



# Part 1 – Role of Mass Media



# Questions to Ask

- What is Mass Media?
- How does the mass media fulfill its role to provide the public with political information?
- How does the mass media influence politics?
- What are the factors that limit the influence of the media?

# Mass Media

- Includes all forms and aspects of communication to the general public
- Considered the "fourth branch of government" given the importance and influence on the electorate, policy-making, politics, and the government



# Types of Mass Media

## *Television*

Politics and television have gone hand in hand since the technology first appeared. **Television is one of the principle sources of political information for a majority of Americans.**

## *Newspapers*

The first newspapers carried mostly political news. Even with the total number of newspapers declining, they are **still the second leading source of political information for most Americans.**

## *Radio*

On average, Americans hear 20 hours of radio each week. Radio has been a source of news and entertainment since 1920.

## *Magazines*

Some 12,000 magazines are published in the United States today. Several magazines are devoted to American news and politics.

## **Internet**

The World Wide Web is becoming a growing source of news and information.

## Select Social Media Sources Used by US Internet Users to Get Political Information, by Age, April 2012

% of respondents

### Facebook



### YouTube/other video



### Political blogs



### Twitter



■ 18-34      ■ 35-54      ■ 55+

Note: n=1,104 likely voters

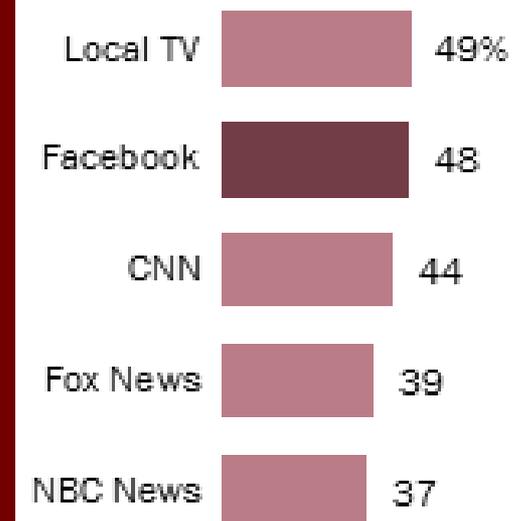
Source: Burst Media, "Online Insights: Online Voters & Online Advertising," April 26, 2012

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www.eMarketer.com

## Facebook a Top Source of Political News Among Web Users

% of web users saying they got news about gov't & politics from each in past week ...



American Trends Panel (wave 1). Survey conducted March 19-April 29, 2014. Q16a-e, Q24, Q24a. Based on web respondents.

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# Growing Social Media

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEuvNduQ97A>

# Role of the Media

## ■ Gatekeeper

- Influencing or determining which issues receive attention or degree of attention
- Stories they report on tell us what to care about as a country
  - Part of agenda setting

## ■ Scorekeeper

- Tracking candidates or issues showing their importance or significance over time
  - Ex. Polls on leading Republican presidential candidates

## ■ Watchdog

- Investigating and exposing candidates and institutions
  - Ex. Watergate, Benghazi investigation, Iran-Contra, etc.

# Media Effects

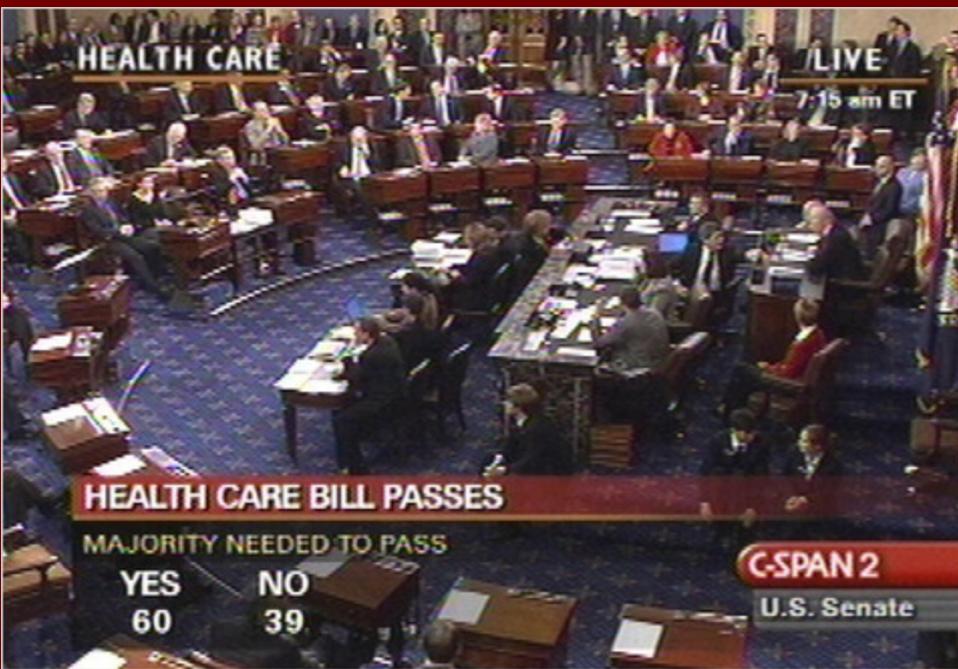
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvgURfZMGoQ>

# Media and the President

- The President receives the most attention by the media
  - One person is easier to track than 535.
- Media Events
- Press Secretary
- Sources of Information
  - News/press releases
  - News briefings
  - News conferences
  - Leaks



# Media and Congress



- Limited coverage in relation to President
- Coverage of confirmation hearings, oversight investigations, scandals
- C-SPAN

# The Media and Politics

## The Public Agenda

- The media play a very large role in shaping the **public agenda**, the societal problems that political leaders and citizens agree need government attention.
- It is not correct that the media tell the people *what* to think; but it is clear that they tell the people what to think *about*.

## Electoral Politics

- Today, television allows candidates to appeal directly to the people, without the help of a party organization.
- Candidates regularly try to use media coverage to their advantage.
- Newscasts featuring candidates are usually short, sharply focused **sound bites**—snappy reports that can be aired in 30 to 45 seconds.

# Limits on Media Influence

- Only a **small part** of the public actually takes in and understands much of what the media have to say about public affairs.
  - Uninformed public/voters
- Many media sources mostly skim the news, reporting only what their news editors judge to be the most important and/or most interesting stories of the day.
- In-depth coverage of public affairs is available to those who want it and will seek it out.

# Is there Media Bias?

- Most people think that there is a “liberal” slant to news broadcasts.
- However, most reporters do try to be unbiased.
- The proliferation of blogs and “talking heads” on cable broadcasts are one reason the public perceives bias.
- What do you think?



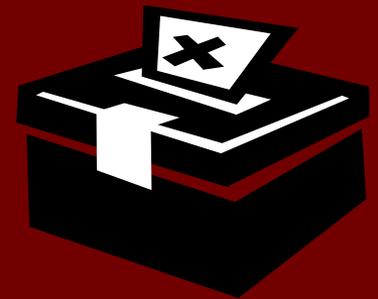
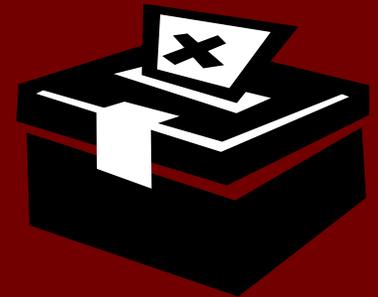
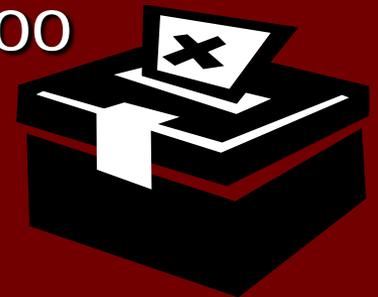
# PART 2: VOTING AND VOTER BEHAVIOR

- Who has suffrage in the US?
- What are the requirements to vote?
- Who is prohibited from voting?
- What is voter registration?



# Suffrage or Franchise = The right to vote

- By 1810 religious qualifications were eliminated, by 1840s property requirements were too
- 1870-15<sup>th</sup> Amendment- race
- 1920-19<sup>th</sup> Amendment- gender
- 1961- 23<sup>rd</sup> Amendment- DC residents
- 1964- 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment – no poll tax
- 1965- Voting Rights Act
- 1971- 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment – age 18+



# Setting Voter Qualifications

**The Constitution sets five limits on the power that States have to set voter qualifications:**

1. Any person whom a State allows to vote for members of the “most numerous Branch” of its own legislature must be also allowed to vote for members of Congress.

2. No State can deprive any person the right to vote “on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”  
(15<sup>th</sup> Amendment)

3. No State can deprive any person the right to vote on account of sex.  
(19<sup>th</sup> Amendment)

4. No State can require the payment of any tax as a condition for voting.  
(24<sup>th</sup> Amendment)

5. No State can deprive any person who is at least 18 years of age the right to vote.  
(26<sup>th</sup> Amendment)

# Universal requirements set by the states



## ■ Citizenship-(varies by state)

- Nothing in the Constitution says that an alien should not be able to vote

## ■ Residency-(varies by state)

- requirement to live in the state need to be < than 31 days in a Presidential election

## ■ Age

- Limit cannot be higher than 18

# Voting Through History

- Ted Ed:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=40&v=P9VdyPbbzII>

# Registration- a procedure of voter id to prevent fraudulent voting

- A Progressive reform – early 1900s
- All states except N. Dakota require registration
  - Oregon recently passed a law mandating that the state automatically registers a voter when they get state identification. You must send in a letter asking to remove you from the voter list.
- Most European democracies require public officials to compile a list of eligible voters.
- “Motor-Voter” Law since 1995



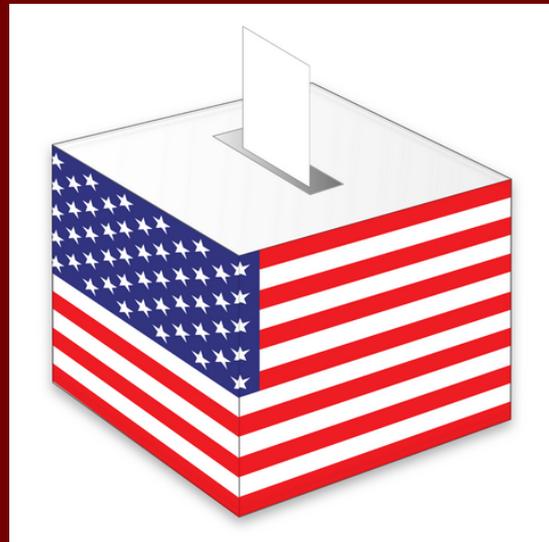
# Persons denied the vote

- No state allows anyone living in a mental institution to vote.
- Around  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the states denies voting to felons.
- A few states do not allow anyone who is dishonorably discharged from the military to vote. (mainly in the South)



# Part 3: Voter Participation and Behavior

- Who votes and why?
- Who doesn't vote and why?



# WHO ACTUALLY VOTES IN AMERICA?

During the 2008 presidential election, 64 percent of voting-age Americans—131 million people—showed up to their local polling places to cast a ballot. But who exactly turned out?

## ★ WOMEN VOTED AT A HIGHER RATE THAN MEN ★



## ★ WHITES AND BLACKS TOPPED THE VOTER TURNOUT TABLES ★



## ★ TURNOUT RATES WENT UP WITH AGE ★



## ★ HIGHER LEVELS OF EDUCATION TRANSLATED INTO HIGHER LEVELS OF VOTING ★



## ★ PEOPLE WHO WERE MARRIED—OR HAD BEEN AT SOME POINT—WERE BETTER AT SHOWING UP TO VOTE ★



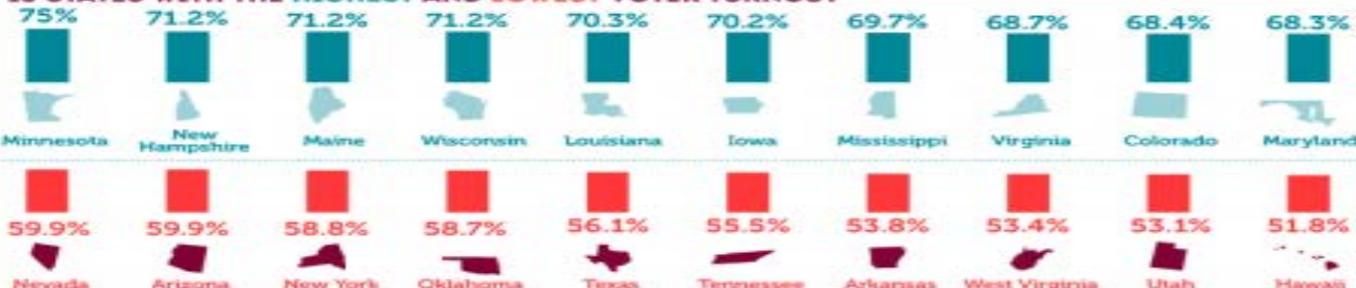
## ★ THE RICH VOTED AT HIGHER RATES THAN THE POOR (Annual family income)



## ★ THE UNEMPLOYED WERE LESS LIKELY TO VOTE ★



## ★ 10 STATES WITH THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST VOTER TURNOUT ★



SOURCES: US CENSUS BUREAU, PROJECT VOTE

## ★ TOP REASONS FOR NOT VOTING ★



★ TAKE ACTION ★  
Tell the world why you're voting this year at [Takepart.com/Tuesday](http://Takepart.com/Tuesday)

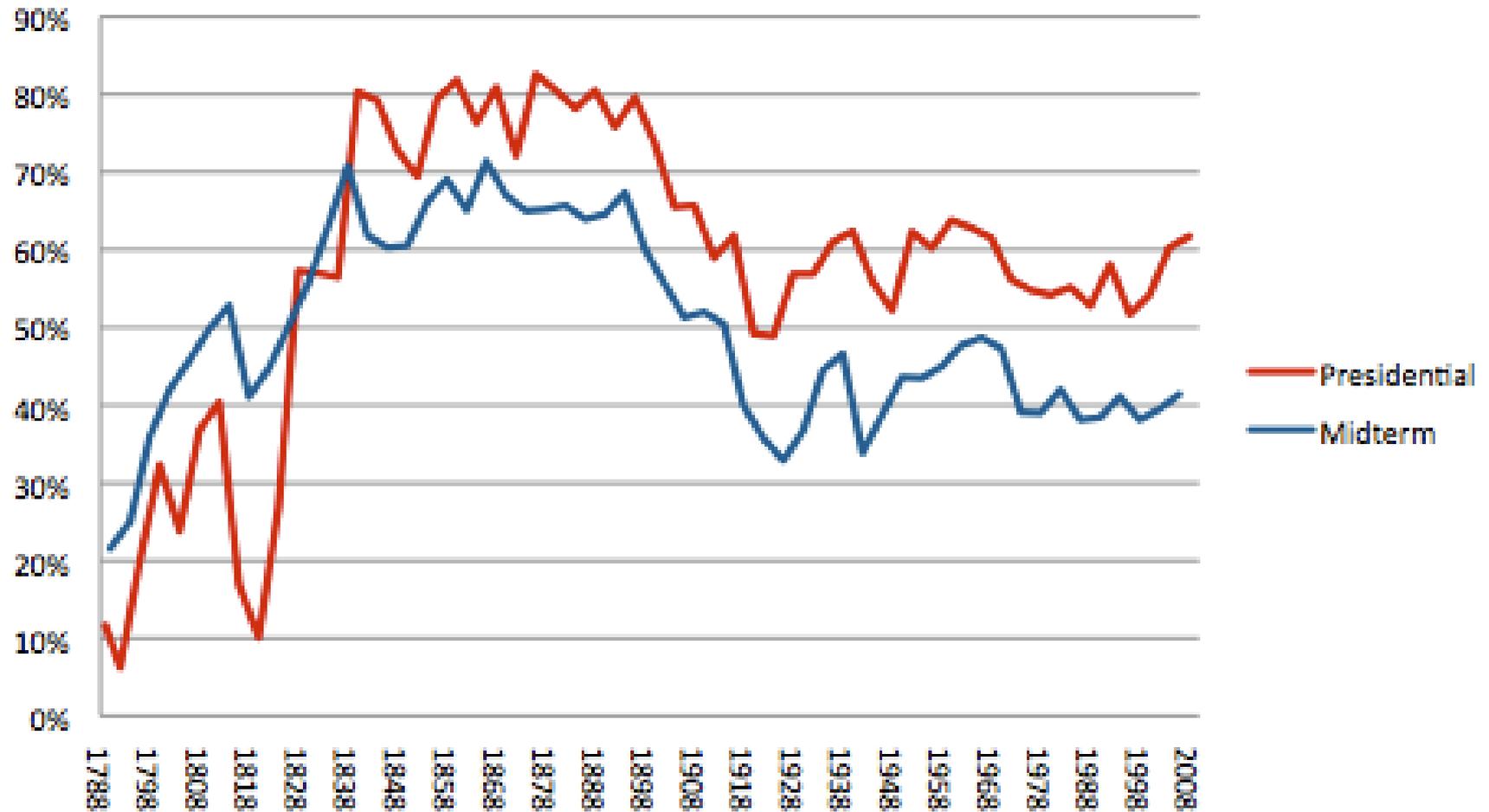
INFOGRAPHIC DESIGN BY COLUMN FIVE



# Nonvoters

- Millions of Americans do not vote when elections are held.
- Only 50.1 percent of eligible voters cast ballots in the 2000 presidential election, and only 46.3 percent of the electorate voted for the members of the House of Representatives.
- Voter turnout significantly decreases in **off-year elections**, congressional elections held in years when there is no presidential election.

## Turnout Rates for Eligible Voters, 1789-2008



# Why don't more people vote?

Talk to your partner; prepare 1-2 reasons why people might choose not to vote.

# Why people do not vote

- Over 110 million did not vote in 2012
- % of non-voters is generally increasing
  - 53.6% of eligible voters voted for president
    - 60.8% in 1968, 49% in 1996
- Cannot vote – Around 20-21 million
  - Around 10 million resident aliens
  - About 5-6 million ill, disabled
  - About 500,000 in mental institutions
  - Around 2-3 million traveling unexpectedly
  - About 2 million in jail
  - About 100,000 who do not vote based on religious reasons



What about everybody else?

What for?  
It won't  
make any  
difference

Everything's  
fine. Why  
bother?

90,000,000 +  
votes

*idiot*

from the Greek word *idiotes*:  
*those who did not vote or take  
part in civic life*

# *Comparing Voters & Non-Voters*

Current information on the nature of voters is as follows

Voters	Non-Voters
<b>Higher income, education, occupation level</b>	<b>Lower income, education level, unskilled jobs</b>
Well established in a community, home owners or urbanites	More often rural residents, rather than urban or suburbanites
<b>Strong party identification – contact with party</b>	<b>Less contact with party organizers</b>
Live where laws and customs promote voting	Live where less enthusiastic law enforcement
<b>Older than 35, married, established in life</b>	<b>Younger, transient, becoming established</b>
Male (Changing)	Women (Changing)

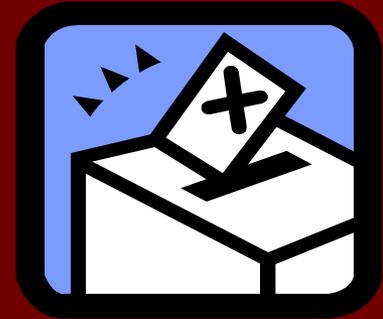
# Factors that Influence Voters

- Sociological and psychological factors
  - Sociological: pieces of the voters social and economic life (two kinds)
    1. A voters personal characteristics-age, race, income, occupation, education, religion
    2. Voters' group affiliations - family- coworkers, friends
  - Psychological: study of the mind and individual behavior
    - Voter perception- how the voter sees the party, candidate and the issues of the election

# Sociological factors determining whether or how people vote

## 1. Income, occupation

- Lower income groups vote Democratic



## 2. Education

- Higher percentages of college graduates vote Republican

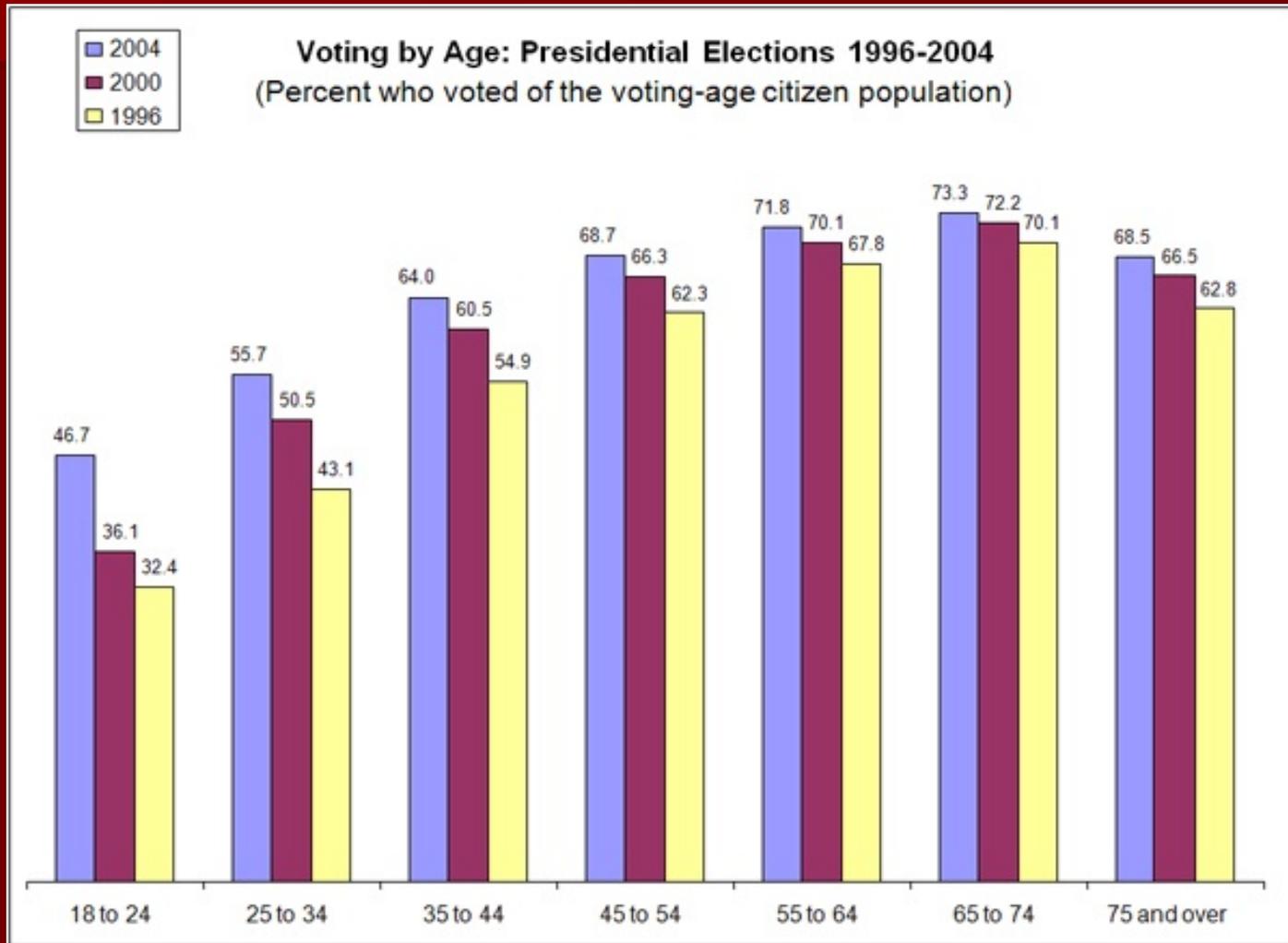
## 3. Gender

- Women tend to be more likely to vote Democrat

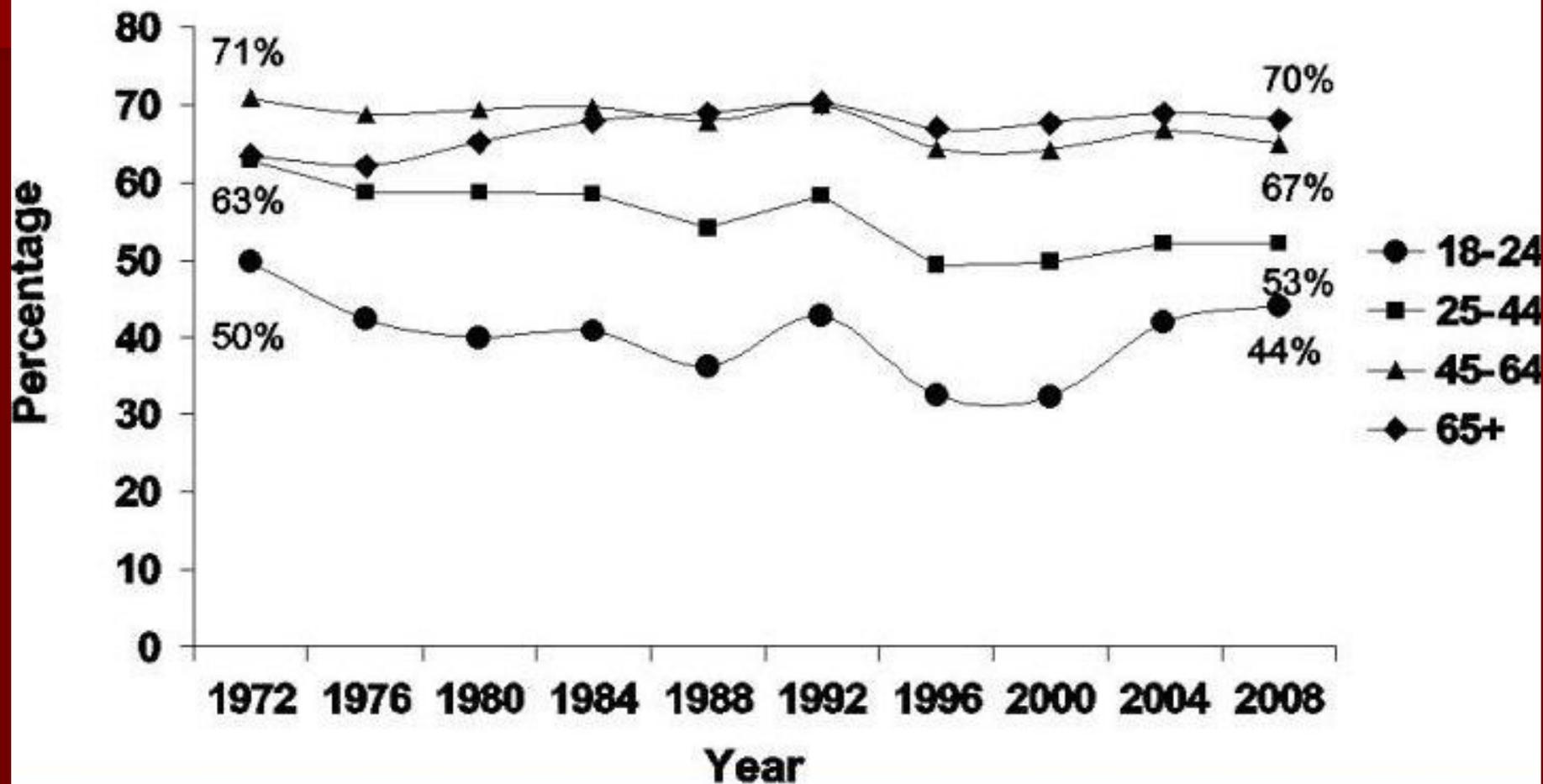
## 4. Age

- Younger people tend to vote Democrat

# Sociological factors determining whether or how people vote



## Voting Turnout, by Age Groups, In U.S. Presidential Elections, 1972-2008



# Sociological factors of voting

## 5. Religion-Republican party recent gains

- Protestants=Republican
- Catholics & Jews= Democrat



## 6. Ethnic Background

- African Americans typically vote Democrat
- Mexican Americans & Puerto Ricans usually vote Democrat
- Cubans usually vote Republican

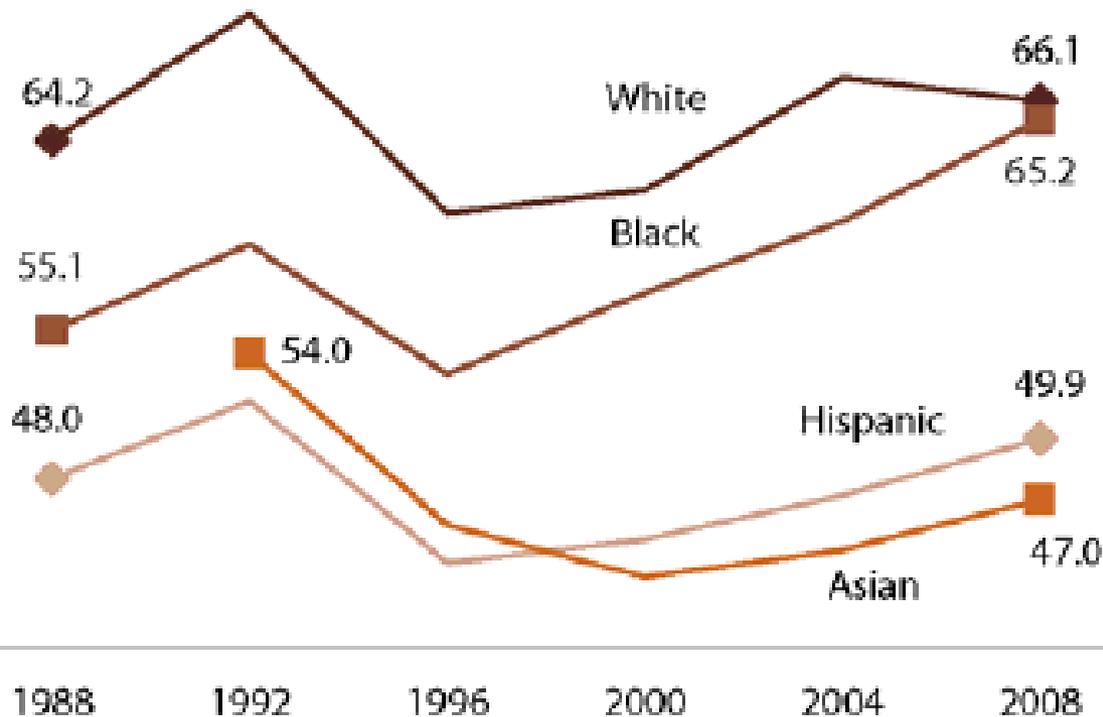
## 7. Family

- 9/10 married couples share partisan leanings
- 2/3 people vote like their parents

**Figure 7**

**Voter Turnout Rate, by Race and Ethnicity, 1988-2008**

*(% of eligible voters)*



Note: Whites include only non-Hispanic whites. Blacks include only non-Hispanic blacks. Asians include only non-Hispanic Asians. Native Americans and mixed-race groups not shown. Voter turnout rate for Asians not available prior to 1990.

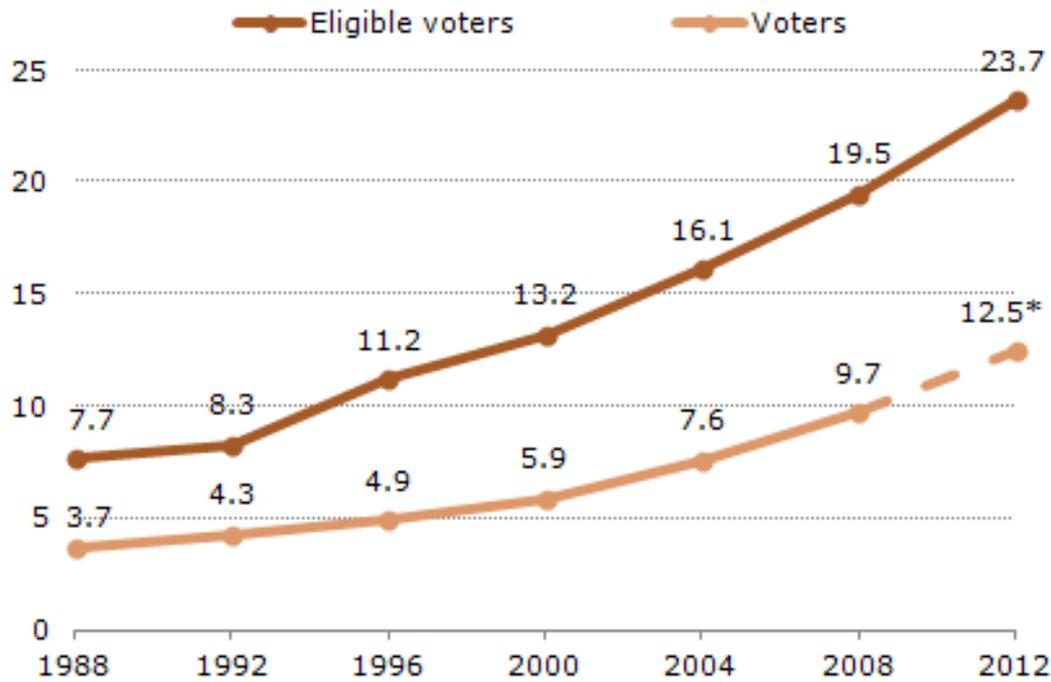
Source: Pew Research Center tabulations from the Current Population Survey, November Supplements data

From  
The Pew  
Research  
Center.

In 2012 – for the first time –  
Black turnout surpassed White turnout 66.2% to 64.1%.

Question: Will this persist after the Obama presidency is over?

Figure 1  
**Latino Participation in Presidential Elections,  
1988-2012**  
(in millions)



Note: Eligible voters are U.S. citizens ages 18 and older.

Source: For 1988 through 2008, Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the Current Population Survey November Supplements; for 2012 number of eligible voters, Pew Hispanic Center tabulations of the August Current Population Survey; \* for 2012 number of voters, Pew Hispanic Center estimate based on the National Election Pool national exit poll and number of votes tallied as reported by media outlets and election turnout experts.

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From the  
Pew  
Research  
Hispanic  
Center

# *Sociological Factors Review*

*Not to be considered exclusive characteristics of people who have voted for either party.*

## Republicans

College graduates  
Protestants  
Professional, Business Executives  
Men  
Older voters  
Caucasians  
Rural American, Suburbs  
Conservatives

## Democrats

High School Only, GED or elementary only  
Catholics, Jews  
Union Members  
Women (Changes as more career oriented)  
Younger voters  
Minorities (Changing)  
Cities, College Towns  
Liberals

# Psychological Factors

Voters' perceptions of their party, the candidates, and the issues significantly affects their voting.

## Party Identification

- The loyalty of people to a particular political party is the single most significant and lasting predictor of how a person will vote.

## Candidates and Issues

- Candidates and issues are two short-term factors that can influence even the most loyal Democrat or Republican. People may vote out of their chosen party if they dislike a candidate or the party's stand on a particular issue.

# Spectrum Review

- After the video:
  - What is political socialization?
  - Why is it important to understand?
- Citizen U Video:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSBPHSAEdYM>

# Compulsory Voting Discussion

- Whether or not you agree that low voter turnout is a serious problem, it seems clear that our government would be more representative if more people voted. Furthermore, low turnout is especially common among young voters.
  - Would you be more likely to vote if voting were no longer voluntary? Why/why not?
  - What about if you would be fined or even jailed for not voting? Why/why not?
  - Should all eligible voters vote?

# Should Citizens Be Forced to Vote?

- News Report from NM:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDBLr9HjuaA>

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