

## Senior Project Outline

### TO VOTE WISELY

#### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Note the well known problem of American nonparticipation in voting (Cite Khalid, Gonyea, & Fadel from *NPR*)
- B. Introduce the problem of uninformed voting in America and its effects
- C. Cite Nixon's Watergate Scandal and Aristotle's quote (Quoted by Hochschild) on his opposition to democracy
- D. Thesis: Elections are determined by popularity and bandwagoning, partisan bonds, and a lack of knowledge on politics and laws; this will be mitigated if people take time to look into their politicians before voting.

#### II. MISDIRECTION AND POPULARITY

- A. Introduce topic
- B. Cite American Democracy Project / The Democracy Commitment on how politicians portray themselves favorably to gain popularity
- C. Bandwagoning helps those in the lead of a political race stay in the lead (Cite Vitelli from *Psychology Today*)
- D. "Fake news" can sway elections and opinions on politicians, and it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish it from correct news (Cite Kalsnes from *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*)
- E. Tie in to bias and partisan bonds paragraph

#### III. PARTISAN BIAS

- A. Narrow down the form of bias being specified and addressed
- B. Cite Somin's notes on how partisan bias comes out as acceptable and creates blind loyalties to one's party of choice, leading them to see their rival party as always ignorant and their own party as always right
  - 1. Also cite Jankowski's notes on how partisans, being committed to their party, don't have incentives to be politically informed
- C. Media fosters this form of bias
- D. Somin's notes on how said bias fosters intentional political ignorance due the weight of party ties

#### IV. DISINTEREST IN POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

- A. Introduce and quote Somin's quote of Prime Minister Tony Blair on topic
- B. Somin's notes on how no one sees a reason to look into politics only to make a single, better-informed vote, and Meyer's notes on the complexity of government
- C. Naivety of such voters allows for manipulation and pursuit of contradictory policies (Citing an interview of Somin by Meyer)
- D. Lack of knowledge on candidates can correlate with bandwagoning and bias

#### V. COUNTER-ARGUMENTS

- A. Argument: Voting has little effect on government, so being informed is pointless.
  - 1. One vote does nearly nothing, but many uninformed votes add up, allowing for arbitrary determination of elections (cite Somin's article)
- B. Argument: Uninformed voting is exaggerated as Americans know plenty enough to make educated votes; bits and pieces of news suffice.

1. News can be skewed, and not listening to / reading the whole story leads to it being used out-of-context
  2. Allude to Hochschild's findings that demonstrate the level of ignorance in Americans
- C. Argument: Political information is burdensome and/or time-consuming to gather.
1. Learning is important regardless of difficulty
    - a) Elections affect many people, sometimes to an international extent
    - b) Learning readies one for what to expect when a politician takes office and the policies to look out for

## VI. EFFECTS OF UNINFORMED VOTING

- A. Deriving from Somin, ADP/TDC, and Vitelli: Ignorance guides the uninformed, and popularity, misdirection, bias, and so on can sway them
- B. Insignificant details affect votes (Refer to JFK)
- C. Politicians can use all of this to win elections, allowing for corrupt or unsuitable people to take office
- D. Learning doesn't only affect elections but also helps the learned to know what to expect when politicians do something with some form of consequence

## VII. ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

- A. Use Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 269 and Surah Al-Fatir, verses 18-20 to show that the Quran holds learning knowledge and wisdom in high esteem and frowns upon ignorance
- B. Hadith from Riyadh-As-Saliheen on the benefits of knowledge in the hereafter

- C. Islam is not restricted as a religion, being also a lifestyle that commands Muslims to aid the community and advance it (cite Maged from *IMAG*), and informed voting can be done in such a way.

## VIII. SOLUTIONS

- A. Offer ideas suggested by Somin on what the government itself can do
- B. Individuals can learn themselves to be informed; cite ADP / TDC on how to do so
- C. Spreading the word will spread the change

## IX. CONCLUSION

- A. Reiterate thesis
- B. The benefits settle in when people try to keep themselves informed, and eventually lead to better leadership, along with an understanding of what happens in the world and how to handle it.
- C. Concluding sentence (“The matter is if people will decide to use their vote wisely.”)