro Death Penalty
– State government power
– Environmental regs hurt businesses
– Embrace Tradition

Democrats

– Liberal
– Pro spending on social programs
– Pro choice
– Gay rights
– Secular
– Relax immigration rules
– Gun control
– Affirmative Action
– Campaign regulations
– Anti death penalty
– Federal government power
– Proactive on environment
– Embrace change
1. What are the origins of American political attitudes and socialization?

1. Political Socialization and Ideology

   a. **Family** – family usually passes down party identification

   b. **Religion** – families form and transmit political beliefs through church (preaching from the pulpit)
      
      I. Catholic families are **SOMEWHAT more liberal** on economic issues.
      
      II. Protestant families are more conservative.
      
      III. Jewish families are more liberal on social and economic issues.

   c. **Gender Gap** – differences between men and women about the size of government, gun control, social programs, gay rights.
      
      I. men have become more republican since the mid-1960’s
      
      II. women have identified with democrats at relatively the same rate.

   d. **Schooling** – college often has liberalizing effects.
      
      I. increased exposure to political information.
      
      II. professors tend to be liberal.
Figure 11.4 What are the ideological self-identifications of first-year college students?

A majority of entering first-year college students describe themselves as middle of the road; this number was fairly consistent in the 1990s but decreased beginning in the early 2000s. The number of students identifying themselves as liberal and far left declined dramatically during the 1970s and early 1980s but is currently on the rise. The number of students identifying themselves as conservative and far right has also increased since the 1970s, but at a slower rate.

Political Socialization and Ideology

2. How are political socialization and ideology connected?

2. One’s political socialization usually helps to determine their ideology or where they fall on the political spectrum.

3. Race and Ethnicity

   a. African Americans overwhelmingly vote democrat, while whites are more likely to be republican.

   b. African Americans tend to favor more government action and stronger affirmative action laws to correct prejudice, social and economic inequalities.

3. Region

   a. Where you live influences your political attitude.

   b. Northern, New England and West Coast states tend to be liberal.

   c. Southern states and the “Bible Belt” (Mid West) states tend to be more conservative.
Bellwork

Political socialization is the way voters tend to create their beliefs and actions about government.

a. Identify three forms of political socialization.

b. Explain the three forms.

c. Identify the most influential of the three forms and explain why it has such a major impact on political attitudes.
1. How is public opinion taken?

2. What makes a poll legitimate?

1. The public’s pulse is often taken through a poll – survey of public opinion.

2. There are 4 criteria to an effective, legitimate poll:

   a) Who conducted the poll – preferably a 3rd party.

   b) Sample size – should be a random sample – a sample selected in such a way that any member of the population being surveyed has an equal chance of being selected.

   c) Sampling error or the difference between the results from two different samples of the same population. – the bigger the sample the greater the percent difference. (+/- 3%)

   d) Question Wording – the way the issue is framed, whether it is accompanied by relevant facts, the order the alternative questions are presented affect the outcome of a poll.

ex: Issue: Death Penalty as a sentence for murder.

   – “Are you in favor of the death penalty for a person convicted of murder?”

   – “If you could choose between the following 2 approaches, which do you think is the better penalty for murder – the death penalty or life in prison with no possibility of parole?”
3. What are the types of Public Opinion Polls

**Straw Polls**—unscientific survey used to gauge public opinion on a variety of issues and policies

**Telephone Polls**—use of random-digit dialing to call people to ask them about their views on political issues

**Exit Polls**—polls conducted as voters leave selected polling places on Election Day—helps media predict the outcomes of the race

**Tracking Polls**—continuous surveys that enable a campaign or news organization to chart a candidate's daily rise or fall in support
   - Rasmussen
   - Gallup

**Internet Polls**—scientific surveys of a particular sample of volunteers
   - Zogby
   - Harris Interactive

**Push Polls**—polls taken for the purpose of providing information on an opponent that would lead respondents to vote against that candidate—misleading and sometimes even erroneous questions intended make an issue or candidate come across in a negative way.
Problems with Polling Public Opinion?
Problems with Polling

- Biased Questions
- Sampling Error
- Bandwagon Effect
- Underdog Effect
- Key Point: All polls are biased; still, they can still be useful
Push Polling

- 2000 South Carolina Republican Primary:
  "Would you be more or less likely to vote for John McCain...if you knew he had fathered an illegitimate black child?"

- 2008 Presidential Election:
  "If you knew Barack Obama was supported by Hamas, would it change your vote?"

- 2012 Presidential Election - Ohio:
  "How can you support a 'Mormon' who does not believe in Jesus Christ?"
Question Bias

Choice of what should been done with the government surplus (Stevenson, 2000)

**Question #1:**
Should the money be used for a tax cut, or should it be used to fund new government programs?

- 60% Tax Cut
- 25% Spending

**Question #2:**
Should the money be used for a tax cut, or should it be spent on programs for education, the environment, healthcare, crime-fighting, and military defense?

- 22% Tax Cut
- 69% Spending

OR
Questions to ask when analyzing a poll

- Who’s behind the poll?
- Who participated in the poll?
- What is the margin of error?
- Is the wording or order of questions suspicious?
- Could the poll be considered a pseudo poll or push poll?
**FIGURE 6–1  Consensus Opinion**

From June 8–11, 2007

**Question:** Do you favor or oppose all immigrants who apply to be U.S. citizens be required to learn English?

- **Favor—89%**
- **Oppose—10%**
- ** Unsure—1%**

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll

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**FIGURE 6–2  Divisive Opinion**

From December 16–19, 2007

**Question:** Do you support or oppose giving illegal immigrants a right to stay here legally if they pay a fine and meet other requirements?

- **Support—49%**
- **Oppose—46%**
- ** Unsure—5%**

Source: ABCNews/Facebook Poll

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**FIGURE 6–3  Nonopinion**

From November 30–December 3, 2007

**Question:** Which party do you think can do a better job of handling immigration issues?

- **Democrats—30%**
- **Republicans—31%**
- **Both or Neither—26%**
- ** Unsure—13%**

Source: Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg Poll
Public Opinion

4. Distribution – how big a piece of the electorate is concerned about the issue? Is it polarizing - one that fragments or deeply divides the nation - or is a consensus easily reached?

Intensity – are they litmus test issues - ones that have uncompromising supporters (abortion, gay marriage, gun control).

Latency - can the issue fade on its own or will it develop into a crisis? What issues will move the public in the future, how will they react to change or to a lack of change?

Saliency – how important is the issue over time?

5. If there is a strong public opinion on an issue then a Congressman is more likely to vote in accordance with it due to their desire to get reelected.

6. Congressmen will not always vote according to popular opinion to avoid being seen as indecisive or to avoid losing party support.

Questions

4. What are the issues with gauging public opinion?

5. How does polling public opinion enhance the voting decisions of Congress?

6. What can limit the influence of public opinion on the voting decisions of Congress?
L4.3 Assessment: White Board Rally

Directions: Take out your white boards, markers, and erasers. When a question is asked, if you know the answer/s then write them down on the white board and hold up your response.

1. This is an issue that fragments or deeply divides the nation. 
Polarizing
2. This is a survey of public opinion. 
Poll
3. The difference between the results from two different samples of the same population. 
Sampling Error
4. What are the 4 criteria of an effective poll? 
Sample Size, Wording, Who conducted the poll, sampling error.
5. Identify 2 reasons a Congressman might not follow popular public opinion. 
Avoid looking indecisive and losing party support.
Bellwork

- Explain why public opinion is important
- Identify 3 types of polls
Why People Don’t Vote

During November of each federal election year, the U.S. Census Bureau conducts a Current Population Survey that asks a series of voting and registration-related questions. In the November 2008 survey, respondents were asked whether they voted in the 2008 election and, if not, what their reasons were for not voting. Review the bar chart showing the results and then answer the questions.

- What is the most common reason people gave for not voting in the 2008 election? What about the least common reason?
- How might political parties and candidates use this information to improve voter turnout rates? Are there steps that the government could take to improve turnout rates?
- Why might political parties or interest groups want to suppress voter turnout among certain groups? In what ways could the information provided in this chart assist with voter suppression?

Political Participation

1. Political participation is involvement in activities intended to influence public policy and leadership, usually through the act of voting.

2. There are several factors that influence voter turnout:
   - Office up for election – bigger the office, bigger the election.
   - Crisis/War – levels of patriotism, reactions to national threats, and panicked calls for help will bring out the votes.
   - Age – senior citizens tend to vote more often, have time to vote, and tend to believe in the political system.
   - Religion – Christians tend to vote more.
   - Income – poor tend to vote less frequently.
   - Electoral Power – more populated states completely dominate most presidential elections.
   - Apathy – when party platforms are similar, races are one-sided, or candidates are bland, turnouts are reduced.

1. What is political participation?

2. What influences voter turnout?
Political Participation

3. What attempts have been made to increase voter turnout?

- Courts: Unconstitutional
  - Literacy Tests and Grandfather Clause
  - Poll Taxes
  - White Primary
  - Long Residency requirements

Voter Rights Act of 1965 (Civil Rights Act 1957, 1960)
  - Federal Govt. Intervenes, supervises Election where minorities vote in % disparate with their population

Motor Voter Law 1993
  - Make Registration easier

2002 Voter Reform Act
  - Simplify Ballots

Constitutional Amendment
  - Women and 18-21 yr olds

4. Who Votes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Highest %</th>
<th>Lowest %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>65+</td>
<td>18-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>College Degree</td>
<td>No H.S Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>Hispanics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Member</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Voting Coalitions of the Two Parties

Democrat
- Young (18-21)
- Women
- African American
- Jewish
- North Eastern & Western Regions
- Urban
- Union

Republican
- Upper Income
- Protestant/church going
- Military families
- South
- Midwest
- Rural
Your Vote

- 18-24 year olds are least likely group to vote
- Different campaigns to try and increase the youth vote
  - Rock the Vote
  - Vote or Die
  - Project Smart Vote
- Do you think these campaigns work?
Youth Vote 2012

- Turnout declined from 2008
- 19% of all voters
- Obama 60%
- Romney 37%
Figure 13.3 How do demographic characteristics affect citizens' vote choice?

Source: www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008/results/polls.main/
5. What other forms of political participation are there? What are the advantages of each?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Advantage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Litigation</td>
<td>Appeal to a principle or a law instead of public opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protest</td>
<td>Bring public attention; sympathy; immediate attention or response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Work</td>
<td>Contact with potential officials, multiply individual interests, training ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run for political office</td>
<td>Directly influence political decisions; set policy agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership in a political organization</td>
<td>Solidarity with others; has a magnifying effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who votes, who doesn’t, and why!

Now read the article from the Pew Research Center, "Regular Voters, Intermittent Voters, and Those Who Don't." In your groups, determine the many reasons why millions of Americans either vote intermittently or not at all. Answer the following questions as you examine the article:

1. Which Americans seem most likely to vote? Who is least likely?

2. What are the most cited reasons for not voting?

3. What is it that keeps intermittent voters voting, even if just occasionally?