

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
AND POLITICS TODAY 2015-2016 EDITION



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Chapter Six

Public Opinion and Political Socialization

Learning Outcomes

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- 6.1 Define public opinion and identify at least two ways public opinion impacts government actions.
- 6.2 Evaluate how the political socialization process shapes political attitudes, opinions, and behavior; explain the impact of demographic characteristics on political behavior.
- 6.3 Describe three forms of social media and explain how social media can shape political decisions or events.
- 6.4 Assess the impact that world opinion of the United States has on the government's domestic and foreign policy decisions.
- 6.5 Identify three factors that might distort public opinion results collected through opinion polling.



President Barack Obama greets students from Medina Elementary School on February 17, 2012, in Medina, WA.

Defining Public Opinion

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- Public Opinion and Policymaking
 - Public opinion
 - Consensus
 - Divisive opinion
 - Nonopinion

Defining Public Opinion

Figure 6-1 ▶ Consensus Opinion

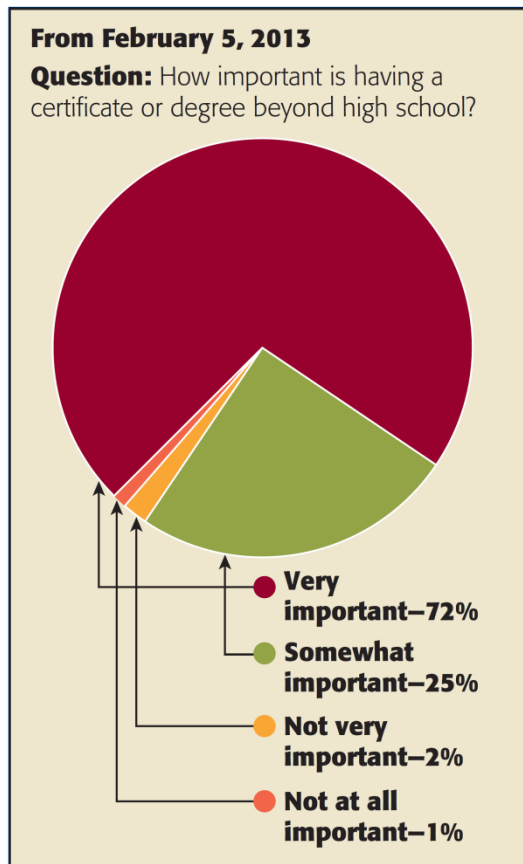


Figure 6-2 ▶ Divisive Opinion

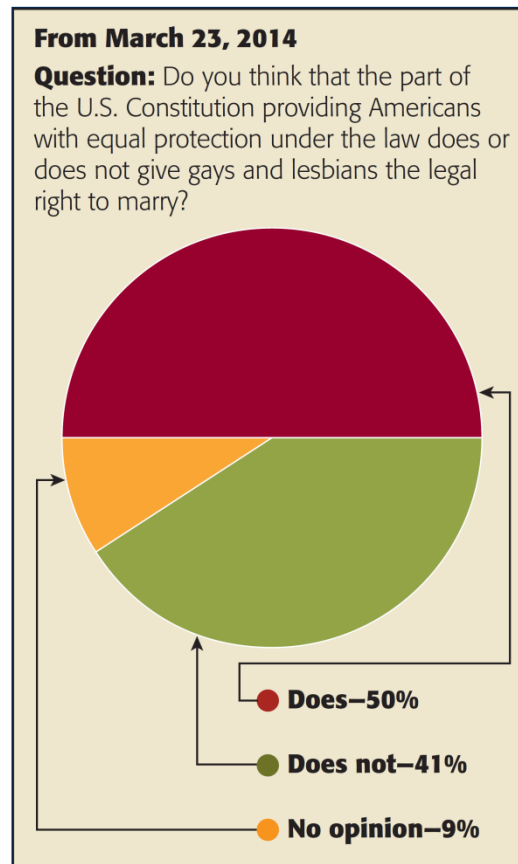
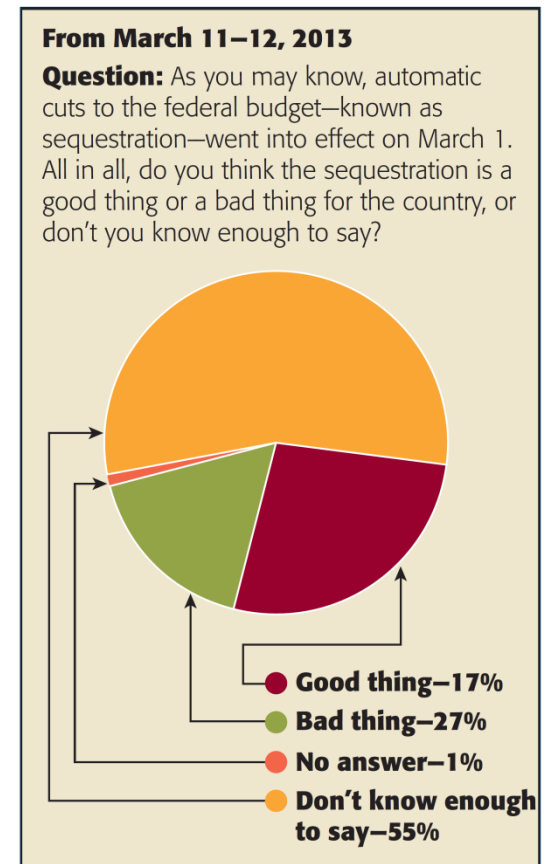


Figure 6-3 ▶ Nonopinion



How Public Opinion Is Formed: Political Socialization

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- Models of Political Socialization
- The Family and the Social Environment
 - Education as a Source of Political Socialization
 - Peers and Peer Group Influence
 - Opinion Leaders' Influence
 - Political Change and Political Socialization

How Public Opinion Is Formed: Political Socialization

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JStone/Shutterstock.com

How Public Opinion Is Formed: Political Socialization

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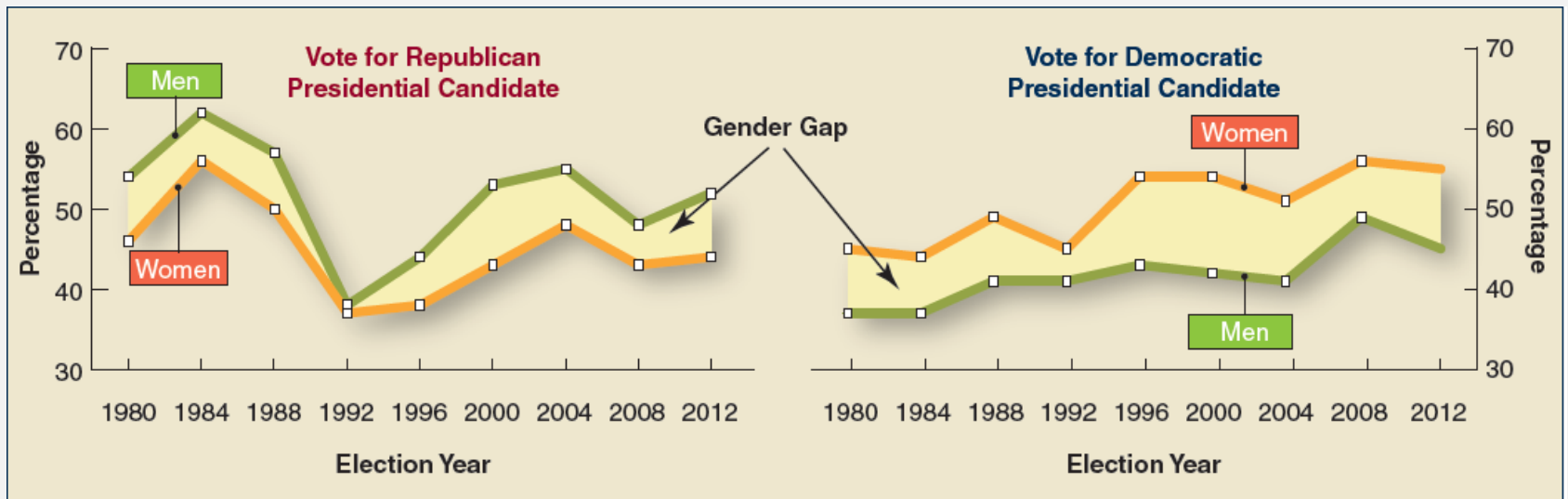
- The Impact of the Media
 - Agenda-setting
 - Managed news
- The Influence of Political Events
 - Life cycle effect
 - Generational effect

Political Preferences and Voting Behavior

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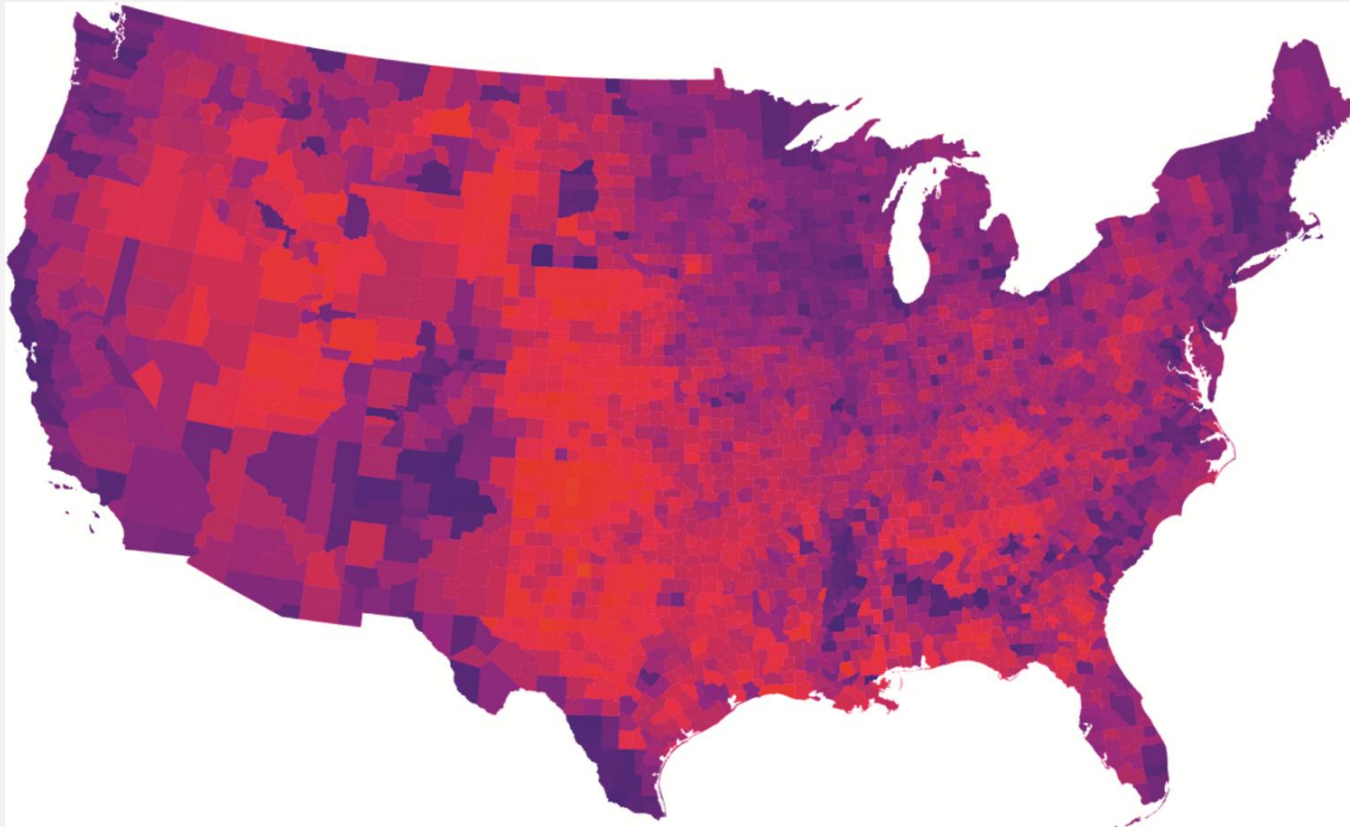
- Demographic Influences
 - Education
 - The Influence of Economic Status
 - Religious Influence: Denomination
 - Religious Influence: Religiosity and Evangelicals
 - The Influence of Race and Ethnicity
 - The Gender Gap
 - Reasons for the Gender Gap
 - Geographic Region

Gender Gap in Presidential Elections, 1980-2012



The Purple Election Map

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Areas that appear purple represent more balance between Republicans and Democrats.

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Measuring Public Opinion

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- The History of Opinion Polls
- Sampling Techniques
 - Representative Sampling
 - The Principle of Randomness

Measuring Public Opinion

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- Problems with Polls
 - Sampling Errors
 - Poll Questions
 - Push Polls

Measuring Public Opinion

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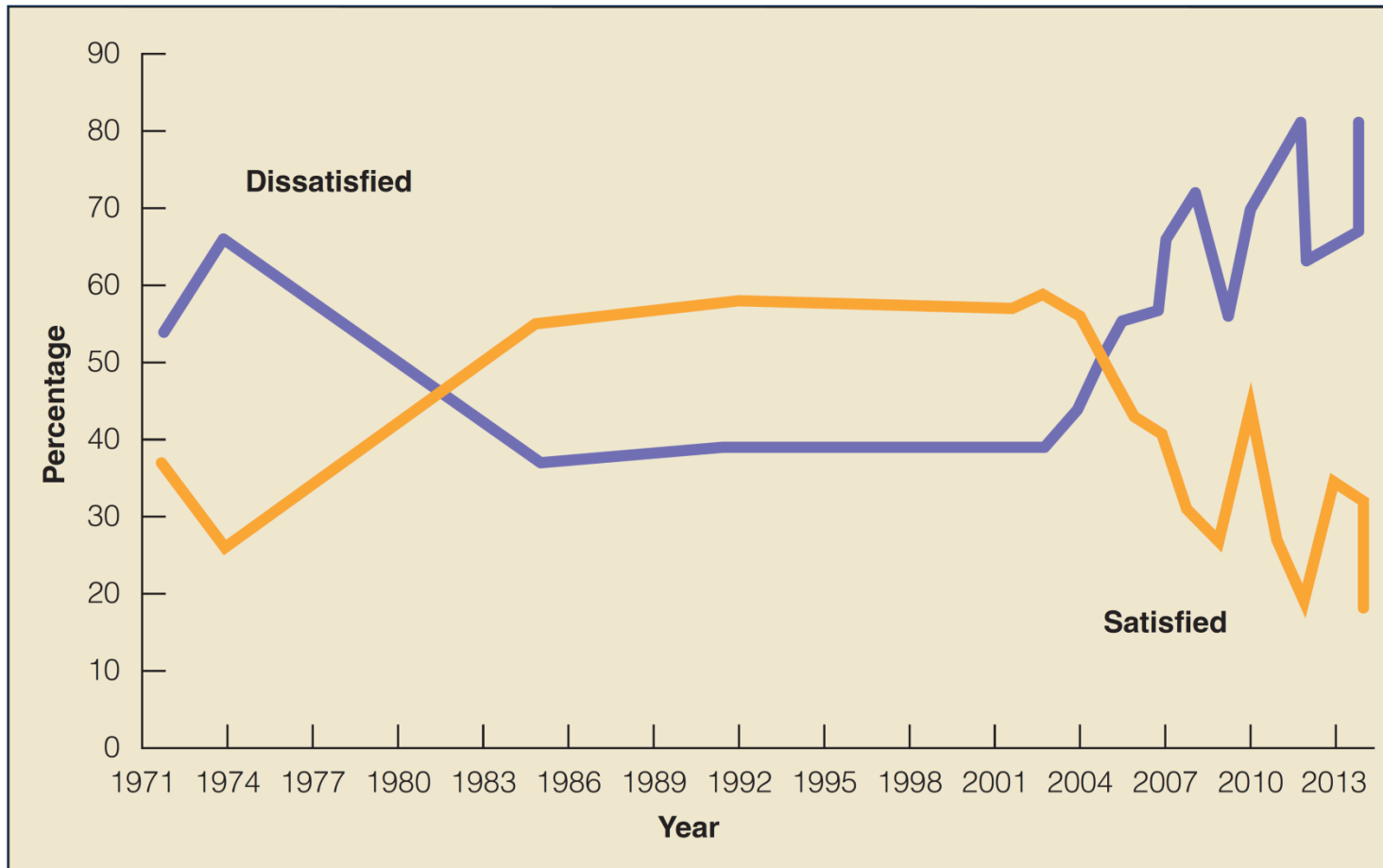
AP Images/Byron Rollins

Technology, Public Opinion, and the Political Process

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- Public Opinion and the Political Process
- Political Culture and Public Opinion
 - Political Trust and Support for the Political System
- Public Opinion about Government

Reaction to How the Nation Is Being Governed



Perceived Most Important Problem Facing the U.S.

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The Door-to-Door Fight for Votes in Virginia

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Click picture to view video



Video Discussion Questions

1. What influences your vote? Do you feel that your vote counts?
2. Do you share your opinions with political volunteers? Why or why not?
3. Are polling results trustworthy? How does polling impact modern campaigns?