

# SCIENCE OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS

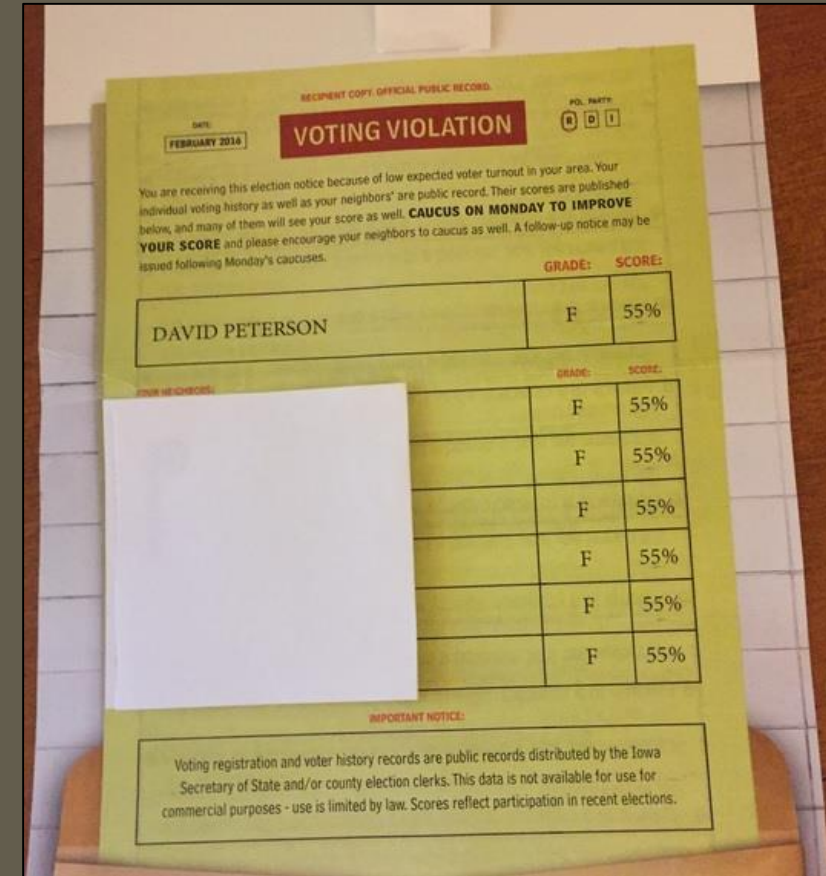
IR 155: Comparative Politics

Wheaton College

Dr. Timothy W. Taylor

# I. THE BASICS

- Identify the political puzzle and form a research question:
  - Do voter shaming mailers increase voter turnout?
  - Does micro-level corruption erode citizens' trust in government?
  - Do gender quotas in legislatures reduce domestic violence rates against women?
- Form an argument/theory
  - Identifying that a voter (and her neighbors) has failed to vote creates communal shame/accountability to vote.
  - Corruption toward public goods is operating expense, but corruption toward justice erodes trust.
  - Gender quotas in local offices lead to more visual exposure and fosters greater respect for women



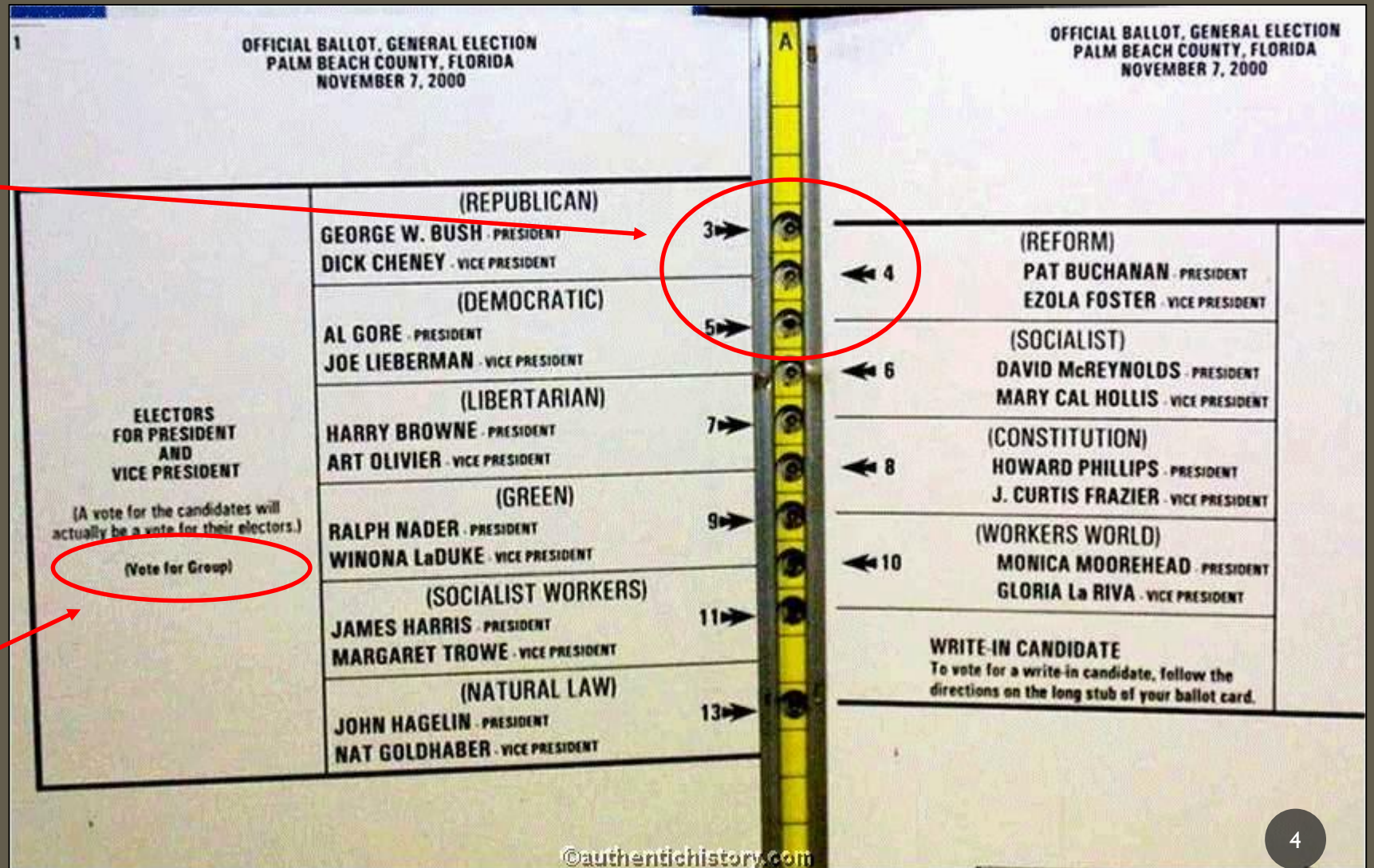
Ted Cruz campaign mailer, 2016 Iowa primary

## II. RESEARCH DESIGN TO PROVE CAUSATION

- There are different ways to find causation
  - Formal models
    - I cannot argue with the logic, but do you have any observational evidence?
  - Statistics
    - How confident are you in the probabilistic relationship? Only 95%!
  - Case study
    - Sure it works for these cases, but does it work for others?
  - Experiments
    - You showed me it works in the lab, but does it work in the real world?

# THE CASE OF THE BUTTERFLY BALLOT

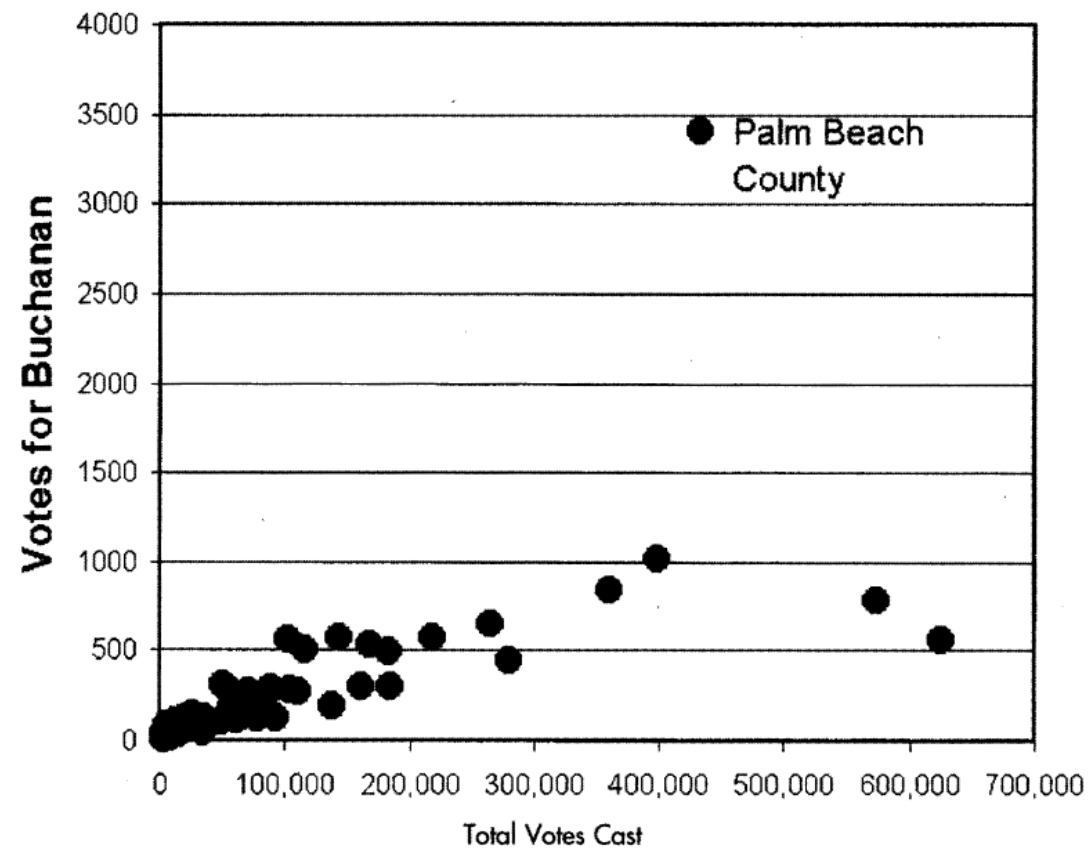
Confusion #1:  
straight vertical punch  
holes for alternating  
columns (e.g.  
Buchanan is listed 2<sup>nd</sup>,  
but is on right-hand  
column)



Confusion #2: does  
“vote for group”  
mean 2 holes need be  
punched (Gore &  
Lieberman)?

# THE CASE OF THE BUTTERFLY BALLOT

**FIGURE 2**  
**Presidential Election Results for Florida, by County**



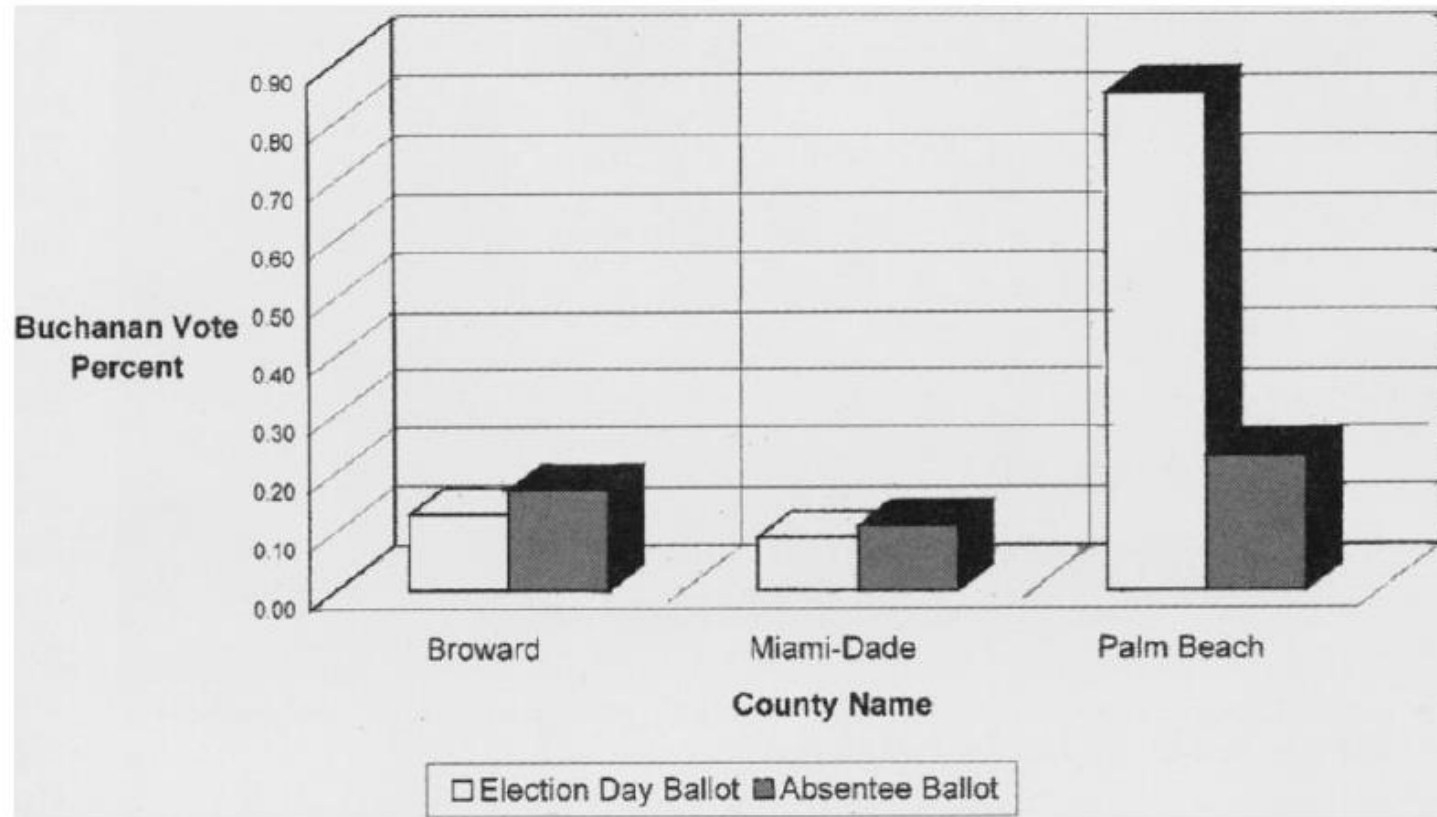
Source: Adams and Fastnow (2000).

## *THE CASE OF THE BUTTERFLY BALLOT*

- Did the butterfly ballot cause Gore supporters to vote for Buchanan?
  - Circumstantial evidence suggests yes, but does it pass reasonable doubt?
- Early analysis of Florida counties showed that Palm Beach was an outlier for Buchanan
  - But perhaps all states had a county outlier?
- Political scientists looked at precinct data within Palm Beach and found that most Buchanan votes came from the most liberal precincts
  - And other outliers were found too (e.g. Tillman precinct in Jasper County, SC)
  - In other counties (e.g. Miami-Dade), Buchanan vote share increases with Bush vote share because Republican support tended to push Buchanan support
- Overvotes seemed to come mainly from Gore/Buchanan supporters
- Absentee ballots seemed to “get it right”

# THE CASE OF THE BUTTERFLY BALLOT

**FIGURE 3**  
**Buchanan Vote by Ballot Type and County**



The “smoking gun” → absentee ballot discrepancy

## *THE CASE OF THE BUTTERFLY BALLOT*

- Did the “detectives” prove the butterfly ballot led to Gore votes being misallocated?
- With a partner discuss...
  - Do you believe the story? Why?
  - Is the evidence convincing? Why?



### III. THE COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY

- Qualitative study of cases
  - In-depth and process tracing
  - Descriptive rather than predictive
- Can we show causation?
  - X = independent variables
  - Y = dependent variable
  - e.g. “Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism”
- Case selection:
  - Need to vary the dependent variable

	X1	X2	X3	Y
A	1	0	0	1
B	1	1	1	1
C	1	0	1	1

Example 1: no variation in DV

	X1	X2	X3	Y
A	1	1	0	0
B	1	1	1	1

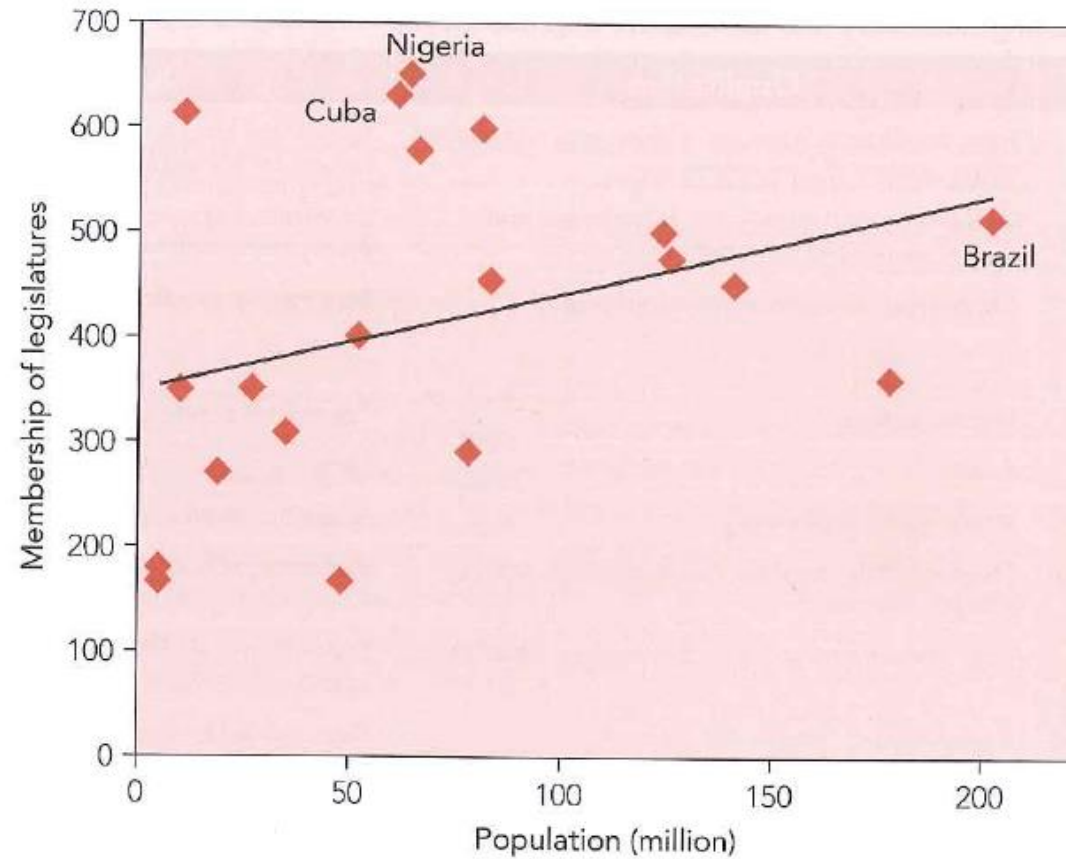
Example 2: variation in DV

## IV. STATISTICAL TESTS

- Large-N studies are probabilistic relationships
  - Many observations
  - External validity
- Regression line
  - The predicted value of the dependent variable based upon certain value of the independent variable(s)
- Need sufficient observations



# REGRESSION GRAPHS



**FIGURE 6.3:** Population and the size of legislature

Note: Membership of legislatures refers to lower chamber only.

Sources: Membership of legislatures from Inter-Parliamentary Union (2015); population size from World Bank (2015)

# REGRESSION GRAPHS

