

Variation in Citizen Participation: Resources & Free-Riding Incentive

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Agenda

- 1 Recapping Madison's Republic
- 2 Elections as Mechanisms of Institutional Control
- 3 Participation Costs
- 4 Bias & Madison's Theory

Revisiting Madison's Theory of the Republic



If men were angels, no government would be necessary.

James Madison

- Opening Question₁: Why is Madison fundamentally concerned about the effects of *human nature*?

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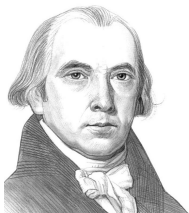


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- ▶ Opening Question₂: Given that Madison does not seek to limit liberty & control the *causes* of human nature, how does his institutional setup control the *effects*?
- ▶ Opening Question₃: What is one of the main criticisms contemporary political scientists with respect to Madison's *Theory of the Republic*?

Retrospective & Prospective Models of Electoral Control

Models of Electoral Control

| <i>Heuristic</i> | Vote-Choice Model | Implications for Representatives | Analytical Purposes |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Ideology | Spatial/Proximity Voting | Responsive to Median Voter | Representation & Candidate Positioning |
| Partisanship | Michigan Model | Responsive to Partisan Base | Explaining vote choice/partisan bias |
| Valence | Retrospective Model/Valence Rule | Develop reputation, (honesty/integrity), monitor economy | Explaining electoral outcomes, pres. forecasting |

Note: Partisanship & ideology are generally prospective models.

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- ▶ Problem with Madison's model of participation?

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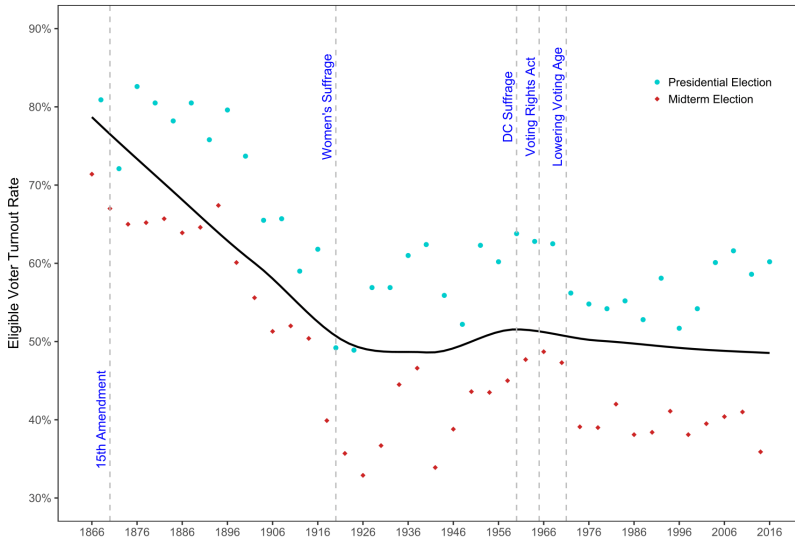
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- ▶ Information costs inherently tied to development of *political self-interest* (preferences)

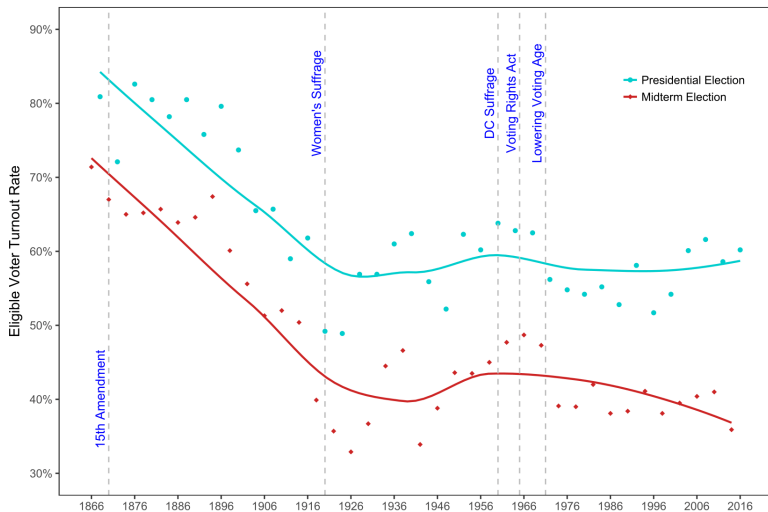
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National Voter-Turnout in Presidential & Midterm Elections in the United States, 1866-2016



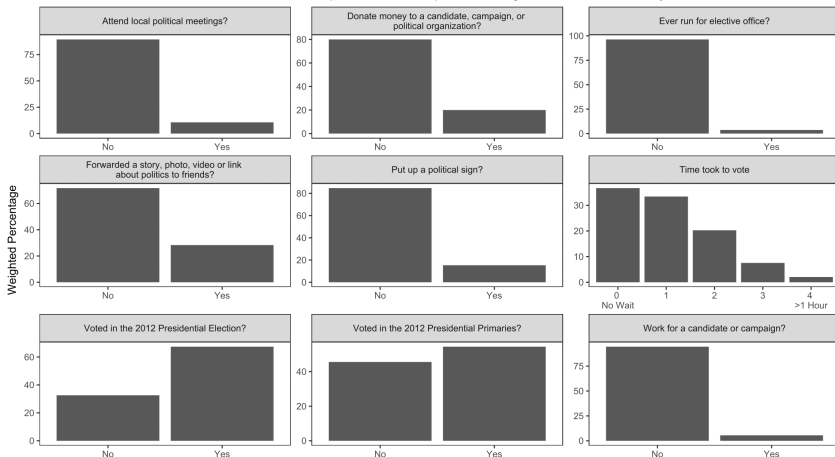
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Variation in Various Forms of Political Participation

Variation in Different Activities of Political Participation, 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study



What does a Resource Bias Look Like?

Eligible Participants



No Bias

=

Actual Participants



Eligible Participants



Bias

≠

Actual Participants



Imagine a society in which individual “sneetches” with stars on their bellies (“stars on thars”) are high status, high resource individuals, whereas individuals without “stars on thars” are low status, low resource individuals.¹ In the “no bias” situation, star-bellied sneetches are no more likely to participate than sneetches without stars. In the “bias” situation, star-bellied sneetches participate at higher rates than their less fortunate compatriots.

Source: Stone (2016) UC Davis Pol 1 Seminar

Revisiting Collective Action & *Paradox of Voting*

Modeling the calculus to vote¹

$$R = P(B) - C$$

Where:

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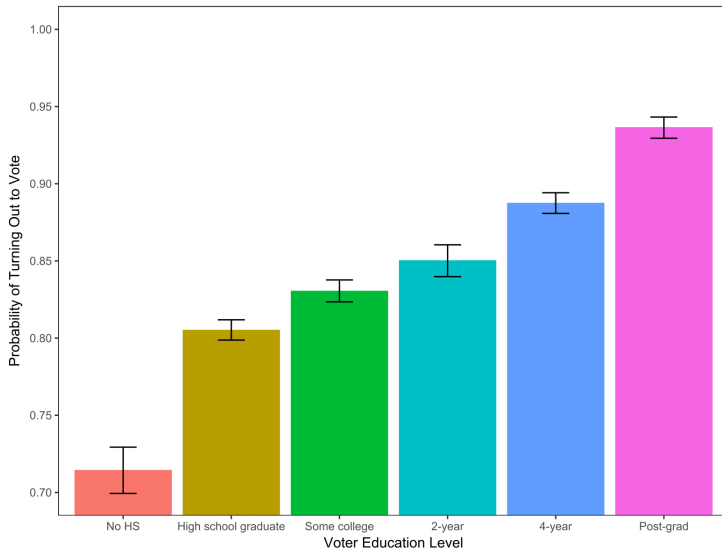
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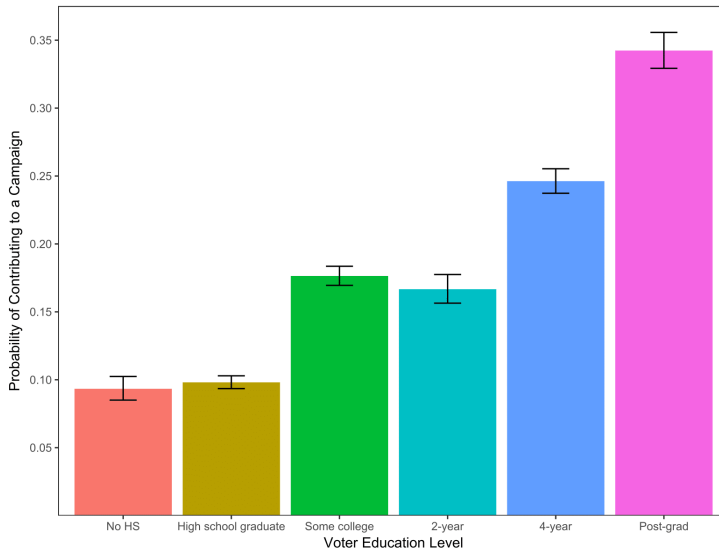
Education Levels & Voter Turnout, 2014 Elections

Probability of Voter Turnout by Education Level in the 2014 Midterm Elections



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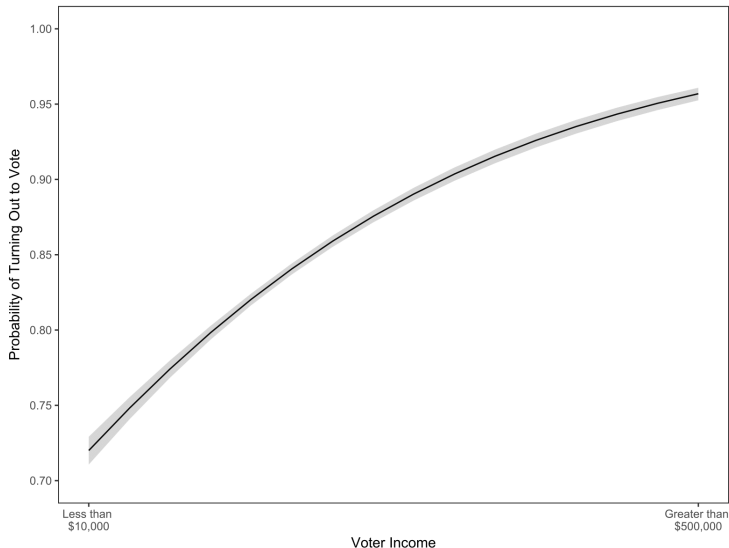
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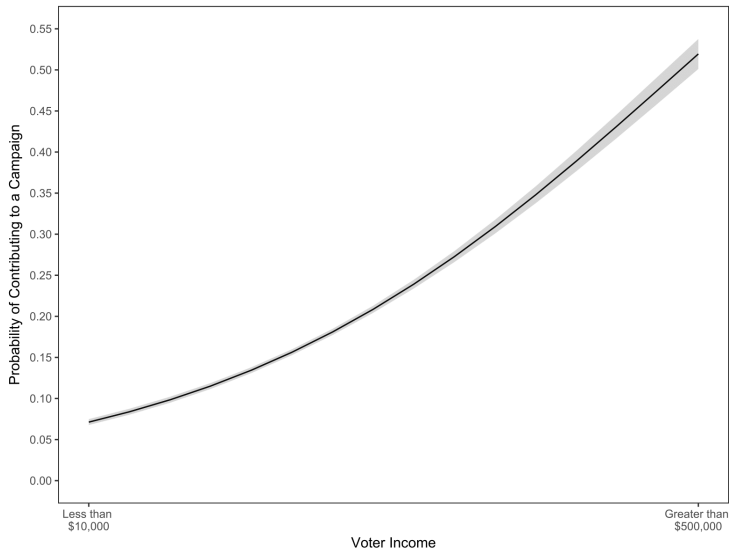
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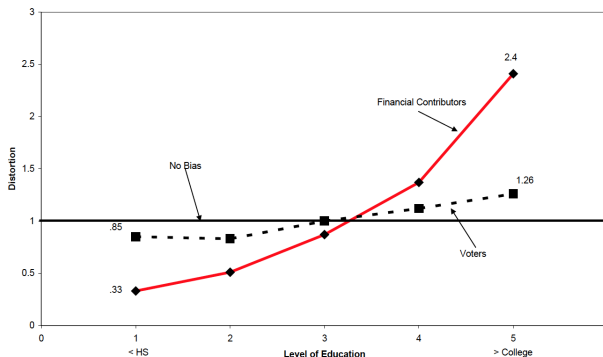
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Bias in Representation?

Evidence of Resource Bias: Representation Ratios for Contributors and Voters by Education Level

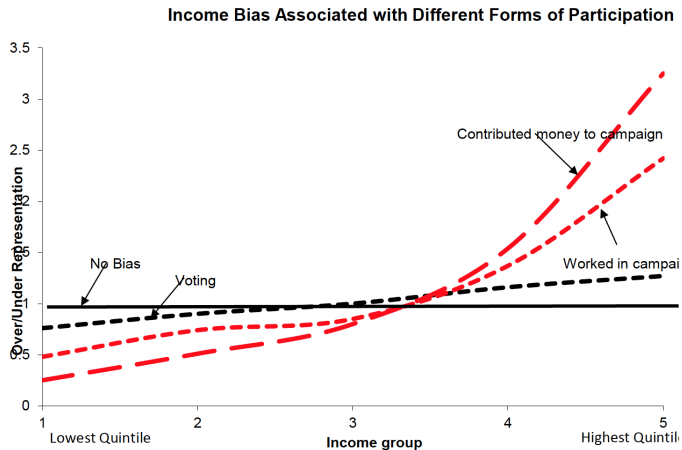


Source: Steven J. Rosenstone and John Mark Hansen, *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America* (Macmillan, 1993) p. 237.

Note: "Distortion" or "bias" is measured on the Y axis as the ratio of the (rate of participation in the group)/(rate of participation in the population). Thus if 10% of the population contributes money to a campaign, the absence of bias would mean that all education groups would contribute at a rate of 10%:

No bias = $(10\% \text{ in the group}) / (10\% \text{ in the population}) = 1.0$. There is substantial bias associated with level of education in the graph because the lowest level of education is under-represented in its rate of contributing (e.g., $3.3\% / 10\% = .33$) and the highest education group is contributing at a much higher than average rate (e.g., $24\% / 10\% = 2.4$).

Bias in Representation?



Key Points:

- ▶ Madison fails to account for the problem of collective action in his model of human nature
- ▶ Citizens not simply motivated by self-interest, strong incentive to free-ride from like-minded citizens
- ▶ Madison fails to account for cost of participating in politics
- ▶ Information costs dominate ability of citizens to participate, variation in participation across different modes
- ▶ Riker & Ordeshok's Model predicts no one would participate, yet they do (*Paradox of Voting*)
- ▶ Education & income help citizens overcome information costs
- ▶ Resource bias exists in the system due to participation costs, Madison would be concerned