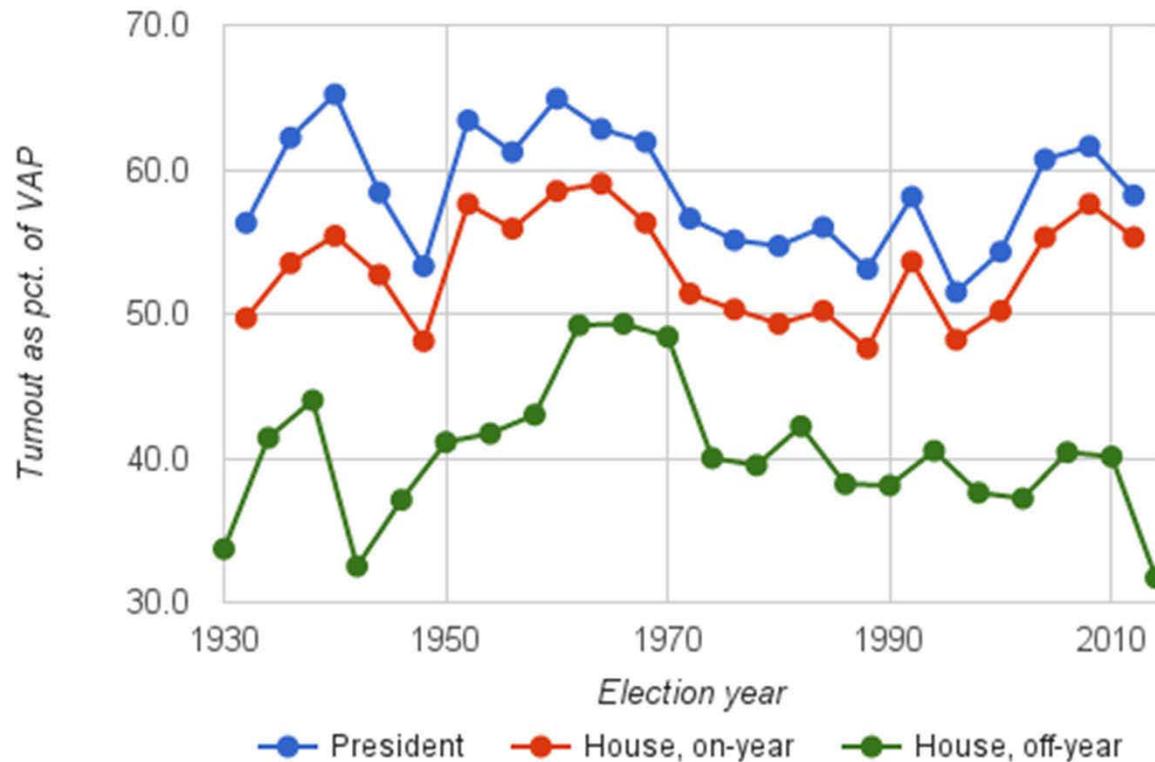# Congressional Voters

17.251/252

Fall 2016

Turnout
(Figure 5.1 updated)

Figure 5.1: Turnout in Congressional Elections, 1930-2014

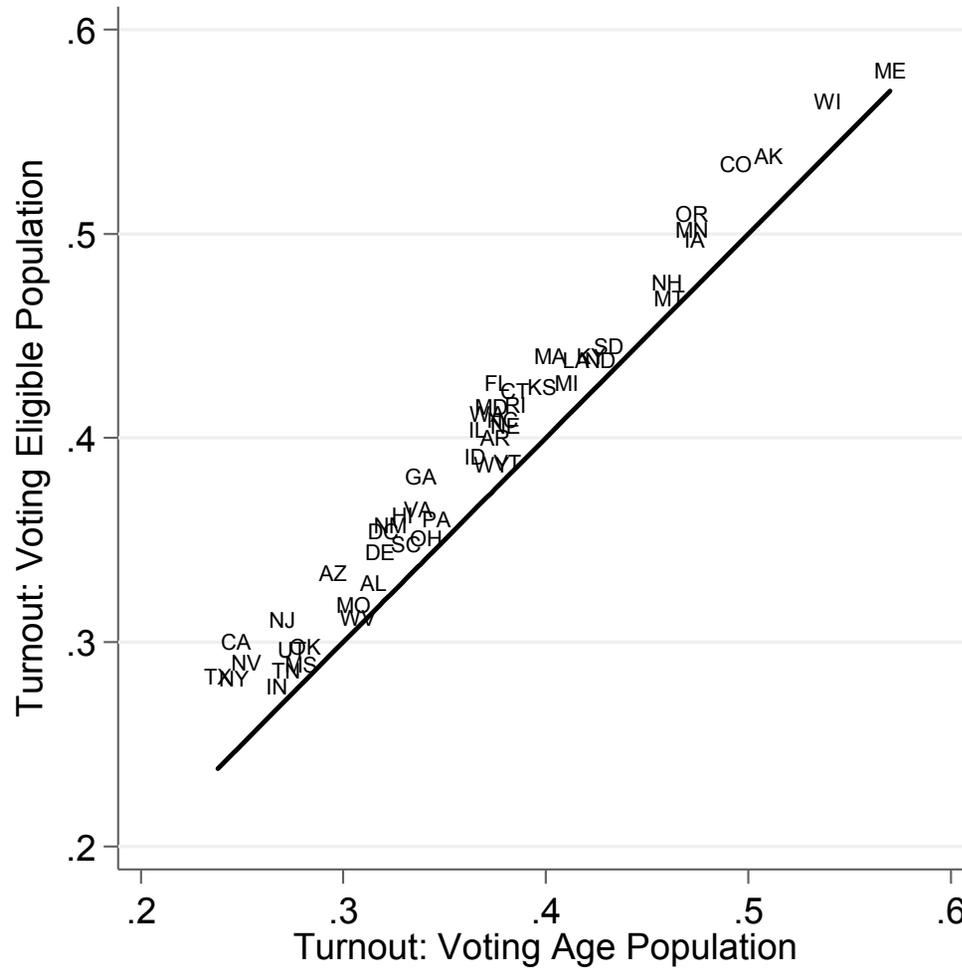*Actual congressional turnout is likely less than this.

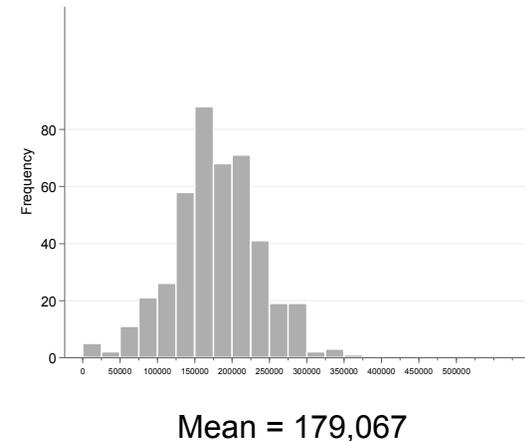# How to Calculate Turnout Pct.

- Turnout Pct. = Turnout / VAP

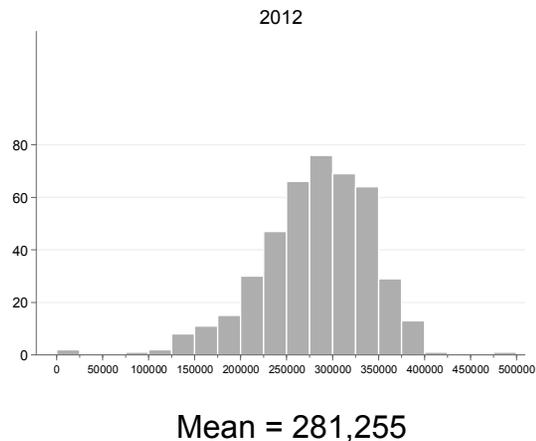not

- Turnout / Registered

- New measure: Turnout / Voting eligible population

Turnout/VEP vs. Turnout/VAP 2014

Variation in Turnout
2008 - 2014 (c.f. Fig 5.2)

2008

Mean = 285,084

2010

Mean = 200,891

2012

Mean = 281,255

Mean = 179,067
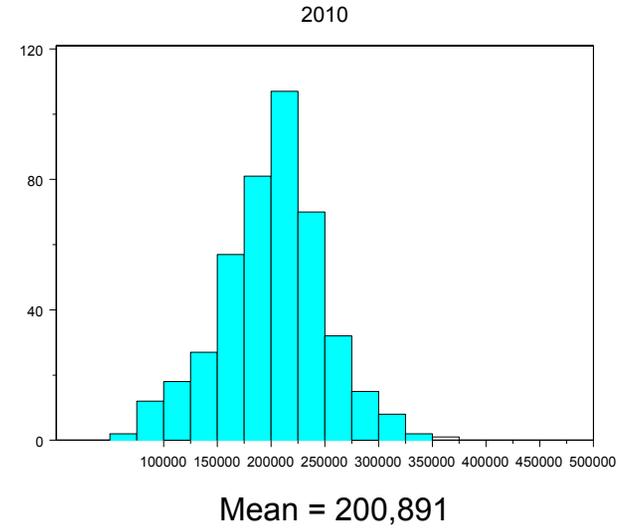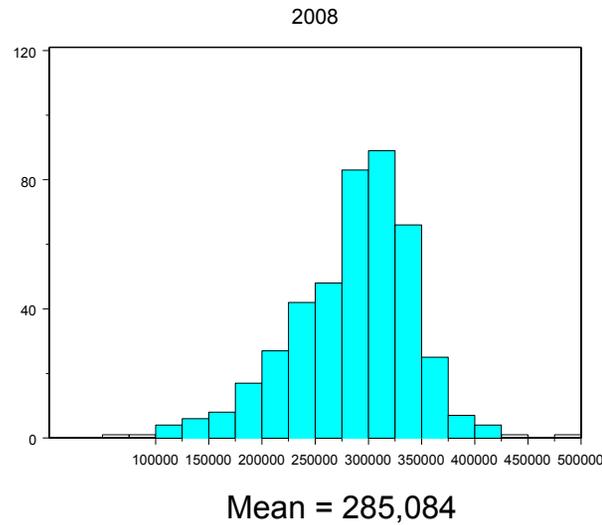
Correlation in Turnout 2008 to 2010
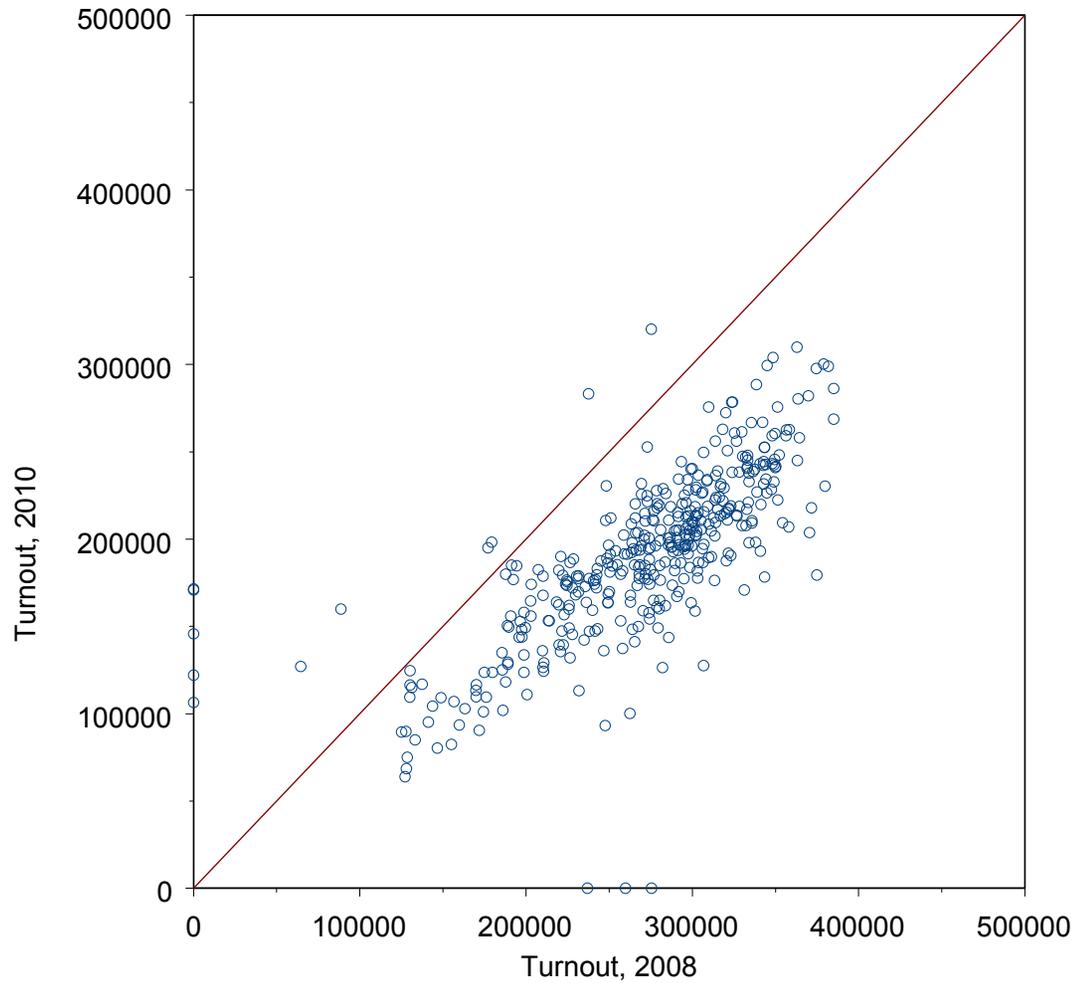
Primary & General Election Turnout, 2000
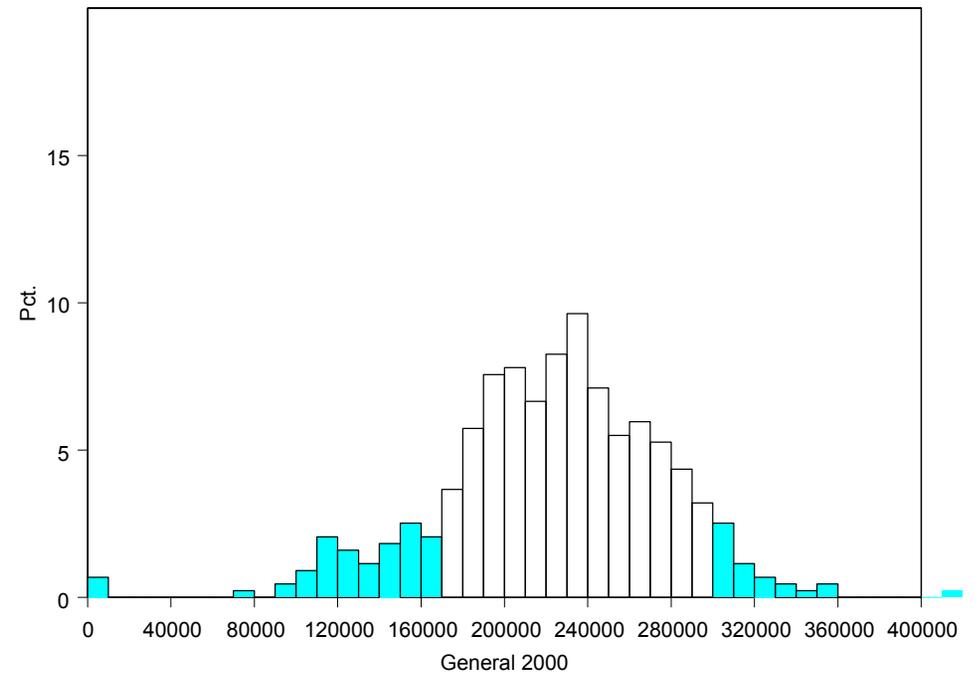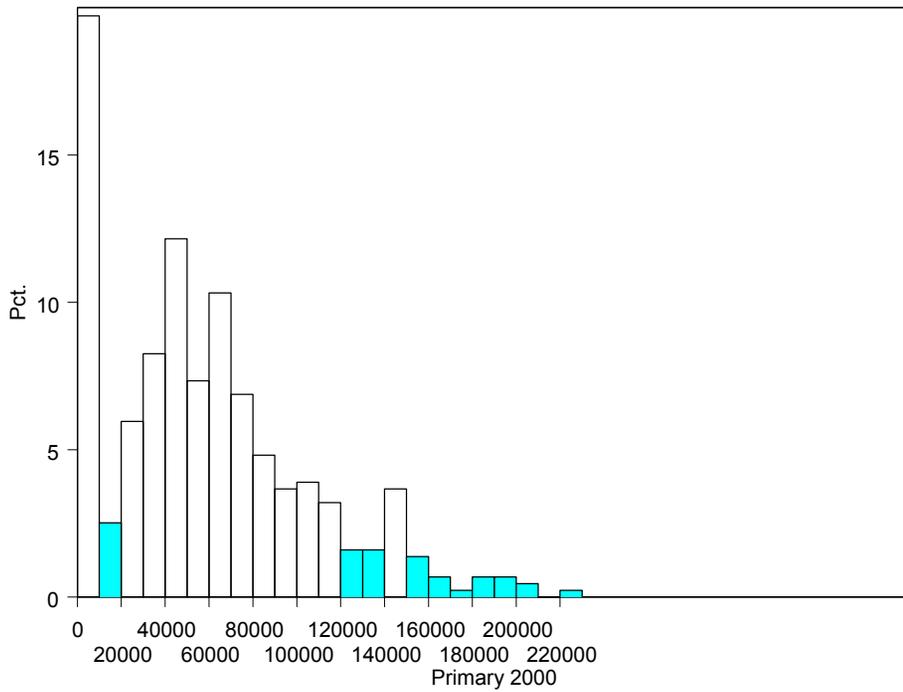
Explaining (Non-)Voting

- Expected value of voting =
  - Benefit the individual receives as a consequence of the election outcome
  - Minus the cost of voting

Explaining (Non-)Voting

State of the World w/out Citizen's Vote	Net Benefit if Citizen Abstains	Net Benefit if Citizen Votes	Condition under which Citizen Should Vote
D wins by more than 1 vote	$B^D_{Citizen}$	$B^D_{Citizen} - c$	Never
D wins by exactly 1 vote	$B^D_{Citizen}$	$B^D_{Citizen} - c$	Never
D and *R* tie	$(B^D_{Citizen} + B^R_{Citizen})/2$	$B^D_{Citizen} - c$	$(B^D_{Citizen} - B^R_{Citizen})/2 > c$
R wins by exactly 1 vote	$B^R_{Citizen}$	$(B^D_{Citizen} + B^R_{Citizen})/2 - c$	$(B^D_{Citizen} - B^R_{Citizen})/2 > c$
R wins by more than 1 vote	$B^R_{Citizen}$	$B^R_{Citizen} - c$	Never

Salvaging the Calculus

- Citizen duty
- Think about it probabilistically, not deterministically
  - Candidate differential
  - Costs of voting
  - Closeness of election
    - Voter attention
    - GOTV


```
. reg tv

      Source |       SS           MS                Number of obs =      433
-------------+----------------------------           F(    1,   431) =    72.45
       Model |  2.1029e+11df     2.1029e+11           Prob > F        =   0.0000
    Residual |  1.2510e+12       2.9025e+09           R-squared       =   0.1439
-------------+--------------431--------------          Adj R-squared   =   0.1419
       Total |  1.4613e+12       3.3826e+09           Root MSE        =    53875
                            432
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   tvotes2012 |      Coef.   Std. Err.      P>|t|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
    marginpct |  -897.7943   105.4763      -8.51   0.000    -1105.106   -690.4824
        _cons |   313335.6   4447.584      70.45   0.000      304594    322077.3
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

2012 & 2014
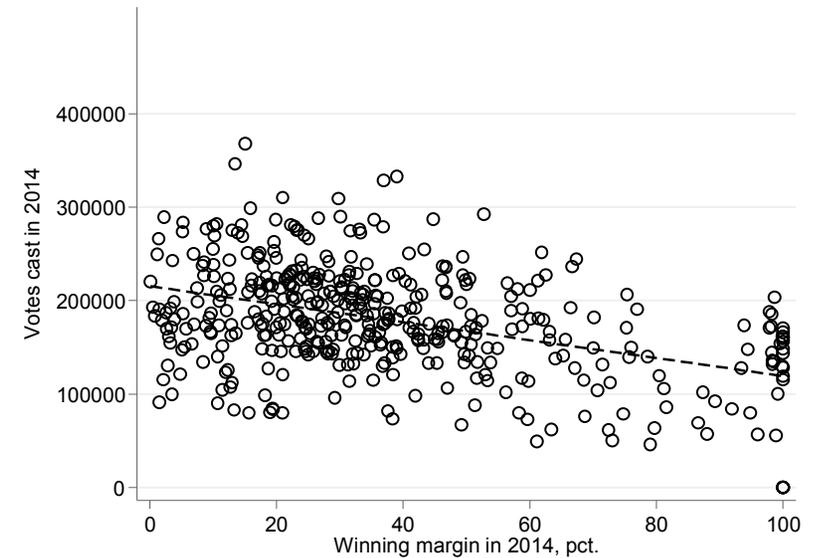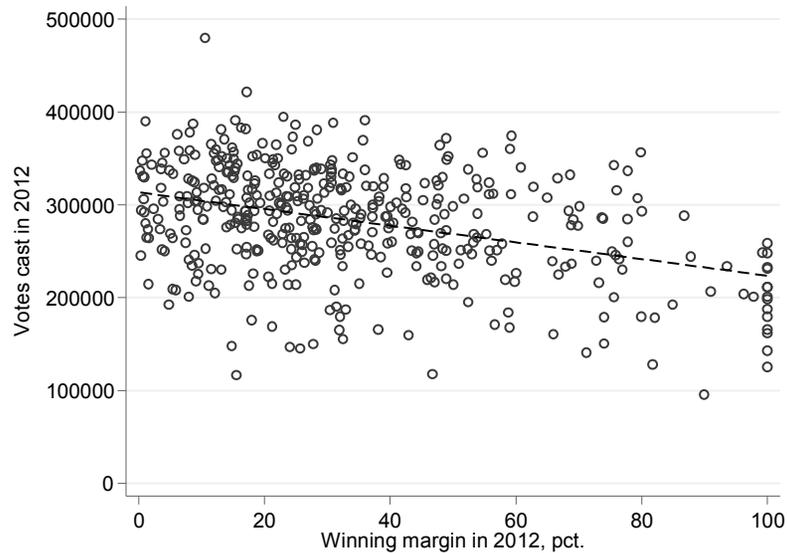

```
. reg tv

      Source |       SS                 MS           Number of obs =
-------------+------------------------------          F(     431) =    72.45
       Model | 2.1029e+11df      2.1029e+11           Prob > F      =   0.0000
    Residual | 1.2510e+12        2.9025e+09           R-squared     =   0.1439
-------------+--------------431-----------          Adj R-squared =   0.1419
       Total | 1.4613e+12        3.3826e+09           Root MSE      =    53875
                    432

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
   tvotes2012 |      Coef.   Std. Err.     P>|t|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
   marginpct |  -897.7943   105.4763      -8.51   0.000    -1105.106   -690.4824
       _cons |   313335.6   4447.584      70.45   0.000       304594    322077.3
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

```
. reg turnout marginpct

      Source |       SS           df       MS       Number of obs =      435
-------------+------------------------------        F(1, 433)     =    97.27
       Model | 2.6951e+11         1  2.6951e+11     Prob > F      =   0.0000
    Residual | 1.1997e+12       433  2.7706e+09     R-squared     =   0.1834
-------------+------------------------------        Adj R-squared =   0.1816
       Total | 1.4692e+12       434  3.3852e+09     Root MSE      =    52637

------------------------------------------------------------------------------
     turnout |      Coef.   Std. Err.      t    P>|t|     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
   marginpct |  -960.4847   97.38473    -9.86   0.000    -1151.89    -769.0791
       _cons |   215402.7   4465.676    48.24   0.000    206625.6    224179.8
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

Who is hurt/helped by turnout

- Naïve view: Dems helped by turnout

Who is hurt/helped by turnout

- District view: the "out party"

Campaign intensity
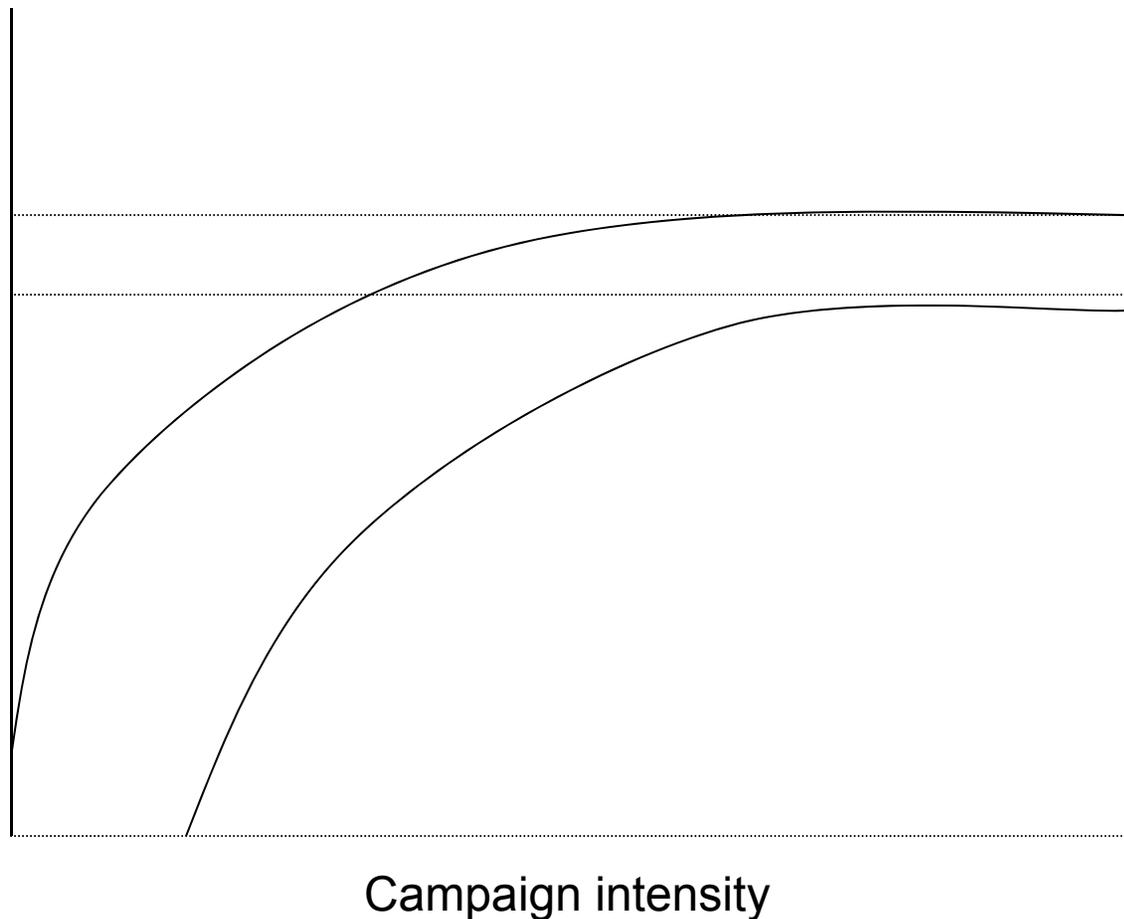
Deciding whom to support

- Ideology
  - Downsian logic directly
- Party ID
  - Downsian logic by proxy

PID x IDEO in 2014

	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Missing	Total
Liberal	10,927	2,742	380	797	14,846
Moderate	6,359	7,606	2,385	1,469	17,819
Conserv.	2,057	4,510	10,120	1,670	18,357
Missing	1,085	1,094	343	2,656	5,178
Total	20,428	15,952	13,228	6,592	56,200

Source: 2014 Cooperative Congressional Election Study

Party and Ideology Distance as Explanatory Factors in 2014 Cong'l Elections

House Ideol.	Party of voter			
	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Total
Lib.	.96	.86	.23	.92
Mod.	.88	.51	.14	.59
Cons.	.76	.11	.04	.13
Total	.90	.40	.06	.47

Source: 2014 CCES

Senate Ideol.	Ideology of voter			
	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Total
Lib.	.98	.90	.22	.94
Mod.	.90	.55	.17	.62
Cons.	.83	.09	.03	.12
Total	.93	.41	.05	.46

Overall voting effect, 2014 Cong'l election

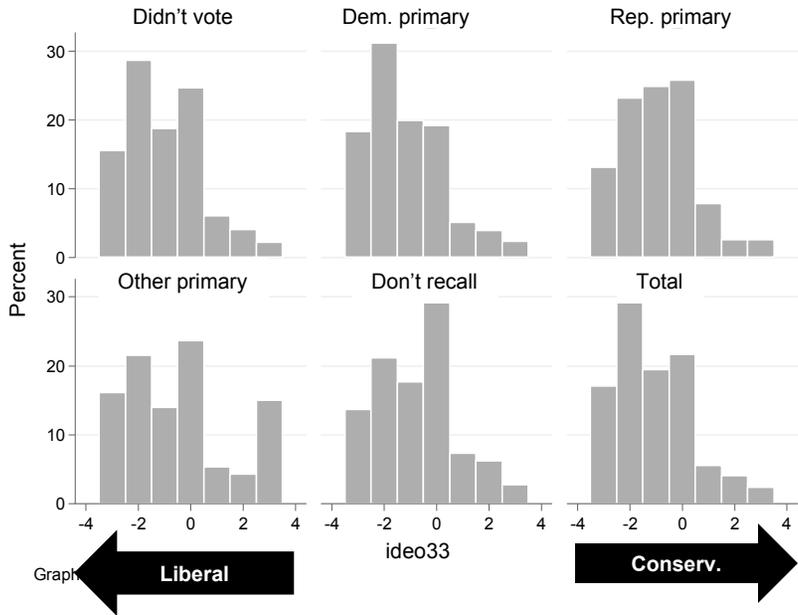|		House	Senate
Party identification	Effect of changing from an Ind. to a Dem.	0.30 (0.003)	0.30 (0.01)
Ideology	Effect of changing from a mod. to a lib.	0.20 (0.003)	0.21 (0.01)
Democratic incumbent	Effect of changing from a open seat race to a Dem. Inc.	0.085 (0.002)	0.052 (0.009)
Constant		0.50 (0.002)	0.50 (0.007)
R^2		.58	.61
N		28,303	14,946

A Word about Primaries

- Party not a useful cue
- Not much research, but…..
  - Primary voters are different from general election voters
    - Primary voters are more ideologically extreme, but
    - Primary voters are more strategically sophisticated than general election voters
  - Don't underestimate the "friends and neighbors" effect
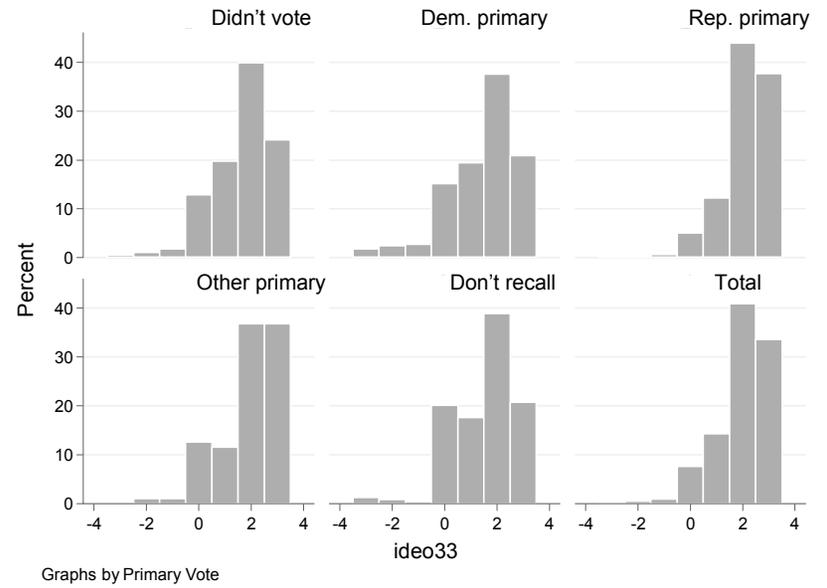
Voting rates in 2010 House primary

	Didn't vote	Voted in Dem. pri.	Voted in Rep. pri.	Voted in another pri.	Don't recall
Rep.	32.6%	2.6%	59.2%	0.6%	5.0%
Ind.	57.3%	12.4%	21.1%	3.0%	6.2%
Dem.	42.2%	49.1%	1.1%	0.7%	7.0%
Total	44.5%	23.7%	24.2%	1.4%	6.2%

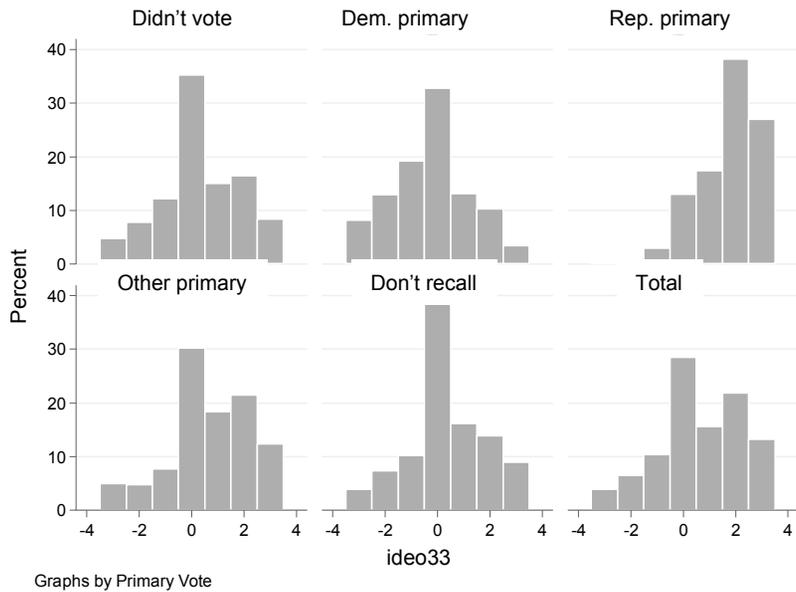Source: Cooperative Congressional Election Study, 2010
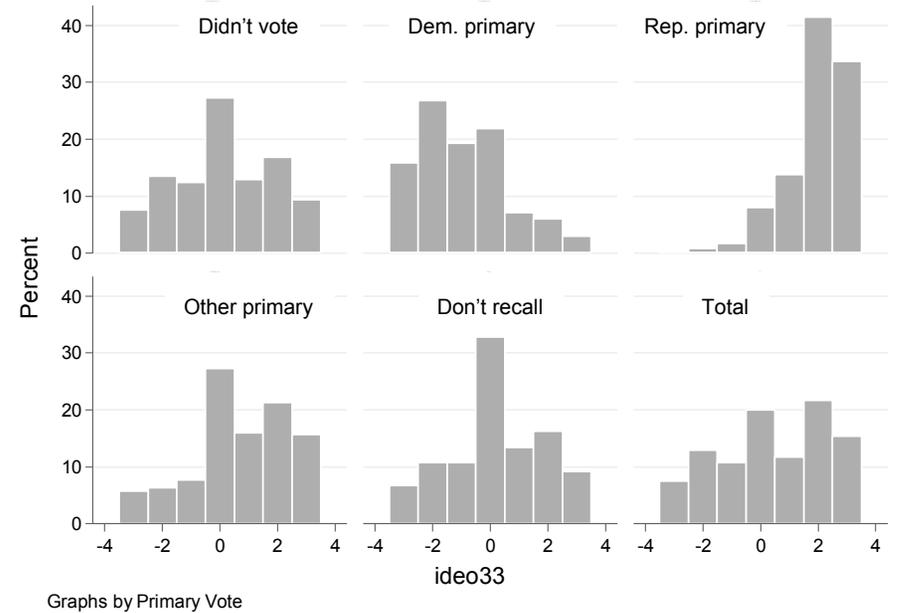(Question not asked in 2014)

Democrats

Didn't vote

Dem. primary

Rep. primary

Other primary

Don't recall

Total

Percent

ideo33

⬅ **Liberal**

Conserv. ➡

Graphs by Primary Vote

Republicans

Didn't vote

Dem. primary

Rep. primary

Other primary

Don't recall

Total

Percent

ideo33

Graphs by Primary Vote

Other

Didn't vote

Dem. primary

Rep. primary

Other primary

Don't recall

Total

Percent

ideo33

Graphs by Primary Vote

All

Didn't vote

Dem. primary

Rep. primary

Other primary

Don't recall

Total

Percent

ideo33

Graphs by Primary Vote

Average ideology of primary voters, 2010

	Didn't vote	Voted in Dem. pri.	Voted in Rep. pri.	Voted in another pri.	Don't recall	Total
Rep.	1.41	1.16	1.86	1.42	1.20	1.66
Ind.	0.15	-0.19	1.33	0.59	0.27	0.39
Dem.	-0.80	-0.91	-0.62	-0.97	-0.59	-0.84
Total	0.07	-0.71	1.66	0.44	0.14	0.29

-3 = strong liberal
0 = moderate
+3 = strong conservative

Std. dev., ideology of primary voters, 2010

	Didn't vote	Voted in Dem. pri.	Voted in Rep. pri.	Voted in another pri.	Don't recall	Total
Rep.	1.14	1.42	1.01	1.25	1.28	1.11
Ind.	1.36	1.37	1.17	1.48	1.40	1.43
Dem.	1.45	1.45	1.42	1.82	1.51	1.46
Total	1.58	1.50	1.14	1.66	1.58	1.69

-3 = strong liberal
0 = moderate
+3 = strong conservative

An aside about primary rules: Run-off vs. plurality rule

- Most states: plurality
- The South: the white primary → runoff elections
- California's "top-two primary"
  - (really like Louisiana's "Jungle Primary")
- Interest in "instant runoff"

Spatial representation of runoff primary (Figure 6.2)
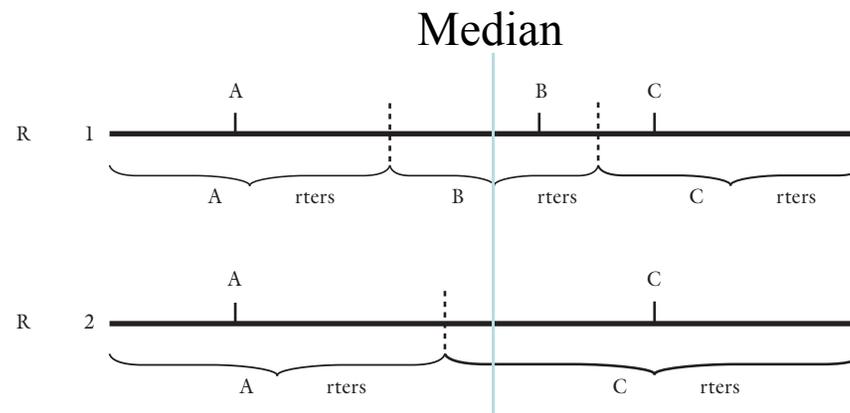
Spatial representation of runoff primary (Figure 6.2)
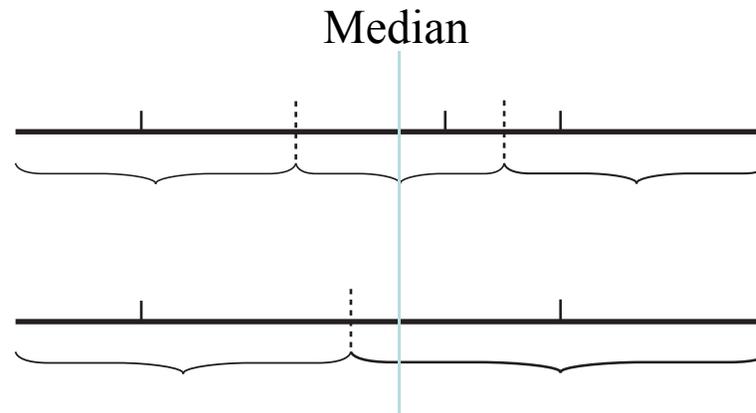
Ahler, Citrin, and Lenz research

Please read Ahler, Douglas J., Jack Citrin, and Gabriel S. Lenz. "Do Open Primaries Improve Representation? An Experimental Test of California's 2012 Top‑Two Primary." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (2016): 237-268.

Then read...

Ahler, Douglas, Jack Citrin, and Gabriel Lenz. "Can California's New Primary Reduce Polarization? Maybe Not." *The Monkey Cage*. March 27, 2013.

Main Findings

- Voters generally can't place candidates ideologically
  - Incumbents better placed than challengers
  - Co-partisan candidates are indistinguishable
  - Parties' candidates distinguishable from each other
- When placed, voters tend to place candidates more centrally than they are

2014: District 4 (Central Valley)

In District 4, incumbent Rep. Tom McClintock made the runoff with fellow Republican Art Moore. McClintock is a conservative and friend of the tea party, while his challenger has positioned himself as the moderate alternative -- a reverse of the "establishment v. tea party" narrative that has plagued this primary cycle.

"If McClintock wins," however, Rarick* says, "the system didn't work."

*Ethan Rarick, Director of UCB Center for Politics and Public Service, IGS

Courtesy of GovTrack.us.

17.251 Congress and the American Political System I

Fall 2016