

Comparative Study of Electoral Systems

Module 4: Macro Report

Country: USA

Date of Election: 6 November 2012

Prepared by: John Aldrich and Stephen Quinlan

Date of Preparation: 3 December 2014

NOTES TO COLLABORATORS:

- The information provided in this report contributes to an important part of the CSES project. The information may be filled out by yourself, or by an expert or experts of your choice. Your efforts in providing these data are greatly appreciated! Any supplementary documents that you can provide (e.g., electoral legislation, party manifestos, electoral commission reports, media reports) are also appreciated, and may be made available on the CSES website.
- Answers should be as of the date of the election being studied.
- Where brackets [] appear, collaborators should answer by placing an “X” within the appropriate bracket or brackets. For example: [X]
- If more space is needed to answer any question, please lengthen the document as necessary.

Data Pertinent to the Election at which the Module was Administered

1a. Type of Election

Parliamentary/Legislative

Parliamentary/Legislative and Presidential

Presidential

Other; please specify: _____

1b. If the type of election in Question 1a included Parliamentary/Legislative, was the election for the Upper House, Lower House, or both?

Upper House

Lower House

Both

Other; please specify: _____

Please note: 33 of the 100 Upper House (Senate) seats were contested.

2a. What was the party of the president *prior* to the most recent election, regardless of whether the election was presidential?

Democrats

2b. What was the party of the Prime Minister *prior* to the most recent election, regardless of whether the election was parliamentary?

N/A

2c. Report the number of cabinet ministers of each party or parties in cabinet, *prior* to the most recent election. (If one party holds all cabinet posts, simply write "all".) Ministers are considered those members of government who are members of the Cabinet and who have Cabinet voting rights. List also cabinet members that are 'independent'. If known, specify if the 'independents' are affiliated or close to certain parties.

Name of Political Party

Number of Cabinet Ministers

N/A

2d. What was the size of the cabinet *prior* to the election (total number of cabinet ministers detailed in 2c)? Please include only full ministers and the prime minister in the count. Ministers are considered those members of government who are members of the Cabinet and who have Cabinet voting rights.

N/A

3a. What was the party of the president *after* the most recent election, regardless of whether the election was presidential?

Democrats

3b. What was the party of the Prime Minister *after* the most recent election, regardless of whether the election was parliamentary?

N/A

3c. Report the number of cabinet ministers of each party or parties in cabinet, *after* the most recent election. (If one party holds all cabinet posts, simply write "all"). Ministers are considered those members of government who are members of the Cabinet and who have Cabinet voting rights. List also cabinet members that are 'independent'. If known, specify if the 'independents' are affiliated or close to certain parties.

Name of Political Party

Number of Cabinet Ministers

N/A

3d. What was the size of the cabinet *after* the election (total number of cabinet ministers detailed in 3c)? Please include only full ministers and the prime minister in the count. Ministers are considered those members of government who are members of the Cabinet and who have Cabinet voting rights.

N/A

4a. How many political parties received votes in the election? In this answer, we want political parties, not merely alliances or coalitions of political parties. Please include all parties that received votes, but do not include independents. Where coalitions are present, please count all member parties separately – for instance, a coalition of three parties would count as three parties in your answer, not as one party. Please provide separate information for elections held contemporaneously (e.g., legislative and presidential voting), when voters cast separate ballots.

Presidential elections: 22 parties¹

House of Representatives:

Senate:

4b. Please provide a source of data and link to a website with official, detailed election results (votes and seats) for all parties participating in the election. If the data is not available electronically, please provide the information in paper format if possible.

American Federal Election Commission:
<http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2012/federalelections2012.pdf> (Date accessed: 3 December 2014).

4c. Please list all parties who received at least 1% of the vote nationally, and the applicable electoral results for each, in the following table. Please indicate the source (even if the same as in Question 4b), and add additional rows to the table as necessary. Please provide party names both in English and in the original language, if applicable.

¹ This figure excludes independent, unaffiliated, write in candidates, and none of the above options from the count. The Reform Party technically had three different candidates running for President as the Kansas and Mississippi branches of the Reform Party nominated different candidates to the official party nominee. In terms of counting parties, the Reform Party is counted as only one party.

Table 1 2012 US Presidential election results

Party	Candidate	Total votes	% of Total vote	Electoral College
Democrats	Barack H Obama	65,915,796	51.06	332
Republicans	Mitt Romney	60,933,500	47.20	206
Libertarian	Gary Johnson	1,275,971	0.99	0
Greens	Jill Stein	469,628	0.36	0
	<i>Write ins</i>	136,040	0.11	0
Constitution	Virgil Goode	122,388	0.09	0
Peace & Freedom	Roseann Barr	67,326	0.05	0
Others	Others	164,754	0.13	0

Please note: All candidates who achieved at least 0.05% of the national vote are listed.

TABLE 2 INSERT HERE – HOUSE OF REP

TABLE 3 INSERT HERE – SENATE

- 4d. What was the voter turnout in the election? Please also provide an official Internet address (preferably) or other official source where this information is available.

Table 2 Turnout in US Presidential elections 2012 (%)

Turnout	%
Registered voters ²	66.66
Voting Age Population ³	54.87

Sources:

- American Federal Election Commission
<http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2012/federalelections2012.pdf> (Date accessed: 3 December 2014)
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
<http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=US>
(Date accessed: 3 December 2014)

- 4e. Please provide the following six statistics for the country at the time of the election studied, so that we may calculate voter turnout in various ways. Some definitions, where provided, are based on those developed by International IDEA. Please also provide an official Internet address (preferably) or other official source where this information is available.

- Total Population: **314,760,969**⁴

² The number of registered voters is as per International Democracy for Election Assistance (IDEA) – Date accessed: 3 December 2014.

³ Voting age population estimate based on the US Federal Election Commission estimate.

⁴ Population estimate is devised on the basis of the estimated population on 6 November 2012.

Definition: The total population includes all inhabitants, of all ages, both citizens and non-citizens (including illegal aliens).

Source: United States Census Bureau US and World Population Clock
<http://www.census.gov/popclock/> (Date accessed: 3 December 2014)

- **Total Number of Voting Age Citizens: 235,248,000**

Definition: This number is meant to approximate the eligible voting population.

Source: American Federal Election Commission
<http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2012/federalelections2012.pdf> (Date accessed: 3 December 2014)

- **Total Vote: 129,085,403**

Definition: The total number of votes cast in the relevant election. Total vote includes valid and invalid votes, as well as blank votes in cases where these are separated from invalid votes.

Source: American Federal Election Commission
<http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2012/federalelections2012.pdf> (Date accessed: 3 December 2014)

- **Total Number of Invalid and Blank Votes:**

Source: for total number of votes cast in 2012:

<http://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/national.php>

150,155 = difference in total number of votes cast in 2012 and total number of votes cast for president.

- **Voting Age Population: 235,248,000**

Definition: Includes all persons above the legal voting age.

Source: <http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2012/federalelections2012.pdf> (Date accessed: 3 December 2014)

- **Number of Registered Voters: 193,653,908**

Definition: The figure represents the number of names on the voters' register at the time that the registration process closes, as reported by the electoral management body.

Source: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
<http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=US> (Date accessed: 3 December 2014)

5. Ideological family of political parties. For this question, please use the same parties that were used in the CSES Module 4 respondent questionnaire, and label them the same way (A-I).

Party Name	Ideological Family
A. Democrats	F
B. Republicans	E
C. Libertarian	G
D. Green	A
E. Constitution	H
F.	
G.	
H.	

Ideological Party Families: (These are suggestions only. If a party does not fit well into this classification scheme, please provide an alternative and some explanation.)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| (A) Ecology Parties | (F) Left Liberal Parties | (K) Independents |
| (B) Communist Parties | (G) Liberal Parties | (L) Agrarian Parties |
| (C) Socialist Parties | (H) Right Liberal Parties | (M) Ethnic Parties |
| (D) Social Democratic Parties | (I) Christian Democratic Parties | (N) Regional Parties |
| (E) Conservative Parties | (J) National Parties | (O) Other Parties |

Source:

<http://www.democrats.org/>

<https://www.gop.com/>

<http://www.lp.org/>

<http://www.gp.org/index.php>

<http://www.constitutionparty.com/>

6a. Ideological Positions of Parties:

Please indicate party positions on a left-right dimension (in the expert judgment of the CSES Collaborator). Please use the same parties that were used in the CSES Module 4 respondent questionnaire, and label them the same way (A-I).

Party Name	Left					Right					
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A. Democrats				X							
B. Republicans									X		
C. Libertarian						X					
D. Green			X								
E. Constitution											X
F.											
G.											
H.											

Source:

7. In your view, what are the five most salient factors that affected the outcome of the election (e.g. major scandals; economic events; the presence of an independent actor; specific issues)? Rank them according to their salience (1 = most salient).

1. Economic events
2. Republican Party divisions over proper direction
3. Policies enacted since last election (2008), such as the Affordable Health Care Act.
4. Evaluation of the incumbent president (that is, Obama, per se).
5. Social issues

8. Party Leaders and Presidential Candidates:

In the table below, report the leader(s) of each party. Please use the same parties that were used in the CSES Module 4 respondent questionnaire, and label them the same way (A-I). If candidates were endorsed by more than one party, please indicate this.

Party Name	Name of Party Leader	Name of Presidential (here: candidate for chancellor) Candidate, if appropriate
A. Democrats	Barack Obama	Barack Obama
B. Republicans	Mitt Romney	Mitt Romney
C. Libertarian	Gary Johnson	Gary Johnson
D. Green	Jill Stein	Jill Stein
E. Constitution	Virgil Goode	Virgil Goode
F.		
G.		
H.		

9a. Fairness of the Election

How impartial was the body that administered the election law?

Very impartial

Mostly impartial

Not very impartial

Not impartial at all

9b. Was there a formal complaint against the national level results?

Yes

No

9c. Were there irregularities reported by international election observers?

Yes

No

No international election observers

9d. On what date was the election originally scheduled to be held?

6 November 2012

9e. On what date was the election actually held? If different from 9d, please explain why.

6 November 2012

10a. Election Violence

To what extent was there violence and voter or candidate intimidation during the election campaign and the election day?

No violence at all

Sporadic violence on the part of the government

Sporadic violence on the part of opposition groups

Sporadic violence on all sides

Significant violence on the part of the government

Significant violence on the part of opposition groups

Significant violence of all sides

10b. If there was violence, was it geographically concentrated or national?

Geographically concentrated

National

N/A

10c. Post-Election (and election-related) Violence

To what extent was there violence following the election?

No violence at all

Sporadic violence on the part of the government

Sporadic violence on the part of opposition groups

Sporadic violence on all sides

Significant violence on the part of the government

Significant violence on the part of opposition groups

Significant violence of all sides

10d. Post-Election (and election-related) Protest

To what extent was there protest following the election?

No protest at all

Sporadic protest

Significant protest

Questions about the Possibilities of Electoral Alliance

Definitions: A joint list refers to one on which candidates of different parties run together. Apparentement refers to a legal agreement between two or more lists to pool their votes for the purposes of an initial seat allocation, with seats initially allocated to the alliance then reallocated to the lists in the alliance.

11. Joint Lists/Candidates

There are multiple types of electoral alliances/coalitions, but we are explicitly interested in those involving joint lists or candidates - i.e. those where parties compete as a unit during the election.

Is this type of electoral coalition legally allowable?

Yes

No

N/A

Is this type of electoral coalition used in practice, even if not legally allowable?

Yes

No

N/A

If “Yes” was answered to either of the above questions, then please complete the following table for the election at which the Module was administered. Please mention only alliances that received at least 1% of the vote nationally. Add additional lines to the table as necessary.

Alliance Name

Participating Parties

(please indicate dominant members with an “*”)

Alliance 1:	
Alliance 2:	
Alliance 3:	
Alliance 4:	
Alliance 5:	

12. If joint lists are possible, are they subject to different regulations than single-party lists? For example, higher thresholds, different numbers of candidates that may appear on the list, etc. (please mark all applicable responses)
- Yes, joint party lists must satisfy higher thresholds
 - Yes, joint party lists may present different numbers of candidates
 - Yes, joint party lists are subject to other regulations that are different from the regulations governing independent parties; please specify: _____
 - No, joint parties are governed by the same rules as the other parties
 - Not applicable; no joint party lists are allowed
- 13a. Is there apparentement or linking of lists?
- Yes
 - No
- 13b. If apparentement is possible, what lists can participate in such agreements:
- lists of the same party in the same constituency
 - lists of the same party from different constituencies
 - lists of different parties in the same constituency
- N/A
- 14a. Can candidates run with the endorsement of more than one party?
- Yes
 - No
- 14b. If candidates can run with the endorsement of more than one party, is this reflected on the ballot?
- No
 - No party endorsements are indicated on the ballot paper
 - Yes, candidate's name appears once, together with the names of all supporting parties
 - Yes, candidate's name appears as many times as there are different parties endorsing him/her, each time with the name of the endorsing party
 - Yes, other; please explain: _____

All of the above applies to the United States but varies by state electoral rules.

Data on Electoral Institutions

If possible, please supplement this section with copies of the electoral law, voters' handbooks, electoral commission reports, and/or any other relevant materials.

- [American Federal Election Commission: *http://www.fec.gov/*](http://www.fec.gov/) (Date accessed: 3 December 2014)
- [American Congressional Election Information: *http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/election.aspx*](http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/election.aspx) (Date accessed: 3 December 2014)

Questions 15a through 21d must be repeated for each electoral tier (segment) of each directly elected house of the legislature.

Electoral Tier (Segment) and House

15a. In your answers for questions 15a through 21d, which electoral tier (segment) is being referred to? (Note: Countries with only one tier may skip this question.)

1 electoral tier in the United States

15b. In your answers for questions 15a through 21d, which house is being referred to (lower or upper)? (Note: Countries with only one tier may skip this question.)

House of Representatives

Questions about Voting

16a. How many votes do voters cast or can cast? In systems where voters rank order the candidates, if there are 10 candidates (for example), the response to this question should be 10.

1

16b. Do they vote for candidates (not party lists) or party lists? (Note: Collaborators may select multiple answers, if appropriate.)

(Definition: Party bloc voting is used in multi-member districts where voters cast a single party-centered vote for their party of choice; the party with the most votes wins all of the district seats.)

Candidates (first tier)

Party Lists (second tier)

Party Bloc Voting

Other; please explain: _____

16c. How many rounds of voting are there?

1

16d. If there are lists, are they closed, open, flexible, or is there party bloc voting?

Closed (order of candidates elected is determined by the party and voters are unable to express preference for a particular candidate)

Open (voters can indicate their preferred party and their favored candidate within that party)

Flexible (voters can allocate votes to candidates either within a single party list or across different party lists as they see fit)

N/A

17. Are the votes transferable?

(Definition: In systems with preferential voting, a voter can express a list of preferences. E.g., votes can be cast by putting a '1' in the column next to the voter's preferred candidate, a '2' beside their second favorite candidate and so on. Votes are counted according to the first preferences and any candidates who have achieved the predetermined quota are elected. To decide which of the remaining candidates are elected the votes are *transferred* from candidates who have more than the necessary number to achieve the quota and from the candidate with the least number of votes. An example of this is the election in Ireland in 2002.)

Yes

No

18. If more than one vote can be cast, can they be cumulated?

(Definition: Cumulative voting refers to systems in which voters are allowed to cast more than one vote for a single candidate.)

Yes

No

N/A

19. Is voting compulsory?

(Definition: Voting is compulsory if the law states that all those who have the right to vote are obliged to exercise that right.)

Yes; Strictly Enforced Sanctions

Yes; Weakly Enforced Sanctions

Yes; Without Sanction for Violation

No

20. Please list and describe any other features of voting that should be noted.

435 electoral districts with each district electing one candidate. Candidates are elected by a simple plurality of the vote.

Questions about Converting Votes into Seats

21a. Are there legally mandated thresholds that a party must exceed before it is eligible to receive seats?

Yes

No

21b. If YES in Question 21a, what is the threshold?

N/A

21c. If YES in Question 21a, what is the unit for the threshold mentioned in Question 21b?

Percent of total votes

Percent of valid votes

Percent of the total electorate

Other; please explain: _____

N/A

21d. If YES in Question 21a, please specify to what House/ Electoral Tier (Segment) the threshold(s) apply.

N/A

Please repeat questions 15a through 21d for each electoral tier (segment) of each directly elected house of the legislature. Countries with only one tier should proceed to Question 22.

References

22. Please provide an official source for district-level election results. English language sources are especially helpful. Include website links or contact information if applicable.

- [American Congressional Election Information:
http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/electionInfo/2012election.pdf/](http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/electionInfo/2012election.pdf/)

23. Please list any resources that were consulted in the preparation of this report, or that the CSES community may find especially helpful in understanding the political system described. Include website links if applicable.

1. [American Federal Election Commission: *http://www.fec.gov/*](http://www.fec.gov/)
2. [American Federal Election Commission:
http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2012/federalelections2012.pdf/](http://www.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2012/federalelections2012.pdf/)
3. [United States Census Bureau US and World Population Clock
http://www.census.gov/popclock/](http://www.census.gov/popclock/)
4. [International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=US/](http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=US/)