Political Participation

Introduction
• Voting and Democracy
• Turnout in Historical Perspective
• Turnout in Comparative perspective

VOTER TURNOUT, 1789–2016
Percentage of eligible voters who voted in presidential elections

Turnout Rate, 1972–2016
(Voting-eligible population, highest office)

Presidential Turnout Rates 1848–2012

Comparative Turnout

Figure 1: Average Turnout 2000–2012, Voting Age Population.

Source: IDEA. Parliamentary elections. Presidential elections in France, Finland and USA. Source for USA data: Michael McDonald (United States Election Project)
Political Participation

Factors influencing turnout

- Cost/benefit equation

Demographic Factors

- Age
- Race
- Region
- Education
- “Stake in the system”
  - Marriage
  - Employment
  - Residential Stability

Legal/Institutional factors

- Registration
- Election day registration
- Early voting
- Photo ID controversy
Political Participation

**Political Factors**
- Weaker parties
- Media emphasis
- Interesting/close races

**Attitudinal Factors**
- Partisanship
- Political efficacy
- Interest

**The big picture**
- Decline and resurgence in turnout
- Comparative perspective revisited

**Other forms of political participation**
- Contacting politicians
- Joining interest groups
- Using courts
- Protest
- Comparative perspective
- Internet

**Forms of Political Participation**

![Chart of political participation](chart.png)

**Figure 7.4** Americans Are More Likely than Citizens in Other Democracies to Participate in Ways More Demanding than Voting

![Percentage of participation in different activities](chart2.png)