

CAMPAIGN LENGTH AND ITS IMPACT ON VOTER TURNOUT

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This thesis examines campaign length and its effect on voter turnout. It uses a comparative approach to better understand how different countries deal with campaigns. This analysis looks at the last four elections from the US, UK, and Sweden to argue that an effective way to increase voter turnout in the government is to shorten the length of the campaign seasons. The shorter the campaign, the more individuals will turn out to vote. Shorter campaigns also mean that less money needs to be raised, which could limit corruption in politics. Shorter campaigns, it is argued in this thesis, are an effective answer to increasing overall voter turnout.

John McCormick, Ph.D., Chair

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## **Introduction**

Mahatma Gandhi once said, “I understand democracy to be something that gives the weak the same chance as the strong” (Gandhi 2016). Gandhi was referring to the power of the vote, where in a democracy every individual has the same role in determining who is elected. In a democracy, there are – ideally - free, fair and frequent elections. Also, citizens have the opportunity to come together to cast a vote, this vote is for the leaders who will lead the country in the direction they think is best, a vote becomes speech, and speech is protest or acceptance of the rules in place set down by the governing body. In a democracy, every vote should carry the same weight. To ensure that a democracy stays strong and that the people feel that their voice matters, there is occasionally a need for a country to pass laws to ensure an equal playing field. Campaign finance reform or limits to the length of the campaign season are both great examples of this. The goal of campaign laws should be to encourage more individuals to vote and feel that their vote matters. If potential voters decide not to show up to the polls to voice their concerns, then it should be in the best interest of the nation to better understand what is causing these low levels of turnout.

Studying levels of trust in governments is one of the areas that has an effect on voter turnout because trust levels have “wide-reaching implications for the vitality of democracy” (Gershtenson, Ladewig and Plane 2006, 882). A lack of political trust undermines support for a democratic government. This mistrust raises questions about a government's legitimacy. Trust in government is one of the

pillars for a successful democracy, which is why scholars focus so much attention on studying it. Knowledge of how and what causes individuals to trust or not trust the government can give signals to members of the government regarding how to make improvements that would help include more people in the democratic process. This is important for members to know and understand because the more trust people have in their government the more votes they will receive and the most important thing a member of the government must do to stay in office is win an election (Desilver 2016).

The goal of this thesis is to examine the link between (a) the length and the expense of elections and (b) the consequent levels of voter turnout. My hypothesis is that the longer, more expensive, and more negative elections are, the lower the levels of voter turnout. To explore this hypothesis, three countries have been selected as case studies: The United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), and Sweden. All three countries have different campaign seasons and different laws that candidates and political parties must obey. There are also differences in the political systems of the three countries: the presidential system of the US, a parliamentary system of the UK (dominated by two parties), and the multi-party parliamentary system found in Sweden. These differences will also offer insight into whether or not trust levels can be swayed by the style of government. The differences among these countries will be explored to test the hypothesis.

For an in-depth comparative analysis of multiple countries, it is important to have extensive background knowledge on the work other scholars have done to be

able to build from what has already been proven. Political campaigns and voter turnout are fields that have been studied quite heavily; however, little research has been done on the question of how the length of campaigns could be a driving force behind low voter turnout due to high levels of being disenfranchised or oversaturation. After first reviewing the current state of research on the topic, the thesis will then assess the experiences of the three case-study countries, reviewing the laws each country has in place for their political campaigns as well considering the amount of money invested in campaigns. It will then look at how much individuals trust their government and voter turnout levels. It then goes on to argue that turnout is down because of the campaigns themselves because of the length, cost and negative qualities of advertising. My dependent variable is voter turnout and the independent variables are campaign length, cost, trust levels, and negative ads. This research is important because it can help to keep the democratic process in check and ensure that democracies are working to build the faith of their people. Democracy is a vehicle driven by the people, it is critical that people have faith in the vehicle or it will no longer be used.

Throughout this thesis, it will be shown that political campaigns have several aspects that can affect the turnout, from cost to advertising to length and trust levels. Political campaigns are designed to educate the electorate; however, this thesis finds that this idea does not hold true since longer campaigns should produce more educated individuals, as well as, individuals more involved in governmental affairs and yet the inference is true. Countries have made several attempts to limit

money in campaigns and to encourage higher voter turnout. This thesis concludes that if campaign length is shortened, turnout goes up and money spent goes down.

## **CHAPTER I: Literature Review**

“Campaigns are the moments in political life when representatives and the represented interact most energetically” (Brady, Johnston and Sides 2009, 18). Voter turnout is speech between the voting population and the government officials elected into office. When a candidate or political party is elected, they are assumed to have a mandate from their constituents to go out and do what they have said they were going to do. This mandate from the people can fundamentally change the direction of a country for generations, which is why it is vital individuals go out to vote. To understand how or why someone was elected it is important to look at their campaign. Political campaigns are an area of interest for political scientists which has generated a lot of scholarly research since the beginning of the field. To adequately understand the effects political campaigns (in particular how the length of the campaign plays on turnout) it is vital to know what past research has been conducted by scholars in this subfield. A better understanding of the research, which has been done by other scholars, helps to shed light on areas need to be expanded upon or can show where scholars have missed focus on completely.

### ***Length of Campaigns***

In the US, the vast majority of potential candidates formally announce they are running for the presidency in the middle of the summer the year before the election. Meaning most candidates formally enter the race 16-18 months before the election. This is different than most candidates’ exploratory committees to determine if it is a good time to run. For 16-18 months, the American population is

thrown into the political sphere to pick the next president. The *League of Women Voters* states, “according to the *Washington Post*, the day after Bob Dole lost to Bill Clinton in the November 1996 election, (Lamar) Alexander was on the phone raising money for his next run” (League of Women Voters 2008, 95). Lamar Alexander was never elected president and yet this helps to illustrate how presidential campaigning starts many years before the election. The lengths of US campaigns are vastly longer than many of the other democracies in the world including the UK and Sweden by adding months onto the campaign season other countries do not have (Kurtzleben 2015). What has caused some nations like the UK and Sweden to have shorter campaigns, while other countries like the US have decided to have much longer campaign seasons? And what effects do these campaigns have on the population?

A campaign's main responsibility should be to ignite partisan loyalties and stimulating individuals' willingness to vote and to inform the voting population why their party or their candidate is the right person for the job (Bennett and Bennett 1989). However, actively trying to convince individuals their candidate or political party is the best for the job truly means the campaign's purpose is to manipulate the electorate to vote for them. The most important task in a campaign is to make sure the party or the candidate wins, nothing they worked for matters if they do not win. Manipulation by campaigns to sway the public can be cured by two different conditions. The first is the public is inherently untrusting of things said during an election, this is evident by levels of trust the people feel for their government. The second condition is a comment or attack made by a candidate or party is unlikely to

go unchallenged by the opposition. Campaigns can prevent any one side from single-handedly manipulating the electorate; this works best when the campaigns are competitive and when all parties and candidates have the resources to make themselves heard. Arguably, the best way to limit campaign manipulation is to have more of a campaign because the opposition has the opportunity to correct the attack (Brady, Johnston and Sides 2009). The inverse argument could be made that in a shorter campaign there will be less of a need to correct the narrative because the most important part will be to educate the electorate on their platform in the short timeframe.

Scholars have done little research into the effects length of campaigns can play on the electorate, however, among the little work they've done, the conclusion is that length of campaigns matter. In longer campaigns, voters rely heavier on the true values of economic conditions to inform their evaluations of parties in power. In shorter campaigns, these effects are mostly absent. According to scholars what is ultimately affected by length of campaigns is the level of knowledge learned by voters (Stevenson and Vavreck 2000; Brady, Johnston and Sides 2000). Voters are able to have more potential opportunities to better understand the true landscape of the country or their district. Voters are more informed the longer the campaigns run. "When political scientists conclude the importance of the economy signifies campaigns have minimal effects, they may be underestimating what the campaigns and the candidates have actually done" (Stevenson and Vavreck 2000, 235). The political campaign process is also important for the voters to be exposed to many different campaign messages so they can accurately estimate the true positions of

candidates on important issues. When voters answer polling questions in the months before the election, they mentally go through the same process they would to make a vote choice; however, many individuals are unable to employ accurate estimates of the true values of fundamental differences between the candidates or parties. The early poll results reflect more individuals' biases toward a particular party or individual than the later poll results, or even the election result. An increase in campaign information helps voters to understand the candidates' positions and the overall economic conditions. The increase in knowledge that occurs over the course of the campaign helps to turn uncertainty from the electorate into concrete ideology, and helps the voters know what/who they are voting for (Stevenson and Vavreck 2000).

One argument for an extended length in political campaign season is to better inform the voters. Voter education is important because people should know what they are voting for. However, with access to the Internet and the different resources available, do voters require the vast amount of time to understand the situation around them or is it that voters simply do not care? Anthony Downs articulates this discussion by saying voters do not have a lot of incentive to be well informed on different political issues. He argues an individual's vote is more than likely not going to sway the overall outcome of the election. This leads voters to not only abstain from the election or from a vote, but it could cause individuals to remain 'rationally ignorant' about different ideals to vote for. Downs states a well-informed voter is vital to a stable democracy. If citizens do not have sufficient information about the policies or governments they vote for, they may be disappointed by the actual

consequences of their decisions, which in turn can undermine the acceptance and legitimacy of democracy as a political system (Downs 1957). Should campaigns be longer for the sake of voter education? What if a voter does not take the time to learn about the political ideology of a candidate anyway?

### ***Citizen Involvement***

Alexis de Tocqueville discusses in his book *Democracy in America*, a participatory public was one of the most important features of the United States political process and an overall strength of the political system. Tocqueville, in the early 1800s, came to the US from France to explore the success of US democracy and how it could be applied to France (Tocqueville 1838). Robert Putnam calls this idea of a participatory public social engagement or social capital in his book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. From the early 1900s to the year 2000 the US population went through a mini upheaval. Putnam showed there was a strict decline, starting in the 1950s, in social capital and engagements in organizational membership, attending religious services, attending club meetings, and interacting with others face-to-face in communities. Individuals are “bowling alone” which means individuals are not signing up for bowling leagues anymore instead they are bowling by themselves, and this leads to individuals not as involved with the community. Society, as a whole, has more social problems when the society does not work together (Putnam 2000). Putnam argues when social capital is high, children do better in school, neighborhoods are safer, people prosper, the government is better, and people are happier and healthier (Putnam 2000).

Tocqueville argues the US success, as a democracy was dependent on the public's involvement in the system; however, as Putnam shows, this is clearly no longer the case. What does this mean for the future of democracy if people are not as involved? Or will society adjust and rebound? Putnam and coauthor Lewis Feldstein are optimistic society can still come together to be more together in his book *Better Together: Restoring the American Community*. They show there are several individuals across the US who are inventing new forms of getting individuals to be more involved. Communities have begun to use resources like the Internet or churches to ignite the community to come together. Ultimately the authors call for individuals to come together to bring about change (Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen 2004). Their entire argument can be summed up by the famous saying by the Greek philosopher Aristotle, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" (A Quote by Aristotle). When a society comes together real change is possible for the better, when united there is a clear voice of the people that the government cannot hide from. These arguments can be used for any true democracy. While Putnam looked at the US for his case study, the argument could also be used for Sweden and the UK on the need for a strong democracy to have a well-involved and informed electorate.

From Alexis de Tocqueville to Robert Putnam, it is abundantly clear individuals must be involved in the political discourse for any country. If it is obvious to scholars, then why is the public not behind the idea of getting more involved? What has fundamentally altered the perception of the public to not trust the government or to not vote as much? Many pundits, politicians, and many social and political scientists believe that most people are populists (Hibbing and Theiss-

Morse 2002). This means that people distrust any decision maker who is not an ordinary person or who is not connected to ordinary people. This is the idea that has led to the question, “would you get a beer with that candidate?”, commonly known as the beer test. Politicians and political parties position themselves as the everyday individual even though they are the elite. People, typically, prefer to rule themselves and will support any reform that empowers the people at the expense of elites. If direct democracy is not feasible, at that point then people will accept a representative system and then if representatives act as a true steward of the people’s wishes, the society will rally behind those elected officials (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). The book *Stealth Democracy: American’s Belief about How Government Should Work* by John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, looks at the psyche of the American public and finds most individuals do not like or trust the government. They show that people want a form of governing style they refer to as a “stealth democracy”, which is a democracy that acts much like a stealth fighter would, stay invisible and out of sight until it is needed. They want this style of governing because individuals are fed up with the constant fighting that goes on between government officials. The authors write “when asked whether the political system does a good job representing the interests of all Americans, people respond with a resounding “no”. This is not because they are worried about that minority views are going unrepresented. Quite the contrary. Most people are convinced that minority views dominate the system and that clear-thinking, salt-of-the-earth, ordinary Americans are ignored” (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002, 105). If individuals are not involved in the political discourse of the country, and if

individuals do not want to be involved, then there seems little reason to keep campaigns long.

*The Vanishing Voter Project* is one of the few research projects that looks into the length of campaigns and how it effects on how people vote. *The Vanishing Voter Project* was a study conducted by the Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University from November 1999 to January 2001. The study looked at how involved voters were in the 2000 presidential campaign. The study did not, however, look at voters' opinions toward the length of presidential campaigns. This research showed how attentive voters were to presidential campaigns and research suggests that voters are somewhat engaged with the campaign season, but engagement tends to increase during exciting or important events (Patterson 2002). The implications of this research means that voters will get involved into politics when the race gets more exciting. Intense campaigns chip away at pro-incumbent biases and encourage actively open-minded thinking about the candidates. Education increases the willingness to entertain pros and cons about the candidates. Intense campaigns encourage individuals to stay open-minded (Kam 2006).

A campaigns purpose is to educate the electorate, but to achieve this goal then the electorate is required to be actively involved. If the electorate only pays attention when the race heats up, it is highly likely that the most exciting time is the time right before an election. A lengthy election could ultimately not be required due to these situations. Voters pay attention right before an election when the race

is exciting, when the voters pay attention they learn the necessary ideals to vote to their interests, so voters are actually learning the most right before the election and it is not required to have a lengthy election to educate the populous. This also helps to support the notion that a long campaign can hurt the electorates' drive to get involved due to oversaturation. The longer a race the less exciting it is and therefore the fewer individuals will possibly pay attention.

### ***Money in Campaigns***

Money in politics and in campaigns have been a hot button issue over the past few elections, with presidential candidates like Senator Bernie Sanders calling for a cap on spending to help end greed and corruption. Scholars have found that campaign funding is important in determining the outcome of a political race (Bennett and Bennett 1989). In a campaign, money can determine the overall outcome of the race. It is vital for candidates to raise as much money as possible. Because campaign fundraising is a key point in the success of an election, it is important to look at the means in which candidates are raising money. Does money in campaigns mean higher levels of greed and corruption?

Money talks. Plain and simple. This has led to what is known as a "Dollarocracy". Dollarocracy is the idea of one dollar one vote instead of the idea of democracy which is the idea of one person one vote. Money is pouring into campaigns at what some would argue is an alarming rate. As addressed previously, political campaigns have drastically increased the number of ads used in marketing their party and candidates but also in attacking their opposition. The Obama versus

Romney, at that time, was the largest funded campaign to date in any democracy around the world (Nichols and McChesney 2013). Political campaign funding is an area of discussion because it is argued that if not derailed the influence of money in campaigns will continue to expand upon a growing problem of unequal financial resources and how some individuals have more of a voice in decisions of government (Mathias 1986).

While there has been research done about the effects that campaign funding has on the electorate and on their voices, Thomas Mann shows the effects money can also play on those who decide to run for office. Political campaigns have become so expensive it has deterred individuals from running for office unless they are independently wealthy or willing to do nonstop fundraising (Mann 1996). There is also an issue with the real and perceived conflicts of interests when individuals in the government who seek campaign contributions from people and organizations with direct interest in matters pending in government. The public views individuals in government corrupt for these possible dealings when trying to raise money. The final issue with campaign funding Mann argues the current campaign financing does not allow for adequate opposition of the controlling party. The party in control has name recognition and therefore more access to donors. Candidates or political parties are not able to raise enough money to challenge those in power, especially for a smaller party. Most people do not know the policies of their representative, and people know less about whom they are running against, and if their voice cannot get across because they cannot afford too (Mann 1996). If people do not have the opportunity to learn about the opinion of every candidate on the issues then

they are not informed fully on who to cast their vote to, diminishing the role the electorate has because the only voice the public will hear is the individuals with money. Money buys things. Money doesn't buy votes but what it buys is airtime. More money a candidate has the more airtime they will have in front of the electorate. This becomes rule by the rulers, which is not an open form of democracy. Large sums of money in politics are detrimental to the success of democracy (Udris, Eisenegger and Schneider 2016). Some attempts have been made to combat big money. Most attempts in campaign finance reform goes to benefit the incumbent; however, not all reform has benefited incumbents. In many states voters have used ballot initiatives to limit contributions to candidates in state elections. These contribution limits seem to have the effect of making elections more competitive. One possible explanation for this finding is that limits are primarily binding for incumbents, but not for challengers, resulting in an improvement in challengers' relative position (Stratmann 2005).

### ***Political Advertising***

One of the first real television based campaigns occurred in 1960. Television was a new medium that made it easier to see the politicians and put a better face on the candidate. The Kennedy-Nixon presidential debated helped spur voter interest and brought in a higher percentage of Americans to the polls, this was a spike that had not been seen in quite some time (Wattenberg 2002). Political advertising on television was in its infancy in the 60s. Political campaigns were scrambling to learn how to get their message across using television. Their ads were amateurish, weak,

hardly convincing, and did not use much sharp rhetoric attacking the opposition. John F. Kennedy was able to capitalize on his charm and looked to win over the electorate. During the first televised debate JFK wore make-up to hide the shine of sweat under the lights while Richard Nixon did not, thus looking sweaty under the lights. This made JFK look more presidential and cool under pressure, all because of a little make up. Many individuals who listened to the debate on the radio were under the impression the Nixon won the debate; however, those who watched the debate thought JFK dominated the debate. Rumor has it that Nixon's own mother called Nixon after the debate to make sure he was feeling ok. Four short years later during the election of 1964 political strategists had sharpened their skills and President Lyndon B Johnson unleashed a campaign so negative on Barry Goldwater that Goldwater himself said he would have been scared out of voting for such a candidate had he not known himself personally. Goldwater was joking; however, this attack was successful and LBJ won. Long gone are the days of the political stump speech and now campaigns are based on the thirty-second attack ads (Wattenberg 2002). The 1960 Presidential campaign changed politics by putting a face on the politicians that had hardly been seen before. TV has widespread implications on the political sphere and there has been no going back. In 1964 when the campaigns became negative it took it down a different route, and once the box was opened there was no going back. This campaign changed the world, not only for America, other countries quickly got involved in airing their political ads, learning from America in the power that the live image contains (Wattenberg 2002).

Campaigns are longer, more expensive, and more negative than ever before (Nichols and McChesney 2013). Why would campaigns be so negative? Because attack ads work in driving the conversation. Political advertising has now become negative advertising. This is the approach that political strategists use to deter voters from voting from the other party. This technique is how many parties and candidates have now been educating the electorate, their teaching technique is to teach people of the perils of their opponent. Over the last several decades there has been a huge uptick in the amount of advertising on television, which respectively has created more negative political ads than any other time in history (Nichols and McChesney 2013). While there is possibly an over saturation of negative ads it is possible that these ads steer the political discourse into investigating these allegations.

Political advertisements have become a vocal approach to marketing their ideals and positions. Many political strategists have used these techniques to gain an advantage in winning an election, and these techniques have continued to evolve. Political advertising is one of the most effective ways by which to persuade voters when used correctly. Two of the best approaches used are positive and negative advertisements. According to Karen Johnson-Cartee and Gary Copeland positive advertisements have six purposes. The first purpose of positive advertisement is to improve the name recognition of the party or the candidate. The best approach is using ads to get the candidates name out to the public. The second purpose of political advertising is to show the public that the candidate or party has leadership qualities that are required to be voted into office. The goal of this is to help give the

electorate confidence in the candidates' ability to lead. The third purpose is to demonstrate how similar they are with the electorate. This helps the voters create a relationship with the candidate to develop further trust and understanding with the candidate and their ideologies, again this is the "would you get a beer with that candidate?" approach. Fourth, positive advertisements give a heroic image of the candidate. This technique is used to get their message across and to grow their base support if they are respected. The fifth purpose is to develop the candidates' issues that are popular to the electorate. This approach is to find a common ground among the voters and highlight topics that more individuals can get behind driving up support. The sixth and final purpose is to link the candidate with positive figures and groups. If a candidate is supported or endorsed by groups or popular public figures, they are more likely to have a greater base of support among the electorate (Johnson-Cartee and Copeland 1997). Negative advertisements have become the main tool used by politicians in the past few decades. Despite negative advertising being the main use of advertising, these ads do not always have a positive impact for the group/person funding the ad. The main argument behind negative advertisements is said to convince voters to sway in their direction. However, research shows that it can have the inverse effect and make voters more supportive of the opposing candidate rather than the sponsor and therefore have an opposite reaction than desired. There are also several other areas that negative ads effect during the election. Common belief is that negative advertisements polarize voters and lead to a decrease of trust in the government (Johnson-Cartee and Copeland 1997).

Advertisements play a role in setting the agenda for the new administration following the general election (Nichols and McChesney 2013). Whether positive or negative in nature, advertisements have become the main tool used for displaying political messages. Over the past few decades there has been a steady increase in negative advertising. However, negative advertisements do not have the outcome that is intended. If negative ads do not change the minds of the electorate then clearly, they are not required. If these ads do not drive people to vote for their candidate or party, then they should surely be outlawed. If the ads cause people to tune out politics, then these ads should not be allowed and in fact could be detrimental to democracy.

### ***Trust in Government***

Turning to trust in government, UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill once said, “never let a good crisis go to waste” (A Quote by Winston S. Churchill). Churchill was referring to the public’s willingness to allow the government to pass bills after a crisis occurs. After 9/11, research found that public support for government spending was greater because trust in government was higher and citizens were more likely to support expanding resources necessary to address issues of homeland security. After a crisis trust goes up in the government (Chanley 2002). Trust in government plays a role in election outcomes. Trust in government can be affected by political scandals and public perceptions of the economy and crime. When politicians show they can do a great job to insure an avoidance of scandal, they skillfully handle the economy, and help to alleviate public concern

about crime, they may help to restore public confidence in government. Trust in government has important implications for public evaluations of incumbent policy makers and the public's policy preferences (Chanley et al 2000). Trust in government is negatively affected by political campaigns. "Campaigns strengthen democracy by holding the elected accountable to the electors. At the same time, campaigns undermine democracy, critics argue, by inducing cynicism, undermining trust in government, depressing turnout, and otherwise frustrating attempts to engage the citizenry" (Kam 2006, 931). Low levels of trust in government are detrimental in the success of a democracy, because individuals are not invested in a system they have little or no faith in (Cook and Gronke 2005). Jeff R. Clark and Dwight R. Lee argue that trust is seen as an important factor in good government. A trusted government can attract the type of people and resources needed to perform tasks to so it is worth trusting. Too much trust though, can increase the power of the government without any accountability in their actions. To combat this, Clark and Lee discuss the optimal trust levels. Views of the optimal trust in government depend a lot on political ideology of an individual; this is influenced by the performance of the government. The performance fuels skepticism toward the government. Clark and Lee argue that voters should be decisive about their government, the more decisive individuals are, the greater their optimal level of trust. There is give and take between too much trust and too little trust (Clark and Lee 2001). The more trust individuals have in their government the more that the government can accomplish and thus solidifying the trust. Governments should strive to work harder to raise the levels of trust because they can accomplish more;

however, individuals are naturally mistrusting of authority so this give and take can be quite the challenge.

### ***Campaigns Effectiveness***

Political campaigns can be long, expensive, and negative. It is important then to ask, if political campaigns are effective “because campaign interest is a prime determinant of turnout, it is possible lengthy presidential [or parliamentary] contests may have contributed to the diminution of interest in campaigns, which in turn dampens voter participation” (Bennett and Bennett 1999, 341). Thomas Holbrook has found the most important determinants of the outcomes of campaigns are the state of the national economy and the current government’s approval rating. He finds campaigns do matter; however, they do not matter on the national scale but more so in smaller races. He finds everyday campaign events and activities do affect the polls and are crucial in more local level elections (Holbrook 1996). Changes in polls do not change an overall vote. Dan Hopkins with FiveThirtyEight finds while there are ups and downs in political campaigns there would be little difference between how a person will vote in January versus how a person votes in November, showing that campaigns are not overly effective in changing the hearts and minds of the electorate (Hopkins 2016). This is something that has been common over quite some time; in 1980 less than 5% of voters changed their minds over the course of the campaign (Finkel 1993). This is evident because there are several individuals who decide late in the election how they will vote. These individuals are unique from other voters in many ways. These voters are not nearly as interested in the

political outcomes, they are less subject to conventional political forces, and are far less predictable than other voters. In close elections, they are likely to dictate the outcome not only from position of relative ignorance but also from conventional reasoning (Gopoian and Hadjiharalambous 1994). These voters are detrimental to campaigns success because these voters are not predictable. These voters do not care about political outcomes therefore they abstain from the political process until the end of the election. This group is a perfect example of the “Stealth Democracy” group, and it is because of these individuals that clearly campaigns are not effective in educating everyone and convincing them to vote for their candidate or political party. Political campaigns seem to fail at everything they set out to do of educating the public and persuading individuals to vote for them. As Vijay Krishna and John Morgan argue “ideology blocks out all other information” (Krishna and Morgan 2011). Scholars argue that it is possible that individuals understand the general platform differences between political parties, even though most do not retain the overall specific partisan issues stands that differentiate between the candidates. “If that is case, then people could connect these macro-level considerations to their own personal values and political orientations. Such a view suggests that individuals are capable of making rational and issue-consistent electoral choices, without having to invoke explicitly the minutiae associated with specific policy initiatives” (Lewis-Beck et al 2008, 202). People vote the same throughout the process or don’t care to vote ever in the campaign season. It is because of this that a campaign could therefore be more effective with shorter campaign season.

## **CHAPTER II: Country Analysis**

Past research has shown a need to understand how campaign length changes the mindset of the electorate. The longer, more expensive, and more negative the elections are the lower levels of trust potential voters will have in their government and there will be lower levels of voter turnout. Reviewing the past research, it has become clear this is an area that can add new light to the study of campaigns. As previously stated to prove this theory, three countries have been selected as a case study approach with statistical backing to argue the hypothesis. The countries that will be looked at and studied are the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), and Sweden. The three countries selected have systemic differences in their approach to government; there is the presidential system of the US, the two-party dominant parliamentary system of the UK, or the perpetual coalition system of Sweden. These differences of government styles play a vital distinction in this analysis because it will be show that there are differences in trust levels and how the levels could be swayed by the style of government. For the overall analysis of how length affects the electorate it is important to understand the background of the countries and why they chose the path they did with regards to campaigns. Each country brings a unique perspective to the table and lessons can always be learned from comparison of healthy democracies.

### ***How the Governments are Set Up***

In this section, there will be an in-depth look the ways in which the different countries have chosen to govern themselves. This is an important distinction in the

overall analysis because each country has a different way in which they have set themselves up and if there is a problem in all three then it is not indicative to one style.

The United States has been a representative democracy since the ratification of the Constitution in 1788. The election process is a complicated one and confusing to many; however, despite the checkered past of the country, today there is universal suffrage to all US citizens' men or women at least 18 years old or older. Elections occur in every even-numbered year for Congress and some state and local government offices in the United States. Other states and local jurisdictions hold elections in odd numbered years. Every four years, Americans elect a president and vice president. Every two years, Americans elect all 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives and approximately one-third of the 100 members of the U.S. Senate. Senators serve staggered terms of six years each. State and local elections are organized through their own State Constitutions. There are two types of basic elections: primary and general. Primary elections are held prior to the general election. The main purpose of primary elections is to pick the candidate to run in the general election, winning primaries mean a candidate will win nomination for that political party. A candidate runs against members of their own party in primary races. In a few states, party candidates are chosen in state or local nominating conventions, rather than primaries. Presidential primaries for states take place throughout the country in the run up to a convention. Typically, the candidate is determined before the convention making it a ceremonial event. Many states keep moving up the date of their primary to make theirs more important in the selection

process, this forces the elections to be longer. Every four years on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November the president is voted on. There have been several changes to the election process since its inception. The founders of the United States were worried about political parties, and did not want there to be any. Within no time at all there were political parties and the US largely works off a two-party model, with it being difficult to win if not a member of these parties. The idea behind this is because two parties can offer sufficient choice in elections to the voters. This style also allows for the parties to change with times, the parties become open to new ideas. The US has a winner take all approach to elections and this also makes it difficult for a third-party member. The approach to picking the president in the US is through the Electoral College. In the Electoral College system, the American public does not technically vote directly for the president and vice president. Instead, individuals vote within each state for “electors” who pledge their vote for the president. The number of electors a state has is based on the total numbers of state’s congressional delegates, which is the total number of the House of Representatives, which is based on population, plus the two senators. There are 538 electors (435 members of the House plus 100 senators plus 3 electors for DC), and to win the presidency a candidate must receive 270 electoral votes. The Electoral College is a winner takes all system, except for Maine and Nebraska. To win a states’ electoral votes, a candidate must win a plurality of the votes. This does mean a candidate can win the presidency without winning the popular election, this has occurred 18 times in the country’s history.

The United Kingdom is made up of four countries: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Governing the UK is several formal documents that are used to formulate the rules that govern them, this is based on statute law, case law made by judges, and international treaties. The UK is a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II as the current head of state, while the Prime Minister is the head of the UK government. The UK is a parliamentary democracy, with two Houses of Parliament, the House of Commons and the House of Lords (UK Government Web Archive). The House of Commons is divided into 650 areas called constituencies. During an election, everyone eligible to cast a vote in a constituency selects one candidate to be their Member of Parliament (MP). The candidate who gets the most votes becomes the MP for that area until the next election. The 650 constituencies are broken down with 533 in England, 40 in Wales, 59 in Scotland, and 18 in Northern Ireland. General elections, in the UK, take place in May once every five years, unless Parliament votes to hold an election sooner. There are three main political parties in the UK - Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat. There are smaller parties or are independent of a political party. To represent a main political party, a candidate must be authorized to run the party's nominating officer. They must then win the constituency votes of their district (@UKParliament). The electorate does not directly elect the Prime Minister of the UK, instead the Prime Ministers are appointed by the Queen. The Prime Minister is a member of the House of Commons elected on the local level of constituents to be a MP. If a party secures a majority of the vote, the Queen appoints the leader of the party to be Prime Minister. If a party does not secure a majority the largest single party could form a minority

government or partnership with minor party. The largest single party can also reach an informal agreement with an opposing party to become a sustainable government. Typically, the party leader with the most seats would attempt to partner and form a coalition with the largest of the smaller parties. This system favors the two major parties the Labour and Conservative parties (@UKParliament). The House of Lords is the second chamber or upper house of the UK Parliament. The members are recommended by the House of Lords Appointment Commission, and then are approved by the Prime Minister. The Queen formalizes the appointment and members serve life terms. There are roughly 800 members in the House of Lords (@UKParliament). It is mentioned throughout UK doctrine that the Queen appoints the Prime Minister and appoints individuals to the House of Lords; however, the Queen's role in government is honorary, with these appointments and responsibilities being a formality and she does not weigh on outcomes of political events.

King Carl XVI Gustaf is the reigning monarch of Sweden. However, his duties are ceremonial, much like that of the Queen of England. Individuals in Sweden are run by a parliamentary democracy called the Riksdag and vote in general elections every four years. Since 1971, Sweden has been ruled by a unicameral (one-chamber) parliament. Elections are held on the third Sunday of September every four years. Sweden's Riksdag uses proportional representation. In a proportional representation the seats are distributed among the political parties in proportion to the votes cast for them around the whole country. Voters choose the party who they wish to rule them. Voters are also able to mark one of the candidates on their ballot,

this is known as personal preference voting, the candidates on the ballot have been nominated by a political party. The Riksdag is a 349 member chambers, whose members are voted for by all Swedish citizens aged 18 or over who are residents of Sweden, or have been residents. These seats are distributed based on a proportion of the votes received. Any one particular party must receive at least 4% of the votes to be assigned a seat. The eight parties currently represented in the Riksdag are: The Social Democratic Party (Socialdemokraterna), the Moderate Party (Moderaterna), the Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna), the Green Party (Miljöpartiet de Gröna), the Centre Party (Centerpartiet), the Left Party (Vänsterpartiet), the Liberal Party (Folkpartiet Liberalerna), and the Christian Democrats (Kristdemokraterna). There are 310 seats are allocated proportionally to the votes received, and then there are 39 adjustment seats. These adjustment seats are used to correct the differences from the proportional national distribution. Once the seats are allocated, the newly elected members of parliament vote for a Speaker and three Deputy Speakers. The member who has been in the Riksdag longest leads the vote. Then, the Speaker, the presiding officer of the Riksdag, proposes the Prime Minister (Swedense 2016, Sweden 2014).

### ***Voting Turnout***

Voting in an election is a right guaranteed to the American public by the US Constitution and yet many individuals do not turn out to vote (Constitution). In fact, the US trails most developed countries in voter turnout (DeSilver). Over the last 40 years' voter turnout for the president tends to fluctuate between 50-60%, and in a

midterm election turnout has been between 35-40% (Voter Turnout Data). Turnout in the 2012 presidential election was 53.6%, based on 129.1 million votes cast and an estimated voting-age population of just under 241 million people (DeSilver 2016). There is some debate on how to calculate voter turnout. Michael McDonald, a political scientist at the University of Florida who runs the United States Election Project, estimates turnout as a share of the “voting-eligible population” (or VEP) by subtracting noncitizens and ineligible felons from the voting-age population and adding eligible overseas voters. Using those calculations, U.S. turnout improves somewhat, to 58% of the 2012 voting-eligible population (DeSilver 2016; Voter Turnout Data). Despite the contradiction, the US is still toward the bottom of most developed countries. According to the Federal Election Commission report on the 2012 Presidential Election, President Barack Obama defeated republican candidate Mitt Romney receiving 51.06% of the vote to Romney’s 47.2%, with the remaining 1.74% going to third party candidates. Voter turnout of those who were registered (VEP) was 58.2%. Obama received 29.72% of the vote of people who were registered to vote. Meaning 70.28% of the eligible voters in America did not cast a ballot for the individual who won (Federal Elections 2012). It is quite possible Obama would still have won the election had the individuals who did not vote turned out to vote; however, it is fascinating to hypothesis on the implications of what the US would look like if more individuals voiced their opinion by voting.

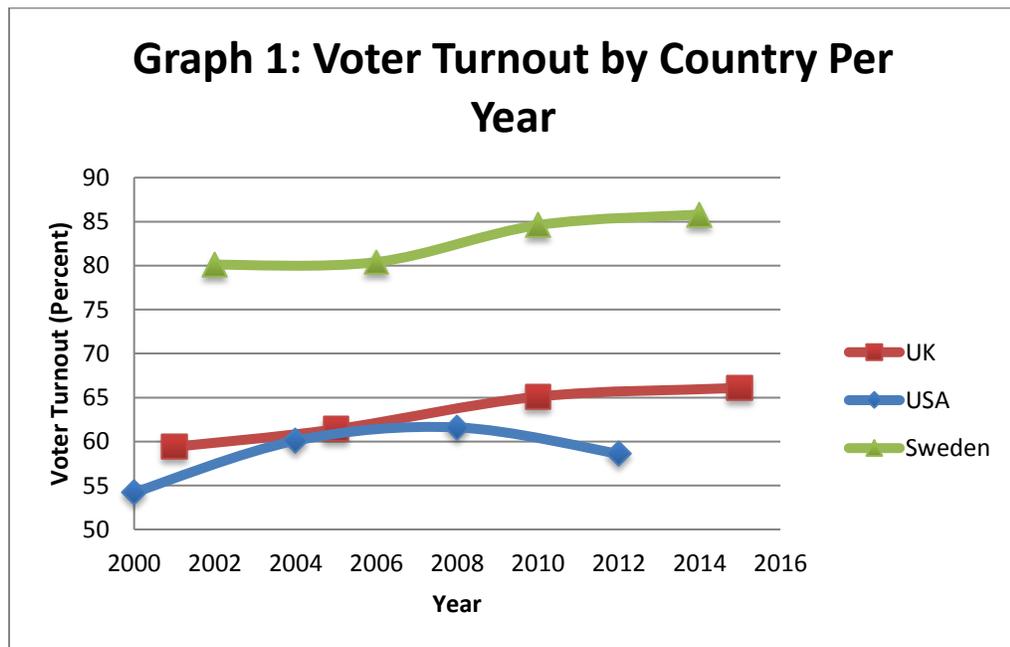
Voter turnout in the UK has had a little downturn compared to historical turnout. From 1945 until 1992 voter turnout was in the high 70% range, with 1950 and 1951 elections being up over 80% turnout (General Election Turnout). Voter

turnout plummeted over 10 points from 77.7% in 1997 to a historic low of 59.4% in 2001. Since 2001 turnout has rebounded a bit with 66.1% of the eligible voters coming out to vote in 2015 (General Election Turnout). Turnout for their MP is the only national voting individuals get to do, they do not get to vote for their Prime Minister; however, because the Prime Minister is chosen as the leader for the majority party it is pretty well known who the individual will be. On June 23, 2016, the UK voted for the United Kingdom European Union membership referendum, also known as the EU referendum and more-well known as the Brexit referendum. The UK voted to depart from the EU; however, this was a historic vote because it had 72.21% turnout, which was the largest turnout since the 1992 general election and one of the highest turnout for a referendum ever (General Election Turnout). The UK does have low turnout for local elections that are not accompanied with an MP election, with turnout typically in the low 30% (By-election Turnout since 1997).

Turnout levels have been relatively stable in Sweden over time with an average of approximately 85% since 1944 (Voter Turnout in Sweden). Turnout level reached its highest levels of participation in the 1976 election with 91.8% and the lowest was in 1944 with 71.9%. When voting in Sweden, individuals vote for a particular party. Campaigns consist of teaching the electorate of the party platforms and are how individuals decide whom to vote for. Voters get somewhat of a say in national politics because the party with the most votes has the most influence on the Speaker and the three Deputy Speakers who appoint the Prime Minister. If individuals are unhappy with the role the Prime Minister is taking, in the next

election, the electorate can vote in a new party into power with individuals who will replace the Prime Minister (Voter Turnout in Sweden). Sweden has worked to improve the electoral system and work to increase citizen involvement. One electoral reform was an attempt to find a balance between political stability, voter accountability and voter turnout, was in 1994 when the terms of office changed from three to four years. Another reform with the purpose of hoping to vitalize the democratic system in 1998 by adding individual names to the ballot so individuals could say who they wanted to see the parties have in government, which put some power in the electorate (Voter Turnout in Sweden).

Graph 1 shows the differences between the three countries for voter turnout by country per year. The graph pulls the data discussed throughout this section to help illustrate the differences.



## ***Cost of Elections***

While turnout for elections are down in the US, costs are way up. In 2012, President Obama raised a \$1 billion against Republican challenger Mitt Romney who raised \$992 million and they both spent most of it (Center for Responsive Politics). In just a short time, money in campaigns has skyrocketed. In 1996 the amount of money spent was \$240 million increasing almost \$800 million in just 16 years. Spending has drastically increased throughout the history of the country. Abraham Lincoln spent \$2.8 million in 2011 dollars in his race for presidency in 1860 (Gilson 2012). There are a couple situations that have helped produce this increase in spending, mainly the creation of Super PACs. There have been Supreme Court cases, which have challenged Super PACs. Two cases *Citizens United v FEC* and *SpeechNow v FEC*, stated that Super PACS can raise unlimited funds from individual and corporate donors and use those funds for ads, as long as the Super PAC does not coordinate with a candidate. Then there was *McCutcheon v. FEC*, which challenged the limit on how much individuals can donate directly to political parties and federal candidates. The Court ruled that limits on campaign contributions were unconstitutional under the First Amendment, which became known as “money is speech” case (State of Campaign Finance Policy 2015).

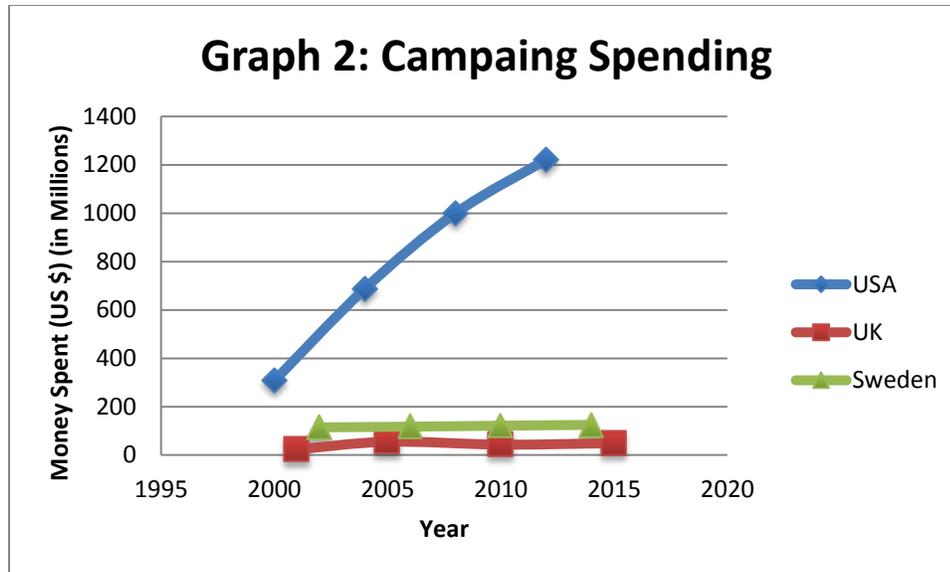
The UK became proactive about the costs of political campaigns and created a law to limit the amount of money spent. There are three main ways political parties raise money: membership fees, donations, state funding (though only for

administrative costs). There has been a lot of discussion and debate over campaign financing because of the drastic increase of spending (The Electoral Commission). In 1997 the total spent on campaigning was \$16,100,000, compared to \$48,610,000 in the 2015 general election. In just 18 short years the amount spent increased \$32 million (The Electoral Commission). Since 1883 the UK has been implementing laws to curb excessive financing of campaigns. The UK's system of regulating campaign financing focuses on limiting the amount of money allowed to be spent by political parties and individual candidates, rather than placing limits on donations that can be received by parties and individuals. By law there must be transparent reporting of donations received and what the money is spent on. There have been some limits to the amount that can be donated to parties and individuals, not allowing more than \$280 million from individuals on the approved donor list. Foreign donors are not permissible to donate unless registered to vote in the UK. The UK has banned on political advertising in an attempt to limit the amount of money political parties can spend on election campaigns. Also, the limit on ads is an attempt to limit the amount they must raise. Campaign financing laws are an ongoing concern in the UK. There are loopholes, which help to provide political parties and candidates with ways of bypassing spending limits. These loopholes are being exposed and closed (Feikert 2009).

Sweden has no legal framework regulating campaign financing. The electoral system is a proportional system and political parties are the main campaign machines. In 1997 the party became transparent, and this has opened elections for individual campaigns by nominated candidates. Typically, individual campaigns are

small with 80% of donations being less than \$3,200(US). Political parties have voluntarily agreed to disclose income when asked. Any political party, individual, corporation or organization can campaign during an election campaigns. The 2003 referendum on the introduction of the euro was an interesting election in Sweden due to new types of campaigning. Public funds were distributed to both sides in the campaign, but organizations and businesses were also allowed to weigh in on the issue and campaign for the side they wanted. Businesses became heavily involved like never before, with the vast majority supporting a 'yes' vote—thus making the 'yes' campaign much better funded overall. During the campaigning, there was a lot of debates on whether the increase in funding marked the undermining of democracy; however, after the 'no to euro' side had won with 56 percent of the vote this debate appeared to have little merit in Sweden because the underfinanced side won (Gratschew 2004). The average cost per voter breaks down to be right around \$17(US) per voter, among one of the highest cost in the world (Nassmacher 2009).

Graph 2 shows the differences between the three countries of campaign spending by country per year. The graph pulls the data discussed throughout this section to help illustrate the differences.



### *Trust in Government*

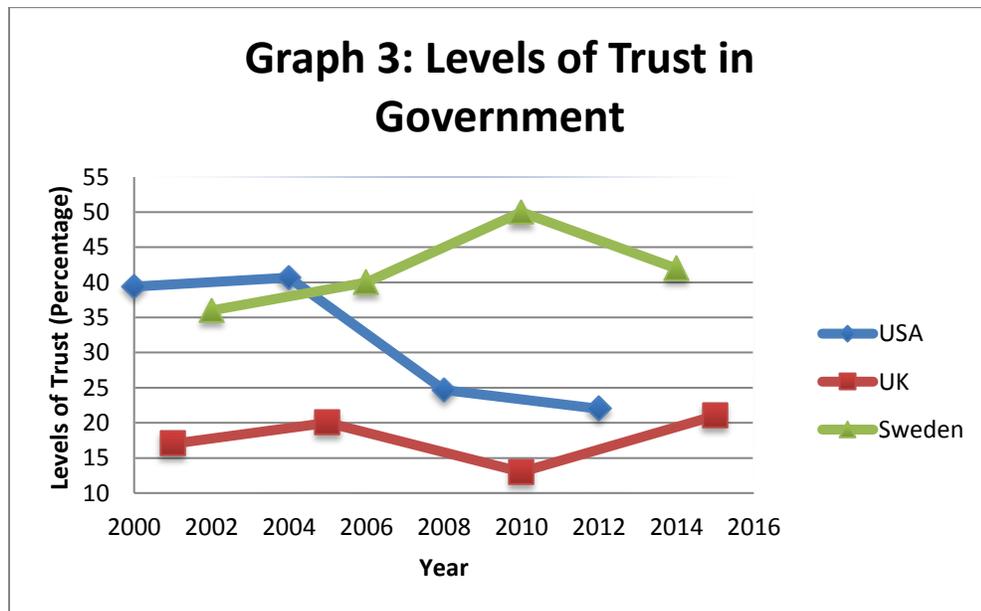
The American public is quite mistrusting of authority (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). This is evident because the United States population’s trust in the federal government has dropped to historic low levels (Bell 2015). 19% of Americans today say they have some levels of trust in the government. Individuals believe those in Washington will do what is right “just about always” (3%) or “most of the time” (16%). 1958 was the first year the American National Election Study polled trust levels in the government and what they found was 73% said they could trust the government just about always or most of the time (Desilver 2016). Trust has drastically decreased over the past 50 years of surveying this question. The 60’s saw the start drastic decrease in trust levels to the point the US is at today. There was a spike in 2001 after 9/11; however, overall the US population has been mistrusting of the government.

Individuals in the UK are not convinced that their politicians will tell the truth. Every year the Social Research Institute interview individuals in the UK and ask them if they find a certain profession is likely to tell the truth. In 2015, 21% of individuals stated that they found Politicians tell the truth. This is up from 13% in 2010. Politicians were found to be the least trustworthy professional on their list. Doctors and Teachers top the list of honest professionals. While politicians are not trustworthy in the UK it does not mean that individuals are not inherently not trusting in people, because when asked how honest an ordinary man/woman in the street was, 68% of individuals believed these ordinary people would tell the truth (Trust in Professions).

Between 1998 and 2015 the level of trust individuals from Sweden have for their government has changed by only a couple percentage points. Every year the National SOM Survey asks individuals "In general, how much do you trust Swedish politicians?", and the responses could select between four responses: "Very much, Fairly much, Fairly little, Very little". The results for answering "Very much" or "Fairly much" in 1998 was 30% and in 2015 the response was 33%. While it is only a three-point swing, the trend has been heading in the more trusting level hitting 50% in 2010 before coming back down to 33% in 2015 (Oscarsson and Bergstrom 2015). While the one-year of trust in government was 50%, the overall average of the 18 years sampled was in the low 40%. It would appear that Swedish people do not have a lot of trust in their government; however, they are overall trusting in Democracy. The National SOM Survey also asks individuals every year, "On the whole, are you satisfied with the way democracy works?". The answer to this

question is a polar opposite from the trust in government. In 1998 individuals were 61% in favor of the way democracy was working and in 2015 the response was 68% in favor, with an overall trust in democracy of low 70%.

Graph 3 shows the differences between the three countries of levels of trust in government by country per year. The graph pulls the data discussed throughout this section to help illustrate the differences.



### *Length of Campaigns*

US politicians are strategic in their advancement through government (Stone et al 2004). Many perceive the President as the leader of the free world. To achieve this high office it has become quite common to start on this path at a young age to be “groomed” to be able to be president. The majority of politicians today are lawyers.

Individuals will go to college and start a law career connecting to the government and will start running for office and try to work up from the House of Representative then possibly for the Senate, maybe also run for Governor of a state, attempting to do as much as possible to build their resume to have the backing to run for high office (Stone et al 2004). Not only are individuals strategic in this approach throughout their life, there is also early fundraising to build their “war chest”. This is all a build up to the official announcement declaring an individual is running for president. To be competitive in the race to get nominated as their party’s candidate, most individuals declare roughly 16-18 months before the election (Curse 2016). The United States has the longest campaign season in the world (Kurtzleben 2015). There has also been no attempt by congress to attempt at limiting the amount of time allotted for campaigning (Friedman 2016). Running for president is a long grueling process lasting quite some time; it essentially becomes a full-time job to campaign. This full-time campaigning is occurring when many individuals running are already elected officials, meaning their government salary is paying for them to campaign. It would be interesting to research how much work these individuals get done while campaigning. It is important to point out campaigns are only this long for president. Seeking office for the Senate or the House of Representatives campaign typically begin only a couple months before primaries. One possibility for this is due to the strong incumbency rate for individuals in these offices. The incumbency rate is in the high 90%; meaning 90% of individuals who seek reelection will win and their races are not always competitive (Campbell 2005). If a race is competitive it becomes longer (Huckfeldt et al 2007).

Elections in the UK are short compared to many other countries (Skoning 2010). There is not a defined amount of time the election campaigns will last because of the process that is in place. At the end of the five-year term the MPs serve the Prime Minister formally calls an end to the parliament and calls for a date for the new election. Campaigns are not allowed to begin until the end of the Parliamentary session. In 2015 Prime Minister David Cameron called the 55<sup>th</sup> Parliament to an end thus beginning the campaign season on March 30, 2015. This is around the time Parliament is typically called to an end, end of March to early April. Elections took place Tuesday May 7, 2015, just a short 39 days after the end of the previous session. Typically, elections last right around a month from start to finish (@UKParliament). There is a possibility of elections running long or restarting if a party does not have a majority of the seats or cannot form a coalition to appoint a new Prime Minister (@UKParliament). The election process in the UK is short and efficient. Every five years the country comes together for one month to vote on their new government and the new direction for the countries.

There is no legal framework that states that the campaigns of Swedish political parties must be limited to a certain number of days (Sweden). Instead it is more of a gentleman's agreement to keep their elections short, typically lasting only two months. In Sweden, there was an upcoming election in four months, and when asked about when campaigning would begin Social Democrat party secretary Carin Jämtin stated, "You can't start now. We don't want to. No one wants to. The voters certainly don't want us to. You can't drive an election campaign for four months. It's too long," ("Sweden Prepares for Frosty Election Campaign" 2014). Sweden

Politicians are aware of over campaigning's effect of the electorate and have chosen not to be out too early. For Sweden, this is a big distinction because there are so many parties competing for votes in a country where the difference between biggest party and the second biggest was only 500,000 votes, and everyone is competing for a slight advantage of each other's (Alvarez-Rivera 2015).

### **CHAPTER III: Analysis and Comparisons**

Chapter 1 looks at the past research undertaken by scholars, chapter 2 begins to look at the differences between the three countries selected, chapter 3 will focus on reviewing the hypothesis showing the connection between length and the expense of elections and the consequent levels of voter turnout and trust in government.

The United States, United Kingdom, and Sweden have different ways they set up their elections, campaigns, and financing. The US leaves the other two countries in its dust in length of election as well as money spent on campaigns (Center for Responsive Politics; The Electoral Commission; Nassmacher 2009). The US has created an industry around political campaigns. Both political parties and candidates are required to raise some tens of millions of dollars in order to be competitive in an election. Previous research showed that campaigns main objective is to educate the public of a party or candidates' ideals and objectives that will be accomplished once in office. The more educated an individual and the more involved the individual a person is, the more they will vote in an election (Lewis-Beck et al 2008). With so much time and money poured into the campaigns in the US then turnout should be vastly higher than the other two countries. The UK and Sweden spend vastly less on elections and campaign a lot less than the US and their voter turnout is higher than the US (DeSilver 2016; The Electoral Commission; Voter Turnout in Sweden). When comparing the three countries the biggest difference that stands out is number of days used for campaigning and the money spent. If the

US had statutes in place like Sweden and the UK on how many days' candidates could campaign, then the amount of money spent would have to be reduced because it is not feasible that a candidate can spend the amount of money that is currently being spent in a shorter amount of time.

The American Voter Revisited articulates that the more educated an individual and the more involved the individual a person is, the more they will vote in an election, which means individuals from Sweden and the United Kingdom must be more informed because they vote at a higher rate. The US population is less trusting of their government than the Swedish population (Desilver 2016; Oscarsson and Bergstrom 2015). The UK, however, has the lowest levels of trust among the three countries (Desilver 2016; Oscarsson and Bergstrom 2015; Trust in Professions). When comparing the three countries, it appears democracy is facing a lack of trust in government, and government trust is something that fluctuates year to year and can drastically change very quickly (Desilver 2016; Oscarsson and Bergstrom 2015; Trust in Professions). While the next section will look at statistical significance; however, it can be inferred the American population has become over saturated with politics over the long campaign season and feel disenfranchised from politics and do not want to vote as much as individuals from Sweden or the UK.

There are a few fundamental differences between the three nations and one that stands out would-be size. The US population is vastly larger than the other two countries, even bigger than both combined (Country Comparison: Population). Sweden has a population is a little under 10 million people, compared to the UK's 65

million people, and the US with a whopping 314 million people (Country Comparison: Population). While the bigger the population the more time could be necessary to educate the entire population, however, the population of the UK is 65 million and only runs campaigns for roughly a month (Kurtzleben 2015; Skoning 2010). The US is a lot more negative in their campaigns than the other two countries. The US has vastly more attack ads and spends more on advertising than the other two countries (Holtz-Bacha and Kaid 2014). Attacks on character and policy have become a staple in US politics, and as previous research has shown it does not work very well (Johnson-Cartee and Copeland 1997). If negative ads are not swaying the electorate then perhaps, individuals have become turned off to politics. "Stealth Democracy: American's Belief about How Government Should Work" shows individuals do not like to see their government fights over issues (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002).

Political campaigns, especially in the US, have become so negative that it must have play a part on the electorate after a long and bruising campaign. In politics, it has become standard practice for individuals and parties to argue and scheme to get their way. In capital cities across the world minute issues are expanded upon and argued over the little details, while the rest of citizens of these countries discuss politics very seldom. Individuals do not want to see what is going on in Washington all the time because it is no negative (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002), and long campaigns would continue to bring these negative attitudes toward the surface and if arguments in Washington turn people off to politics, then long campaigns surely must as well.

Complaining about campaigns lasting too long has become a staple of discourse. “Critics of lengthy campaigns point to at least three harmful results: the candidates are exhausted, campaign costs have skyrocketed, and the public is bored” (Bennett and Bennett 1989, 341). Boredom of the public in politics leads to the disengagement of the public. As previously discussed individuals who feel disengaged will not feel their voice matters, and if votes are voices then people are not voting because they do not want to use this form of voicing their opinion.

### ***Statistical Analysis***

As previously discussed, the three different countries have different ways they have chosen to be governed. They are governed by different styles, from the presidential system of the US, the two-party dominant parliamentary system of the UK, or the multi-party parliamentary system of Sweden. These countries also have different levels of turnout, trust and spend differently on campaigns, and yet they are all still forms of democracies that let the people voice who is in control of the government. As previously discussed there are several factors that can affect voter turnout. One of the influences that this thesis hypothesizes that affects voter turnout is campaign length. The longer the campaign possibly due to oversaturation of campaigns. For this study voter turnout was used as the dependent variable for the US, UK, and Sweden looking at the past four elections for each country. The independent variable is campaign length, which is measured in days, which is the main variable for this analysis. The control variables used are: levels of trust in government, money spent on campaigns, population, and GDP per capita. Levels of

trust in government was ran as a percent, money spent was ran as US dollars in millions, population was also in millions, and GDP per capita was in US dollars. To measure length of campaign an average was length for US, UK, and Sweden. While there are no official start dates for US and Sweden for campaigns like in the UK, all the countries campaigns fluctuate a couple days. The estimated length of campaigns per country may be off by a small margin for Sweden and the UK; however, it would only be a couple days at most. The estimate for the US could be the most off due to campaigns beginning whenever a candidate formally announces their candidacy and this can be any time before an election. For a country like the US, candidates enter the race for Presidency at a wide variety of times. While most candidates have entered the race by mid-summer of the year before the election, some declare as early as January the year before the election (Curse 2016), and to accommodate this discrepancy an average time candidates begin campaigning works best. The tables below show the relationship campaign lengths have on voter turnout.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Voter Turnout in %</b>	<b>Campaign Length in days</b>	<b>Levels of Trust in %</b>	<b>Money Spent in Mil \$ (US)</b>	<b>Population in millions</b>	<b>GDP per Capita in \$ (US)</b>
USA	2012	58.6	510	22	1,220.20	314.143	51433
UK	2015	66.1	31	21	48.67	64.72	43438
Sweden	2014	85.8	60	42	124.6	9.64	58900
USA	2008	61.6	510	24.67	1,000.10	304.09	48401.4
UK	2010	65.1	31	13	42.83	62.72	28292.9
Sweden	2010	84.6	60	50	121.1	9.34	52076.4
USA	2004	60.1	510	40.67	687.7	293.05	41921.8
UK	2005	61.4	31	20	54.72	60.21	40298.5
Sweden	2006	80.4	60	40	117.164	9.05	46256.5
USA	2000	54.2	510	39.4	306.8	282.17	36449.9
UK	2001	59.4	31	17	22.4	59.08	25980.2
Sweden	2002	80.1	60	36	114.28	8.91	29571.7

Table 1 is the raw data collected from each country for the last 4 major elections. The table should be interpreted, for example as, the UK in 2015 had a voter turnout of 66.1%, their campaign for that year lasted roughly 31 days, also during that year trust in government was 21%, during the election \$48.67 million(US), their population was 64.72 and GDP per capita was \$43,438 (US). This raw data was discussed in the previous chapter and is the basis of the graphs created, and it was from this raw data that testing of my dependent variable of voter turnout was possible. Seeing the data in its entirety helps to illustrate the differences between the nations on almost every aspect.

<b>Table 2: What Effects Voter Turnout?</b>						
Model		<b>Coefficients</b>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	67.233	6.894		9.753	.000
	Campaign Length	.081	.055	1.644	1.476	.190
	Levels of Trust	.078	.262	.084	.300	.774
	Money Spent	.013	.007	.460	1.862	.112
	Population	-.235	.086	-2.738	-2.740	.034
	GDP per Capita	.000	.000	.155	1.193	.278

a. Dependent Variable: Voter Turnout

This analysis used a linear regression model to show the effect that variables have on voter turnout. Table 2 shows how campaign length, levels of trust in government, money spent on campaigns, population, and GDP per capita all play on voter turnout. This graph shows quite a bit about political campaigns. The past research shows how much can affect a political campaign and how much goes into the study of voter turnout. This table shows that when comparing the US, UK, and Sweden voter turnout does not have a significant relationship between any of the variables, except for population. When population goes down voter turnout goes up. This could indicate when controlled for these variables the bigger the country the lower the turnout. It is possible it is because voters feel their vote does not matter the larger the population becomes. 1 in 64 million carries more weight than 1 in 300 million. This table shows that voter turnout is clearly a complicated issue and when

controlling for all the different variables that go into an election many issues that would seem to be important simply do not show significance. This could indicate that personal choice may weigh heavy on a voters' mindset. When every variable is taken into consideration they blur away from a voter. This idea would support the claim made by Dan Hopkins with FiveThirtyEight, he argues that while there are ups and downs in political campaigns there would be little difference between how a person will vote in January versus how a person votes in November, showing that campaigns are not overly effective in changing the hearts and minds of the electorate (Hopkins 2016). Table 2 does not argue that campaign length plays no impact on voter turnout, it just shows that campaigns are complicated when every aspect of what could affect turnout is controlled for.

Political campaigns are widely complex entities with several issues driving voter turnout. Individuals decide to vote or to not vote for several different reasons. Table 2 shows that when multiple variables are controlled for that length is not significant. While looking at the entirety of political campaigns, nothing seems to matter, when looking at each area one by one, as indicated with past research, length would seem to have some statistical significance on voter turnout; however, not provable with data provided. This chapter has discussed the important findings on different variables effecting campaign turnout, mainly the effect campaign length has on turnout. The final section of this study will summarize the main research question discussed throughout the study, discuss research limitations, propose future research, as well as make conclusions about the importance of this area of study.

## Conclusion and Discussions

Democracy is vital to the success of a strong country. The people should have a voice to cast concern on their government by voting. Voting is the speech between individuals and their government. If there is an area that is causing individuals to not feel their voice matters or that they do not want to vote, these reasons should be identified whatever it maybe, no matter how big or how small. Democracy must be protected and individuals should feel they can participate and their vote matter. One area that appears to be affect turnout in campaign length. Length of the campaign season could be an easy opportunity to get the electorate to turn out to vote at a higher percentage.

Reforming campaign length would not be an easy task. There would be a lot of debate with several different options that could be employed to determine the exact length that would work best for each nation; however, the one thing that cannot be argued, length in campaigns matter in turnout. This is evident in a country like the US, which has some of the longest campaigns. Of the three countries looked at in this study, the US has the longest, most expensive, and lowest level of voter turnout. Costs would go down and turnout would go up if campaign length were to decrease. Lack of turnout and high spending is something that could crumple democracy because there would be no faith in the government and high spending means high fundraising, therefore money would continue to talk.

As addressed earlier reform is not always easy when determining an adequate length of time for a campaign, but because something is difficult does not

mean it should not be attempted. Research could be done into what the public views as an acceptable length. This new campaign length could possibly increase turnout and for just the possibility of increased turnout it is something that demands to be attempted.

Political scientists have done extensive research over political campaigns and elections and overall find there are several factors affect the turnout of an election. However, scholars' research falls short on several levels. One area in which it falls short is studying the effects the length of campaign can sway the electorate. Many scholars have acknowledged this shortcoming and yet there is still a gap in knowledge (Brady, Johnston and Sides 2009; Bennett and Bennett 1989; Stevenson and Vavreck 2000). Political campaigns are such a vital part of democracy it is a shame such a topic as length of campaigns has been under researched. Especially because the lack of research was caused by "scholars of the 1940s and 1950s, [who] demonstrated only minimal effects on voting behavior. The solidity of these American politics scholars to turn their investigations to other phenomena. The study of campaign effects slowed to a halt" (Stevenson and Vavreck 2000, 218).

Political campaigns are designed to educate electorate; however, this does not seem to hold truth statistical testing because longer campaigns should produce a more educated and more individuals involved in governmental affairs. The US, UK, and Sweden are all democracies, and democracies place the power in the people. The power given to the people is being squandered when turnout is as low as it is in

the US. Turnout is a little better in the UK and Sweden. In any democracy, there are several variables that go into understanding voting turnout.

There are also shortcomings to this study. These gaps should be expanded upon which could better help understand the relationship between the length of campaigns and the electorate. There is an underlying psychological reason behind the electorate not voting under longer campaigns, perhaps due to voter fatigue or because they feel disenfranchised. Future research would be necessary to understand this. This goal can be accomplished by better utilizing global polling to understand campaign length on the mindset of voters. Asking individuals how they feel about the length of campaigns and in a few campaign cycles there would be extensive research into what about campaigns cause individuals to turn away from the ballot box. While this research maybe extensive it is important to understand more into the mental capacity of the electorate that can help politicians better improve their effectiveness in running a campaign, this would be a win-win for the politicians and political parties. The study was also unable to statistically prove the link between length and turnout. More case studies would need to be used as well as setting up dummy variables to statically prove the link. Ideally every democracy would be used to interpret the link between length and turnout; this research is very plausible and should be done.

Ultimately, political campaigns are an important part of democracy. When individuals vote, they have the ability to come together to voice their concerns about government and can accept or reject the current direction of their country by voting.

Because of the important role played by voting in a democracy, political scientists have studied election campaigns and voter turnout for many years to better understand the effects on the electorate. This thesis set out to show that a political campaign can be too long and it will inversely affect the electorate in a negative manor. Voters know the campaign season is long and thus many choose to not participate and to only pay attention a few weeks before the general election. As Sweden's Social Democrat party secretary Carin Jämtin discussed, voters do not want elections to stretch out over too long of a period, but this is exactly what the US system is built on, long and expensive campaigns that have little turnout. This not to say that it is not possible to have higher turnout because Sweden and UK have shorter election seasons and higher turnout. Voter turnout is an area of study that is very complicated and ever expanding and more research should continue to be done to better understand how the electorate could be swayed by the elections themselves and not just policy differentials.

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