Ingredients and output of the MVT?

- Mapping between my ideal point and my choice
- Mapping between a distribution of preferences over different political programs and who gets elected

Implicit assumption?
Everyone participates in the elections
Model that we saw yesterday in class

- Context = understanding vote-buying

- Idea: the reason why I vote and choose candidate A over B is NOT (or not only) that I believe it is going to affect the final outcome of the election

- Then, why do some voters participate, and others don’t?
Why do some voters participate and others don’t?

- Instrumental benefits (voting as a means towards an end)
  I hope to affect the result of the elections / vote buying
  Higher for close election / in a Swing state

- Expressive benefits
  I vote for a party with similar political views as mine
How do these 3 types of benefits fit with the model seen in class last time?

- The model:
  \[ U_i = m + \left( \frac{1}{2} - |p_j - b_i| \right) - c_i \]
  where \( m \) is the money received for my vote (can be 0)
  \( b_i \) is my political preference (for instance taxation rate)
  \( p_j \) are the propositions of the different candidates
  \( c_i \) is my cost of voting

- Instrumental benefits?
  I vote to get payment \( m \)

- Expressive benefits?
  \[ \frac{1}{2} - |p_j - b_i| \]

- What we want to predict
  - which candidate I vote for BUT ALSO
  - whether I vote or not
What affects $c_i$ (and, thus, participation)?

Consider $c_i$ as a net cost: gross cost of voting - intrinsic utility derived from voting

- What affects the Gross cost of voting?
  1. Going to the polling station
  2. But one first needs to be registered!
  3. Feeling incompetent

- What affects the intrinsic utility derived from voting?
  1. Complying with a norm of good citizenship
  2. Being seen by *others* as a good citizen
  3. Fulfill a commitment towards a canvasser
WHAT CAN AFFECT $c_i$ (AND, THUS, PARTICIPATION)?

Consider $c_i$ as a net cost: gross cost of voting - intrinsic utility derived from voting

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- What affects the Intrinsic utility derived from voting?
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GOING TO THE POLLING STATION

Details matter: “le diable est dans les détails!”

- When is Election Day? Sunday as in France / weekday?
- How far do I have to go to vote? France, 1848, 1st elections with universal suffrage in the country
- Information: Where should I vote? What time is the polling station open?
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FEELING INCOMPETENT: DANIEL GAXIE, THE HIDDEN POLL TAX

- Short story of poll taxes
  - prevalent in Southern states, cf. censal suffrage
  - outlawed by the 24th Amendment, ratified in 1964
  - literacy tests eliminated by the Voting Rights Act of 1965

- Daniel Gaxie: there is still a hidden poll tax
  - we usually make the assumption that everyone is equally competent about political subjects
  - cf. polls: what do you think of the North American Free Trade Agreement?
  - but actually, many people don’t even know how to locate themselves on a left-right (or democrat-republican) axis
  - political competence, measured by the fraction of answers increases with education, age, social-demographic category, and higher for men
What can affect $c_i$ (and, thus, participation)?

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GET-OUT-THE-VOTE CAMPAIGNS

- Who were the people asking questions at the last Obama / Romney debate?

- Which voters do the 2 candidates actually target?
  - Undecided voters (cf. MVT - preferences framework)
  - Their own base (cf. participation framework)

  - their question: why declining turnout since the 70s?
  - hypothesis: because declining *personal* contacts between parties and voters
  - test: GOTV randomized experiment
  - results: door-to-door canvassing more effective than telephone calls and direct mail
  - has shaped campaigns since 2004
Get-out-the-vote campaigns

- Channels through which GOTV operates?
  - increased information
  - increased competency
  - commitment

- Potential issues?
  We might end with many uninformed voters, adding noise and voting for “wrong” reasons

- But maybe we should not consider the degree of political interest as something fixed
  If you convince me to vote, I will take time to get informed, talk with friends, and decide which candidate I prefer
What can affect \( c_i \) (and, thus, participation)?

Consider \( c_i \) as a net cost: gross cost of voting - intrinsic utility derived from voting

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In France and US, registration is not automatic →

- unregistered citizens
- misregistered citizens

In this class, how many students are registered to vote in Cambridge?

My research in France: voters’ registration experiment

- door-to-door canvassing visits
- home registration visits

Results

- high impact on registration
- high impact on turnout