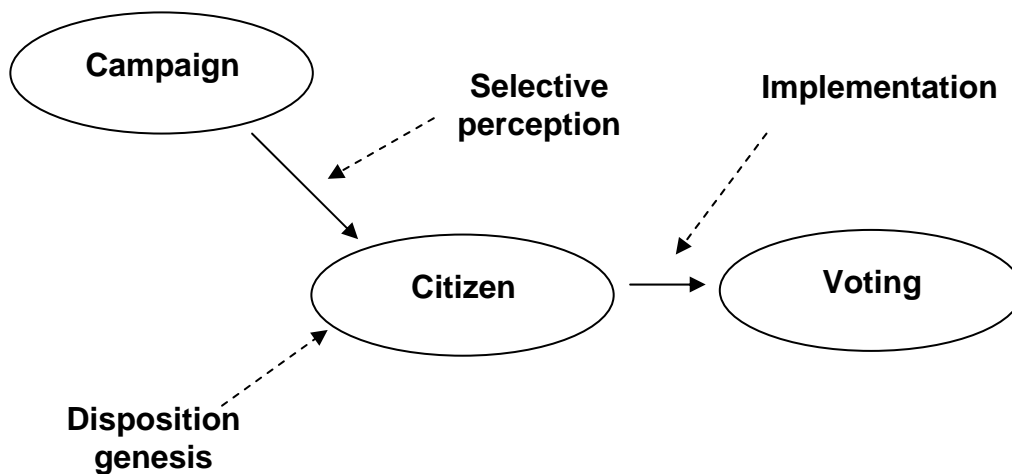


Campaign – citizen – vote schematics, by B. Berelson, P. Lazarsfeld, W. McPhee:



There is no simple “influence cascade” coming from political party extended thorough campaign, ending on voting process. Several mechanisms might be pointed:

- When members of specific group show general tendency to vote in seminal manner, such visible majority will be altering voting patterns of other group members, who weren't at first agreeing with predominant voting pattern.
- Such group influence is usually extended through informal meetings and talks with peers, rather than via broad, mass campaign means.
- Individual who is a subject of strong pressure coming from contradictory sources (e.g. two parties fighting for his vote) is likely to change his mind late in the course of campaign or to skip the voting altogether.
- Voting intensions are strongly correlated with voting outcomes expectations. A “bandwagon effect” might be observed, making people vote on the person that they think is likely to win. From the other hand, people usually expect their candidate should win.

“Practical side” of real electoral systems, from individual citizen's perspective:

- Democracy's theory assumes broad **mobilization and participation**, in practice quite low level of both is observed. One of the reasons is that people simply don't see any “real” effects of their voting decisions.
- Theory assumes that citizens have full **knowledge** about candidates and parties, while making electoral choice. This is rarely true – no individual is capable of getting such information and processing it, even if it would be freely available.

- In theory, while casting a vote, citizen should be driven by ideology, belief, **political vision**. In practice, most of voters cannot construct such broad vision and they just act the way other member of their group act.
- Three points above are the reason, that it is hard to consider individual voters being fully **rational**.

In political theory, many features of ideal system are mutually exclusive, others are just too hard to fulfill. In the effect, each voting system in real life is heterogeneous. Examples are:

- **Participation and indifference.** Citizens are supposed to mobilize, but if anyone would want to participate in the system, state his interests and values and defend them, every political action would become extremely difficult to conduct. The amount of people that would have to be convinced to start support any notion would become very high, making any action very hard and time consuming.
- **Stability and flexibility.** Each political system is supposed to be stable, so the rules don't change too often, but in the same time it should be able to adapt. Political stability is usually based of **social stability** – existing pattern of groups and organization whose interests and values doesn't change too fast. Strong position of such groups doesn't allow the system to evolve and change too drastically. The change is possible through groups of voters that aren't bound strongly with any of such stable groups and that **aren't too consistent** in their voting patterns.
- **Unity and division.** Ideally efficient system assumes total unity; however such total unity would lead to system's stagnation and severe limitations of individual freedom. At the same time, too strong division and lack of unity can paralyze whole system and dissolve the society. The only reasonable way is finding optimal combination of those two features.
- **Individualism and collectivism.** Although it is individual who is casting a vote, this individual is driven by many collective – based factors. Information is socially distributed, opinions are being formed in interaction with various groups, starting from those closest, people are usually subject to political campaigns, driven by political parties.

Sample electoral systems:

<p>First Past The Post (FPTP)</p>	<p>Each voter votes for one candidate. The candidate they prefer. The candidate with the most votes is elected.</p> <p>FPTP can also be used to elect multiple candidates for a constituency in some local elections. Each voter gets N votes where there are N people to be elected. The voters must use each vote on a different candidate; they cannot put all their votes on the same candidate.</p> <p>The N candidates with the most votes are elected.</p>
<p>Run-Off Voting</p>	<p>Voting takes place in two rounds. The first round is a FPTP election. If no candidate gets a majority of the vote in the first round, a second round is held, with only the candidates who did well in the first round standing.</p>
<p>Single Transferable Vote (STV)</p>	<p>Each voter marks '1' against the candidate they most like, '2' against their next favorite, and so on until they have no preference for the remaining candidates.</p> <p>The highest preferences for each candidate are counted. If any candidate has more votes than the Quota, they are elected. The Quota is calculated as:</p> $\text{Quota} = \text{int}(V/(N+1)) + 1$ <p>where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> V = number of votes N = number of candidates to be elected int() = convert to integer, rounding down <p>The rationale for this formula is that the quota is the smallest number of votes such that the candidate is certain to be within the top N candidates.</p> <p>If someone is above the quota, the additional votes above the quota are reallocated to the other candidates according to the voters' lower preferences. This is done by giving each vote of the candidate a fractional value according to the fraction that the candidate was above the quota.</p> <p>If no-one is above the quota, the candidate with the smallest number of votes is eliminated, and their votes are reallocated to other candidates.</p> <p>When votes are reallocated, if the voter has expressed no further lower preferences, their vote is discarded.</p> <p>This procedure is continued until all N candidates are elected.</p>
<p>Party List systems (PL)</p>	<p>Each party makes out a list of candidates. Each voter votes for a party list. Each party is then allocated MPs in proportion to how many people have voted for it. Sometimes the MPs are allocated according to the order they appear on the party's list. Sometimes voters can influence the order.</p> <p>Some PL systems have a threshold, so that if a party gets a lower proportion of the votes than this, it is allocated no seats at all.</p> <p>Parties won't qualify for whole numbers of seats - they will theoretically be entitled to eg 34.72 seats or 19.14 seats. Two approaches for allocating the surplus seats are commonly used - the Hare system, under which the surplus seats go to the lists with the largest number of surplus votes; and the d'Hondt system, under which the surplus seats go to the lists with the highest average vote per seat.</p>

Concepts related to elections and voting systems:

- **Gerrymandering.** The practice of fixing the result of an election by altering electoral boundaries to favor one side. Gerrymandering is a lot easier to do in some electoral systems than in others.
- **Splitting the vote.** May happen, when two candidates with very similar views and program compete with each other and split the votes between them. Third candidate may amass fewer votes than those two combined, but more than any of them taken individually.
- **Tactical Voting.** Occurs when votes vote in any pattern other than their true preference, because doing this allows them to better influence the result of the election in their favor.

Basic features of properly functioning voting systems:

- **Efficiency.** Capability to influence country politics based on election's results rather than on any other factors
- **Clarity.** Capability to link specific political decisions with specific parties and individuals.
- **Representativeness.** Capability to reflect voters diversity (based on geography, interests, values, programs, etc).

First Past The Post versus Proportional Representation, example arguments:

Small parties rule the roost under Proportional Representation	Under FPTP a small group of swing voters decide who is in government.
First Past the Post is tried and tested	FPTP fails decisively on three counts – seats that look like the votes cast, voter choice and representing society fairly.
PR is incomprehensible	Opponents of PR sometimes try to make it sound complicated when it is not.
PR doesn't let you kick out an unpopular government	Under FPTP by taking safe seats for granted and focusing on marginals, a party can win an election despite being unpopular
First Past the Post is best for representing a constituency	A constituency link established on a feeble mandate does not look that strong from the voters' point of view.
PR does nothing for turnout	The things that turn people off politics – the obsession with swing voters in marginal seats that makes all the parties sound alike –are all products of FPTP
PR creates weak coalitions	The most unstable governments are often those governments with a small, or no, overall majority that FPTP throws up
PR lets in extremist parties	It is only in FPTP that there is the possibility of having representation monopolized by an extremist party
STV form of PR is bad for party cohesion and therefore government	Many voters would not feel that it is a bad thing that candidates are more dependent on their local base than the approval of head office.