

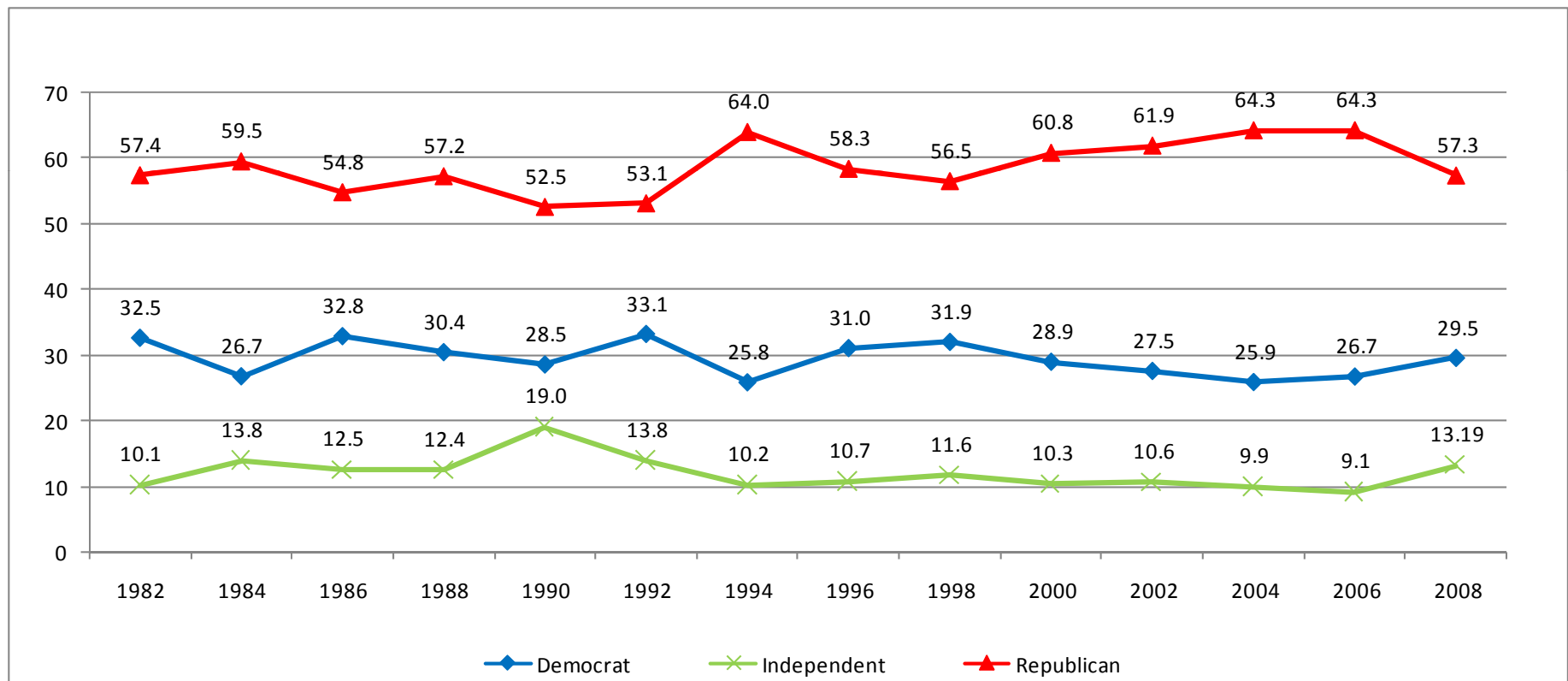
# Elections in Utah: A Perspective with Data

Quin Monson, BYU

Thad Hall, University of Utah

# Utah Elections in Context:

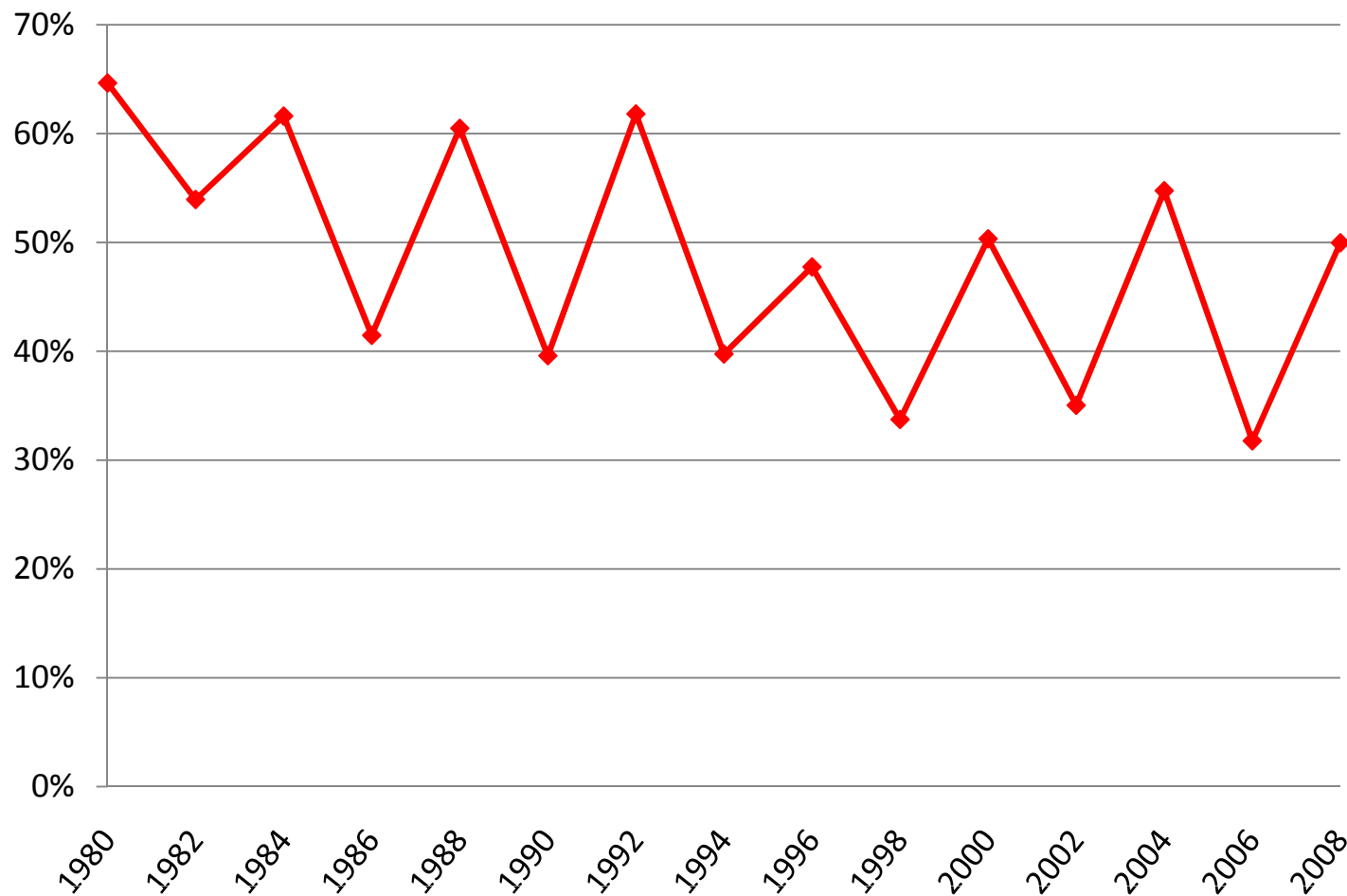
## Utah party identification 1982-2008



# Factors Affecting Turnout

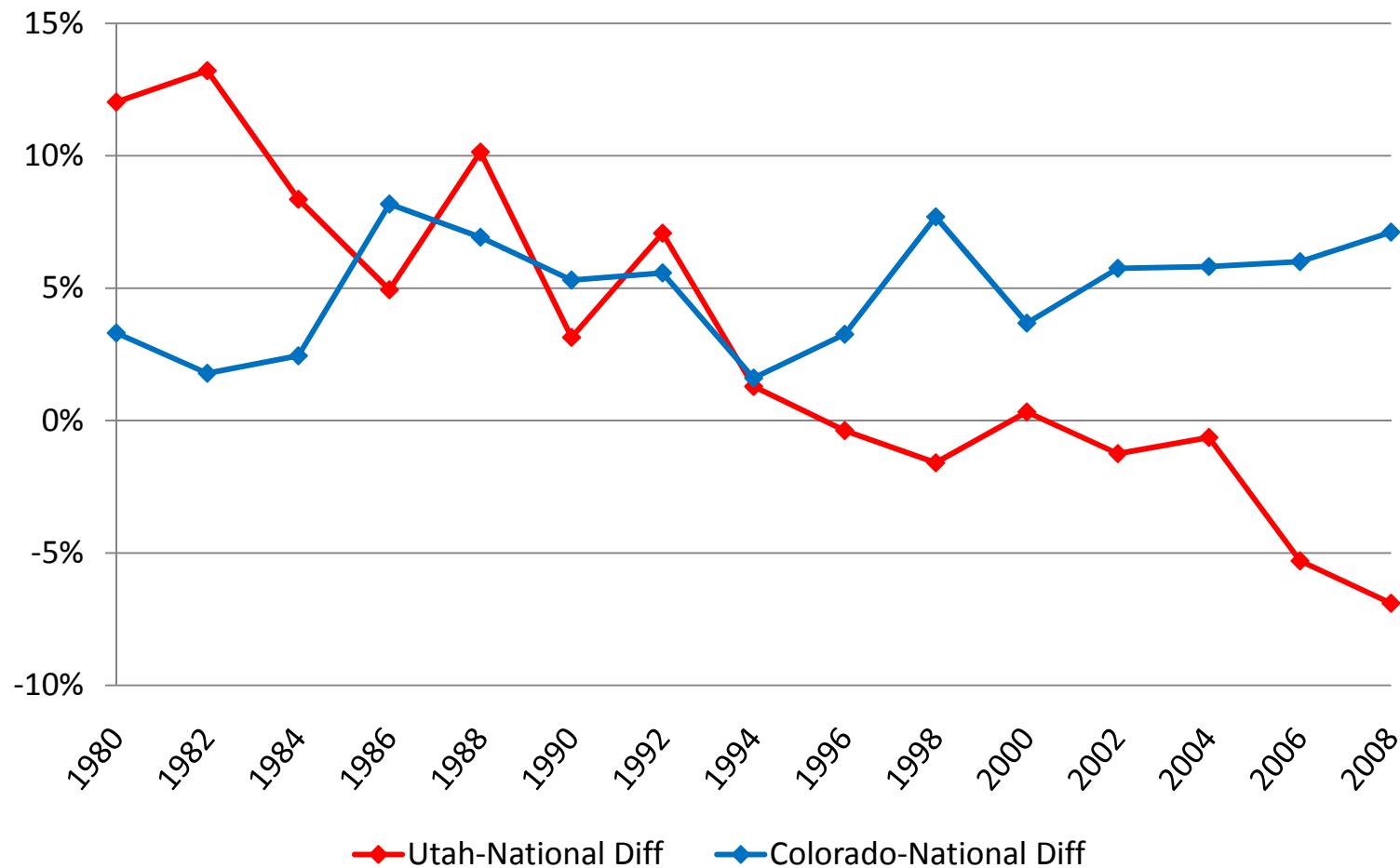
- Individual-level factors
  - Age, education
- Structure
  - Registration Laws
  - Closed Primaries / Use of Caucuses
- Election specific
  - Competition
  - Mobilization

# Voter Turnout in Utah, 1980-2008



Note: Turnout equals number voting for highest office on ballot divided by voting age population  
Data Source: [http://elections.gmu.edu/voter\\_turnout.htm](http://elections.gmu.edu/voter_turnout.htm)

# Utah - National Colorado - National



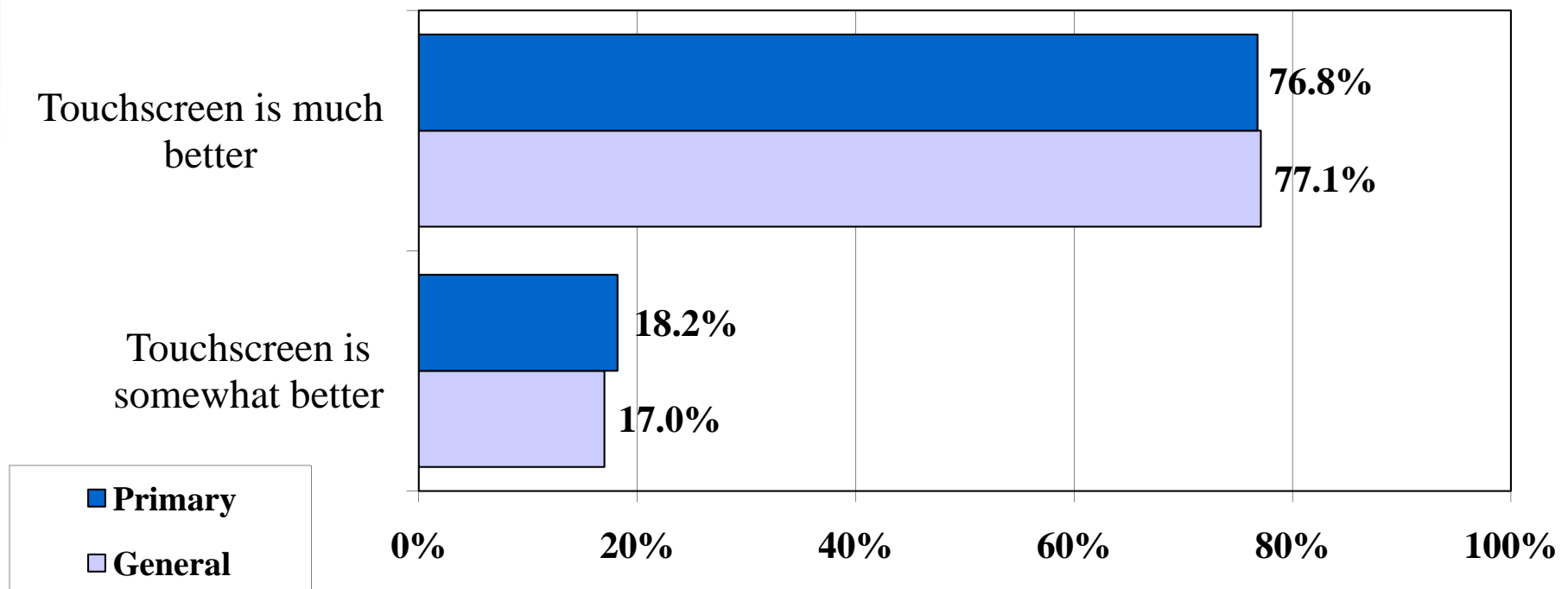
Note: Turnout equals number voting for highest office on ballot divided by voting age population  
Data Source: [http://elections.gmu.edu/voter\\_turnout.htm](http://elections.gmu.edu/voter_turnout.htm)

# Voting Experience

- Voters Like Elections in Utah
  - Like new voting equipment
- Utah Voters confident in the Process
  - Affected by Partisanship
  - Affected by Voter/Poll Worker Interaction

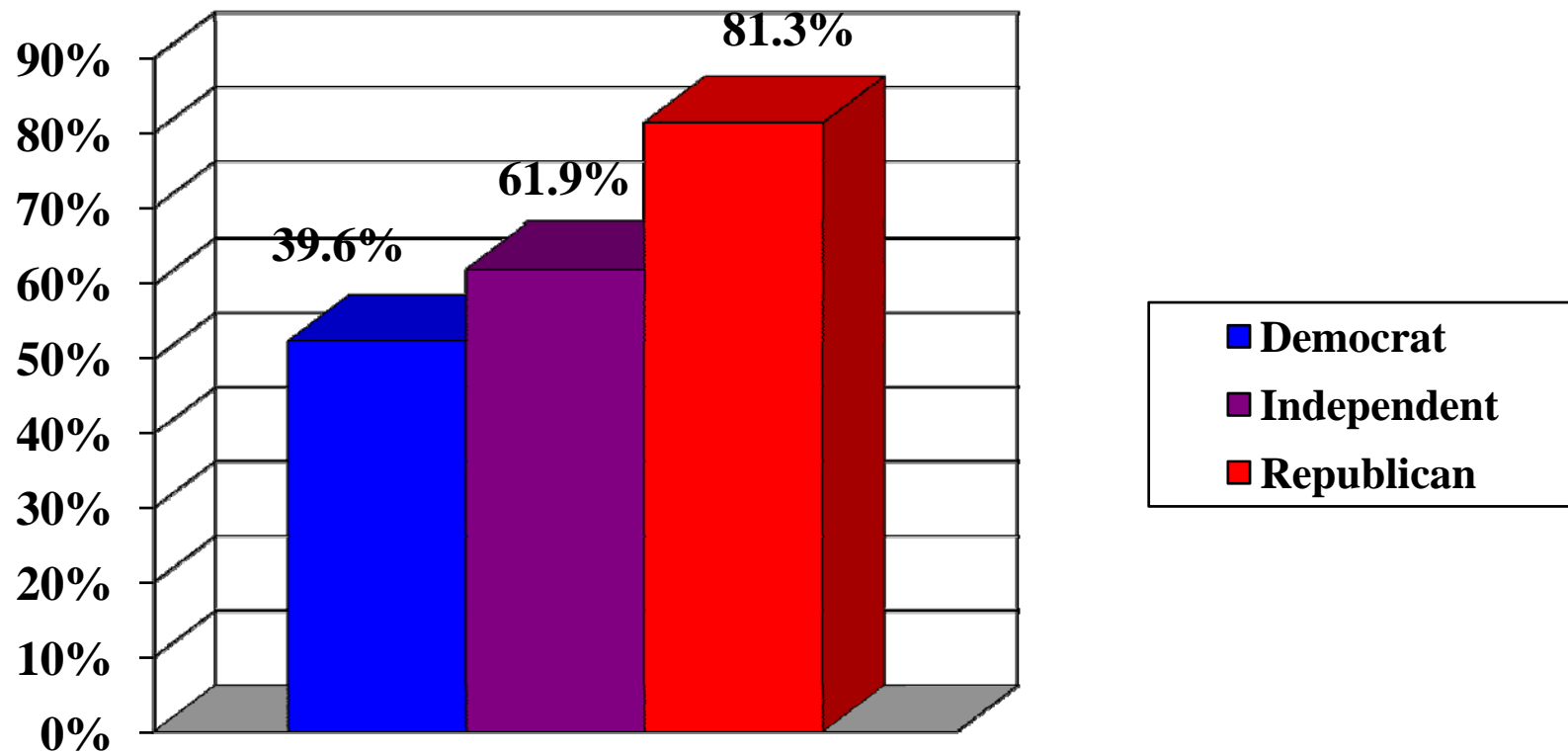
# New voting machines

- How would you compare the touchscreen voting system to the punch card system that had been used previously at your polling place?



# Confidence by partisanship

- Voters who are very confident that their vote will be counted accurately



# Poll Workers and Voting

- Poll Workers Key to Election Experience
  - They are in control on election day
- What makes a good poll worker
  - Better training
  - Age of poll worker important
  - Good interaction with voter

# Assessment of poll workers

- Please rate the performance of the poll workers at your precinct today

|           | Primary | General |
|-----------|---------|---------|
| Excellent | 85.6%   | 79.4%   |
| Good      | 13.0%   | 19.0%   |

# Poll Workers and Voter Confidence

|                                  |                          | Poll Worker Job Performance |                          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
|                                  |                          | Excellent                   | Less than very Excellent |
| Vote will be counted accurately? | Very Confident           | 76%                         | 53%                      |
|                                  | Less than Very Confident | 24%                         | 47%                      |

# The “Hidden” Municipal Elections

- Municipal elections under-considered in law
- Most municipalities are very small
  - 103 are smaller than 1,000 citizens
  - 164 are smaller than 5,000 citizens
- Elections held in off-years
  - Affects interest and turnout.

# Addressing Municipal Elections

- Need for experimentation with reforms
  - Vote by mail
  - Vote centers
  - Merging with state elections
  - Letting counties administer
- Need to try these out to learn what works.

# Issues of Reform

- Voter Identification
  - Public support for ID (74%)
  - ID laws are systematically problematic to implement
- Low public concern about voter fraud
  - 6% of Republicans and 12% of Democrats worry about in-person voting fraud
  - 41% of Republicans and 27% of Democrats worry about absentee voting fraud.

# Issues of Reform

- Voter Centers
  - Requires rethinking polling places and voter registration
  - Voting as a service activity
- Increased turnout in Colorado
  - Especially among those less likely to vote
  - 2.6% turnout improvement

# Issues of Reform

- Election Audits
  - Have good post-election process in Utah
  - Lt. Governor Herbert implemented process
- Should consider better performance audits
  - Chain of custody
  - Better data on poll workers and improved management