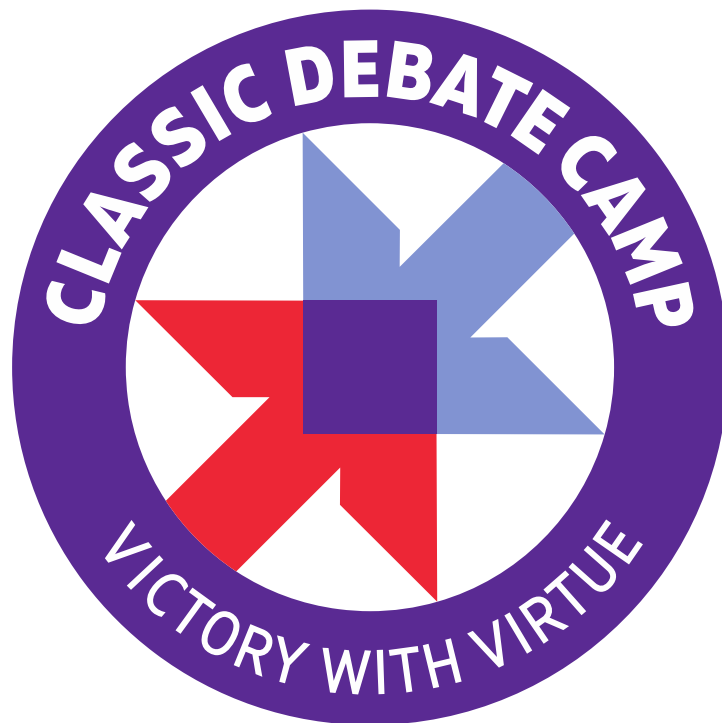


**CLASSIC DEBATE CAMP
SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2020
LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE BRIEF**



**Resolved: In a democracy, voting
ought to be compulsory.**

**Compiled by Rachael Harris
classicdebatecamp.com**

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A Note from Rachael

Hello, everyone! I hope you're all doing well and are staying safe and healthy. My primary goal in this brief is to provide some useful evidence to get the gears turning as you begin your own research on the topic. I believe that the multitude of possible perspectives and strategies can put you on a path to find some new ideas that you are interested in learning more about.

I would be completely remiss without saying hello to all of my Classic Debate Camp friends! We've only been apart for about a month, but I miss you all so much already! I cannot wait to see what you accomplish this season, and I wish you the very best at all of your tournaments.

Also, a special thank you to all of my fellow CDC instructors who helped me with this project, namely Zach Paganini, Shreyaa Nagajothi, Nick Protasiewicz, Dan Driscoll, Natalie Schaller, and Mr. Paik! I appreciate you all very much.

Good luck, everyone! I have the utmost faith in you all. Above all, remember that debate is a game – not combat, and be sure to have fun.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions about this brief or the research contained in it. Here's my email for you: harrisrach19@gmail.com

-Rachael Harris

Information on how I research:

1. I have included every link and citation for every source that I have cut a card or taken information from. If you plan on using any part of this brief in the future, it is my strong recommendation that you download the full article or PDF, especially if you plan on using it in your case.
 - a. I do hold myself to a high standard when it comes to researching, and you should as well. However, "from the Classic Debate Camp brief" is not the most intelligent or compelling citation. You should always be citing the original author to give them credit for their work.
2. Similar to Grace Johannes, I cut in whole paragraphs, even multiple if I find it all to be relevant. As an extension of the first point, I do believe that if you plan on using these cards in round or in your cases, having the context for them does help

for a breadth of your knowledge base and on the occasion that your opponent asks to see the evidence.

3. How I cut cards (also similar to Grace)
 - a. **Tag**
 - b. Author last name, Year
 - c. Author full name. Author qualifications. Full date. “Title of article/work.”
Publication info (i.e., citation)
 - d. Link
4. Do I power tag? Absolutely not. Please read the card to understand how my claim is warranted. Maybe even attempt to figure out how I came to that conclusion, or write your own tag.

Topic Essays

Core Questions the Resolution Raises

by Zach Paganini¹ (paganizj@miamioh.edu)

In every resolution, there are a couple of core questions or general themes that rest at the heart of the topic. Whenever a new topic is released, I try to figure out what these questions are, because knowing and trying to answer them is an easy way to find different arguments and frameworks for any topic. So, for the next page or two, I will dive into what I think is a key question and a general theme of compulsory voting. This isn't really a list of arguments, but rather a stream of consciousness of how I went about thinking about this topic when I first heard of it.²

Let's start with a question: would compulsory voting make for a better democracy? On the surface, the answer seems like a resounding yes. Democracies are founded on the idea that if everyone votes, then not only would we have better political discourse and decision making, but also elected officials would be forced to consider the interests of most citizens and not just a couple of groups. So, placing a legal obligation on citizens to vote should achieve just that, right? Well, there's a couple of problems.

First, uninformed voters may make for worse decisions. Essentially, this counter argument states that many of the people who choose not to vote aren't well informed in politics. Of course, the people who take the time to do in-depth research into the different candidates to come to a well-informed decision are going to vote since they've sunk in the time and effort. The people who don't do as much research are the ones who aren't voting. A Pew Research Poll done in October 2006 directly supports this claim, finding that, "Non-voters are politically estranged: They are the least interested in local politics... and the most likely to say voting doesn't change things."³ Forcing those who would normally abstain from voting may include uninformed opinions that lead to electing worse candidates.

Second, misinformation poses a silver bullet to the ideals of democracy, even for citizens who try to be informed. While this is not specific to the US, I think the United States' current political discourse serves as a good example to prove that more voices or votes don't always lead to better discourse and decisions. A Pew Research Poll done in April 2019 found that 60 percent of Americans would say that, over the last several years, the tone and nature of political debate has become less focused on policy issues and 76

¹ Zach Paganini has been an instructor for CDC for two years, and before that, he attended CDC as a debater for two years. In high school, he spent two years in International Extemporaneous Speaking before doing LD for the rest of his high school speech and debate career.

² Something I want to note before diving in: whenever I use a source, there will be an endnote at the bottom of the page giving a link to access the study/poll. However, a couple of the sources used can't be accessed by everyone because they require a login into a research database that I have through my university. So I've saved PDFs of all the sources. If you want access to any of these studies but can't get it because it requires a login, just email me and I'll be happy to send you the PDF.

³ <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2006/10/18/who-votes-who-doesnt-and-why/>

percent say it's become less fact based.⁴ Furthermore, in a study run by Briony Swire, a political science professor at MIT, participants were given claims (both true and false) made by President Donald Trump. Then, the claims were corrected for the participants. Both before and after the corrections were made, the participants were asked questions about their voting tendencies. The study found that, "Belief change in Trump-attributed misinformation remained uncorrelated with a change in voting intentions and feelings toward Trump."⁵ This means that whether or not Trump's claims were true didn't impact whether or not people were going to vote for him. This suggests that political discourse in the US is becoming more focused on a candidate's perceived character (or perceived character relative to other candidates). While it may seem like an obvious statement to say that a candidate's character matters, the United States' current political discourse shows how it can become dangerous for a population to put character over facts. There is a lot of literature on the topic of misinformation (most of it is US-centric however). If you want to read more on it, I would suggest reading through this study, especially its introduction.⁶

The general theme I noticed for this resolution is the clash of democratic values versus freedom. Even if we assume that compulsory voting leads to better democracies, we have to remember that compulsory voting would be a violation of people's freedom. However, that fact doesn't automatically disqualify a government from having compulsory voting. There are justified instances in democracies where freedom is limited. When the government stops someone from stealing from others, that's a limit on that person's freedom. You would be hard pressed to find someone who would say that the government is unjustified in stopping a thief. Well, where's the bright line? How do we know when a democracy is and isn't right to limit a person's freedom? That is by no means an easy question to answer. The key to answering that question is knowing what the point of government is, a question on which there are many differing opinions. If we are talking about this in the context of a debate round, this is a question that your framework would answer. I'm not going to dive into all the different possibilities for framework because Rachael and I are going to cover that in a separate essay. However, I will recommend two things. First, read the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy's entry on Democracy.⁷ Looking at different justifications of democracy and democratic values can help give you an idea of what a democracy should be keeping in mind when making decisions such as these. Second, remember that this resolution is not US-centric. It's hard

⁴ <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/06/19/public-highly-critical-of-state-of-political-discourse-in-the-u-s/>

⁵ Swire, Berinsky, Lewandowsky, and Ecker 2017 (Page 17) Under "4.5 Voting Preferences"

<https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsos.160802>

⁶ Ecker 2017

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2211368117300700>

⁷ Democracy (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/democracy/>

to keep that in mind since almost all of the evidence out there is about the United States, but it's very important to keep that in mind. Just because something is true about the US's democracy doesn't mean it's true about democracies in general.

Finally, I want to move away from this topic and talk a bit about thinking about any topic in general. When you first see the resolution, I would highly recommend that you ask yourself "Why did the NSDA choose this topic?" Remember, there is a whole committee of people who agreed to make this a topic for the entire country because they believe there are core questions and themes that provide a deep two-sided debate. That same committee also thinks that this topic provides educational benefit to the students debating it. In my experience, looking at any topic from that point of view makes it easier to see what is at the heart of it. Having that knowledge and perspective about the topic is, in my opinion, an invaluable asset as a debater.

Overview of Compulsory Voting and Key Arguments

by Shreyaa Nagajothi (nshreyaa02@gmail.com)

Introduction

The debates on this topic are going to come down to whether compulsory voting laws are detrimental or conducive to the tenets of an ideal democracy. Before debaters research individual arguments, they should thoroughly research and understand the current implementations of mandatory voting laws. Voting is mandatory in 19 of the 166 electoral democracies in the world.⁹ Examples of democracies with compulsory voting include Australia, Greece, and Uruguay. On average, nations with mandatory voting laws have a 7.37% higher voter turnout than countries without them. Enforcement mechanisms for these laws vary from country to country. Australia and Uruguay fine voters who don't cast ballots, while Greece has no sanctions whatsoever.¹⁰ In fact, only 9 of the 19 countries that have mandatory voting laws actually enforce them.¹¹ This leads to a key question in the debate: Does a nation have to actually enforce its mandatory voter laws in order for it to be considered a country with compulsory voting? Although a lot of debates will be theoretical because no individual democracy is specified in the resolution, researching the effects that mandatory voting laws have had in the past is still key to understanding possible topic ground.

Affirmative Arguments

1. Compulsory voting creates policy outcomes that reflect the views of a broader range of citizens

In democracies without mandatory voting laws, socioeconomically disadvantaged citizens are significantly less likely to vote. Thus, the votes of the citizens that choose to vote may not accurately represent the views of the general public. In nations with voluntary voting, politicians focus on advancing the interests of

⁸ Shreyaa Nagajothi debated for 4 years in Lincoln-Douglas debate for Jackson High School. She qualified for the OSDA state tournament 4 times. She also qualified for the NSDA national tournament twice. As a senior, Shreyaa made it all the way to the final round and won 2nd place. She also won 5th out of 250 debaters in the LD Speaker Awards. Shreyaa joined the CDC community as an LD instructor in 2020. She was awarded the Chancellor's scholarship at the University of Pittsburgh, where she will study neuroscience on a pre-med track.

⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/mar/08/how-australias-compulsory-voting-saved-it-from-trumpism>

¹⁰ <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voter-turnout/compulsory-voting>

¹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/mar/08/how-australias-compulsory-voting-saved-it-from-trumpism>

demographic groups with higher voter turnout, thus creating policies that fail to take the needs of the socioeconomically disadvantaged into account.¹²

2. Voting is not just a right, but a responsibility

According to Amber Herle of the Brookings Institution, voting is a civic duty. She writes, “As it is with jury service, so it is with voting: Asserting a civic duty is the best way to guarantee the right this duty entails.”¹³ Affirmatives could argue that voting is something that all citizens have an obligation to do, so the state is justified in making it compulsory. However, affirmatives should be careful when comparing voting to jury duty. There are a lot of differences between voting and serving on a jury. For instance, political ignorance has a much greater effect on voters than it does on jurors. Additionally, since there are usually only twelve jurors in a jury, each individual is likely to take his or her duties seriously. Thus, apathy is less of a problem for jurors than it is for voters.¹⁴ Negatives could also just say that both mandatory jury duty and mandatory voting are unjust. Affirmatives can still compare voting to serving on a jury to show that both are civic duties, but they need to have more in-depth analysis and justification for why civic duties ought to be compulsory.

3. Compulsory voting has historically led to better policy outcomes

According to Anthony Fowler of Harvard University, “When Australia passed compulsory voting, the Labor Party did better and you saw more progressive policies in line with what the working class was advocating for.” Fowler asserts that mandatory voter laws can have a large impact on policy and benefit the least advantaged.¹⁵

Negative Arguments

1. Compulsory voting will increase random votes

Negatives can argue that voters who wouldn’t vote voluntarily are unlikely to educate themselves about political issues if voting is compulsory. This could lead to many uninformed voters simply picking a candidate at random without actually checking to see if that candidate’s policies truly align with their values. Thus, candidates who don’t actually reflect the values of the general public can win

¹² <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/voting/#4>

¹³ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2020/07/24/why-shouldnt-voting-be-mandatory/>

¹⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2015/03/25/why-mandatory-jury-service-is-a-poor-justification-for-mandatory-voting/>

¹⁵ https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/westminster_model_democracy/files/fowler_compulsoryvoting.pdf

elections by chance.² This is pretty speculative, but it could be a good argument with strong evidence.

2. Compulsory voting is inconsistent with the ideal of democratic freedom

Negatives can argue that citizens have a right to abstain from participating in the democratic process if they choose to do so. Mandatory voting laws restrict personal freedom by forcing citizens to exercise a right that they shouldn't have to exercise. Freedom is a core tenet of democracy, and compulsory voting laws violate freedom. Debaters can frame this argument in a more consequentialist way by arguing that citizens can perceive compulsory voting laws as oppressive, causing citizens to become dissatisfied with their government. Not only does this undermine democratic ideals in and of itself, but it could also undermine political stability by causing conflict between citizens and the government.

3. Compulsory voting removes avenues of peaceful protesting

Democracies ought to encourage citizens to engage with the government through peaceful protesting. Abstention is a legitimate form of peaceful protest, and compulsory voting laws prevent citizens from engaging in this form of protest. Democracies should not limit the ways that citizens can peacefully protest the government.

Compulsory Voting: Value-Based vs. Policy-Based

by Rachael Harris¹⁶ (harrisrach19@gmail.com)

Introduction

The debate rounds on this resolution are going to break down in a few key ways, and it truly depends on how you are evaluating this topic. In Lincoln-Douglas debate, we often get asked to evaluate policy-based, value-based, or fact-based resolutions. I personally believe that this topic lies at the center of all three. While the topic is not asking for a specific policy to be implemented, evaluating the topic in from a policy-oriented perspective opens the door to discussing feasibility and solvency impacts. I suggest being wary of this argument, however, as the door could be opened far enough that your opponent asks for a plan text (that you may or may not have). On the other hand, through the lens of a value-based perspective, the affirmative side-steps feasibility and solvency while gaining access to “the ideal democracy.” The affirmative also escapes any real-world examples presented by the negative, but the negative’s potential arguments based on autonomy and liberty become a lot stronger and more compelling.

Personally, I feel that debates are a lot stronger when they have a narrative or a cohesive advocacy. What I mean by this is that you should do your best to stay consistent in your case and rebuttals. This is a strategy that aims to win the round by selling the judge a coherent story rather than just winning on the flow. Simply put, you can make different arguments in round, but they should all be coming from the same perspective and should not contradict each other. You should have two goals when aiming for this style of debate: you should try to present a consistent advocacy that is sound and logical, and you should ensure that your advocacy contains the best possible explanation for everything in the round. By the end of the round, the judge should be able to easily sum up why they should vote for you in a sentence or two. Therefore, in terms of types of “evaluations” of the round, I am referencing the narrative that you might present. You do not need to make it explicit that this is what your narrative is, but you should keep it at the forefront of your mind as you research, write your cases, and come up with responses in prep time.

So what do I mean by a value-based evaluation and a policy-based evaluation? In my eyes, the value-based evaluation comes from a more theoretical perspective and aims at the values (wow, big shocker there) that would be important to the resolution and its potential implementation. I believe that this is more what Lincoln-Douglas (maybe in its

¹⁶ In 2019, Rachael placed seventh in LD at the Pennsylvania state tournament after placing in the top five at every local tournament that season. She also qualified for the NCFL national tournament in LD and the NSDA national tournament in World Schools Debate. Rachael has been coaching LD privately and remotely for about a year. She joined the CDC LD staff in 2020.

more traditional style) is about. It asks questions such as the following: Where is the moral obligation? Whom is the moral obligation to or from? What is the most ideal ethical scenario in the resolution? And many more. I find this style more open to a creative framework and more focused on a general principle. On the contrary, I think that the policy-based evaluation prioritizes solvency, feasibility, and implementation. These are also great issues to consider, especially because they are more concrete and tangible. This approach, however, can be more difficult because it generally does not have as much emotional appeal as values and sometimes the numbers are hard to find. I think the two form a simulation of an ongoing clash in society and in policymaking.

With that, I present to you the value-based and policy-based arguments that I immediately thought of on this topic.¹⁷

Value-Based Arguments

I. Affirmative

a. Definitional Democracy

At the crux of any democracy, regardless of how you define it, is the notion of “for the people, by the people.” In order to remain true to this core ideal, we must have compulsory voting, as it would guarantee an increase in the voter turnout. With an increased voter turnout comes a more accurate representation of the people, which in turn, leads to more politicians catering to the needs of the majority. Strengthening the core of a democracy makes it stronger and less likely to slide backwards on the democratic scale towards an authoritarian regime.

b. Compulsory Voting Conveys the Message That Each Citizen’s Voice is Expected and Valued

As democratic states stand, there is the tendency for citizens to feel that there is a gap between them and the politicians. Compulsory voting bridges this gap. Not only this, but many citizens do not vote, let alone participate politically, because they feel that their voice will not be heard. Compulsory voting, when done right, pushes the narrative that the democracy cares about the opinions of all its citizens.

II. Negative

a. The Ideal Democracy Would Not Require Compulsory Voting

In essence, the root of this argument is that in the perfect world, an ideal democracy would not require compulsory voting because every

¹⁷ Disclaimer: these are things to consider and things to develop into your own contentions. The following will not stand as contentions on their own (but they might make for some good internal links or framework arguments).

eligible voter would be eager to vote and to participate in the political process.

However, I find it crucial to note that this argument can be made for just about any resolution. Take for example, “Resolved: Plea bargaining ought to be abolished in the United States Criminal Justice System.” You could say that in an ideal world, we would not have a need for plea bargaining because citizens would not violate the laws. (So, this could be a framework argument or justification, but it depends on your advocacy).

b. The Ideal Democracy Does Not Exist (Kritik)

Similar to the argument above, the premise of this argument is theoretical. However, I believe that it uniquely provides grounds for running a K. While I do not suggest doing it on the local circuit, I think it might be something to consider if you plan on going to any national tournaments for this topic. The thrust of this argument contradicts the previous one by asserting that an ideal democracy is not possible. As badly as we may like to achieve the purest form of democracy, this does create a utopian standard for how we act. If we are expected to be perfect citizens, it leaves little room for human nature.

c. Liberty (The Right to Express Political Neutrality)

Citizens have a right to remain politically neutral, no matter the reason they may choose to do so. For example, some citizens’ faiths prohibit them from voting, some citizens do it as a statement of peaceful protest, and others do it for more personal reasons.¹⁸ Democracies exist to protect the rights of the citizens that they govern and denying them the liberty *not* to vote is an infringement upon their rights.

Policy-Based Arguments

I. Affirmative

a. Mail-in-Ballot (Plan Text)

To me, a mail-in-ballot system seems to be the easiest way to implement compulsory voting. I suggest looking more into the 22 countries that have compulsory voting to see how they do it, should you need inspiration.¹⁹

I do not believe that this is an argument exclusive to the national circuit. I believe that when running any kind of policy-based argument, it is almost always to your advantage to have some hypothetical plan that you can reference either in case, cross, or rebuttal. In my opinion,

¹⁸ <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-apr-10-me-49138-story.html>

¹⁹ <https://theconversation.com/book-extract-from-secret-ballot-to-democracy-sausage-112695>

this does not need to be a fully fleshed-out plan text, but it can be something that you can provide when asked to. I find it important to note that this plan is something to bring up *when prompted* (i.e., in cross or when your opponent says that there is not a way for a compulsory voting policy to be implemented feasibly). As a judge, I am personally of the belief that if you brought this argument up without being prompted, you would be required to have the full plan text.

b. Compulsory Voting Empirically Works

While compulsory voting does not produce a 100% voter turnout, Australia is the closest with turnout in the high 90% range.

Furthermore, other statistics measuring voter response rates have remained consistent since they implanted their policy in 1925.²⁰

Moreover, many countries that have implemented compulsory voting still have those policies in effect today. The closest thing that I have heard is that many countries that do have it do not enforce it (but in my mind, that is a completely separate issue). I think this argument would have a lot less traction if many countries (especially democracies) had tried it out and it had a high failure rate.

II. Negative

a. Voter Turnout Will Never Be 100%

The case of Australia²¹ proves that voter turnout will never be 100%. Even though Australia has the highest turnout of any democracy with compulsory voting, its voter turnout fell to approximately 92% in their 2016 election. (By the way, that was Australia's worst turnout since the 1920s when their compulsory voting policy, was implemented).

b. Compulsory Voting Increases the Number of Blank Ballots

This argument ties together quite a few ideologies. First, that as a democracy, we would be requiring everyone to vote, though we cannot guarantee that every citizen will cast an informed vote. Second, even if they are informed, we cannot guarantee that citizens will like their options for policies or candidates. Third, even if they like their options and they are informed, we cannot guarantee that they will not choose to abstain for personal or religious reasons. Without compulsory voting, we see fewer blank and random ballots because those who

²⁰ https://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/research/files/voter-turnout-2016.pdf

²¹ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/11/these-countries-have-some-of-the-highest-voter-turnout-in-the-world/>

would feel the need to leave it blank would simply not cast a ballot to begin with.

c. Enforcement

In my opinion, this is one of the most intuitive solvency arguments. Enforcement of the compulsory voting policy seems a bit difficult, especially depending on the implementation and the level of punishment selected. Depending on your definition of mandatory (i.e., if it is required by law²²), the punishment could be a fine or even imprisonment (which opens the door to the overcrowded prisons impact). In the United States, we see that laws are not always enforced in an impartial or equal manner. If we leave the punishment for not voting up to law enforcement, I am wary of the consequences. Moreover, it would be costly to employ the additional law enforcement personnel and prosecutors needed.

In general, I think that both evaluations have their place, and I think it would be interesting to watch a value-based case go up against a policy-based case. I would like to recommend not vehemently sticking with one and completely avoiding the other throughout the two-month cycle. Instead, explore and experiment with both, or write multiple cases for each side! (Just remember not to run both evaluations in the same round!) Personally, I would go for the value-based arguments because I like the narrative it presents and I like to leave solvency debates to Policy and Public Forum, but that's just my opinion. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions!

²² <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/compulsory>

Framing

by Rachael Harris and Zach Paganini

Introduction

As a debater, I (Zach) always had the most trouble finding a framework for my case. While making arguments wasn't easy by any means, at least I had an idea of how I wanted to do it and where to go. Frameworks, especially to debaters who don't have a lot of experience in LD, can seem weird and counterintuitive at times. Even though that was true, I found myself trying to set a framework in stone before putting my arguments into a case because I wanted my framework to best represent what the theme of my case was. This way, everything I told to the judge was consistent and flowed well. Rachael has a different way about constructing her case that she'll tell you about, which goes to show that there isn't just one way to go about deciding a framework, or any part of a case for that matter.

As a debater, I (Rachael) always enjoyed the framework. Typically, when the topic would first come out, I would spend the first week researching (mostly to give myself some background because I usually wouldn't know much). I would keep a running document where I pasted links and uncut cards (though sometimes I would cut them immediately if I felt particularly inclined). As I continued my research, I began to come up with ideas for arguments. After a while, I would try to group arguments together that I thought made sense or would present a strategic advantage. From there, I would begin finding a framework. This was usually the longest part of the process, and it would occasionally present quite the challenge. Before I knew several frameworks, it was hard to keep choosing from the same three. I agree with what Zach mentioned earlier, that framework can be very weird, which only added to the challenge.

If you're reading this topic analysis, there's a good chance you're looking for a framework that fits into your case. So, here are some framework ideas for both sides. When we say ideas, that's exactly what we mean. These are meant to be ideas that could be the foundation of a framework that you will then need to develop into a fully-fledged framework for a case.

Please note the following: Most of the framework ideas below include a very basic explanation of the philosophical theories they are based on. However, we have included some links for more in-depth explanations. When in doubt, reference the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy!

Affirmative Framing

- a. **Structural Violence.**²³ According to Robert Gilman, “structural violence is physical and psychological harm that results from exploitive and unjust social, political and economic systems.”²⁴ Structural Violence is a rights-based framework centered around the denial of human rights. I (Rachael) believe that this framework will be able to weigh some of the biggest problems in voting as we know it, especially due to voter suppression, which you could effectively argue would be solved by compulsory voting. (I also feel that you could gain access to this argument as voting has been a particularly politically oppressive structure of the past, as women and African Americans previously were not allowed to vote in the United States.) However, I do believe that the Negative would be able to link into this framework due to the Religious Oppression argument (so be wary of that).
- b. **Communitarianism.**²⁵ I (Rachael) think an argument could be made, similar to something like governmental legitimacy, that democracies need a strong core to survive. Democracies are a political community in which individuals are recognized as citizens and therefore can participate in political decision-making in some fashion. At a minimum, recognized citizens must be able to select decision-makers (read: politicians). I would argue that under a voluntary voting system, the core of democracy is weak, as voter turnout is often low. A low voter turnout can signify an unwillingness to politically participate, a disliking for the candidates, or a lack of confidence in political knowledge. Strengthening the core of democracy by building a community of politically active and knowledgeable citizens only serves to make it stronger and staying true to the crux of what a democracy is -- “for the people, by the people.”²⁶ Under this framework, you could run more theoretical arguments (i.e., voting is a

²³ References for SV:

Lecture Video (Part 1): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rKAGpIE4x4> (Start at 3:02)

Lecture Video (Part 2): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6tW0iGw1Lg>

A short article (PDF): http://www.opensourceleadership.com/documents/DO_Definitions.pdf

A longer article (web page): <https://thingofthings.wordpress.com/2015/03/15/structural-oppression-is-a-valid-concept/>

(More good definitions):

https://slutwalk.fandom.com/wiki/Concepts_of_Structural_Oppression:_A_General_Overview

²⁴ <https://www.context.org/iclib/ic04/gilman1/>

²⁵ References for Communitarianism:

Article: <https://icps.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs1736/f/downloads/Communitarianism.Etzioni.pdf>

SEP: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/communitarianism/>

²⁶ <https://www.politicalsciencenotes.com/democracy/democracy-definition-and-explanation/831/>

civic duty). The closest to policy-based arguments that I would run would be something along the lines of how compulsory voting increases voter turnout, but the impact would be a stronger democracy.

- c. **Utilitarianism (Maximizing Societal Welfare).**²⁷ There are two basic formulations of utilitarianism. The first is the greatest good for the greatest number, and the second is maximizing happiness. The former is what typically gets used in round. Since this is a pretty broad explanation, most people will narrow it down (i.e., “saving the most lives” or in this case “maximizing societal welfare”). I (Rachael) feel that maximizing societal welfare would be strategic on this topic, as the statistics do support it. Of democracies that use compulsory voting, many have a significant voter turnout. While Zach and I may not entirely believe that “util is trutil” for this topic, it can be beneficial if you have consequentialist impacts. Any argument that proves that compulsory voting is good for the greater majority of citizens in a democracy would be supported under this framework (i.e., voter turnout increases, which is good for the majority). I think if used strategically, societal welfare can make for a great case, as it is pretty intuitive, but I’m not sure that it would be my first choice.
- d. **Social Contract.**²⁸ While different philosophers have different social contracts (Locke, Rousseau, and Hobbes are good examples of that),

²⁷ References for util:

Kahn Academy (Part 1): <https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/wi-phi/wiphi-value-theory/wiphi-ethics/v/utilitarianism-part-1>

Kahn Academy (Part 2): <https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/wi-phi/wiphi-value-theory/wiphi-ethics/v/utilitarianism-part-2>

Kahn Academy (Part 3): <https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/wi-phi/wiphi-value-theory/wiphi-ethics/v/utilitarianism-part-3>

Crash Course Philosophy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-a739VjqdSI>

SEP: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/utilitarianism-history/>

Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/utilitarianism-philosophy>

Ethics Unwrapped: <https://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/glossary/utilitarianism>

²⁸ References for SC:

Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-contract>

Ethics Unwrapped: <https://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/glossary/social-contract-theory>

SEP: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/contractarianism-contemporary/>

here's a general explanation. Governments are created because people want to exit what Locke calls the pre-political state of nature, which is what life would be like without any overarching government. People agree to leave this state of nature and follow the laws of the government as long as the government follows certain conditions. What exactly those conditions may be differs from philosopher to philosopher, and this is actually where the social contract could go either way. The aff justification says that since a democracy is promising to its citizens that this is a government by the people and for the people, then any democracy has an obligation to guarantee that such government actually exists. Therefore, a democracy should do whatever it can to guarantee that as many citizens as possible are participating in government in some way, mainly voting.

Negative Framing

- e. **Governmental Legitimacy.**²⁹ Lately, I've started to see people use Governmental Legitimacy (GL) as a value criterion. While you're welcome to do that, I (Zach) would recommend that GL be used as a value due to how general it is. There are many different definitions and explanations that can be found for this. On this topic, it would be reasonable to argue that the goal of any democracy is to have legitimate authority to rule, which is a good justification for a value but not specific enough for a value criterion. What gives a government legitimate authority to rule? That is a pretty hard question to answer, and there has been fierce debate over that for hundreds of years. This seems like the perfect time to introduce a value criterion and explain how that makes a democracy

Khan Academy: <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-government-and-civics/us-gov-foundations/us-gov-ideals-of-democracy/v/thomas-hobbes-and-social-contract>

Crash Course Philosophy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Co6pNvd9mc>

Oxford Observer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Av6R8QfgZ48>

²⁹ References for GL:

SEP: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/legitimacy/>

Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/legitimacy>

Princeton: <https://pesd.princeton.edu/?q=node/255>

Loyola University: https://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/dccirp/pdfs/articlesforresourc/Article_-_Aragon_Trelles,_Jorge_2.pdf

Expository Video (Definition): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCs_hyI15R8

Crash Course Sociology: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCs_hyI15R8

legitimate. I (Rachael) believe that you should refrain from the “my value is governmental legitimacy and my value criterion is...” phrasing with this framework (and with any framework in general). You just presented a lot - let’s unpack all of it. Like Zach mentioned earlier, you need to explain what makes a government legitimate. This explanation is something that you cannot skip over and leave unanswered; it’s a pretty big question in the round. Make sure that your value criterion explicitly answers that question.

- f. **Liberty.**³⁰ Many would argue that a core value to any democracy is liberty. A government by the people and for the people is founded on the ideals that ordinary citizens should not only be able to control their own lives, but also control who they want to make key decisions in government. Liberty can also be justified as a part of the social contract I mentioned earlier. It isn’t unreasonable to argue the government has an obligation to uphold citizens’ liberty as much as it can since the citizens would have perfect liberty without a government in place. It’s hard to argue that affirming this resolution wouldn’t be limiting the liberty of the citizens, since compulsory voting takes away citizens’ freedom to abstain from voting in elections. However, there are some instances where a democracy is allowed to take away a citizen’s freedom for the sake of society as a whole
- g. **Autonomy.**³¹ In a discussion that Zach and I had, we concluded that Liberty and Autonomy were pretty similar, though the key distinction was that Liberty had more to do with rights and Autonomy was more in relation to free will. I believe that citizens have a right to choose whether or not to participate in a given election. While citizens may have the liberty or the freedom to express that right, I believe that there might be some autonomy in the decision to not express it insofar as you are expressing your right to peacefully protest or remain politically neutral. I believe that Autonomy Negatives have some ground, as the resolution implies a mandate upon all eligible voters in a democracy (in pretty much an “all-or-nothing” fashion).

³⁰ References for Liberty:

Annenberg Classroom: https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/glossary_term/liberty/

SEP: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/liberty-positive-negative/>

³¹ References for Autonomy:

SEP: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/autonomy-moral/> - ConAut

SEP Part II: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/personal-autonomy/>

Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/autonomy>

- h. Human Rights.**³² While I (Rachael) believe that this framing is a stretch at best, I think the core argument is still there. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes the phrase that representatives should be chosen “freely.”³³ I believe the Negative has access to saying that elections should be held freely, as it is included in the UDHR, especially since democracies exist to protect rights and should strive to protect human rights as much as they can. Not only that but the resolution does not specify a democracy in particular and technically the only authority higher than a democratic state would be the United Nations. Again, I think this link is sketchy at its highest ground, but with some theoretical arguments, it could be strengthened. (I also find it important to note that this framework will clash directly with a Structural Violence Affirmative).
- i. Rawlsian Ethics (Law of the Peoples).**³⁴ I (Rachael) think that this framework can be related to that of Liberty or Autonomy. Rawls proposes a Law of the Peoples, which has eight principles. The first of which is, “Peoples (as organized by their government) are free and independent, and their freedom and independence is to be respected by other peoples.” I think “independence” alludes to the Autonomy principle, that we, as citizens, should have the free will to exercise our right to remain politically neutral or to peacefully protest. I think “respected” alludes to the Liberty principle, that our government should not infringe upon our right to remain free and/or freely choose our representatives. I think this could be more of a theoretical framework, and it could be a good way to

³² References for Human Rights:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1xaL0VcqZljBB3Ob7KNmyH-WzRNeGhRHRq7BFtUPesUI/edit?usp=sharing>

<https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/human-rights/>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/pages/whatarehumanrights.aspx>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights/what-are-human-rights>

³³ <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

³⁴ Resources for LOP:

Purdue Lecture Video Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNS5Im0WZX8>

Purdue Lecture Video Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CuyBPGKBxOE>

Pacific University: <https://commons.pacificu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1031&context=eip>

Boston College Law School:

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d7c6/7853d41b62e45af96f6011da3d9df877a12e.pdf>

SEP: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rawls/> - LawPeoLibForPol

combine Liberty and Autonomy, though I think that they both have strategic advantages on their own.

Please keep in mind that these are not the only frameworks that can be used on either side of this resolution. Do not limit yourself to this list, as it is not exhaustive! These are the ones that we felt would be the most common or the most strategic on this topic.

As always, feel free to email either or both of us if you have any questions! Good luck!

Thoughts on Framing and Arguments

by Nicholas Protasiewicz³⁵ (Email: nhprotasiewicz@gmail.com)

This topic seems a solid way to ease into the debate season. It's pretty simple and clear-cut, and researching it will likely yield a lot of information that's timely and relevant outside of debate, given that we're in the wake of a rather consequential presidential election.

I don't have much to say about wording/phrasing, so I didn't make a full section out of it. I think the topic can be pretty cleanly interpreted through two related questions: First, do democratic governments have an obligation to mandate their citizens to vote? Second, is a world in which democracies require voting better or worse than the alternative? Debaters intending to make a consequentialist case will tie the second question to the first while those who follow a deontological route will want to separate the two and center the debate on the former.

I. What's the Deal with Democracy?

Aside from just specifying that we're talking about countries with electoral processes, the setting of democracy for the resolution introduces a couple interesting considerations.

First, is democracy even all that great? Or are we, as pretend policymakers, just trying to squeeze all that we can out of a flawed system with no better alternatives? Many debaters will likely use "democracy" as a value and assume that the goal of the round is to maximize democracy, whatever that may mean, but I wouldn't be afraid to push back on that framing if you find it strategic. Perhaps governments have some other obligations that supersede anything democracy-related; hardcore democracy may even be incompatible with meeting those obligations.

Second, assuming there is some good in democracy, how do you conceptualize the good of democracy? Is the value of democracy inherent? That is, would democracy still be valuable even if it produces undesirable outcomes? You might think of this view in terms of pluralism/diversity, or through a scheme of representation or political rights. Or is democracy useful only instrumentally, only insofar as it produces a society and governmental system that facilitates our quest for some higher end? The utility of political participation goes much deeper than one might think at first glance, reaching

³⁵ Nick has attended Classic Debate Camp all five years of its existence: The first three years he was a camper. Then in 2019 he crossed over and became an LD instructor. Nick just completed his second year on the CDC staff. He has the distinction of being the only LD debater to win the Ohio state title in back to back years, 2018 and 2019.

from the more obvious benefits such as checking abuses of power or allowing for the clash of ideas and values to less direct benefits such as reducing the incidence of terrorism or violent conflict. Maybe it's these goals that we really care about, not just the fact that people vote. If we have to eschew a little democracy on the way there, so be it. Another way to think of this overall question may be: How do you judge the success of "democracy"?

Third, because democracy is government "by the people," its operation is largely dependent on a given country's political culture or other confounding variables. The United States, for example, lies towards the diverse end of the diversity-homogeneity spectrum in terms of its population, and also is afflicted with great division in media and politics (related to foreign interference? Another country-specific factor). This claim leads me to a few thoughts on burdens:

If the affirmative takes a consequentialist route, it may be smart as the negative to press them on whether compulsory voting is really the way to achieve their desired ends, whatever they may be. Many countries without compulsory voting (e.g., Sweden) blow the US out of the water in terms of voter turnout, so it may be that there's a deeper problem that leads people to either not be registered to vote or not show up at the polls that can't be solved by simply threatening to punish those who fail to participate. In the same vein, one might find it useful to press the affirmative on whether compulsory voting is a tool that ought to be used universally among democracies, i.e., whether it is compatible with political cultures of all sorts. To once again use the United States as an example, we know that there tends to be a lot of pushback to forcing individuals to do anything (see the mask fiasco) since we're so liberty-minded (discussed more below). The negative could then make the corollary argument that it would be imprudent to make the categorical claim of compulsory voting being good, and with sufficient philosophical or practical harms in these odd cases, you could negate based on that. The conclusion that I come to regarding these burdens is that the job of the affirmative is to create a case based around something inherent to the idea of compulsory voting, as opposed to some generic benefit that may come about after forcing people to vote in certain countries (to me, ideally, this would be deontological, but you do you).

II. A Few Affirmative Positions

This is not a comprehensive list; these are just a few arguments I find interesting and worthwhile to consider that may also help you in your own brainstorming.

A. Voting as Responsibility

This argument takes the approach that democracy, or even government in general, necessitates a give and take, a balance of rights and responsibilities. There are obvious obligations one must take on in order to reap the benefits of society, like paying taxes (unless you're rich). However, I think that for this argument to be effective it should be

tied into the idea of rights as if they are two sides of the same coin. For example, citizens in the US have the right to a trial by a jury of their peers, but citizens are also served the obligation of jury duty. Some people may also refer to this responsibility as a sort of civic duty seen through the lens of a philosophy like civic republicanism.

Another formulation of this argument could be made using a framework of virtue ethics. Aristotle's conception of the state included the belief that the state ought to make its citizens better people, to cultivate virtue. In this way, compulsory voting could be seen to not only push citizens into doing something good for their nation through the act of voting, but also nudge individuals to become more politically informed and take on a larger role in their communities in the future. (An important distinction one should keep in mind regarding virtue ethics is that the value of an action comes not from the good that the action produces outside of the actor, but the effect the action has on the actor's character. So, yes, it is consequentialist in a sense, but not in the typical sense).

B. Voter Turnout Inherently Good

Like the responsibility argument, this argument could take several different forms. The one that comes to mind first is rooted in some value of diversity/pluralism/equality. In an abstract sense, this might mean that the inclusion of more votes and more voices in the electoral process is an intrinsic good, especially since the process is affecting the lives of those who vote in a drastic way. In a more real sense, the distinction between those who vote in a society and those who do not vote often coincides with other social identifiers such as race or class, and so compulsory voting could play a part in a larger effort to include voices of all types into policy-making and remove barriers to success based on factors out of one's control. (Note that you tread a fine line between deontology and consequentialism running this argument. If the end goal you base your case on is reducing inequalities in the real world, then you've made a consequentialist case that's susceptible to outweighing from a number of angles. If you make the case that the action itself of forcing voting has a quality to it that reflects diversity or equality, then you retain the moral high ground regardless of whether compulsory voting has x negative effects).

Another angle you could explore is one based in the idea of the social contract (not any one philosopher's description of the contract per se, but just the idea of an agreement or set of terms between citizens and their government which confers political authority onto a governing body). The most common critique of the "contract" philosophy is that regular people don't actually explicitly agree to be a part of a nation's contract; they're just born into a country and stuck with it (and as Nozick would say, tacit consent isn't worth the paper it's not written on). This lack of consent or choice on the part of the citizenry presents a practical problem in that the government now has all of the bargaining power in the relationship, but it also presents a philosophical problem in that if one party doesn't agree to the contract, the contract doesn't mean squat, and the government's authority to rule is essentially null. Compulsory voting could rectify this issue by forcing citizens to essentially read and accept (and edit) the terms and conditions of the social contract, refreshing the political legitimacy of the government.

But what if compulsory voting doesn't actually increase turnout? I talk about this a little more in the negative section, but I think it's entirely reasonable to assume that voter turnout will increase following compulsion (though, of course, not necessarily reach full capacity).

C. Consequentialism

There are undoubtedly a bunch of viable consequentialist arguments out there, but here are two I found interesting. First, by making voting not a "choice," actual barriers to voting for those who want to vote would be forced into the public light. Before, if someone had to work on election day, or their vote was being suppressed through whatever means, the government could avert their eyes and pretend those people just don't have an interest in voting. But if the government makes voting a priority, they may be forced to confront other socioeconomic or electoral issues that hinder turnout and democracy.

Second, by making all citizens vote, the government makes politicians and parties appeal to more people of all backgrounds and levels of political knowledge or affiliation, and so encourages policy to align with the beliefs and interests of average citizens to a greater extent. As it stands now, many of the people who tend to vote are people who tend to be more involved in politics anyway, and it's among the subgroup of college educated and politically activated "intellectuals" that more radical ideas tend to flourish, while ordinary citizens look on with bewilderment (see "abolish the police"). Compulsory voting should expand the voter base sufficiently to the point where politicians must move with the average rather than the outliers. An unrepresentative electorate also creates the dilemma wherein if large subsets of the people are underrepresented in government, politicians often don't fully understand the plight of these groups (e.g., it's tough to understand how screwy and convoluted the American welfare system is unless you or someone you're close to has gone through it), and so even if they had an electoral stake in serving them, they would be ill-equipped to do so. CV would hopefully increase representation of otherwise marginalized groups and mitigate this issue.

III. A Few Negative Positions

I would say that this list isn't comprehensive, but I don't think there are too many negative positions to take here. My hunch is that the best negatives will succeed with nuance and spin on stock arguments as well as strong framing and refutation.

A. Rights Necessitate Choice

If voting is a right (which it could not be, see the responsibility argument), then included in that right must be the ability to waive, or not exercise, that right. The

examples I would always use to demonstrate this principle back when I debated were that the government grants citizens (in the US) the rights to free speech and to bear arms, but the government doesn't force us either to speak or to own a gun; compulsory speech or mandatory gun ownership would be ridiculous and defeat the point of the "right."

Important to note is that the practicality or reasoning behind the waiving of the right is not central to it being a right. For example, there isn't a "logical" reason why someone would go their whole life without speaking, but it doesn't follow that they shouldn't have full access to the right to free speech. Similarly, affirmatives will surely argue that not voting is silly, or that everyone should vote, or something to that effect, but if you as the negative get bogged down in the rationale for not voting, you let the underlying "rights" argument become under-covered.

Although it may not be advisable or relevant to the argument, I actually think there's a case or two to be made for not voting. The classic reason for abstaining is as a "protest" if you don't support any of the candidates, but affirmatives will surely argue for some sort of "none of the above" option on ballots, which I think is totally reasonable. I think the idea of protesting needs to be construed as not a protest to the candidates, but rather a protest to the system (please elaborate what the "system" is if you actually make this argument), since even selecting none of the above implies that you're fine with the system at large, just not the candidates appointed to run it. Another way you could frame this argument is through the lens of the social contract as discussed above. Even voting for a "lesser of two evils" candidate allows said candidate to claim legitimacy from all of the votes they receive, which may be philosophically problematic depending on what they do in office. One final argument here draws another analogy from 2A. A reason a number of people don't own guns is that they haven't been properly trained or they don't feel that they would wield one properly/responsibly. Though the notion that voting requires some conventional education or training is troubling, someone who has not followed politics at all for years may not feel that their vote would be well placed, and so choose to abstain.

B. Consequentialism

Here are two quick consequentialist arguments: First, compulsory voting would force uninformed voters to vote, which could result in politicians less likely to perform well. This argument makes the strongest callback to the instrumentally valuable democracy conception described toward the beginning of this analysis. If voting is only useful insofar as it produces incumbents more likely to serve the public interest effectively, then democracy would be stronger if politically apathetic or uninformed citizens could opt out of voting (though an affirmative could also make the potentially truthful claim that an average Joe may have a more clear-headed or reasonable opinion about politics than someone deeply immersed in political circles or echo chambers).

Second, compulsion builds resentment among voters. Like mentioned earlier, this phenomenon may be only apparent from a US perspective, but I predict a number of debaters will make this claim and apply it to other countries. An interesting (though not the only) impact of this argument, though, could be that if enough individuals ignore the voting requirement or submit trashed ballots out of resentment, compulsion could lower

voter turnout or at least effective turnout. I think this is rather unlikely and that the number of non-voters complying with compulsion would be greater than the voters flipped to nonvoters by resentment, and so the affirmative can assume (or fiat) that voter turnout in the affirmative world is higher than in the negative world, but you never know. You could always do a before and after of countries that actually have compulsory voting.

A final resource: I took a class this past spring semester literally called “Voters and Elections,” and I figured some of the readings from the class might be useful to you all in prepping (or they might just be interesting). Here’s a link to a google drive with the documents.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1m5JCUhFlSKq8U7rKBm4xxHEd4GlYd1Lv?usp=sharing>

And as always, feel free to email me with any questions or if you want a case reviewed. Good luck debating! :)

Framing—A Philosophic Approach
by Dan Driscoll³⁶ (dvdisc1114@gmail.com)

Below, I've compiled some of my thoughts on the upcoming LD resolution. I cannot say that there will be much here in terms of policy or pragmatics—the following are baskets of big ideas, themes of arguments that may serve to grant some persuasive force to the framework you'll be cooking up. Most of these themes center on a certain philosophic question that the resolution seeks to answer. It is my opinion that the best debaters are the ones who are able to identify those points of philosophic clash and make it clear and comprehensible for the judge. Some of these questions might include: What does democracy entail? What is voting, and how does it tie into the project of ethics? What do ethics and politics have to do with one another? What are the obligations of government? A good debater is one who can identify which of these questions has become important in a given round. A great debater is one who can bring the debate to bear on one of these questions and explain cogently to the judge why the question flows to their advocacy.

I. AFFIRMATIVE

A. Assurance of rights: The big idea here is that there is a major difference between claiming a people has a formal right to something and facilitating the means by which that right is exercised. The argument hinges on the notion that these are actually two fundamentally different projects: (1) protecting the right itself and (2) ensuring it can be accessed. Both are the responsibility of liberal governments, but more often than not, western liberal democracies tend to promote the former at the expense of the latter. Let's consider an example. Formally, I have the right to a driver's license—however, if there is no DMV within walking distance, and my city doesn't provide public transportation, then the "right to a driver's license" means very little. If rights are nominally protected but not assured in practice, then rights language is reduced to empty rhetoric.

There is, of course, the idea of a totally minimal government, one that does not provide me with the means to achieving the rights they nominally protect, but spends its energy and resources solely on ensuring that my rights are not infringed upon. In theory, such a libertarian nation-state might sound ideal. Indeed, government is—at best—a necessary evil. Still, the idea that government exists for the sake of protecting rights and not assuring them is totally fallacious. We are constantly called upon to not only protect the rights of others but to fully realize the rights that have been provided for us. All sorts

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of compulsory action, from seat belt laws to military conscriptions, can be understood as a liberal government “forcing its citizens to be free,” in a sense. All in all, the idea here is that government can’t just protect a right in theory without defending it in practice, so values such as **JUSTICE** or **GOVERNMENTAL LEGITIMACY** could work well here, since we’re talking about the fundamental obligations of democratic government. The next type of framework argument is closely related to this one.

B. Mitigating structural oppression: There can be no debate that even in western liberal democracies, and especially in the United States, the laws surrounding voting procedure are designed in ways that systemically exclude certain marginalized communities from the election process. There are, for instance, striking levels of inequity between wealthy white communities and less well-off communities of color, thanks to policies that require literacy tests, up to date identification, and formal home addresses—not to mention that voting is not a healthy financial decision if you’re paid by the hour. The result is that the voices of these marginalized communities remain in the periphery—their needs and concerns serve as padding material for liberal platforms—after the election, those concerns are themselves pushed to the periphery—and the needs of communities in most dire need of aid are all but forgotten.

Compulsory voting would disrupt the cycle of marginalization and, with any luck, mitigate structural oppression in western liberal democracies. The big idea here is that if voting is compulsory, then governments would have a more difficult time justifying these policies of exclusion. It also seems like Election Day would have to be a national holiday. There is an argument to be made that all of the above described policies of exclusion would be undermined by the notion that each and every person is legally required to make their voice heard.

The extension is that some places literally do not have the adequate resources and facilities for their communities to vote in full. This is the connection to the last argument about assuring a right in practice, not just formally declaring it exists. The COVID-19 pandemic in the United States provides a really clear example of this. Communities in southern states like Georgia and South Carolina, as well as those all across the country, found that they did not have the hospital space to meet the growing demand for care when the pandemic began raging. Indeed, there are entire towns in the south and elsewhere that do not have a community hospital. The idea is that, regardless of whether or not there is some unspoken right to medical care in this country (although the government, as with voting, feels no obligation to assure that right for each citizen), *the infrastructure for the realization of such a right simply does not exist*. One major argument for universal healthcare in recent months addresses this problem. It’s not just about making sure that each person has coverage—it’s about ensuring that our communities have the infrastructure necessary to adequately serve them. The same is true of compulsory voting. The government would not be able to mandate such a practice without providing the infrastructure necessary to ensure it is carried out. The values of **JUSTICE** and **GOVERNMENTAL LEGITIMACY** would work here as well, since most of us tend to think that liberal governments should ensure that liberties and offices are

open and available to all. From that perspective, there may be a Rawlsian “ensure the benefit of the least well-off” justification of the liberal welfare state.

There may also be an argument about how those marginalized communities are now given another tool in their tool box—a collective voice, in an electoral setting—in addition to protesting, civil action, public interest defense, and public opinion. Be careful though: this could easily become an instance of patronization, paternalism, or white saviorism. If you want to make this sort of liberation argument, be sure to consider how it relates to your own identity, and how you can make the argument in the most respectful terms possible. I’ll add (just from my personal perspective) that there is a real problem with debaters taking on positions of liberation for the sake of winning a debate round, but not acting on liberatory politics in their own day-to-day lives. So, all in all, think really hard about whether or not this is an argument you really believe in before deploying someone else’s life and experiences to win a piece of plastic.

C. Increased dissent: There’s plenty of classical liberal argumentation (consider Locke’s *A Letter Concerning Tolerance* and Mill’s *On Liberty*) which asserts that public dissent, debate, and discussion are inherently good. The big idea is that voting is a decision and, ultimately, a public one. Regardless of whether or not that physical act of voting is done in private, it is a decision that affects the public realm, and as such, it is a decision that one can be held accountable for by one’s community. As such, voting as a decision is an exercise in rational agency—that human capacity to envision and weigh between given ends. Rational agency, to the classic liberal, is what separates us from the other forms of life: vegetative plants and appetitive animals. When we exercise our rational agency, we are doing something like “fulfilling our purpose.” As such, there may be links to a value like **HUMAN DIGNITY** from this type of argument.

Of course, the value isn’t merely inherent. There is some extrinsic, or consequential, value to this line of argument as well. The first is that an increase in public discourse would see an increase in the correction of wrong opinion. Those who listen attentively to others will often find fault in their own internal logic. Second, dissent may further justify true beliefs. If I have an opinion which I take to be true, and it is true, when I hear a dissenting opinion in public and weigh it against my own true opinion, I will be ever more justified and convicted in my true belief. Finally, public dissent assures that there is some public conversation surrounding the obligations of individuals, communities, and governments. There are plenty in our society who never engage with these types of questions because they are never required to make a serious decision with respect to them. Compulsory voting ensures that each individual feels a greater sense of responsibility and, as such, western liberal governments may actually be held more accountable by those they govern.

D. Authority of communal obligations: One major problem with modern western liberal democracies is that they command very little authority. The crux of the argument is that many people feel justified shirking civic duty (for example, searching for any and all tax loopholes) and disregarding health and safety restrictions (for example, not

wearing a mask in public during a pandemic) because they do not feel responsible for the state that the country is in. These are not the people who have been systemically marginalized as mentioned above—this is a population who has chosen to disenfranchise themselves for the sake of individualism. “I don’t have to concern myself with communal obligations,” they think, “because I don’t exercise my communal privileges. This isn’t my government—I didn’t vote them in—as such, their rules don’t apply to me.” This type of internal logic, while flawed already (since we are always already enjoying the privileges that communal life provides) would not be possible in a state where voting is compulsory. You, just like everyone else, take on an equal share of the praise or blame. You have exercised your communal privileges to the same extent as everyone else. As such, you may not make an exception for yourself with regards to communal obligations. I’m imagining a value criterion like **COMMUNITARIANISM**, or something that describes why communal obligations are important and why the government is bound by them.

E. Facilitating Samaritan duty: The final basket of Affirmative arguments has to do with something called the Samaritan duty. It is based on a utilitarian theory popularized by contemporary ethicist Peter Singer. To paraphrase Singer, “When you have the capacity to increase the quality of life for a neighbor at little or no cost to yourself, you are obligated to do so.” If you are a healthy adult, for example, and you come across a child who is drowning in a lake next to you, you are obligated to try to save their life. Arguing that you would ruin your expensive suit in doing so is surely not adequate justification for inaction.

This is what voting is. The idea is that by making a choice you are instantiating your own ethical judgements about the world. You are saying, “This is how it ought to be.” As such, voting inherently contains the notion that you are increasing quality of life. The real crux of the argument is that government should not hinder our ability to meet our Samaritan duty—in fact, it should facilitate our ability to do so. As such, voting should be compulsory because it not only allows each of us to increase the collective quality of life, but because the government’s obligation is to ensure we are able to do so. This would likely have a similar value to the ones mentioned above.

II. NEGATIVE

A. Protection of rational agency: There are plenty of affirmatives that will make the argument that voting ought to be compulsory since individual rationality / decision-making / choice is in and of itself valuable. But these types of arguments ignore the fact that the act of voting itself—and not just whom one decides to vote for—is a matter of choice. In the same way that we might utilize our rational agency in order to choose the candidate that we most agree with, we likewise use our rational agency to decide whether or not we will participate in the electoral process at all. Even in times of military conscription, citizens have been able to pull themselves out of consideration for reasons

of personal moral convictions. Seeing as voting is most often a choice for the lesser of two evils, it seems entirely plausible that someone would choose to abstain on moral grounds from voting for any candidate. Any affirmative that seems to value choice and rationality would be inconsistent, from a philosophical perspective, if they did not allow abstention from voting: “the choice to not make a choice,” if you will. A compelling value / criterion pair could be one of my personal favorites from my high school LD days: **JUSTICE** with **PROMOTING RATIONAL AGENCY**. For more on the notion of rational agency, see Christine Korsgaard of Harvard.

B. Bio-power: There is, of course, the argument that government is not able to compel me to do anything at all. The big idea is that government exists not for the sake of maximizing my privileges but for protecting my individual rights. That means that the government can prevent me from doing certain things, or taking advantage of certain liberties—but it does not mean that the government can tell me what to do. This argument should include rhetoric to the tune of saying that only the individual is able to decide what is right for them (this could come from a situational ethics perspective, or perhaps from using the rational agency framework described above). This sort of notion can be called bio-power, which says that the machine of the body is only rightfully operated by the mind which inhabits it and that, while it may be advised or recommended that I choose some course of action, ultimately the decision is and ought to be my own.

What’s more, the ways in which the government is allowed to limit my own liberties is minimal. Government has to prove that, if I were to exercise these liberties, that I would harm someone else—either physically, or in their ability to pursue their own liberties, privileges, and ends. This is called the Harm Principle. John Stuart Mill envisioned it as a means of justifying the limitations that government will inevitably place on, say, theft or murder. But the Harm Principle cannot justify compulsory voting.

Indeed, government is only justified in limiting my liberties in very extreme cases. To jump from what I am not allowed to do, to what I am forced to do, there would have to be a very serious amount of work done by the affirmative to justify not only the further restriction of liberty, but the invasion of a person’s own bio-power. As such, a framework that includes **LIBERTY** or **HUMAN DIGNITY** could be beneficial here.

C. Voting as placation: I’ll say right off the bat that this would be a difficult argument to make in the round. Revolutionary politics will always spur reaction, and reaction requires in-depth explanation—that is to say, it would frankly be very difficult for a novice debater to present this type of argument in round and expect to be able to explain it in such a way that a lay judge would feel comfortable voting for it. Regardless, this may be what you truly believe with regards to the topic—or else, you’re a junior or senior and you’re interested in making more out of the box political theory arguments. If that’s you, read on.

There is an argument to be made that, in western liberal democracies, voting actually does very little to change or disrupt the status quo. Our elections are more often

than not a decision between two parties that, fundamentally, differ very little in their respect for liberal capitalism and global imperialism. In the United States, at least, it seems that the only clear difference between the GOP and DNC is that the former is interested in making the racism in this country more explicit and obvious, while the latter would serve to maintain racism's status as systemic and guised. Elections are bought and paid for by super PACs. The process by which the campaigns of politicians are funded primarily by private corporations and then those politicians are offered private sector positions upon completion of their terms means that constituents' needs are rarely cause for true concern. And beyond all of this, each individual politician is a shill for the party platform as a whole.

In response to the protests and riots surrounding the murder of George Floyd, many made assertions such as "Protest and unrest are unjustified—these people should just vote in November." The real meat of the argument can be seen in phrases like this. Most people get the idea that voting fulfills their civic duty. There is no need for further dissent or action. Protest and civil disobedience are not only unnecessary but unjustified, since government allows us certain legitimate means of lodging complaint and, as such, all other forms of doing so are illegitimate. Compound all of this with the notion that voting is actually the least likely of any form of democratic participation to disrupt the status quo—there is even an argument to be made that, in western liberal democracies, voting serves to maintain the status quo in that it does very little to disrupt the political structure. The final extension is that voting, in fact, placates a people and makes them less likely to utilize other methods of lodging dissent. As such, compulsory voting would result in an overall decrease in democratic participation. This argument could utilize a really interesting criterion that could turn the Aff advocacy—something like ***ENSURING DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION***, if you want to be cheeky, just defining democratic participation as a toolbox where voting is only one of the tools.

Key

I cut the cards how I would consider reading them in round. I do suggest that you re-cut them yourself, especially because it forces you to read more of the card and to know the context.

1. Cards

- a. **Bold, underlined, and yellow highlighted** – parts of the card that I would definitely read (i.e., supporting evidence to the claim or tagline)
- b. **Underlined** – parts of the card that I would read if there is enough time and to provide additional context
- c. **Text bold, underlined, green highlighted, and boxed in** – the minimum I'd read in order to convey the argument quickly
- d. **[Rachael here:]** = a note from me to you or my commentary on a card.

2. Blocks

- a. **A2** – answer to (i.e., a block); this blocks an argument
- b. **F2** – a frontline to (i.e., a block to a block); this blocks an A2 a claim
- c. **B2** – a backline to (i.e., a block to a block to a block); this is an A2 a frontline
- d. **I2** – an indictment (i.e., a reason to question the credibility of the source)

“Team A’s Argument → Team B’s Block → Team A’s Frontline → Team B’s Backline”
– Candor Debate

3. Block Tagging (adapted from Candor Debate)

- a. **[NL]** – No Link (i.e., your opponent’s argument does not occur); the link from one claim to another does not exist. An example of this type of response would be “X does not lead to a recession”
- b. **[LT]** – Link Turn (i.e., changing the way an argument relates to a case; changing the source of an impact). An example of this type of response would be your opponent saying that “not solving for the U.S. federal debt increases the chance of a recession.” A link turn would be “not solving for the U.S. federal debt *decreases* the chance of a recession, as we prioritize stimulating economic growth...”
- c. **[IT]** – Impact Turn (i.e., changing the merit of an impact). It is important to note that an impact turn concedes the impact at hand. An example of this type of response would be your opponent saying that “increasing the U.S. federal debt increases the chance of a recession, which is harmful for the economy.” An impact turn would be “increasing the U.S. federal debt does increase the chance of a recession, but this is not harmful for the economy.”
 - i. **I find it important to note that you should not double turn.**
What I mean by this statement is that you should not read a link turn and an impact turn on the same part of an argument. With the

examples provided above, a double turn would look like: “not solving for the U.S. federal debt *decreases* the chance of a recession, but even if you don’t buy that argument, realize that increasing U.S. federal debt does increase the chance of a recession but it is not harmful for the economy.” Essentially, these two responses are contradictory and take away from the point that you are trying to prove.

- ii. You can, however, read two turns, but they *must* be on two different parts of the argument.

4. Abbreviations

- a. Any time that I reference Compulsory Voting in a heading, I will abbreviate it to “CV” but I will use the full phrase in the tagline.

Definitions

I believe that definitions are very important to framing the debate. Oftentimes, the definition of a key word or phrase could change the way that evidence is evaluated. Depending on the judge, I recommend being conscious of how you define key words. For example, with a less experienced judge, I would define most of the terms intuitively (i.e., definitions that the common person might know or agree to). However, with a more experienced judge, I know that I could probably be a bit more specific (note: not abusive) with my definitions.

Looking back, I eventually realized that judges were not particularly fond of definition debates. As a result, I would define the one term that I knew other debaters would use to skew or narrow the round. I usually used an intuitive definition for this term or phrase, as it was usually easier to convince the judge of.

As a judge, I will say that any longer than a minute spent on the definition debate is a bit too long. As mentioned previously, the definitions can frame the debate. For example, the March-April topic of 2018 (Resolved: The United States ought to implement a Universal Basic Income). Defining and characterizing a UBI in case was preferable to spending most of my 1AR explaining it.

In regard to this resolution, I believe that “democracy” and even potentially “compulsory voting” will be two key terms to define. I feel that a definition of democracy as relating to “for the people, by the people” will be intuitive and will also allow you to access voting as a right to encourage political participation. I also believe that in the framework, you could specify that the goal of a democracy is to encourage and maximize political participation. The reason that I feel “compulsory voting” would be an important term to define is because incorporating a legal element to voting raises the questions of “Who enforces this law?” and “How do we enforce this law?”

Democracy

Democracy is for the people, by the people.

MacMillan Dictionary

Turner, J. (2017). Voting. In MacMillan Dictionary. Place of publication not identified: Routledge.

<https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/democracy>

“A system of government in which people vote in elections to choose the people who will govern them.”

Oxford Dictionary

Fowler, H. W. (1949). Democracy. In The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English Oxford Dictionary. Oxford: Clarendon.

<https://www.lexico.com/definition/democracy>

“A system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives.”

Cambridge Dictionary

Landau, S. I. (2000). Democracy. In Cambridge Dictionary of American English. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press.

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/democracy>

“The belief in freedom and equality between people, or a system of government based on this belief, in which power is either held by elected representatives or directly by the people themselves.”

Merriam Webster

Webster, N. (1949). Democracy. In Webster's New Handy Dictionary: A Merriam-Webster: Based upon Webster's New International Dictionary. New York: American Book.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/democracy>

“Government by the people”

Democracy derives its legitimacy from popular political participation.

Democracy. 2017. “Democracy: Definition and Explanation.” Political Science Notes

<https://www.politicalsciencenotes.com/democracy/democracy-definition-and-explanation/831/>

“David Held, a renowned authority on the concept, defines the term as ‘**Democracy means a form of government in which, in contradistinction monarchies and aristocracies, the people rule. Democracy entails a political community in which there is some form of political equality among the people.**’ Precisely stated, **democracy is the rule by the people.** Of all the definitions of democracy perhaps the best and most popular definition is the following: It is called ‘**the government of the people, by the people and for the people.**’”

Larry Diamond. 2004. “What is Democracy?” Stanford.

<https://diamond-democracy.stanford.edu/speaking/lectures/what-democracy>

“I want to begin with an overview of what democracy is. We can think of democracy as a system of government with four key elements:

- 1. A political system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections.**
- 2. The active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life.**
- 3. Protection of the human rights of all citizens.**
- 4. A rule of law, in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens.**

I want to talk about each of these four elements of what democracy is. Then I will talk about the obligations and requirements of citizens in a democracy. Then I will conclude by talking about the obligations that we, the international community, have to the people of Iraq as you seek to build the first true democracy in the Arab world.”

Michael Coleman. “The Meaning of Democracy.” DLC.

<https://dlc.dcccd.edu/usgov1-1/the-meaning-of-democracy>

“**Democracy is a system of government that bases its legitimacy on the participation of the people.** While democratic governments come in many varieties, they are uniformly characterized by (1) competitive elections, (2) the principle of political and legal equality, and (3) a high degree of individual freedom, or civil liberties. **Due to reliance on elections, democracies have as their default principle the concept of majority rule.** However, one of the dominant tensions running through democratic societies is the balance struck between the will of the majority and minority rights. The compromise between these two principles differs in different democratic states.”

[Rachael here:] Just a reminder, this resolution is only asking debaters to defend countries, states, or organizations that resemble democracies.

Voting

To vote is to show your choice.

MacMillan Dictionary

Turner, J. (2017). Voting. In MacMillan Dictionary. Place of publication not identified: Routledge.

https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/vote_1?q=voting

“To show your choice of a person or an issue in an election”

To vote is the right to show your choice.

Oxford Dictionary

Fowler, H. W. (1949). Voting. In The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English Oxford Dictionary. Oxford: Clarendon.

<https://www.lexico.com/definition/vote>

“A formal indication of a choice between two or more candidates or courses of action expressed typically through a ballot or a show of hands”

“The right to register a choice in an election”

To vote is to show your interest or to endorse.

Merriam Webster

Webster, N. (1949). Voting. In Webster's New Handy Dictionary: A Merriam-Webster: Based upon Webster's New International Dictionary. New York: American Book.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/voting>

“To choose, **endorse**, decide the disposition of, defeat, or authorize **by vote**”

“To vote in accordance with or **in the interest of**”

“A usually formal expression of opinion or will in response to a proposed decision”

To vote is to express your will, preference, or choice.

Black's Law Dictionary

Garner, B. A., & Black, H. C. (2019). VOTE. In Black's Law Dictionary. St. Paul, MN: Thomson Reuters.

<https://thelawdictionary.org/vote/>

“The **expression of** his **will, preference, or choice**, formally manifested by a member of a legislative or deliberative body, or of a constituency or a body of qualified electors, in regard to the decision to be made by the body as a whole upon any proposed measure or proceeding, or the selection of an officer or representative. And the aggregate of the expressions of will or choice, thus manifested by individuals, is called ‘vote of the body.’”

[**Rachael here:**] I think all of these definitions are fine. They each show that the citizen has some political interest and is willing to bridge the gap between citizens and politicians.

Ought

The use of the word “ought” in the resolution suggests a moral obligation.

Merriam Webster

Webster, N. (1949). Ought. In Webster's New Handy Dictionary: A Merriam-Webster: Based upon Webster's New International Dictionary. New York: American Book.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ought>

“**Moral obligation** or duty”

“Used to say or suggest what **should** be done”

The use of the word “ought” in the resolution suggests what could be done.

Oxford Dictionary

Fowler, H. W. (1949). Ought. In The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English Oxford Dictionary. Oxford: Clarendon.

<https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/ought>

“Used to indicate that something is **probable**”

[Rachael here:] I really only suggest using this definition with a pragmatism (or feasibility) framework.

Compulsory

Compulsory voting is mandatory.

Merriam Webster

Webster, N. (1949). Compulsory. In Webster's New Handy Dictionary: A Merriam-Webster: Based upon Webster's New International Dictionary. New York: American Book.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/compulsory>

“**Mandatory**, enforced”

“Coercive, **Compelling**”

Compulsory voting would be required by law.

Cambridge Dictionary

Landau, S. I. (2000). Compulsory. In Cambridge Dictionary of American English. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press.

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/compulsory>

“(of something) that must be done; **necessary by law** or a rule”

The use of the word “ought” in the resolution denotes a moral obligation, and that obligation is for citizens to vote in a democracy, as compulsory is defined as being obligatory.

Oxford Dictionary

Fowler, H. W. (1949). Compulsory. In The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English Oxford Dictionary. Oxford: Clarendon.

<https://www.lexico.com/definition/compulsory>

“Required by law or a rule; **obligatory**.”

[**Rachael here:**] I personally like this definition because it links together the two definitions of “ought” and “compulsory” while simultaneously opening the door for a morality framework.

General Evidence

What is Compulsory Voting?

Boundless. The Definition of Compulsory Voting in Political Science. No Date.

<http://oer2go.org/mods/en-boundless-static/www.boundless.com/definition/compulsory-voting/index.html>

“Compulsory voting is a system in which electors are obliged to vote in elections or attend a polling place on voting day. If an eligible voter does not attend a polling place, he or she may be subject to punitive measures, such as fines, community service, or perhaps imprisonment if fines are unpaid or community service not performed.”

FindLaw. 3-16-2020. “What Is Compulsory Voting?” Findlaw.

<https://www.findlaw.com/voting/how-u-s--elections-work/what-is-compulsory-voting-.html>

“Compulsory voting occurs when a state or nation requires all of its citizens to vote. In many countries today, voting is required by law. But in most cases, the penalty for not complying is so mild that the term ‘compulsory’ is a bit of a misnomer.”

[Rachael here:] Essentially, compulsory voting is the idea that voting is mandatory for all citizens who are eligible to vote. Most countries that employ compulsory voting do not have consequences for not voting and if they do, they have not been enforced recently. Australia is one of the few democracies with a strong compulsory voting system that is actually enforced.

What Does the UDHR Say?

United Nations General Assembly. 1948. Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

<https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

“Article 21.

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”

[Rachael here:] In my opinion, since this article uses the word “freely,” it directly refutes the crux of compulsory voting, which is mandated. As citizens of a democracy, we have the right to participate in fair and freely held elections; it should never become a mandate upon us to vote. I am not certain that this is an argument that I would use in my case if I were debating this topic, but I find it to be relevant information to have.

Countries That Have Compulsory Voting

(And what to make of them)

22 nations have mandatory voting.

Santhanam 2014

Laura Santhanam. Lara Santhanam is the Data Producer for the PBS News Hour and is the recipient of the American Psychoanalytic Association's 2020 Award for Excellence in Journalism. 11-3-2014. "22 Countries Where Voting Is Mandatory," PBS NewsHour.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/22-countries-voting-mandatory>

"22 nations around the world make voting mandatory for its citizens," often starting at age 18, according to the CIA World Factbook. Several of these countries are in Latin America with a handful allowing citizens to age out of compulsory voting by as early as age 65. In Australia, failure to vote can result in a \$20 fine, The New York Times reported.

Altogether, an estimated 744 million people live in nations with compulsory voting laws.

Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Honduras, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mexico, Nauru, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Singapore, Thailand, [and] Uruguay" [listed from a data table].

And, of the 22 countries that voting is mandatory in, only 19 are electoral democracies and of *those*, only nine strictly enforce it.

Brett 2019

Judith Brett. Judith Brett is an Emeritus Professor of politics at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia. Her 2017 biography of Alfred Deakin won the 2018 National Biography Award. 3-4-2019. "Book extract: From Secret Ballot to Democracy Sausage." Conversation.

<https://theconversation.com/book-extract-from-secret-ballot-to-democracy-sausage-112695>

"Not many countries compel their citizens to vote, but Australia is one. Voting is compulsory in 19 of the world's 166 electoral democracies and only nine strictly enforce it. None of Europe's most influential democracies has it, and none of the countries in the mainstream of Australia's political development: not the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, New Zealand or Ireland."

Even so, voter turnout is not even a full 100%.

AEC 19

Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). 12-10-2019. "Voter turnout – previous events."

https://www.aec.gov.au/elections/federal_elections/voter-turnout.htm

Take Australia for example. According to the Australian Electoral Commission, during their last election in 2019, voter turnout was just above 90%. [link above]

[Rachael here:] I do not believe that there is a card to be cut from this, but I still think that it is a great resource to have on this topic. The CIA World Factbook does a great job listing every country and its voting status (universal, restricted, or compulsory), and it even includes the age at which these voting statuses occur! I very strongly recommend that you read this source thoroughly or at least have it open for reference while you research. I think that it is a great resource to have on-hand in a round on a topic like this, especially for a quick reference. You can check it out here:
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/fields/311.html>

Democracies Use Utilitarianism to Make Policy Decisions

[AFF]

Based on the knowledge that public officials are presented with, utilitarianism is the only moral calculus.

Goodin 90

Robert Goodin. Fellow in philosophy, Australian National Defense University. 1990. The Utilitarian Response. p. 141-2 Annabelle Kim.

<https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/251475>

“My larger argument turns on the proposition that **there is something special about the situation of public officials that makes utilitarianism more probable for them than private individuals**. Before proceeding with the large argument, I must therefore say what it is that makes it so special about public officials and their situations that make it both more necessary and more desirable for them to adopt a more credible form of utilitarianism. Consider, first, the argument from necessity. **Public officials are obliged to make their choices under uncertainty**, and uncertainty of a very special sort at that. All choices – public and private alike – are made under some degree of uncertainty, of course. But in the nature of things, private individuals will usually have more complete information on the peculiarities of their own circumstances and on the ramifications that alternative possible choices might have for them. Public officials, in contrast, (and) are relatively poorly informed as to the effects that their choices will have on individuals, one by one. **What they typically do know are generalities: averages and aggregates**. They know what will happen most often to most people as a result of their various possible choices, but that is all. **That is enough to allow public policymakers to use the utilitarian calculus** – assuming they want to use it at all – to choose general rules or conduct.”

Woller 97

Gary Woller. PhD in Political Science from the University of Rochester, Chief of PEEL Party, and Director of Monitoring and Evaluation. 1997. “Trade-offs Between Social and Financial Performance.” BYU ScholarsArchive.

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/esr/vol9/iss2/5/>

“Moreover, virtually all **public policies entail** some **redistribution of** economic or political **resources**, such that **one group's gains must come at another group's expense**. Consequently, **public policies in a democracy must be justified to the public**, and especially to those who pay the costs of those policies. Such justification cannot simply be assumed a priori by invoking some higher-order moral principle[s]. Appeals to a priori moral principles, such as environmental preservation, also often fail to

acknowledge that public policies inevitably [and] entail trade-offs among competing values. Thus since policymakers cannot justify inherent value conflicts to the public in any philosophical sense, and since public policies inherently imply winners and losers, the policymakers' duty to the public interest requires them to demonstrate that the redistributive effects and value trade-offs implied by their policies are somehow to the overall advantage of society."

[Rachael here:] I believe that this evidence can be used in many different situations, though I think it is very beneficial on the affirmative. I feel that the affirmative has access to the argument that compulsory voting strengthens and consolidates democracy because more voices are being represented in politics, which is to the overall advantage of all citizens. I believe that the argument could also be made that a stronger democracy is beneficial in an international setting. As policymakers can see that this has a large-scale impact and will benefit the majority of people, they would want to implement a compulsory voting policy. With some magnitude impacts, this could be a very strong affirmative advocacy.

States Aren't Moral Actors [NEG]

Moral agents must possess a sense of intentionality. Therefore, we state storms are not morally responsible for any damage they cause. States lack the type of intentionality required for moral agency.

Gerson 2007

Lloyd Gerson. Professor of Philosophy at the University of Toronto, author of *Aristotle and Other Platonists*, *Plotinus*, *From Plato to Platonism*, *Knowing Persons*, and *Platonism and Naturalism*. 2007. "The Morality of Nations: An Aristotelian Approach." Published in *Aristotle's Politics Today*, compiled by Lenn E. Goodman and Robert B. Talisse. Albany: SUNY Press.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297275892_The_morality_of_nations_An_Aristotelian_approach

"Having said this, I still think that the argument that seeks to include nations within the class of moral agents on the basis of intentionality is a weak one. Here is why. There is an ambiguity in the term 'intentionality' that this argument exploits. **In the sense in which nations have intentionality, the attribution of moral agency does not follow.** In the sense of intentionality according to which moral agency does follow, this argument does not show that nations have that. **Intentionality in the first sense can characterize any goal-directed behavior** and can also be applied to any behavior that is understandable in the light of that goal. **For example, it is perfectly reasonable to say that a squirrel is gathering nuts for the purpose of eating throughout the winter,** or that the rattle of the snake's tail shows that it intends to strike, or that the field mouse is trying to get into the house in the autumn in order to keep warm, or that the chess-playing robot is *trying* to pin down my knight. **But the sense of intentionality that applies to such goal-directed behavior by agents obviously does not indicate moral agency. Intentionality in the second sense, the sense according to which its applicability does imply moral agency, is something else. In this sense, intentionality refers first and foremost to the self-awareness of the presence of the purpose and the self-awareness of the mental states leading to its realization. That is, of course, precisely why we refrain from claiming that someone is responsible for her actions when she is *unaware* of what she is doing, especially when she could not have been aware. The acknowledgement of self-awareness is necessary for the attribution of moral agency.** I would in fact argue that all and only nondefective human beings have this ability to be self-aware. But that is not my point here. There *may* be agents other than human beings that are moral agents. My present point is that **a group of human beings, such as the group that comprise a nation, cannot be self-aware in this way and therefore cannot be a moral agent.**"

[Rachael here:] Similar to the previous piece of evidence, I feel that this evidence could be used in many situations, though it is my opinion that it is especially advantageous on

the negative side of this resolution through a specific link chain. The link chain goes as follows: States are not moral actors, which means that they do not have a moral obligation to uphold the “ideal” democracy, and therefore, compulsory voting is not necessary. Democratic states have an obligation to protect rights and insofar as that burden is sufficiently met, they do not have any further obligations. I would then go as far as to say that citizens have the right to abstain from voting and that right must be protected for a multitude of reasons. I personally find the strongest of these reasons to be that abstention from voting is a political protest, which is an extension of free speech, which in turn is a part of a larger check on the government. Democracies ought to protect free speech, as it is a fundamental freedom guaranteed by a democratic state. I think that this has the potential to be a pretty strong negative advocacy if it were developed more.

Affirmative

CV Places More Pressure on Politicians to Represent the Beliefs of the Majority

Voluntary voting creates class bias.

Weller 2016

Chris Weller. Senior innovation reporter for Business Insider. 11-7-2016. “Half of Americans Probably Won't Vote — But Requiring Them to Would Change That.” Business Insider

<https://www.businessinsider.com/compulsory-voting-what-if-americans-have-to-vote-2016-11>

“Political scientists worry about this because **older and wealthier Americans vote more often than anyone else. This means leaders' policies are more likely to favor their interests over other groups'. It's called ‘class bias.’**”

The impact is societal division and harms to the economy.

Weller 2016 [2] (citation above)

“Low voter turnout encourages politicians to design policies that cater to the interests of the few over the many. This, in turn, promotes societal division and harms the economy.”

Compulsory voting reminds public officials they are accountable to all citizens – not just those who are vocal and active in society.

Moyo 2019

Dambisa Moyo. PhD, Zambian economist, public speaker, and author who analyzes the macroeconomy and global affairs. October 15, 2019. “Make Voting Mandatory in the U.S.” NY Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/15/opinion/united-states-voting-mandatory.html>

“The bigger the voter pool, the stronger the contract is between citizens and leaders. In this year’s European parliamentary elections, mandatory voting in Belgium and Luxembourg led respectively to turnouts of about 90 percent and 86 percent. By comparison, turnout in France was 50 percent, and in the Netherlands it was 42 percent.

If the United States had mandatory voting, there likely would be a greater turnout among lower-income groups and minorities, which could lead to a change in the

types of politicians elected. One might think this would favor Democratic candidates, but that's not necessarily the case. While compulsory voting has been assumed to help Australia's Labor Party, for example, it has not prevented right-of-center parties from holding power."

New Statesman 2012

New Statesman. The New Statesman is a British political and cultural magazine published in London. Founded as a weekly review of politics and literature. April 28, 2012. "The Case for Compulsory Voting." New Statesman.

<https://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/politics/2012/04/case-compulsory-voting>

"Democracies have an ingenious mechanism for ensuring that public policy broadly reflects the demands of the population: voting. Yet elections are only able to achieve this if the views of the electorate accurately reflect those of the population. When the collective desires of the voting population diverge too much from those of the citizenry at large, elections can no longer steer governments according to popular wishes. There are worrying signs that this is beginning to happen in the UK, with potentially devastating consequences for the body politic.

The consequences of differential rates of electoral participation for public policy are profound. **Worrying evidence from the US suggests that non-voters are much less well represented than voters, and surely it cannot be coincidental that the recent spending cuts in the UK have disproportionately affected the young and the poor – precisely those groups that vote with least frequencies.** Why has the Education Maintenance Allowance been cut and tuition fees trebled but the free goodies (TV licenses, bus passes, winter fuel payments) going to older people preserved?

Increasing electoral turnout is not just a nice idea, it is something we must actively strive for if elections are to serve the needs of all citizens. Sadly this is not something the coalition government cares about: their proposal to shift from a compulsory to voluntary system of voter registration will at a stroke disenfranchise millions of voters.

As it currently stands many non-voters do not believe political leaders are responsive to their wants and grievances, and the sad thing is they are right. **Politicians have little incentive to cater to the views of groups which are known to have low rates of participation. The result is a cycle of disaffection and under-representation which can only be broken by radical means.** Adding a small measure of compulsion to our electoral process could go a long way toward putting our political institutions back on an even keel and addressing the problem of growing political inequality."

**Low turnout is one of the biggest threats to democracy as we know it.
Compulsory voting would solve.**

Engelen 2007

Bart Engelen. PhD on “Rationality and Institutions: The Normative Implications of Rational Choice Theory” at the University of Leuven, and assistant professor in philosophy at Tilburg University. April 2007. “(PDF) Why Compulsory Voting Can Enhance Democracy.” Tilburg University.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/248874800_Why_Compulsory_Voting_Can_Enhance_Democracy

“To show **that low turnout is among the most serious threats democracies face today**, I want to argue that it affects basic democratic values. The most fundamental premise of democratic thinking holds that those affected by a decision should be able to participate in the process which brings it about. **To ensure that public policy is about the public – as it ought to be – one has to give the public a say in it.** As Dahl argues, **all members of a democracy ‘must have equal and effective opportunities for making their views known to the other members as to what the policy should be’**”

Compulsory voting increases the power of the average citizen.

Brookie 2008

James H. Brookie. M.A. in Economics, Clemson University. July 2008. "The Effect of Compulsory Voting Laws on Government Spending." Graduate School of Clemson University.

https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1419&context=all_theses

“The final reason why a positive correlation between compulsory laws and government spending was not found is that it may correlate in the opposite direction. An article entitled The Right Versus The Obligation to Vote: Effects on Cross-Country Government Growth stated that it is possible for compulsory voting to actually decrease government spending (Crain and Leonard, 1993). According to the authors, if compulsory voting is able to actually increase voter turnout, or at least rid it of its class bias, then the possibility for transfers from non-voters to voters is less. **The increase in the number of participating citizens would decrease the opportunity for special interest groups to lobby the government and in turn decrease the amount of money given to them.** If government spending is controlled by the demands of well-organized special interest groups, not unorganized regular voters, then these transfers are most likely damaging to the average person. However, the tax burden is spread out over the entire taxpayer base, whereas the benefits are centralized in the special interests. This accounts for why one is much more organized and fervent in Washington and why many citizens rationally do not

vote. **Alternatively, if more citizens are forced to vote, their power increases relative to those of the pressure groups** (Crain and Leonard, 1993). **Special interests would no longer be able to take advantage of the rationally disinterested voter.** It may be that this negative effect is countering the other positive effect we discussed in the beginning.”

Compulsory voting forces politicians to make policies tailored to the majority of citizens.

Lacroix 2018

Justine Lacroix. Professor in the Department of Politics at the Université libre de Bruxelles and author of Walzer. *Le pluralisme et l'universel* (Michalon, 2001); *Communautarisme versus libéralisme* (ULB, 2003); *La pensée française à l'épreuve de l'Europe* (Grasset, 2008). November 8, 2018. “A Liberal Defense of Compulsory Voting.” Political Studies Association.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9256.2007.00299.x>

“One obviously does not need to adhere to neo-republican theories to consider that such inequalities in electoral participation pose serious problems of legitimacy for a liberal well-ordered society. One might even draw a parallel with the social question as redistribution mechanisms have also been the butt of criticism by libertarians in the name of free enterprise. Conversely, many other liberal thinkers argue that this is an improper interpretation of the word liberty as this restrictive conception actually concerns the liberty of a few and thus implies constraints for the majority. ‘A much more attractive ideal would be liberty for all ... in other words, the liberal commitment for liberty has resources that may be opposed to the “libertarianism” of the economic conservatives’ (Waldron, 1987, p. 129). That is the reason why the liberal commitment to liberty has been reformulated as a commitment for equal liberty, a principle that justifies solidarity policies which do not infringe on individual rights as they aim at guaranteeing liberty for all and creating the necessary conditions for the full exercise of individual liberty. The same argument can be used to defend compulsory voting. **By encouraging all citizens, even the least motivated among them, to be informed and voice their opinions, compulsory voting would partially thwart the strong social determinants and oblige political parties to pay heed to the more marginalized electors.** As in John Rawls’s model the only acceptable forms of inequalities are those that are beneficial to the least privileged part of the population, **it is all the more difficult to contend that the recorded inequalities in electoral participation may serve the interests of this category of individuals.** From this approach, the defense of compulsory voting echoes Shklar’s observations on democracy. As emphasized by Paul Magnette, ‘in Shklar’s definition of liberalism ... [I]t is first and foremost the liberty of the weakest that is protected by democracy.’ [Compulsory voting] may not make citizens equal, but ‘at least it erodes the submission of the weakest.’”

Compulsory voting improves the functionality of a democracy because it mitigates the prioritization of the elites.

Williamson 2020

Vanessa Williamson. Senior Fellow in Governance Studies at Brookings and a Senior Fellow at the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. 7-20-2020. "Lift Every Voice: The Urgency of Universal Civic Duty Voting." Brookings.

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/lift-every-voice-the-urgency-of-universal-civic-duty-voting/>

"Our emphasis is not on imposing sanctions but on sending a strong message that voting is a legitimate expectation of citizenship. Nations that have embraced carefully implemented versions of universal civic duty voting have enjoyed dramatic increases in participation. **'Compulsory voting makes democracy work better,' concluded Lisa Hill of the University of Adelaide, 'enabling it to function as a social activity engaged in by all affected interests, not just a privileged elite.'**"

There is a laundry list of positive impacts.

Flavelle 2014

Christopher Flavelle. Reporter for the New York Times and recipient of the 2018 National Press Foundation award. 6-19-2014. "Reduce Polarization with Mandatory Voting." Miami Herald.

<https://www.miamiherald.com/latest-news/article1967167.html>

"The progressive argument for **mandatory voting** is straightforward, if not exactly new. It **neutralizes voter suppression. It renders ineffective negative ads designed to depress turnout among your opponents' supporters. It lets campaigns spend less time and money on voter turnout and more time developing policy. It creates broader mandates for victors. It creates incentives for parties to nominate candidates who are palatable to a greater range of voters. It makes it harder for people to ignore politics.**"

CV Increases Voter Turnout

Austria proves.

Hoffman et al 2015

Mitchell Hoffman, University of Toronto. Gianmarco Leon, UOF and Barcelona GSE. Maria Lombardi, UPF. May 31, 2015. “Compulsory Voting, Turnout, and Government Spending: Evidence from Austria.” Barcelona Graduate School of Economics.

<http://www-2.rotman.utoronto.ca/facbios/file/Austria.pdf>

“Even with weak enforcement, as is the case for Austria, CV can affect turnout through the signaling value of enacting a law, as argued in Funk (2007). Panel A in Table 3 shows the effects of CV on turnout within and across Austrian states in the 1949–2010 period. The introduction of CV causes statistically and economically significant increases in turnout in parliamentary, state, and presidential elections. When independently considering each type of election, we find that **CV increases turnout by 6.5 percentage points in parliamentary elections, by 17.2 percentage points in state elections, and by 9.5 percentage points in presidential elections.** However, we gain additional power by pooling all types of elections together, as doing so allows more precise estimation of the year and state fixed effects. In column 4 of Panel A in Table 3, we pool the three types of elections together, and analyze the impact of CV on each type of election (our preferred specification). CV now increases turnout by 6.6, 8.1, and 9.1 percentage points for parliamentary, state, and presidential elections, respectively. Note that these results show slightly lower point estimates than in the previous regressions, and this is particularly the case for state elections, for which we have a smaller sample size. The results are highly significant based on standard errors clustered ballot, while the others correctly vote for a party or candidate. Hence, an increase in turnout of this magnitude could very well result in a shift in election results and public policies.”

Australia’s implementation of compulsory voting saw an immediate and significant impact.

Moyo 2019

Dambisa Moyo. Dr. Dambisa Moyo is a Zambian economist, public speaker, and author who analyzes the macroeconomy and global affairs. October 15, 2019. “Make Voting Mandatory in the U.S.” NY Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/15/opinion/united-states-voting-mandatory.html>

“In 1893 Belgium became the first democracy to institute compulsory voting by parliamentary act. Backers saw it as a way to empower the working classes. **Australia introduced compulsory voting through an amendment to its Electoral Act in 1924,**

in response to declining voter numbers. Turnout in 1922 had fallen below 60 percent from more than 70 percent in 1919. The impact of legislation was swift: In 1925, 91 percent of the electorate voted. What's more, a century later, compulsory voting still works."

Australia's compulsory voting policy has increased voter turnout by 24%.

Fowler 2013

Anthony Fowler. Associate Professor in the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago. 2013. "Electoral and Policy Consequences of Voter Turnout: Evidence from Compulsory Voting in Australia." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 2013, 8: 159-182. Department of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/westminster_model_democracy/files/fowler_compulsoryvoting.pdf

"Despite extensive research on voting, there is little evidence connecting turnout to tangible outcomes. Would election results and public policy be different if everyone voted? The adoption of compulsory voting in Australia provides a rare opportunity to address this question. First, I collect two novel data sources to assess the extent of turnout inequality in Australia before compulsory voting. Overwhelmingly, wealthy citizens voted more than their working-class counterparts. Next, exploiting the differential adoption of compulsory voting across states, **I find that the policy increased voter turnout by 24 percentage points** which in turn increased the vote shares and seat shares of the Labor Party by 7–10 percentage points. Finally, comparing across OECD countries, I find that Australia's adoption of compulsory voting significantly increased turnout and pension spending at the national level. Results suggest that democracies with voluntary voting do not represent the preferences of all citizens. Instead, **increased voter turnout can dramatically alter election outcomes and resulting public policies.**"

Countries with compulsory voting have turnout rates up to 13% higher than those with voluntary voting.

New Statesman 2012

New Statesman. The New Statesman is a British political and cultural magazine published in London. Founded as a weekly review of politics and literature. April 28, 2012. "The Case for Compulsory Voting." New Statesman.

<https://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/politics/2012/04/case-compulsory-voting>

"IPPR research demonstrates that by far the most effective way of boosting participation is to make voting compulsory. It is more widespread than many realize, and is currently practiced in approximately a quarter of the world's

democracies, including Belgium and Australia, though in no case is voting itself required by law; rather what is mandatory is attendance at the polls. Not all of these states actively enforce the legal requirement to turn out on election-day, but among those that do, enforcement is usually underpinned by means of small fines.”

“Countries that use such sanctions have turnout levels that are on average 12 to 13 per cent higher than those where electoral attendance is voluntary. Moreover, states that make electoral participation a legal requirement also have higher levels of satisfaction with democracy, lower levels of wealth inequality and less corruption.”

Voting Is a Civic Duty

Compulsory voting increases the likelihood that citizens perceive voting as a civic duty.

Rangel 2017

Gabriela Sainati Rangel. PhD Philosophy, Assistant Professor of Virginia Military Institute. 2017. "Voting as a (Mandatory) Duty: Citizen Attitudes, Political Engagement, and Party Outreach Under Compulsory Voting." UKnowledge.

https://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=polysci_etds

"The first step in understanding the broader effects of CV is to examine whether it influences citizens' perceptions of the democratic act of voting. In chapter two, I develop a detailed theoretical framework that highlights whether compulsory voting increases citizens' feelings of civic duty or generates resentment amongst eligible voters. I also argue that the impact of CV on attitudes could be neutral—by devaluing the act of voting and making individuals indifferent towards the democratic process. Using a hierarchical modeling technique and survey data from Latin America, I show that voters living under CV are no more likely to report either increased feelings of civic duty or higher rates of resentment, compared to their counterparts under voluntary voting. Instead, individuals who are required to turn out by law are slightly more likely to feel indifferent towards electoral participation. Then, chapter three takes advantage of the recent abolition of compulsory voting in Chile to evaluate whether CV laws promote political engagement beyond election day. An empirical analysis of public opinion surveys over a 10-year period pre and post reform shows that rates of political engagement—specifically, watching and reading political news and discussing politics with family—are significantly higher under compulsory than under voluntary voting, and this is especially the case for those with lower levels of education. These findings suggest that when presented with the task of turning out at the polls, citizens seem to incur the extra costs necessary to make an informed decision.

Existing arguments for and against this voting institution typically categorize compulsory voting into promoting either positive or negative attitudes amongst voters. **On the one hand, the continuous act of voting under CV and the sense of inclusiveness it promotes may trigger a sense of civic duty, which can in turn make citizens more politically engaged** (Blais 2000; Engelen 2007; Keaney and Rogers 2006). On the other hand, forcing individuals to vote might generate resentment among the population, by coercing voters to incur the costs of turning out and violating the premise of democratic freedom (Brennan 2014; Birch 2009; Senado 2012). In this paper, I examine empirical evidence for these arguments and also develop an alternative theoretical implication that considers how the context surrounding CV laws might increase the likelihood that citizens simply feel indifferent towards voting. I argue that the shift away from the relevance of turning out, combined with the reduced costs of turning out produced by

voter-friendly institutional design, should minimize both negative connotations and positive associations with voting. Drawing on survey data from Latin America, I employ a hierarchical multinomial technique to test my theoretical expectations.

Indeed, research shows that individuals are largely driven by these psychological benefits when going to the polls. Riker and Ordeshook (1968) find that **turnout is 70 percentage points higher for those who indicate having a strong sense of civic duty in comparison to those who do not.** Other research shows that **civic duty is one of the most important motivations driving the willingness to vote** (Blais 2000; Clarke et al. 2004; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Even though a great deal of research examines how big a role the ‘D’ term plays in motivating electoral participation, fewer studies have focused on predicting the ‘D’ term in the rational voting calculus.

On average, a substantial number of individuals believe voting is a civic duty. Blais (2000) reports that **in the United States, 84 percent of surveyed university students indicate support for the statement that voting is a citizen’s duty. The number is even higher for a sample of Canadian students—99 percent for those in Quebec and 92 percent in British Columbia.** Individuals with higher levels of political interest tend to feel a higher sense of civic duty, which is not surprising. Blais (2000) also finds that women, older individuals, and those with higher degrees of religiosity also report higher rates of civic duty. With a focus on individual level determinants, the study does not, however, consider institutional design as a predictor of civic duty.

A relatively common argument in the compulsory voting literature is that CV has a positive impact on individual’s attitudes. Some existing literature suggests **that CV can increase rates of political engagement and knowledge because it increases one’s sense of civic duty** (Engelen 2007; Lijphart 1997). The theoretical mechanism promoting that claim, however, remains underdeveloped. I contend that there are several reasons to expect CV laws to positively affect individuals’ feelings towards the act of voting.

First, mandating that all eligible citizens turn out in every election consequently creates a habit of voting, directly influencing citizen behavior. Previous works show that in CV systems, voting is likely to become a habit even for those who would be considered non-voters under voluntary systems (Blais and Achen 2010; Gerber, Green, and Schachar 2003). Once voting becomes a habit, participation patterns are likely to spill over into other types of political involvement, and politics becomes a more significant part of citizens’ lives (Lijphart 1997; Verba, Nie, and Kim 1995; Wertheimer 1975). As Jakee and Sun (2006, 64) put it, ‘the more people vote, the more they become civic and politically minded.’ Thus, **having to vote election after election, an individual living under CV is likely to develop a stronger sense of civic duty.**

Additionally, one of the main concerns involving low voter turnout rates is that young voters are increasingly less interested and involved in politics (Engelen 2007; Keaney and Rogers 2006). **Research shows, however, that young people's participation is significantly influenced by the presence of active voters in the household** (i.e., parents) (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2012). **When children are exposed to political participation from a young age as they observe their parents and other relatives going to the polls, they are more likely to perceive it as an important act and a civic duty.** Plutzer (2002, 43) also argues that 'parental political involvement can provide both behavior to model and campaign-relevant information that children rarely get from formal schooling.' When voting is compulsory, the likelihood that a young individual will also observe their parents participating often is much higher, which in turn makes them better able to internalize the norm to vote, ultimately increasing the likelihood that the act of voting is perceived as a civic duty from a younger age (Engelen 2007).

Compulsory voting can also incite feelings of civic duty via a more symbolic mechanism. Making voting a requirement can send a signal that the government values every citizen's participation, and is committed to incorporating as many individuals into the electorate as possible. An Australian politician explains that 'Compulsory voting allows the entire electorate to feel that they have a degree of ownership in government and its decisions. People feel they are part of the loop and matter. It avoids the marginalization, hostility and sense of remoteness found in the US' (Australia 1997, 124)."

Compulsory voting allows a state to embrace a full democracy.

Williamson 2020

Vanessa Williamson. Senior Fellow in Governance Studies at Brookings and a Senior Fellow at the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. 7-20-2020. "Lift Every Voice: The Urgency of Universal Civic Duty Voting." Brookings.

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/lift-every-voice-the-urgency-of-universal-civic-duty-voting/>

“[Civic duty voting is] a full embrace of democracy: It insists that every citizen has a role to play in our nation's public life and in constructing our future.’

Essential as these various enhancements and repairs to our system are, we believe that **civic duty voting itself is the necessary prod to the changes we need because it would clarify the priorities of election officials at every point in the process: Their primary task is to allow citizens to embrace their duties, not to block their participation.** We see it as a message to political leaders: It will encourage them to understand that their obligations extend to all Americans, not just to those they deem to be 'likely voters.' And

we see it as a full embrace of democracy: **It insists that every citizen has a role to play in our nation's public life and in constructing our future."**

5 reasons why voting is a civic duty.

Satz and Widom 2018

Debra Satz, Dean of Humanities and Sciences. Jennifer Widom, Dean of Engineering. Stephan Graham, Dean of Earth, Energy and Environmental Resources. September 19, 2018. "Voting Is a Civic Duty." Stanford Daily.

<https://www.stanforddaily.com/2018/09/19/op-ed-voting-is-a-civic-duty/>

"Here, we offer 5 main reasons for voting:

1. **We build our democracy with votes.** Through our votes, we express what we as citizens think is in our collective interests; we empower officials to act in our name to promote those interests.
2. **It's the power of the vote that keeps our elected officials accountable.**
3. **If only some people vote, elected officials are likely to give less weight to the interests and views of non-participants.** Studies show that young voters, along with citizens with lower levels of income and education, are less likely to vote.
4. It is sometimes said that no one's vote makes a decisive difference. But **each person's vote makes our democracy more representative of the will of its citizens.** In close local elections, small numbers of votes can be decisive.
5. Our country (and our world) face significant challenges that require the action of government: climate change, inequality, global conflict, terrorism and poverty. Individual action, however well motivated, cannot compare to what can be accomplished by the actions of large state institutions. **As a citizen it is essential for you to vote on the basis of your informed views about those candidates who offer the best public policy responses to these challenges."**

Not only is voting a civic duty, but citizens have an obligation to cast a "good" vote.

Brennan 2016

Jason Brennan. American philosopher and business professor. He is currently the Robert J. and Elizabeth Flanagan Family Professor of Strategy, Economics, Ethics, and Public Policy at the McDonough School of Business at Georgetown University. 7-28-2016. "The Ethics and Rationality of Voting." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2016 Edition).

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/voting/>

“Most people appear to believe that there is a duty to cast a vote (perhaps including a blank ballot) rather than abstain (Mackie 2010: 8–9), but this leaves open whether they believe there is a duty to vote in any particular way. Some philosophers and political theorists have argued there are ethical obligations attached to how one chooses to vote. For instance, **many deliberative democrats** (see Christiano 2006) **believe not only that every citizen has a duty to vote, but also that they must vote in publicly-spirited ways, after engaging in various forms of democratic deliberation**. In contrast, some (G. Brennan and Lomasky 1993; J. Brennan 2009; J. Brennan 2011a) argue that while there is no general duty to vote (abstention is permissible), those citizens who do choose to vote have duties affecting how they vote. They argue that while it is not wrong to abstain, it is wrong to vote badly, in some theory-specified sense of ‘badly.’”

CV Discourages Voter Suppression

Compulsory voting could permanently solve for voter suppression.

Williamson 2020

Vanessa Williamson. Senior Fellow in Governance Studies at Brookings and a Senior Fellow at the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. 7-20-2020. "Lift Every Voice: The Urgency of Universal Civic Duty Voting." Brookings.

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/lift-every-voice-the-urgency-of-universal-civic-duty-voting/>

"Universal civic duty voting would also help ensure increased political participation in communities of color that have long confronted exclusion from our democracy.

With the reforms that would necessarily accompany it, **civic duty voting would permanently block voter suppression measures.** The reprehensible police killing of George Floyd shocked the conscience of the nation and forced its attention to entrenched racial injustice. Floyd's death, and those of Rayshard Brooks and Breonna Taylor, called forth large-scale protests around the country against police violence that has long been an enraging fact-of-life in Black neighborhoods. The new movement is demanding a thoroughgoing overhaul of policing but also a larger confrontation with racism. The demand for equal treatment has been reinforced by unequal suffering during a pandemic whose costs to health, life, and economic well-being have been borne disproportionately by communities of color. Voting rights, equal participation, and an end to exclusion from the tables of power are essential not only for securing reform, but also for creating the democratic conditions that would make social change durable. Police brutality, as an expression of systemic racism, is not merely about how Americans are policed but whose voices are heard on policing. **Universal voting could amplify long voter-suppressed voices so that long-denied solutions to systemic racism are represented in the voting booth and enacted in legislatures."**

The impact of solving for voter suppression is a more accurate representation of the public in policymaking.

McElwee 2015

Sean McElwee. Commonly referred to as "the Leon Trotsky of the contemporary Left," Sean McElwee is an American progressive activist and data scientist. He is a co-founder of the non-profit think tank Data for Progress. 2015. "Why Voting Matters: Large Disparities in Turnout Benefit the Donor Class." Demos

http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/Why%20Voting%20Matters_0.pdf

“One important consequence of this legacy and continuing evolution of voting restrictions is unequal voter turnout in elections, with white Americans, and particularly affluent white Americans, out-participating people of color, low-income people, and young people by significant-to-wide margins. **As a result, large numbers of lesser-advantaged Americans are left out of the democratic process: in 2012, 26 million eligible voters of color did not vote, and, among eligible voters earning less than \$50,000, 47 million did not vote.** In 2014, 44 million eligible voters of color did not vote, and 66 million eligible voters earning less than \$50,000 did not vote. These voter ‘turnout gaps’ or voting inequalities are well known among experts who study American democracy, but, in the following explainer, we argue that such voting inequality is underestimated in its social impact and in the larger policy debates about the direction of our country. More specifically, while it is obvious to many why the turnout gaps matter for democracy, it is less obvious why **closing the turnout gaps and creating a more fully inclusive democracy matters for the policy decisions and social outcomes that should be the fruit of our democracy.**

We aim to help clarify one important reason why this is so by examining how the turnout gaps reflect not only differences in power and privilege but also striking differences in policy views and ideology. At the core of this problem, we see that people in the under-voting groups tend to be more or substantially more in favor of progressive economic policies and government intervention in the economy compared to more affluent voters and particularly more affluent white voters. While money in politics is increasingly a focal point for explaining why the US policy landscape leans so heavily to the right compared to those of other wealthy democracies, the data we look at here suggest that our **country’s cumulative voter turnout gaps**—historic and contemporary—are also **an important factor in the growing misalignment of public policy with the concerns and needs of working-class and low-income people, particularly in communities of color.”**

CV Discourages Polarization

Compulsory voting positively affects political polarization and increases representation in voter turnout.

Flavelle 2014

Christopher Flavelle. Reporter for the New York Times and recipient of the 2018 National Press Foundation award. 6-19-2014. "Reduce Polarization with Mandatory Voting." Miami Herald.

<https://www.miamiherald.com/latest-news/article1967167.html>

"Data showing Americans' increased political polarization breathes new life into an old cause: mandatory voting. If the connection between the two isn't clear, then bear with me.

A new report from the Pew Research Center shows that a growing share of Americans hold increasingly strident ideological views; those views are increasingly far apart; and the people who hold those polarized views are the most likely to vote.

It seems self-evident that this is a problem. Increased polarization means voters elect lawmakers who are increasingly unwilling to compromise, which in turn means Congress can't react to new problems or deal with old ones. It also means that whichever party wins the White House is all but guaranteed to infuriate the half of the country whose votes it didn't get, as the demands of each party's most strident supporters become increasingly irreconcilable.

That toxic mix of legislative gridlock and unpopular executive action leads to deeply imperfect policies and more people tuning out of politics – which in turn leads to still greater polarization, because the only people still willing to vote are those with the most strident views. Oh, and half of the country starts to hate the other half.

If you accept the premise that this is undesirable, you're left with two options. The first is to try to reverse the polarization. I accept the theoretical possibility of that goal, but have yet to hear anyone make a compelling proposal for how to do it — especially given the desire of the most liberal and most conservative Americans to live near and associate mostly with people who share their views.

That leaves the second option of trying to get more centrist Americans involved in politics. As Pew reports, just 39 percent of those with mixed ideological views say they always vote, compared with 58 percent of those with consistently liberal views and 78 percent with consistently conservative views. Those in the mixed category were also less than half as likely to contact an elected official, and one-third as likely to contribute to a political group.

The progressive argument for mandatory voting is straightforward, if not exactly new. It neutralizes voter suppression. It renders ineffective negative ads designed to depress turnout among your opponents' supporters. It lets campaigns spend less time and money

on voter turnout and more time developing policy. It creates broader mandates for victors. It creates incentives for parties to nominate candidates who are palatable to a greater range of voters. It makes it harder for people to ignore politics.”

**Polarization is a barrier to adequate policy-making in democracies.
Compulsory voting solves.**

Dews 2014

Fred Dews. Managing editor of podcasts and digital projects at the Brookings Institution and host of the Brookings Cafeteria podcast. 12-4-2014. “Is Compulsory Voting a Solution to America’s Low Voter Turnout and Political Polarization?” Brookings.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brookings-now/2014/12/04/is-compulsory-voting-a-solution-to-americas-low-voter-turnout-and-political-polarization/>

“In a 2011 New York Times piece, **Galston laid out three arguments in favor of mandatory voting: it would reinforce and strengthen citizenship; it would strengthen our democracy by leveling disparities among citizens based on education, income, and other factors; and it would diminish political polarization.** Recognizing, like Mann, the barriers to enacting such a system in the United States, Galston proposed an experiment in which ‘a half-dozen states from parts of the country with different civic traditions should experiment with the practice, and observers—journalists, social scientists, citizens’ groups and elected officials—would monitor the consequences.’”

Compulsory voting increases the accuracy of representation in policymaking, which alleviates the problem of voter suppression.

Badger 2010

Emily Badger. Journalist, New York Times (she writes about cities and urban policy for The Upshot from the Washington bureau). 7-8-2010. “Mandatory Voting as a Cure for Extreme Partisanship?” Pacific Standard.

<https://psmag.com/news/mandatory-voting-as-a-cure-for-extreme-partisanship-18582>

“‘You have a kind of reinforcement where politicians appeal to more ideologically inspired voters, who then reinforce politicians who respond to them,’ said William Galston, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. ‘I’ve spent a lot of time thinking and doing research on this problem. It’s not easy to interrupt a vicious cycle. It’s one of the hardest things to do in life — and certainly in politics.’”

Galston’s solution is a fairly radical intervention: Make everyone vote. **If the people who turn up voluntarily at the polls reinforce our worst political instincts toward conflict and obstruction, we could dilute their influence by roping absolutely everyone into the process.**

‘Non-voters look like the classic bell curve,’ Galston said, if we rate them on an ideological spectrum from left to right (see Emory political scientist Alan Abramowitz's new book *The Disappearing Center*). **‘That's not what the electorate looks like,’** he added.

Galston, though, is convinced the evidence is on his side. **Congress has become measurably more polarized over the years, a crisis that consumes countless think-thank hours in Washington. And a significant increase in voter participation would statistically bump up the percentage of self-described moderates in the electorate.** ‘There's just no question there,’ Galston said.”

CV Decreases Income Inequality

Compulsory voting encourages a more equal distribution of income.

Kouba and Mysicka 2019

Karel Kouba and Stanislav Mysicka. Assistant professors of Political Science at the University of Hradec, Kralove, Czech Republic. 3-5-2019. “Should and Does Compulsory Voting Reduce Inequality?” SAGE Journals.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2158244018817141?icid=int.sj-abstract.similar-articles.2>

“As parties design their programs to reflect the views of the electorate, rather than of the whole population (Birch, 2009b³⁷), such equalizing effects of compulsory voting should also generate policies supportive of more income redistribution and hence lower income inequality. For example, **where voting is compulsory, governments tend to spend more on health services as a share of their total expenditure** (O’Toole & Strobl, 1995³⁸), **lending support to such policy-changing effects of voting compulsion.** **Cross-national evidence finally supports the hypothesis that countries with strict enforcement of sanctions for nonvoting** (though not all compulsory voting systems) **feature a more equal distribution of incomes than countries with voluntary voting or where compulsion is not enforced** (Birch, 2009b; Chong & Olivera, 2008³⁹). **Abolishing compulsory voting in Venezuela has led to an increase in income inequality** supporting the Lijphart thesis (Carey & Horiuchi, 2017⁴⁰).”

³⁷ Birch, S. (2009b). Full Participation: A Comparative Study of Compulsory Voting. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

³⁸ O’Toole, F., Strobl, E. (1995). Compulsory Voting and Government Spending. *Economics & Politics*, 7, 271-280.

³⁹ Chong, A., Olivera, M. (2008). Does Compulsory Voting Help Equalize Incomes? *Economics & Politics*, 20, 391-415.

⁴⁰ Carey, J. M., Horiuchi, Y. (2017). Compulsory Voting and Income Inequality: Evidence for Lijphart’s proposition from Venezuela. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 59, 122-144.

CV Conveys the Message That Each Citizen's Voice is Expected and Valued

Compulsory voting allows the state to tell the citizens that their voice is important to them and their decision-making.

Rangel 2017

Gabriela Sainati Rangel. PhD Philosophy, Assistant Professor of Virginia Military Institute. 2017. "Voting as a (Mandatory) Duty: Citizen Attitudes, Political Engagement, and Party Outreach Under Compulsory Voting." UKnowledge.

https://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=polysci_etds

"Compulsory voting can also incite feelings of civic duty via a more symbolic mechanism. Making voting a requirement can send a signal that the government values every citizen's participation, and is committed to incorporating as many individuals into the electorate as possible. An Australian politician explains that 'Compulsory voting allows the entire electorate to feel that they have a degree of ownership in government and its decisions. People feel they are part of the loop and matter. It avoids the marginalization, hostility and sense of remoteness found in the US' (Australia 1997, 124)."

Compulsory voting shows that democracies value their citizens' voices rather than an elitist conception of society.

De Witte 2018

Melissa De Witte. Deputy director for social science communications for the Stanford News Service. She attained an M.A. in Media, Culture, & Communication from NYU and a B.Sc. in Sociology from LSE. She was previously the digital communications manager for the Division of Social Sciences at UC Santa Cruz. 11-30-2018. "The Case for Mandatory Voting." Stanford News.

<https://news.stanford.edu/2018/11/30/case-mandatory-voting/>

"The idea of compulsory voting is that it conveys the idea that each person's voice is expected and valued," said Chapman, an assistant professor of political science in Stanford's School of Humanities and Sciences. **"It really offers this society-wide message: There is no such thing as a political class in a democracy. Voting is something that is for everybody, including and especially people at the margins of society."**

CV Is Cost Effective

Australia's 2016 election was projected to cost \$227 million.

Pickering 2016

Heath Pickering. Doctoral Researcher in Public Administration at the KU Leuven Public Governance Institute, Belgium. 2016. "Election Could Cost \$227 million." Election Watch - Australia.

[https://electionwatch.unimelb.edu.au/australia-2016/articles/2016-federal-election-to-cost-\\$227-million](https://electionwatch.unimelb.edu.au/australia-2016/articles/2016-federal-election-to-cost-$227-million)

"The cost to hold a federal election has risen 15% on average since 1990. **This year's poll is predicated to cost taxpayers at least \$227 million, or around \$15 per voter.**

Why so much? Well, Australia's federal elections are the country's largest logistical event – with over 15 million enrolled voters. Compulsory voting ensures mass participation, with voter turnout in 2013 around 93%. Increasingly, the financial cost of implementing our democratic principles has ballooned.

Data from the Australian Electoral Commission shows that the 1990 election cost \$55 million. This year the federal election is predicted to cost more than four times that amount – around \$227 million. **This will expand beyond \$300 million by 2021.**

Since 1990, the cost per federal election has increased by around 15%. Interestingly, the 2010 election costs \$2 million less than the 2007 campaign and is the only modern election to not increase in cost. However, the 'cost-effective' 2010 election is more likely to have profited from the bloated 2007 election – which increased by \$46 million or 39%."

Australia's election cost is pocket change compared to how much the US spends on elections.

Santoreneos 2019

Anastasia Santoreneos. Reporter at Yahoo Finance Australia. She covers consumer finance, women's wealth, inequality and property. May 12, 2019. "\$10 Billion and 6 Weeks Long: These Are Election Costs around the World." Yahoo Finance.

<https://au.finance.yahoo.com/news/10-billion-and-6-weeks-long-these-are-election-costs-around-the-world-210000773.htm>

"Australian politicians are no strangers to splashing cash on campaigns, with **the Australian** Electoral Commission clocking in the **2016 double dissolution cost** at a whopping **\$287 million.**

The House of Representatives and half-senate election in 2007, where Kevin '07 led Labor's landslide 23-seat win, even **racked up a massive \$163 million bill.**

But these figures are just India and the US' spare change.

As Aussies across the nation are gearing up for this Saturday's Federal Election, Yahoo Finance has taken a look at election costs around the world:

United States

Total cost: \$9.3 billion

It was arguably one of the most controversial elections to take place, and it saw billionaire mogul, Donald Trump, win the majority of electoral votes with a total of 306 electors from 30 states over his competitor, Hilary Clinton.

Sitting just behind India by a slim \$700 million, **the combined cost of the US' 2016 congressional and presidential races was US\$6.5 billion** (AU\$9.3 billion).

According to The Washington Post, Clinton raised US\$1.4 billion (AU\$2 billion) during her campaign, while Trump raised US\$957.6 million (AU\$1.4billion). Both parties spent almost entirely what they raised.

Of the smaller candidates, Bernie Sanders of the Democrats Party raised US\$234.3 million (AU\$334 million), while Ted Cruz of the Republican Party raised US\$93.2 million (AU\$133 million)."

[Rachael here:] Let's do some simple math. One of the cards above says that the Australian election will cost approximately \$15 per voter. Multiplying that by the number of eligible voters in Australia, that would be \$249,529,200.00. Doing the same for the US (with 235M eligible voters), that would be \$3,525,000,000. Assuming the card was talking about \$15 in Australian dollars, I converted it to USD. The cost for the election would be, according to these calculations, \$2,533,399,875.00 This would, in theory save the US quite a lot of money in their next election. (The cards for eligible voters for each country are below). I do not recommend copy and pasting my quick math into your case (actually, I'm going to ask you not to do that, so please don't do it). I'm doing this not only to prove my point but to hopefully plant the idea to include a link chain like this into your own case with real statistics! (I also think this argument would pair really well with the lower cost of campaigns argument!)

AEC 2020

Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). 7-23-2020. "Enrolment statistics."

https://www.aec.gov.au/Enrolling_to_vote/Enrolment_stats/

As of 30 June 2020:

“16,635,280 Australians are enrolled to vote. 17,231,901 Estimated Australians eligible to be enrolled. 96.5% Estimated proportion of eligible Australians enrolled. 596,621 Estimated eligible Australians who are not enrolled.”

Sen 2019

Shonel Sen. Research and Policy Analyst for the Demographics Research Group at the University of Virginia. 11-11-2019. "Projecting Potential Voters for 2020 Elections." University of Virginia.

<http://statchatva.org/2019/11/11/elections-2020-projecting-eligible-voters-by-state/>

“More than 70% of the overall U.S. population will be eligible to vote in the general election in 2020. These **235 million eligible voters** are not uniformly distributed across the country, however. Figure 1 shows the distribution of potential voters in 2020 for the 50 states and Washington, D.C. The states of California, Texas, Florida, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Ohio account for over a 100 million (or 43%) of all eligible voters.”

Negative

CV Will Increase Random and Blank Votes

Due to the nature of compulsory voting, the number of random and blank votes will increase in a given election.

PSA

Political Studies Association. "Beyond Turnout: The Consequences of Compulsory Voting."

<https://www.psa.ac.uk/insight-plus/beyond-turnout-consequences-compulsory-voting>
[Accessed: 8/18/20]

"Compulsory voting's effects on turnout are more pronounced among certain segments of the electorate. By attaching a penalty to abstention, compulsory voting decreases disincentives for turnout among these underrepresented societal groups and, as such, their participation rates typically begin to approach those of more mainstream groups where voting is forced. For example, in research I recently published in Political Studies, I found that the young, the less knowledgeable, the poor, and those who are more detached from politics participate at roughly the same rate as their older, more knowledgeable, richer, and more engaged counterparts in countries where voting is compulsory and abstention is sanctioned.

Of course, by [compulsory voting] increase[es]ing participation among these typically dormant groups, compulsory voting produces voting populations that are more likely to include individuals who are apathetic or unknowledgeable about politics and government. One effect of compelling these individuals to the polls is an increase in the percentage of blank and spoilt ballots. Further, as many such individuals do complete a ballot paper, compulsory voting can increase the incidence of votes that do not necessarily align with ideological or policy preferences, and instead are cast randomly, perhaps in response to a hot-button issue or a scandal, or reflecting a psychological attachment to a political party. And, for individuals who are skeptical of the democratic system, forcing engagement with it may exacerbate their negative orientations toward democracy itself."

Brazil proves.

Power and Roberts 1995

Timothy J. Power, head of Oxford School of Global and Area Studies, Professor of Latin American Politics, and comparative political scientist. J. Timmons Roberts, Ittleson Professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology at Brown University. "Compulsory Voting, Invalid Voting, and Abstention in Brazil." Political Research Quarterly Vol. 48, No. 4 (Dec., 1995), pp. 795-826 (32 pages). Sage Publications Inc. Page 796

https://www.jstor.org/stable/448975?read-now=1&seq=2#page_scan_tab_contents

“During Brazil’s military regime of 1964-85, blank and spoiled ballots were often interpreted as a form of protest against the dictatorship. However, **in recent, democratically conducted elections in 1986 and 1990, rates of invalid voting set new records, skyrocketing to 40 percent of all ballots cast** for the lower house of the National Congress. **In addition, in 1990, some 15 percent of potential voters failed to show up at the polls** altogether, most of these in violation of the law. Clearly, such magnitudes of electoral nonparticipation are troubling for a country seeking to consolidate its fragile political democracy. Two questions immediately present themselves: what explains the phenomena of invalid voting and abstention in Brazil? Second, under what social and political conditions should we expect higher or lower rates of invalid voting in a compulsory voting setting?”

Austria proves as well.

Hoffman et al 2017

Mitchell Hoffman, labor and personnel economist and associate professor at the University of Toronto. Gianmarco Leon, associate professor at the Department of Economics at Universitat Pompeu Fabra and a research affiliate at the Barcelona GSE, IPEG and CEPR. Maria Lombardi, Assistant Professor, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, School of Government. 2017. “Compulsory Voting, Turnout, and Government Spending: Evidence from Austria.” *Journal of Public Economics* 145 (2017) 103-115. Page 110.

<https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S0047272716301487?token=7BEE5D97051BC09D644D6FB0FC654DCB24E9A3E8A8DF4D7CD7FB201046F4B5B84D52D534E81D81E1F68B657FE5408F49>

“Average turnout in our sample is relatively high, ranging from 86% in state elections to 90% in parliamentary elections. The average incidence of invalid ballots in these elections is 2%. We define ‘right-wing’ parties as ÖVP and FPÖ and ‘left-wing’ parties as SPÖ and KPÖ. Both in state and parliamentary elections, the right-wing vote share (52%–53 %) exceeds the left-wing vote share (around 40%).

CV can increase turnout by drawing uninterested voters, or those who might not be familiar with the voting process. If this is the case, we might expect the proportion of invalid ballots to rise. As shown in Panel B of Table 3, **the increase in turnout from CV is paired with a statistically significant increase in invalid votes**. In elections without CV, the share of invalid votes ranges between 1.5% and 3.8%. Based on the results in the preferred specification (column 4), **CV increases the share of invalid votes by 0.9–1.8 percentage points**, depending on the type of election. Even though the increase in

turnout associated with CV is also conducive to a higher proportion of invalid votes, there is certainly not a one-to-one relation. That is, **for every 10 people who are driven to vote due to CV, only 1.5–3 of them issue an invalid ballot**, while the others correctly vote for a party or candidate. Hence, an increase in turnout of this magnitude could very well result in a shift in election results and public policies.”

The number of votes that do not count drops by 2% when countries abolish compulsory voting.

Bart 2007

Bart Engelen. PhD on “Rationality and Institutions: The Normative Implications of Rational Choice Theory” at the University of Leuven, and assistant professor in philosophy at Tilburg University. April 2007. “Why Compulsory Voting Can Enhance Democracy.” *Acta Politica - ACTA POLIT.* 42. 23-39. 10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500167.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/248874800_Why_Compulsory_Voting_Can_Enhance_Democracy

“Some opponents of compulsory voting, however, contend that higher turnout levels are not necessarily a good thing. Compelling citizens to participate, even when they have no opinion or do not want to express it, only results in a higher number of protest votes (Keaney and Rogers, 2006, 30). **The legitimacy of the democratic process is not enhanced if citizens cast their votes only because they have to.** This argument is forceful in pointing out the possibility that their vote does not reflect their true preference (which is to stay at home) or opinion (which they often lack). If citizens freely decide to participate, their vote will be more authentic.

To assess this argument one can analyze to what extent compulsory voting coincides with invalid, blank and other protest votes. **The data show that the number of votes that do not count (invalid and blank ballots) drops about 2% when countries abolish compulsory voting.**¹⁰ The amount of ‘lost’ votes is thus substantially smaller than the amount of votes ‘gained’ by compulsory voting.

However, the problem lies in interpreting the group of protest votes that do count. **Citizens who would not vote if they were not obliged to might vote at random.** This phenomenon of ‘donkey voting’ – after the game in which a blindfolded child ‘pins the tail on the donkey’ – is not to be neglected. The problem is that the exact number of such votes is hard to measure. Additionally, they also occur in voluntary voting systems (Orr, 2002, 575). While pleading for more research in this respect, I want to refer to the options of leaving the ballot blank or spoiling it as an expression of one’s protest. In my view, these have to be made more attractive, for example by adding a box with ‘none of the above’ or providing space for personal comments (Hill, 2002a, 11; Keaney and Rogers,

2006, 31–32; Orr, 2002, 578). This way of collecting protest votes would partly remedy the failure of current compulsory voting systems to differentiate between politically, anti-politically and apolitically motivated protest voters. As protest votes are as valuable as other votes in a democracy, one should give them more electoral weight than they currently have.”

CV Is Inconsistent with the Ideals of Democracy

Compulsory voting weakens democracy.

Moraro 2012

Piero Moraro. PhD, lecturer at the Centre for Law and Justice, Charles Stuart University, Australia, with research focusing on legal and political theory. June 2012. “Why Compulsory Voting Undermines Democracy.” ETHICS CENTRE.

<https://ethics.org.au/why-compulsory-voting-undermines-democracy/>

“Forcing everyone to vote means that the voice of those with no interest in politics will influence the decision about who rules the country. This generates what author Jason Brennan calls **‘pollution of the polls’** in his book *The Ethics of Voting* **and is one of the main causes of the actual crisis of democracy worldwide:** incompetent politicians winning elections through media control (the recent case of Italy under Silvio Berlusconi epitomizes this phenomenon).

By the same token, compulsory voting cannot be defended by arguing that a government’s legitimacy of a majority formed by a low turnout is questionable, for numbers alone do not add credibility in this regard.”

Compulsory voting defeats the purpose of democracy.

Hoff 2015

Dr. Samuel B. Hoff. George Washington Distinguished Professor of History and Political Science at Delaware State University. March 2015. “Mandatory Voting Defeats Purpose of Democracy.” News Journal

<https://www.delawareonline.com/story/opinion/contributors/2015/03/22/mandatory-voting-defeats-purpose-democracy/25207447/>

“To undertake mandatory voting is to assume that one is a better citizen if one votes. But that’s like saying that a person is a better religious adherent if he or she attends regular services. **It is much more important to have an informed, educated citizen participate in the voting process than one who will utilize an arbitrary means to select future officeholders.** Through the political socialization process and positive reinforcement, many Americans develop an attitude of wanting to participate in the electoral process rather than having to, such that it becomes a lifelong adult habit.”

Compulsory voting is inconsistent with the democratic ideal of freedom.

Barry 2013

Peter Barry. Irish Fine Gael politician who served as Tánaiste from January 1987 to March 1987. September 2013. “How Compulsory Voting Subverts Democracy.” Quadrant Online.

<https://quadrant.org.au/magazine/2013/09/how-compulsory-voting-subverts-democracy/>

“Democracy is an achievement that has come about through determination, hard work, struggle, even bloodshed. On these grounds alone, it deserves to be honoured. But democracy can only be honoured if we appreciate the gift we’re fortunate enough to possess in the first place. Sadly, a considerable number of people do not appreciate it, and have never given the matter a moment’s thought. I’d argue that the massive indifference towards politics that now pervades the general populace will only be overcome by removing the compulsion to vote. Politicians would then be forced to argue their cases with more conviction, and to educate their constituents about the historical struggle that was necessary to achieve what most of us now take for granted.

People have to be persuaded of the importance of voting to the democratic process. Yet compelling people to do so subverts our democratic rights. **Democracy is about freedom; it is the antithesis of compulsion. Compulsory voting raises a question we shouldn’t even be asking whether voting is a civil right or a civic duty.**

The right not to vote in an election is as fundamental as the right to vote. Both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN’s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights refer to people’s rights to “freely chosen representatives.” This right is something we each possess and can each choose to use, but it should never become a dictate.

Those who argue that voting is a duty, and therefore a legal obligation, readily agree we’re free to vote, but then declare it’s a freedom we’re compelled to exercise. They have no time for freedom of choice. Greg Sheridan says:

It is a central conservative insight that democracy confers both rights and responsibilities. Attending a polling booth on Election Day is the mildest possible responsibility.

Christopher Bayliss, in his submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, said:

All our voting system requires is for a voter to attend a polling booth and mark some papers as they wish, approximately once every three years. This does not seem to be an insurmountable burden to be part of a democracy.”

Compulsory voting could be enforced in a way that is discriminatory, which inconsistent with the democratic ideal of equality.

Williamson 2020

Vanessa Williamson. Senior Fellow in Governance Studies at Brookings, and a Senior Fellow at the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. 7-20-2020. "Lift Every Voice: The Urgency of Universal Civic Duty Voting." Brookings.

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/lift-every-voice-the-urgency-of-universal-civic-duty-voting/>

"We also address equity concerns related to penalties. Even small fines could be discriminatory against poor people, and immigrants' rights activists raise legitimate concerns that inadvertent voting by noncitizens could subject them to unfair penalties."

These concerns shaped our recommendations which make clear that the fine for not voting be very small and be set aside for those willing to meet a very modest community service requirement. The fine would be limited to no more than \$20, it could not be compounded over time, nor would civil or criminal penalties be imposed for not paying the fine. If the experience in Australia and other nations with versions of compulsory voting can be taken as a guide, most nonvoters would never face a fine. We also detail protections for noncitizens to prevent exploitation of the system by public officials hostile to immigrants."

CV Removes Avenues of Peaceful Protesting

Not voting can be a political statement. It is undemocratic to remove that avenue to peacefully protest.

Filar 2015

Ray Filar. Freelance journalist and an editor at openDemocracy magazine, working on the Transformation section. 5-6-2015. "If You Care about Politics, Don't Vote." openDemocracy.

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/dont-vote-political-case-for-not-voting-in-2015-general-election/>

"What does choosing not to vote mean? **If voting is fundamentally undemocratic, not voting could be the more transformative political action.** Last week 20 'DON'T VOTE' posters, designed by Strike! magazine, appeared in bus shelter adverts around London. Their slogans read: 'engage with politics,' 'take to the streets,' and 'spoil your ballots.' Reminding us that **box-ticking is the least radical, least efficacious way to create change**, the posters hinted at the possibility of a different kind of politics. A politics of collective and individual action. This kind of engagement is totally absent from politicians' debates and mainstream media election coverage.

'To politicize not voting is to recognize that real democratic participation is about far more than making compromise.' said an anonymous spokesperson for the Special Patrol Group, who claimed responsibility for putting up the ads. They went on: **'the emphasis on voting as our "one chance" to get involved is actually designed to disempower and disengage the people, not the other way around.'**

Voter abstention is a constitutional right.

Lubben 2016

Alex Lubben. Freelance journalist in New York covering climate change and politics. 10-6-2016. "What If Everyone in America Decided Not to Vote?" VICE

https://www.vice.com/en_ca/article/5gq9b5/what-if-they-gave-an-election-and-no-one-voted

"Voter abstention"—a.k.a. 'not voting and being really smug about it'—is more than just a stoner thought experiment. It's a proud tradition in America, and it's **[is a] part of** that **'free speech'** thing Americans value so much as well as that 'not really giving a s---t' thing Americans also love. One political science paper from 2006 found that 'alienation

and indifference each motivated significant amounts of voter abstention in the 1980-1988 US presidential elections,' which affirms every Gen X slacker stereotype in the book.”

The US Cannot Pass a Law for Mandatory Voting

It is unconstitutional for the US to mandate voting in a presidential election.

Burrus 2015

Trevor Burrus. Research fellow in the Cato Institute's Robert A. Levy Center for Constitutional Studies and editor-in-chief of the Cato Supreme Court Review. 3-22-2015. "Mandatory Voting Guarantees Ignorant Votes." Cato Institute

<https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/mandatory-voting-guarantees-ignorant-votes>

"The First Amendment covers the right not to vote. Moreover, **Congress lacks constitutional authority to pass a law mandating voting**, particularly in presidential elections. **Article II of the Constitution gives Congress limited powers over presidential elections.** State legislators have the power to choose how electors will be selected to the Electoral College, and there's actually nothing in the Constitution mandating states to give citizens the right to vote for electors. Congress only has power to determine 'the Time of choosing the Electors, and the Day on which they shall give their Votes.'

Even if it were possible to amend the Constitution to allow for compulsory voting, it would still be unwise.

Many people don't vote because they don't care enough or know enough to get involved, and there is no compelling evidence that mandatory voting increases voter knowledge. Simply put, people who vote tend to know more about politics than those who don't. It is worth asking why we would want low information citizens voting in the first place. Just so they're 'involved' even if they're trudging to the polls to avoid a fine?"

Americans don't like being told what to do.

Weller 2016

Chris Weller. Senior innovation reporter for Business Insider. 11-7-2016. "Half of Americans Probably Won't Vote — But Requiring Them to Would Change That." Business Insider

<https://www.businessinsider.com/compulsory-voting-what-if-americans-have-to-vote-2016-11>

"Fowler speculates that **few Americans would be excited by the idea. 'The idea that somebody might force me to vote might sound off-putting to a lot of American voters,'** because Americans don't often like being told what to do, he said. It goes against many Americans' notion of individual liberty."

CV Minimizes the Freedom to Express Religion

Jehovah's Witnesses respect the authority of the government, but as an ideal of their religion, they choose not to participate politically.

JW.ORG 2020

JW.ORG. "Why Do Jehovah's Witnesses Maintain Political Neutrality?" 2020. JW.ORG

<https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/political-neutrality/>

"Jehovah's Witnesses remain politically neutral for religious reasons, based on what the Bible teaches. We [they] do not lobby, vote for political parties or candidates, run for government office, or participate in any action to change governments. We believe that the Bible gives solid reasons for following this course.

Respect for governments. Although we do not take part in politics, we respect the authority of the governments under which we live. This is in harmony with the Bible's command: 'Let every person be in subjection to the superior authorities.' (Romans 13:1) We obey the law, pay taxes, and cooperate with efforts of the government to provide for the welfare of its citizens. Rather than participate in any attempt to subvert the government, we follow the Bible's counsel to pray for 'kings and all those who are in positions of authority,' especially when they are making decisions that could affect freedom of worship.—1 Timothy 2:1, 2

Is our political neutrality a threat to national security? No. We are peace-loving citizens from whom governmental authorities have nothing to fear. Consider a 2001 report produced by the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Commenting on our political neutrality, the report stated: 'Today some may dislike this stand of Jehovah's Witnesses; it was a basic reason for their being accused by the totalitarian Nazi and Communist regimes of the past.' Yet, even under Soviet repression, the Witnesses 'remained law-abiding citizens. They honestly and selflessly worked in collective farms and at industrial plants and presented no threat to the Communist regime.' Likewise today, the beliefs and practices of Jehovah's Witnesses do not, the report concluded, 'undermine the security and integrity of any state.'"

Some religions practice political neutrality and abstain from voting. Compulsory voting would force them to abandon their religious ideals.

Hall 2001

Carla Hall. LA Times staff writer. April 10, 2001. "Some Faiths Abstain from Casting Ballots." Los Angeles Times.

<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-apr-10-me-49138-story.html>

“In the city of Los Angeles, according to a spokesman for the religion, there are 204 congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses, each with about 100 people. (Gonzalez’s congregation numbers about 120.)

In their eyes, they’re not relinquishing a right—‘We already know there’s really no hope in man,’ said Gonzalez--they are upholding their long-standing choice.

Some ultraconservative Christian groups don’t vote as another way of keeping themselves apart from a sinful society, said Gordon Melton, director of the Institute for the Study of American Religion in Santa Barbara. The members of a group called the family, **which has about 9,000 members worldwide**, some in Los Angeles, do not vote. ‘They want to separate from as much of the world as they can,’ Melton said.

Few groups reach the philosophical commitment of the about **6 million Jehovah’s Witnesses worldwide who make it a tenet of their religion to abstain from voting**--but several religions’ members circumscribe their involvement in political life.

‘There’s always been a struggle to know what it means to give absolute loyalty to the kingdom of God without compromising your loyal citizenship,’ said Wilbert Shenk, a professor of mission history at Fuller Theological Seminary and a Mennonite minister.

Members of the Mennonite religion, after centuries of persecution and disenfranchisement in other countries, **often choose not to vote**. ‘Their starting point is not one of opting out but simply being pushed out,’ Shenk said.

The Mennonites believe that society is never warranted in taking a life, even in the course of law enforcement. The clash between their views and society’s mores has led some members of the faith to decide not to participate in the society’s voting process. Shenk chose not to vote during the Vietnam War--which he did not support--when he was involved in missionary work. ‘It was an act of solidarity with people in other parts of the world who criticized my government,’ he said. ‘It was done in a considered way.’”

Those with Little Interest in Politics Are Forced to Participate

Compulsory voting makes a negative impression on those who prefer not to participate.

Singh 2015

Shane Singh. Freelance journalist. 4-1-2015. "Compulsory Voting Can Actually Weaken Support for Democracy." Washington Post.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/04/01/compulsory-voting-can-actually-weaken-support-for-democracy/>

"But my ongoing research suggests that **compulsory voting** also has a more troubling effect: it **sours attitudes toward the democratic system among those who prefer to not to vote.**

The reasoning is straightforward: when people are forced to do something that they don't want to do, they often come to dislike whoever is making them do it. So those who don't want to vote may come to have less favorable attitudes toward the political system that forces them to vote.

Unsurprisingly, those who prefer to abstain are more dissatisfied with democracy than those who prefer to vote, regardless of whether there is compulsory voting. But those who prefer to abstain are more dissatisfied in countries with strong compulsory voting."

Compulsory voting erodes the core of democracy.

Tuccille 2020

J.D. Tuccille. Former managing editor of Reason.com and current contributing editor. 3-2-2020. "Mandatory Voting Will Build Resentment, Not Democracy." Reason.

<https://reason.com/2020/03/02/mandatory-voting-will-build-resentment-not-democracy/>

"Are we really supposed to believe that the social contract is strengthened by threatening people with fines unless they mail in a sheet of paper [...]?"

Rather than reinforce some mythical contract between voters and politicians, **mandatory voting would** seem more likely to **further erode connections and build resentment.** 'Participate in our bogus process or else' seems designed to sour people on voting and politics, not build enthusiasm.

Mandatory voting isn't likely to build respect for democracy or make sure that anybody's voice is heard by the government. But fining non-voters will do an effective job of demonstrating that government is all about forcing people to do things just to make politicians happy."

The Consequence Isn't Severe Enough to Get People to Vote

In democracies like Australia, the consequence for not voting is a measly fine.
WAEC 20

Western Australian Electoral Commission (WAEC). 2020.

<https://www.elections.wa.gov.au/vote/failure-vote>

“Voting at State general elections, by-elections and referenda is compulsory.

If you did not vote at a State election or referendum you may receive an email, text message or notice in the mail seeking an explanation of your apparent failure to vote. Please respond to the electronic message or complete the form and return it in the envelope provided.

Electors who fail to vote at a State election and do not provide a valid and sufficient reason for such failure will be fined.

The penalty for first time offenders is \$20 and this increases to \$50 if you have previously paid a penalty or been convicted of this offence. **If you do not have a valid and sufficient reason for not voting, you can pay the penalty and that will end the matter.**

Electors who do not respond to notices or do not pay the prescribed penalty may have the matter referred to the Fines Enforcement Registry and could have their driver's license suspended.

Payments must be made by the due date on the relevant notice. If you miss a due date for payment you will need to wait for the next notice for new payment information.”

Rychter 2018.

Tracey Rychter. Social editor for the Travel section of The New York Times. 10-22-2018. “How Compulsory Voting Works: Australians Explain.” New York Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/22/world/australia/compulsory-voting.html>

“More than 96 percent of eligible Australians are enrolled to vote. Of those, more than 90 percent typically turn out to cast ballots for a federal election, far more than the 55 percent of eligible Americans who participated in the 2016 presidential election.”

[**Rachael here:**] This leaves 6% of eligible voters not voting. If the punishment for compulsory voting was enough, we would probably see 100% voter turnout in countries with enforced compulsory voting.

Hutt 18

Rosamond Hutt. Senior Writer, Formative Content. 11-7-2018. "These Are the Countries with the Highest Voter Turnout." World Economic Forum

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/11/these-countries-have-some-of-the-highest-voter-turnout-in-the-world/>

[Rachael here:] Comparing 2016 elections, the US experienced a 55.7% voter turnout and Australia "experienced the lowest recorded turnout since the introduction of compulsory voting in the 1920s."

If you don't pay the fine in Australia, further action can be taken, but there haven't been any cases of that so far.

ECSA 2019

Electoral Commission South Australia (ECSA). 5-18-2019. "What Happens If I Did Not Vote?"

<https://www.ecsa.sa.gov.au/voting/failure-to-vote>

"The Lifecycle of a Failure to Vote:

- a. Apparent Failure to Vote Notice (No Fine)
- b. Expiation Notice (\$70 fine); Expiation Fee: \$10 + Victims of \$60 Crime levy
- c. Reminder (\$135 fine); Expiation Fee + Victims of Crime levy + Reminder \$65 Fee
- d. Enforcement Action Starts; Referred to Fines Enforcement and Recovery Unit (Additional Fees start from here; restricting vehicle registration and suspension of driver's license and deducting money from your bank account(s))
- e. Further Enforcement Action; Clamping, impounding, and selling your vehicle, deducting funds from third parties who hold your money such as employers, seizing and selling your property, publishing your name online, placing a restriction on the proceeds of sale should you sell property, your matter will be referred to a debt collection agency"

[transcribed from a table]

Even so, not every country with compulsory voting enforces it.

Brett 2019

Judith Brett. Emeritus Professor of politics at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia. 3-4-2019. "Book Extract: From Secret Ballot to Democracy Sausage." Conversation.

<https://theconversation.com/book-extract-from-secret-ballot-to-democracy-sausage-112695>

"Not many countries compel their citizens to vote, but Australia is one. **Voting is compulsory in 19 of the world's 166 electoral democracies and only nine strictly enforce it.** None of Europe's most influential democracies has it, and none of the countries in the mainstream of Australia's political development: not the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, New Zealand or Ireland."

Belgium hasn't enforced the punishment for not voting in 17 years.

Khosla 2014

Simran Khosla. Freelance journalist. 10-15-2014. "Here Are the Countries Where It Is Illegal to Not Vote." Business Insider.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/countries-where-it-is-illegal-to-not-vote-2014-10>

"Using data from the CIA, we've created a map that shows which countries have compulsory voting laws, along with information about their requirements of restrictions.

In Mexico, for example, **there are no formal sanctions for not voting** but there's plenty of social stigma. **Belgium,** meanwhile, **has sanctions on the book but hasn't enforced them since 2003."**

A2 Affirmative Arguments

A2 CV Produces a More Accurate Representation of What the Population Wants

[LT] Compulsory voting is not much more accurate than voluntary voting.

Brennan 2016.

Jason Brennan. American philosopher and business professor at Georgetown University. 7-28-2016. “The Ethics and Rationality of Voting.” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/voting/#4>

“One major argument for compulsory voting is what we might call the Demographic or Representativeness Argument (Lijphart 1997; Engelen 2007; Galston 2011; Hill in J. Brennan and Hill 2014: 154–173). The argument begins by noting that in voluntary voting regimes, citizens who choose to vote are systematically different from those who choose to abstain. The rich are more likely to vote than the poor. The old are more likely to vote than the young. Men are more likely to vote than women. In many countries, ethnic minorities are less likely to vote than ethnic majorities. More highly educated people are more likely to vote than less highly educated people. Married people are more likely to vote than non-married people. Political partisans are more likely to vote than true independents (Leighley and Nagler 1992; Evans 2003: 152–6). In short, under voluntary voting, the electorate—the citizens who actually choose to vote—are not fully representative of the public at large. The Demographic Argument holds that since politicians tend to give voters what they want, in a voluntary voting regime, politicians will tend to advance the interests of advantaged citizens (who vote disproportionately) over the disadvantaged (who tend not to vote). Compulsory voting would tend to ensure that the disadvantaged vote in higher numbers, and would thus tend to ensure that everyone’s interests are properly represented.

Whether the Demographic Argument succeeds or not depends on a few assumptions about voter and politician behavior. **First, political scientists overwhelmingly find that voters do not vote their self-interest, but instead vote for what they perceive to be the national interest.** (See the dozens of papers cited at Brennan and Hill 2014: 38–9n28.) **Second, it might turn out that disadvantaged citizens are not informed enough to vote in ways that promote their interests**—they might not have sufficient social scientific knowledge to know which candidates or political parties will help them (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Caplan 2007; Somin 2013). **Third, it may be that even in a compulsory voting regime, politicians can get away with ignoring the policy preferences of most voters** (Gilens 2012; Bartels 2010).

In fact, contrary to many theorists' expectations, **it appears that compulsory voting has no significant effect on** individual political knowledge (that is, it does not induce ignorant voters to become better informed), individual political conversation and persuasion, individual propensity to contact politicians, the propensity to work with others to address concerns, participation in campaign activities, the likelihood of being contacted by a party or politician, **the quality of representation, [or] electoral integrity**, the proportion of female members of parliament, support for small or third parties, support for the left, or support for the far right (Birch 2009; Highton and Wolfinger 2001). Political scientists have also been unable to demonstrate that compulsory voting leads to more egalitarian or left-leaning policy outcomes. The empirical literature so far shows that compulsory voting gets citizens to vote, but it's not clear it does much else."

A2 CV Decreases Income Inequality

[NL] Compulsory voting as a whole and income inequality do not have a direct correlation.

Kouba and Mysicka 2019

Karel Kouba and Stanislav Mysicka. Assistant professors of Political Science at the University of Hradec, Kralove, Czech Republic. 2019. "Should and Does Compulsory Voting Reduce Inequality?" SAGE. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018817141> S

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2158244018817141>

"Compulsory voting is thought to increase electoral participation and thereby contribute to equalizing the political voice across income or education groups. However, a countervailing tendency of compulsory voting is to generate large proportions of invalid ballots. **As invalid voting is strongly related to income inequality and low education,** we conclude that **whatever benefits in terms of equal voice are associated with higher turnout under compulsory voting, these are [it is] effectively erased by the high share of socioeconomically biased invalid votes that do not count for determining political representation.** We presented evidence supportive of this conjecture from Ecuadorean 2009 elections where one quarter of all votes casted were invalid and one quarter of all registered voters abstained. In other words, the fact that turnout becomes less socioeconomically biased through compulsory voting does not automatically translate into less socioeconomically biased political representation (or political voice). This finding offers different lenses to the affirmation that **while compulsory voting makes turnout more egalitarian, it does not make the candidate selection more equitable due its effects on invalid ballots** (Cohen, 2018). Consequently, ballot spoilage generated by compulsory voting may have negative effects on the legitimacy of elected authorities, offsetting the contribution of higher turnout."

Carey and Horiuchi 2013

John M. Carey and Yusaku Horiuchi. 2013. "Compulsory Voting and Income Inequality." Dartmouth.

<https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.dartmouth.edu/dist/2/109/files/2013/04/HoriuchiCarey201304221.pdf>

"The discussion above implies that the government's relative responsiveness to the rich vis-à-vis the poor is independent of whether voting is mandatory or voluntary. If the government is more likely to respond to the rich under a compulsory voting system than

under a voluntary voting system, there is no guarantee that K' is on the right side of K . On the other hand, if the government is more likely to respond to the poor under a compulsory voting system, the gap between K' and K may be expanded. In either of these cases, **it is difficult to claim that the voting rule has a causal effect on the distribution of income, because politicians' motivation to affect the distribution of income** (i.e., our outcome variable) **through the change in voting rule** (i.e., our treatment variable) **could be a confounding factor producing the observed non-causal association between voting rule – whether compulsory or voluntary voting – and income inequality.**

In sum, there are four underlying assumptions of Lijphart's hypothesis. Whereas the first three are less controversial, the validity of the fourth assumption needs an empirical investigation. Thus, we also examine the following:

Assumption: Politicians do not intend to make voting compulsory or voluntary in order to change the distribution of income.

We undertook an extensive search for written materials on the electoral reform in Venezuela, as well as for a more recent, similar reform in Chile. As we recognize that politicians may not state their full intentions in advancing electoral reform, we also examine whether voters' attitudes toward economic inequality and for compulsory voting are correlated. If they are not, it is unlikely that politicians' efforts to change the rules around compulsory voting are manifestations of broader agendas to affect the distribution of income."

[NL] Venezuela disproves itself.

Carey and Horiuchi 2013

John M. Carey, Professor in Social Sciences, Department of Government, Dartmouth College. Yusaku Horiuchi, Associate Professor and Mitsui Chair in the Study of Japan, Department of Government, Dartmouth College. 2013. "Compulsory Voting and Income Inequality." Dartmouth.

<https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.dartmouth.edu/dist/2/109/files/2013/04/HoriuchiCarey201304221.pdf>

"Given the results of these two placebo tests, we are inclined to believe that **the intervention in 1993 in Venezuela caused an unusually sharp increase in income inequality during the post-intervention period. We are not fully sure, however, whether the 'intervention in 1993' that matters is indeed the abolishment of compulsory voting.** One might rightly note that **the end of compulsory voting was not the only major electoral reform to hit Venezuela in 1993.** From 1958-1988, the Chamber of Deputies had been elected by closed-list proportional representation (PR), using the country's states as districts. In 1993, **Venezuela switched to a mixed-member system** resembling Germany's mixed-member proportional (MMP) system, with half the

seats contested by plurality in single-member districts (SMDs) while the other half were allocated to achieve overall proportionality.”

A2 Voter Turnout Increases

[NL] High turnout is a myth. 10% of eligible voters in Australia are not registered to vote.

AEC 2020

Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). 7-23-2020. "Enrolment Statistics."

https://www.aec.gov.au/Enrolling_to_vote/Enrolment_stats/

"596,621 Estimated eligible Australians who are not enrolled."

Beck 2013

Katie Beck. Freelance writer for BBC News. 8-1-2013. "Australia Election: Why Is Voting Compulsory?" BBC News.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-23810381>

"High voter turnout is a myth when you consider that 10% of Australians are not even registered." When that myth is debunked, I think you'll see a dramatic shift in public perception of compulsory voting,' he said.

According to the Australian Election Commission, a third of the overall number of eligible voters who are not enrolled are between 18 and 24 years old. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has made mobilizing the youth vote central to his 2013 campaign."

A2 Negative Arguments

A2 Voter Turnout Low in Australian 2016 Election

[LT] Turnout as a proportion of VEP, which is more accurate, remained steady and effective participation actually rose during the 2016 election.

AEC 2016

Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). 2016. "Voter Turnout – 2016 House of Representatives and Senate Elections."

https://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/research/files/voter-turnout-2016.pdf

"Turnout at the 2016 House of Representatives (HoR) elections (91.0 per cent) was the lowest recorded since the introduction of compulsory voting ahead of the 1925 federal election. **Turnout at the 2016 Senate elections [was] (91.9 per cent)** was the lowest recorded since the 1925 federal election.

'Headline' turnout does not take into account the enrolment rate at the time of the election. A low turnout coinciding with a high enrolment rate might represent a higher proportion of eligible people participating in the election compared with a high turnout rate that coincided with a lower enrolment rate.

Further, **turnout includes both formal and informal ballot papers.** While turnout is used as an indicator of electoral participation, informal ballot papers are not used in determining the results of an election. Accordingly, turnout does not indicate effective participation.

Alternative statistics can therefore be useful to provide additional context to analysis of turnout. In particular, an effective participation rate can be derived by comparing formal votes against the estimated number of total potential electors (the Voting Eligible Population, or VEP).

While 'headline' turnout decreased between the 2013 and 2016 HoR elections, **turnout as a proportion of VEP remained steady at 86.5 per cent, indicating that an increase in enrolment rate matched the decline in headline turnout. Over this same period, effective participation actually rose, from 81.4 per cent to 82.1 per cent, because of the positive impact of the increase in proportion of formal votes. This indicates that a higher proportion of the eligible population successfully cast a formal vote in the 2016 HoR elections compared with 2013.**

Similar analysis of the 2016 Senate elections show a slight increase in VEP 'turnout'; but a decrease in effective participation, reflecting a decline in formality."

A2 CV Will Make a State Swing Left

[NL] This argument just empirically isn't true.

Greenblatt 2016

Alan Greenblatt. Senior staff writer. February 2016. "What Would Happen If America Made Voting Mandatory?" Governing.com

<https://www.governing.com/topics/elections/gov-compulsory-voting-switzerland.html>

"But even supporters of compulsory voting don't think it's going to happen in the U.S. The very idea of forcing people to vote seems, well, anti-democratic. What's more, it's a partisan issue. As Obama himself suggests, the people who tend not to vote often look like Democrats -- the poor, the young, members of minority groups. One recent study of ballot measures in Switzerland found that compulsory voting boosted the progressive position by up to 20 percentage points.

Most academic research, however, **has found that mandatory voting does not move the average voter to the left**, according to Jason Brennan, a professor at Georgetown University and co-author of *Compulsory Voting: For and Against*. 'There's a widespread belief among Democrats that compulsory voting would deliver more states to Democrats,' he says. 'It turns out that's not true. **The people who vote and the people who don't vote are roughly the same in terms of their partisan preferences.**'"

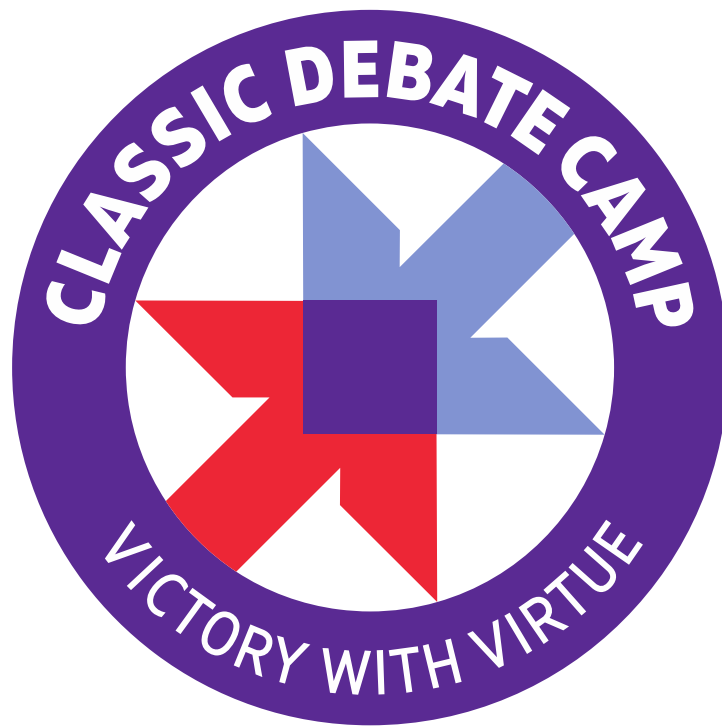
Moyo 2019

Dambisa Moyo. Dr. Dambisa Moyo is a Zambian economist, public speaker, and author who analyzes the macroeconomy and global affairs. October 15, 2019. "Make Voting Mandatory in the U.S.." NY Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/15/opinion/united-states-voting-mandatory.html>

"If the United States had mandatory voting, there likely would be a greater turnout among lower-income groups and minorities, which could lead to a change in the types of politicians elected. **One might think this would favor Democratic candidates, but that's not necessarily the case. While compulsory voting has been assumed to help Australia's Labor Party, for example, it has not prevented right-of-center parties from holding power.**"

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