

Parties and Voters

Past Questions

1. Account for why voter attachment to political parties has eroded in some contexts, but not in others? [TT23]
2. What are the connections, if any, between social cleavages and the changing character of party systems? (not really – more on party systems) [TT22]
3. What theory best explains variations in vote attachment to political parties across countries and over time? [LV22]
4. 'In developing states social cleavages underpin democratic party systems.' Discuss. (also not really – more on party systems) [TT21]
5. To what extent does Lipset and Rokkan's sociological thesis help explain modern party systems in established democracies? (also not really – more on party systems)

Category 1: Frameworks for Voter-Party Links

General Concepts

- Generational Replacement: older voters leave the electorate, becoming a shrinking group, while young voter and immigrants enter the electorate, becoming a growing group

Social-psychological model (Campbell)

- Measures group influences on individual vote choice which was eventually refined to social-psychological explanations of vote choice
 - Social characteristics/cleavages anchor political preferences: class, ethnicity, gender or race
- Social characteristics and social contexts overlap since both rely on social interaction and social identification to explain the communication and mobilisation successes or failures of parties and other political organisation
 - The fundamental story of the social characteristics-contexts model is that communities provide a setting for group influences on political preferences
 - Communities constitute spaces for interpersonal interaction, and these interactions are the medium by which social environments and social groups condition individual activity and group behaviour
- Conditioning occurs in two ways
 - Dominant social divisions contain varying parcels of historical experiences, socialising influences, and material interests
 - These experiences, environments and interests among members of the same social group become matched to the policies and programmes expressed by a particular political party
 - As long as the party continues to advocate for the group, most of its members will continue to support it

- Forms of communication/discussion within groups, group mobilisations by parties, and group exposure to media
 - Transmit the prevailing political preference of the group to its members
 - Mediate the influence of socioeconomic status on political preference
 - Work to reinforce 'like-minded' view in the group while converting views that deviate from prevailing opinion about issues, candidates and leaders
 - These discussions (in contexts such as families, churches) express affective orientations and social norms, and they provide guidelines for decision making, especially when the decision must be made under imperfect information and an environment of risk and uncertainty
 - Frequent use of these guidelines and their demonstrated reliability in decision making tend to strengthen ties among individuals, engender policy agreement, and to mobilise political participation
- Addition of psychology to social characteristics-contexts approach: the immediate determinants of an individual's behaviour lies more clearly in his attitudes and his perceptual organisation of his environment than in either his social position or other "objective situational factors"
 - Can account for the impact of changing political events on people's attitudes about politics
- Central addition is the small group theory with a central concept of party identification – what Butler and Stokes call, "partisan self-image"
 - Party identification was defined as "an individual's affective orientation to an important group-object in his environment...the political party serves as the group towards which the individual may develop an identification, positive or negative, of some degree of intensity."
 - Such party identification is usually acquired as the result of childhood and adolescent socialisation experiences that occur within families or other primary group settings; identifications are usually very stable
- Party-identification also develops a perceptual screen which mediates how political information and events are perceived by the individual, thereby exerting indirect effects on voting by shaping attitudes towards parties, their issue stands, and their candidates for public office
 - Butler and Stokes' account: the perceptual screening functions of party identification help it to overcome the public's lack of political sophistication, particularly its 'remoteness...from the affairs of the government', 'the limits of its political information', and 'the problem of causal reasoning' as reflected in the difficulties of attributing responsibility to parties for past actions or of calculating future probable actions

- When party identification is widespread in an electorate, it constitutes a powerful force working to restore long-term patterns of party competition
- An important anchor for the existing party system in the minds of citizens and hence helps to promote the stability of the larger political order
- Green, Palmquist, and Shickler argued that there is relatively little work on party identification as a form of self-identification
 - They argue that people know who they are and party identification flows from their own self-knowledge as a socially informed self-identification with cognitive and affective components
 - Fundamentally, people are biased information processors, making partisan attachments relatively immune to changes in the political environment as partisan attachments persist even as people are dissatisfied with their party
 - The stability and filtering function of party identification make it a powerful force anchoring individual voting behaviour and limiting the extent of variation in election outcomes
- Limitations
 - Inability to deal with information that lacks an obvious social group referent
 - Inability to keep pace with the short and medium term changes in the variables they purport to explain
 - Emotional reactions to economic conditions
 - Individual rationality framework + issue-priority models
 - How party-identification changes over time because party-identification and retrospective judgements interact with one another

Rational-voter model

- Basically, voters and parties are rational in trying to maximise their von Neumann-Morgenstern utility function
- Downsian proximity model (equivalent to the Hotelling linear city model)
 - Political parties lure voters on an ideological continuum
 - Voters' positions on the ideological continuum are determined by preferences for different amounts of government-provided goods and services
 - Parties then compete by moving their policy positions across the continuum to the point that attracts the maximum number of voters
 - Classic case of two parties and uniform distribution of voters, the parties are expected to converge
 - The voter chooses by calculating which candidates/party's issue position is closest to his or her ideal point or preference for utility income on the ideological continuum
 - Essentially, calculating distance or space → assessment of what Downs calls "current party differentials"

- What information are the voters using to calculate?
 - Retrospective voting → using past performances
 - Comparing utility received today and counterfactual if the opposition had been in power
- Limitations
 - Stokes argued that voters and parties focus on “valence issues” which the Downsian model seems to exclude
 - Valence issues are conditions or goals that nearly everyone shares such as the instrumental value of prosperity and individual economic well-being → broad consensus of priority
 - I disagree with Stokes: (i) surely the ideological continuum could be characterised by different prioritisation of different values (such as post-materialist vs materialist ones) and (ii) surely the ideological continuum could be characterised by the different interpretations of values (liberty → either no taxation or a lot of taxation; effective healthcare → nationalised or privatised)
 - There is no unique one to one mapping from value to policy
 - Stokes also argued that the spatial model relied on four questionable assumptions of unidimensionality, fixed structure, ordered dimensions and common references
 - But we can simply generalise it to a n-dimensional vector space
 - Stokes argued that parties and voters do not disagree about goals but instead which party (leader) and policies are most likely to achieve the outcome that everyone wants
 - Voters differentiate parties and leaders on the basis of such qualities such as ability or trustworthiness, and symbols of success and failure
 - The differentiation occurs from ‘experiences with parties and leaders, and the results that they achieve over time’

Valence model

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- Voters rewards a governing party for its success in bringing prosperity or holds a governing party responsible for its failure in hard times

Synthesising valence and voter-rationality models

- Both models specify the use of future utility or anticipated performance assessments, and also allow for past or retrospectively focused judgements
- Both models recognise that voters pay attention to incumbent performance and they attribute responsibility for this performance
 - The idea of voters attributing credit or blame to an incumbent government for the state of the economy or other valence issues is the core concept that motivates Key’s (1968) reward-punishment model
- Also similarity between Downs’ notion of party differential (that is, the space between parties on the ideological continuum) and Stokes’ concept of position-issues on which parties or leaders are differentiated by their advocacy of alternative positions on an ordered dimension
 - Issue-position model posits that parties and leaders differ and are perceived to differ, in their advocacy of alternative policies
 - The Issue-position model says 3 conditions must be met for an issue to impact the election: (i) a voter must have a position on an issue, (ii) competing parties must have clearly different policies on the issue, and (iii) the voter must be able to link his or her position to the policy of one of the parties
- Issue-priority model: allows voters to disagree about policy priorities, policy implementation, and party competence
 - Political parties develop policy agendas that they use to structure public debate and they establish track records of dealing with a specific set of issues when in office
 - Parties thereby claim issue ownership and build policy reputations that become widely recognised by voters

- Mobilises voters by emphasising its uses and hence benefits when certain issues are more salient on the political agenda
- Contrast to the reward-punishment model → negative outcomes do not necessarily prompt punishment at the polls; voters' decisions reflect both current conditions and the perceived issue-priorities of the competing parties
 - For example, when health-services deteriorate or unemployment increases, the issue-priority model predicts that these conditions will become salient election issues, but that voters will not necessarily punish a governing left-of-center party → such parties have reputations for caring about such problems and thus are perceived to be more willing and able to address them
- These predictions of the issue-priority model are consistent with the empirical observation that social welfare and public service issues, such as health, education, and welfare provision, traditionally benefit left-of-center parties, whereas issues involving crime prevention and national defence work to the advantage of right-of-center parties (Hibbs)

How performance or valence judgements matter

Economic evaluation models

- Trying to figure out if voters' think primarily in terms of egocentric considerations or sociotropic ones (national economic conditions)
 - Former is microeconomics/individual rationality framework but the latter does not fit well as voters are said to be people concerned about the provision of economic goods that flow to society as a whole
- Relative importance of past-vs-future oriented economic evaluations is also another important questions for party support
 - Downs argues that, if the retroactive-prospective distinction is interpreted to mean past performance versus future promises, then rationality individuals will rely on the former when judging the economy, since using past performances supplies the voters with more concrete facts → emphasis on reliable information + parties will 'say anything'
 - But Clarke et al stress that elections require voters to forecast what parties or leaders will do based on current information → rational voters have no interest in rewarding or punishing anybody but just want to maximise their utilities and they must make forecasts about what the future holds if an alternative party or leader is elected
 - Linear extrapolation or adaptive expectations that updates expectations using current and past economic performance
 - Regardless, the assumption is that economic expectations matter for party support
- How do voters acquire and use economic information when making decisions

- Conover and Feldman think that economic evaluations have affective and emotional content → thoughts about the economy and their personal economic situations generate emotional reactions → important results on how they process politically relevant information (happy, hopeful, disgusted about economic circumstances even if it does not affect them personally)

Individual rationality models of partisanship by Fiorina

- Party identification is a storehouse of information about the largely economic performance of political parties and their leaders
 - Over time, voters update their partisanship as they acquire new information on economic conditions and parties actual or expected performance
 - Voters make summary running tallies of current and past party performance evaluations, giving more weight to recent as opposed to earlier information
- All such models agree that partisanship at any point in time is the product of voters using a utility-maximising or satisficing strategy to process information
 - The core idea is that partisanship is **not exclusively a product of early-life socialisation but rather of information updating that produces changes in both the intensity and direction of partisan attachments**
 - As Stokes argued “the trend towards valence politics is plainly correlated with the weakening of the old-time party loyalties, which were rooted in strong position issues” → so the Michigan model of party identification is faltering as people rely more on past performances and economic expectations to make decisions and in turn which affects their own party-identification

Impact on leaders on the electorate

- Another area in which performance or valence judgements: how party leader images affect parties’ standings with the electorate
 - Traditionally been argued that leader images have small to null effects on voting behaviour and election outcomes in Britain
 - Leader images are short term ephemeral factors that are easily overcome by the complex of powerful long term forces summarised by voters’ class locations
 - The ‘pull of the leaders remains but one among the factors that determine the transient shifts of party strength; it is easily outweighed by other issues and events of concern to the public, including the movements of the economy which do so much to set the climate of the party battle’
- But party leader images matter as well → leader images and the people’s feelings of like or dislike of leaders and the standards of judgement that they bring to bear on leader performance exert significant direct effects on party support

- Constitutional developments, leadership style, party strategy and public outreach activities have contributed to the rising prominence of PMs and the presidentialisation of the prime minister's role
 - Media has constantly shone the spotlight on the prime minister → increasing focus
 - PMs have significant effects on party support but it does not require that these effects to be equally strong regardless of who occupies the office
- Conduct of election campaigns in parliamentary and presidential systems → election campaigns have become more “personalised”, which is exacerbated by the media's encouragement for the personalisation of electoral politics by focusing heavily on the leaders' policy pronouncement, and by conducting in depth and provocative interviews with them
 - Candidate-centered vs party-oriented election campaigns that have evolved in response to the primary election system and televised campaigning in the US
- Voter psychology: voting on leaders do not require the assumption that voters are responding irrationally to vacuous aspects of leader images
 - Issues and parties are essentially abstractions, while leaders are amenable to direct sensory perception because they are heard and seen frequently and sometimes spoken to or touched
 - Embodiments of the parties themselves → voters may resort to heuristic devices when issues are complex including leader images, to deal with too little or too much information
- Voters may rely on two dimensions to assess the leader's image
 - General effectiveness and competence
 - Thatcher's unrelenting advocacy of neoconservative policies led to a sharp distinction in people's minds between her competence to manage the government, and her responsiveness to public needs and concerns
 - Caring about/responsiveness to public concerns

Category 2: Factors for declining Voter-Party Links

Operationalising Voter-Party Links

Factors for declining Voter-Party Links

Post-Materialist value transition

- Materialist-Post-Materialist distinction
 - Materialist values: Physiological sustenance, economic security, safety

- Post Material values: Non-physiological needs such as aesthetic self-expression → concerns for nuclear power, environmentalism, social tolerance
- Thesis for transition
 - Scarcity Hypothesis: an individual's priorities reflect the socioeconomic environment; one places the greatest subjective value on those things that are in relatively short supply
 - Socialisation Hypothesis: The relationship between socioeconomic environment and value priorities is not one of immediate adjustment; a substantial time lag is involved, for, to a large extent, one's basic values reflect the conditions that prevailed during one's preadult years
 - Primary thesis: Economic prosperity and conditions of existential security promote the transition from materialist priorities to post-materialist priorities
 - Greater subjective perception of one's prosperity, well-being and security
- Intergenerational value change; cohort effects
 - Cohort analysis: In Japan, there is a large difference between older generations thinking that financial security is the most important vs younger generations
 - This shows that as younger generations (because this was analysed in post-war conditions) enter into conditions of prosperity and existential security, they start to prioritise their post-materialist values from young
 - Inglehart found the largest increase in post-materialist priorities from the during war to post-war generation → it is the fact that they never had to adjust from materialist to non-materialist values that accounts for this
- Ageing effects
 - Inglehart also found that as older generations continued living within conditions of existential security and economic prosperity, they themselves start to see shifts within their own materialist values to non-materialist priorities
- Post-materialism and elite groups
 - While young technocrats are post materialists, Inglehart found that young self-employed business people
 - Among those less than 35 years old with job that lead to top management and top civil service posts, Post-Materialists outnumber Materialists decisively
 - Greater than students
 - These people are a highly select stratum → so the young elites are significantly more post-materialist than materialist

- Older people (50 years and older) have more Materialists than post-materialists in every occupational category
- Inglehart found that young, college educated individuals tend to be the most post-materialist
 - Post-materialist are markedly more favourable to social change than other value types → significantly more progressive and less conservative than materialists
 - Strong relationship between post-materialist values and a predisposition for unconventional protest
- Implications
 - Against the valence model → not everyone thinks that economic growth is inherently good → conflicts with the environment because the most economically conducive policy may not be the most environmentally friendly

Weak Party Systems (Munoz)

Munoz argues, electoral clientelism -- that is, the use of benefits to gain 'votes' or 'political participation' from prospective voters -- is extremely prevalent in developing nations because of their "weakly organised political contexts". What this means is that party networks are poorly developed and managed, unlike the organised machinery we see in America for the Democrats and Republicans. The nuance in Munoz's argument is that evidence points to electoral clientelism being an *indirect* mechanism to predict voter patterns. By using cheap gifts to persuade relatively poor voters to participate in campaigns (and not to buy votes), Munoz highlights that this increases the perceived turnout and credibility of the politician, which in turn increases the donors' and voters' perceptions of his or her electoral viability. But this is not enough; when comparing the campaigns of Trelles and Atkins in the regional Peru presidential elections, Munoz found that the personal characteristics or charisma of Atkins propelled him to victory over his challenger Trelles. The point of this analysis is to show that throughout this process, there was virtually no concrete interaction between the voter, his/her voter patterns and the *party*; what mattered was the electoral viability and personal characteristics of the politician -- which at most is indirectly affected by the party investing in electoral clientelism.

- Parties are poorly organised so they cannot always provide a coherent set of policy proposals or deliver these policy proposals in a way that voters can understand effectively
 - Due to failure of voters to understand (poor and uneducated), but also because these parties do not have the resources or ability to do so
- So, party leaders become at the forefront of election, and electoral clientelism is organised around elevating their image
 - Munoz shows in these contexts, that party leaders become much more important as a source of electoral patterns and voting behaviour

- The informational bases that voters use are much more peripheral in general and less linked to actual substantive policy, but organised around perception of the politician running for office

Informational Theory: Informational Deprivation and electoral clientelism (Chandra)

Summary: a theory of individual voter and elite behaviour in elite democracies which explains the expectations of ethnic favouritism as an outcome of information constraints that characterise patronage transactions in such democracies. Voters are biased towards ethnic categorisations of the beneficiaries of patronage transactions under conditions of informational deprivation

Thesis: self-reinforcing equilibrium of ethnic favouritism. Because voters are biased towards ethnic categorisations of beneficiaries, elites are forced to favour voters from their own categories and voters, observing that politicians help their “own”, but unaware that their own perceptual biases drive elites to adopt such a strategy, place their trust primarily in co-ethnic politicians, leading to a self-enforcing and reinforcing equilibrium of ethnic favouritism in patronage democracies

- Basically, in highly deprived informational contexts, voters and parties form a stable relationship due to electoral clientelism (low barrier to entry informational system) on the basis of ethnicity

Context and Concepts: Patronage Democracy/electoral clientelism

Patronage democracy

- State has a relative monopoly of jobs and services in which elected officials enjoy significant discretion in the implementation of laws allocating the jobs and services at the disposal of the state
- Focus in on the power of elected officials to distribute the vast resources controlled by the state to voters on an individualised basis through their discretion in the implementation of state policy

Electoral clientelism

- Rent seeking where politicians seek rewards and returns in the form of votes rather than bribes
- Dyadic transaction between traditional notables and their dependents bound by ties of reciprocity
- A particular mode of exchange between electoral constituencies as principals and politicians as agents in democratic systems

Patronage politics

- Court support not by promising some group of voters favourable legislation but assuring them of favourable implementation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● E.g. Selectively employ discretionary powers to make it easier for some groups of people to obtain certificates (for setting up retail shops)
Key mechanism: why voters in patronage democracies should expect elites to favour coethnic elites rather than others in the distribution of material benefits	<p>Politicians in patronage democracies have an incentive to collect rents on policy implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Especially under the context of having monopolistic control over valued benefits and discretionary power in the implementation of policy ● Votes are most lucrative form of rent in democracies since they provide opportunity for continued control of the state ● Secret voting does not prevent the operation of such transactions → Schaffer poses examples of mechanisms that allow for individual votes to be secret, but aggregate results for each village or group of villages did not → local level political patrons can gauge effectiveness of their efforts → pervasive in poorer areas ● Given monopoly of the state, people are unlikely to perceive votes as secret anyway since the politicians have such large power <p>Voters in patronage democracies have an incentive to use their votes as instruments to extract material benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need to secure some of the vast material benefits at the disposal of those who implement the policy is the ultimate focus of the voter ● Might be because they tend to be poor <p>Benefit-seeking voters have an incentive to organise collectively in the pursuit of individually distributed goods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Voters know individual votes make no difference and so they must find a way to magnify the purchasing power of their vote → voters then join a group to create greater bargaining power <p>Benefit-selling candidates have an incentive to target the distribution of individual benefits to group members rather than free-floating individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The candidates want to magnify their purchasing power of their benefits at their disposal and how to monitor compliance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distributing a favour to one group member sends a signal to others in the group that they can count on him in the future and dealing with groups allows him to target more people at once <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dealing with individuals may require him to favour one individual over another; but by helping part of a group, the whole group perceives the patron as helping all of them ● Because voters want to organise into groups and candidates want to support the existence of these groups, patronage democracies converge into group voting <p>Voters in patronage democracies evaluate the promises of candidates about the distribution of benefits in the present by looking at the record of past patronage transactions by incumbents. Consequently, incumbents seek to develop records of patronage transactions that will help them most in the future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Voters will survey history to look at patterns of past patronage transactions to identify the principles on which patronage benefits were distributed in the past, which is their best guide to how they will allot benefits in the future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○
<p>Key mechanism: why voters expect to obtain psychic benefits from elites from their “own” ethnic group rather than elite with whom they share other bases of group affiliation</p>	<p>Voters surveying the record of past patronage transactions are typically forced to distinguish between individuals under severe informational constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Patronage transactions cannot be conducted openly in modern democracies → any attempt by candidates to trade policy implementation for votes in the open market would constitute a serious violation of the norms of modern government → no politician could openly promise to favour some voters in the allocation of hospital beds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ So informational constraints constrain voters from their ability to derive what politicians are doing ○ Signalling mechanisms breakdown to voters not in the in-groups → very

	<p>little background information about the beneficiaries of patronage transaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influenced by perceptual biases for highly visible ethnic identification <p>Consequently, voters are biased towards schemes of ethnic categorisation in interpreting how past patronage benefits were distributed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voters must assess who benefitted under which regime and they will always code beneficiaries based on ethnic identities • Insight by Barth who argues that ethnic groups are defined, not by internal homogeneity, but by possession of a limited set of 'cultural differentia' which separates insiders from outsiders
Key mechanism: How these expectations result in a self-enforcing and reinforcing equilibrium of ethnic favouritism	<p>When voters are biased towards an ethnic categorisation of beneficiaries, politicians will favour co-ethnics in their distribution of material benefits although they may also channel leftover benefits to voters from other ethnic categories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If voters at time $t+1$ formulate expectations of benefits based on history of past patronage transactions using schemes of ethnic categorisation, incumbents at time t have no choice but to apply ethnic principles in the way in which they choose to distribute benefits → need to send ethnic signals to their distribution of benefits • Non-ethnic principles of distribution are unverifiable on ground since voters use schemes of ethnicity to interpret benefits • A strategy of equal distribution does not give anyone any benefit <p>Superior visibility of ethnic identities in limited information environments also drives voters to obtain psychic benefits from co-ethnic elites rather than others</p> <p>Consequently, we should see a self-enforcing equilibrium of ethnic favouritism in patronage democracies</p>
<p>Example</p> <p>Erdogan's Turkey economic clientelism + Netanyahu's Israel selective neoliberalism</p>	

Dalton's overview of the trends of citizen politics and voting behaviour

General decline in the long term determinants of voting

- Social class has had a decreasing impact on voting in virtually all established democracies, along with similar declines in the impact of religion and other social characteristics
 - Social Group Model of Voting → our social group both determine our political values and beliefs while also determining the information we receive and we receive them
 - Social position often indicates his or her values and political beliefs; poorer people would favour expansion of social services
 - Social characteristics reflect some of the political cues to which he or she is exposed → a British mineworker may hear about politics from his coworkers or other working class neighbours
 - Social groups orient voters to political issues and providing information about politics → knowledge that unions favour one party and the Catholic Church another can help voters locate themselves in relation to the parties
 - In the 1960s, most British political scientist thought that social class was the basis of all British politics
 - Lipset's theory of class cleavage as one of the most pervasive bases of party support → occupations are classified based on their relationship to the means of production → bourgeoisie are self employed and owners of capital; the workers who sell their labour to live are the proletariat
 - Generalised to form two large social classes: the middle and working class
 - Historical class alignments persist in each nation: the working class gives disproportionate support to leftist parties, ranging from 48% voting for Labour in the 2010 British election to 58% voting Social Democratic, Greens, or Linke in the 2009 German elections
 - Old middle class is the bastion of support for conservative parties
 - Introduction of the new middle class → no clear position in the traditional dichotomy between the working class and the bourgeoisie
 - Declining size of blue-collared workers in advanced economies → new middle class is now the largest group of voters and most importantly, has ambiguous partisan preferences as they are located between the working class and the self-employed in its Left/Right voting preferences and disproportionately supports parties that represents a New Politics ideology, such as Green or New Left parties

- New middle class is a major contributor to the changing political alignments of advanced industrial democracy
- Alford index of class voting → difference between % of working class voting for left and % of middle class voting for the left
 - Class differences has declined dramatically in Britain and Germany
 - Gap in leftist support between the working class and middle class was once 40% but now it is less than 10%
 - Class differences in voting have also declined dramatically in the U.S.
- Dalton found that the correlation between social class and voting choice is now quite modest in most nations
- Explanation 1: declining size of traditional social strata + mobility
 - Members of traditional social strata – industrial workers, farmers and the self-employed – remain integrated into their class networks but the size of people in these class networks are declining
 - Spreading affluence to the working class while also there are expanding ranks of low-paid and low status white collar employees
 - Few individuals now possess exclusively middle-class or working class social characteristics
 - Social and occupational mobility may also weaken the link between individuals and traditional social classes
 - One's ultimate social position is often different from their parents
 - Many farmers' children moved away from conservative political upbringings into unionised, working class environments in the cities, just as many working-class children went from urban, leftist backgrounds into white-collar occupations that are traditionally conservative
- Explanation 2: Changing relationship between class groups and the political parties
 - In the latter half of the twentieth century, many leftist parties tried to broaden their electoral appeal to attract new middle class voters
 - Socialist parties in Europe shed their Marxist programmes and adopted more moderate domestic and foreign policy goals
 - Conservatives started to include basic social programmes from the left
 - Can be explained by Downsian model? → Caul and Gray cite a general convergence of party positions on socioeconomic issues during the past half-century → smaller class differences
- Religion – impact on religious cues are declining
 - Germany: erratically trended downwards since the 1960
 - But has not declined as sharply as we seen in class → increasing secularisation so religion is declining in explanatory power

- New Politics as a new cleavage (materialist-post-materialist cleavage) to induce partisan alignment
 - Developing a new partisan cleavage must require (i) groups to organise and represent New Politics interests and mobilise voter support and (ii) for group bases of these issues to be concentrated like in Old Politics (economic security etc) → (ii) does not hold for new politics
 - Environmental issues have several groups which speak for them
 - But we have Europeans who frequently express a willingness to vote for an environmental party; the potential electorate for a Green party's rivals that of Socialist and Christian Democratic parties
 - As post-materialist parties have gained representation, populist-rightist parties have often emerged to challenge their views – cleavage
 - Postmaterialist values have an increasing influence as these issues enter the political agenda and parties respond by offering policy choices
 - Voting differences between materialists and postmaterialists in West Germany was modest in the early 1970s but increasing by the end of the 1990s and
 - Unlikely to provide a basis for a new group-party alignment
 - Values define a cluster of like-minded people but one cannot identify a postmaterialist in the same way as that of class, religion or region provides a basis of personal identity and group mobilisation
 - In fact, postmaterialist concerns are a vast array of single-issue groups and causes – women's movement to peace organisations to environmental advocates; opposition from the New Right is equally fluid → extremely ill-defined membership
- Issue-voting
 - M-PM divide: Witnessing a transformation from social group cleavages to issue group cleavages
 - Bases of electoral mobilisation are becoming more individualised and focused on discrete issue publics
 - Interest mobilisation will be characterised by more complex, overlapping, and cross-cutting associational networks; more fluid institutional loyalties and looser organisational structures
 - Fewer citizens use voting cues from external reference groups such as unions or churches while economic and moral issues remain key elements of the political agenda
- Similarly, dealignment has decreased the effect of party attachments on voting
 - Socio-psychological model of voting: Socioeconomic conditions influence group loyalties and basic value orientations (economic conditions bonding an individual to a social class or religious identities) → group identities and

values shape more explicitly political attitudes (party attachment, issue opinions and candidate images)

- The first factors are temporally distant from the voting decision and the factors at the end are more proximate to voting choice
- First part represents broad social conditions that structure political conflict; attention shifts explicitly more political
- Learning model of party-identification
 - According to Hess and Torney, children learn party loyalties before they can understand what parties stand for – like other group ties
 - Empirically confirmed by cross-national studies which found that there were high levels of agreement in party-identifications of parents and childrens in America, Germany and the UK
 - Parents have dominant influence on a child's life
 - Once people form party ties, electoral experiences follow from the electoral dispositions
 - According to Niemi and Jennings, if voting experiences counteract partisanship, these party loyalties gradually corrode and vice versa
 - But still not easily altered once formed and strengthened: Jennings and Markus found that 70% of American adults and 58% of adolescents held the same partisan ties in 1965 and 1973, spanning one of the most turbulent political periods in twentieth century American history
 - Same for UK: 80-90% of British public retain consistent party ties from one election to the next (Shickler and Green)
 - Partisanship strongly influences the voter's perception of the political world especially on opinions more closely linked to parties such as evaluations of government performance and candidate images → partisans root for players on their team
- Initial signs of partisanship decline appeared in late 1970 where many elections had swing in outcomes
 - Dalton claims that voters are not simply defecting from their preferred parties in one or two elections but across a wide set of nations, the evidence shows an erosion in partisan loyalties – the same loyalties that electoral research emphasised as a core element in explaining citizen political behaviour
 - In Britain: more than 40% of the British public were strong partisans in 1960s, but by 2010 only 10% of the British were
 -

Growth of importance of short-term factors on voting, such as issue opinions and candidates image

- Franklin, Mackie and Valen in their study of voting behaviour across 17 Western democracies
 - If all the issues of importance to voters had been measured and given their due weight, then the rise of issue voting would have compensated more or less precisely for the decline in cleavage politics
- Trend toward greater issue voting and candidate voting is a self-reinforcing process
 - As party ties weaken, the potential for issues to influence voting choice increases
 - In addition, as issues become more important, this encourages some party defection and erodes the voter's party attachments still further
 - We can look at the issue-partisan attachment model to see this
 - Parties also respond to the developments and change their electoral messages to voters away from long-term loyalists
 - So rise of issue voting and decline of partisanship are interrelated trends
- Fragmentation of voter choice into separate subpublics
 - Some people base their choice on idiosyncratic criteria; some people base their votes on social group identities; some view the campaigns and candidates in terms of party loyalties; more sophisticated voters may have strong issue beliefs and make their voting choice on which party or candidate best represents their views
 - The impact of economics on the vote illustrates these change: traditionally, social divisions defined economic conflicts → the working class versus the middle class, industrial versus agrarian interests
 - In this situation, one's social position was often a meaningful guide to voting choices
 - As social divisions have narrowed, the group bases of political interests have blurred, other issues attract voter attention, and social class is less relevant as a voting cue
 - This decline does not mean that economic issues are unimportant: contemporary evidence of economic voting is widespread, but today issue positions are more individually based rather than group derived
 - Concern: citizens who lack the political skills who meet the requirements of sophisticated issue voting → isolated from politics if traditional political cues decline in usefulness; many political analysts see the rise of the New Right and flash parties in Europe, especially those headed by charismatic party leaders, as a negative consequences of a dealigned electorate

Evaluative point: subpublics and voting differences

- Dalton argues that there are different subpublics that may exist in any one election is unlimited
 - The challenge is which subgroups are most important

- Issue interests are not evenly homogenous
- Some people rely on their partisan identities as political cues, while others have the cognitive skills and resources to reach their own political judgements → some have both – or neither
 - Better-educated and politically sophisticated voters place more weight on issues as a basis for their electoral decision making
 - Less sophisticated voters rely more on partisanship and social cues
- A parallel analysis of the 2009 Germany elections found a similar pattern where apertisans were most likely to mention policy reasons for their votes and least likely to cite party traits; conversely, ritual partisans and cognitive partisans were most likely to cite party traits as an explanation for their votes
 - Each of these groups uses a different decision-making calculus when making its choices

Cees van der Eijk and Mark Franklin Theory of Voters Orientation

General Empirical Observations

- Decline of Partisanship: declining power of social cleavages to structure partisanship that occurred in many countries in late 20th century also led to a decline in the strength of partisanship, with weaker effects of group loyalties giving rise to weaker identification with political parties
 - Dealignment in Britain's two most powerful parties following a decline in cleavage politics
- In America, progressive decline in the percentage of strong partisans among cohorts that entered the electorate from 1948 to 1968, along with a temporary downward swing, in 1968 to 1972 among older cohorts. From about 1968 onwards, the percentage of strong partisans among young adults entering the electorate appears to be less than half what it was in 1948 and this lower partisanship among young adults has continued to characterise the American electorate in recent years
 - Older voters today are no less partisan than they were 50 years ago even though young voters are much less so
 - So there are more weak partisans in the American electorate today than there used to be because younger members have lower partisanship than used to be the case
- Greater volatility of election outcomes in the modern era

Electoral changes and mechanisms for their dynamics

- Generational Replacement: new voters enter the electorate as they come of age while old voters die out and leave the electorate
 - To the extent that there is a systematic difference (that is not an effect of ageing) between the political complexion of those leaving and those entering

the electorate, over time there will be change in the political complexion of the entire electorate

- Quite significant: at each election in Western countries, roughly 10% of the electorate has been new so if new voters favour a given party 30% more than the oldest voters do, then at each election, the shift in votes will be about 3% in favour of the party supported by new parties, and elections are often won or lost by argos less than this
 - Changes induced by generational replacement are inexorable
- Less dominant in some countries: Netherlands, party switching by established parties in consecutive elections caused three times as much political change as generational replacement
 - However, much of this switches in older voters were temporary, and consisted in switches within party families than to parties that held radically differing ideas or policy postures
 - Over longer periods the replacement effect is likely to have greater and was indeed established by van der Eijk and Niemoller
- Political realignment: situations where there is a massive change in party support
 - Key classic treatment of political realignment which suggested a typology of patterns of change that distinguished between elections that:
 - Maintain the alignment of political forces (such that parties continue to be supported by their established clienteles)
 - Loosen the relationship of party attachments to a previous clientele (dealignment)
 - Alter those relationships (realignment)
 - Keys argued that realignment had to be preceded by dealignment because the bonds of loyalty had to be loosened before they could be changed into a new long term equilibrium
 - But no research had backed up Key's sequence of election type changes → does not characterise US elections
 - For the 1930s realignment, Lubell said that the author had failed to find one whose party loyalty had weakened and transformed after talking to hundreds of voters
 - The problem for political scientists is that no realignment of the classic type has occurred in any country since the advent of academic election studies based on random samples of the mass electorate
 - Anderson validated Lubell's failure to find voters who had changed their party allegiance during the US 'New Deal' realignment of the 1930s
 - Her reconstruction showed that the realignment of the 1930s in the US took place as a result of the mobilisation of large numbers of

previously non-voting individuals rather than a conversion of existing voters

- New voters were drawn from the pool of first and second generation immigrants who had acquired citizenship prior to the Depression years but had not been mobilised to vote
 - Consistent with Lipset and Rokkan's view of expansions of electorates as the motor of European electoral change in the late 19th and early 20th centuries
- Cumulated into definitional issues regarding what is to be considered as realignment → is it simply new voters entering the electorate or must pre-existing voters switch their votes? → what is the base in which the realignment took place? When did it start for America's "New Deal" realignment
 - Less ambiguity surrounds the the British realigning election of 1945, where the Labour party definitely replaced the declining Liberal Party as the major competitor to the Conservatives
- Reconstruction for the pattern of change in the British electorate by Franklin and Ladner
 - Similar to Andersen for earlier realignment in the US: the major source of change was generational
 - Citizens who had not been old enough to vote in 1935 were entirely responsible for the huge increases in votes for the British Labour Party in 1945 → not because voters switched party allegiances but because new voters were sufficiently numerous and sufficiently different from established voters to bring about realignment
- The decline of cleavage politics has allowed for large swings in party support to be possible possible in contemporary electorates without requiring a corresponding enlargement of the electorate
- Concludes that the most important thing is how institutional arrangements and fixed features of elections can change the level of turnout progressively over the course of future years
 - Turnout at any particular election reflects a dynamic balance of long-term forces reinforcing or counteracting each other to create a baseline turnout level, from which short-term forces can cause deviations → this is why we should look at the dynamics at generational replacement → prototypical effects that have long-term consequences for the evolution of turnout levels
- Dynamics of general replacement
 - Extension of the franchise (when women were given the vote in Switzerland in 1971 and in several countries after WW2)
 - These newly enfranchised individuals have to learn to vote because they have a habit of not voting → so in the immediate aftermath of

enfranchisement, electoral turnout falls and rises steadily according to Franklin

- Youngest members of the newly enfranchised group learn to vote at the same rate as members of the new cohort
- Abolition of compulsory voting
 - According to Franklin, the abolition of compulsory voting will first have a sharp drop in turnout, followed by a steady decline in turnout, after which it will settle at some level
 - Level of turnout should continue to decline as successive cohorts of voters enter the electorate with no compulsion to vote and therefore learn to vote at a lower rate than their elders did
 - Eventually, whole electorate consists of voters that learned how to vote post-abolition and thus settles down
- What also matters is consequence of elections
 - In Switzerland, the institution of a governing cartel in which the same parties took office, sharing powers in the same proportions whatever the outcome of the parliamentary elections removed the relevance and consequences of parliamentary elections → so people felt that there was no point voting
 - Younger cohorts entering also did not think that there was a point
- Delay built into effects of reforms
 - Progressive effects as new cohort of citizens enter the electorate and these progressive effects are not the result of something happening now → they are results of reforms of the past
 - We can expect past events to influence current party choice in the similar cohort-related manner but this has not been studied as such
- Realignments and the decline of cleavage politics both reflect generational replacement; what has not been done is to use these insights to generate expectations for a baseline balance of partisanship – a baseline around which voting at particular elections would vary under the impact of short-term forces – another important avenue for future research

Determinants of Voter Preference

- Examining effects on party
 - Incumbent Parties that have a highly realised electoral potential cannot expect to benefit from improving economic and can only be hurt by deteriorating economy; while parties that have low electoral standing cannot expect to be hurt
 - Opposition parties are the inverse
- Regression analysis

- Issues have a regression coefficient of 0.54 on preferences while class has 0.52, Religion 0.55, Postmaterialism 0.32, Left-right proximity 0.39, Government approval 0.50
 - In terms of standardised regression coefficients: Left-right proximity, Issues most important
- Party level effects: party size is important in determining preferences; new politics parties (new parties such as Green Parties did particularly well in 1989 European Parliament elections); parties with extreme positions to the left or right are less preferred than moderate parties except for voters who themselves take an extreme position (suggested that voters in general dislike extreme parties)
- Government parties tend to be penalised → Downs predicted this by reasoning that parties cannot fulfil all their promises and cannot avoid making increasingly more enemies over the course of their tenure
 - But Franklin and van der Eijk argues that this is only true up to a certain point → after a certain time has elapsed, the standing of the government parties start to rise again
 - Governments face popularity declines in the first half of their term and standing improves in the second half of their terms
- Implications: social cleavages coefficients show the role still played by social structures in determining party preferences even after the decline of cleavage politics

Prospective vs Retrospective voting

- Can we tell if people vote retrospectively, holding governments to account for their performance while in office, or prospectively, giving mandates to particular parties to introduce or amend particular policies
 - Difficult to tell in 2 party systems because it is hard to determine whether a voter intends to punish the government or give a mandate to the opposition if they vote for the opposition
 - Coalition governments easier because it is difficult to hold government coalitions all accountable for poor performance → Powell has pointed out that a focus on government accountability is really a feature of the majoritarian vision and it is logically hard to reconcile an accountability orientation with the fact that partners in a coalition government do not generally see their vote shares moving in step at election time
- Voters take into account party size for retroactive voting → large parties are those held responsible for economic conditions, not government parties
 - Moreover, ideology is just as important as party size in determining how voters credit or blame individual parties for good or bad economic times

- Coalition systems: voters react to changes in economic conditions in a very prospective fashion, taking account of likely party policies in light of whatever economic problems might be paramount → preference for right when inflation is important, left when unemployment is important
- Retroactive power seems to be a better fit in countries characterised by single party governments → possible that this is just apparent since there is difficulty in distinguishing retrospective from prospective orientations
 - False dichotomy: Fiorina suggested that voters use past performance as a guider to future performance so retrospective and prospective orientations are merged
 - But when we look separately at parties that are members of a coalition government or when we look at party reactions to policies that a government has enacted, we see clear signs of prospective orientations on the part of voters many of whom, when prospective and retrospective orientations would have led to different choices, apparently choose prospectively rather than retrospectively

Effects on preferences in newly established and consolidating democracies

- New democracies: did not have importance of group loyalties because they were preceded by communist political structures which suppressed group identifications; instabilities of part system implies that we do not see focuses on issue voting as well
 - Parties in new democracies adapt their policy positions and ideological profiles in the face of rapid social changes and changing opportunities for political mobilisation
- In consolidating democracies
 - Small reduction in effect of left-right proximity in former communist states
 - Less Importance for party size suggests that voters in these relatively new democracies have not yet learned the same strategic preference for large parties that we see in established democracies
 - Voters in both kinds of countries evidently use the same considerations when evaluating parties as potential recipients of their votes → gender, religion, social class, issues are all approximately equally significant in determining vote
- One important factor that helps voters make sense of their political environment is their experience with that environment and one important difference between political systems is the extent to which the political environments found in different countries do encourage and make possible a lifetime of learning experience for voters
 - Differences in the sophistication of voters in parliamentary democracies and the US → voters find it hard to learn their way around the political system because new protagonists enter the arena every election

- Interesting implication is that the way in which new and consolidating democracies differ from established democracies is essentially the same as the way in which new and recently adult voters differ from established voters
 - A new democracy is different in the same way that new voters are different because they are new
 - Only after a passage of 60 years will a new democracy all voters are 'new'