

ICPSR 3727

**CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN
AMERICAN NATIONAL
ELECTIONS, 1952-1996:
[INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS]**

Handout

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Data Collection Description

Principal Investigator(s): Donald L. Davison

Title: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN AMERICAN NATIONAL ELECTIONS, 1952-1996: [INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS]

ICPSR Study Number: 3727

Summary: These instructional materials were prepared for use with AMERICAN NATIONAL ELECTION STUDIES CUMULATIVE DATA FILE, 1948-2000 (ICPSR 8475), compiled by Virginia Sapiro, Steven J. Rosenstone, and the National Election Studies. The data file (a Stata data file) and accompanying documentation are provided to assist educators in instructing students in continuity and change over time in the major determinants of American national elections. An instructors' handout has also been included, containing the following sections, among others: (1) an overview of the instructional module and an introduction to the use of Stata, (2) a discussion of, and exercises on, the influences of party identification on political behavior, including the sources of partisan identification, partisan change over time, and partisanship and voting, (3) a discussion of, and exercises on, the social characteristics of the American electorate, including major social groupings in the American electorate, who really votes, and the social composition of the political parties, (4) a discussion of, and exercises on, the influence of social and economic factors on political behavior, including who votes, the question of class bias in American politics, and the economic determinants of the vote, and (5) a bibliography of related readings. The dataset is a collection of certain common variables for selected federal elections between 1952 to 1996 taken from the National Election Study Cumulative file. Variables in the dataset include race, gender, religion, education level, other demographic information, economic status indicators, media exposure, political ideology, political behavior, attitudes toward salient public policies, and partisan identification.

Universe: Cases from the AMERICAN NATIONAL ELECTION STUDIES series.

Sample: See sampling information from the individual studies in the AMERICAN NATIONAL ELECTION STUDIES series (1948-2000).

Date of Collection: 2003

Time Period: 1952-1996

Data Collection Notes: 1) This collection is part of the ICPSR initiative, Site for Instructional Materials and Information (SIMI), which promotes the use of social science data in undergraduate and graduate education through the sharing of faculty-submitted ICPSR data-based instructional materials that have been developed for use in the classroom. (2) These materials were designed for use with AMERICAN NATIONAL ELECTION STUDIES CUMULATIVE DATA FILE, 1948-2000 (ICPSR 8475). (3) The data are provided as a Stata data file. (4) The

codebook and handout are provided by ICPSR as MS Word and Portable Document Format (PDF) files. The PDF file format was developed by Adobe Systems Incorporated and can be accessed using PDF reader software, such as the Adobe Acrobat Reader. Information on how to obtain a copy of the Acrobat Reader is provided on the ICPSR Web site.

Data Source: Data files from the American National Election Studies series

Restrictions: SIMI instructional modules are to be used at ICPSR member institutions only. They may not be redistributed without the express written permission of the ICPSR.

Extent of Collection: 1 data file + machine-readable documentation (MSWord 10.0 and PDF)

Extent of Processing: REFORM.DATA/REFORM.DOC

Data Format: Stata data file

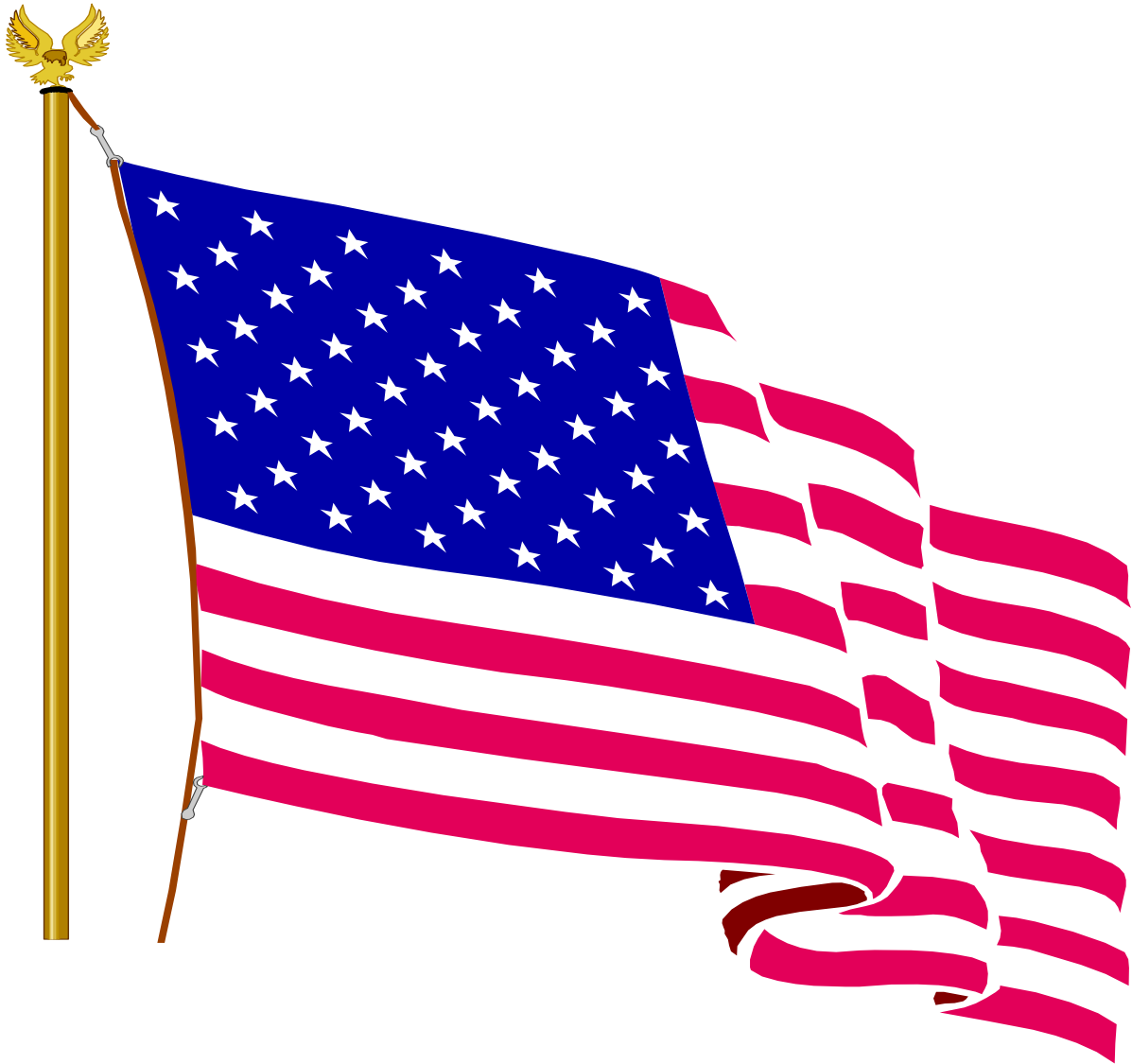
File Specifications

<i>Part No.</i>	<i>Part Name</i>	<i>File Structure</i>	<i>Case Count</i>	<i>Variable Count</i>	<i>LRECL</i>	<i>Records Per Case</i>
1	Data file	-	18,565	165	-	-

***CONTINUITY and CHANGE in
AMERICAN NATIONAL ELECTIONS, 1952-1996***

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GETTING STARTED

This supplement is designed to give you hands-on experience analyzing American electoral behavior. It will introduce you to and develop skills about types of data (categorical and continuous) and the appropriate statistical techniques used to analyze those data. It will also introduce you to one of the major statistical software packages – STATA – used by professional researchers and policy specialists. In addition, you will learn some of the basic techniques for manipulating data and, for those who are ambitious, how to create a new output data set from the original data file used in this class. Finally, I hope that the exercises created in this handout will help you to better understand the dynamics of American voting behavior and consequently more effectively and intelligently participate in the electoral process.

You will be analyzing samples from several American National Election Studies (NES). These election surveys have been administered by the University of Michigan and funded by the National Science Foundation. They cover every national election from 1948 through 1998, occurring every two years. There is one large data file created for this class. This file has been purposefully selected based upon historical time period and election type (e.g. presidential open election, presidential incumbent running for re-election, congressional, etc.). The data file includes the 1952, 1960, 1968, 1972, 1974, 1980, 1988, 1992, 1994, and 1996 elections. Each complete survey contains from 550-900 variables for 2200 respondents. I have selected, though, a more manageable number of 165 variables from our samples of elections. (If anyone is interested in studying a particular election in depth, they can download the entire data set with its codebook from ICPSR.)

I believe that among the unique features of this project is that you will be working with an *historical* election series. American voting behavior has gone through many transformations during the past 40 years. One must understand *where we have come from in order to understand where we are* today. This series of elections will permit us to study the continuities and the changes which have occurred in the electorate during this period.

There will be a series of exercises in which are designed to reinforce the major points of each section of the literature. These exercises are designed to stimulate discussion, provoke your curiosity, and develop your statistical and analytical skills. Furthermore, at the end of each chapter there will be a section of *Additional Research Questions*. These are issues and questions which will hopefully invite you to conduct further research on your own.

You will be using STATA -- a powerful professional statistical package. **I presume no prior experience with STATA or with statistics.** I think that you will find STATA to be user-friendly and quite versatile for analysis. The elections which we are analyzing have already been converted into a STATA data set. This file pools the election returns by year into a single data set. Consequently, this data set is very large which necessitates several first steps before we can begin our analyses.

1. Launching STATA

Before you launch STATA, make sure that all other applications and programs that are running have been shut down and closed.

There is an easy way to launch STATA. Go to File/Program and search for STATA. Double-click on the “Intercooled STATA” option. This will invoke the STATA for Windows program. After STATA has appeared you need to access the election data set. You can access the file by clicking on **File** from the menu bar, locating the file, and then clicking **Open**.

2. Memory Requirements and Modifications

STATA, unlike many other statistical software programs such as SAS or SPSS, holds data sets in memory. This permits STATA to execute swiftly data manipulations and calculations. However, memory parameters will vary depending upon the size of the data set and the available RAM on your computer. It is important to determine the memory requirements for your data sets when using STATA. The easiest method is to simply look at the size of the file through EXPLORE (right click the Start button) and inspect the details of the file. After determining the memory requirements you may need to reset the memory parameter for STATA. A safe rule of thumb is to allocate four (4) times the size of the data set for memory in STATA.

To change the memory parameter simply type **set memory 15000** on the STATA Command line and Enter. You must set the memory parameter each time you begin a STATA session. This should be adequate memory for this data set. If you have not allocated sufficient memory you will receive an error message when trying to open the file.

3. Describe (des)

Once the data set is repartitioned it is ready for analysis. The **describe (des)** command will list the variables and their definitions. It will also give information such as the total number of variables and observations in the data set.

4. Logging/Preserving output

STATA offers several convenient functions for preserving your work. STATA will create a *log* of your entire session. That is, STATA will write to a file all the commands you enter and their results. The file can be written directly to a disk for you to take with you. This is very convenient if you wish to preserve a record of your work for that particular session. Its other advantage is that the log file is in ASCII format which can then be edited by your word processor. Thus you can easily edit, cut/paste, and attach printed results from STATA into your reports and papers with normal word processing editing.

You can invoke the log function by pressing the *log button* on the toolbar and you will be prompted to create a filename. The logging option may also be turned *off* -- which suspends the logging function, and turned *on* -- which resumes logging, as the user wishes.

NOTE: The logging feature will only preserve commands and their results. Graphs will not be preserved in the log, but instead must be saved as separate files.

5. Printing

You have two options for printing your results. Typing on the command line **log using prn:** will route your command and its results directly to the printer. This, too, can be turned *off* (**log off**) and *on* (**log on**) depending upon what you wish to print; **log close** terminates the print session.

I strongly encourage you to create log files and print from them. Your analyses will generate large amounts of output but you will only be interested in portions of the results. Thus, you can cut the output that you do not wish to print which will save you time and confusion. It is also convenient to have a file copy of your results on disk. If you created a log file of your work, then this can be printed by selecting the *print log file* button from the *file* menu.

6. Using Expressions

Frequently, you will be interested in obtaining results which satisfy specific criteria. For instance, you may wish to study the voting behavior of women only in the 1952 election. The data files are organized to give results, though, for the complete series of elections. Therefore, it is possible to suppress the output and customize your results to satisfy specified conditions. This is done by using programming **expressions**. The use of these qualifiers will greatly simplify your research and analysis. Among the most frequently used expressions are: **if**, **&**, **|**, **<**, **>**, **=**. You should try to familiarize yourself with them by consulting a STATA manual.

7. Ending your STATA session

When you are finished with your STATA session then type **.exit** on the command line. Alternatively, you can click the *close* button in the upper-right corner. However, STATA has a safeguard which protects your work. If you manipulated the data set in any way which changes it from its original form, then STATA requires that you clarify whether you want to really exit (and therefore lose the transformations held in memory) or to save the new work. For example, let's say that you created a new variable which is now held in memory. When you type **.exit** STATA will respond, **.no, data in memory will be lost** as a reminder to you that you might lose your work. If you still wish to exit and not save the work in memory then type **.exit, clear**. This will 'clear' the work in memory and exit STATA without changing the original data set. However, if you wish to add the new variable to the data set, then you must type **.save, replace**. Then you can leave STATA by typing **.exit**.

Special Note for the Data File:

The data file is a series of national election surveys collapsed into one file that spans 46 years. There are 165 variables in this data set covering 10 different national elections. Many of the variables have results for only a few of the elections because different issues and research questions are examined at different points in time. For instance, public concern about America's involvement in the Vietnam War was no longer relevant after 1974. There will also be variables (partisan identification, education, age, etc.) that have results for each of the elections.

CHAPTER 1:

The Many Influences of Party Identification

A citizen's attachment to a political party exerts a strong set of influences over a broad range of political activities. Partisan identification, for instance, improves the likelihood that citizens will participate as well as vote consistently for the candidates of their party. Partisan attachment influences political attitudes. One's party affiliation influences the ways individuals receive and interpret information. And partisan identification also appears to predispose citizens towards holding certain policy preferences.

Many argue that party identification is a fundamental orientation for the majority of the electorate -- even if they do not admit or realize it. In other words, many people minimally share an *inclination* toward either the Democratic or Republican parties. This attachment tends to be quite durable over time, often even strengthening. Thus, it is the intensity or strength of partisan attachment that changes, not its intrinsic properties, which affect political behaviors. However, the strength of one's partisanship seems to determine the degree to which these processes apply to voters.

A. The Sources of Partisan Identification

Individuals acquire their party affiliation from a variety of sources. Friends, co-workers, neighbors, and families transmit political orientations and public attitudes (see Dawson, Prewitt, and Dawson, Political Socialization; Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, Voting). The family, though, is probably the strongest influence which explains how individuals obtain their political opinions -- at least initially. These 'inherited' orientations also tend to be both strong and long-lasting.

Exercise 1.1

One way to evaluate the strength and 'pull' of familial influence is to examine the relationship between voters' partisan identification and that of their parents. Also we want to study whether the strength of partisan attachment matters as well as examine these relationships through time. What is the influence of the family on individuals' partisan identification? Has it changed across time? In what ways?

Using the **data file** data for our election time series, examine the sources of partisan identification in the American electorate. How do we acquire our partisan identification? What factors influence the strength of our partisan identification? How durable is that partisanship across time?

Programming Note:

In order to study how an individual acquires his/her party identification it may be necessary and/or desirable to *recode* the data in the variables of interest. This permits us to compare similar categories of data. Recoding data is in essence redefining the observations in a variable for purposes of analysis. Typically, recoding categorical data (as we have in these election studies) is simply collapsing the data from different categories into new categories. For instance, v301 measures the strength of partisan identification of respondents from "strong democrats" (v301=1) to "independents" (v301=4) through "strong republicans" (v301=7). There are seven categories of partisan affiliation plus two separate categories for respondents who refused to answer the question (v301=0) or consider themselves to be apolitical (v301=9).

Similarly, v306 and v307 report the party identification of the respondents' parents. However, these variables contain only a total of five categories compared to the nine categories of information in v301. It is possible to cross tabulate uneven categories of data, but frequently analysis is easier and more meaningful if appropriate categories of data collapsed.

Using the **data file** data, run the following: **. tab v301 v306, row col cell**

As you should see, strong democrats, weak democrats, and leaning democrats are cross tabulated with whether the respondent's father is a 'Democrat,' 'Independent,' or 'Republican.' Likewise, the gradations of respondent Republican affiliation are cross tabulated with the father's partisan affiliation. Recoding these data will better summarize the relationships for analysis and presentation.

In this exercise you have two alternatives for recoding. The objective is to collapse the seven categories of partisan identification in v301 into three categories which can easily be compared with the three categories in v306 and v307.

Alternative 1: Collapse "Strong Democrats," "Weak Democrats," and "Leaning Democrats" into a single *Democrat* category. Do the same for the Republican categories.

```
.recode v301 2=1 3=1 5=7 6=7
```

Alternative 2: Perhaps you believe that the "Leaning" Democrats and Republicans more properly are considered *Independents*. Therefore, the "Leaning" respondents should be combined with the single category "Independents."

```
.recode v301 2=1 3=4 5=4 6=7
```

Try both alternatives and see which construction better illustrates the relationship. NOTE: The recode command transforms the data and holds it in memory. Do not use **save, replace** unless you want to permanently change the data. If you wish to create a new variable which permanently saves the recoded data then you need to use **generate**. That is you would **generate** (create) a new variable which is identical to v301, and then perform the **recode** on the new variable. Then you can use **save, replace** to add the new recoded variable to the data set.

```
.generate newvar = v301
```

```
.recode newvar 2=1 3=1 5=7 6=7
```

```
.save, replace
```

B. Partisan Change Over Time

Partisan affiliation remains with citizens for relatively long periods of time. A change in individuals' partisan attachments may occur for a variety of reasons. Significant new issues may emerge which cleave the existing partisan alignments. This may result in the creation and/or disappearance of political parties. It is also possible that this new issue, such as slavery or whether government should intervene into domestic economic and social policy, may redistribute the current partisan alignment (see Sundquist, The Dynamics of the Party System).

The strength of partisan attachments may weaken through time as new voters grow older and are replaced in the electorate with new and younger voters who hold weaker partisan loyalties. Through this process of generational replacement of the electorate a large pool of "dealigned" voters is created. These voters range from weak partisan identifiers to no partisan affiliation (see Paul Allen Beck, "Generational Replacement and the Electoral Cycle"). This pool of dealigned voters can be the source of a new partisan realignment stimulated by a major new exogenous issue or remain a volatile portion of the electorate. It is also possible that voters convert from one political party to another as a result of the social group pressures placed upon them. The influence of co-workers, friends, and neighbors can encourage individuals to gradually adopt the partisan attachment which prevails in that particular social context.

Exercise 1.2

What has happened to the New Deal coalition in the United States? The partisan realignment which began in the 1928-1932 interval created a majority for the Democratic party. Much of the literature on partisanship asserts that once an individual acquires their partisan identification it tends to grow stronger and more durable through time. Exercise 1.1 showed that many of us inherit our partisan sympathy from our parents.

Using our time series of elections, examine what has happened to the partisan attachments of the electorate. Compare the Democratic and Republican parties' respective share of the population and how it changes. Where do these voters go? What does this tell us about the stability of the New Deal coalition and the current composition of the electorate? From this can you predict the stability of future electoral coalitions?

Programming Note:

Ideally, this can be studied two ways. The first is to simply obtain the frequencies (percentages) for partisan affiliation for each of the election years.

.sort v4

.by v4: tab v301

Visual representations often better summarize the information and convey a clearer representation of the relationships. Since the data used in v301 are categorical, then an appropriate graph is through histograms.

.histogram v301, discrete by (v4)

Further refinement of the graph can be achieved by labeling the y-axis (**ylabel**) and the x-axis (**xlabel**), and super-imposing a normal curve (**norm**) over the distribution.

.histogram v301, discrete normal ylabel (.05 (.05) .30) xlabel (1(1)7) by (v4)

How does the shape of the distribution change between 1952 and 1996? Given the major determinants of the American two-party system (i.e., winner-take-all election rules and ideological homogeneity), what would you predict will be the nature of competition between the Democratic and Republican parties? What does this suggest regarding how easy or difficult it would be for elected leaders to govern the American mass democracy? (i.e., Is there a stable partisan majority from which to govern?)

C. Partisanship and Voting

One of the fundamental questions in the study of American electoral behavior is determining what factors encourage citizens to vote. This is a question which we will consider from many different vantage points. Numerous factors influence whether individuals participate in national elections. Among these variables are education, income, age, social status, and partisanship (see Wolfinger and Rosenstone, Who Votes?; Rey Teixeira, The Disappearing American Voter).

There are competing theories offered which explain turnout. Citizens who have comparatively greater 'stakes' in political outcomes have a greater incentive to vote. Accordingly, middle-aged and older citizens who have vested interests in government policies, taxes, and economic conditions are among the nation's highest participators. Many also argue that voting in a large mass democracy is *costly* and therefore participation is discouraged. Frequently, these are costs (or burdens) connected to the processes of participating such as registration requirements, discerning the positions between candidates' ambiguous and inclusive policy appeals, and citizens' sense of political efficacy. Therefore, any variable which reduces these costs will, in turn, increase the likelihood of voting. Hence, a heightened educational level and socio-economic status (SES) increases turnout. Partisan identification is included as a variable which either reduces the costs of participating or increases the motivation to vote (or both). In short, partisan attachment exerts a strong influence on voting behavior.

Exercise 1.3

Investigate the influences of partisan identification on voting behavior. Has the influence of partisanship on the vote changed across time? Remember that the process of partisan influence may remain constant but the magnitude may change. Is there any difference between Democratic and Republican identifiers? Does the strength of partisanship matter for citizen vote decisions? Finally, how does partisanship affect the selection of candidates? Relate these results to what you discovered in Exercise 1.2.

Programming Note:

There are several steps involved in this exercise. First is studying the relationship between strength of partisanship and the likelihood to vote. As in Exercise 1.1, it might be desirable to recode v301 into a single dimension which runs between very weak to very strong partisanship, irrespective of political party. Thus, “Strong Democrats” and “Strong Republicans” are now recoded as *Strong Partisans*. Similarly, “Weak Democrats” and “Weak Republicans” become *Weak Partisans*, and so forth. “Apolitical” is now recoded to be the weakest partisan.

```
.recode v301 7=1 6=2 5=3 9=5  
.by v4: tab v301 v702, row col cell
```

You also need to investigate partisan differences. Is there a difference between Democrats and Republicans? Finally, how loyally do these partisans vote for candidates from their own party? Who has the weakest candidate loyalty? (i.e., Who are the ticket-splitters?) What portion of the contemporary electorate do these ticket-splitters represent? (Hint: Refer to Exercise 1.2).

[For those of you who are ambitious: Create an output data set from these results.]

CHAPTER 2

Social Characteristics of the American Electorate

The United States is a geographically large country with a diverse population. The voting behavior of this pluralistic population is often observed by studying the participation rates among large social groupings such as gender, race, age, religion, age, and others. The electoral coalitions which the parties and candidates organize also can be examined from the perspective of these social groups.

This chapter explores the social composition of *who* votes in the United States and what are their partisan inclinations. We will examine the relative contributions of these social groups to the political parties' electoral coalition and their consequences. For instance, does the disproportionate presence of blacks in the Democratic Party influence the policy positions of the major candidates? Furthermore, this analysis will permit us to consider whether there are certain and predictable biases to participation in America. It is also important to remember that membership in a particular social group can also help explain how those individuals selectively receive and interpret political information.

A. Major Social Groupings in the American Electorate

The United States is a pluralistic society composed of numerous social groups. These major social groups may participate at differential rates which in turn distribute electoral advantages and disadvantages to candidates and their parties. Moreover, it is important to consider whether their participation changes across time or remains constant.

Exercise 2.1

In order to begin to understand the complex nature of how electoral coalitions form in the U.S. we must first identify and study the participation of the major social groups. What are the participation rates for the dominant social groups in the United States? Compare their turnout rates, across time, to the average turnout rate for the nation. Why do you think there are differences? What do they suggest regarding who exercises political power in the U.S.?

You can begin this exercise simply by obtaining the frequencies for whether a respondent voted in the current election (**v702**) for the major social groupings (e.g., race, gender, religion, age, union membership, occupation). Remember to examine these patterns across time. Therefore, the frequencies must be estimated for each election year (**v4**) in the data set. Have any of the participation rates changed in the aggregate? For example, has the percentage of women who vote changed or remained relatively constant through the time series?

Programming Note:

This exercise examines the participation rates of the major social groups in the American electorate. Accordingly, you will be cross tabulating demographic groups (say, gender -- **v104**) by whether they voted in the current election (**v702**), for each of our elections.

.sort v4

.by v4: tab v104 v702, row col cell

Then you must compare the *row* percentages for the categories of interest to the *column marginal* for those who voted in the current election. Using males, you should compare the percentage of men who voted in the current election (row percentage) to the total percent of respondents who voted (column marginal). Partial results for 1952 show that 79.7% of men voted in the current election compared to an average national turnout rate of 74.0%. Thus, men in 1952 voted at rates higher than the national average.

by v4: tab v104 v702, row col cell

-> v4= 1952
| Vote in Current Election

SEX	NO	YES	Total
Male	150	588	738
	20.33	79.67	100.00
	35.80	49.21	45.72
	9.29	36.43	45.72
Female	269	607	876
	30.71	69.29	100.00
	64.20	50.79	54.28
	16.67	37.61	54.28
Total	419	1,195	1,614
	25.96	74.04	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00
	25.96	74.04	100.00

B. Who Really Votes? Using Control Variables

Aggregated data may give a distorted picture of the true relationships and their magnitudes being examined. For instance, males vote at a higher rate than the national average and higher than women. Do *all* men vote at this rate or does this apply only for certain subgroups of men? In fact, disaggregating the gender vote may reveal differential voting patterns for each of the subgroups. Similarly, it is advisable to disaggregate the other categories of social groupings by using *control* variables.

When using control variables, you should be guided by two considerations. First, does the disaggregation make sense? It does not really make much sense to see which candidate white, well-educated, men with their mothers still alive supported in the current election. Second, do not use so many control variables that the number of observations (n) is reduced to a number which can no longer support statistical analyses. For instance, it might be interesting to study the voting behavior of black males who only have a high school education, consider themselves to be 'born again,' and live in the Deep South. Because these are random national samples, this selection will probably reduce to less than 30 respondents which is inadequate for analysis.

Exercise 2.2

As mentioned above, when studying the participation rates of social groups it is also frequently more meaningful to disaggregate their behavior. For instance, do all men vote at similar rates in the United States or do differential patterns exist? Typically, the behavior of large demographic groups is much more complex than is revealed in the aggregate-level results. The common method to disaggregate the results is to use *control* variables.

Re-examine the voting behavior of the major social groups which you studied in exercise 2.1 by using appropriate control variables. Compare 'who votes' in the disaggregated data to the aggregated results. What are the new biases of the electorate?

Programming Note:

In STATA, using control variables is virtually identical to sorting data into *by groups*. In the above exercises, the data was sorted **by v4** in order to receive results organized by election year. In other words, the *by group* is the control variable(s). We sort the data by year (**v4**) and by other control variables which are of analytic interest. For example, if we are interested in examining the voting rates of men and women, controlling for race, we would first submit the following command to sort the data.

.sort v4 v106

Then use the **by** command to execute the tabulation statement.

.by v4 v106: tab v104 v702, row col cell

Notice that you will receive the cross tabulation of gender and vote, by election year and race.

by v4 v106: tab v104 v702, row col cell

-> v4= 1952 v106=White
| Vote in Current Election

SEX	NO	YES	Total
-----+-----+-----			
Male	108	558	666
	16.22	83.78	100.00
	34.50	48.95	45.84
	7.43	38.40	45.84
-----+-----+-----			
Female	205	582	787
	26.05	73.95	100.00
	65.50	51.05	54.16
	14.11	40.06	54.16
-----+-----+-----			
Total	313	1,140	1,453
	21.54	78.46	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00
	21.54	78.46	100.00

-> v4= 1952 v106=Black
| Vote in Current Election

SEX	NO	YES	Total
-----+-----+-----			
Male	42	27	69
	60.87	39.13	100.00
	40.00	51.92	43.95
	26.75	17.20	43.95
-----+-----+-----			
Female	63	25	88
	71.59	28.41	100.00
	60.00	48.08	56.05
	40.13	15.92	56.05
-----+-----+-----			
Total	105	52	157
	66.88	33.12	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00
	66.88	33.12	100.00

C. The Social Composition of the Political Parties

The composition of the party coalitions are frequently being made and remade through time. Some portions of the coalitions may remain stable while other components may change with each election. Identifying the disaggregated components of the party coalitions may also help to explain the policy positions of their candidates and the various electoral strategies they implement.

Exercise 2.3

Now that we are familiar with the participation patterns of the major social groups we need to examine their partisan distribution. Have the partisan voting patterns for these groups changed over time? For example, has the percentage of women who identify with a political party changed or remained relatively constant through our time series? Compare these results to the rates at which these social groups vote for specific candidates. Use control variables which you think are analytically important and appropriate. What are the relative contributions of these social groups to the respective party coalitions?

Programming Note:

You should recode variables and use control variables as you determine to be appropriate. Also, note that **v705** is the vote for the Democratic, Republican, or Other candidates in the current election for all respondents. Therefore, it also includes those respondents who did not vote (DK/NA/RA). If you are interested in the behavior of only those respondents who voted then you should use **v702** as one of your control variables. For example, if we are interested in examining the gender vote for the presidential candidates in 1952 by race and whether they voted then we would use the following commands.

```
.sort v4 v106 v702  
.by v4 v106 v702: tab v104 v705, row col cell
```

```
-> v4= 1952 v106=White v702= Yes  
| Pty of Pres Vote-3 Codes
```

SEX	Dem	Rep	Other	Total
Male	223	325	3	551
	40.47	58.98	0.54	100.00
	49.45	48.08	100.00	48.76
	19.73	28.76	0.27	48.76
Female	228	351	0	579
	39.38	60.62	0.00	100.00
	50.55	51.92	0.00	51.24
	20.18	31.06	0.00	51.24
Total	451	676	3	1,130
	39.91	59.82	0.27	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	39.91	59.82	0.27	100.00

-> v4= 1952 v106=Black v702= Yes
 | Pty of Pres Vote-3 Codes

SEX	Dem	Rep	Total
Male	23	4	27
	85.19	14.81	100.00
	56.10	40.00	52.94
	45.10	7.84	52.94
Female	18	6	24
	75.00	25.00	100.00
	43.90	60.00	47.06
	35.29	11.76	47.06
Total	41	10	51
	80.39	19.61	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00
	80.39	19.61	100.00

CHAPTER 3

The Influence of Social and Economic Factors: Sorting Out the True Effects

Socio-economic status (SES) is frequently used to explain and predict the political behavior of individuals. It is nearly commonplace to conclude that as the social and economic characteristics of individuals increase, so too will their participation rates. Discovering the true impact of SES, however, is more problematic.

Socio-economic status is in fact an index which is constructed from several different variables. Individuals' educational level, income, and occupation are the essential components which define SES, but it may include other variables such as perceived social status, age, or even race and religion. For our purposes we will rely upon individuals' education, income, and occupation.

The question emerges whether each variable which comprises SES carries an identical or differential impact on voting behavior. For instance, does an additional year of education exert the same effect on an average voter's behavior as would a unit increase (say \$2000) in income? Likewise, are these variables of equal weight compared to occupational scales? These are particularly difficult questions to answer because these variables are *collinear* with each other.

Collinearity is a situation where the values of two or more variables move together. The variables which form SES illustrate this statistical problem. Typically, at higher educational levels individuals earn higher incomes and probably hold higher status occupations. Conversely, workers with low educational levels earn lower salaries and hold blue-collar or working class jobs. Thus, all three variables -- education, income, and occupation -- change in the same direction and at the same time for most individuals.

Attempts to sort out the separate and independent contributions of education, income, and occupation are susceptible to this problem. Because education and income change in the same direction, then how do we discover whether it is education or income producing a change in participation? The ability to estimate the contributions of each of these variables is of more than mere academic interest. Correctly identifying the variables which explain changes in popular participation and estimating their magnitudes provides the theoretical assumptions about an important aspect of the American democracy. If personal income is the most important variable explaining participation then this in turn implies that there is an upper-class economic bias to voting. On the other hand, if education is identified as most significant, then this may imply that the general information costs associated with participation are too great. It could also question the quality of campaign information which is disseminated by candidates. Therefore, it is important to discover the importance of these variables for our theoretical understanding of the American democracy.

A. Who Votes?

Voting studies show that as the educational, income, and occupational levels of individuals rise their participation rates will also increase (see Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, The American Voter 1964; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, Who Votes? 1980; Teixeira, The Disappearing American Voter 1992). However, are all three variables of equal importance to all individuals? Many argue that education is the most important variable influencing participation. Thus we need to examine how these variables are associated with each other.

Exercise 3.1

Examine the strength of association among education, income, occupation, and age for our election time series. Interpret the correlation coefficients (Pearson's r) for those variables. Are the variables correlated with each other? Does the relationship change across time?

Programming Note:

There are two important methods which will help us examine the degree to which education, income, and occupation are related. First we can use a combination of control variables with a series of cross tabulations. For instance, we can cross tabulate respondents' educational level with their income level, controlling for occupation. However, this process can quickly become cumbersome especially if there are more than a few variables that we are interested in.

Alternatively, we can use the correlation coefficient to summarize the strength of association between or among variables. The correlation coefficient, Pearson's r , is a statistic which measures the strength of association among variables. It is designed to measure association among *continuous* variables. However, *categorical* data with numerous intervals can also sometimes be appropriately evaluated using Pearson's r . The correlation coefficient is a superior method because it allows for easy evaluation among many variables.

The correlation coefficient is a bounded value between 1 and -1 where $(-1 \leq r \leq 1)$. As the coefficient approaches 1 the strength of association is increasing until a possible maximum of $r=1.00$ which is a perfect linear relationship. There are few if any such perfect linear associations in the stochastic world of behavioral science. Likewise, as r approaches -1 there is an increasingly strong inverse relationship. Conversely, as r approaches 0 there is a weakening association between the variables until when $r=0$ which means no association exists between the variables.

A common mistake is to interpret the correlation coefficient as a percent because it is reported in decimal form and constrained lie between -1 and 1. If the correlation coefficient between age and percent turnout is $r=0.45$ then there is a moderately strong positive relationship between these variables -- as an individual ages (s)he is more likely to vote. It does not mean that turnout is 45%.

Remember that in order to receive the results **by** election years the data must first be sorted.

```
.sort v4
```

Then to receive the correlations,

```
by v4: corr variables
```

or

```
by v4: corr v102 v114 v115 v140
```

For 1952, you should receive the following results in matrix form.

```
by v4: corr v102 v114 v115 v140
```

```
-> v4= 1952 (obs=1702)
```

```
      |  v102    v114    v115    v140
-----+-----
v102|  1.0000
v114| -0.2569  1.0000
v115|  0.0278 -0.2346  1.0000
v140| -0.2302  0.4164 -0.2820  1.0000
```

B. A Class Bias in American Politics?

One of the great paradoxes in American politics is our declining participation rate. Since 1960 turnout has steadily decreased to where now slightly more than 50% of the eligible electorate vote in a presidential election. However, increased education improves individuals' likelihood to vote. For instance, a person with a college education is about 34% more likely to vote than is someone with less than an elementary school education. The paradox is that the average educational level of the American population has increased since 1945, yet we have witnessed a simultaneous decline in turnout rates.

There are multiple influences which explain why turnout has declined in the United States. Higher socioeconomic conditions -- particularly educational -- actually pushed turnout upward. However, this influence probably has been countered by two big trends which pushed turnout downward. There has been a substantial decline in *social connectedness*, especially as manifested in a younger, less married, and less church-going electorate. The idea is that interpersonal, community, and general social ties provide a substantial proportion of an individual's motivation to vote because these ties can provide external encouragement as well as an enhanced sense of an election's meaningfulness. Those who are married and live with their spouses have the interpersonal tie with their partner; those who attend church relatively often have the interpersonal and community ties generated by such attendance; and those who are older tend to be more 'settled down' with deeper roots in communities and society and more stable, long-lasting ties with others. People with these attributes should therefore have a higher level of social connectedness and be more likely to vote.

There has also been a generalized withdrawal or disconnection from the political world manifested by a declining psychological involvement in politics and a declining belief in government responsiveness. Those who follow an election campaign in the newspapers or on television, those who have a high level of general interest in a campaign, and those who follow overall public affairs closely should feel more involved in an election -- and therefore more likely to find it meaningful and vote -- than those who lack these attributes. Similarly those who believe the government is responsive to the wishes of ordinary people are more likely to find voting meaningful and thereby be more likely to vote than those who are skeptical of government responsiveness. It follows that if these particular connections of Americans to politics have eroded -- as they have since 1960 -- then it will exert a downward push on turnout.

While identifying the characteristics of who is likely to vote in American elections and what are the sources of nonvoting informs us about the motivational barriers which encourage or discourage certain citizens to vote, it tells us little about the *impact* of increased nonvoting. *Who* is not voting and *what difference* does it make to American politics? In short, what are the biases to participation in America?

Exercise 3.2

Nearly half of the eligible electorate does not vote in presidential elections. Who are the nonvoters and has their composition changed between 1952 and 1992? Also analyze their impact on the nature of American politics and its biases. Analyze these questions by investigating the influence of demographic characteristics such as education, income, race, age, and occupation on whether individuals vote. Compare the column percents for voters and nonvoters for 1952 and 1992. Compute the percentage change between the years. What do you think explains the difference?

Programming Note:

This exercise can be done by running simple cross tabulations for each demographic variable by whether the respondent voted (v702). Analyze the column percents for voters and non-voters by each demographic variable. You might wish to create a graph showing the patterns across time.

```
.sort v4  
by v4: tab v140 v702, row col cell
```

-> v4= 1952

vote in current election			
Education	1	2	Total
1	250	410	660
	37.88	62.12	100.00
	59.95	34.37	40.99
	15.53	25.47	40.99
2	84	241	325
	25.85	74.15	100.00
	20.14	20.20	20.19
	5.22	14.97	20.19
3	40	205	245
	16.33	83.67	100.00
	9.59	17.18	15.22
	2.48	12.73	15.22
4	18	124	142
	12.68	87.32	100.00
	4.32	10.39	8.82
	1.12	7.70	8.82
5	18	116	134
	13.43	86.57	100.00
	4.32	9.72	8.32
	1.12	7.20	8.32
6	7	97	104
	6.73	93.27	100.00
	1.68	8.13	6.46
	0.43	6.02	6.46
Total	417	1,193	1,610
	25.90	74.10	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00
	25.90	74.10	100.00

C. Economic Determinants of the Vote

Many scholars assert that Americans are primarily economic voters. Individual economic conditions are especially important during a period of weak partisan affiliation that serves as an anchor for voters. Their economic decision making can operate either *prospectively* or *retrospectively*. A prospective economic voter bases his/her voting decision on the anticipated economic conditions that will be delivered in the future by a party or candidate. In other words, a prospective voter rewards the candidate who they expect will deliver the greatest economic benefit to them in the future.

Conversely, retrospective decision making is primarily based upon an assessment of recent economic conditions. If recent economic conditions are good then voters will *reward* the incumbent party with their electoral support. However, if recent economic conditions are poor then voters will *punish* the incumbent party by casting their ballots for the challenger. Thus, economic retrospective voting is based less upon where the country should move in the future and more on where the country has recently been.

Exercise 4.1

Are Americans economic voters? Assess the degree to which Americans cast their presidential vote based upon their recent personal experiences or their future economic expectations. Are economic factors more important predictors of voting decisions than other determinants of voting behavior such as education, income, occupation, and partisan identification?

There are two parts to this exercise. First, you need to evaluate whether Americans are economic retrospective voters (v880) or prospective voters (v881). Second, assess whether personal economic experiences or expectations crosscut typical determinants of voting such as educational level, income level, occupation, and partisan identification. Conduct your analyses on either the 1968, 1984, or 1992 presidential election.

Programming note:

This exercise is designed for you to test the *reward-punishment hypothesis* in American electoral politics. Specifically, do citizens reward incumbents for economic prosperity and punish them for economic despair by voting for their challengers? Accordingly, you need to be aware of incumbent party in your selected election. The second part of this exercise requires you to use simple control variables for education, income, occupation, and partisan identification. This will permit you to determine whether voters with similar socio-economic characteristics practice politics of economic reward and punishment.

by v4: tab v705 v871, row col cell

-> v4= 1992

pty of pres	how bad/good was economy					
vote-3						
codes	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1	3	9	118	245	414	789
	0.38	1.14	14.96	31.05	52.47	100.00
	50.00	12.86	30.81	43.67	65.40	47.73
	0.18	0.54	7.14	14.82	25.05	47.73
2	2	52	196	199	110	559
	0.36	9.30	35.06	35.60	19.68	100.00
	33.33	74.29	51.17	35.47	17.38	33.82
	0.12	3.15	11.86	12.04	6.65	33.82
3	1	9	69	117	109	305
	0.33	2.95	22.62	38.36	35.74	100.00
	16.67	12.86	18.02	20.86	17.22	18.45
	0.06	0.54	4.17	7.08	6.59	18.45
Total	6	70	383	561	633	1653
	0.36	4.23	23.17	33.94	38.29	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	0.36	4.23	23.17	33.94	38.29	100.00

by v4: tab v705 v872, row col cell

-> v4= 1992

pty of pres	how will economy be			
vote-3				
codes	1	3	5	Total
-----+-----+-----+-----				
1	208	410	141	759
	27.40	54.02	18.58	100.00
	40.15	52.56	49.13	47.89
	13.12	25.87	8.90	47.89
-----+-----+-----+-----				
2	220	230	82	532
	41.35	43.23	15.41	100.00
	42.47	29.49	28.57	33.56
	13.88	14.51	5.17	33.56
-----+-----+-----+-----				
3	90	140	64	294
	30.61	47.62	21.77	100.00
	17.37	17.95	22.30	18.55
	5.68	8.83	4.04	18.55
-----+-----+-----+-----				
Total	518	780	287	1,585
	32.68	49.21	18.11	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	32.68	49.21	18.11	100.00

by v4: tab v705 v880, row col cell

-> v4= 1952 no observations

-> v4= 1968

pty of pres	finan situ retro			
vote-3				
codes	1	2	3	Total
-----+-----+-----				
1	155	194	57	406
	38.18	47.78	14.04	100.00
	47.99	41.99	30.98	41.90
	16.00	20.02	5.88	41.90
-----+-----+-----				
2	130	221	104	455
	28.57	48.57	22.86	100.00
	40.25	47.84	56.52	46.96
	13.42	22.81	10.73	46.96
-----+-----+-----				
3	38	47	23	108
	35.19	43.52	21.30	100.00
	11.76	10.17	12.50	11.15
	3.92	4.85	2.37	11.15
-----+-----+-----				
Total	323	462	184	969
	33.33	47.68	18.99	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	33.33	47.68	18.99	100.00

by v4: tab v705 v881, row col cell

-> v4= 1952 no observations

-> v4= 1968

pty of pres	finan situ prospect			
vote-3				
codes	1	2	3	Total
1	115	198	37	350
	32.86	56.57	10.57	100.00
	39.12	41.25	43.53	40.75
	13.39	23.05	4.31	40.75
2	145	236	35	416
	34.86	56.73	8.41	100.00
	49.32	49.17	41.18	48.43
	16.88	27.47	4.07	48.43
3	34	46	13	93
	36.56	49.46	13.98	100.00
	11.56	9.58	15.29	10.83
	3.96	5.36	1.51	10.83
Total	294	480	85	859
	34.23	55.88	9.90	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	34.23	55.88	9.90	100.00

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END OF HANDOUT