

PARTICIPATION IN STATE AND LOCAL POLITICS

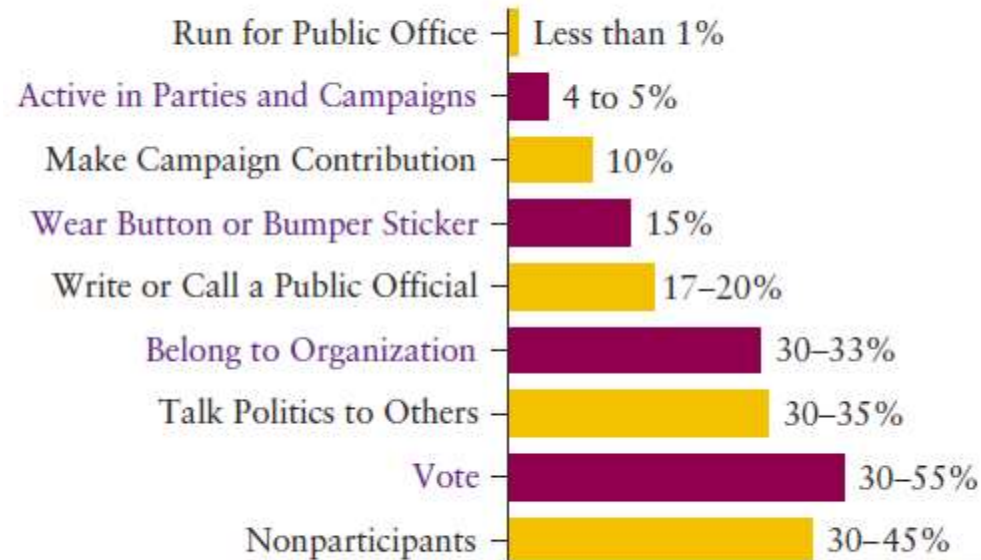
Chapters 4 and 11

What is Participation?

- Definition
- Why is it “vital” in our political system?
- How participatory are Americans?

Political Participation

FIGURE 4-1 Political Participation



Source: National Election Studies Cumulative File

Voting and Voter Turnout

- Voting is the most common yardstick of participation.
- Voter turnout is the percentage of the voting-age population or registered voters that cast ballots in an election.

Factors Depressing Voting

- The “rational” voter
- Free rider problem
- Voting is costly
 - Registration
 - Voter equipment failures
- Counting ballots
- Media Predictions
- Socialization is key to political participation

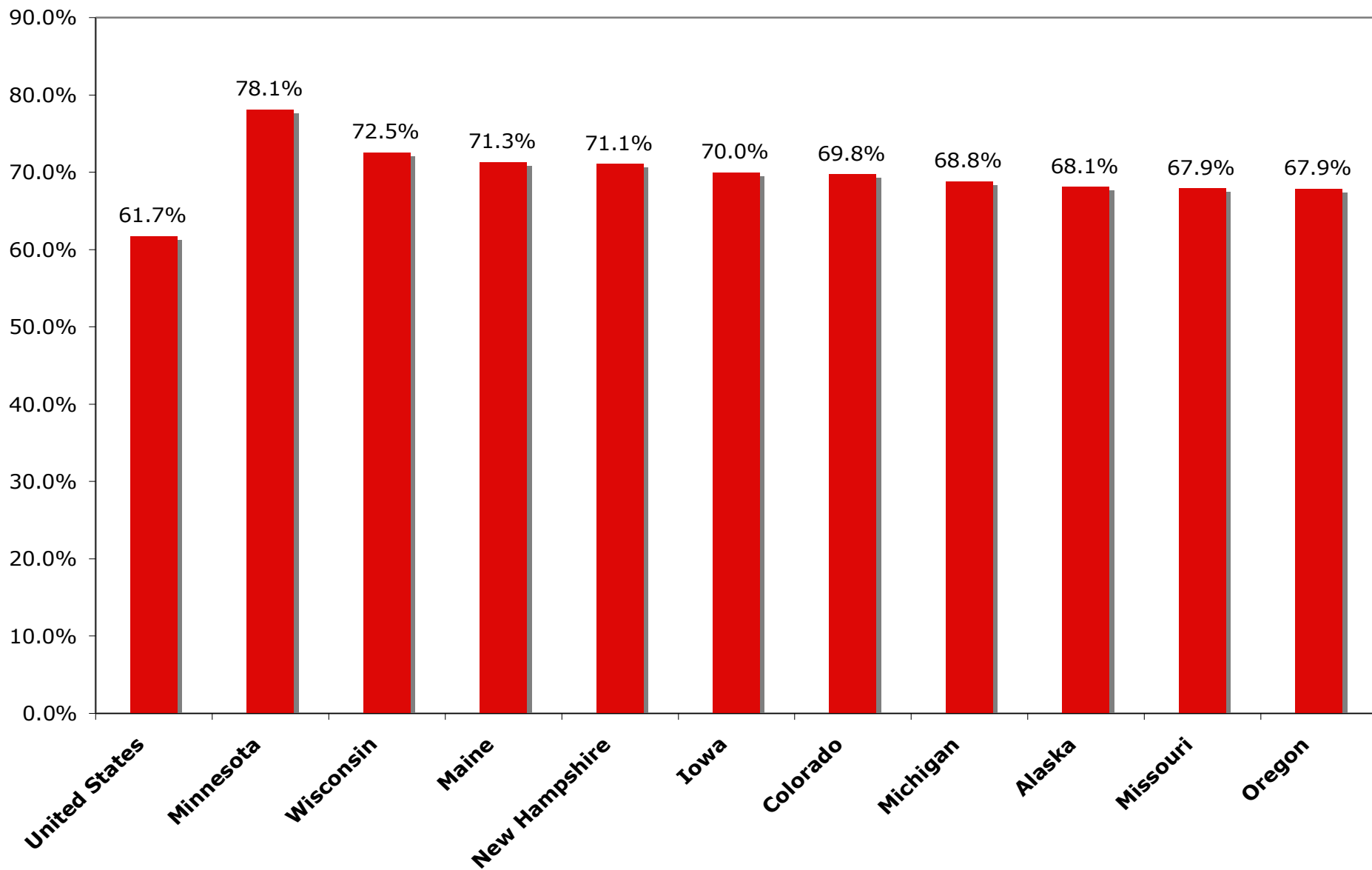
Profile of the “least likely” voter

- Citizenship
- Religiosity
- Transient residents
- Job status
- Race
- Party affiliation
- Marital status
- Income

Efforts to Increase Voting Turnout

- National Voter Registration Act (AKA “Motor Voter Law”)
- Updating equipment - HAVA
- Larocca and Klemanski article findings:
 - Universal mail voting
 - Permanent no-excuse absentee voting
 - Nonpermanent no-excuse absentee voting
 - Early in-person voting
 - Election Day registration
 - Voter identification requirements

Voter Turnout



Voter Turnout in Local Elections

Lower voter turnout is expected with

- Nonpartisan electoral systems
- Council-manager form of government
- City elections held separately from state and national elections
- Small or middle-sized cities
- Middle-class, homogeneous cities
- No hot issue on the ballot

Higher voter turnout is expected with

- Partisan elections with competitive parties
 - Strong mayor form of government
 - City elections held concurrently with state and national elections
 - Large cities
 - Ethnic, heterogeneous cities
 - Hot issue on the ballot
-

Citizen Participation

- Americans are volunteering more than ever before (not including voting)
- Voting in local elections: Is substantially lower than in state or national elections
- Local referenda voters – referenda available in 70% of cities
- In local politics, though not in big cities, still possible to run a low-budget campaign

Minorities, Women, and the Young and Old in State Politics

- Majority-minority districts
- Women in state offices and the gender gap
- Age differences in policy priorities

Minorities and Women in Local Government

About half of the 100 largest cities in the U.S. have minority or women mayors.

- Minorities on councils
- Policy consequences
- Women in local politics: Participation has risen dramatically in recent years; about 20 percent of mayors in cities of at least 30,000 are women

Interest Groups in State Politics

- Interest Groups and Lobbyists
- Lobby Registration
- Typical Tactics
- Bill Monitoring
- Lobbying
- Bribery and Corruption
- Grassroots Lobbying, Media Campaigns, and Public Relations
- PACs-Political Action Committees

Comparing Interest Group Power in the States

- The Economic Diversity Explanation
- The Party Explanation
- The Professionalism Explanation
- The Governmental Fragmentation Explanation

Transformation of Local Politics

- **Old-style political machines:** Bosses, patronage jobs, corruption, graft; also performed important social functions for city
- **Reform:** An effort to eliminate political machines, patronage, and party influence; and to install professional city management, nonpartisan elections, at-large districts, and the merit system of employment

Reformers and Do-Gooders

- Social bases of reform: mostly the upper-class elite
- Reform Goals
- The new personalized machines: Patronage still important
- Ethics: The never-ending battle to combat corruption:
Crook County

Reasons for the Machine's Decline

- Decline in European immigration
- Federal social welfare programs
- Rising levels of prosperity
- Spread of middle-class values
- New avenues of upward social mobility
- Structural reforms
- Rise of self-financed candidates
- Emergence of television

Professionalization of Local Government

- Citizen politicians being replaced by career politicians
- Five types of local elected office-seekers:
 - the politico, self-regarder, community-regarder, local, and particularist
- Friends at city hall: Some council members initially appointed when someone else resigns; voluntary retirement the most common exit from community politics