

The Science Of Voter Lization

This book deals with the problems that arise in the analysis of electoral history -- the sources for which are fragmentary, or biased, or plagued with discrepancies. The contributors discuss ways of uncovering new, previously untapped data, detecting vote fraud by using computer-readable sources, and using new statistical techniques for working with quantitative data. Outside of its specialist subject, it is a much needed overview for the historian. '...an informative introduction to the use of electoral statistics...' -- Canadian Journal of History, Vol 18 No 3, December 1983

Debunking conventional wisdom about voting patterns and allaying recent concerns about electoral stability and possible third party movements, the authors uncover faulty practices that have resulted in a skewed sense of the American voting population.

This book attempts to redirect the field of voting behavior research by proposing a paradigm-shifting framework for studying voter decision making. An innovative experimental methodology is presented for getting 'inside the heads' of citizens as they confront the overwhelming rush of information from modern presidential election campaigns. Four broad theoretically-defined types of decision strategies

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that voters employ to help decide which candidate to support are described and operationally-defined. Individual and campaign-related factors that lead voters to adopt one or another of these strategies are examined. Most importantly, this research proposes a new normative focus for the scientific study of voting behavior: we should care about not just which candidate received the most votes, but also how many citizens voted correctly - that is, in accordance with their own fully-informed preferences.

A reader gathering highlights of the best original work in the study of American voting behavior from the late 1950s through the mid-1980s. The editors provide introductory essays that summarize each of a half- dozen areas of voting behavior research. Drawing from the first two editions of *Controversies in Voting Behavior*, the editors have also selected readings not previously collected that are now recognized as classic contributions. Annotation copyright by Book News, Inc., Portland, OR

An accessible textbook that provides an overview of the historical origins and development of voting theory, this guide explores theories of voting and electoral behaviour at a level suitable for college students.

This book brings leading scholars together to examine the performance of elections across the United States, using a data-driven perspective.

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"Caplan argues that voters continually elect politicians who either share their biases or else pretend to, resulting in bad policies winning again and again by popular demand. Calling into question our most basic assumptions about American politics, Caplan contends that democracy fails precisely because it does what voters want. Through an analysis of American's voting behavior and opinions on a range of economic issues, he makes the case that noneconomists suffer from four prevailing biases: they underestimate the wisdom of the market mechanism, distrust foreigners, undervalue the benefits of conserving labor, and pessimistically believe the economy is going from bad to worse. Caplan lays out several ways to make democratic government work better.

The secrecy of the ballot, a crucial basic element of representative democracy, is under threat. Attempts to make voting more convenient in the face of declining turnout – and the rise of the “ballot selfie” – are making it harder to guarantee secrecy. Leading scholars James Johnson and Susan Orr go back to basics to analyze the fundamental issues surrounding the secret ballot, showing how secrecy works to protect voters from coercion and bribery. They argue, however, that this protection was always incomplete: faced with effective ballot secrecy, powerful actors turned to manipulating turnout – buying presence or absence at the polls – to obtain their electoral goals. The authors proceed to show how making both voting and voting in secret mandatory would

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foreclose both undue influence and turnout manipulation. This would enhance freedom for voters by liberating them from coercion or bribery in their choice of both whether and how to vote. This thought-provoking and insightful text will be invaluable for students and scholars of democratic theory, elections and voting, and political behavior.

A powerful new research design in the field of voter mobilization has created a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of various get-out-the-vote campaign methods. With an increase in field experiments in the past few years, researchers, campaigns, and policymakers have gleaned important insights into voter participation. Until recently, voting behavior was mainly studied through survey research. And while large national surveys have had a tremendous impact on scientific and policy debates, concerns about the accuracy of survey research remain. Surveys suffer from two major drawbacks. First is the possibility of misreporting by survey participants. Measuring voter turnout through survey research relies on respondents' disclosure of whether they voted or not, and some voters may feel embarrassed that they did not vote and provide false answers. Second, campaigns may focus their energies on likely voters. If so, surveys may show a correlation between voter turnout and voter mobilization activity even when voter mobilization campaigns are ineffective. Aware of the limitations of survey research, political scientists have recently turned to field experimentation to gain a clearer picture of the causal implications of voter mobilization efforts on specific populations. This issue of The ANNALS presents the results of several field

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experiments, which are at the forefront of research in this area. These field experiments draw important distinctions between different forms of mobilization activities and their effects on a variety of populations – studying personal versus impersonal mobilization efforts as well as partisan versus non-partisan efforts. Challenging conventional wisdom and clarifying important methodological issues, this issue of *The ANNALS* provides a new approach to the study of voter mobilization. Taken together, these intriguing articles report advances in knowledge gained by field experiments and have the potential to reshape the past assumptions about campaign effectiveness and influence future strategies on mobilizing voters. This issue will also serve as a springboard for new work in the field as political scientists grapple with filling in existing gaps – such as the effects of mass media – and move toward an even clearer theoretical understanding of the conditions under which interventions work. Professionals, volunteers and anyone directly involved in voter mobilization will discover important findings in this collection of studies. And, because the research was conducted in the real world of campaigns and elections, the authors help answer the critical question of how to apply scholarly insights to voter outreach programs on a grand scale.

The Reasoning Voter is an insider's look at campaigns, candidates, media, and voters that convincingly argues that voters make informed logical choices. Samuel L. Popkin analyzes three primary campaigns—Carter in 1976; Bush and Reagan in 1980; and Hart, Mondale, and Jackson in 1984—to arrive at a new model of the way voters sort

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through commercials and sound bites to choose a candidate. Drawing on insights from economics and cognitive psychology, he convincingly demonstrates that, as trivial as campaigns often appear, they provide voters with a surprising amount of information on a candidate's views and skills. For all their shortcomings, campaigns do matter.

"Professor Popkin has brought V.O. Key's contention that voters are rational into the media age. This book is a useful rebuttal to the cynical view that politics is a wholly contrived business, in which unscrupulous operatives manipulate the emotions of distrustful but gullible citizens. The reality, he shows, is both more complex and more hopeful than that."—David S. Broder, *The Washington Post*

An in-depth look into the psychology of voters around the world, how voters shape elections, and how elections transform citizens and affect their lives Could understanding whether elections make people happy and bring them closure matter more than who they vote for? What if people did not vote for what they want but for what they believe is right based on roles they implicitly assume? Do elections make people cry? This book invites readers on a unique journey inside the mind of a voter using unprecedented data from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, South Africa, and Georgia throughout a period when the world evolved from the centrist dominance of Obama and Mandela to the shock victories of Brexit and Trump. Michael Bruter and Sarah Harrison explore three interrelated aspects of the heart and mind of voters: the psychological bases of their behavior, how they experience

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elections and the emotions this entails, and how and when elections bring democratic resolution. The authors examine unique concepts including electoral identity, atmosphere, ergonomics, and hostility. From filming the shadow of voters in the polling booth, to panel study surveys, election diaries, and interviews, Bruter and Harrison unveil insights into the conscious and subconscious sides of citizens' psychology throughout a unique decade for electoral democracy. They highlight how citizens' personality, memory, and identity affect their vote and experience of elections, when elections generate hope or hopelessness, and how subtle differences in electoral arrangements interact with voters' psychology to trigger different emotions. Inside the Mind of a Voter radically shifts electoral science, moving away from implicitly institution-centric visions of behavior to understand elections from the point of view of voters. Presidential campaigns in recent years have shifted their strategy to focus increasingly on base partisans, a shift that has had significant consequences for democracy in America. Over the past few decades, political campaign strategy in US elections has experienced a fundamental shift. Campaigns conducted by both Republicans and Democrats have gradually refocused their attention increasingly toward their respective partisan bases. In Bases Loaded, Costas Panagopoulos documents this shift toward base mobilization and away from voter persuasion in presidential elections between 1956 and 2016. His analyses show that this phenomenon is linked to several developments, including advances in campaign technology and voter targeting

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capabilities as well as insights from behavioral social science focusing on voter mobilization. Demonstrating the broader implications of the shift toward base mobilization, he links the phenomenon to growing turnout rates among strong partisans and rising partisan polarization. A novel, data-rich account of how presidential campaigns have evolved in the past quarter century, *Bases Loaded* argues that what campaigns do matters--not only for election outcomes, but also for political processes in the US and for American democracy.

One of the most actively growing subareas in multi-agent systems is computational social choice theory, which provides a theoretical foundation for preference aggregation and collective decision-making in multi-agent domains. It is concerned with the application of techniques developed in computer science, including complexity analysis and algorithm design, in the study of social choice mechanisms, such as voting. It seeks to import concepts from social choice theory into Artificial Intelligence and computing. People often have to reach a joint decision despite conflicting preferences over the alternatives. This joint decision can be reached by an informal negotiating process or by a carefully specified protocol. Over the course of the past decade or so, computer scientists have also become deeply involved in this study. Within computer science, there is a number of settings where a decision must be made based on the conflicting preferences of multiple parties. The paradigms of computer science give a different and useful perspective on some of the classic problems in economics and

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related disciplines. A natural and very general approach for deciding among multiple alternatives is to vote on them. Voting is one of the most popular ways of reaching common decisions. As such, the study of elections is an area where fields such as computer science, economics, business, operations research, and political science can be brought together. Social choice theory deals with voting scenarios, in which a set of individuals must select an outcome from a set of alternatives. This book focuses on convergence to pure strategy Nash equilibria in plurality voting games and a number of other positional and non-positional scoring rules. In such games, the voters strategically choose a candidate to vote for, and the winner is determined by the plurality (or other) voting rules. Voters take turns modifying their votes; these manipulations are classified according to the way in which they affect the outcome of the election. The focus is on achieving a stable outcome, taking strategic behaviour into account. A voting profile is in equilibrium, when no voter can change his vote so that his more preferable candidate gets elected. The book investigates restrictions on the number of iterations that can be made for different voting rules, considering both weighted and equi-weighted voting settings.

The struggle for civil rights among black Americans has moved into the voting booth. How such a shift came about--and what it means--is revealed in this timely reflection on black presidential politics in recent years. Since 1984, largely as a result of Jesse Jackson's presidential bid, blacks have been galvanized politically. Drawing on a

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substantial national survey of black voters, Katherine Tate shows how this process manifested itself at the polls in 1984 and 1988. In an analysis of the black presidential vote by region, income, age, and gender, she is able to identify unique aspects of the black experience as they shape political behavior, and to answer long-standing questions about that behavior. How, for instance, does the rise of conservatism among blacks influence their voting patterns? Is class more powerful than race in determining voting? And what is the value of the notion of a black political party? In the 1990s, Tate suggests, black organizations will continue to stress civil rights over economic development for one clear, compelling reason: Republican resistance to addressing black needs. In this, and in the friction engendered by affirmative action, she finds an explanation for the slackening of black voting. Tate does not, however, see blacks abandoning the political game. Instead, she predicts their continued search for leaders who prefer the ballot box to other kinds of protest, and for men and women who can deliver political programs of racial equality. Unique in its focus on the black electorate, this study illuminates a little understood and tremendously significant aspect of American politics. It will benefit those who wish to understand better the subtle interplay of race and politics, at the voting booth and beyond.

In 2016, 90% of young Americans reported an interest in politics. 80% intended to vote. Yet only 43% of people between the ages of 18 and 29 ended up actually casting a ballot. Making Young Voters investigates what lies at the core of this

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gap. The authors' in-depth, interdisciplinary approach reveals that political apathy is not the reason for low levels of youth turnout. Rather, young people too often fail to follow through on their political interests and intentions. Those with 'noncognitive' skills related to self-regulation are more likely to overcome internal and external barriers to participation. This book combines theory from psychology, economics, child development, and more to explore possible solutions rooted in civic education and electoral reform. This potentially paradigm-shifting contribution to the literature of American politics serves to influence not only our understanding of voter turnout, but also the fundamental connections between the education system, electoral institutions, and individual civic behavior in a democracy. How young people vote affects not only each individual future, but that of the United States, and of us all.

The use of wedge issues such as abortion, gay marriage, and immigration has become standard political strategy in contemporary presidential campaigns. Why do candidates use such divisive appeals? Who in the electorate is persuaded by these controversial issues? And what are the consequences for American democracy? In this provocative and engaging analysis of presidential campaigns, Sunshine Hillygus and Todd Shields identify the types of citizens responsive to campaign information, the reasons they are responsive, and the tactics

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candidates use to sway these pivotal voters. The Persuadable Voter shows how emerging information technologies have changed the way candidates communicate, who they target, and what issues they talk about. As Hillygus and Shields explore the complex relationships between candidates, voters, and technology, they reveal potentially troubling results for political equality and democratic governance. The Persuadable Voter examines recent and historical campaigns using a wealth of data from national surveys, experimental research, campaign advertising, archival work, and interviews with campaign practitioners. With its rigorous multimethod approach and broad theoretical perspective, the book offers a timely and thorough understanding of voter decision making, candidate strategy, and the dynamics of presidential campaigns.

This book examines the dynamics behind shifts in voter registration rates across the states and adopts a framework of collaborative governance with election administration at its center. The book starts by introducing readers to the “voter registration gap,” an aggregate measure of variance in voter registration, and demonstrates how it fluctuates between federal elections. To explain why this variance exists, the author examines the relationship between federal reforms, such as the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) and the Help America Vote Act; and state-level reforms, such as Online Voter Registration. Thessalia

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Merivaki argues that the weak relationship between the two is not surprising, since it hides dramatic variations in administrative practices at the local level, which take place in shorter intervals than the most frequently used two-year estimates. In closing, she shows that challenges to successfully registering to vote persist, largely because of how, when, and where eligible citizens have to register.

Political behavior is the result of innumerable unnoticed forces and conscious deliberation is often a rationalization of automatically triggered feelings and thoughts. Citizens are very sensitive to environmental contextual factors such as the title 'President' preceding 'Obama' in a newspaper headline, upbeat music or patriotic symbols accompanying a campaign ad, or question wording and order in a survey, all of which have their greatest influence when citizens are unaware. This book develops and tests a dual-process theory of political beliefs, attitudes and behavior, claiming that all thinking, feeling, reasoning and doing have an automatic component as well as a conscious deliberative component. The authors are especially interested in the impact of automatic feelings on political judgments and evaluations. This research is based on laboratory experiments, which allow the testing of five basic hypotheses: hot cognition, automaticity, affect transfer, affect contagion and motivated reasoning.

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Few events in American politics over the past two decades have generated more attention than the increasing number of voters calling themselves Independent. By the early 1970s Independents outnumbered Republicans, according to many eminent experts on voting behavior. Yet the authors of this incisive new commentary on American politics claim that most of this widespread speculation on declining party affiliation is simply wrong. They contend that most so-called Independents lean strongly toward one of the two parties and resemble—in all important respects—either Democrats or Republicans. Contrary to expert opinion, only a small segment of voters are truly "independent" of either major party. Based on the most up-to-date 1990 data, *The Myth of the Independent Voter* provides a roadmap of the political arena for the general reader and scholar alike. Debunking conventional wisdom about voting patterns and allaying recent concerns about electoral stability and possible third party movements, the authors uncover faulty polling practices that have resulted in a skewed sense of the American voting population. Demonstrating that most of what has been written about Independents for more than thirty years is myth, this challenging book offers a trenchant new understanding of the party system, voting behavior, and public opinion.

On June 25, 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its decision in *Shelby*

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County v. Holder, invalidating a key provision of voting rights law. The decision—the culmination of an eight-year battle over the power of Congress to regulate state conduct of elections—marked the closing of a chapter in American politics. That chapter had opened a century earlier in the case of Guinn v. United States, which ushered in national efforts to knock down racial barriers to the ballot. A detailed and timely history, *The Rise and Fall of the Voting Rights Act* analyzes changing legislation and the future of voting rights in the United States. In tracing the development of the Voting Rights Act from its inception, Charles S. Bullock III, Ronald Keith Gaddie, and Justin J. Wert begin by exploring the political and legal aspects of the Jim Crow electoral regime. Detailing both the subsequent struggle to enact the law and its impact, they explain why the Voting Rights Act was necessary. The authors draw on court cases and election data to bring their discussion to the present with an examination of the 2006 revision and renewal of the act, and its role in shaping the southern political environment in the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, when Barack Obama was chosen. Bullock, Gaddie, and Wert go on to closely evaluate the 2013 Shelby County decision, describing how the ideological makeup of the Supreme Court created an appellate environment that made the act ripe for a challenge. Rigorous in its scholarship and thoroughly readable, this book goes beyond history and analysis

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to provide compelling and much-needed insight into the ways voting rights legislation has shaped the United States. *The Rise and Fall of the Voting Rights Act* illuminates the historical roots—and the human consequences—of a critical chapter in U.S. legal history.

This book explains why elections from 1960 to 2016 came out the way they did. Why did voters choose one candidate over the other and what issues were they concerned with? The answer comes from talking to thousands of voters and analyzing their verbatim responses. Traditional methods used by most political analysts have often led to false interpretations. The book presents a unique model that can predict the vote of 95 percent of respondents. The book also shows that there are two major forces—long-term and short-term—that can explain the overall results of an election. In addition, the author finds a new, highly reliable way to measure the ideological composition of the American electorate. Appropriate for students of American government and informed citizens as well, this book is a revolution in the study of electoral behavior.

From the award-winning author of *Out of Order*—named the best political science book of the last decade by the American Political Science Association—comes this landmark book about why Americans don't vote. Based on more than 80,000 interviews, *The Vanishing Voter* investigates why—despite a better educated citizenry, the end of racial

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barriers to voting, and simplified voter registration procedures—the percentage of voters has steadily decreased to the point that the United States now has nearly the lowest voting rate in the world. Patterson cites the blurring of differences between the political parties, the news media's negative bias, and flaws in the election system to explain this disturbing trend while suggesting specific reforms intended to bring Americans back to the polls. Astute, far-reaching, and impeccably researched, *The Vanishing Voter* engages the very meaning of our relationship to our government.

This book presents an alternative empirical theory of voter turnout. Named the Mobilization/Demobilization Theory, it analyzes voter turnout of different segments of the voting age population in terms of barriers created to prevent participation and efforts to stimulate participation. This study challenges the theory that the characteristics of nonvoters, low levels of education and political apathy, are the root causes of poor voter turnout among persons of low socioeconomic status (SES). The Mobilization/Demobilization Theory argues instead that nonvoting results from the behavior of politicians, political elites, and the political system and not from the characteristics of the poor and working class. The study suggests that voter turnout for national elections could reach an 80 percent level if a major party focuses on these two groups. Statistical evidence is given to show why the poor and working class do not vote when neither party represents them. Chapter One of the book presents the evidence against the current theory of voter turnout--the Standard Socioeconomic

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model. Chapter Two presents the alternative theory--the Mobilization/Demobilization model. Chapters Three and Four cover the issues of removing obstacles to voting and nonpolicy related organizational efforts. This is followed by a discussion in Chapter Five of the major party focus of nonparticipators and a discussion in Chapter Six of the impact of party alignment. The final chapter takes a look at mobilization and demobilization today. This book makes for informative reading to anyone interested in political behavior, public opinion, electoral politics, or political parties. It should be of special interest to persons active in election activity, from grassroots organizers to persons making election regulations.

Turnout! offers strategies for "emergency elections," like the 2020 races, and addresses the nuts-and-bolts for civic groups and individuals to effectively turn out the vote. Indeed, few elections in recent history represent the kind of apocalyptic turning point for our planet and democracy as the present one. Turnout! is both a creative work of political vision combined with a detailed manual for turning out millions of new voters. Participation at local, state, and federal levels will have an outsized impact on the future of democracy and life itself. The elections also provide an opportunity to power-up social movements that can re-frame and re-define civic participation in an age of extreme inequality, climate change, and pandemics. Contributors include powerful movement leaders Maria Teresa Kumar (Voto Latino), Aimee Allison (She the People), Winona LaDuke (Honor the Earth), and Matt Nelson (Presente.org); leading public

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officials advocating greater voter engagement like Oregon Senator Jeff Merkley and Wisconsin Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes, and councilors Helen Gym and Nikki Fortunato Bas. *Turnout!* reveals strategies and real-world tactics to mobilize millions of discouraged, apathetic, or suppressed voters, including women, low-income, Indigenous, Black, Latinx, Asian, LGBTQIA+, student and youth, and working-class voters.

In the run-up to a contentious 2020 presidential election, the much-maligned American voter may indeed be wondering, “How did we get here?” *A Citizen’s Guide to the Political Psychology of Voting* offers a way of thinking about how voters make decisions that provides both hope and concern. In many ways, voters may be able to effectively process vast amounts of information in order to decide which candidates to vote for in concert with their ideas, values, and priorities. But human limitations in information processing must give us pause. While we all might think we want to be rational information processors, political psychologists recognize that most of the time we do not have the time or the motivation to do so. The question is, can voters do a “good enough” job even if they fail to account for everything during the campaign? Evidence suggests that they can, but it isn’t easy. Here, Redlawsk and Habegger portray a wide variety of voter styles and approaches—from the most motivated and engaged to the farthest removed and disenchanting—in vignettes that connect the long tradition of voter survey research to real life voting challenges. They explore how voters search for

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political information and make use of it in evaluating candidates and their positions. Ultimately, they find that American voters are reasonably competent in making well-enough informed vote choices efficiently and responsibly. For citizen voters as well as students and scholars, these results should encourage regular turnout for elections now and in the future.

The most important element in every election is getting voters to the polls—these get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts make the difference between winning and losing office. With the first three editions of *Get Out the Vote*, Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber broke ground by introducing a new scientific approach to the challenge of voter mobilization and profoundly transformed how campaigns operate. *Get Out the Vote* has become the reference text for those who manage campaigns and study voter mobilization. In this expanded and updated edition, Green and Gerber incorporate data from a trove of recent studies that shed new light on the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of various campaign tactics, including door-to-door canvassing, e-mail, direct mail, and telephone calls. The new edition gives special attention to “relational organizing” through friend-to-friend communication and events. Available in time for the 2020 presidential campaign, this practical guide to voter mobilization will again be a must-read for consultants, candidates, and grassroots organizations.

The first edition of *Get Out the Vote!* broke ground by introducing a new scientific approach to the challenge of voter mobilization and profoundly influenced how

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campaigns operate. In this expanded and updated edition, the authors incorporate data from more than one hundred new studies, which shed new light on the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of various campaign tactics, including door-to-door canvassing, e-mail, direct mail, and telephone calls. Two new chapters focus on the effectiveness of mass media campaigns and events such as candidate forums and Election Day festivals. Available in time for the core of the 2008 presidential campaign, this practical guide on voter mobilization is sure to be an important resource for consultants, candidates, and grassroots organizations. Praise for the first edition: "Donald P. Green and Alan S. Gerber have studied turnout for years. Their findings, based on dozens of controlled experiments done as part of actual campaigns, are summarized in a slim and readable new book called *Get Out the Vote!*, which is bound to become a bible for politicians and activists of all stripes." —Alan B. Kreuger, in the *New York Times* "Get Out the Vote! shatters conventional wisdom about GOTV." —Hal Malchow in *Campaigns & Elections* "Green and Gerber's recent book represents important innovations in the study of turnout."—*Political Science Review* "Green and Gerber have provided a valuable resource for grassroots campaigns across the spectrum."—*National Journal*

During the 2016 presidential election, America's election infrastructure was targeted by actors sponsored by the Russian government. *Securing the Vote: Protecting American Democracy* examines the challenges arising out of the 2016 federal election, assesses

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current technology and standards for voting, and recommends steps that the federal government, state and local governments, election administrators, and vendors of voting technology should take to improve the security of election infrastructure. In doing so, the report provides a vision of voting that is more secure, accessible, reliable, and verifiable.

In this timely book, Martin Wattenberg confronts the question of what low participation rates mean for democracy. At the individual level, turnout decline has been highest among the types of people who most need to have electoral decisions simplified for them through a strong party system--those with the least education, political knowledge, and life experience.

Playing Politics: The Science of Elections by the Editors of Scientific American Politics makes strange bedfellows, and that becomes even more apparent when trying to analyze the science of politics. Pulling from an array of disciplines including social science, behavioral science and mathematics, Scientific American does just that in this timely eBook, Playing Politics: The Science of Elections. This anthology offers analyses of key factors in the process of electing a leader: from dissecting those qualities considered to be ideal, to how potential leaders are portrayed, to voter behavior, to the voting process - casting, collecting and counting the votes. In recent years especially, science has increasingly been at the center of controversies over voting methods, a voter's motivation, the geography of presidential elections -- including the introduction

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by the media of the terms red states and blue states -- even questions about the veracity and abilities of candidates. Of particular importance is the analysis of how the electoral process really works and whether it truly represents the majority's intentions of how the country should run. In addition to providing the tools to analyze the process, this ebook also addresses the top science issues of Election 2012. Scientific American partnered with ScienceDebate.org, an independent citizen's initiative, to engage the current presidential candidates – Barack Obama and Mitt Romney – to answer where they stand on 14 key science and technology policy questions facing the United States today. This thoughtful debate, which includes questions on climate change, sustainable energy, the economy and education, caps off an essential read for concerned voters. Argues with the standard interpretation of the American voter as incompetent in matters of policy.

In *The Turnout Gap*, Bernard L. Fraga offers the most comprehensive analysis to date of the causes and consequences of racial and ethnic disparities in voter turnout. Examining voting for Whites, African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans from the 1800s to the present, Fraga documents persistent gaps in turnout and shows that elections are increasingly unrepresentative of the wishes of all Americans. These gaps persist not because of socioeconomic or voter suppression, but because minority voters have limited influence in shaping election outcomes. As Fraga demonstrates, voters turn out at higher rates when their votes matter; despite demographic change, in

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most elections and most places, minorities are less electorally relevant than Whites. The Turnout Gap shows that when politicians engage the minority electorate, the power of the vote can win. However, demography is not destiny. It is up to politicians, parties, and citizens themselves to mobilize the potential of all Americans.

When survey research, statistics, and electronic data processing were first introduced, they held out promise that a new level of political knowledge would be created. Applied to the study of voting behavior, survey research promised an understanding of the factors determining the outcome of an election, that political history could be based on rich and current data, and that we could begin to understand the role of elections in constitutional democracy. The truth as Peter B. Natchez shows, is that despite the opportunity provided by this revolution, voting studies have failed to make significant contributions to democratic theory or political history. The findings of voting studies have spread from the universities into the political system with a rather grim message. In its simplest form the message is this: the electorate does not measure up to the task thrust upon it by democracy. The studies conclude that voters choose candidates for reasons having little relevance to the success of the political system, and little relevance even to politics. Thus political science, in shifting from an optimistic focus on theory to a strong emphasis on empiricism, became a source of pessimism. One cannot study democracy or the democratic process without a point of view on democracy. The scientific method requires a point of view: science is not only a method for discovering reality, but for

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addressing well-structured questions. Natchez identifies goals for democracy, freedom and tolerance, and consciousness in decision making. Elections serve two functions; one, filling constitutional offices, and two, a symbolic function rooted in democratic experience that is more ambiguous, but no less vital as a part of regime analysis. A political science that connects these two aspects of voting will require an analysis of why voters vote the way they do to fill offices; but, more importantly, it will also require an understanding of the symbolic function of elections.

On voting behavior in the United States

The study of elections, voting behavior and public opinion are arguably among the most prominent and intensively researched sub-fields within Political Science. It is an evolving sub-field, both in terms of theoretical focus and in particular, technical developments and has made a considerable impact on popular understanding of the core components of liberal democracies in terms of electoral systems and outcomes, changes in public opinion and the aggregation of interests. This handbook details the key developments and state of the art research across elections, voting behavior and the public opinion by providing both an advanced overview of each core area and engaging in debate about the relative merits of differing approaches in a comprehensive and accessible way. Bringing geographical scope and depth, with comparative chapters that draw on material from across the globe, it will be a key reference point both for advanced level students and researchers developing

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knowledge and producing new material in these sub-fields and beyond. The Routledge Handbook of Elections, Voting Behavior and Public Opinion is an authoritative and key reference text for students, academics and researchers engaged in the study of electoral research, public opinion and voting behavior.

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