

American politics essay sample

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



1. It has been argued that it is "irrational" to vote and "irrational" to become informed about politics. Explain fully how these conclusions are derived. What factors, e. g., political factors or behavior, promote voting and/or reduce the costs of voting and getting informed? Use concrete examples to explain if, why and how people become informed about politics and vote.

There have been several arguments about voting and some people have argued out that it is unreasonable to vote and become informed about politics. Such arguments are based on the nature of politics and the occurrences of events in the political arena. There are some political factors that also contribute a lot towards the people's participation, in politics. There are several factors that may promote voting for a given candidate or party. Some people are simply obsessed with some political parties and will vote for them no matter which candidate is being fronted by the party. It is also unreasonable for informing people about politics since some people do not vote for leaders but they vote for people based on their ethnic backgrounds or political parties that they contest with. Some behaviors that have been depicted by voters that may reduce the costs of voting and getting informed include: nepotism and racism. People can get informed about politics and voting through print and non-print advertisements. The process is made even easier once the voters have learnt about the candidate's origin thus boosting or demoralizing the voters.

2. Explain and contrast the Expressive and Weak Altruism theories of voting. Be sure to evaluate the weaknesses and strengths of each.

The expressive system of voting gives a person a chance to lineout his/her

preferences while in the weak altruism a person votes with a target of some expectations being achieved. Altruism can be said to be a motivation for providing a value to a party with the main duty focusing on the moral obligation. Pure altruism may also involve giving up a value without any expectation or seeking any compensation either directly or indirectly. Weak altruism on the other hand involves that type of altruism that enhances the future outcome of the voting for the person committing to it. Weak theory of voting involves a person voting with an expectation that he/she will get something good as a result of the vote casted. Weak Altruism can be said to be the single most important decision for people to vote since they do so with some expectations.

The expressive method, gives the voters a chance to express their feelings and vote on what options they feel is best. This has a major advantage as voters are able to weigh out the available options and then settle for the best candidate. However, this method can lead to a compromise of services as the elected people into office may not have some stated issues to be addressed within some time frame thus resulting into a compromise of services once they enter the offices.

Weak altruism on the other hand challenges the contesters to meet the expectations of the voters hence leading to development. However, this method can lead to favoritism and corruption as people may expect a lot from the elected people into office. Some of the expectations may not be achievable and in the process lead to corruption or nepotism as favors may also form part of the expectations of the voters.

3. It has been argued that a fear of the "tyranny of the majority" and fear of monarchy were driving factors in the framing of the American Constitution. Explain the difference between tyranny of the majority and fear of monarchy/dictatorship as expressed by Madison. Give examples each. How was the Constitution, and hence American government, structured by these fears? What does the fear of the tyranny of the majority imply about the framers' interpretation of democracy?

Tyranny of the majority involves a system of democracy whereby decisions are made by a majority under a given system. This system according to Madison is not one of the best as an individual who is not forming part of the majority may be actively oppressed. Madison actually feared tyranny of the majority just the same way he feared dictatorship. In places where tyranny of the majority is being exercised, the minority will in most cases be oppressed. He therefore proposes a system of ensuring that such a problem does not occur through insisting that the United States must have a federal structure. This can be best achieved through the use of separation of powers through the three branches of the government that ensures that no individual is oppressed as a result of a difference in opinion. Monarchy on the other hand involves a rule exercised by a king. In such a situation decisions are made by an individual in a dictatorial kind of setting. The decisions are to be made however unpopular they may be. Fear of the monarchy therefore expresses some concerns that may arise in a situation when the king is the overall ruler. Madison expressed his concerns about decisions being made by the one person that may be unpopular and may result into oppression. America has been able to grapple with such circumstances and currently

decisions are made by the majority and then checked by the federal structure hence popular decisions are made that do not oppress the minority in any way. The American government is structured based on the three branches of the government used to control tyranny of the majority and avoid oppression as decisions are made amidst consultations.

4. Many political observers argue that voting is dominated by retrospective evaluations, rather than prospective evaluations of candidates. Explain the difference between retrospective and prospective voting. Be sure to evaluate the proposition that a candidate has a "mandate from the people." What are the relative advantages and disadvantages of both? What is the evidence in support of retrospective and/or prospective voting? Evaluate the arguments against "negative advertising" based upon the distinction between retrospective and prospective voting. Is retrospective voting used in all elections? If not, what other low-information cost means of voting are there?

Difference between retrospective and prospective voting

Retrospective voting involves a voting method that is based on the opinions gathered from prior experience. The voting in such situations is mainly based on the previous experiences of the voters. Prospective voting on the other side involves the voters deciding what the government will do through choosing a given political party based on their manifesto.

Advantages and disadvantages of retrospective and prospective voting

Retrospective voting is more realistic and development conscious as voters are able to choose their leaders based on their past performance. Candidates will also strive to initiate developments so that they can get a chance to be

voted for another term into office. Retrospective voting can in some cases lead to poor performance especially for candidates who are having their last terms in office.

Prospective voting on the other hand can have the major advantage of combining developmental issues and helping the voters choose which party is more realistic. It deals with party structure and not individual candidates hence can lead to sustainable development as opposed to retrospective whereby candidates are voted for based on their past performance and not what they are intending to do for the voters.

7. Madison, as "Father of the Constitution," wanted a strong, central government that could even veto state laws. However, to obtain ratification of the new constitution, the Federalists had to make a number of compromises. What were the major compromises that they required? Explain who were their major proponents, and the effects of the compromises on the US system of government.

The original plan when making the constitution was to amend the articles of confederation though this gave much power to the Federal government.

Federalists were known to be advocating for much stronger central government while the anti Federalists advocated for more power in the states. A compromise therefore had to strike which also involved including a bill of rights in the constitution. Federalists also had to compromise by having a system of checks and balances and also by including the three branches of governance so as to achieve the process of striking checks and balances. The compromises that were made resulted into the three branches of government and also resulted into including a bill of rights in the

constitution. The main parties that were involved during the convention were the federalists and the anti-federalists.