

Course Overview & Defining the “Ideal Citizen” in the American Democratic System

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Welcome to Pol 157!



Course Logistics & Structure

- ▶ GitPage: <https://calgara.github.io/pol157s2019.html>
- ▶ Canvas: <http://canvas.csus.edu/>
- ▶ Important! If you have no experience prior reading social scientific articles, please read this primer from Dr. Amelia Green from Drexel University: [How To Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps.](#)

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What is Political Science?

- ▶ Participation Question: What do you think political science entails & how does it differ from civics?
- ▶ Importance of *theoretical models* to explain observed political phenomena
- ▶ Scientific method to evaluate models:
 - ▶ Observables
 - ▶ Formulating hypothesis explaining phenomena: $IV \rightarrow DV$
 - ▶ Gathering *empirical & measurable data* to address hypothesis
 - ▶ Testing hypothesis & revisiting model (alternative explanations?)

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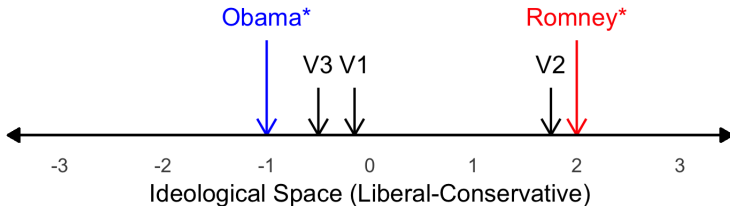
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Ex: What explains how people vote in American elections?

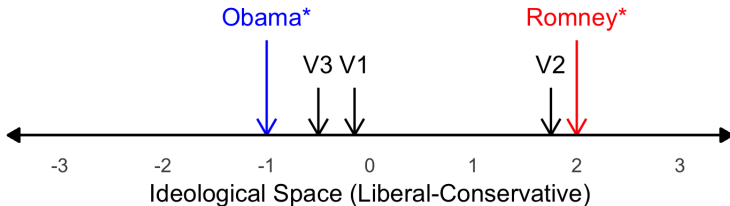
Spatial Model of Voters & Candidates



- What do we observe?
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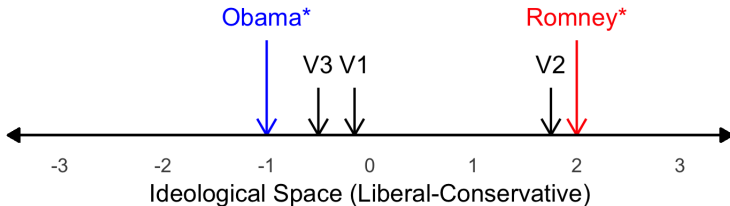
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Causes of the Problem

Human Nature & Differing Opinions

“ As long as the reason of man continues fallible, and he is at liberty to exercise it, different opinions will be formed.”

“The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man... a landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations, and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views.”

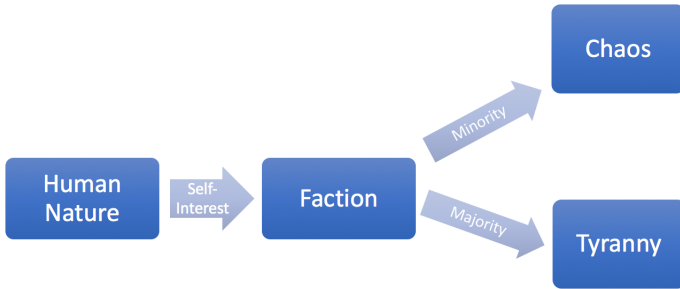
Inadequacy of Removing the *Cause*

“It could never be more truly said than of the first remedy, that it was worse than the disease. Liberty is to faction what air is to fire”

“The inference to which we are brought is, that the **CAUSES** of faction cannot be removed, and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its **EFFECTS**.”

Formalization of Madison's "*Problem*"

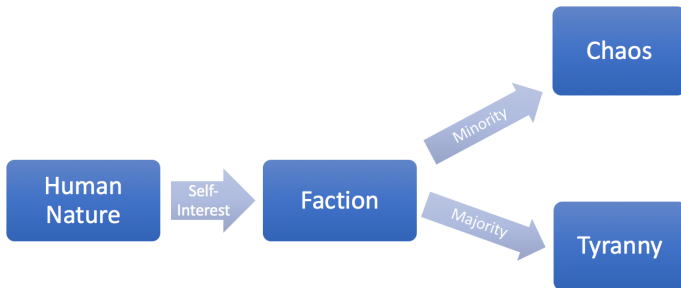
Casual Theory of Conflict in Madison's Federalist 10



- ▶ Where does factional conflict come from?
- ▶ Is it possible to limit root cause of human nature?

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A Principal-Agent Model as the Solution

Delegation (*The Republic*) as the Solution

“The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation, and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of the government.”

“A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place . . . the delegation of the government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest.”

Motivating Political Participation

“... By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.”

Beware of Agency Loss Through Unwise Representatives

“...pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves, convened for the purpose. On the other hand, the effect may be inverted. Men of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs, may, by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means, first obtain the suffrages, and then betray the interests, of the people.”

Conceptualizing the “Ideal” Citizen

- ▶ What sort of qualities does the “ideal” citizen of the Republic have according to Madison?
 - 1 Universal participation in politics
 - 2 Informed citizens with respect to preference and knowledge

Representing Faction (Primarily Federalist 10)

- ▶ Human Nature \rightarrow_1 Factions \leftrightarrow_2 Representation
- ▶ Where: \rightarrow_1 = Self-interest & \leftrightarrow_2 = Elections
- ▶ Election & re-election (\leftrightarrow_2) critical to theory: protects against agency loss by faction (voters)

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Focusing on “Self-Interest” in Democratic Politics

Tying Madison & Bernard Berelson’s Conception of the “Fundamental Requirement of Democratic Politics”

- ▶ What does Berelson posit as the fundamental role of a “citizen” in democratic politics? What is this question asking?
- ▶ Why the focus on “electorate decisions” by Berelson? Is this congruent with the logic set-up by Madison?

Theory & Public Opinion

The theorists tell us how a democratic electorate is supposed to behave and we public opinion researchers claim to know something about how the democratic electorate in this country actually behaves

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- ▶ *Prerequisites of “Electorate Decisions”:*

- ① *Personality Structure*
- ② *Interest & Participation*

- ▶ *Components & Processes of “Electorate Decisions”:*

- ① *Information & Knowledge*
- ② *Political Principle*
- ③ *Accurate Observation*
- ④ *Communication & Discussion*

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- ▶ Why are surveys useful in conducting quantitative research in the social sciences?
- ▶ Why is the survey method limited to “correlation work?” What does this mean and how do survey “panels” and experiments useful in tackling questions of causality?
- ▶ Why are researchers concerned about the huge reliance on RDD designs? What was the virtue of these designs in previous generational work?
- ▶ How have non-probability inter samples “changed the game” in public opinion research? How are these samples “corrected” to be representative of the general population?

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Optimizing Survey Research Design

- ▶ What are the concerns of survey design in tapping citizen attitudes and preferences?

- ▶ *Key Concern:* Measurement reliability and validity

- ▶ Assumptions of the ideal survey respondent: *The Optimizer*

- ① Respondents as “optimizers”: learning each question carefully

- ② Searching “memory” useful to answering the question

- ③ Translating summary judgment onto the response alternatives

- ▶ Implications of Survey Respondent “Ideal Type”

- ① Design questions as easy as possible to answer

- ② Discourage “satisficing”

- ③ Do not violate “conversational conventions” without explicit warning

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- ▶ Open vs. closed questions
- ▶ *Downside*: open ended questions can lead to stark variation
- ▶ Example?
- ▶ Randomizing questioning order & avoiding priming effects
- ▶ Example: partisanship, vote-choice, presidential, and party approval

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Example of Survey Questions: *Open-Ended*

- ▶ *Candidate Likes-Dislikes*: Is there anything in particular about Vice President Mike Pence that might make you want to vote for him?
- ▶ *Most Important Problems*: What do you think is the most important problem facing the country?
- ▶ *Political Knowledge*: Now we have a set of questions concerning various public figures. We want to see how much information about them gets out to the public from television, newspaper, and the like. What job or political offices does Nancy Pelosi hold?

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- ▶ *Political Knowledge*: Now we have a set of questions concerning various public figures. We want to see how much information about them gets out to the public from television, newspaper, and the like. What job or political offices does Nancy Pelosi hold?

Example of Survey Questions: *Open-Ended*

- ▶ *Candidate Likes-Dislikes*: Is there anything in particular about Vice President Mike Pence that might make you want to vote for him?
- ▶ *Most Important Problems*: What do you think is the most important problem facing the country?
- ▶ *Political Knowledge*: Now we have a set of questions concerning various public figures. We want to see how much information about them gets out to the public from television, newspaper, and the like. What job or political offices does Nancy Pelosi hold?

Example of Survey Questions: Differing Scales

- ▶ *Feeling thermometers*: I'd like to get your feelings toward some of our political leaders and other people who are in the news these days. I'll read the name of a person and I'd like you to rate that person using something we call the feeling thermometer. The feeling thermometer can rate people from 0 to 100 degrees. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the person. Rating the person at the midpoint, the 50 degree mark, means you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the person. If we come to a person whose name you don't recognize, you don't need to rate that person. Just tell me and we'll move on to the next one.

- 1 Donald Trump
- 2 Mitch McConnell
- 3 Nancy Pelosi

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Example of Survey Questions: Ideological Scales

How would you rate each of the following individuals and groups?

	Very Liberal	Liberal	Somewhat Liberal	Middle of the Road	Somewhat Conservative	Conservative	Very Conservative	Not sure
Donald Trump	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senate Democrats	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senate Republicans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
United State Congress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Example of Survey Questions: Ideological Scales

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as liberal, conservative, moderate, or what?

- ☐ Liberal
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Conservative
- ☐ I'm not sure

Example of Survey Questions: Knowledge Scales

Which party has a majority of seat in...

	Democrats	Republicans	Tied
The United States Senate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The United States House of Representatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The California State Assembly	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The California State Senate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Key Points

- ① Fundamental role of citizens to serve as *fully informed principals* in Madison's *Theory of the Republic*
- ② Madison & Berleson posits that citizens motivated to participate in politics by *common impulse of passion or of interest*
 - ▶ Political scientists suggest Madison ignores costs to participation, information, & rational incentive to abstain from politics
- ③ Surveys primary mechanism by which political scientists measure citizen attitudes and preferences
- ④ Importance of survey design critical & involves trade-offs in construction to “optimize” sincere survey responses
- ⑤ Survey construction & careful measurement should inform analysis