

Chapter 19 Project

Public Economy

Purpose

After finishing this chapter, you have learned that the advantage of a democratic system of government over other systems is that it allows everyone in a society an equal say. Let's explore how this relates to your everyday life.

The purpose of this exercise is to help you understand a practical difficulty that arises in a democracy when people follow their own self-interest, which is that most people who are eligible to vote choose not to. This is despite the fact that the failure to vote in an election could lead to outcomes that are not favorable to the voter.

Directions

This exercise has two parts. In the first, you will consider which factors play a role in your decision to vote in an upcoming election. In the second, you will use your own experience to incentivize other similar individuals to vote.

Part 1 - What Makes You Vote?

This chapter mentioned various factors that influence an individual's decision to vote. These factors relate to the economic notion that individuals make decisions guided by their own self-interest. The following are some factors:

- The voter's belief in how likely it is their vote will affect the outcome
- Cost of the voter acquiring and assimilating information about the policies up for vote
- Demographics of the voter, such as age, marital status, employment, and income
- Ease of registering to vote
- Ease of casting votes, related to such issues as times when the polls are open
- Involvement of special-interest groups in the election
- Policies at stake in the election

Also noted in this chapter was the statistic that voter turnout tends to be less than 50% of eligible voters in local elections and congressional elections when there is no presidential race.

First, review these factors and choose the three that you believe most directly influence your decision to vote in a *local* election. Then, identify a fourth factor that is not included in the list. Finally, write an essay describing why each of the four factors you selected plays a role in your decision to vote and how the economic notion of self-interest guides your decision.

Your essay should be at least three paragraphs in length and describe the decision to vote in a local election in the context of your own everyday life. The best analysis will be specific and demonstrate application to your experiences as a voter.

Part 2 - Getting Others to Vote

In Part 1, you identified four factors influencing your personal decision to vote in a local election. In Part 2, consider how an external force could use these factors to incentivize you to vote in a local election. Use that consideration to construct an 8.5 × 11 in. poster or flyer that could be distributed to eligible voters similar to yourself to encourage their participation in a local election. Your goal is to improve the aforementioned statistic that less than half of eligible voters participate in local elections. The best flyer demonstrates a clear connection to the four factors you chose in Part 1.

Checklist

Part 1

- ☐ Choose three factors that influence your decision to vote.
- ☐ Identify your own factor that influences you to vote.
- ☐ Describe and apply your own experiences to each factor.

Part 2

- ☐ Construct a flyer/poster.
- ☐ Appeal to each of the factors you chose in Part 1.