

The SAGE Handbook of Electoral Behaviour



2 Volume Set

Edited by
Kai Arzheimer, Jocelyn Evans
and Michael S. Lewis-Beck



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The SAGE Handbook of Electoral Behaviour



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The SAGE Handbook of Electoral Behaviour



Volume 1

Edited by
Kai Arzheimer, Jocelyn Evans
and Michael S. Lewis-Beck

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Introduction

Kai Arzheimer, Jocelyn Evans and
Michael S. Lewis-Beck

How do we decide how to vote? Since the post-war behavioural revolution, psychologists have proposed a set of relatively simple theories to account for the social and psychological processes which result in the nature of the vote cast. To test the simple theories, a larger set of varyingly complex and technically sophisticated models have been operationalised to provide a more or less rigorous empirical validation, or negation. The complexity of models has derived both from a desire to combine theories, either to generate more complete accounts of voting behaviour, or to test competing hypotheses, and from a need to specify such models robustly, to avoid spuriousness and biased estimations.

Party identification, the pivotal variable to any full model of voting in post-war democracies, is a case in point. A baseline to any well-specified voting model in countries where there has been demonstrated validity, the underlying concept of an affective attachment to a party has remained relatively untouched as a cornerstone of vote motivation. The principal source of its development has been debated, the social-psychological bases to Michigan's take on early political socialisation being challenged by the retrospective learning process posited by Morris Fiorina and other rational choice adepts. This tension between a social-psychological approach and a rational choice approach also finds expression in the argument over the extent to which party identification is exogenous or endogenous. Put another way, does party identification have the characteristics of a stable, long-term enduring attachment, or the characteristics of a changing, short-term, more unstable predisposition? This question finds some resolution in the dynamic models of party identification which enable both theories to consider

how identification evolves over time, information and experience recasting what early socialisation has imbued.

But all these refinements, re-conceptualisations and re-interpretations notwithstanding, the core of the argument made by Campbell et al. back in 1960 still stands. Taken together, the chapters in this Handbook demonstrate that the act of voting grows out of some form of partisanship and sociological status that anchors the voters in the long term, while they are buffeted about by short-term forces, such as the pressing issues and leadership appeals of a campaign. Of course, once in the voting booth, voters themselves must reconcile these contradictions by making a unique party choice.

Sociological accounts of voting, though at first sight having experienced greater changes over time, betray a similar stability at the conceptual level. The binary simplism of the class divide, or the secular–religious conflict which for so long dominated many countries’ Left–Right content, has given way to more variegated accounts of occupational class and gradations of religious practice. At the same time, evidence for the growing influence of other socio-demographic attributes as explanatory variables rather than the ‘standard controls’ they were once relegated to – gender, age, ethnicity, amongst others – has been clearly seen in countries even where class has been most widely (and somewhat erroneously) written off. Underlying all such behavioural approaches to the sociology of voting – as opposed to the structural–functional determinism of cleavage theory which in many ways relegated voters to ballot-wielding pawns to be pushed along the electoral board – is an assumption that the environmental context of individuals drives their behaviour and shapes information, attitudes and preferences. An atomised account of value-neutral information gathering and processing by a voter *qua* data miner is absent in any empirically founded account of voting.

Given the debates which have taken place over the past 30 years regarding the decline of social–structural and socio-demographic accounts of voting, some may be surprised at the space we give to these individually. Undoubtedly, the role of class, religion and other social identities has changed in accounts of voting, and in some senses declined. Where religious identification, and more importantly religious practice, has declined in absolute terms across most if not all democratic societies, the amount of variance these factors can account for in a voting model will likely decline. However, among a greater patchwork of social identities and group belongings, rather than as one side of a binary cleavage, religious affiliation can still be a powerful predictor of vote. The patchwork metaphor works well for social class in the modern era too. The Marxist dyad or the manual/non-manual split, which suited simple numerical indices of class voting – but little else – have been replaced by more granular and only quasi-hierarchical categories of occupational class and sector belonging which are a far more satisfactory description of social structure by employment than an *a priori* politicised frame with a decidedly Procrustean approach to fit. Social structure remains

important even where voting no longer lines up with its categories, because at the very least it provides the researcher with a benchmark against which to see both how voting has changed from the demand side and also how parties have shifted their offer, consciously or otherwise, away from the social structuration which previously oriented their programmes.

Nevertheless, it remains a difficult argument to make that, even where the direct causal link of social structure on vote is broken, the more proximate explanations of vote, such as attitudes towards policies and leaders, derive from something other than social context. While the disconcertingly random voter discovered through Converse's belief system paradigm has since been shown to be somewhat more consistent and ordered than previously assumed, *homo economicus* is certainly not a reasonable label for modern voters any more than it was for their forebears. A greater quantity of political information is available through traditional, electronic and social media, but this information is processed through biased filters and prejudiced cognitive systems, if it is received at all. Modern voters no more sit down and neutrally construct a political ideology based upon beliefs and context than they apply this strategy to any other habitual and affective behaviour in their lives. Context preconditions behaviour through attitudes. If not the context of social position, gender, ethnicity and identity, then what?

Modern studies of voting have come up with a complementary answer to social context that previous work had only hinted at more or less anecdotally, by beginning to operationalise the workings of the human cognitive and affective system(s) and, even beyond that, the very building blocks of human life – DNA and genetics – which associate with political choice. Where Wallas described impulse and instinct, and the non-rational side of politics, biology, psychology and neuroscience now show us how such unconscious drivers activate in political behaviour as much as in other aspects of life. For a discipline which spends much of its time asserting its broad relevance and interest to an external audience increasingly turned off by the topic's content, political science has generally proved remarkably resistant to studies that lodge 'political behaviour' in the 'behaviour' box. Methodological concerns over causality, the extrapolation from lying in an MRI machine to standing in front of a voting machine, and processes which remain largely 'black box' can be well taken, if they acknowledge that similar concerns need to apply as strongly to more traditional approaches with exactly the same methodological issues. Clinical science variables may be late-comers to the party, but they are not gatecrashers¹.

Again, however, the challenge comes not to the 'heavy variables' (*les variables lourdes* as French psephologists call them) of social context and party identification, or the more proximate issue causes, but rather to the process of interaction between the individual and their context, and how cognitive and affective processes within that context arrive at a political choice. The history of voting studies has been at its most productive not from trying to turn traditional voting accounts on their heads, but rather by better explaining how those accounts

work under the bonnet. Party identification is measurable as a phenomenon in the United States. Refinements in understanding the conditions of its appearance, its mutability, and its manner of influence do not undermine the concept, but rather reinforce its core role in voters' decision making. True, the extent to which strong identifiers have been increasingly offset by 'leaners' demonstrates that the factors responsible for party identification have changed in their relative strength and composition. But party remains the key shortcut to vote choice. The findings of Columbia, indirectly, and Michigan, directly, remain valid seven decades on.

Continuity of a similar kind will strike readers who cover the majority or all of the chapters. A handful of key texts return no matter what the content. *The American Voter* by the Michigan team and VO Key's *The Responsible Electorate*, along with Anthony Downs's *Economic Theory of Democracy* and Fiorina's *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*, are four texts whose concepts and approaches have influenced a substantial proportion of all research into voting. Those readers who are struck by the rich collection of sociological explanations may well be those equally struck by the absence of a dedicated rational choice chapter. As a field which in the past has been characterised as cartelising schools of thought and journals in a way that many physicists have more recently bemoaned string theory doing², why have we apparently bypassed this theoretical canon? The answer is to be found in the abundance of chapters where rational choice's influence lies implicit in the assumptions about voter behaviour. What is implied may not be perfectly informed *homo economicus* (not that Downs ever assumed perfect information) with a cognitively processed cost-benefit analysis resulting in utility maximisation. Rational choice's eventual influence may well have come instead from the modifications imposed by boundedness, by psychological insights into low-cost habitual, affective action and by all manner of shortcuts, heuristics and thought-saving devices that voters employ. Rational choice's first-principles derived theory was required to step away from the empiricist induction characteristic of many 'explanations' – pattern spotting and anecdotal in many cases – of vote, to spur more realistic accounts of the decision calculus employed by the electorate. As the chapters in this Volume attest, party identification; economic voting; strategic voting; core ideology; valence; geolocation – all partly or totally rely upon a level of cognitive evaluation and choice for the theoretical framework to function.

With an emphasis on theoretical refinement and improvements in analysis, rather than paradigm shift, the technical sophistication of explanatory models has inevitably increased over the years. We would be mistaken to think that anything pre-1990 and the advent of PC-based statistical software could only be rudimentary. Nevertheless, the realms of maximum likelihood, simulations and Bayes were computationally, if not theoretically, off-limits. As the respective chapters on cross-national data sources, multi-level modelling and technology show, psephology has always been at the forefront of technological innovation in political science and has in turn benefitted hugely from novel ways of collecting,

sharing and analysing data. The best models employ the technical sophistication to reflect as accurately as possible the functional form of an outcome, to map involved causal pathways, to anticipate the role that time plays in variation of effects, to correct bias – in short, to try to depict a simplified reality as accurately as possible in quantitative terms. But where technical sophistication begins to outweigh simplicity as an end, rather than a means, the balance has shifted, and for the worse.

This may seem like a truism, but where simple models of electoral behaviour still add immense value is in exploring new inflections to the vote calculus which better data now provide. For, while we would underline that the principal explanations of vote remain constant in their relevance, if not in the hierarchy of their importance, there is still work to be done in exploring minor influences on voter choice. The personal vote, candidate effects, campaign effects more generally and even electoral institutions may not always be game-changers, but rather condition baseline voting propensities, yet their influence adds to our understanding of what matters to voters beyond the main causal drivers. This knowledge has helped tremendously in developing a new branch of electoral studies, that of election forecasting. Of course, the causal factors enabling successful forecasts of this sort have always been present in voting research, at least on the margins and often at the heart, for example in *The American Voter*. Yet, the dominance of large-n national sample survey work has in the past diverted the study of candidate-specific, or campaign-driven, investigations of aggregate-level electoral effects to a separate stream of research. Advances both in choice modelling and data linking mean that this stream has now become a river, whose major forks (e.g. political markets or econometric forecasting) thankfully branch back to the main channel eventually.

Such refinements have occurred largely in the countries where voting models have been most prevalent – from the US origins through to mainly European counterparts. In these countries, commitment to collection of large-scale election data, and to funding supplementary studies with specific analytical foci, has ensured that researchers can test across time and space. However, it is evident that an increasing number of newer democracies provide auspicious setting for refining and retesting models. In Latin America, Asia and Africa, rigorous election studies are increasingly present for researchers wishing to find different contexts in which to test their assumptions. European studies have a growing set of cases with the inclusion of Central and Eastern European countries. Whilst comparative datasets across large numbers of countries have not always provided the highest level of rigour or comparability in the past, national election studies predicated upon the full model of voting are now increasingly the norm. Even where such data are still not directly accessible, or do not exist, developments in datascraping of online sources mean almost no country is now beyond the scope of some degree of electoral analysis, and from multiple sub-disciplinary perspectives.

Indeed, one might argue that, roughly a century after its beginnings, psephology has come full circle: while political science is at its core, psephology is forever borrowing methods, concepts and data from other disciplines – geography, statistics, sociology, economics, psychology, and now even neuroscience, genetics and computer science. Looking back at the highlights of this remarkable story would have made for an interesting (if slightly nostalgic) book, too. But instead of a sentimental journey, the authors of this book have aimed for something much more rewarding: each of the following chapters presents the current state of knowledge on the respective topic whilst highlighting several points of departure for new research. Inevitably, the state of the art moves continually forward and, by the time of publication, steps will have been taken to refine voting models further, and to apply them to new contexts. Like the survey data which provide the raw material for many electoral studies, this collection is a set of snapshots of the status quo, which provide a guide to the community of electoral research. We hope you enjoy the tour.

Notes

- 1 One suspects no small part of the problem also comes from a certain envy at the ‘interlopers’ having better toys at their disposal.
- 2 It is presumably coincidental that both have been criticised in their respective fields as being long on theory, short on empirical testing.

PART I

Institutional Approaches





Institutions and Voter Choice: Who Chooses, What Do They Choose Over, and How Do They Choose

Shaun Bowler

One of the important sources of variation across democratic systems is the variation in institutional context. That variation in institutional context is important in helping to understand the workings of electoral democracy in a comparative sense. Indeed, in one sense what is being compared in comparative studies of voter behaviour are the institutional contexts of democratic practice. For that reason, institutions should be helpful in explaining variation in how citizens engage with the political process.

Elections are about choice. They are about citizens choosing, from the bottom up, what kinds of policies they wish to see put into practice and what kind of government they would like to have. In this chapter we outline some of the ways in which electoral institutions help to shape political behaviour in both direct and indirect ways. Electoral institutions cover a range of different facets of institutional and electoral life. Here we largely restrict our discussion to the electoral system and electoral rules since these are the ones that are more proximate to the two key features of political participation – turnout and vote choice – that form the dependent variables in many studies of electoral behaviour. Electoral institutions have a series of effects on both of these variables.

The chapter considers several questions as we unpack the relationships between institutions, turnout and vote choice. The first question examines who chooses, the second asks what voters choose over and the third asks how voters choose. The argument of this chapter is that institutions affect all these relationships in fundamental ways, although the sizes of those effects are often quite modest.

WHO CHOOSES?

Electoral rules affect who chooses by shaping who comprises the electorate. Rules shape the electorate by controlling who finds it easier or harder to turn out and vote. This, in turn, means that rules may consequently shape the policy preferences that are expressed in elections. Historical examples are provided by the mid 19th through to the mid 20th century of the expansion of the franchise to include non-property owning men, then women, and then (in the US at least) people of colour. It is quite straightforward to see that, as the franchise expands, then so too will the electorate, and so too will the set of policies being considered and being acted upon by the parties. While it is tempting to consign that process to a historical study of franchise expansion no longer relevant for the current period, present-day examples do exist of how rules shape the electorate.

First, there are a series of ways in which rules still affect the decision to turn out. After all, policy outcomes are shaped by the preferences of those who vote, not by those who stay at home. But participation in elections matters, too, on several normative grounds. Participation is important for the legitimacy of governments and as an expression of democratic citizenship. Not surprisingly, a great deal of attention has been paid to assisting people to vote. As one non-profit organization puts it:

The right to vote depends on the ability to vote. For democracy to function properly, local, state, and federal governments must foster an election system that achieves the highest standards of accuracy, convenience, efficiency, and security. (Pew Charitable Trusts, online)

Or, again:

Elections are the cornerstone of representative democracy. Through elections, governments obtain their democratic mandate and are held accountable for their performance in office. Flawed elections deprive people of their voice in governance and undermine sustainable democratic development. (IDEA, online)

Similar statements may be found on the websites of electoral management bodies around the world. The impetus of all these organizations, non-profit and quasi-governmental alike, is to improve the ability of all citizens to cast their ballot and have that vote counted fairly. To that end, a series of rules changes have been made in order to accomplish those goals. In the US case, these rules include, but are not limited to, keeping the polls open longer, allowing people to vote over a period of several days rather than just one day, allowing vote by mail and so on. Other rules – for example those requiring photo or other kinds of ID – are introduced with the aim of limiting or reducing ballot fraud. The literature contains a series of studies that demonstrate a link between registration rules and turnout (see Highton 2004 for review): generally speaking, the higher the cost of registering to vote, the lower the turnout. But some rules, for example

early voting or vote by mail, are intended to foster turnout. Not all rule changes, however, have the intended effect. Burden, Canon, Mayer and Moynihan (2014), for example, make the case that early voting reduces turnout in part because, in effect, it reduces the social capital that is usually generated by having an election day, and social capital helps to generate turnout. The broader point, however, remains. Discussions about the rules of electoral participation are often framed in terms of normative values of democratic participation that are to be maximized.

Normative arguments about turnout to one side, the practical political problem with such rules as early voting or voter ID is that they may have differential effects on who turns out and votes. Even well-intentioned rule changes may have what amounts to discriminatory consequences. As one electoral management body puts it:

One of Elections Canada's (EC) key roles is to communicate effectively and clearly to Canadians about the electoral process, registration procedures and the identification required to vote. To that end, the agency has developed many resources to reach out to the Canadian electorate, especially those who face barriers to voting (youth and students, seniors, Aboriginal electors, persons with disabilities, electors who are homeless and members of ethnocultural communities). Electors in these groups often lack the identification documents required to prove their address. They are less likely to be registered and receive a voter information card (VIC).

[\(<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=ele&dir=erp&document=index&lang=en>\)](http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=ele&dir=erp&document=index&lang=en)
accessed 5 Aug 2015)

To use the terms found in Tsebelis (1990), institutions may be seen as either ‘efficient’ or ‘redistributive’. That is, institutions can either help coordination so that all (or almost all players) are winners, or divide the population up into winners and losers. Here we can see that even fairly technical rules on voting such as voter ID age, which, on the face of it, are about the integrity of an important democratic process, also help to make some people – and hence some parties – into winners or losers. In the US in particular there continues debate about the ways in which rules structure participation along racial grounds, although as the Canadian example illustrates these concerns are by no means restricted to the US setting. For example, as in Canada, relatively recent immigrants – who are often renters rather than owners – may not have appropriate documentation to satisfy photo ID requirements. Much of the evidence of this is raised in court cases rather than the academic literature, but for examples see Barreto, Nuno and Sanchez 2009; Mycoff, Wagner and Wilson 2009; Herron and Smith 2014 (but see Hood and Bullock 2012 for a contrary view). Certainly, there is a partisan component to how photo ID laws are seen by voters themselves. Table 2.1 reports descriptive statistics from a 2012 survey on US public opinion relating to whether voters should present photo ID when voting.

On the surface a rule on voters proving their identity is a straightforward question about vote fraud and making sure those who are casting a ballot are legally

Table 2.1 Should voters be required to show official photo ID before they vote on Election Day?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>Republican</i>	<i>Democrat</i>	<i>Independent</i>
Should	77	95	61	83
Should not	20	5	34	15
Don't know	3		4	2
	100	100	100	100

Source: Pew Research Centre September 2016 <http://www.people-press.org/2012/10/11/broad-support-for-photo-id-voting-requirements/>

entitled to do so. Table 2.1 plainly shows, however, that – while there may be strong overall support for this rule – there are also large partisan differences that are tied to both normative concerns about equal treatment as well as concerns about ‘distributive’ consequences.

Given that a substantive link exists between demographic characteristics and policy preferences, then this is a troubling pattern on both normative and political grounds (see, for example, discussions in Dovi 2009 for normative concerns). The overlap between demographics and vote choice make for straightforwardly partisan implications of rules on voter identification¹. The charges that there is a partisan or racial element – while often debated in the courts – is buttressed by the fact that it is Republicans who often introduce restrictions of this kind (Bentele and O’Brien 2013; Biggers and Hanmer 2015), especially in competitive electoral contexts (Hicks et al. 2015).

Even if it is the case that charges of racial and/or partisan bias are overstated and the days of express demographic targeting on grounds of race and gender lie in the past, it is still the case that rules on participation shape turnout in a very direct way. There are still laws that shape the franchise by explicitly targeting some demographic groups. One example is that of legal voting age. The threshold of 18 as a minimum is widely adopted. Discussions continue on expanding the franchise to 16 and older (see Birch et al. 2015; Wagner et al. 2012, but see Zeglovits and Aichholzer 2014 for a counter example from Austria). Empirical evidence does not clearly support the arguments relating to the normative benefits of including teenage voters. Lowering the voting age may not help increase levels of turnout overall. Blais and Dobrzynska (1998) and Franklin (2004) show that reducing the voting age from 21 to 18 decreased overall turnout possibly by as much as 2 percentage points for every year reduction in age (see also McAllister 2014). As with the rules on photo ID, however, there may be a partisan component in that younger voters may well lean towards left-wing parties (Birch et al. 2015: 309).

Another example of demographic targeting concerns rules governing participation by those with disabilities. Some disabilities relate to physical challenges such as mobility or sight. Here there are some straightforward remedies.

Polling stations may be made wheelchair accessible or ballots may be provided by mail or in Braille. A deeper challenge remains whether persons deprived of legal capacity are allowed to vote or not. The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights reports wide variation across the EU. Seven of the 28 EU states are permissive in allowing all to vote (Austria, Croatia, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Sweden, the UK), while 15 prohibit people with disabilities deprived of their legal capacity from voting. The remaining countries (e.g. Hungary, Slovenia) may involve judges in helping to decide whether someone is capable of voting (FRA, 2010). Rules on competence and disability will have differential effects on participation by age group. For aging European societies these decisions on legal capacity are not without consequence for shaping the electorate. Similar patterns exist across the US, where different states have different age profiles (Hall and Alvarez 2012; Miller and Powell forthcoming; and more broadly Powell 2015).

One might expect – even in the absence of legal or rule-based barriers to participation – that there may exist different rates of participation by demographic groups. These different rates have consequences because of differences in preferences. If few elderly voters turn out then presumably the electoral outcome will not be as supportive of pensions as otherwise; if fewer younger voters turn out there will be less generous support for college education, and so on. The point about these various rules of participation is that they essentially muffle or exaggerate some of these differences by shaping the pool of voters who are eligible. The broader point is that rules will shape the electorate and therefore who chooses. As long as any correlation exists between demographic traits and political preferences, then any rule that has unequal effect across demographic groups will have political consequences alongside normative ones (Hajnal and Trounstine 2005). While elections may be about a kind of ‘bottom-up’ choice as citizens choose their government, then differential turnout rates mean that only some citizens are doing the choosing (see Lijphart 1997 and the special issue of *Electoral Studies* edited by Lutz and Marsh 2007).

There are solutions to problems relating to low turnout that are, themselves, rule based. One possible solution is to change the electoral system. A sizable literature demonstrates that proportional systems foster higher turnout (Blais and Carty 1990; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998; Gallego et al. 2012). That said, it is not always clear why turnout is higher in PR than other systems. Part of any effect may be that safe districts in non-PR systems depress turnout (Cox 2015: 60). Short of reforming the electoral system as a whole, it may be possible to engage in re-districting practices to produce fewer safe seats and more competitive districts and so raise turnout this way. But, just as with the unintended consequence of early voting possibly affecting social capital noted earlier, one unintended consequence of increasing levels of turnout by increasing the number of competitive districts is that competition *per se* is often seen in negative terms by voters. Political competition may help to increase turnout but it also helps to lower regard for politics and politicians (Bowler and Donovan 2011).

A more serious objection to changing districting practices or even changing the electoral system is that turnout may still vary quite considerably. Even if a polity did adopt PR it is still the case that, while turnout would be high, some people would still stay home leaving us with the same issues of inequality across demographic groups we noted above. There may well be good reasons to change the electoral system, but it will not solve problems of unequal turnout.

A second alternative, then, is to compel everyone to vote. This is an especially appealing solution when turnout is seen to be low and/or declining. In part for these reasons compulsory voting has become a topic of interest again (Birch 2009; Singh 2011; Franklin 1999). Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the main empirical regularity of compulsory voting is that turnout increases with voting made compulsory (as does the number of spoiled ballots). Ferwerda (2014) offers some intriguing evidence from Austria, where compulsory voting was gradually repealed at the state level between 1982 and 2004 and provides a neat natural experiment comparing across the states. He estimates an average drop in turnout of just under 9% with several municipalities seeing turnout declines of around 15%. The implementation of compulsory voting does vary quite considerably across cases. In Australia the fine begins at \$20 but can – and does – increase; Brazil's non-voters may be banned from taking professional exams or even acquiring a passport, while other nations that have compulsory voting have no penalties or do not enforce it (Electoral Commission 2006: 7–8). Just how much of an effect compulsory voting has does depend in part on whether it is enforced or not.

Arguments relating to compulsory voting have a strong normative component (Electoral Commission 2006: 12; Lever 2010; Hill 2011). Among the points raised in these discussions are that voting is a duty and not simply a right and so it is fine to compel people to do their duty. Other arguments point to the positive spillover effects of voting. Making people vote will promote increased political awareness and/or encourage other kinds of participation, both of which are worthy normative goals in and of themselves. Whatever the normative argument, the practical political issue remains that outcomes – i.e. which parties will win and which policies parties will pursue – depend on the composition of the electorate. Making voting compulsory removes that dependence. But of course doing so likely does have a partisan consequence since it brings into the electorate the preferences and tastes of those who used to stay at home. A series of country-level studies examines this point (for country-specific examples see e.g. Mackerras and McAllister 1999; Pettersen and Rose 2007; Hooghe and Pelleriaux 1998; Hill 2006). The Australian case offers a neat reversal of the usual arguments about compulsory voting since there voting is both compulsory and enforced. In which case the question is: who would be hurt should compulsory voting be relaxed? In Australia it is generally accepted that compulsory voting assists the Australian Labor Party. Left to their own devices many Labor supporters would prefer to stay at home on election day. Of course that is part of the point of compulsory voting: the voices of people who would stay at home and go unheard, and so go

unheeded, will get an airing. Although in the case of Austria the distributional shifts post-repeal seemed to be quite modest. Ferwerda (2014) finds small (<2%) shifts from the minor parties to the larger ones, in particular the SDP.

So far the discussion has been quite straightforward: rules shape who gets to the polling station. It is also straightforward to see that, once in the voting booth, electoral rules have a series of effects on what voters are choosing over. Institutions make a difference in terms of what voters are choosing over. Just as importantly, however, institutions also shape how voters make their choices by shaping what the choices are to be made.

WHAT DO VOTERS CHOOSE OVER?

We can see two broad ways in which electoral institutions are either more or less constraining in how voters are allowed to make a choice. At its narrowest, the structure of the ballot shapes just what kind of preference voters are allowed to express (candidate or party? preference order or just one preference?) and how the ballot presents the choices to voters.

A simple but effective way in which electoral institutions shape what voters choose over is the ballot paper itself. Features of ballot paper design have been repeatedly shown to have a small but robust effect on the number and kind of choices open to voters. Depending on jurisdiction, ballot papers may list the name, party affiliation or occupation of the candidate. The candidates may be listed alphabetically or in random order. Some ballot papers print photographs of the candidates. A sizable body of evidence demonstrates that all these factors have an effect on voter choice, especially in low information elections. For example, where photographs are available it allows voters to cast ballots on the basis of race or gender or simply general appearance (Buckley et al. 2007; Johns and Shepherd 2011; Leigh and Susilo 2009; Reidy and Buckley 2015; Aguilar et al. 2015). Where occupations are listed voters may decide to vote on that basis (McDermott 2005; see also Campbell and Cowley 2014). Candidates placed at the top of the ballot for a given office are often advantaged as some voters cast a ballot for the first listed candidate. Whether the order of the candidates on the ballot is alphabetical or randomized can, then, be a way in which the ballot itself provides a choice to voters (Bowler and Farrell 1991; Edwards 2015; Farrell 2011).

Although combinations of effects may build to a more sizable (dis)advantage for candidates with certain attributes, the body of work on these themes generally shows a small but persistent effect in terms of percentage vote share. Generally speaking, the effect is robust but quite small and lies in the low single digits in terms of percentages. As scholars on this topic are quick to point out, even these small effects can have consequences for who wins, especially in low turnout races which are so common at the local level. We might add that, given

the importance of local offices as a stepping-stone for higher office, then the consequences for outcomes increase further. Beyond the series of specific patterns (appearance, occupation, alphabetical voting and so on) this body of work as a whole tells a curious story about democratic participation that has not been fully explored. Much of the work in this area is anchored in a framework of voters using heuristics in a low information environment. They are therefore often seen as speaking to the capability of voters. But there is a broader set of issues relating to citizen participation. On the one hand, citizens who have borne the costs to turn out and vote exhibit these patterns. Yet, even after bearing these costs, they have not been sufficiently engaged to find a substantive reason to vote for a candidate. That is, this set of results attests to the importance some people place on expressing a preference at election time. On the other hand, these results also show that a whole section of the voting public is not terribly engaged in politics. Taken together, then, these results can be seen to offer a somewhat conflicted view of citizen engagement.

Of course, some choices depend on the nature of the election which itself may vary cross-nationally in important ways. Some countries have presidential systems, some have direct democracy, some have directly elected positions (mayors, for example), while others do not. Leaving aside these kinds of differences to focus on elections for the national legislature, then we know there are a great many differences across electoral systems in what kinds of preferences voters are allowed to express. Depending on the electoral system, voters may be asked to choose a single party (e.g. list PR as in Portugal) or a single candidate with a party label (e.g. first past the post in Canada, or the UK), or asked to choose multiple candidates with a party label attached (e.g. in STV in Ireland and in some versions of open list PR) or can have a choice of a party as well as an individual (MMP in Germany and New Zealand). That is, while Germans, Portuguese, New Zealanders, Irish, British and Canadian voters are all asked in general elections to choose the composition of a parliament, the choice they are being asked to make varies on the ballot between one and multiple choices and candidates or parties.

Even when voters are allowed to choose individual candidates (i.e. in systems other than closed list PR), electoral laws can shape the set of candidates over which voters may or may not choose. For example, a series of countries have adopted quotas mandating female candidates for office (<http://www.quotaproject.org/aboutQuotas.cfm>, European Parliament 2013). Approximately 40 countries have some kind of quota system and a further 50 have political parties that have a rule to that effect (Dahlerup 2013: 3–4). There is a large literature on this topic (see e.g. Caul 2001; Paxton and Hughes 2015)². Other political systems have adopted term limits, which is another way in which the set of candidates over which voters may choose is shaped by rules. Term limits are quite usual for presidential positions but some societies limit how long legislators may remain in office. Fifteen US states have term limits ranging from eight to 16 years. For nine of the states the limit is on consecutive terms; for six the limit is a lifetime total³.

Even in the modern democratic Mexico, candidates for legislature and president are still only allowed to remain in an office for one period at a time.

While term limits and quotas of various kinds shape the set of candidates to choose from, the bigger effects are over whether voters are allowed to make a single choice or several, and whether they are allowed to choose for candidates as well as (or instead of) parties or just allowed to choose parties. These kinds of structuring of choice that are made by the electoral system affects both the decisions voters are being asked to make, and the way in which they make them (Bowler 1996).

All of these features of ballots – how candidates are arranged on the ballot and how many choices voters may face – all have a direct effect on vote choice. A more important effect of electoral systems is their indirect effect. In a quite literal sense, the objects of choice – the set of factors the voter is choosing over – depend upon the electoral system. In general, electoral systems have an effect by shaping the incentives of candidates and organizations that make up the party system: electoral systems shape party systems, which, in turn, shape voter choice. It is the case that it is possible to overstate this argument. Colomer (2005) notes that politicians choose electoral systems – at least initially – rather than the other way round. Clark and Golder (2006) remind us that there is an interaction between social structure and electoral system. Nevertheless, the standard framework is that candidates and parties respond to the incentives provided by the electoral system. The consequence is that the electoral system shapes both the number of choices available to citizens and, to some extent, the ideological content.

The canonical version of how electoral systems shape the number of choices is found in Duverger's law, in which first past the post in single member districts (FPTP/SMD) greatly reduces the number of parties in the system and, hence, reduces the number of choices open to voters. Electoral systems provide incentives for candidates to coordinate or compete (Lakeman and Lambert 1970; Cox 1997; Farrell 2011) and the FPTP/SMD system provides strong incentives for candidates and activists to collaborate in order to win the single seat up for grabs. In general, FPTP/SMD tilts the electoral advantage in favour of fewer, larger parties. But a long-established literature in political science shows how, even under proportional election systems, rules on how proportionality is arrived at may give the edge to larger parties – thereby squeezing out smaller parties – and provide incentives for parties to collude. Other counting rules do not provide such incentives to collude/cooperate (see e.g. Rae et al. 1971; Gallagher 1991 for discussion)⁴.

Collusion may be especially clearly seen in a two-round system such as that used in France. In France the first round sees many candidates and parties enter with a great reduction in the second round – a restriction to the top two for presidential races and parties above a vote threshold for the National Assembly. What this means for candidates and parties is that they need to form coalitions or pacts for the second round. Voters themselves have a reduction in choices between

the first and second round but, in order to win a majority of votes, candidates in the second round should try to moderate their positions. Arguably a somewhat similar system is implied by the US practice of primary election and then general election.

One version of these runoff systems is the preferential system known in Australia as the Alternative Vote (AV) and in some areas of the US as Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). Typically, this system offers a combination of single-member districts but with a preferential ballot. For a while the system was called Instant Runoff in the US to help convey the idea that ranking candidates in one ballot has some similarities to ranking candidates in one round and then choosing between the two alternatives in a runoff. It is not always clear that this system will result in more real choices open to voters, since large parties are privileged in the system and the final choice may be limited in much the way that FPTP/SMD limits choice (Rydon 1989). One argument in support of these kinds of systems focuses on the way candidates moderate their positions between the first and second round as they seek to build a majority coalition.⁵ Even if the number of choices under AV/RCV is not noticeably greater than under FPTP/SMD, the argument would be that the alternatives under the latter set of rules are more moderate than under the former because the candidate needs to build broad support.

Open-list PR systems and in particular STV-PR provide quite different incentives to both candidates and activists in part because there are often multi-member districts. Once voters are allowed to choose candidates from within the same party then the locus of competition shifts. Under STV-PR, for example, especially implementations of STV with a high district magnitude (i.e. large number of seats up for grabs), it is not only that there are many parties running but also many candidates from within the same party competing for votes. From the party's perspective this provides problems in terms of coordinating campaigns and nominations. For the voter it presents a different set of decisions where s/he is not only choosing across many different parties that have a viable chance of winning but also choosing between candidates from within the same party. The voter sees both inter- and intra-party competition within the same election and so has a far wider range of choices open to him or her than under FPTP/SMD. It is not simply that more choices are on offer, but that the kinds of choices available differ. Parties, for example, may run different kinds of candidates – local 'notables' such as retired sports figures or celebrities – in order to try and capitalize on the 'personal' vote (cf. Thomas Zittel in Chapter 29 of Volume 2, this *Handbook*).

The electoral system has a powerful effect in terms of shaping the number and range of options open to voters in a variety of ways. One of the important consequences of this comes in terms of how electoral competition is framed i.e. what the election is contesting. One way in which we can see how electoral institutions affect how the contest is framed is when voters cast a preference over government, and the way in which they do so. A large literature considers the extent to which voters are able, and actually do, hold governments accountable

for their actions. For single-party governments in two-party systems the process is quite straightforward: a poorly performing government can be voted out and its rival put in power. But proportional representation electoral systems generally produce multi-party systems and hence coalition governments. These coalition governments – and multi-party oppositions – complicate the decision over who to blame and who to reward. The electoral system shapes the number of parties and the number of parties shapes whether there is a one-party government or a coalition government, which, in turn, affects who voters may hold accountable, and how. Anderson is careful to stress that holding a government accountable in the sense of electorally punishing a poorly performing incumbent does not only depend on clarity of responsibility – an institutional feature – but also upon the availability of a credible alternative to government (Anderson 2007: 284–5). But there are what Anderson calls ‘institutional limits to economic voting’ (Anderson 2007: 281; see also Lewis-Beck 1980; Whitten and Palmer 1999; Fisher and Hobolt 2010; Nishizawa 2009).

Another way in which electoral systems may change the choice facing voters is through strategic voting, a topic Gschwend and Meffert consider in some depth later in this Volume (Chapter 16). For the most part, models of vote choice assume that voters will choose sincerely i.e. they will cast a ballot for the party they sincerely like best and want to win. But under some circumstances voters cast a ballot for a party they like second best. In districted systems with one-party governments this is relatively straightforward. (Although see Blais et al. 2001 for a study of the Canadian case, which shows just how complicated strategic concerns even in a relatively simple system may become.) In multi-party systems and/or preferential systems, as the calculations voters have to make become more complex, so too does the range of strategic alternatives. For example, in MMP voters do have the choice to ticket split (see e.g. Gschwend 2007 for a study of Germany), which is itself a strategic decision that can be affected by estimates of how close a party is to the electoral threshold. Election thresholds, such as Germany’s 5% rule, have a different impact on the restrictions on candidates such as term limits or quotas: even though the candidate may appear on the ballot s/he need not gain election because s/he failed to meet the required minimum of votes. In practice, thresholds shape the strategic decision of voters – how close or far away a party is from a threshold can determine whether to vote for that party or not⁶.

Coalition governments and coalition possibilities complicate the strategic decisions facing voters even further. Cox (1997) makes the case that strategic voting in PR systems will shape the number of parties within the system. But voters may not only consider the electoral success of parties – as in the standard model of strategic voting – but also consider strategies over government formation (Bowler et al. 2010). The electoral system can make calculations over who forms the government either easier or harder. Within systems such as the UK or Canada an extensive literature exists on strategic voting but the strategic

calculation over whom to help and who to hurt in terms of government formation is relatively straightforward. In multi-party systems the calculations become more complicated (see for example Gschwend 2007 on the case of MMP; Gschwend 2009 on district magnitude; Meffert and Gschwend 2010, 2011; Blais et al. 2014). Estimates vary on how common strategic behaviour is among voters. Blais, Aldrich, Indridason and Levine (2006) see around 10% of the Israeli electorate in 2003 engaging in voting over coalition preferences rather than party preferences, while estimates of strategic voting in the UK range from around 6% to possibly as high as 17% (see Alvarez and Nagler 2000: 75). Gschwend, Johnston and Pattie report a 20% figure for Germany in 1998. It is likely that, just as the susceptibility of parties to losing/gaining votes varies by party, so too do levels of strategic voting vary by election: some elections, for example, are likely to have quite definite winners known ahead of time and one would expect to see less strategic voting under such circumstances.

Not surprisingly, given the consequences of institutions, voters may have preferences over electoral institutions and the rules of the game themselves (Bowler and Donovan 2013). Some of those preferences are quite directly expressed in initiatives or referenda when a polity may be deciding to institute a change. Examples of these times include popular votes on the electoral system as a whole, such as those held in the UK in 2011, the Alternative Vote, British Columbia (2009) and New Zealand's 1993 referendum, which famously produced a change in electoral system to MMP. Smaller examples of voter opinions on electoral laws also exist. Table 2.1 showed that, even on a somewhat technical issue of the identification voters must produce, there is room for a partisan component.

HOW DO VOTERS CHOOSE?

Variations in electoral systems, then, clearly have a strong direct effect on voters in shaping the clarity of the decision they are being asked to make over government formation and over who will win. There is an indirect effect in shaping the number of parties over which voters choose, and the ideological platforms they offer. In shaping the party system and the expression of preferences, electoral rules also help shape the psychology of voting by affecting the number and content of alternatives on offer. Because electoral systems vary the set of alternatives on offer and vary the preferences which voters may express (one or many; candidate or party), electoral systems are also likely to be associated with how voters choose. In other words, how voters make choices is likely to be related to the choices they are being asked to make. One way of seeing this in a political context is by reference to party identification.

As Dinas (Chapter 13) and Green and Baltes (Chapter 14) consider later, the party id(entification) model remains a key conceptual building block of models of vote choice, but party id does have an institutional basis. The most visible

part of electoral politics is still the party system. Voters still engage with the political system most directly through the political parties. Despite concerns over the decline of party, it is still the parties, and news of the parties, that tends to dominate election coverage and the partisanship of government is a prominent description of the government itself. It is still, then, the voters' relationship to parties that has a major role in shaping how voters relate to the political system (Dalton et al. 2011). Since the 1960s, the party id model has provided a bedrock in our understanding of voters' relationship to parties and the political system. At a fairly fundamental level, the electoral system shapes how many parties are viable in the system and, hence, shapes which parties voters may have identifications over: party identification is endogenous to the party system, which is itself a product of the electoral system.

Even without that issue the model travels to some environments more easily than others. In multi-party settings party id seems to vary with vote choice more often than it does in two (or few) party settings (Thomassen and Rosema 2009). More to the point, given variation in the kinds of differences in the sorts of choices voters are being asked to make, their underlying predispositions may vary, too. If, to take one example, German voters can vote for two different parties, their attitudes towards parties are likely to be somewhat different than those in the UK who may cast a ballot for only one party/candidate. Where voters are constrained into one, and only one, choice then this could harden attitudes in support of the chosen party but also in opposition to other alternatives. On the other hand, if voters are allowed to choose more than one party this could allow for softer attitudes. One simple expectation is that, when people are allowed more than one simple 'bullet' choice (i.e. open-list PR, STV or MMP) then their party attachments will necessarily become more complex and less entrenched.

One implication of the idea that bullet choices will be associated with more heated partisanship while being allowed to express multiple preferences will be associated with cooler partisanship because voters will be asked to consider other parties and those parties, in consequence, will be trying to make themselves appealing. Intensity of partisanship should, on average, vary according to the way in which voters are given opportunities to express their preferences. Is there any empirical evidence that can be brought to bear to help illustrate that how people see parties will systematically differ across electoral systems?

Some, very preliminary, evidence consistent with this view may be found in propensity to vote (PTV). This is a useful, albeit under-appreciated, measure of how voters see parties. It is also a measure that allows us to compare across countries (see van der Brug et al. 2008; van der Eijk and Franklin 1996). Using this measure we can assess the average propensity to vote. We can assume that voters will score their favourite party very highly and their most disliked party very low. Given the implication noted above, the question is how voters rank parties in the party system on average. In systems where voters are allowed to express a preference for more than one party (or candidate) it seems reasonable to suppose,

first, that the question ‘how likely are you to vote for party X?’ will be more than hypothetical and, second, that partisan lines will have blurred. On average, then, people will be more willing to consider voting for parties where they have the option of voting for more than one party.

Looking at 27 European countries we see that the average propensity to vote for a party is higher in countries with open-list or MMP systems, even controlling for several other factors including individual-level attributes (age, education, interest in politics and attachment to a particular party) as well as system-level attributes (number of parties running and whether the country is a ‘new’ democracy or not). The omitted categories of electoral systems are closed list and districted ones. These are systems where we expect partisan attitudes to be reinforced and so, on average, people will express a lower propensity to vote for a given party.

What Table 2.2 suggests is that both open-list and MMP systems are indeed associated with a higher average propensity to vote for a party. The parameter for STV systems is correctly signed, but not statistically significant. These patterns hold over and above the number of parties in a system as well as a range of individual attributes and other controls. They are evidence consistent with the suggestion that the electoral rules themselves may shape how voters see the choices on offer (see also Norris 2004: Chapter 6) and the context of vote choice possibly explains differences in the cross-national value of party identification as a predictor, as opposed to a consequence, of vote choice.

CONCLUSION

The literature discussed in this chapter allows us to make three points by way of conclusion. First, institutions do matter to mass behaviour. As a heuristic rather than strictly accurate statistical or mathematical model, let us represent the decisions to turn out and to vote along the following lines:

- 1 Turnout = + *Age + *Education + *Gender + *Race
- 2 Vote choice = *Issue preference + *Performance + *Partisan Leanings | Turnout

The literature reviewed in this chapter shows that institutions shape all these relationships –including the baseline level of turnout . The institutions that shape participation will also affect the parameters in the turnout model, which will, in turn, affect the parameter(s) for demographic traits in the voter choice model. That is, the effects in (2) are conditional on who turns out. This will have consequences for the relative size of the effects represented here by *issue preference (and the preferences themselves we can reasonably assume are correlated with demographics). Some systems reinforce (weaken) partisanship and partisan leanings (standing opinions) and so will make the parameter larger (smaller). The relative effect of performance will vary according to system, too. Some will

Table 2.2 Predicting average 'Propensity to Vote' (Random effects by country) standard errors in parentheses + p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01

	(1)
	Mean Propensity to Vote
Number of parties	-0.114* (0.0511)
New democracy	-0.538** (0.190)
Electoral system==MMP	0.917** (0.321)
Electoral system==OL	0.493* (0.208)
Electoral system==STV	0.481 (0.390)
v200 education: ISCED level (cross-country comparable)	-0.000889 (0.00843)
q78 interest in politics	-0.0317* (0.0138)
q103 year of birth	0.00973** (0.000703)
q118 attendance at religious services	-0.0659** (0.00779)
Left right scale (folded)	-0.0145* (0.00617)
q7 days a week follow news	-0.00770 (0.00673)
q48 retrospective sociotropic economic evaluation	-0.0635** (0.0117)
Close to a party (0,1 1=yes)	-0.139** (0.0256)
Constant	-14.42** (1.451)
Ins1_1_1	
Constant	-0.803** (0.138)
Insig_e	
Constant	0.448** (0.00481)
Observations	21610
Var (cons)	0.26
Var (residual)	2.45

Source: European Election Voter Study 2009

find it easier to hold governments accountable for their performance than others. That is, the value of the parameters, and hence the relationship between them, depends on institutions.

Second, the effects seen on the models (1) and (2) really help to point up a Jekyll and Hyde quality to many discussions on electoral institutions and voters. Very often, discussions about voting, elections and electoral law are framed in terms of normative – and sometimes even ethical or moral – terms. For example, the Electoral Commission of the UK has, on its website, a rationale for why people should register to vote.

For example:

Across the world people have died fighting for the right to vote and be part of a democracy – by registering to vote you'll be showing that you think that right is important.

Think about it this way – in the UK, less than 100 years ago, people were killed during their struggles to get the vote for women. In South Africa, not until the end of apartheid in 1994 were black people able to vote for the first time. Today, many people across the world are still denied the right to vote. (<http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/register-to-vote/why-should-i-register-to-vote> accessed 5 Aug 2015)

The tone and language of how voting is seen is similar to those of the examples noted earlier from Canadian and non-profit websites. Voting is an important signifier of democratic citizenship and is a focal point for the values of democracy and democratic citizenship. But voting and electoral systems also create winners and losers, participants and people who stay on the sidelines. To recap the terms from Tsebelis (1990), electoral rules can be talked about as being either ‘efficient’ or ‘distributive’. The language of the websites cited in this chapter and the normative works in political science clearly lean towards the ‘efficient’ in that they emphasize the normative values of voting and elections. But much of the empirical literature reviewed in this chapter speaks to the ‘distributional’ dimension to institutions.

What seems to be the case is that electoral rules are uncomfortably both efficient and distributive at the same time. Perhaps nowhere else do we see quite as clearly a set of rules being in place that speak directly to normative values on the nature and meaning of democratic citizenship, while at the same time having such clear and thoroughgoing distributive consequences.

Third, we should be careful not to overstate the consequences of institutions. The effects of institutions are real and, often, substantial. The literature to date has identified a series of effects: here is an institutional effect on turnout, another on accountability, another on strategic versus sincere voting and so on. Several of those examples are noted earlier. But there are also situations where institutions have minimal effects, even on turnout and vote choice (Bowler and Donovan 2013). For example, the introduction of the ‘ticket’ vote into Australia’s STV elections reduced the number of spoiled ballots but did not materially affect how preferences were transferred since voters largely followed ‘How to Vote’ cards prior to the change (Bowler 1996: 108). More to the point, there may be indicators

other than turnout or vote choice we care about and that are less susceptible to institutional rules. Electoral institutions are important to helping understand behaviour – especially within a cross-system framework, as the project on the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) ably demonstrates⁷ – but there would seem to be some need to better understand institutions at a theoretical level, too. It is not clear whether there is yet one overarching theory that can encompass the large set of differences we see except at a very general level of abstraction. That is, we can probably see that voters are sensitive to the costs of making decisions and institutions shape those costs. But there seems to be a gap in the literature between this broad level of abstraction and the kinds of effects of specific institutions or specific rules that we see in the literature to date.

A further reason why we should not stress the ways in which the variety of institutional settings creates varieties in voter behavior too heavily is because, despite differences in institutional setting, the main components of voting behavior are similar across different settings. A few years ago van der Brug and colleagues made the following observation:

The fundamental expectation that underlies all research on voting behavior, though seldom stated so baldly, is that people are the same wherever they are found. If they behave differently in some countries than in others it is because they find themselves in different circumstances, such that if those circumstances were replicated in another country the behavior of voters in that country would respond accordingly. Research on political behavior in different political systems finds repeatedly that behavior responds to systemic and contextual differences. (van der Brug et al. 2008: 590)

To some extent the expressions (1) and (2) underline that same fundamental expectation. While the parameter values for the kinds of models represented by (1) and (2) may vary by setting, in each of those settings voter models offer variants on the same, basic constructs. Economic voting and party attachments, to take but two examples, are now familiar components of vote models in any setting. At a very general level of abstraction then, voters are voters the world over and a surprisingly similar set of factors and constructs allows us to capture that variation.

Notes

- 1 A related topic is that of felon disenfranchisement (Blessett 2015). Given differing rates of incarceration by race, whether felons are allowed to vote will have consequences for the racial composition of the electorate if, as is the case in the US, incarceration rates are high.
- 2 Valdini (2012) and Krook and Norris (2014) provide interesting cautionary studies on the limits of quotas as a remedy for gender representation.
- 3 See National Conference on State Legislatures 'The Term Limited States' <http://www.ncsl.org/research/about-state-legislatures/chart-of-term-limits-states.aspx>
- 4 There is a vast literature on types of electoral systems and their effects. Farrell (2011) provides the best recent study of this literature. See also IDEA <http://www.idea.int/esd/index.cfm>

- 5 More explicit attempts at electoral engineering to encourage moderation include minimum vote thresholds for minor parties in order to handicap more extreme parties early on.
- 6 Thresholds also have the appeal of being ideal opportunities for regression discontinuity research designs e.g. Hainmueller and Kern (2008).
- 7 See <http://www.cses.org/> and more generally Klingemann (2009).

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Party Systems and Voter Alignments

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INTRODUCTION

The success of Western democracies is on many accounts a story of stable party systems. Predictability in the choice-set that confronts voters at elections provides several advantages or democratic goods (Sartori 1976; Mainwaring and Scully 1995; Kitschelt et al. 1999; Lipset 2001). A stable party system allows for voters to align with parties and hence strengthens mass-elite linkages. It facilitates different voting strategies on behalf of the voters by allowing them to effectively assign accountability *ex post* and to give mandate *ex ante* (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991; Tóka 1998; Przeworski et al. 1999; Strøm et al. 2003). Furthermore, a stable party system enables coalition-building and decision-making (Dalton 1996).

One of or perhaps ‘the’ stabilizing factor of party systems has been the strong impact of social characteristics on voting, which was acknowledged early by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, who stated that: ‘a person thinks, politically, as he is, socially. Social characteristics determine political preferences’ (1948: 27). The rationale for the powerful behavioural force of social characteristics was later provided with a historical framework in the seminal study *Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments* by Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967), where they outlined the origins of parties and their connection to a stable set of cleavages within society, established during early phases of state-building. From the outset of electoral research, the prevailing image was that of stability in the political behaviour of voters and of parties with firm roots in society.

The cleavage concept has over time been highly central within the field and is often discussed in close connection to party systems. A social cleavage has been defined as a political difference founded in the social structure of a society (Bartolini and Mair 1990). These historically rooted societal differences have shaped groups of people with shared interests, which in turn are reflected in party loyalties or party identification (cf. Dinas [Chapter 13], Green and Baltes [Chapter 14] in this Volume) and translated into electoral support for certain parties. The vertical ties between the masses and political elites are hence not seen as being of individual character, but rather composed of ties between well-defined social groups and political parties.

The general notion of robust effects of social structure and political cleavages on the behaviour of voters has however been seriously questioned during recent decades (Dalton 2000; Franklin et al. 1992). The stabilizing impact of social cleavages on electoral behaviour, by aligning groups of voters with specific parties, has been claimed to be weakening since the early 1980s, which is manifested by a steady decline of strong party identifiers in established democracies (Dalton 1984; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000). The previously dominant pattern of stability has been replaced by a more individualized and volatile electorate, which in turn creates less stable party systems (Dalton et al. 1984; Franklin et al. 1992). The trend, according to which parties to a lesser extent than before are understood as representatives of clearly outlined social groups, is labelled *dealignment*.

The dealignment thesis has however not gone unchallenged. One of the main lines of critique stems from scholars that have tried to establish new patterns of political competition, so-called *realignment*. According to the realignment thesis, dealignment is to be considered as a temporary phase of partisan decay, before new alignments between parties and voter are established (Beck 1979; Campbell 1979; Clubb et al. 1980; Crewe 1980). Researchers have attempted to demonstrate how the support of new political alternatives such as the New Left in the 1970s and 1980s, and more recently by the parties of the New Populist Right (Mudde 2007; Kriesi 2010), can be connected to shifts in value orientations and to new types of cleavage patterns within modern societies. Further, the dealignment thesis has been criticized by scholars emphasizing the persistent strength of traditional cleavages, the endurance of links between social strata within the electorate and party support, and a relative stability of party systems (Heath et al. 1991; Evans 1999 and this Volume [Chapter 9]; Nieuwbeerta and de Graaf 1999; Brooks et al. 2006; Elff 2007).

The aim of this chapter is to outline the major structures of a classic field of research and to provide an overview of how voters have aligned with parties or systems of parties over time. The field is characterized by two dominating, and relatively detached, traditions. The so-called *bottom-up* approach studies voters' alignments with parties from the demand side of politics. It hence takes the perspective of voters and outlines the extent to which social characteristics, interests

and values explain voting behaviour. The *top-down* approach, or the party choice thesis (Jansen et al. 2013) in turn accentuates the actions and strategies of parties and how alterations in the supply side of politics influence the electoral choices made by voters. Both perspectives will be covered to a certain extent, but the main emphasis lies on the demand side of politics, that is, on the voters and their values rather than the impact of parties and their actions. Due to the historical centrality of the cleavage concept within the literature, and the fact that it offers a widely accepted explanation as to how groups of voters with joint interests align with parties, it will be given a fair amount of attention. The current emphasis within the field on the political behaviour of voters in mature Western democracies will be reflected in the text, but the aspect of how well the cleavages travel across contextual settings will also be touched upon.

THE FREEZING HYPOTHESIS

One study above others has served as inspiration and as fuel for debate concerning the impact of social structure on political competition, and that is the classical study on the origins and stability of western European party systems by Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan published in 1967. In this widely cited text Lipset and Rokkan famously state that ‘the party systems of the 1960s reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920s’, coupled with the ‘party alternatives, and in remarkably many cases the party organizations are older than the majorities of the national electorates’ (1967: 44), commonly referred to as the ‘freezing hypothesis’.

Although studies of party systems and voter alignments have expanded and developed extensively since the late 1960s, the historical-sociological cleavage model by Lipset and Rokkan still offers the most popular explanation for the formation and durability of West European party systems. Accordingly, the most significant elements of this seminal piece will be outlined here, before moving on to more recent developments within the field.

In their theory of social cleavages, Lipset and Rokkan characterize the formation of parties and electoral competition as reflecting a complex set of historical processes triggered by the national and the industrial revolutions. These two revolutions are presented as ‘critical junctures’ and are argued to have shaped two long-lasting structural divisions between specific socio-demographic groups, divisions that in turn gave rise to the political issue conflicts that were present at the breakthrough of universal suffrage and that hence came to influence the formation of modern party systems.

The division between capital and labour has been by far the most influential of the four cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan. This economically based cleavage was formed between the dominating actors of the new industrial structure that followed from the industrial revolution, and the workers that constituted

the labour force. The class cleavage, represented by Socialist parties to the left and Conservative parties to the right of the political spectra, has been present and even dominating political competition in most European countries throughout the 20th century. The second structural division identified by Lipset and Rokkan as being rooted in the industrial revolution is the division between agriculture and industry, manifested by parties with aligned groups of voters aiming at defending traditional agricultural interests against the growth of new production methods dominating within urban areas.

The national revolution in turn also gave rise to two distinct cleavages: the division between the centre and the periphery, manifested in parties defending cultural autonomy for certain areas or groups and parties emphasizing a single public authority on a given territory, and the division between state and church, expressed by parties and voters emphasizing a strict division between the authority of the church and that of the state and in parties wanting to preserve an intimate relation between the two.

According to Lipset and Rokkan, only the parties reflecting these four cleavages were able to survive and reproduce themselves electorally and institutionally. These groups of parties hence became the backbone of the modern party systems within the European context. The composition of, and the balance within, the party systems that were moulded in different countries did however vary depending on the relevance of the cleavages within each specific society. Moreover, once a cleavage structure was established it tended to provide a durable (or ‘frozen’) basis for political conflict expressed through the ballot box (Rose 1974; Bartolini and Mair 1990). Over time voters developed strong and stable bonds to parties, bonds that were maintained and strengthened through processes of political socialization and social learning.

THE CENTRAL CONCEPT OF CLEAVAGE

The cleavage model offered by Lipset and Rokkan strongly influenced the academic debate that followed. It was, however, not left un-criticized. One of the early opponents was Giovanni Sartori, who objected to the proposed causality of the model. Applying a top-down perspective to the link between parties and voters, Sartori (1969) claimed that it is not so much social divisions within society that have caused the birth of certain political parties, but rather that parties have functioned as inspiration and fuel for the politicization of specific social cleavages within society. Sartori also emphasized that parties play an important role when it comes to intensifying or politicizing cleavages that from a social perspective might be in decline (see also Lipset 1970).

Sartori’s critique of the causality of the cleavage model has continued to influence the debate and has perhaps gained significance, as the academic debate has begun to revolve around processes of de- and realignment discussed

in more detail below. While the conventional bottom-up perspective suggested by Lipset and Rokkan, in which social divisions in society shape political competition, has continued to dominate the field, research focusing on the impact of ‘political manoeuvring’ of parties has grown, especially when seen as a response to dissolving social structures (Evans 2010, and this Volume [Chapter 9]).

Some of the debate in the aftermath of the freezing hypothesis can be attributed to the relative vagueness of the social cleavage theory. Lipset and Rokkan painted with a wide brush rather than being precise in detail (Deegan-Krause 2007) and, according to Peter Mair, ‘(T)here still remains a marked degree of confusion about what precisely was believed by Lipset and Rokkan to have settled into place by the 1920s’ (2001: 27). Two alternative interpretations are offered by Mair – that it was *the party systems* that froze, and that this stable set of parties therefore managed to grow older than the majority of the national electorates, or that it was *the cleavages or cleavage structures* that froze, with the stability of the party alternatives merely reflecting outward manifestations of these frozen cleavage structures.

The potential confusion that Mair points at gives some insights into the complexity of the relation between voter alignments, political behaviour and party systems in general, and perhaps most importantly to the diverging interpretations made within the literature concerning the relationship between the two. Conceptual consistency and precise definitions have hence not characterized the field. To quote Deegan-Krause: ‘A baffling array of inconsistently-used terms plagues contemporary scholarship on cleavage’ (2007: 538; see also Franklin 2010).

In its fullest or most demanding definition a cleavage consists of three equally important and inter-related elements: an empirical or social-structural, a normative or value-based, and a behavioural element (Bartolini and Mair 1990; see also Frabbini 2001). First, a cleavage should be *empirically* definable in social structure. It departs from a social division, which in turn is outlined in identifiable groups within society. Second, a division in social structure will need to be complemented by a *normative* element, indicating that members of socially structured groups share a common interest or values that create a sense of collective identity. The third and last step involves behaviour. In order for the cleavage to become politically relevant these norms or shared set of values will need to be reflected in voting behaviour. *Behaviourally* a cleavage must hence be manifest in the political alternatives that exist and constituents should vote for a party that represents their group-based interests.

This threefold definition of political cleavages was outlined in prominence by Bartolini and Mair (1990) and further refined by Knutsen and Scarborough (1995) it can be seen as a response to the general development within the field during the 1970s and 1980s, a time at which the social basis of cleavages was played down and the normative aspect of the concept was given higher prominence (Inglehart 1977; Dalton et al. 1984). By outlining a strict threefold definition, Bartolini and

Mair aimed at bringing conceptual clarity to a field that has been described as plagued by ‘weak theorizing’ (Franklin 2010).

Most scholars agree that the classical social cleavage model, although very prominent in explaining electoral choice, has declined in importance since the 1960s (Franklin 2010). As a response to this development, the search for new cleavages has involved conceptual stretching and attempts to outline new, and less comprehensive, models of party competition. In order to distinguish between different types of approaches and to bring conceptual clarity to the study of ‘something less’ than a full cleavage, the concepts *differences* and *divides* have been suggested as complementary to *cleavage* (Deegan-Krause 2007; Bartolini 2011). While Bartolini in his framework applies the concept *divide* for studies that encompass both one (simple divides) and two (compound divides) out of three elements in the threefold model, Deegan-Krause differentiates between *differences* (one out of three elements) and *divides* (two out of three elements), with the variations of *position* (structure and norms), *issue* (norms and behaviour) or *census* (structure and behaviour) divides, depending on the elements included (see Table 3.1).

As is pointed out by Bartolini (2011), a *difference* (or simple divide as he labels it) is not likely to provide a long-lasting base for political structuring. It is, for example, unlikely that an interest orientation with a social basis will endure without a generalized feeling of solidarity or without an organizational foundation to build on. A behaviourally based difference without an ideological knit or structural roots in society is also unlikely to last, which is an important reason why most parties try to establish a cultural or ideological underpinning in order to survive. It is hence difficult to conceive that a political difference based solely in interests, culture or organization can become stabilized and have long lasting political relevance. In order for that to happen, several components will need to be combined.

A framework of this kind, attempting to bring conceptual clarity to the study of various aspects of voter alignments and systems of parties, is very much needed and can be utilized to make relevant distinction and to classify different types of relationships. A difference or different types of divides should, however,

Table 3.1 A conceptual framework for differences, divides and cleavages

<i>Component</i>		<i>Differences</i>			<i>Divides</i>		<i>Cleavage</i>	
Empirical	Social division	+	-	-	+	+	-	+
Normative	Cultural/ ideological orientation	-	+	-	-	+	+	+
Behavioural	Organizational base	-	-	+	+	-	+	+
		Interest	Cultural	Behavioural	Census	Position	Issue	Full cleavage

Note: Developed based on Bartolini (2011) and Deegan-Krause (2007).

analytically be kept apart from that of a full political cleavage, not least since the political and societal implications of the different concepts vary substantially.

THE EVOLVEMENT OF VOTER ALIGNMENTS

In the aftermath of the freezing hypothesis followed a time when research on social cleavages and their impact on the behaviour of voters became less fashionable (Brooks et al. 2006). Attention was instead directed further down the funnel of causality (Campbell et al. 1960) at, for example, economic, ideological, cultural or cognitive explanations of the vote (Franklin et al. 1992). This was also a time at which party identification, the concept launched by Angus Campbell and his colleagues in *The American Voter* in 1960, had gained wide acknowledgement outside the American context and was accentuated and highly debated (Budge et al. 1976; Thomassen 1976). In the course of this shift in rationale, the sociological model of voting and the previously strong emphasis on political cleavages was even criticized for lacking theoretical relevance (Achen 1992). The altered agenda of voting studies was also accompanied by a general trend away from the macro-historical perspective towards more micro-empirical designs, triggered by the expanding access to individual level survey data (Frabbini 2001).

The most important factor behind the decreased interest in sociological determinants of the vote was, however, the fact that scholars started to observe changes in electoral behaviour, changes that went counter to the intuition of the freezing thesis. While Rose and Urwin (1970) in their study of persistence and change in Western party systems up until 1969 had confirmed the stability outlined by Lipset and Rokkan, the pattern was about to change. Less than a decade later Mogens N. Pedersen (1979) concluded, based on a thorough examination of volatility rates in 13 European countries, that it was time to alter the analytical focus from stability to the increasing rates of instability.

The altered patterns of party competition, with a weaker basis in social structure, have become a widely accepted explanation for the increased volatility in elections (Dalton et al. 1984; Dalton 2002; Dalton and Wattenberg 1993; Lane and Ersson 1997; Kriesi 1998). While the importance of the cleavage model appears to have already started to decline in the 1970s with increasing levels of volatility, the magnitude and the implications of the decline has over the years caused extensive debate, and continues to do so (Elff 2007). The meaning of the decline has also been given different interpretations by different scholars. While some have claimed that it was a general weakening of the explanatory power of social structure on vote choice – a trend often described as *dealignment* – others identified new patterns of structured party competition and the emergence of new alignments between voters and parties, labelled *realignment*. Both of these arguments and strands of research will be dealt with in more detail below.

Dealignment

We will start with the dealignment thesis, which dominated the field for about two decades from the early 1980s. The main argument of the dealignment literature is that the socio-structural anchoring of electoral behaviour is weakening. The thesis hence predestines voting behaviour to gradually become more influenced by factors closer to the election, and as such also become more floating and less predictable.

The decline of the political relevance of social cleavages is often attributed to extensive changes at the societal level related to modernization (Bell 1974; Lerner 1958) that is taken to gradually alter the political attitudes and behaviour of voters. These fundamental changes that comprise both class structure and value systems are not new and their political implications have been emphasized by sociologists and political scientists in the European sphere since at least the 1960s (Mair 1989).

The perhaps most powerful change that modernization brings about, in terms of its contribution to the alteration of political competition, is what Dalton labels *cognitive mobilization* (1984; 2000). Cognitive mobilization encompasses the general improvement of education levels within Western societies as well as the spread of information through mass media, both of which are claimed to empower voters to make more individualized electoral choices, independently of the cues provided by social groups (for a more detailed account of cognitive mobilization see Todd Donovan in this Volume, Chapter 15). When the electoral choice in the 1950s was understood as shaped by, for example, class or religious affiliation, and parties through their strong vertical links to social groups were considered as key actors for integrating and mobilizing citizens into the political process, cognitive mobilization brought about a new order in which it was argued that voters *had begun to choose* (Rose and McAllister 1986).

As pointed out by Elff (2007), however, cognitive mobilization, and an increasingly autonomous decision-making process by voters, are not preconditioned to cause electoral change or dealignment. As long as political interests within a social group remain stable, the behaviour of voters and their connection to certain political parties are likely to be constant even if choices are made individually and not by reliance on a few opinion leaders (Berelson et al. 1954). Cognitive mobilization, and the general increase in voters' capacity to make sovereign electoral choices based on increased level of political sophistication and access to information, should hence not be understood as the driving force behind dealignment. It might be a necessary condition for electoral change to take place since it opens up an increased willingness and capacity of voters to make choices that diverge from traditional. It is however not sufficient to cause a restructuring of electoral competition alone.

In order for dealignment to take place, cognitive mobilization will need to be complemented by a weakening of the collective identities within social

groups that have constituted the competing sides of politically relevant cleavages. Considering the far-ranging socio-economic transformation of societies that has taken place since the establishment of most modern party systems, it is not hard to come up with examples of forces that have altered not only the relative size of politically relevant groups but also the composition of groups. Contemporary modern democracies are characterized by heterogeneity in terms of life experiences and by a great availability of options (Kriesi 2010). Social and geographical mobility is far greater today than 50 years ago and secularization has increased (Norris and Inglehart 2004). Moreover, alterations in the class structure, involving a decline of the traditional working class, the growth in low-status white-collar employment, an increasingly important service sector and rising income and living standards of workers have blurred social structure and the basis of support of mainstream leftist parties (Dalton 2009; Evans 2000).

A great bulk of research has until now presented evidence of weakening alignments between socio-structural groups of voters and parties. These results are coupled with the general weakening of party identification, which can be described as one of the most well-known trends in the social sciences (Bengtsson et al. 2014). According to Mark Franklin, the general explanatory power of social cleavages on party choice dropped from around (or above) 30 per cent in the 1960s to around 10 per cent in the 1980s (Franklin et al. 1992). Since then the drop has been less extensive and in the late 1990s the variance in party choice explained by social structure was less than 10 per cent in all but one out of 16 Western democracies analysed (Franklin 2009; see also Brooks et al. 2006; Oscarsson and Holmberg 2013; Hansen and Andersen 2013; Aardal et al. 2015).¹ As is noted by Franklin and colleagues, however, dealignment is not a continuous process, but rather a process that tends to vary in time, across countries and across cleavages.

In an overview of the historically most prominent cleavage in determining electoral choice Knutsen concludes that: ‘Class voting is definitely declining in advanced western democracies’ (2007: 475; see also Jansen et al. 2011). While many scholars tend to agree that the cleavage impact of the class on electoral choice has declined (see for example Clark and Lipset 1991; Franklin et al. 1992; Nieuwbeerta 1995; Knutsen 2007; Jansen et al. 2011), others have questioned the extent to which this actually holds true. The evidence in favour of a decline in class voting has for example been credited to outdated operationalization of class (see e.g. Heath et al. 1985), coupled with a trend towards increasingly dispersed voting behaviour among the traditional working class due to cross-cutting cultural voting (van der Waal et al. 2007). It also appears as if the development in class voting varies relatively extensively across countries. In countries with historically strong patterns of class voting the structuring power of class has decreased more dramatically than in countries with traditions of less extensive class voting (Bengtsson et al. 2014).

When focusing on comparisons across cleavages in turn, it seems as if dealignment has been less powerful in countries where religious or geographically based

cleavages have been strong (Elff 2007). Cleavages based on ethnicity or language have also proven stable in many countries and there are few examples of parties that cut across salient ethnic boundaries, or of salient ethnic groups without a party representing their interests (Deegan-Krause 2007; Bengtsson 2011; for an example see Westinen 2015).

Moreover, the loosening of the ties between social structure, ideological orientations and voting behaviour can be seen as a gradual development in which generational replacement plays a significant role. The process in which older generations, socialized during an era at which cleavage politics stood strong, are slowly replaced by new generations entering the electorate with different attitudes and behavioural patterns, is likely to have substantial impact on the overall evaluations of re- and dealignment (van der Brug 2010; van der Brug and Kritzinger 2012).

The deviating trends in structurally based voting behaviour, both in terms of time, space and the magnitude of change, are the reason why it has been hard to reach a general consensus as to what extent dealignment has taken place. Scholars documenting the resilience of social class, religion or other cleavages as the basis of structural determinants of political behaviour have criticized the dealignment thesis (Elff 2007; Evans 1999; Heath et al. 1991; Goldthorpe 1999; Manza and Brooks 1999; van der Waal et al. 2007), stating that the ‘reports of the death of social cleavages are exaggerated’ (Elff 2007, 289) and that it is not a universal trend, but rather a development limited to some cleavages, most prominently the class cleavage, and to some countries.

It has also been argued that changes in social structure do not necessarily imply dissolving structures; they can also contribute to re-shaping them by making social groups more distinct (Evans 2010). Secularization in European societies has, for example, contributed to making the church/state cleavages in its various forms more salient even though the share of religious people is declining (Goldberg 2014; Knutsen 2004; Madeley 1991; Minkenberg 2010; van der Brug and van Spanje 2009).

Realignment

One of the major debates within the field of voting behaviour revolves around the question if, and to what extent, dealignment has been replaced by realignment, that is by new structural links between social groups and voting behaviour. According to Lipset and Rokkan the formation of new structural cleavages or new party-voter alignments develop in response to major social transformations or ‘critical junctures’ – dramatic changes that seen from a historical perspective can be considered as fundamentally altering the structures and the living conditions within societies in the 18th and 19th centuries. From the perspective of realignment, a highly relevant question is if it is possible to identify critical junctures of our time, changes that have the power to restructure political

competition by creating new cleavages that connect socially identifiable groups with shared political interests and parties that articulate these interests.

It has been argued that the development in education during the 1970s and 1980s constitutes one such critical juncture (Bornschier 2009). Another attempt to identify a modern critical juncture has been made by Hanspeter Kriesi with colleagues, who present globalization and denationalization as a major force that has transformed the basis for political competition in Western Europe (Kriesi et al. 2006 referring to Zürn 1998 and Beisheim et al. 1999; see also Kriesi et al. 2012). According to Kriesi and his colleagues, the development towards globalization has created a new political cleavage consisting of those who are ‘winners’ and those who are ‘losers’ of the denationalization process. They label this new cleavage, which is said to cut across the older structural cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan, the ‘integration-demarcation’ cleavage.

Kriesi and colleagues (2012) present the ‘integration-demarcation’ cleavage as constituted by three distinct societal changes, which have developed into political conflicts. The first conflict stems from changed patterns of *economic competition* based on increasingly open economies and global patterns of competition. The second is founded on increasing *cultural diversity* shaped by migration processes with immigration of culturally distinct groups to western societies. The third conflict revolves around *political integration* and the transformation of political power to institutions beyond the nation state, such as the European Union. In terms of the organizational part of the cleavage, these values are largely seen as being articulated by parties of the New Left and the New Right, with the former group being represented by Green parties and the latter by Populist Right parties.

The work by Kriesi and colleagues is only one of many attempts to establish new patterns of alignments between voters and parties. The common theme in most of this research is the gradual transformation of values in society. The applied concepts have varied over time and between scholars, but target similar, or at least closely related, value patterns. Flanagan and Lee (2003) and Kitschelt (1994) use the concepts libertarian/authoritarian values, Inglehart post-materialist/materialist (1977) or self-expression/survival values (Inglehart and Welzel 2005); Hooghe and colleagues (2002) label it GAL/TAN (green-alternative-libertarian/traditional-authoritarian-nationalist) values. Bornschier (2010) in turn uses the division between libertarian-universalistic/traditionalist-communitarian values. This line of research has convincingly demonstrated that there has been a shift in values in modern Western societies and that this divide in most countries has made political competition more multidimensional than before (see, however, van der Brug and van Spanje 2009).

In order to establish that realignment is taking place in the classical sense and that these new value orientations constitute a full cleavage, it is however crucial to identify stable patterns in which structurally based groups of voters share these values and to connect these groups to organized actors claiming to represent their

political interest. This process has proven demanding. To cite Hanspeter Kriesi in his Stein Rokkan lecture in the late 1990s: ‘The crux is to identify theoretically and empirically the relevant social divisions in a world in flux, and to study their political formation’ (1998: 181). Others have argued that the full-fledged cleavage model, including all three components and in particular the requirement of a socio-structural origin of cleavages, radically narrows down the applicability of the cleavage concept since the mechanisms that sustain politicized collective identities are not necessarily tied to social groups, but rather limited to shared values (Enyedi 2008). Given that the value component is more successful in linking the winners and losers of the globalization process to political behaviour (Kriesi 2010: 677), this pattern should be considered as a ‘value-based divide’ (cf. Deegan-Krause 2007) rather than a full-fledged political cleavage.

In more recent work based on six West European countries, Kriesi and colleagues (2008, 2012) have however been able to identify an increasingly stable social basis for the ‘demarcation-integration’ cleavage founded on education and social class, partly by a reconceptualizing of the latter since the division appears to cut across the new middle class and divides cultural professionals from managers and technocrats (see also Knutsen 2004, 2006). The group who are identified as ‘losers’ of the globalization or denationalization process are unqualified workers, that is, citizens with a low level of education and workers with a low level of skills often employed within traditionally protected sectors. Cultural professionals, entrepreneurs and highly qualified employees in sectors open to international competition are on the other hand identified as coming out on top of the process.

Other scholars have identified similar patterns both when analyzing the support for Radical Right parties supplemented with distinct age and gender patterns (Ivarsflaten 2005; Oesch 2008) and for parties of the New Left (Dolezal 2010). While voting for parties of the New Left is strongest among the highly educated professionals of the middle class, Radical Right parties gain their strongest support from the less educated and the working class. The importance of education is also stressed by Stubager (2010), who identifies education as a structural divide for the liberal-authoritarian value difference, based on concerns for the environment and for immigration.

Kriesi (2010) does however emphasize that, although the cultural dimension is related to electoral support for parties of the New Left and the New Radical Right, it should not exclusively be connected to these parties since the entry of these parties to the electoral arena has caused a transformation of the traditional political space, involving a repositioning of the old mainstream parties (2010: 683). Social Democratic parties have, for example, in many countries been able to partially adopt the policies of Green parties and in some countries Conservative parties have applied the same strategy in order to handle competition offered from the Populist Right. Due to the adaptable character and the repositioning of mainstream parties it is hence difficult to ascribe these values solely to the parties of the New Left and the New Populist Right (Kriesi 2010). This top-down

perspective, taking into account the supply-side of politics, will be discussed in more detail below.

Assuming that Kriesi is right, and that the shifting strategies of mainstream parties make it difficult to establish stable alignments between voters and specific parties based on this value dimension, we might not even be dealing with an *issue division* (or political division as Kriesi labels it, influenced by Bartolini 2005, 2011) but rather a *cultural difference* (cf. Deegan-Krause 2007) in terms of values. A value difference that to some extent is detectable in social structure and that can be connected to Green parties and Populist Right parties, but also to more established parties of the Left and Right. Such an interpretation would indicate that these new values, and the voting patterns that are connected to them, over time are about to become absorbed by the division between left and right still dominating most European party systems (Bale 2003; Mair 2007; see however Kriesi et al. 2006). If this turns out to be the case, we can expect a limited impact on the overall functioning of party systems in the long run, with the exception that it is likely to bring about greater polarization. On this matter it appears the jury is still out.

THE PARTY SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE

Voters and their interest articulation do not work in isolation but rather are strongly dependent on the actions of the organizational part of politics – that is, political parties. Despite the fact that studies of public opinion have demonstrated that the attitudes of citizens tend to be structured along more than one dimension on a number of issues (e.g. Middendorp 1991; Kitschelt and McGann 1995), party systems in many countries have had a predominantly one-dimensional structure. This has already been acknowledged by Sartori: ‘When the citizen speaks, he may have many things to say. But when he is coerced into casting a ...vote, he may well have to ...vote for the party ...perceived as closest on the left-right spectrum’ (1976: 338). Hence, while opinions in many countries appear to be structured along two different and largely independent dimensions – a value-based dimension and a classical left-right dimension – the supply side, that is, the alternatives that are offered to voters during the election campaign, have tended to be dominated by the left-right schema (e.g. Oppenhuis 1995; van der Eijk and Franklin 1996; Mair 2007).

Despite the fact that the supply and demand side of politics work in tandem, the evolution of voting behaviour and party system research have tended to be relatively separate fields of research. De- and realignment are commonly discussed and studied from the perspective of voters using a generic categorization of parties or party families, and the evolution of parties and party system that represents the organizational component of the cleavage concept is in turn commonly studied in isolation from that of voters and their behaviour. However,

during the last decade or so, it appears as if the separate traditions have begun to converge, with more scholars applying integrative research designs that take into account both the positions of parties and values and behaviours of voters (see for example Kriesi et al. 2008, 2012; Jansen et al. 2013; Oskarsson and Demker 2015; Dahlström and Esaiasson 2013).

Studies applying a top-down perspective, looking at changes from a party and in particular from a party system level have tended to draw slightly different conclusions concerning the overall effects of electoral change than those applying a bottom-up perspective. Studies of aggregate electoral patterns and overall balance of party support in the 1990s did at least draw conclusions of continuity rather than change (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Mair 1993, 1997; Pennings and Lane 1998). Electoral volatility has indeed increased substantially over time (Pedersen 1979; Dassonneville 2015) and the effective number of parties has increased in many countries as new parties have entered the political scene. Still, the overall effects on the functioning of party systems have tended to be relatively limited in the long term. At least within the West European sphere, the bulk of aggregate volatility takes place between groups of parties belonging either to the left or the right side of the ideological spectrum and a relatively limited share of the electoral instability transfers across blocs (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Oscarsson and Holmberg 2013; van der Meer et al. 2012).

As Sartori points out, a party system means ‘a system of interactions resulting from inter-party competition’ (Sartori 1976: 44). From the perspective of party systems, what is of interest is not the individual parties as such, but rather the extent to which these parties have had an impact at the systemic level by, for example, making them more polarized, by transforming two-party systems to multiparty systems, or, and of particular relevance for the purpose of this chapter, by altering the patterns of electoral competition by introducing new ideological cleavages and stable patterns of alignment between groups of voters and parties.

Party system change can be, and has been, operationalized in a number of different ways. The classic work by Sartori (1976) outlined the still-dominating distinction based on the number of relevant parties in terms of their blackmail or coalition potential, and dividing systems into one- two- and multiparty systems.² In terms of this classification it appears as if not much has changed within the West European sphere, since most countries have had multiparty systems since the 1940s. And the few examples of two-party systems (most notably the UK and Malta) have tended to be stable, even though the system appears to have moved in a more volatile direction in the last few elections in the UK (Mudde 2014). Sartori did however not only take into account the number of relevant parties, but also their ideological spread, when he divided party systems into moderate and polarized pluralism, and from this perspective it seems as if alterations have occurred, or are about to occur, in many countries.

Seen from a party system perspective, the stability thesis has been faced with two main challenges since the late 1970s. In the 1980s this challenge came from

the rise of the New Left and environmentalism. Green parties entered parliaments in many countries and often claimed that they represented a new ideological dimension with the power to reshape party alignments (Müller-Rommel 1989; Richardson and Rootes 1995). In retrospect it does however appear as if the existing party systems were relatively successful in integrating these parties into the dominant left-right framework (Dalton 2009). In a study of the implications of the Green parties and their success in Western Europe, Peter Mair (2001) concludes that, as these parties became mainstream and acceptable for coalitions, the general effect on the party system level was that it strengthened the Left and its potential when it comes to coalition building, and reinforced the bipolarity of many multiparty systems.

The second, and more recent, challenge for the stability of party systems has come from the Populist Right parties. Although Radical Right parties have emerged in several waves in Western Europe since the Second World War (von Beyme 1988), it is only since the 1980s that these parties have begun to establish themselves as integral parts of national party systems (Mudde 2014). The trend has been relatively dramatic during the first 15 years of the new millennium, with a general increase in the electoral support for Populist Right parties, coupled with a number of cases in which these parties have become *Koalitionsfähig* ('acceptable for coalition'). The fact that there has been an increased willingness of the mainstream right-wing parties to collaborate with Populist Right parties in turn speaks to a further polarization of party systems into a left-libertarian and a right-authoritarian side (Bale 2003; Dalton 2009; Mudde 2014). The agendas of the Populist Right parties do however propose a greater challenge to the establishment of party systems than the New Left did in the 1970s and 80s, since their authoritarian-nationalist agendas tend to attract supporters from both the traditional Left and Right (Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008, 2012), in line with Lipset's (1959) thesis of the 'authoritarian working class' already formulated in the late 1950s.

The fact that the supply side has had a tendency to strike back, to force even newly established parties to arrange along a uni-dimensional space, has been put forward as a factor that nurtures increasing volatility rates. Although much research has demonstrated that large shares of volatility take place within blocs and hence have a limited impact on the overall functioning of the party system and the ability of parties to structure political competition, there are reasons to believe that this pattern is about to become challenged by cross-cutting opinion patterns. If party positions structure along one dimension and voters' opinions are increasingly multidimensional, there will be groups of citizens whose opinions do match the supply that is offered to them, and whose issue positions are not fully represented by any of the available parties. This is likely to make election results more dependent on which issues dominate the political agenda during the election campaign and can cause increased cross-bloc volatility over time (Maddens 1996; Petrocik 1996; van der Brug 2004; Kriesi 2010). Another potential effect is detachment from politics and decreasing rates of turnout. If

voters have diverging party preferences, depending on which issues that are emphasized, they might be confronted with cross-pressure (Tingsten 1937; Lipset 1963) and decide to withdraw from politics.

BEYOND MATURE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES

The theory of cleavage politics was developed within the West European sphere, based on the historical experience from the processes of national unification and of industrialization, and how these experiences were politically incorporated during the process of democratization. The academic debate has also to a large extent concentrated on this context, and on other mature Western democracies such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the US. The general impression is that, although the types of cleavages in different societies vary, where for example cleavages in the US tend to revolve around cultural aspects such as region, race and religion (Manza and Brooks 1999), the general concept of cleavage travels relatively well within this broader context of mature democracies. When moving beyond this relatively narrow milieu to other parts of the world, evidence becomes more scattered and the relevance and utility of the cleavage model is disputed (Randall 2001).

As was noted in the introduction to this chapter, the stability of parties and party systems founded in enduring alignments with groups of voters can be considered as a key explanation for the success of Western democracies. The significance of cleavages for the functioning of democracy is naturally not isolated to this part of the world. According to Margit Tavits, '(F)ew institutional developments are more critical to democratic stabilization than the development of stable party systems' (2005: 283). The value of established ties between parties and groups within society can hence be understood as a contributing factor to democratic stability in new democracies by contributing to decreasing electoral volatility and increasing predictability of political outcomes (Whitefield 2002). The crucial role of cleavages in new democracies is also emphasized by Lipset, who writes that '(P)arties in new electoral democracies will be inherently unstable unless they become linked to deep-rooted sources of cleavage, as the parties in the older institutionalized western democracies have been' (2001: 5). The counter argument is that electoral competition based on solid structural cleavages may undermine democracy in highly polarized societies, especially when voters align according to deep ethnic cleavages, since elections run the risk of becoming 'winner-takes-it-all' exercises (van de Walle 2003). The dominant view in the field is however that persistent volatility resulting from an absence of durable alignments between voters and parties in the long run reduces a democracy's ability to survive.

Unstable party systems and high rates of volatility have plagued many new democracies, not least in Latin America and in post-Communist Europe (Tavits

2005; Epperly 2011; Powell and Tucker 2014). The extent to which electoral volatility decreases naturally over time as patterns of electoral competition and partisanship develop in new established democracies is debatable. Lupu and Stokes (2010), for example, argue that the proportion of voters with partisan attachments should increase with the number of years that have passed since the democratic breakthrough (see also Tavits 2005). Mainwaring and Zoco (2007), on the other hand, claim that volatility persists in countries that were democratized late, since parties lack social attachment to voters and they generally have not been as involved in the process of voter enfranchisement, as was the case in Western Europe.

In post-Communist Europe, party politics have been structured along different lines and at various degrees of institutionalization. Overall, the literature has concluded that there are weak alignments between voters and parties in this region (Mair 1997; Enyedi 2008; Elster et al. 1998). Although full cleavages occur for example when it comes to ethnic minorities (Deegan-Krause 2007), these cleavages tend to be of low significance due to the small size of these minorities. The class conflict, traditionally dominating many Western European societies, has been less influential in Eastern Europe, with the exception of the Czech Republic (Casal Bértoa 2014). The generally low salience of the class cleavage has been explained by the fact that these societies emerged from socialism as ‘flattened societies’ (Wessels and Klingemann 1994), i.e. that communism to a large extent eroded the socio-economic basis for the class cleavage. Party preferences have instead been dominated by cultural divides of different kinds, often including nationalist elements (Deegan-Krause 2013). Despite the overall fragile nature of citizen-party linkages and high rates of party instability in Eastern and Central Europe, party systems and electoral behaviour are not purely random, but rather have tended to be structured around a predictable set of factors related to society and the salience attached to these factors (Whitefield 2009; Casal Bértoa 2012).

Moving on to Latin America, Torcal and Mainwaring (2003) and Bustikova and Zechmeister (Chapter 6, this Volume) present voters as far less anchored to parties through social cleavages, compared with voters in Western Europe. Party systems have tended to be unstable and rates of volatility high, and research has to a large extent been concentrated on the absence of a structural or even attitudinal base of party support (Conaghan 1995; Kitschelt et al. 2010). The weak party system institutionalization has been seen as a defining characteristic that separates Latin American party systems from those in Western Europe (Dix 1992; Mainwaring 1998; Kellam 2013). Class politics have been of low salience in most Latin American countries due to the small size of the industrial working class compared with employees in other sectors, and the weak union movement (Dix 1989; Torcal and Mainwaring 2003; Knutsen 2007). Ethnic or linguistic divides are also rare in the region, and tend to have a limited impact on party competition at the national level (Yashar 1998). Issue divides with relevance

for party competition have often revolved around aspects of regime and culture. Moreno (1999) has emphasized the democracy-authoritarianism divide, salient in many countries in the early 1990s. It does however appear as if other cultural issues such as abortion, religiosity or nationalism have gained in importance over time, while issues related to the process of democratization have become less salient.

Research on political cleavages in Asia has established that few countries have followed the European cleavage patterns and volatility has been fairly high, with levels comparable to those of Latin America (Hicken and Kuhonta 2011). Clientelist networks are common, especially in South East Asia, sometimes in combination with cleavages such as ‘primordial’ conflicts based on ethnicity and religion (Ufen 2012). The general pattern is however that of a generally weak impact of social structure or cultural divides. Japan represents a different and more stable pattern, and a prominent left-right divide has characterized Japanese politics. This divide has however in general been conceived as being more relevant for attitudes concerning foreign policy and defence than for redistributive politics (Weisberg and Tanaka 2001) and age and education have been stronger structural determinants of the vote than class (Knutsen 2007). In South Korea and Taiwan in turn, parties have generally failed in making programmatic appeals to voters and relied on strategies of personalization (Kim 2000; Wong 2004; Jou 2010).

There is a great diversity in the ways in which parties and voters align outside the context of mature democracies. A few examples from different parts of the world have been very briefly touched upon here. Overall, there are few examples of full threefold cleavages, volatility rates are often high and clientelistic relations between voters and parties are common. As Deegan-Krause (2007) concludes, it appears as if attitudes play an important role in structuring political choices made by voters around the world. Which issues that are the most prominent do, however, vary from one context to another.

CHALLENGES TO THE STUDY OF PARTY SYSTEMS AND VOTER ALIGNMENTS

The fact that voters’ alignments with parties or systems of parties continues to attract great scholarly interests is hardly surprising. Established patterns of electoral competition are considered as having an intrinsic value for the stability and long-term survival of democratic systems. It provides political predictability and enhances the prospects for voters to influence political outcomes by allowing them to assign responsibility *ex post* and to give mandate *ex ante*. At a very overarching level, the study of the extent to which voters align with parties can contribute to forecasting the future of democratic systems. The field has also had the advantage of a common source of inspiration – a seminal contribution grand

enough to inspire generations of future researchers, and vague enough to guarantee a continued debate.

It is however a research field faced with a great deal of challenges. One of these challenges is the moving character of the target. While the evolving landscape of voters' behaviour and loyalties stimulates continued intense research, it is also an important explanation as to why the field is characterized by diversity in terms of empirical findings. The general vagueness and inconsistency in the use of central concepts, and a great variety in terms of the research designs that are applied, further contributes to the diversity.

Yet another challenge for the field is the fact that patterns of electoral competition display major temporal and spatial variations. While it is possible to detect general patterns of de- and realignment described in previous pages, these configurations vary by country and take place at different periods of time. Moreover, they can be expected to vary over time within a certain environment, with one election realigning voters with established parties and the next election being of a more volatile nature. Hence, although the social cleavage theory can be expressed in quite general terms, it cannot be expected to apply in the same way across countries, or even within individual countries across time.

Moreover, in much of the current research there is a lack of attention given to the institutional setting, rules of the game that can facilitate or hinder processes of de- and perhaps especially realignment. The openness of the Dutch electoral system has for example been acknowledged as one of the driving forces behind the increasing volatility rates and process of de- and realignment in the Netherlands (Irwing and van Holstein 1989; Mair 2008). Comparative research however often neglects to take the rules of the game into account, and also often do not acknowledge that the relevant cleavages and their general impact vary between countries. It is hence not only the fact that de- and realignment processes take place at different periods of time in different countries that complicates things; also the point of departure and prerequisites for change are far from constant. The fact that social cleavage theory was never intended to apply the same way across countries is often overlooked due to the general saliency of the class-based cleavage and also due to a sizable appetite for generalizations.

To further complicate matters, the study of voter alignments and party systems is characterized by two important perspectives that seldom communicate effectively: the top-down perspective looking at parties and systems of parties and how they develop, interrelate and forge new political issues, and the bottom-up perspective, looking at the development of voters, their structural basis, values and behaviour. It would be misleading to assume that these two major forces of representative democracy develops in isolation. In order to gain a full understanding of the electoral behaviour of voters, and in particular how voters align with parties or systems

of parties, these two research perspectives will need to be combined to a larger extent than has been the case so far.

Notes

- 1 The exception was the US, in which social structure accounted for 12 per cent of the explained variance in party choice (Franklin 2010, 651).
- 2 See also Blondel (1968), which added the two-and-a-half party system based on the West German case in which two dominating parties govern alternately with the same minor coalition partner.

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The Study of Less Important Elections

Hermann Schmitt and Eftichia Teperoglou

The character and the importance of the electoral contest is a group of contextual variables that have become a staple in comparative analysis and, together with the political climate, constitute the core dimensions of multi-level electoral research. The character of the electoral contest is defined by the perceived political importance (or salience) of the office to be filled, which differs between the different types of elections. Elections of members of national parliaments or of a president with executive powers are contests of high salience (or ‘high stimulus elections’), while all other types of elections are of low salience (or ‘low stimulus elections’).

The impetus for systematic analyses of these different types of elections mostly originates in efforts to understand the results of US midterm elections, a research stream that was initiated in the mid 1950s by US scholars. As is well known, US midterm elections are characterized by stable patterns of lower participation rates compared with the preceding presidential election on one hand, and losses for the party of the president on the other. An enormous number of studies shed light on this classic feature of US politics. We can distinguish three main approaches: the original ‘surge and decline’ theory of the Michigan school (Campbell 1960); the ‘referendum’ theory (Tufte 1975); and the ‘balancing’ theory (Alesina and Rosenthal 1989, 1995).

This perspective on electoral research, as many others, was successfully exported beyond the confines of US elections. In the late 1970s we observe a spillover of the model to the study of European electoral politics. A first effort to study the ‘midterm loss’ phenomenon in a European multi-party environment was published by Dinkel (1977, 1978). He analyzed the results of German state

elections (*Landtagswahlen*) on the basis of Campbell's surge and decline theory. Three years later, another step towards a general theory of voting behavior in less important elections was proposed in a study of the mechanisms behind the various national results of the first direct elections of the members of the European Parliament (EP) in June 1979. Writing in the aftermath of the first EP electoral contest, Reif and Schmitt (1980) presented the first supra-national election as an example of a series of national second-order elections. The distinction between first-order and second-order elections is now frequently used in scholarly analyses, and the theoretical framework originally developed by Reif and Schmitt today is probably the most prominent in this research area.

The main aim of this chapter is to review the state of the art in electoral research related to voting behavior in second-order elections and to outline the intellectual and theoretical trajectory of the second-order election (SOE) model from the first EP election of 1979 to the last (at the time of writing) in 2014. The chapter is structured in four sections. The first outlines the roots of the theories of 'low stimulus' elections. In the second section we briefly describe the application of the paradigm of midterm losses in European contexts. The third section offers a detailed presentation of the SOE model. The review of the literature includes studies of voting behavior in European Parliament elections and – to some degree also – in other SOEs such as regional elections and by-elections in Europe and beyond. The fourth section discusses the limits of the SOE model.

THREE CONCEPTIONS OF LESS IMPORTANT ELECTIONS

The surge and decline theory

In 1960, Angus Campbell formulated the 'surge and decline' theory according to which partisanship is only fully mobilized at the time of presidential elections. This implies that mobilization is significantly less at the time of midterm elections. This proposal was seeking to explain a repeated pattern in US politics: the lower turnout and the losses of the presidential party in midterm elections as compared with the preceding presidential election. These fluctuations are determined by short-term political forces (A. Campbell 1960: 397). There are three main factors in his model: level of political stimulation, political interest, and party identification. His analysis is focused on two fundamental distinctions. The first one is between 'high stimulus' or 'surge' elections and 'low stimulus' or 'decline' elections. The main difference between these two types of elections is related to the importance of the contest (and its outcomes) as it is perceived by the electorate. Presidential elections are 'high stimulus' contests, while midterm elections are 'low stimulus' (see A. Campbell 1960 and later, among many others, the overview by J. Campbell 1997a, Marsh 2007 and Marsh and Mikhaylov 2010). The motivation to cast a vote in 'high stimulus' presidential

elections is higher: along with it comes a surge of political information, and an intensive campaign which generates higher levels of electoral participation. The reason for all of this is that voters elect a president – the head of the executive. Under these circumstances, many voters who may not vote in a ‘low stimulus’ environment can be motivated to turn out. With an eye on the partisan shifts between presidential and midterm election, the second distinction in Campbell’s study is between ‘core’ and ‘peripheral’ voters. The latter category refers to those voters who are lacking a sustained interest in politics, who are more erratic in terms of their political behavior (if not apolitical), and whose party attachment is low or absent. While these voters tend to abstain in midterm elections, many of them are likely to vote in presidential elections. This is because in the ‘low stimulus’ elections the level of political information is lower, and the campaigns do not provide sufficient stimulation to go to the polls. Therefore, the lower levels of participation in midterm elections are explained by the abstention of ‘peripheral’ voters. ‘Core’ voters are habitual voters, with a stronger party identification than ‘peripheral’ voters and a comparatively high level of political information. They tend to participate irrespectively of the salience of an election. Core voters in a ‘high stimulus’ election may depart from their normal partisan behavior. Even if they identify with the disadvantaged party, they might in a presidential election vote for the candidate who is advantaged by the circumstances (Campbell 1960: 401), just in order to return to their habitual behavior in the next ‘low stimulus’ midterm election. Therefore, the losses for the presidential party in midterm elections are the mirror image of the surge of support in the previous ‘high stimulus’ election. Presidential election results can thus be seen as a departure from an equilibrium that is re-established in the next midterm election (Marsh 2007: 76).

The revised surge and decline theory

A quarter of a century later, James Campbell (1997a, 1997b) proposed a revised version of the original surge and decline theory. While he maintained the earlier description of ‘high’ and ‘low stimulus’ elections, he considered in addition the prior presidential election in order to explore the roots of midterm losses. A major difference from the original theory is the consideration of short-term forces on voting behavior in midterm elections. He introduced the concept of potential cross-pressures between short-term political forces and party identification. The original surge and decline theory takes into account how these cross-pressures can affect party choice, but is silent about their effect on electoral participation (Campbell 1997a: 90). He argued that the difference in the result between the presidential and midterm elections is not caused by the turnout effect but, on the contrary, derives from voters whom James Campbell calls ‘disadvantaged partisans’. Unlike the original theory, the revision hypothesizes that the surge of information in a high stimulus election affects the turnout of

'peripheral partisans' as well as the vote choice of independents and weaker partisans. Disadvantaged partisans (like advantaged partisans of the winning presidential party) contribute to the midterm loss of the presidential party mainly through their participation and not through their vote choice (Campbell 1997a: 103). The revised theory thus claims that short-term forces influence the vote choice on the side of independents and the decision to participate or not on the side of partisans (Campbell 1997a: 104).

The presidential-coattail explanation of midterm losses

Campbell's original 'surge and decline' theory did not come out of the blue. It had a predecessor in the presidential-coattail explanation of midterm losses (see Bean 1950; Miller 1955; also Hinckley 1967 and Calvert and Ferejohn 1983). Indeed, it has been argued that Campbell (1960) just took the withdrawn coattail approach one step further (Erikson 1988: 1013).

The basic assumption of the coattail voting approach is that the losses suffered by the president's party in midterm elections are a result of the absence of presidential 'coattails'¹. Congressional candidates of the president's party when running in the on-year elections take advantage of 'coattail effects'. However, this advantage is lost when running in subsequent midterm elections and therefore, so the argument goes, they are experiencing a 'midterm defeat'. The coattail voting approach does not consider determinants of individual vote choices or decisions to turn out. It focuses almost exclusively on presidential candidates (Campbell 1997a: 17). This is where 'surge and decline' and 'coattail' differ. On the other hand, there are also some common characteristics. In both approaches the losses in the midterm election are linked to a previous 'surge' in the presidential election; both identify short-term political forces in on-year elections which create favorable circumstances for the party of the winning presidential candidate; and both argue that the variation in midterm seat losses should be proportionate with the gains of the previous 'high stimulus' election (Campbell 1997a: 16–17)².

The referendum theory

The second main approach for understanding divergent voting patterns in midterm elections is the referendum theory. It was proposed by Tufte (1975, 1978). However, under this theoretical framework we can also subsume some additional approaches (or amendments to the original theory) such as Kernell's negative voting theory (1977) and the strategic politician approach by Jacobson and Kernell (1981). The referendum theory of midterm losses is probably the main alternative approach to the original surge and decline theory. As presented above, the latter approach identifies the roots of the midterm losses in the previous presidential election. By contrast, the referendum theory attributes midterm

losses to the political conditions prevailing at the time of the midterm election (Campbell 1997a: 9).

The referendum theory was originally developed by Tufte in 1975. In this article we can find the most straightforward definition for the midterm vote: ‘the midterm is neither a mystery nor an automatic swing of the pendulum; the midterm vote is a referendum’ (Tufte 1975: 826). This insight was carried forward in the work of 1978, in which the broader theoretical framework of the economic voting theory is developed: ‘When you think economics, think elections, when you think elections, think economics’ (Tufte 1978: 65). This is perhaps the most often-cited quote in any economic voting textbook (for the economic voting theory see among many others Lewis-Beck 1988; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000; Anderson 2000; van der Brug et al. 2007). Tufte introduces two main explanatory variables in his analysis of midterm election outcomes. The first one is the electorate’s evaluation of the president at the time of the election. The popularity of the president is measured by the standard question of the approval or disapproval of the president’s job performance. The second explanatory variable is the performance of the economy in the year prior to the midterm election. Midterm elections are characterized as ‘referendum on the government’s performance, in which voters express their approval or disapproval through voting for or against the presidential party’ (Marsh 2007: 77). This insight was generalized by showing that the referendum mechanism is able to account for variation in the aggregate outcomes of US elections for the House, Senate, governorships, and upper and lower houses of state legislatures (Simon 1989; Simon et al. 1991). This mechanism was also identified in sub-national elections in Argentina (Remmer and Gélineau 2003). However, presidential approval cannot account for everything. Other scholars suggest that voting in gubernatorial contests reflects a combination of national and state evaluations (Svoboda 1995). Moreover, the referendum element is somehow dismissed when it is difficult for voters to assign responsibility to one party or to another (e.g. in situations of divided government, see e.g Lowry et al. 1988).

By introducing economic conditions in his analysis of the magnitude of the losses in midterm elections, Tufte follows, among others, the work of Kramer (1971). According to him, the best measure of economic conditions is the pre-election changes in real income per capita (1975: 816), when compared with the impact of inflation and unemployment. The main hypothesis of the referendum theory then is as follows: ‘The lower the approval rating of the incumbent President and the less prosperous the economy, the greater the loss of support for the President’s party in the midterm congressional elections’ (Tufte 1975: 817). His theory is based on two main assumptions. The first is that the president’s popularity declines through the term of office and it is relatively low at the time of the midterm contest (for similar conceptions of an electoral cycle see Mueller 1973 and Stimson 1976). The second is that the state of the economy, because of appropriate political interventions, tends to be better at the time of the presidential election.

One of the main differences from the surge and decline theory is that Tufte's referendum theory does not consider a turnout factor in his model of midterm losses. Tufte measures the congressional vote as the difference between the national congressional vote for the president's party and the party's normal congressional vote (the latter being calculated as the average of its share of the popular vote over eight previous both on-year and off-year congressional elections). According to him, this standardization is necessary in order to account for the variation in the electoral performance of the Democratic and Republican parties over time (Tufte 1975: 815).

Negative voting theory

This theory was originally proposed by Kernell (1977), who argues that voters give more attention to failures of the incumbent than to his or her achievements (Kernell 1977: 52). He explicitly refers to *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960), according to which a change in the party vote is mainly driven by negative rather than positive evaluations (see Kernell 1977: 51; Campbell et al. 1960: 554–6). Under the negativity hypothesis, midterm losses are a result of the fact that judgments on the president's performance are characterized by a kind of punitive response (Marsh 2007: 78). In other words, there are more voters dissatisfied with the performance of the president than are satisfied, and so the referendum character of midterm elections tends to be biased against the presidential party. Contrary to Tufte's work, in Kernell's analysis turnout does play a role. According to him, voters who disapprove of the performance of the incumbent administration, irrespective of their party identification, turn out in greater proportions (Kernell 1977: 56). Moreover, those who are dissatisfied with the incumbent administration are more likely to vote against the congressional candidates of the presidential party than satisfied voters are likely to vote for them (Kernell 1977: 52). Finally, Kernell postulates that dissatisfaction with the presidential performance is more influential in producing defections than approval of it is. Consequently, he predicts a higher defection rate among voters who identify with the president's party and are dissatisfied, compared with those who identify with the other party but approve of the record of the incumbent administration (Kernell 1977: 58).

The strategic politician theory

Jacobson and Kernell (1981, 1982) argue that both the 'surge and decline' and the 'referendum theory' concentrate on understanding the voters' choices much more than on the motivations of politicians. They argue that both the candidates and those who recruit and finance them do consider the political climate at midterm. Following Tufte, the political climate at midterm is indicated by the popularity of the president and by economic performance measures. The

quality of the candidates and the availability of money and other campaign resources are strategic choices that depend upon these conditions: strong candidates will be recruited and the campaign will be well financed when the economic conditions are good and the president enjoys high levels of popularity. The opposite happens when the political climate is less favorable (Jacobson and Kernell 1982: 424). Therefore, the outcome of congressional contests is linked to these strategic choices. As J. Campbell notes, the theory by Jacobson and Kernell boils down to an elite version of the referenda approach (J. Campbell 1997a: 75).

The roots of balancing: The presidential penalty theory

Robert Erikson proposed a presidential penalty explanation for midterm losses. According to this, the electorate punishes the presidential party for being the party in power, regardless of the quality of its performance (Erikson 1988: 1013). He identifies two reasons for this behavior. The first is related to the negative voting approach by Kernell (1977) and assumes that voters at midterm are prone to cast a protest vote. The second reason is based on some sort of low-cost rationality on the side of the electorate: voters prefer that the same party does not control both the presidency and Congress. Because of this, they vote against the president's party at midterm in order to balance the control of the two institutions between Democrats and Republicans (Erikson 1988: 1014) in order to promote policy moderation. He refers to similar 'balancing' phenomena in Canadian provincial elections where the ruling party at the national level tends to suffer losses. There are of course similar cases further afield such as German state elections – we will come back to these shortly.

The Alesina and Rosenthal model

The theoretical argument for balancing was further elaborated by Alesina and Rosenthal (1995). They identify two types of voters: extremists and moderates. The first are those who want a unified government ruled by their preferred party. Therefore, they tend to support the same party both in the presidential and in the midterm contest. Moderate voters, by contrast, split their ticket by supporting one party for the presidency and another one for the Congress – in an attempt to moderate either a too-liberal or a too-conservative policy. An important element in the Alesina and Rosenthal model is the 'electoral surprise'. They argue that midterm losses are mainly produced by the sub-group of moderates who were surprised by the outcome of the presidential election. The probability of splitting the ticket and counterbalancing the president's policies is higher when the degree of electoral surprise is high (Scheve and Tomz 1999: 510). Therefore, midterm losses are linked to the electoral behavior of the most surprised moderates.

EXPLAINING MIDTERM LOSSES ELSEWHERE: FROM AMERICA TO EUROPEAN MULTI-PARTY SYSTEMS

In the late 1970s the theoretical arguments about midterm losses were imported from the US to European multi-party systems. They were applied with one main amendment, which originates in the fact that ‘low stimulus’ elections in Europe are not always held at midterm of the national electoral cycle. Based on the electoral cycle literature for the government popularity in the US (Goodhart and Bhansali 1970; Stimson 1976) and the UK (Miller and Mackie 1973), it has been argued that the outcomes of less important elections differ depending on whether they take place at the beginning, in the middle or towards the end of the national electoral cycle.

'Low stimulus' elections in the German context

Dinkel (1977) pioneered this modification of the analysis of midterm losses. He observed that the performance of the federal government parties in German state elections (*Landtagswahlen*) depends on the timing of such an election within the federal electoral cycle. Testing a cyclical model of vote losses at state elections, he concluded that the greater the distance to the federal election, the greater the losses of the government parties, while their probability of winning a state election is greatest at the beginning or at the end of the federal electoral cycle. He concludes that ‘less important elections – above all state elections – are systematically influenced by the superior constellation in the federal parliament (...), the losses of the governing parties are a function of time within the electoral cycle at the federal level’ (Dinkel 1978: 63)³.

Dinkel’s model has been tested by a number of scholars. Anderson and Ward (1996) studied German state elections (and also British by-elections), which they classified as ‘*barometer elections*’. These are ‘elections that reflect changes in citizens’ attitudes toward the government in response to changing political and economic conditions, absent the direct opportunity to install a new executive or remove the party in power’ (Anderson and Ward 1996: 448). More focused on Dinkel’s hypothesis of an electoral cycle, Jeffery and Hough analyze the performances of the main government party, the main opposition party, and smaller parties in relation to the place of the state election in the federal electoral cycle. They conclude, for the period between 1991 and 1998, that ‘there is no clear pattern in the relation of Land to federal elections ... the trend is one where the federal–Länder electoral relationship has become less clear and predictable. Länder elections seem to have become less second-order than they were’ (Jeffery and Hough 2001: 93). This has been confirmed on the basis of a time series analysis of ‘*Politbarometer*’ data by Schmitt and Reif (2003), and was tentatively explained by the irritations that German re-unification introduced in the formerly

highly stable and predictable German electoral system (see similarly Hough and Jeffrey 2006: 119). This is also why the results of studies trying to identify a balancing mechanism in German state elections (Lohmann et al. 1997; Gaines and Crombez 2004; Kern and Hainmueller 2006) are to be taken with a grain of salt.

Presidential elections in European premier-presidential regimes

In quite a number of European electoral systems, the post of the president is filled by way of direct election although the presidential powers are not decisive for determining the policies of the national government. As these presidential elections are clearly ‘less important’ than legislative elections, the usual expectations about their results should apply. However, it is not so much the electoral behavior of citizens that has been at the center of scholarly attention in this field (see however Tavits 2009; Magalhães 2007; van der Brug et al. 2000), but rather the activities of directly and indirectly elected presidents (such as the frequency of their vetoes, e.g. Köker 2014) or their constitutional powers (Roper 2002). There is also a certain predominance of country studies and country chapter books (e.g. Elgie 1999; Hloušek 2013), while truly comparative studies are only recently becoming more prominent. In short, the study of less important elections of presidents in premier-presidential systems has been subjected to constitutional and agency issues more than to electoral research. Part of the explanation of that phenomenon could be that presidential elections *per se* are more idiosyncratic – because they are tied to the personality of the presidential candidates – than parliamentary elections are, and regularities might be harder to detect there. Another part of the story could be that a large number of premier-presidential systems emerged in the post-communist Eastern Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain – a territory in which a stable party system and well-established partisan ties among citizens are still in the making. This again could have had a detrimental effect on generalizable findings. It is true at the same time that this research area is waiting for a comprehensive study pursuing an electoral behavior agenda.

A new kind of ‘less important’ elections was introduced in the European electoral system in 1979 when the European Parliament was directly elected for the first time. The holding of European Parliament elections and the subsequent study of them in the tradition of the US midterm elections research have contributed enormously to the establishment of the study of less important elections outside the United States.

THE SECOND-ORDER ELECTION MODEL

Writing in the aftermath of the first supra-national election of the members of the European Parliament (EP), Reif and Schmitt regarded this new ‘type’ of election

not primarily as European but as a pale reflection of national elections (Marsh and Franklin 1996: 11). They distinguished between two types of elections: ‘first-order elections’ (FOE) and ‘second-order elections’ (SOE). The view of EP elections as SOE captures two elements: that they are secondary compared with national parliamentary elections and that they are ‘national’ rather than ‘European’ contests (Hix and Marsh 2007: 496). First-order national elections are those which determine the composition of national governments. These are national parliamentary or presidential elections, depending on the political regime. Second-order national elections, by contrast, are less important elections. In addition to EP elections, other examples of SOE are local, municipal and regional elections, by-elections in Britain, and midterm elections in the US and in many presidential systems of Latin America. Actually, mid-term elections as they are known in the Americas have always been the prototype and prime example of SOE.

The main hypothesis and also the novelty of the second-order election model (SOE model) compared with the previous studies of less important contests is not the distinction of the elections as such, but their reference to different arenas of a system of multi-level electoral politics. In order to understand the results of EP elections, one first has to appreciate the decisive role of the political situation in the first-order political arena at the time when the second-order elections are being held (Reif and Schmitt 1980: 8). Following Dinkel’s model, Reif and Schmitt related the extent of the losses for the incumbent party/parties to the timing of the EP election in the ‘first-order’ electoral cycle. The SOE model does not focus on economic performance variables. Therefore, if we want to identify a ‘referendum’ element in the SOE model, it is probably best captured by the timing of the EP elections in the first-order electoral cycle (Marsh 2007: 74). The second main amendment of the second-order elections model to the broader paradigm of midterm losses is the inclusion of party properties beyond the government-opposition status. Irrelevant in the US two-party context, ‘party size’ is of particular importance in the analysis of ‘low stimulus’ elections in multi-party systems.

The central assumption of the SOE model is that in all these less important elections, EP elections among them, there is less at stake because the results will not determine the partisan composition of the executive of the first-order political arena (Reif and Schmitt 1980: 9). To be sure, the classification of different types of elections according to the ‘less at stake’ criterion does not lead to a simple dichotomy because not all first-order elections are equally important and not all second-order elections are equally unimportant (van der Eijk et al. 1996). In addition, the ‘less at stake’ dimension should not be misunderstood as a static element of the model. This is all the more true in an unfinished electoral system such as the European Union. It was only in the 2014 election that the selection of the president of the European Commission was linked (so far indirectly) with the electoral success of the lead candidates of the EP political groups (Schmitt and Teperoglou 2015; Schmitt et al. 2015).

Initially, Reif and Schmitt's effort to understand EP elections results focused on the following dimensions of electoral contests: the specific-arena dimension, the institutional-procedural dimension, the campaign, the main-arena political change dimension and the social and cultural change dimension. Of these the one that has been most thoroughly studied is probably that of the electoral campaign (e.g. de Vreese et al. 2007). Most of the studies that followed focused on aggregate predictions of the SOE model based on the less-at-stake dimension. Until the last EP election of 2014 the model consistently received empirical support (e.g. Freire 2004; Hix and Marsh 2011; Norris 1997; Reif 1985, 1997; Schmitt and Teperoglou 2015; Schmitt 2005, 2009; Teperoglou 2010; van der Brug and van der Eijk 2007; van der Eijk and Franklin 1996).

Aggregate hypotheses of the second-order election model

- 1 turnout is lower than in first-order elections,
- 2 national governmental parties lose, following the first-order electoral cycle,
- 3 large parties do worse,
- 4 small parties (and in particular new flash and ideologically extreme parties) fare better.

Turnout

Much as in US midterm elections, turnout is expected to be lower in second-order elections compared with the preceding national first-order contest (Reif 1985: 15). Low turnout does not necessarily indicate a lack of legitimacy of EU politics, a point that is usually raised by media commentators shortly after each EP election. One of the main reasons for the lower participation levels is linked to Campbell's seminal work (1960): the lack of politicization and electoral mobilization in these second-order elections. For Schmitt and Mannheimer (1991), the 'habitual voting' mechanism is in line with the SOE model. Based on the post-electoral surveys of the European Elections Study 1989, participation in that EP election was primarily found to be the result of 'habitual voting'; citizens went to the polls just because they were used to doing so on election day, regardless of their attitudes towards the EU and their more general political involvement (see also Franklin 2004; Franklin and Hobolt 2010).

Some studies have insisted on an alternative set of factors explaining low levels of turnout in EP elections. 'Voluntary abstainers' as they have been called by Blondel *cum suis* (Blondel et al. 1997, 1998) are those citizens who decide to abstain due to matters related to European politics. For them this is a conscious decision related to the lack of viable choice options that can represent their Euroscepticism without undesired undertones of an e.g. extreme-left or extreme-right political orientation. So far, the observed effects of attitudes toward the EU on turnout are typically small – but, given the growing policy reach of the Union and the increasing opposition this is evoking in the citizenry, this is not necessarily the case. In the past, the weakness of the 'European'

explanation of low turnout has been frequently addressed (e.g. Schmitt and van der Eijk 2007). Nevertheless, other studies (e.g. Schmitt 2005) that include the new post-communist member states show that abstentions in EP elections in Eastern Europe are partly driven by EU-scepticism, while the same does not hold in older member states. Flickinger and Studlar (2007) find that in the old EU member states higher aggregate levels of support for EU membership correlate with higher turnout rates, while in the new member states national politics factors (e.g. trust in government) play a more prominent role. Alternative explanations focus on structural-level causes of abstention in EP elections as the EU expands (e.g. Franklin 2007a and 2007b).

Franklin, van der Eijk, and Oppenhuis (1996) have argued that the frequency of the elections may affect electoral participation and some recent studies investigate whether the second-order nature of EP elections may also depress turnout in national elections (Franklin and Hobolt 2010). Their main conclusion is that, due to the failure to mobilize new voters in these elections, it is more likely for these second-order non-voters not to vote in subsequent national elections either. Another study (Schmitt et al. 2008, 2009) relates turnout in SOE to dissatisfaction with one's last first-order vote choice.

Many studies have focused on the individual-level determinants of turnout (e.g. Franklin et al. 1996; Schmitt 2005). Macro-level systemic and contextual factors, such as compulsory voting, the size of the party system, the nature of the electoral system, Sunday voting, last first-order participation rate, concurrent national elections, and post-communist environment, can be studied in tandem with individual-level characteristics, such as interest in politics, campaign mobilization, attitudes towards the EU, party attachment etc., as well as with socio-demographic characteristics.

Time and party size as moderators of parties' electoral fortunes

Another main hypothesis of the SOE model is that we observe in the EP elections different electoral performance of the incumbent party (or parties) as a function of the time distance of the SOE from the previous FOE. The losses for governing parties will be greater the closer a SOE is located around the midterm between two FOE. Reif and Schmitt introduced in the analysis of 'low stimulus' elections the performance not only of the governmental parties, but also that of the opposition parties. They hypothesize that these parties will suffer losses too. While governing parties in EP elections tend to lose votes regardless of their size (and their party family; see Hix and Marsh 2007: 503), only big opposition parties usually see their electoral percentages shrink (Marsh 2005). Another new variable in the theoretical paradigm of 'less important' elections is the performance of the small parties. According to the SOE model, smaller parties are expected to perform better in the EP elections compared with a first-order

election. Schmitt (2005: 662) suggested using the index of the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP, introduced by Laakso and Taagepera 1979) to test this hypothesis. If small parties perform better in the EP election, the ENEP will be higher compared with that for the preceding FOE. The main rationale behind this hypothesis is that there is a desire to switch from a strategic FOE to a sincere SOE vote choice when there is less at stake because voters here can express their ‘true first preference’ even if the chosen party will not gain representation (Schmitt et al. 2008, 2009).

Do all the small parties, irrespective of their party family, perform better in an EP election? The findings are contradictory. Reif (1997) claims that small parties’ gains are greater for extreme parties and new parties, while Marsh (2005) does not find any correlation of electoral success with party extremity. Hix and Marsh (2007) find that anti-EU parties on average do much better in European than in national elections. Curtice (1989: 227) suggests that Green parties consistently perform better in EP elections, while Marsh (1998) observes only modest support.

Main amendments/revisions of the original second-order election model

From the first study of the 1979 election onwards, we can identify over time two main amendments of the original model. The first one is that subsequent studies have offered typologies of voting in second-order elections. Van der Eijk and Franklin (1996) discovered that one of the major types of voting in EP elections is a swing into a protest vote against the incumbent government, the political class, the programs, and/or the candidates of the parties voters would normally vote for, or to indicate support for a particular policy. Using a term from the lexicon of football hooliganism, this has been characterized as ‘*voting with the boot*’ (e.g. Oppenhuis et al. 1996: 301–4; Franklin 2005). Thus, less salient EP elections offer voters the opportunity to express a (temporary) dissatisfaction with the party that they usually vote for by deciding either to defect (i.e. vote for another party) or to abstain. Another form of vote switching is to vote for the party they prefer most, given the fact that the EP election outcomes thus far cannot be expected to have severe political consequences. Voters do not tend to vote strategically (in terms of not wasting one’s vote on a party that is unlikely to be a viable contender for government office, or to vote for a party that might have a destabilizing effect in Parliament) and vote sincerely ‘*with the heart*’ (by supporting the first electoral preference). The reverse holds for ‘*voting with the head*’ (Oppenhuis et al. 1996: 301–4; Marsh and Franklin 1996: 16–21; Franklin 2005). Here, voters do behave strategically by supporting an opposition party to the previously preferred government party – thus signaling their discontent with government policy making at the time of the second-order election.

For an electoral ‘honeymoon’ period some scholars (Reif and Schmitt 1980) suggest that the victorious government parties will receive greater or near identical support in an EP election shortly after the first-order election (post-electoral euphoria). Others (van der Eijk and Franklin 1996) argue that more voters will tend to ‘vote with their heart’ during this period. For the later term, van der Eijk and Franklin (1996) again argue that the closer the EP election comes to the next FOE, the more likely it is that citizens ‘vote with the boot’ (or ‘strategic defection’; see Schmitt et al. 2008, 2009), while Reif and Schmitt (1980) claim that these elections are characterized by some recovery in national government popularity, so that parties will tend to lose fewer votes than during mid-term elections. For the intermediate period, there is a consensus that losses will be greater than either early or late (e.g. Reif 1985; Van der Eijk and Franklin 1996). Here we mainly observe instrumental voting against the government ('cyclical signaling'; see Schmitt et al. 2008, 2009).

The aggregate predictions of the second-order election model have ‘overshadowed’ the somewhat hidden ‘micro-foundations’ of the SOE model. The second main revision of the model since its inception in the early 1980s is this research orientation. These are the hypotheses about the motivations and intentions of individual voters that drive their behavior in a second-order election (e.g. Carrubba and Timpone 2005; Hobolt and Wittrock 2011; Hobolt and Spoon 2012; Schmitt et al. 2008, 2009, and Weber 2011). We can identify three different mechanisms that are likely to affect inter-election vote patterns according to the SOE model: mobilization, sincere voting, and strategic voting (Schmitt et al. 2008, 2009). Mobilization only has an impact on SOE abstentions, while sincere as well as strategic voting choices are expected to affect both SOE abstainers and SOE defectors. A series of micro-level hypotheses can be built around these three mechanisms. We can distinguish between two main groups of predictions: the first is about turnout, and the second is about vote switching (Schmitt et al. 2008, 2009).

Micro-level hypotheses of the second-order election model

Turnout:

- 1 *Mobilization*: FOE voters abstain in SOE simply because of the lack of politicization and mobilization,
- 2 *Sincere abstention*: FOE voters abstain in SOE because of their Euroscepticism and the lack of viable choice options (e.g. Blondel et al. 1997),
- 3 *Strategic abstention*: FOE voters abstain in order to signal discontent with the performance of their previous first-order party choice at the time of the SOE,
- 4 *Cyclical signaling*: strategic abstentions are expected to increase with decreasing distance to first-order midterm. This happens because of the tendency of government popularity to evolve in a cyclical manner, with a depression shortly after midterm (e.g. Stimson 1976)

Vote switching:

- 1 *Strategic defection*: people defect from their FOE vote because of their intention to signal discontent with the performance of their previous vote choice (see also 'voting with the boot'),
- 2 *Cyclical signaling*: strategic defection should increase with decreasing distance to first-order midterm,
- 3 *Systemic signaling*: strategic defection should increase with increasing clarity of policy responsibilities,
- 4 *Sincere defection*: voters support a different party in a SOE because they are closer to it on policy grounds. We can identify two possible reasons for this. The first one is that in a SOE there is no danger of wasting one's vote. The second reason is that arena-specific issues might call for arena-specific vote choices (e.g. Clark and Rohrschneider 2009)

By-elections and regional elections as SOE

The outcomes of the British by-elections have been analyzed under the 'midterm losses' paradigm mainly by Mughan (1986)⁴. He built three models of 'government vote losses': the turnout model (referring among others to Campbell 1960), the referendum model and the personal vote model. For the latter, Mughan refers to the work by Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina (1984) in which we can also find the roots of the 'balancing' theory (for more details on testing the models, see Mughan 1986: 767–72). He concluded that by-elections could be seen as 'national referendums on government performance' (Mughan 1986: 772–3).

A number of different studies have tested the applicability of the SOE model to regional elections in Europe, North and Latin America (among others, see Erikson and Filippov 2001; Jeffery and Hough 2003; Pallarés and Keating 2003; Schakel and Jeffery 2013; Thorlakson 2015; Remmer and Gélineau 2003). Overall, two of the SOE hypotheses have been corroborated almost universally: the first is that turnout is lower. However, provincial elections in Canada seem to be an exception to this rule; here the turnout difference does not always favor federal elections, probably due to the felt importance of provincial politics and the less-than-perfect nationalization (i.e. structural congruence) of provincial party systems (Thorlakson 2015: 172). The second is that anti-government swings are observed, and opposition parties fare better – in relative terms. This expectation is supported by a comparison of Canadian federal and sub-national election outcomes (Erikson and Filippov 2001). While government parties regularly tend to lose, the notion of an electoral cycle does not always help in understanding the SOE electoral results (Schakel 2014: 4; Johnston 1999 for the Canadian case; Schmitt and Reif 2003 for Germany).

Some other studies have compared different types of SOE in an attempt to depict a 'hierarchy' among them: for the British local and EP elections, Heath, McLean, Taylor, and Curtice concluded that 'if elections to the European Parliament are regarded as second-order, then we might think of elections to local council as "one and three-quarters order"' (1999: 391). Another study comparing

regional and EP elections in Greece, Spain and Portugal indicates that there is a high dissimilarity between these contests and that voters treat each SOE differently. Some voters in local elections choose one of the larger parties, instead of switching to smaller ones, as they do in the European elections. Overall, municipal elections appear to be two-faced by nature. They maintain characteristics of a first- and second-order election (Skrinis and Teperoglou 2008).

THE LIMITS OF THE SECOND-ORDER ELECTION MODEL: WHEN EP ELECTIONS PROGRESSIVELY LOSE THEIR SECOND-ORDERNESS

We identify two main sources that can diminish the adequacy of the SOE model. The first one is that the utility of the theoretical paradigm by Reif and Schmitt is getting weaker when applied to analysis of the EP results in the post-communist countries. The second one has to do with the *skeleton of analysis* of the model itself: the ‘less at stake’ dimension. In the 2004 EP election we observed an inconsistency in testing the model between the old Western EU member countries (plus Cyprus and Malta), and the eight member countries of Eastern Europe (see Schmitt 2005; Marsh 2005; Koepke and Ringe 2006). The losses of governmental parties did not follow the FOE cycle and, in some of these eight countries, smaller parties did not perform better compared with the previous FOE. The explanation for these ‘failures’ is linked to the fact that the SOE model has been built upon consolidated electoral and party systems, while in these eight and now eleven (including Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania) additional EU countries a stable and consolidated party system has yet to develop (Schmitt 2005: 666). Aiming to justify these exceptions, some scholars have tried to refine the SOE model by introducing in the analysis some new variables, most of them from the broader ‘referendum theory’ for US midterm losses⁵. They have related the performance of government not to the timing of the EP election, but rather to the state of the economy (using indicators such as unemployment, economic growth, and inflation; see Kousser 2004; Marsh 2005; Schakel 2014 for regional elections in the post-communist countries). However, the results are inconclusive. Marsh (2005) states that the timing of the election, rather than economic performance, is a better proxy for the governmental losses, while the other two studies highlight the role of the economy in determining the vote in ‘low stimulus’ elections.

Moving to the second main possible limitation for the SOE model, its main assumption that there is less at stake in the EP elections compared with the FOEs is arguably ignoring the growing policy authority of the EU level of European governance, as well as efforts to strengthen the authority of the European Parliament in the EU-level policy-making process. We might possibly identify a ‘threat’ for the SOE model coming from the politicization of European integration in general (Hooghe and Marks 2009): political conflicts increasingly cross

national boundaries on the ‘higher level’ of the multi-level system of European governance.

A central question for the 2014 EP election was whether changing socio-political circumstances and periods of economic turmoil, such as those experienced across Southern Europe, have the potential to change the second-order character of the contest. Have these EP elections become ‘critical elections’ in the sense of V. O. Key (1955)⁶ or have the SOE characteristics prevailed? A major conclusion for the study of these elections in the countries of Southern Europe is that the contest has maintained its characteristics of a classic SOE. Nevertheless, we can also observe indications of a more critical contest in which the EU divide becomes more polarized and important in determining voting choices. This however is concentrated primarily on FOE under conditions of high electoral mobilization. European Parliament elections then primarily serve as ‘confirmatory’ elections in which realignments that occurred in the first-order electoral arena are ‘rubber-stamped’ (see Teperoglou et al. 2015; Schmitt and Teperoglou 2015).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have made an effort to review the findings of more than half a century of research into electoral behavior in less important elections – midterm elections in the US, and various types of second-order elections in Europe (sub-national elections of the members of state parliaments, or simultaneous supra-national elections of the members of the European Parliament). The particular property of this field of electoral research is that electoral decisions – to participate or not in a contest and, if so, which party to support – is never analyzed in isolation, but usually with reference to another such decision in an election of greater importance. Therefore, we can also think about this stream of analyses as focusing on inter-election voting patterns.

All started in the 1950s in the US when the ‘surge and decline’ mechanism of electoral support between on-year elections (presidential elections) and off-year elections (midterm congressional elections) was identified. Pretty much a child of its time, this understanding of inter-election variation of voting behavior concentrated on the informational and mobilization aspects of the game. In this view, an *equilibrium* of partisan sorting was reached in ‘low stimulus’ midterm elections while, two years later, at ‘high stimulus’ presidential elections, the swing of the pendulum was affected by short-term factors of various kinds. More particularly, issue and leadership effects were observed to gain greater importance compared with the normal vote at midterm, which was mostly driven by partisanship. Some twenty years later, in the 1970s, a rational-choice-inspired perspective on inter-election change gained in prominence – the ‘referendum’ approach, which focused more on the economic achievements and shortcomings of the incumbent administration at midterm than on partisanship and mobilization.

At the same time, this kind of electoral research crossed the Atlantic and spilled over to Europe in order to inspire the study of electoral behavior in less important elections there. Applying US-grown models of political behavior in less important elections, there were important institutional and procedural differences to overcome. One was that ‘midterm’ elections in Europe are not always held at midterm, but at various times in the national electoral cycle. Another was that party politics in Europe was (and still is) somewhat more variegated compared with its counter-image in the US: coalition governments are the rule rather than the exception in Europe, and there are relevant parties of very different sizes and ideological extremity which are competing for electoral representation.

These were some of the challenges that inspired a European answer to the US-based midterm elections literature. There are, however, two more. One additional challenge was the introduction of a series of less important elections in the calendar of national electoral politics of the member countries of the European Union (which called itself European Community at the time): direct elections of the members of the European Parliament. After decades of deliberation and political controversy, this project – which aimed at democratizing European level politics – finally took off in June 1979. The scholarly answer here was a proposal to consider these new electoral contests as additional national second-order elections held simultaneously in the whole Union but at different places in the national electoral cycles.

An additional challenge for this field of studies was presenting itself roughly a quarter of a century later. After the collapse of the Soviet empire, many post-communist Eastern European countries became members of the European Union, and were included in the electoral process of selecting their representatives for the European Parliament. The challenge here was that these newly democratizing polities had not (and in part still have not) developed the kind of consolidated party systems which the second-order election theory assumed as a stable basis of electoral competition. As a consequence, many predictions of the SOE model – such as that government parties lose, or that small parties have brighter prospects in these contests – could not be corroborated in the elections of these new member countries.

Where does that lead us to and what are the likely challenges ahead? The study of electoral behavior in less important elections, we believe, has three important tasks to address. One is to increase the outreach of our theories, to increase the level of generalization. This asks for more mutual recognition of the work that is done in the US and elsewhere, but in addition for a new class of SOE research at a higher level that would combine e.g. the analysis of electoral behavior in US midterm elections, EP elections, and state elections in federal systems.

A second and related task is to include contextual parameters in the multi-level analysis of electoral behavior in different kinds of elections. The properties of the political regime, the electoral system applied, the format of party competition, the degree of ideological polarization, these and more contextual parameters are expected to have an impact on the electoral choices. The broader the scope

of analysis, the more promising are these multi-level approaches to the study of electoral behavior.

And having said this, an important third task of inter-election voting studies is to concentrate more than in the past on the micro-foundations of electoral behavior in less important elections. How important are balancing motivations beyond the narrow confines of a two-party system in a presidential regime such as the US? What is the role and relevance of arena-specific issue voting in European Parliament elections, at different times and in different member countries? Moreover, are less important elections, such as the SOE to the European Parliament, an arena used primarily for strategic purposes – in order to signal discontent e.g. with the policy output of the national political process, or are they – because there is less at stake – rather an opportunity to vote sincerely? It is not that we do not know enough to answer these questions. But we certainly do not know enough to construct a comprehensive model of inter-election voting decisions.

Notes

- 1 The explanation in terms of withdrawn coattails is an example of statistical ‘regression to the mean’ (Erikson 1988: 1012).
- 2 The coattail voting approach has also been tested in some Latin American countries. Evidence from Brazil suggests that we have to take into account the extent of political decentralization, which is likely to produce ‘reverse coattail effects’ (Ames 1994; Samuels 2000).
- 3 G. Fabritius (although employing a qualitative analysis) arrives at similar conclusions; see G. Fabritius ‘Sind Landtagswahlen Bundesteilwahlen?’, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B21/79: 23–38.
- 4 We refer to by-elections in those parliamentary systems where there is no possibility to fill automatically a casual vacancy (caused either by the death or resignation of a member of the Parliament) by the next person on the list (Mughan 1986: 762).
- 5 Refinements of the original SOE model could also be formulated by studying the SOE micro-foundations; see among others Hobolt et al. 2008; Weber 2007.
- 6 According to Key (1955), elections are critical when the traditional coalitions between social groups and their political agents are subject to profound and lasting realignments.

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Clarity of Responsibility and Vote Choice

Thiago Silva and Guy D. Whitten

INTRODUCTION

Among the major theories about how institutions influence voting behavior, the theory of clarity of responsibility is a relative newcomer. It was developed by G. Bingham Powell and Guy D. Whitten in a 1993 paper published in the *American Journal of Political Science* as a possible solution to a puzzle in the economic voting literature. Although there are substantial disagreements about how the basic concepts in this theory should be measured, it has received robust support across empirical tests and has been extended in a variety of interesting ways. In this chapter, we begin with a discussion of the origins of this theory. We then discuss the influence that this theory has had on studies of economic voting and the range of ways in which it has been studied, challenged, and extended.

DEVELOPING THE THEORY OF CLARITY OF RESPONSIBILITY

The vast literature on economic voting (see Duch and Stevenson 2008, Hibbs 2006, Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2013, and this *Handbook*, Volume 2 [Chapter 26], for recent reviews of this literature) has overwhelmingly found support for the basic theoretical proposition that voters hold incumbent politicians responsible for the performance of the economy. In this section, we briefly recount the history of this extensive literature as it pertains to the development of the theory of clarity of responsibility. Its development was driven by a combination of theoretical

innovations and the expansion of cases that tested successive theories of economic voting.

The most widely cited early articles on economic voting models are Goodhart and Bhansali (1970), Kramer (1971), and Fair (1978). Each of these articles presented empirical tests of a simple economic voting theory in which objective measures of macroeconomic fluctuations in the period prior to an election were thought to influence aggregate support for the incumbent party. Goodhart and Bhansali's tests were conducted using data from the United Kingdom while Kramer and Fair used data from the United States.

In the early 1980s, substantial efforts were made to refine both the theories and empirical tests of economic voting. Kinder and Kiewiet (1981) explored the individual-level mechanisms of economic voting and introduced the term 'sociotropic' voting to explain the mechanism through which individuals would hold incumbents responsible for macro conditions rather than individuals' own personal or micro-level economic fortunes. In response to this, Kramer (1983) added a new wrinkle to economic voting theory by suggesting that some elements of economic performance are politically relevant while others are not. In doing so, Kramer framed one of the major challenges to students of economic voting – theoretically identifying and empirically measuring the politically relevant aspects of economic performance. Hibbs, Rivers, and Vasilatos (1982) proposed that the ideology of governing parties would play a role in determining which economic indicators would be used by voters to evaluate economic performances. Their idea was that, since parties of different ideological viewpoints advocated for different aspects of the economy, they would hold governments accountable for the aspect of the economy that governing parties emphasized. In particular, Hibbs et al. advanced the proposition that governing parties from the left would be held more accountable for unemployment while parties from the right would be held more accountable for inflation. Together, these new theoretical developments moved theories of economic voting from the simple diagram on the left side of Figure 5.1 to the more complicated diagram depicted on the right side of this figure.

While Kinder and Kiewiet, and Kramer relied on data from the United States to test their theories of economic voting, Hibbs et al. utilized data from the United States, the United Kingdom, and West Germany. In their study of West Germany, they struggled to make sense of results from a time period during which the nation was governed by a grand coalition of the two major political parties (the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats, which were ruling together from 1966 to 1969). As the authors discuss, this presented a challenge for their theoretical expectations about the interplay of government ideology and objective economic indicators to determine the impact of the politically relevant economy. While they found some support for their theoretical propositions across all three nations they studied, they also found considerable cross-national variation in the way that the economy influenced support for incumbent politicians.

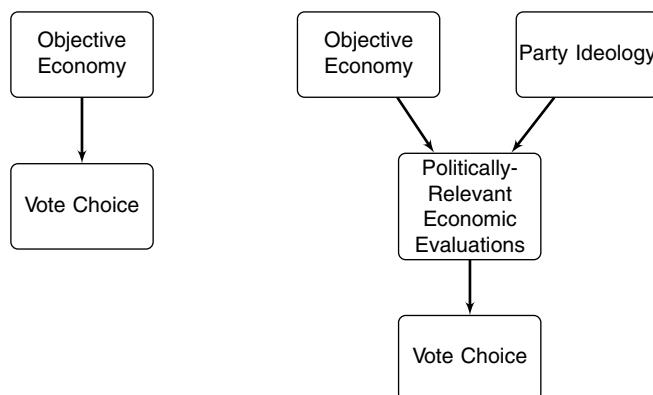


Figure 5.1 Early theories of economic voting

This heterogeneity of economic voting evidence was echoed in Lewis-Beck's (1986) attempt to investigate the individual-level mechanisms of economic voting across nations. Using survey data from Britain, France, Germany, and Italy, Lewis-Beck found evidence that economic evaluations mattered for vote choice in each of the nations studied, but that there was considerable heterogeneity across these countries in terms of the strength of the economic voting relationship. This led Lewis-Beck to raise questions about the economic voting enterprise as a whole:

All of these findings, stimulating as they may be, leave many issues unsettled. A major one, obviously, is whether the strong economic effects are transitory. Are they merely a product of the high salience of economic concerns at the time of the survey? Perhaps, in the context of better economic times, the effects would be much less. This brings up the related question of how permanent a place economic conditions have in models of voting behavior. If economic issues are a 'sometime thing' for voters, then their status as vote determinants is diminished, in comparison to the ever-present, long-term of class, religion, and ideology. (Lewis-Beck 1986, p. 343)

The first pooled time series tests of economic voting theory by Strøm and Lipset (1984), Lewis-Beck and Mitchell (1990), and Paldam (1991) all reached similarly pessimistic conclusions about heterogeneity in economic voting. The title of Paldam's contribution 'How Robust is the Vote Function? A Study of Seventeen Nations over Four Decades' conveys both his research question and the data that he used to try to answer it. The start of his conclusion communicates both his frustration with the findings of his study and his hopes that a way forward can be found:

The whole argument above is that the VP-function [Vote Popularity] is a function that is on the one hand unstable and, on the other hand, often highly significant. This combination has led to great research efforts, for the combination of significance and instability appears to suggest that we are missing one little trick that would make the function stable. It may be a mathematical reformulation, the inclusion of a crucial missing variable, or something else; once the trick has succeeded, everything is pushed forward with a full decimal point. There is, of course, a great incentive to write the paper presenting the trick. It would surely be one of the most quoted papers – so I am trying. (Paldam 1991, pp. 28–29)

Paldam went on to suggest that the solution to the instability of economic voting results might require more than a ‘little’ trick, emphasizing the need for a combination of deep theoretical thinking about the micro-foundations of economic voting and the collection of better data, especially on political aspects of economic voting models.

Responding to this heterogeneous evidence of economic voting in these pioneering cross-national studies, Powell and Whitten (1993) suggested that the influence of perceived economic performance on a voter’s choice might vary with the political institutional context. More specifically, Powell and Whitten posited that the influence of the economy on voting behavior would be strongest when the combination of institutional arrangements and the parties holding power across powerful institutions is such that it is clear in the minds of voters who is responsible for recent economic performances.

The dotted lines in Figure 5.2 depict the expected conditioning relationship of this variable, labeled ‘clarity of responsibility’, on economic voting, which led to the following expectations:

- When responsibility for policy-making is clear, economic voting relationships will be strongest.
- When responsibility for policy-making is clouded by institutional settings, coalition government, and other circumstances, economic voting relationships will be weaker or non-existent.

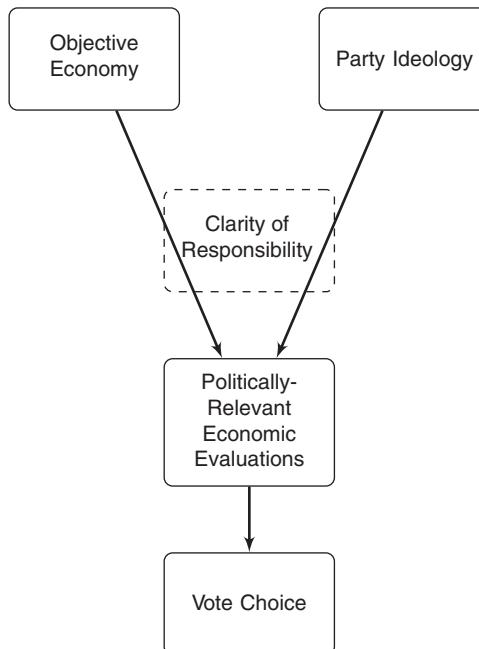


Figure 5.2 Economic voting with clarity of responsibility

In order to measure this conditioning variable, Powell and Whitten relied heavily on studies about the diffusion of political power, particularly the work of Arend Lijphart (1984). In his contrast between Westminster and Consensus models of democracy, Lijphart argues that the Consensus model can be characterized as a system in which the power is shared, dispersed, and restrained. The Consensus model of democracy would restrain the rule by a legislative majority through factors such as executive power-sharing in broad coalition cabinets, legislative bicameralism, minority representation with veto powers, multi-party systems, federalism, and decentralization (Lijphart 1984, pp. 23–9; p. 67; p. 90; p. 106).¹

Powell and Whitten argued that each of these factors which Lijphart identified as restraining majority rule can also potentially make responsibility for policy outcomes less clear. They built an initial measure of clarity of responsibility, in which one point was added based on the presence of each of the following conditions: ‘weakly cohesive parties, opposition sharing of committee chairs, opposition control of policymaking institution, pure minority government, and each additional (competing) party added to the governing coalition’ (Powell and Whitten 1993, p. 406). They then calculated the average value of this ‘lack of clarity’ scale for each country election in their sample, and divided countries into a high-clarity sample if this average value was less than 2.0, and a low-clarity sample otherwise. They estimated economic voting models on these two samples and compared the results. As expected, their results indicated strong economic voting in the high-clarity sample and weak to non-existent economic voting in the low-clarity sample.

IMPACT, EXTENSIONS, AND DISAGREEMENTS IN THE ECONOMIC VOTING LITERATURE

As discussed in the previous section, Powell and Whitten’s theory of clarity of responsibility came directly out of a puzzle in the economic voting literature. The most optimistic reading of this paper and its role in the subsequent economic voting literature would be that the theory presented in it was the one ‘little’ trick that Martin Paldam was calling for in 1991. But even if this is the case, it is clear from the number of citations of this paper, as depicted in Figure 5.3, and the volume of subsequent work in the economic voting literature on clarity of responsibility, that important questions remain about how clarity of responsibility works. In this section, we provide a brief discussion of some of the work in this area. Given the volume of citations, this section is certainly not intended to be an exhaustive review of the relevant literature. Instead, we have selected a broad range of publications on economic voting in which clarity of responsibility plays a central theoretical role.

Several studies, with different levels of data aggregation and refinements on the original concept of ‘clarity of responsibility’, have reinforced the

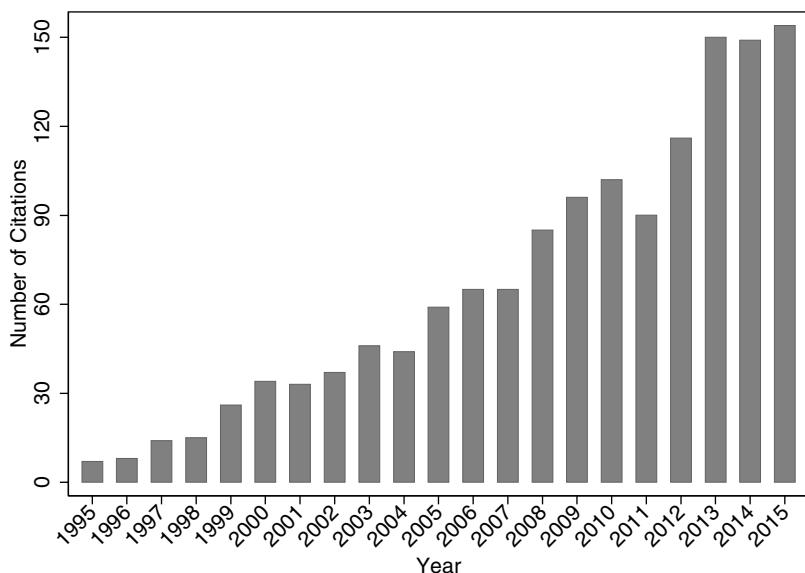


Figure 5.3 Google Scholar citations of Powell and Whitten (1993)

aggregate findings of Powell and Whitten (e.g. Palmer and Whitten 1999). Anderson (2000), analyzing survey data from 13 European countries, also reinforced Powell and Whitten's results (1993). Due to its unusual combination of political institutions, particularly its dual governance system, France has been an interesting case for analyzing the effect of 'clarity of responsibility' on economic voting. In semi-presidential systems, such as France, the executive power consists of a president and a prime minister. This duality of the executive branch can lead to a 'cohabitation' scenario where the president is from a different political party than the prime minister. This can be seen as a special kind of divided government, because under such a context the power share is not only between branches – i.e. executive versus legislative branch – but also within the executive. Studies on economic voting in France reveal that, under cohabitation, voters' attributions of responsibility for the country's economic performance shift from the president to the prime minister (Lewis-Beck and Nadeau 2000). These studies also reveal that cohabitation is an important factor in reducing the effect of the economic vote (Lewis-Beck and Nadeau 2004).

Other studies have proposed additional theoretical components of clarity of responsibility. Bengtsson (2004), for instance, adding two more contextual factors (volatility and turnout) to the concept of 'clarity of responsibility', also reaffirmed that economic voting only appears (or is more likely) under clear responsibility contexts. In an exploration of whether there might yet be some forms of economic voting in less clear responsibility settings, Williams and

Whitten (2015) developed a theory that combined elements from Downs' (1957) theory of spatial party competition with economic voting. They found evidence of spatial contagion effects in less clear electoral settings, which indicated that there may yet be a form of economic voting in these settings.

Inevitably, there have been a number of critiques of the theory and suggestions of alternative research strategies. One of the biggest questions that has been raised is the degree to which clarity of responsibility applies in presidential democracies. Much of the first work along these lines has come from studies of the United States. Nadeau and Lewis-Beck (2001), for instance, found no support for the idea that divided government blurs clarity of responsibility. They found that voters tend to blame the president for the national economic outcomes regardless of whether the legislature is controlled by her allies or her rivals (Nadeau and Lewis-Beck 2001, p. 171). Norpoth (2001) also found evidence suggesting that a divided government poses no obstacle to economic voting. According to his findings, when voters are faced with a divided government there is no evidence that they become incapable of assigning responsibility for economic outcomes. Rather, under a divided government, voters (at least American voters, according to the author's research) tend to solve the problem by absolving the congress and assigning responsibility for the economy to the president (Norpoth 2001, p. 415; p. 426). In a broader comparative study of clarity of responsibility in presidential systems, Samuels (2004) argued that clarity of responsibility functions differently under presidentialism. His main findings were that executive elections are always shaped by the economy but that the degree to which the economy influences legislative elections in presidential systems is largely determined by whether or not legislative elections are held at the same time as elections for the executive.

Some results from studies on post-communist countries also contradict the clarity of responsibility theory. Coffey (2013) suggested that voters in these settings will use economic indicators to punish or reward the incumbent government only if the economic conditions exceed a certain level of 'pain tolerance' for the voters. Using aggregate-level data from the Czech Republic, she found that voters do not punish strong governments more intensely, nor do they consider the left-right political spectrum when attributing responsibility to the actors responsible for economic outcomes, and they do not always punish the incumbent for bad economic conditions.

A variety of other efforts have focused on the refinement and/or expansion of the measure of clarity of responsibility. According to Royed, Leyden and Borrelli (2000, p. 678; p. 683), a more parsimonious measure of 'clarity of responsibility' – that is, whether a government is a single-party or a coalition government – is a sufficient measure of the underlying concept. On the other hand, some studies have suggested that clarity of responsibility could be a function of more variables rather than fewer. Duch and Stevenson (2010, pp. 120–1), for instance, found evidence that more open economies lead to a significantly

smaller economic voting effect. Their argument was that open economies, which are more subject to exogenous economic shocks, seem to weaken the competency signal and, consequently, drive these countries to a smaller economic vote effect. In a similar way, by analyzing data from 17 Latin American countries, Alcañiz and Hellwig (2011) reveal that, as the number of actors whom citizens may blame for economic outcomes – including world markets, international institutions, and foreign banks – increases, voters' responsibility attributions become more dispersed. This finding supports the results of previous studies on the impact of globalization on economic voting (Hellwig and Samuels 2007; Duch and Stevenson 2010).

A number of studies have tried to expand or refine the role of clarity of responsibility in economic voting by focusing on the micro-level foundations. Anderson (2006) explored the ways in which clarity of responsibility operates when citizens face multiple levels of governance. In his terms, Powell and Whitten (1993) and others who focused mainly on the national government were analyzing horizontal clarity. In addition, Anderson assesses the impact of what he terms 'vertical clarity' by looking at how citizens respond to different degrees of federalism. Using survey data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, Anderson found that, in countries where multi-level governance is prominent, economic voting becomes correspondingly weaker.

Lobo and Lewis-Beck (2012) and Hobolt and Tilley (2013) used survey data to extend the logic of clarity of responsibility to the supra-national level. They studied individual-level relative assessments of responsibility attributions between the European Union and their national governments. Based on data from Southern Europe (Spain, Italy, Greece, and Portugal), Lobo and Lewis-Beck found that, as citizens' perception of the European Union's responsibility for economic outputs increases, the national economic vote in these countries diminishes. Hobolt and Tilley, in turn, found that citizens are responsive to institutional context and can distinguish between the European Union and their national government's degree of responsibility across different policy domains, such as monetary policy, health care and climate change.

Parker-Stephen (2013) also refined the concept of clarity of responsibility, using it as a moderator variable on voters' partisanship and their economic evaluations. By analyzing survey data from 11 Western democracies, Parker-Stephen found that, in high-clarity contexts, a motivated economic reasoning, i.e. the association between economic beliefs and partisanship support, by the voter is stronger. Hobolt, Tilley and Banducci (2013), in turn, advocate for two distinct dimensions of the clarity of responsibility: an institutional clarity, i.e. the formal dispersion of institutional power among the government branches, and a government clarity, i.e. the cohesion of the incumbent government. According to the authors' results from survey data from 27 European countries, voters' responsibility assignment and electoral accountability are based primarily on the government clarity rather than on the institutional clarity.

In one of the first uses of experimental data to explore the micro-foundations of clarity of responsibility, Duch, Przepiorka and Stevenson (2015) studied responsibility attribution in circumstances where outcomes were the result of collective decisions that were made by a weighted vote among decision makers, yet the influence of any sole decision maker would have been irrelevant or imperceptible. The authors gathered these data by using collective *dictator games* in which recipients could punish individual decision makers whom the recipients perceived as part of the collective dictator. Under these circumstances, the authors found that individuals apply those responsibility attribution principles to collective decisions made by similar groups, such as families, boards in international organizations, or coalition governments. They found little evidence that recipients punish decision makers with veto power, or that the punishments are proportional to vote share. Their study shows that recipients will punish what they deem to be unfair allocations and will blame the decision maker who holds the power to propose allocation and who has the largest vote share. According to the results of the online component of their experiments, the belief that the decision maker with proposal power held the most control over the collective decision outcome was a prevalent belief among the participants.

Although the original purpose of Powell and Whitten's article (1993) was to address a puzzle in the economic voting literature, work by Margit Tavits (2007) demonstrates that the concept of 'clarity of responsibility' applies well to other areas of research. To explain variation in corruption across democratic nations, Tavits makes an argument that politicians in nations with high levels of clarity of responsibility face greater incentives to pursue policies that reduce corruption. She finds substantial support for her theory in empirical tests on data from parliamentary and semi-presidential democracies of the OECD and Eastern Europe. In a recent book, Schwindt-Bayer and Tavits (2016) extend the theory and tests of Tavits (2007) and found further evidence of this negative relationship between clarity of responsibility and corruption.

CONCLUSION

Although it is a relatively new theory about how institutions shape voting behavior, the theory of clarity of responsibility has had substantial influence and generated a wide range of interesting questions in the study of economic voting. While there have been some questions about the best measures of this concept and its applicability to presidential democracies, the basic theoretical propositions put forward by Powell and Whitten in 1993 have generally been supported. So an obvious question is, what is left to be done with this theory?

Clearly more work needs to be done on clarity of responsibility in presidential democracies. As discussed above, there is some evidence, particularly from

work in the United States, that this concept does not apply well to presidential systems. In the case of presidential democracies, the argument seems to be more about whether or not the status of the chief executive makes all such cases high in terms of clarity of responsibility. But there are clearly substantial variations across presidential democracies in terms of the power of presidents, institutional arrangements, and party systems.

Another area needing more work is the study of what is occurring in settings where there is less clarity of responsibility. The extant theory is essentially about what is *not* going to occur in such cases. And, although the empirical evidence certainly supports the proposition that low-clarity cases will provide less evidence of economic voting, this is a finding that begs the question of just what *is* happening in these cases. This question becomes more acute when we consider that the countries that tend to fall into this categorization generally have higher levels of voter turnout and a broader ideological menu of parties for voters to choose from. Recent work by Williams and Whitten (2015) is an example of work along these lines.

As the recent work by Leslie Schwendt-Bayer and Margit Tavits (2016) demonstrates, clarity of responsibility has the potential to travel beyond economic voting. What other important policy dynamics might be influenced by variations in clarity?

Note

- 1 Similarly, according to Tsebelis' veto players theory, which focuses on how the policy-making process operates, the greater the number (and the ideological distance) of veto players in the decision-making process – by bicameralism, coalition government or the requirement of qualified majorities – the more diffused the power of the government (Tsebelis 2002, p. 157; p. 185).

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Voting in New(er) Democracies

Lenka Bustikova and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister

INTRODUCTION

Electoral behavior in comparatively young democracies shares significant similarities with that found in older, established Western democratic settings, and yet also differs in fundamental respects. Voters in newer democratic contexts make decisions based on group identities, policy divides, party attachments, and retrospective evaluations. However, in these settings, party systems are more fluid – with identifications, programs, and electoral options all subject to recurrent shifts. The experiences of both Latin America and Eastern Europe testify to the fact that the accumulation of electoral experiences is not sufficient to bring about party system stability and institutionalization. A consequence of high levels of volatility is that voters lack the same heuristic aids for decision-making that facilitate substantive, programmatic voting behavior in other countries. In Latin America and Eastern Europe, party attachments often have shallow roots, and left-right labels are under-utilized and under-supplied with coherent meaning. The complexity of decision-making in these environments has consequences for party behavior, in that it can motivate single-shot and short-sighted maneuvers and investments (such as abrupt program switches and clientelism). As such, it can lead citizens to discount policy promises, to expect material incentives for the vote, and to privilege more easily identifiable factors, such as economic performance and (to varying degrees) identity-based cleavages.

Another difference between younger and older democracies is the extent to which the basic rules of the democratic game remain more contested in the

younger systems. Both Latin America and Eastern Europe demonstrate that classic regime-type cleavages, pitting the authoritarian past against the democratic future, are not necessarily enduring. Some exceptions aside (particularly in Eastern Europe), few parties campaign on a promise to return to the authoritarian past. Yet, in both regions, decades of experience with often mediocre, and sometimes abysmal, outcomes have left key segments of the electorate disenchanted with traditional party politics and open to anti-establishment populists. These populist leaders have galvanized support with accusations (of which many are well founded) of corruption among the traditional political elite and by mobilizing large swaths of the public (“us”) against the privileged classes (“them”). In Latin America, populism has turned discussion of democracy from ways to avoid returns to an authoritarian past to concerns about the degrading quality of democracy under populist leaders who dismantle checks and balances and undermine media freedom. These same concerns about the implications of populism for democracy can be found among observers of Eastern European politics, where populism is associated with a radical right that espouses leftist economic principles¹ and where populist appeals contain strong links to the politics of identities (particularly, ethnicity and class).

This chapter presents a portrait of the development, dynamics, and key issues in electoral behavior in new (and newly re-emerged) democratic contexts. Each of the following core chapter sections (Latin America and Eastern Europe, respectively) was developed by one of the two chapter co-authors (Zechmeister and Bustikova, respectively) following a common framework. Each of these sections first situates the region within the transitions to democracy that belong to the global third wave (Huntington 1991), and speaks to the regime (and other) cleavages that marked electoral competition in this first post-transition period. Each section then turns to a focus on electoral volatility, a defining feature of party systems in both Latin America and Eastern Europe. We then address economic factors and voter choice, with the Latin American section drawing on a comparatively larger scholarship on the prevalence of economic voting, the factors that condition it, and the rise of class-based voting of late. The Eastern European section focuses on the ways in which voting patterns initially mapped onto cleavages associated with transitional winners and losers, and later shifted to decision-making marked by strong currents of anger and cultural identity.

Finally, each section turns to a discussion of issues that are particularly salient in these regions in recent times, with a focus on crime in Latin America and corruption in Eastern Europe. Cutting across both these discussions of new issues on the agenda is an awareness of the ways in which voter dissatisfaction with the ability of elites to deliver has given fuel to anti-establishment populist options, which in turn have further undermined prospects for the consolidation of coherent programmatic party systems and the regularization of patterns of electoral behavior in these regions.

LATIN AMERICA

Voters in contemporary Latin America are accustomed to going to the polls. In a handful of countries, regular elections have been held consistently since the early to mid twentieth century, whereas in the rest of the region democratic contestation re-emerged over three decades ago.² The average fifty-year-old adult in Latin America has had the opportunity to participate in at least nine elections for national office, and many more sub-national elections.³ Yet, time has not brought stability to the menu of choices confronting voters at the polls. Rather, party systems in Latin America have been characterized by constantly shifting allegiances and options (Lupu and Stokes 2010; Morgan 2011; Roberts 2013, 2014; Lupu 2015a). This unsteadiness, fueled by endogenous and exogenous factors, has had important implications for electoral behavior across the region. For parties, systemic instability shortens time horizons, causing elites to under-invest in efforts that would institutionalize programmatic party structuration (Lupu 2015a; Lupu and Riedl 2013). For voters, instability in electoral politics undermines the development of long-standing party identifications and diminishes the heuristic value of standard short cuts for ideological decision-making, which in turn privileges simple retrospective decision rules while potentially complicating the integration of new issues into a robustly programmatic space.

Traces of an authoritarian-democratic divide in Latin America

Democratic electoral politics came to (re-)characterize the Latin American region during the global third wave (Huntington 1991) of democracy, and elections have become the predominant path to political office. While present to varying degrees in Latin American electoral behavior, the relevance of a regime-type divide pitting once-dominant authoritarian options against standard bearers of democracy has been fading. Yet, the issue of democracy remains germane to the choices citizens make at the polls, as seen in discussions over candidates' links to the authoritarian past, concern about the diminishing quality of democracy under (elected) populist leaders, and the tendency for anti-democratic interruptions to splinter normal democratic proceedings from time to time in some countries.

The authoritarian regimes that preceded today's democratic governments in Latin America were a diverse set. They varied in ideological stripes and they ranged from corporatist institutionalized one-party authoritarian rule in Mexico to personalized dictatorships in countries such as Nicaragua and Chile (Jones 2012). Nonetheless, the well-documented tendency displayed by governments throughout the Latin American region to oscillate between democratic and authoritarian forms (Pastor 1989) makes it appropriate to search for a classic

regime-type cleavage in opinions held by the voting public. On the surface, the modern Latin American public strongly endorses democracy in the abstract. Yet, vestiges of a schism over this issue have been detected at times (Moreno 1999), with opinion divides more prevalent in some party systems than others (Hawkins et al. 2010).

One type of regime cleavage appeared among the voting public during Mexico's slow transition from many decades of one-party dominance to competitive party politics. At the peak of Mexico's transition, in the 1980s and 1990s, the key distinction voters made was between the dominant party, the PRI, and any opposition party (namely, the PAN and the PRD). Domínguez and McCann (1996) presented this as a 'two-step' decision model, in which individuals first decided whether to vote against the dominant party or not, and other considerations were relevant only for those who selected to support the opposition. In 2000, an opposition party (PAN) won the presidency for the first time in over seventy years and, by 2006, the relevance of the Mexican regime divide had faded precipitously (McCann 2012). Voters granted the PRI the presidency again in 2012, yet this reversion to the once-dominant party was *not* driven by a public longing for the past. Rather, negative retrospective assessments regarding the state of the economy, security, governance (corruption), and public service provision were important determinants of that election in which the victorious candidate, Peña Nieto, painted himself as a new option divorced from his party's problematic past (Domínguez et al. 2015; McCann 2015).

Chile is another country in which a public opinion cleavage related to regime-type has been detected in elections, but here as well the significance of this divide has faded over time. Attitudes toward Pinochet and his (1973–1990) military regime were quite relevant to the choices made by voters in the first national elections following the transition to democracy (Dow 1998). The economic successes achieved by Pinochet's team left some reservoir of goodwill toward the authoritarian regime that had taken office via the overthrow of democratically elected President Salvador Allende. Support for the military in contemporary Chile has persistently been higher than in its neighboring Argentina, where the military's failures sullied the institution's reputation to a greater and more enduring degree (Huneeus 2003; Loveman 1999; AmericasBarometer data [cf. Chapter 41, p. 969, Volume 2, this *Handbook*] by LAPOP). Ambivalence toward democracy and dissatisfaction with the party system have been detected among the Chilean public even in more recent years (Carlin 2011; Siavelis 2009), yet evidence suggests that the relevance of a democracy-authoritarian divide is on the decline (Bargsted and Somma 2016).

Declining support for an explicitly authoritarian option does not mean that the regime issue is resolved.⁴ For one, a number of recent politicians who have appeared on the ballot and in national offices have had democratic credentials that can reasonably be questioned as the result, for example, of alleged ties to past human rights violations (e.g. Guatemalan president Otto Pérez Molina), explicit ties to revolutionary guerrilla groups (e.g. Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega), and

involvement in previous coups (e.g. Venezuela's Hugo Chávez). Additionally, with the widespread acceptance of elections as just about 'the only game in town' (Przeworski 1991), dialogue in the region has recently transitioned to address whether, or the extent to which, the quality of democracy is being eroded by (elected) populist leaders who curb checks and balances, place limits on freedom of the press, attempt to radically alter term limits, and otherwise diminish liberal democracy (see e.g. Coppedge 2003 on the weakening of democracy under Venezuela's Hugo Chávez).

Finally, a number of countries across the region have experienced brief authoritarian and/or military interventions in the last two decades. For example, in 1992, democratically elected President Alberto Fujimori of Peru oversaw an *autogolpe*, a 'self-coup', in which he shut down Congress. In 2009, the Honduran military removed (without bloodshed) sitting President Manuel Zelaya from office. Public opinion data provide some evidence of a complicit stance among large swaths of the public for such maneuvers. For example, Fujimori successfully won re-election in 1995 (and public support continues for *Fujimoristas*, as seen via the political successes of the former president's daughter, Keiko Fujimori, a member of Congress from 2006 to 2011 and a strong competitor for the 2011 and the 2016 Peruvian presidential elections). Survey data from Honduras also points to decreasing satisfaction with the political system prior to the 2009 military coup (Seligson and Booth 2009). Yet, a key difference between the authoritarian and military interventions of the 'third wave' era, as opposed to those of early periods, is that such explicit interruptions to democratic proceedings tend to be short-lived. Elections have become widely accepted by the vast majority of the Latin American voting public and, perhaps just as importantly, by trade partners and political allies. This fact has led old regime cleavages to be supplanted by new divisions centered around populist leaders, and has shortened but not eradicated disruptions to democratic party politics.

Shifting electoral landscapes

The third wave of democracy diffused allegiance to the formal democratic rules of the game across the world. Beginning in the 1970s, elections became increasingly common and competitive in the Latin American region. As Carlin, Singer, and Zechmeister (2015) count, there have been more than three hundred presidential and legislative contests in the Latin American region since the start of the third wave. Unfortunately, these democratic contests have not all been without flaws or interruptions. Moreover, time has not yet brought about democratic consolidation, party system institutionalization, or stability to the menu of choices confronting voters in many countries across the region. With respect to the latter point, electoral volatility and fragmentation have remained characteristic of Latin American politics, as new parties and movements have emerged while other electoral options and sometimes entire party systems have collapsed

(Lupu and Stokes 2010; Morgan 2011; Roberts 2003, 2013, 2014; Lupu 2015a; Mainwaring and Zoco 2007). As Carlin, Singer, and Zechmeister (2015) note, the ‘flux’ that characterizes electoral competition in Latin America suggests that stable equilibria can remain evasive for long periods of time following a transition from authoritarianism to democracy.

Electoral volatility in contemporary Latin America, though varying significantly across countries, has been higher than that found in regions populated by older democracies (Mainwaring and Scully 1995). Further, electoral volatility *increased* in the decades following the last global wave of democratization. Electoral volatility is the net change in votes (or seats) won by distinct political parties at the polls from one election to the next. It offers a window into stability and institutionalization in party systems, which matter because these factors both reflect and influence voter decision-making. According to one measure, electoral volatility in Latin America’s presidential elections was 17.4 in the 1980s, 27.2 in the 1990s, and 31.1 in the first decade of the current century, with volatility in legislative elections following this same trend (Roberts 2013, 2014; see also Roberts and Wibbels 1999). Independent of other factors, repeated electoral experiences *ought* to stabilize partisan attachments and deepen party system institutionalization (Lupu and Stokes 2010; Mainwaring and Scully 1995). Yet, this has not been the case in Latin America due to a host of countervailing factors. Historically weak parties, individual-centric institutions and electoral rules, modern developments such as television and mass media, and exogenous shocks such as economic decline are among the culprits fingered for contributing to varying but high and increasing levels of electoral volatility in the Latin American region (Mainwaring 1999; Lupu 2015a; Remmer 1991; Roberts and Wibbels 1999; Roberts 2013, 2014).

Electoral volatility has been driven by, is reflective of, and has fueled a broad set of ‘interruptions’ to normal democratic processes. Between 1980 and 2007, eighteen presidents saw their terms of office prematurely ‘interrupted’ or saw their administrations ‘break down’ (Pérez-Liñan 2014; see also Valenzuela 2004 and Helmke 2017). Even within ‘normal’ democratic processes, the region has borne frequent witness to the breakdown of parties and party systems. In terms of the disappearance of parties from the electoral menu, Lupu (2014, 2016) calculates the region saw twenty-five percent of its established political parties wither between 1978 and 2007. While many systems have splintered, resulting in increased party system fragmentation over time in a number of Latin American countries, two party systems – Peru and Venezuela – collapsed entirely at the end of the twentieth century (Roberts 2003; Morgan 2011; Seawright 2012). New parties, movements, and political outsiders (see e.g. Carreras 2012) have regularly moved to fill the void, and these in turn have contributed their share of instability with respect to the menu of choices⁵ and, as alluded in the earlier reference to populism’s consequences, with respect to institutions and electoral rules.

Przeworski (1991) lauded democracy for its ‘institutionalized uncertainty’, by which he meant that lack of certitude over who will win the next election can motivate losers in any one round to stick to the rules of competition. Yet, Lupu and Riedl (2013) and Lupu (2015a) aptly point out that the particularly high level of uncertainty that characterizes many Latin American party systems with respect to electoral rules, economic developments, the menu of choices, and democracy itself can create what could be considered a vicious cycle in which elites shorten their time horizons and ‘invest less in programmatic appeals, consistent party brands, and institutionalized party organizations’ (Lupu 2015a, p. 135), which in turn ought to fuel even more uncertainty, to the detriment of party system stability in the region. Carlin, Singer, and Zechmeister (2015, p. 3) argue that the lack of a steady equilibrium to party politics in many Latin American countries can ‘encourage a great deal of policy experimentation, as entrepreneurial elites shift their positions to activate dormant and new cleavages, and even pursue radical policy switches’ (e.g., see Stokes 2001). In short, a state of unsteadiness in party politics exacerbates uncertainty and induces future instability.

The implications of this uncertainty and instability for voters are non-trivial because they undercut prospects for programmatic party structuration. Programmatic party structuration is the tendency for electoral competition to center around substantive (policy, ideological) packages offered by coherent teams (parties) (Kitschelt et al. 2010). Time and stability are critical to the development of coherent brands and ideologies needed for programmatic party competition (Converse 1964; Hinich and Munger 1996; Lupu and Stokes 2010). To the extent that partisanship is at least in part a long-standing psychological attachment (Campbell et al. 1960; Dinas, this Volume, Chapter 13), strong party ties are more likely to be found in systems in which the same parties have endured, ideally without interruption but potentially in spite of authoritarian interludes (Lupu and Stokes 2010; see also Dalton and Weldon 2007). The same is true at the individual level; in Latin America, partisanship is more likely to be expressed by those who are older and who have longer histories of democratic experience (Lupu 2015b). Breakdowns and about-faces (radical policy switches) by parties on the electoral menu are quite counterproductive to the dynamics of party branding and identification, and recovery from such events is bound to be slow because programmatic party competition is far more easily deconstructed than reconstructed (Stokes 2001; Kitschelt et al. 2010).

Taken at face value, partisanship in Latin America frequently functions as it does in older, more-established settings (Lupu 2015b; Nadeau et al. forthcoming). Though levels of partisanship vary across countries, many people do express a party identification, partisanship is a strong predictor of voter choice, and levels of party identification for the Latin American region as a whole have held fairly steady during recent years (AmericasBarometer by LAPOP). That said, stability on the surface belies instability of partisan allegiances, for high electoral volatility cannot exist alongside high and vote-relevant partisanship (as it does

in the region) without voters switching partisan ties as often as they switch vote choices. Moreover, to the degree that parties have lacked time to develop coherent platforms, or have introduced uncertainty in these due to policy switches or allegiances that ‘dilute’ brand recognition (Lupu 2016), it is not surprising to find that party labels are not always as effective in providing heuristic short cuts for citizens who might otherwise use party positions to identify their own stances on issues of the day (Merolla et al. 2007); such a deficiency has likewise been identified in scholarship on Eastern Europe (Brader and Tucker 2012; Brader et al. 2013). Taking a step back to consider the relevance of Latin American partisans to their democratic states more generally, partisans tend to be more engaged and more overtly supportive of democracy in the Latin American region (Lupu 2015b; Vidal et al. 2010; AmericasBarometer by LAPOP), yet it may also be the case that at least some Latin American partisans are more likely to ‘take the streets to protest’ when electoral outcomes fail to go their way (Vidal et al. 2010).

Time and stability, jointly, are also critical to policy-based and ideological voting behavior. Voters in Latin America do select parties on the basis of issue stances, though to varying degrees. Using data from the late 1990s, Luna and Zechmeister (2005) show that the mass public is more likely to link to elites on the basis of issue positions that differ across partisan groups in some countries, such as Chile and Uruguay, than others, such as Ecuador and Bolivia. Party system institutionalization (resulting from time spent consolidating and putting down roots) and, to at least a moderate extent, policy switches influence the degree of issue-based elite-mass linkages across countries in the region. Baker and Greene (2015) analyze fifteen years of survey data to demonstrate evidence of economic policy-based voting in just over three of every four major Latin American countries; the exceptions they identify (that is, the countries in which they find no evidence of economic issue voting) are Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Paraguay (see also Baker and Greene 2011; Saiegh 2015; Nadeau et al. forthcoming).

A frequently shifting and nebulous electoral landscape, in terms of the decline and emergence of political parties and muddled policy platforms, also makes substantive electoral behavior more difficult to the degree that it diminishes the heuristic value of ideological markers, such as ‘left’ and ‘right’. When they are used effectively by elites (who imbue them with meanings that are relevant to the particular party system) and by citizens (who use them to locate themselves, opinions, candidates, and parties in the party system), ideological labels can help rationally under-informed voters make decisions more effectively. In the Latin American region, left-right ideological labels are used less often by citizens than they are in Western Europe, for example. One set of factors responsible for this outcome concerns the shifting nature of the Latin American political landscape. Within Latin America, individuals living under party systems that have higher levels of electoral volatility and higher levels of fragmentation are less likely to locate themselves in a left-right space in Latin America (Zechmeister and Corral 2013).

Zechmeister and Corral (2013; see also Zechmeister 2015) argue that party system fragmentation is a symptom of political instability in the Latin American context (but see also Cohen et al. 2016). Volatility and fragmentation also undermine the connection between policy stances and left-right identifications (Zechmeister and Corral 2013). Furthermore, the relationship between left-right placements and the vote is greater in systems that are less fragmented (Zechmeister 2015).

One salve for the pernicious effects of fragmentation and volatility can come from polarization, or the tendency for parties to stake out distinct (albeit not necessarily too extreme) stances on issues. For example, some variation in the level of issue-based voting is driven by the extent to which elites take clearly distinct stances on issues (Page and Brody 1972; Zechmeister 2008), and indeed it is the case that polarization is associated with higher levels of issue-based voting in the Latin American region (Baker and Green 2015). Furthermore, polarization can make ideological short cuts more likely to be used by citizens and voters (Zechmeister and Corral 2013; Zechmeister 2015; Singer 2016). Given that they have divergent consequences for voter behavior and yet are likely connected in at least some ways, more work remains to be done to understand the emergence and consequences of volatility and polarization in the Latin America region (but see Singer 2016). With polarization unable to provide a complete antidote (and, at the extreme, not always a desirable party system characteristic), it is suffice to say that the tendency for Latin American party systems to exhibit a comparatively high degree of instability in the menu of options, among other factors, undermines the degrees to which party identifications are deeply rooted, voters make decisions on policy divides, and citizens effectively employ cognitive short cuts to make substantively meaningful choices.

The privileging of economic factors

A confluence of factors propels economic performance and retrospective economic evaluations to the forefront of voters' decision-making calculi in the Latin American context. As just discussed, issue- and ideological-based voting – already such a cognitively demanding task that levels even in older, established democracies are far from high – is made more difficult to the extent that Latin American party systems are volatile and fragmented (though polarization can help to counteract those diminishing tendencies). If unable to select based on policy stances, an easy decision rule is past performance (Downs 1957; Fiorina 1981). Furthermore, weak party system institutionalization engenders weak partisan attachments, which can increase voters' sensitivities to economic outcomes (to the detriment of electoral stability; see Kayser and Wlezien 2011). Finally, in a region where economic vulnerabilities are made salient through comparatively low levels of economic development and comparatively high levels of income inequality, the economy has tended to play a central role in electoral competition (Kitschelt et al. 2010). The economy frequently plays a central role in campaigns

across the region (Gélineau and Singer 2015), and both general salience and campaign emphasis matter for levels of economic voting (Singer 2013b; Hart 2013). Furthermore, economic volatility and recession can increase the salience of the economy and voter sensitivity to it (Singer 2011, 2013a; Singer and Carlin 2013; Gélineau and Singer 2015) and, in the course of its most modern history, Latin America has witnessed more than its fair share of economic turbulence and decline.

Ample evidence shows that Latin American voters tend toward casting out-of-office incumbents who deliver poor economic returns (Remmer 1991, 2003; Gélineau 2007; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2008; Lewis-Beck and Ratto 2013; Gélineau and Singer 2015; Singer 2013a; Echegaray 2005). The specter of the economy is so significant that under some circumstances it can induce atypically long memories in voters who reject not only the sitting incumbent but all established parties (Benton 2005; see also Roberts 2003). It is also so significant that it can condition the relevance of other factors. For example, citizens' tendencies to reject the incumbent for bad governance in Latin America are conditional on the state of the economy: when the economy is in dire shape, voters are more likely to hold the sitting administration accountable for corruption (Manzetti and Wilson 2006; Zechmeister and Zizumbo-Colunga 2013; Carlin et al. 2015; Manzetti and Rosas 2015; Rosas and Manzetti 2015). There is an important asymmetry in the tendency of the Latin American public to factor economic downturns and corruption into their voting decisions: the average citizen punishes poor economic performance regardless of levels of perceived corruption but she withdraws support from the executive for corruption only under economic decline (Zechmeister and Zizumbo-Colunga 2013). The implication is that corruption is likely to remain both a salient and a sticky issue in the Latin American region for years to come. It is nearly always the case that executives are punished for poor economic output and, thus, given their druthers, are likely to place a priority on bringing about economic booms, which have the two-fold benefit of increasing public support and decreasing the extent to which they are held accountable for corruption.

The research industry built on identifying factors that condition the relationship between the economy and incumbent support has not skipped over Latin America. Discussion of conditioning factors, in fact, identifies several that are particularly relevant to the Latin American case. One concerns attribution of responsibility. Incumbents are more likely to suffer at the polls when they preside over bad performance that voters attribute to their doing (Anderson 2000). Hyper-presidentialism (i.e., particularly strong and dominant executives) in Latin America helps center blame on the executive office, thus facilitating economic voting in general (Hellwig and Samuels 2008; Gélineau and Singer 2015; but see also Gélineau 2007). Within the region, the actual extent to which Latin American presidents dominate over the legislature (via share of same-party legislative seats) increases the weight of economic evaluations in voters' decision-making calculi, while fragmentation in the party system (which presumably obscures

responsibility) decreases it (Gélineau and Singer 2015). A second important aspect of economic voting in Latin America derives from electoral volatility and transitions from one-party dominance, which place on the menu parties that are less proven and, therefore, have governing potential that is comparatively harder to predict. In at least some cases, such as transitioning one-party dominant Mexico at the end of the twentieth century, this type of context can lead risk propensity to condition economic voting, such that standard economic voting patterns were found, for a time period at least, predominantly among those who are risk-acceptant and thus willing to assume the risks inherent in voting for an unknown (Cinta 1999; Morgenstern and Zechmeister 2001).

Third, while voters in Latin America on average, and in a manner similar to that found in other world regions, tend to privilege the national economy over personal outcomes in their voting decisions, variation in the level of economic development in Latin America supports important assessments regarding the tendency for sociotropic versus pocketbook voting to vary across economic contexts. For example, the Latin American region has provided evidence that underdevelopment and poverty can motivate pocketbook orientations (Echegaray 2005; Singer and Carlin 2013). Finally, Latin America's increasingly globalized economy has provided an opportunity to assess the extent to which the public tempers its economic voting tendencies when the government is more constrained by the world's economic forces (Hellwig 2014). The evidence suggests that, in fact, globalization's forces (measured, among other factors, through debts held by the International Monetary Fund, trade openness, and foreign direct investment levels) decrease the extent to which voters in the Latin American region hold the incumbent president accountable for poor economic output (Alcañiz and Hellwig 2011; Gélineau and Singer 2015; Singer and Carlin 2013).

In a consistent focus on the economy as an explanatory factor for voter choice and in the fact that the economy's relationship to the vote is variable, Latin America is not unique. That said, as noted above, it offers a number of important exemplars of the types of configurations that can induce comparatively higher or more consistent levels of economic voting and in the insights the region can provide into factors that undercut the relationship between (certain) economic factors and the vote. What about other indications of material well-being? A non-trivial number of scholars have examined the relevance of wealth and related measures of socioeconomic status (class) for the rise of populist leaders. The most intensely studied of such chief executives has been Hugo Chávez, with most researchers concluding that support for the former Venezuelan president was strongly driven by those who were comparatively worse off (Canache 2004; Cannon 2008; Handlin 2013; Heath 2009a, 2009b; Rodríguez 2013). In fact, across the region as a whole, the current era has seen a rise in the degree to which left-leaning leaders, and populists in particular, have been successful in mobilizing class-based voting in Latin America, such that class-based voting

in the region has increased over the course of the last two decades (Torcal and Mainwaring 2003; Mainwaring et al. 2015).

The relevance of candidates, clientelism, and crime for voter choice in Latin America

While factors identified in classic models of voter choice matter in the region, Latin America's unique context propels to the forefront a number of additional influences on voter decisions. Among these are candidates, clientelism, and crime. First, as a region with histories grounded in strong leaders (*caudillos*) and with institutional configurations that motivate personalistic campaigns and facilitate strong executives, it is important to acknowledge the extent to which characteristics of political candidates or office holders influence voter choice (McCann and Lawson 2003; Echegaray 2005). While many aspects of a candidate can matter, including their appearance (Aguilar 2011; Lawson et al. 2010), religion (Boas and Smith 2015), ethnicity (Moreno 2015), and/or gender (Morgan 2015), a factor that is frequently discussed in the case of Latin American (and other) politics, but under theorized and assessed, is charisma. A seminal perspective on this is offered by Madsen and Snow (1991), whose study of the 'charismatic bond' between Juan Perón and his followers in Argentina during the first half of the twentieth century presents a framework for understanding the psychological bases of individuals' allegiances to particular leaders. Much as partisanship has been presented in scholarship rooted in the United States as a factor that taints the public's interpretation of evidence (Campbell et al. 1960), so too can charisma lead individuals to overlook poor performance for the sake of maintaining a sense of hope and optimism that the given leader can deliver better times (Madsen and Snow 1991; Merolla and Zechmeister 2011; Weyland 2003). Charisma is also relevant to understanding the allure of certain populist leaders who have emerged in the region, and whose governing and rhetorical styles are consistent with the creation of charismatic bonds with the public.⁶ Among a number of consequences of these combined factors – charisma and populism – is the public's acquiescence to or support for the removal of restrictive term limits, put in place by cautious constitution drafters who had favored single-term limits. Due to the currents of incumbency advantage (Corrales and Penfold 2014), the result has been a significant lengthening of mean presidential tenure in office, most notably in Peru where Alberto Fujimori held the executive office for ten years, from his inauguration in 1990 until he was forced out under a corruption scandal in 2001, and Venezuela where Chávez maintained the presidency for fourteen years, from his inauguration in 1999 to his death in 2013.

Second, the historical tendency in Latin America for political parties and candidates to offer jobs (patronage) and material goods (clientelism) in exchange for political support did not disappear when the third wave washed over the region. The continuation of such practices placed such a strain on some countries'

finances that they contributed to the breakdown of at least one entire party system, for example Venezuela in the 1990s (see, e.g., Roberts 2003). Clientelism is more common in some countries (e.g. the Dominican Republic) than others (e.g. Chile) in the Latin American region (Kitschelt and Altamirano 2015; data from the AmericasBarometer by LAPOP). Its relevance for the vote choice is underscored by the fact that a non-trivial number of party supporters in at least some countries (e.g. Mexico) express an expectation of some material incentive for their vote (Vidal et al. 2010).

Numerous scholars have documented the various ways that politicians and brokers use material incentives to motivate particular outcomes at the polls across the region. Some important conclusions from research on clientelism in Latin America, with particular relevance to electoral behavior, include the fact that vote buying can be used to de-mobilize as much as it can be used to mobilize (Nichter 2008, 2010; Simpser 2012); that those who are more marginalized are more likely to be targeted by vote-buying practices (see e.g. Chubb 1981; Debs and Helmke 2009; Szwarcberg 2010; Lehoucq 2003; Stokes 2005; Taylor-Robinson 2010); and that vote-buying practices tend to be placed within a portfolio of strategies used by a diverse set of parties across the region, rather than the stand-alone approach of a particularly distinct set of political actors (Magaloni et al. 2007). Gauging the relative importance of vote buying as one component of a broader platform is difficult, in part because of challenges in the measurement of vote-buying practices (Gonzalez-Ocantos et al. 2012) and in part because of the lack of cross-national comparable survey data that would connect reports of vote offers to particular parties or candidates. Yet, it remains the case that vote buying is a persistent feature of modern elections across many parts of Latin America, with its relevance to the vote decision varying not only across countries but also across subsets of individuals within countries.

Third, and finally, crime has become increasingly salient in modern Latin America. Some opinion divides over this issue were present among the public in the 1990s (though less so among legislators; see Luna and Zechmeister 2005). Recently, the Latin American public's concerns with security have increased (Zechmeister 2014). This can be seen quite clearly in the public's increased tendency to identify issues related to crime and insecurity as the 'most important problem' facing the country (see Figure 6.1). At present time, research is only beginning to assess the extent to which and how experiences with and concerns about security enter into voter decision calculi in the Latin American region. As scholars work to address how this new issue is being incorporated into electoral decision-making in Latin America, they will need to consider at least three possible mechanisms, relating to policy, retrospective assessments, and issue priorities.

For one, increased discussion over issues related to crime and security might translate into issue-based voting behaviors by which individuals select candidates based on the extent to which they offer one approach versus another

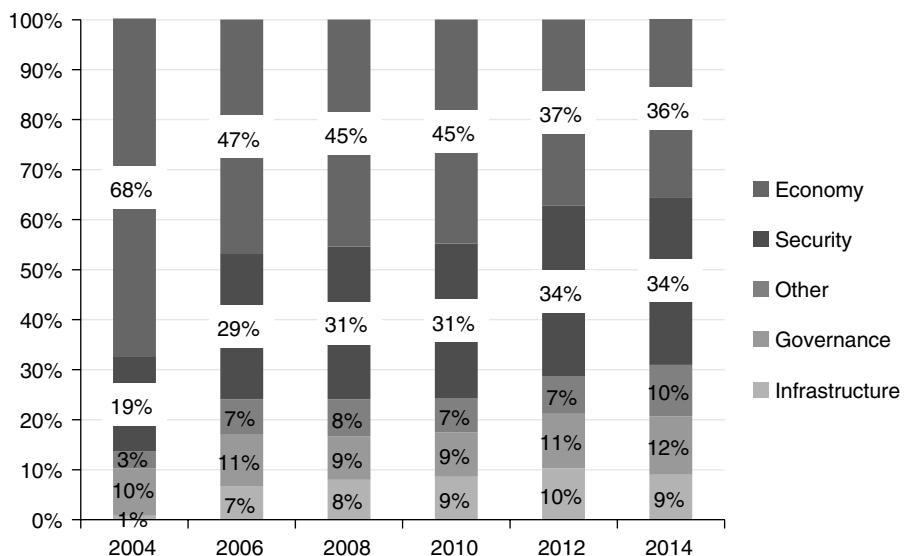


Figure 6.1 Distribution of most important problem issue areas over time, Latin America

Source: AmericasBarometer by LAPOP (18 Latin American countries only)

(e.g. hardline versus softline, punishment-oriented versus rehabilitation-focused platforms). In violence-ridden Honduras, for example, the 2005 presidential contest pitted a candidate emphasizing tougher punishments for criminals ('Pepe' Lobo Sosa) against a candidate with a stance that emphasized police and social reform (Manuel Zelaya) and it is possible that the electorate's tendency to favor this more moderate stance helped bring about Zelaya's victory at the polls. As politicians experiment and achieve varying successes (and failures) with different platforms and programs aimed at addressing the problem of violent crime in the Latin American region, it is likely that policy-based voting on issues related to law and order will increase in the years to come.

For another, voters might select to address issues related to security via retrospective evaluations at the polls. As in the field of economic voting, a relevant question is whether the public is likely to take into consideration sociotropic or egoistic factors. The evidence, to date, favors the former. Because most crime occurs close to home and can feel idiosyncratic, it may be more commonplace for the voting public to connect general performance on security issues to their voting decisions more so than individual experiences with crime victimization (see Pérez 2015). An even more complex set of causal processes remains to be uncovered in this nascent research domain, for example with respect to the role that the media might play in amplifying concerns about crime and the consequences this might have for voter decisions (on the role of news consumption, see Castorena and Zechmeister 2015).

Finally, issues related to crime and security might enter into electoral politics via voters' selection of candidates and parties that pledge to prioritize this issue. Jones and Baumgartner (2004, p. 1) reflect that 'problem solving is a critical component of competent government'. Especially when issue-based voting is particularly challenging, it is conceivable that voters might privilege selecting candidates based on the slate of issues they *prioritize* more so than the specific *positions* they take. Such a model of representation is closer to the trustee than the delegate form presented by Pitkin (1967; see also O'Donnell 1994). In confusing electoral contexts in which voters face numerous choices at the polls, such as the Brazilian case, evidence suggests voters do in fact tend to select candidates on the basis of the single most important issue rather than take steps to comprehend a multi-dimensional policy landscape (Cunow 2014). It may be, then, that the emergence of issues related to crime and security at the top of many voters' agendas in Latin America will motivate increased attempts by parties to brand themselves as prioritizing and competent in this realm. The consequence is likely to be seen in some (but not an overwhelmingly large) rise in voting based on security policy stances; a moderate increase in security-based retrospective voting; and, perhaps even more so, more voting on the basis of security issue *prioritization*. Simultaneous to such developments we might expect to find a consequent decline in the relevance of economic factors for at least the short run, in at least some of the more insecurity-plagued countries in the region.

EASTERN EUROPE

The countries of Eastern Europe and the satellites of the former Soviet empire have generally followed two distinct trajectories since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The first group evolved into democracies and semi-democracies. Geographically, this group is mostly located in Central and South-Eastern Europe with Ukraine, Georgia and Mongolia situated on its democratic frontier. The second group of post-communist polities initially flirted with democracy, but eventually settled on a firmly authoritarian path. This group of countries includes all of the Central Asian republics, Belarus and contemporary Russia (Hale 2014).

The most Western-oriented countries of Eastern Europe demonstrated a desire to democratize and consolidate their party systems swiftly. Yet, after twenty-five years, their trajectory is surprisingly fragile, despite the fact that countries on the Western border started the process with the best possible economic endowments, favorable legacies and an aspiration to re-join the West. In the past five to ten years, a fluidity of voter attachments, political corruption in which private interests systematically shape policies (state-capture), commercialization and politicization of media, and the push-back against liberal civil society have plagued even the most advanced East European democracies. The greatest buffer against a semi-authoritarian reversal does not seem to be democratic longevity,

but membership in the European Union, which has carrots and (limited) sticks at its disposal to discipline the newest members (Levitz and Pop-Eleches 2010; Vachudova 2008). But despite the influence of Brussels over Eastern Europe, it has been unable to quiet anti-democratic sentiments and illiberal inclinations.

At the same time, after virtually being left alone to build ties with the West for twenty years, a more assertive Russia has emerged to compete for the hearts and minds of East Europeans, who are split between their love for Western liberties and their nostalgia for economic safety and self-rule.⁷ This benefits Russia, which is aligning itself with political forces, both in Western and Eastern Europe, pursuing a more narrow definition of democracy as a community of ethnic equals and a greater national independence. If this trend continues, we may not be far from a moment when voting in new East European democracies will become a vote on the sustainability of tolerant and diverse societies.

Diversity among authoritarian legacies in Eastern Europe

Between 1989 and 1991, East European party systems emerged from decades of one-party rule. Despite homogenizing attempts to create a universal *homo sovieticus*, societal preferences and human endowments across communist societies were quite distinct. An early study of societal cleavages uncovered a very diverse field of social and ideological differences among twelve countries, which mapped differently onto party systems (Evans and Whitefield 1993). Legacies of communist rule diversified party systems at the onset of democratization as well (Kitschelt 1992, 1995, 2003, 2015; Kitschelt et al. 1999). Memories of either democratic or semi-authoritarian inter-war regimes were transmitted over generations. Similarly, legacies tied to industrialization, monopolistic institutions, bureaucratic competence, mass schooling, nationalist mobilization and ethnic tensions were preserved for between fifty and seventy years only to emerge at the onset of democratization and influence party systems (Bunce 1999; Bernhard and Karakoç 2007; Darden and Grzymala-Busse 2006; Fish 1998; Ekiert and Hanson 2003; Kopstein 2003; Pop-Eleches 2007; Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2011).

Civil society actors contributed to the collapse of communism (Ekiert and Kubik 2001; Wittenberg 2012) and proved essential during the process of democratization by creating bottom-up pressure on political elites to move forward with the EU accession process (Petrova and Tarrow 2007; Schimmelfennig 2005; Vachudova 2005, 2014). There is a fundamental disagreement between scholars of civil society over whether Eastern European civil societies are inherently weak and apathetic (Howard 2003) or diverse, active and innovative (Ekiert and Foa 2011; Rakušanová 2007). While active citizenry has been perceived as a net contributor to the development of liberal civil society, recent scholarship has begun to slowly turn to the study of more illiberal forms of civil society participation, such as xenophobic movements and hostile paramilitary associations, and their

negative impact on majority-minority relations in new democracies (Bustikova 2015; Chambers and Kopstein 2001; Kopecky and Mudde 2003; Minkenberg 2015).

The uniqueness of Eastern European development stems from a multiplicity of concurrent transitions: an economic transformation, a democratic transition, and a redefinition of both the state and ethnic boundaries (Brubaker 2004). Among a multitude of legacies that reflect this complexity, three have shaped post-communist party alignments the most: (1) regime divide, (2) economic endowments, and (3) historical patterns of ethnic tensions.

The notion of a ‘regime divide’ in Eastern Europe refers to divisions over the nature of the previous regime (autocratic regimes ruled by communist parties in the former Soviet bloc) and its interpretation. In most cases, the interpretation of the Soviet legacy in various post-communist countries has been either consensual or strongly contested. Whereas Central Europeans tend to view the rule of their respective communist parties aligned with Moscow as alien rulers (Hechter 2013), eastern parts of the bloc tend to view the Soviet Union as glorious and victorious. In countries such as the Baltic states, Serbia and Ukraine, legacies were contested mostly due to the reversal of ethnic hierarchies or significant loss of power. Naturally, some lamented this change, and therefore did not subscribe to the dominant narrative of the past. Regime divides reflect this consensus or contestation of the past.

Central Europeans viewed the legacy as largely negative, and were united in their desire to eradicate the stain of communism from their history (Darden and Grzymala-Busse, 2006). Central Asians viewed the legacy as rather positive and were united in their appreciation of economic opportunities that the long-ruling Soviet regime opened up for their pre-industrial societies. Since Leninist legacies (Jowitt 1992) in these two extreme cases were not contested, regime divides in these cases dissipated very quickly and did not polarize party systems. The impact of regime divide on party system was short-lived but it created a positive legacy in itself by allowing for an immediate consolidation of the parties behind, or against, the reform agenda.

Where the past has been contested, such as in post-1993 Russia and Ukraine, different interpretations of Soviet rule deeply split voters for a decade and the reform agenda was blurry (McFaul 2001). The most extreme example of political schizophrenia today is Ukraine. Opposing views of the past and a protracted decision about whether ‘to lean East or West’ created a rift in a violently polarized Ukraine, pitching a post-Soviet industrialized East against a patriotic, and historically rural, West (Beissinger 2013; Darden 2013; Kubicek 2000; Shevel 2002). Contested regime legacy thus had a more lasting impact by forcing parties to re-negotiate historically rooted state identities, which detracted from their efforts to address more mundane tasks of governance.

Economic endowments and legacies of bureaucratic capacity related to governance have also proven to be a powerful, yet often short-lived, legacy.

The depth and the severity of the initial economic decline associated with the onset of transition were unexpected (Svejnar 2002). The initial economic decline after first market reforms were introduced was shaped both by wealth and administrative capacity inherited from communism. Countries with better economic endowments and more efficient public bureaucracies suffered less. Large declines in economic output ‘varied from 13 to 25 percent in Central and Eastern Europe [and] over 40 percent in the Baltic countries’ (Svejnar 2002: 8). Some transition economies experienced high inflation or even hyper-inflation, such as the Baltic countries, where consumer price inflation was about 1000 percent in the very early 1990s (Svejnar 2002: 10). Similarly, unemployment rates rose quickly, and uncompetitive sclerotic socialist enterprises collapsed like a house of cards.

These tumultuous events affected voters right away. The first manifestation of economic voting linked transitional winners and losers, defined mostly in economic terms, to voting preferences and distinct party families. Because many left-wing parties in Central Europe, often successors of communist parties, supported fast economic liberalization and did not conform with a more traditional Western alignment of parties on the left-right scale (Grzymala-Busse 2002; Ishiyama 2009; Kitschelt et al. 1999; Lewis 2001; Tavits and Letki 2009), voting was often structured around those who supported market-oriented policies versus those who advocated for the preservation of market protections associated with the communist regimes (Colton 2000; Tucker 2006).⁸ However, due to the diversity of transition strategies and catch-up growth, which came eventually, the effect of communist economic legacies evaporated within a decade and was therefore short-lived (O’Dwyer and Kovalčík 2007).

A historical pattern of ethnic tensions is the third powerful – and most durable – legacy of the communist rule. Given the multi-faceted and diverse nature of many post-communist polities, ethnic identities were natural focal points around which to organize politics (Whitefield 2002; Siroky and Aprasidze 2011). The most violent wave of ethnic mobilization in the early 1990s swept the Balkans, but ethnic polarization was also echoed in the politics of the dissolving Soviet, Yugoslav and Czechoslovak federations. The less violent wave of identity politics emerged once the basic tasks of creating market institutions were completed, which led to new opportunities to restructure the political field.

Mobilization on ethnic issues therefore proceeded in two waves. The first wave followed immediately after the dissolution of many of the multi-ethnic federations and was a direct result of newly achieved sovereignty and a shift to a direct rule (Siroky and Cuffe 2015). Nationalist mobilization along ethnic lines resulted in voting both for parties that embraced newly earned independence and freedom from being ruled by non-titular ethnic groups. At the same time, the opportunity to organize in a new democracy combined with the nationalist fervor that accompanied independence created a sense of threat among small ethnic groups, which mobilized to form parties on ethnic platforms.

Yet not all ethnic groups had the same capacity to organize. Roma and Jews are minorities dispersed among countries without a strong political backing. They are targeted across a broad spectrum of parties and voters are occasionally sympathetic to calls for their exclusion from public life. The second types of minorities (e.g. Russians, Hungarians, and Turks) are more concentrated and apt to mobilize. These are often minorities who were once in a high-status position (the rulers), but ended up on the wrong side of the border at a crucial historical moment. They have a high capacity for collective action and can keep the titular nationalities in check by calling on their ‘mother countries’ who serve as patrons in ethnic relations (Jenne 2007). At the same time, the political accommodation of these groups by established parties increases voting for radical right parties (Bustikova 2014).⁹ Legacies of regime divide, past economic endowments and configurations of ethnic relations were able to structure party systems at the onset of democratization, yet they were not powerful enough to induce party system stability.

This is because, in the first ten or fifteen years, big issues such as privatization, democratization, and the EU accession (which were often induced by external actors, e.g. the IMF, World Bank, and the EU) strained the party systems, subdued domestic debates and (temporarily) imposed order. Eventually, however, the processes of building basic market and democratic institutions were completed and new issues – such as inequality, loss of sovereignty and entrenched political corruption – were introduced and injected fluidity back into the party systems.

Fluidity of party attachments / volatility of party systems

After the regime change, party systems were predisposed to volatility. Yet, despite the lack of consolidation based on societal cleavages throughout the 1990s, party systems aligned according to their positions on reforms and the degree to which voters sought fast privatization and dismantlement of the old economic structure. Under seemingly volatile systems, discernible voting blocks and parties emerged. Parties, both old and new (Haughton and Deegan-Krause 2015), changed names, but the blocks of parties associated with transitional supporters or opponents displayed a surprising degree of stability and ability to structure party and voter alignments in the early stages of democratization.

It is therefore paradoxical that, after twenty-five years, party systems today are more volatile than in their first decade of existence. Current Eastern European party systems are rather fluid with a high number of parties in the system and weak party attachments (Hanley and Sikk 2014). Electoral volatility, when compared to Western Europe and to at least parts of Latin America, is exceptionally high (Birch 2003; Tavits 2005).¹⁰ Surveying what they call seismic elections ten to twenty years after the breakdown of communism in Bulgaria (2001), Poland (2001), Hungary (2010), the Czech Republic (2010 and 2013), and Slovenia (2011 and 2014), Tim Haughton and Kevin Deegan-Krause (2015) describe

a system of instability in Eastern European party systems akin to a ‘hurricane season’.

According to their study, these seismic elections ‘involve swings of more than 40 percent and give pluralities to parties still in their infancy’ (Haughton and Deegan-Krause 2015: 61). At the time when party systems should be deepening consolidation, these disruptive elections signal that they are instead heading for a period of high volatility characterized by a pattern in which established parties lose, and ‘uncorrupted’ parties rise only to lose to newcomers until the cycle of political earthquakes begins again.

In a recent, similarly pessimistic analysis of party system stability, Conor O’Dwyer concludes that ‘[i]n postcommunist Europe, one finds both low-volatility party systems whose composition today closely resembles that of the early 1990s, and, at the other extreme, volatile systems with vanishingly small continuity over time’ (O’Dwyer 2014: 530). O’Dwyer shows that, where economic issues have dominated party competition, party systems tended to be most stable. This is consistent with previous research, which found that societal cleavages, as opposed to economic ones, were incapable of stabilizing party systems, especially in the first decade of transition (Tavits 2005).

When compared to economic cleavages, ethnic cleavages had a limited impact on structuring peaceful Eastern European party systems (cf. Kitschelt et al. 1999; Tworzecki 2003; Rovny 2015). Theories of economic voting proved to be superior in predicting voting, turnout, and electoral outcomes. Economic voting exhibited a dynamic comparable to the US (Fiorina 1981), Western Europe (Lewis-Beck 1988; cf. Anderson 2007) and Latin America (Remmer 1991; Singer 2013a; Gélineau and Singer 2015). The effect of economic considerations on voting was so well established that Joshua Tucker concluded in his extensive review of Eastern European voting that [rather than whether the economy matters] ‘we can now begin to ask exactly *how* [it] affects … voting’ (Tucker 2002: 294, cf. Bernhard and Karakoç 2011).

The reward-punishment model of economic voting (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000; Stegmaier, Park and Lewis-Beck, this *Handbook*, Volume 2, Chapter 25), in which the voters vote out the government if the economy underperforms, was mostly applicable in the first post-transitional decade (Pacek 1994; Fidrmuc 2000). After two large waves of voting, in which the voters oscillated between political alternatives (Pop-Eleches 2010), they came to the realization that establishment parties cannot address their concerns about the legitimacy of newly acquired wealth and inequalities associated with access to state resources. Populism, personalism and a fragmented political landscape driven by anti-establishment sentiment have therefore disrupted the mapping of economic cleavages on parties.

The consolidation of party politics in the 1990s was a temporary phenomenon that reflected the structuring impact of two exogenous shocks on new party systems: massive economic restructuring and, in the case of the accession countries, the obligation to comply with the EU requirements (Vachudova 2009). Once

these two forces were removed, the shallow nature of post-communist politics came to full force.

Economic/material well-being and voting

In the first decade, economic issues dominated the formation of post-communist party systems, which led to the impression that East European party systems were on the path toward orderly consolidation. What were the factors that contributed to the initial, post-transition alignment?

In the early stages of transition, voters aligned according to economic issues and mapped onto the platforms of parties on economic transition. Urban voters who had marketable skills compatible with the new economy supported parties associated with the fast-paced economic transition. Conversely, pensioners, rural voters, and voters from declining sectors such as mining, textiles, and heavy machinery – lacking human capital or towards the end of productive age – were more inclined to vote for parties that would buffer them from imposed austerity measures and the subsequent economic anxiety associated with declining incomes, worsening access to quality health care, and security in the retirement age (Fidrmuc 2000; Whitefield 2002).

In countries where there was a general consensus about the political direction, governing and opposition parties quibbled over the speed and nuances of the reforms. In countries leaning in a more authoritarian direction, the agreement was against the adoption of the so-called Washington consensus and reforms stalled. In more divided polities, where consensus was absent from the very beginning, the process of democratization was more protracted, since the transition forces were battling strong advocates of the old regime (Frye 2010; McFaul 2002, cf. Hellman 1998). The regime divide did not structure voting in cases where the nature of the regime was settled and therefore politics could evolve around economic winners and losers.

Where the nature of the regime was contested, such as in Ukraine or Russia, the party system was sharply polarized and voters were more divided on the issue of regime, which prevented a consensus about the policy choices associated with economic reforms. In countries with equally strong pro-regime and anti-regime political backing, this division ultimately undermined economic progress (Frye 2002) and eventually raised the stakes for the transitional losers. Policy instability deterred outside investment and internal development. In politically polarized societies, the pool of transitional losers was expanding faster, making economic success and failure highly politically salient.

Although new economic opportunities emerged for East European voters, the ability to capitalize on them was unequally distributed. The harsh impact of economic restructuring that had started in the early 1990s removed safety nets and exposed voters to the brutalities of the market. Fifteen years after the transition, most voters thought that they were economically better off under the previous

regime, which provided them with protections, such as job and pension security, cheap housing, food, transportation, and access to health and education. At the same time, many voters were not thrilled with the new democratic institutions that were associated with the implementation of free markets (Mishler and Rose 2001).

The division between the winners and the losers of transition, rooted in human capital and the ability to adapt to the new political and economic environment, was also translated into voters' positions on European Union enlargement and the process of re-joining Europe both politically and through trade ties (Vachudova 2005; Kelley 2006; Kopstein and Relley 2000). During the pre-accession process of the late 1990s and early 2000s, attitudes towards the EU structured the political field in a similar manner: young, urban voters with marketable skills capable of taking advantage of the opening to the West leaned towards parties that embraced the European project more enthusiastically. Yet a large proportion of voters were not enthusiastic, since their ability to take advantage of travel, investment, work and study opportunities due to the enlargement were limited. Eventually the voters have also recognized that the European project restricts state sovereignty, which was re-gained so recently.

For one or two decades, the party systems were overwhelmed by problems of economic transition and adoption of the large body of the European law: *acquis communautaire*. Preoccupation with the redistribution of economic resources and with the adjustments required to join the European community blinded politicians to the injustices incurred during the massive displacement of economic opportunities and consequences of the reduction of national sovereignty. The end of economic restructuring and the completion of the European enlargement process enabled new issues to gain traction and salience in the party systems.

New issues: corruption and the anti-establishment revolt

Despite the fact that the transition to free markets rewarded investment into human capital, it was accompanied by vast corruption, waste, and a misappropriation of state and European funds. After more than two decades of intermingling politics and business, through the processes of simultaneous democratization and marketization, many countries developed political-economic, semi-criminal networks that penetrated state structures, party offices, and quasi-independent media (Grzymala-Busse 2007; Kopecky and Spirova 2011; O'Dwyer 2006).

Eastern Europe in 2015 might be compared to Berlusconi's Italy insofar as dominant parties are imploding, corporations that keep journalists on a tight leash have been increasing their control over media, and populist politicians are promising to fight corruption only to quickly enrich themselves or their business partners. This trend is reflected in declining confidence in democracy over the past ten years (Figure 6.2).

A new cleavage around anti-establishment populist politics emerged when the transition dust settled and the EU accession process was completed (Pop-Eleches

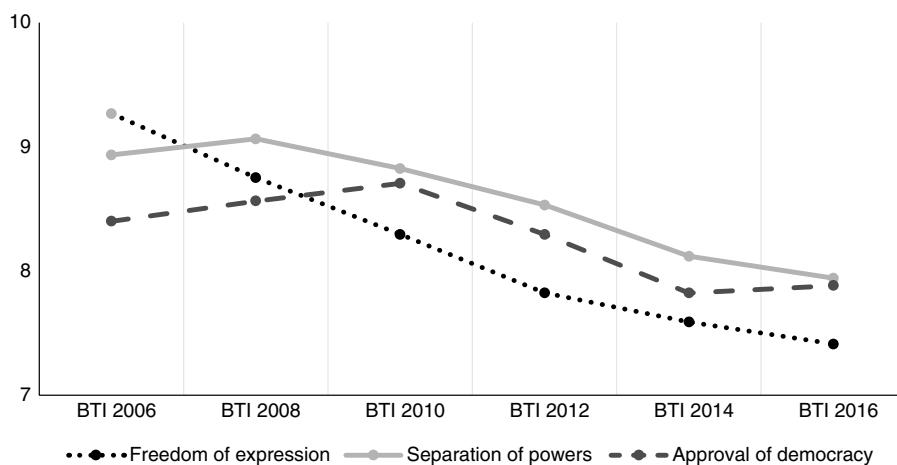


Figure 6.2 Decline in confidence in democracy, Eastern Europe

Decline in confidence in democracy, BTI 2006–2004 for East-Central and Southeast Europe

Source: Confidence in democracy has been shaken: regional averages BTI 2006–2014, Bertelsmann

Transformation Index 2014, Regional Report, East-Central and Southeast Europe <http://www.bti-project.org/reports/regional-reports/east-central-and-southeast-europe/>

2010). This populist cleavage however does not have the ability to consolidate the party systems in the long run. Voters often take cues from parties, which put popular attractive personalities with no policy agendas (other than a shallow commitment to root out corruption) on ballots to conceal the true donors, who operate in the background with ulterior business motives and control politics through proxies.

For example, Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydło was put up front as a candidate for the Law and Justice Party in 2015, due to the unpopularity of its leader, Jarosław Kaczyński. This strategy proved successful with the president-elect, Andrzej Duda (also from the Law and Justice party), who managed to defeat a very popular President Komorowski. Yet the former prime minister, Kaczyński, is the actual leader of the party and commands the loyalty of both Duda and Szydło. Another example of non-transparent leadership structures can be found in the Czech Republic's anti-corruption party, Public Affairs. The true leader of the party, Vít Bárta, was the owner of a security agency. According to information leaked to the leading Czech newspaper, the decision to form a new political party was a business decision in order to gain access to economic intelligence and compromising materials. Bárta is currently under investigation for illegal wiretaps, but maintains his innocence. The party was founded on an anti-corruption platform, since that was expected to resonate with the voters. For some time, it was led by Radek John, a popular public figure and former writer, who later became the Minister of Interior.

A list of corrupt politicians with dubious business backing could fill this whole chapter, but a few of the most recent flagrant cases will suffice. A district court in Slovenia ruled that the former Prime Minister of Slovenia, Janez Janša (and his conspirators), had sought about €2m in commission from a Finnish firm, Patria, for military contracts. Janša was arrested, but the Constitutional court overturned the verdict in 2015. In Albania, the circle behind the controversial Prime Minister Sali Berisha managed to get their candidate Lulzim Basha elected as the mayor of the capital city of Tirana in 2011 after a re-count, which included ballots that were cast in the wrong ballot box (BTI 2014). An alleged wiretapping operation (called Gorilla), leaked in 2011, practically destroyed a center-right reformist party in Slovakia (SDKU). The Gorilla file alleges that an investment fund (Penta) was involved in privatization deals with the reformist government. It states that Penta has paid millions of euros in bribes to public officials and provided shoddy financing for major Slovak political parties.

The deterioration of media freedoms among the most consolidated democracies is the strongest indicator of backsliding (Figure 6.3). Despite the fact that crude indicators of political freedoms, separation of powers and governance indicators have not changed that much over the past ten years and are quite positive, the politicization of the media in the post-accession period and the curtailment of the ability of journalists to impartially report on political corruption and abuse of state powers indicates corrosion in the quality of regimes. Central-East European newspapers have traditionally been in the hands of foreign media companies, which did not interfere with media content. Due to declining profit margins, foreign investors have been withdrawing from the region, leaving the media sector to local businessmen with political ambitions (Guasti and Mansfeldová 2017) who take advantage of corruption scandals and weak governance to drain votes from established parties.

A scandalous media affair lies at the heart of the current illiberal turn in Poland after the Law and Justice Party won elections in 2015. The party dominates Poland like no other party in twenty-seven years by controlling the presidency, both houses of parliament and the government. The roots of its current success can be traced to the so-called Rywin Affair. In 2002, Lew Rywin met with the editor in chief of the popular daily, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, and offered him 17.5 million USD to modify a draft bill of the media law. The meeting was secretly recorded by the editor and leaked six months later. The change in the draft law would have allowed the owner of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Agora SA, to expand into television broadcasting. This affair eventually led to the resignation of Prime Minister Leszek Miller, who was suspected, among others, to be behind Rywin's offer. More importantly, the affair fatally wounded the ruling party – the Polish social democrats – and opened the door for the populist Law and Justice Party to win on the anti-corruption platform in 2005. The party was eventually voted out of office, but regained power in 2015. Immediately after seizing power, the Law and Justice Party introduced a new Media Law, which gave the ruling party the

executive power to appoint the heads of state TV and radio. The party replaced senior staff to restore balanced reporting in line with ‘national interests’ and tightened the grip of the government on public media (Guasti and Mansfeldová 2016).

A media leak was also behind the demise of the once well-established Hungarian social democratic party. In 2006, an audio recording of Prime Minister Gyurcsány’s speech, in which the leader of the social democratic party admitted that the government had been lying to the public about its administrative and economic competence, was leaked to the public. The speech led to the Prime Minister’s resignation, but more importantly marked the beginning of the illiberal turn in Hungary under the leadership of Viktor Orbán and his party. Developments in Hungary since 2010 and in Poland since 2015, both under conservative governments, have sent shockwaves throughout the European Union. Both Poland and Hungary were once poster children of democratic consolidation in Eastern Europe, but are now developing a playbook to undermine the pillars of democratic governance. These steps include assaults on the constitutional court and constitutional checks, increased control over state media, and delegitimizing the opposition by suggesting that they are disloyal proxies of foreign forces.

In January 2016, for the first time in the EU’s history, the European Commission launched a formal investigation into the rule of law in one of its member states, Poland. The EU and the Council of Europe are mostly concerned with laws passed to overhaul the Polish constitutional tribunal and curb media freedoms. The pushback against the destruction of Polish democracy is closely watched in the whole region. The EU was able to reverse an attempt to impeach the Romanian president via unconstitutional means in 2012 by threatening to suspend Romania’s voting rights in the EU, but it has not been able to tame Viktor Orbán in Hungary. Cracks can be observed in yet another front-runner of democratic consolidation: the Czech Republic.

In 2013, a business oligarch, and current Minister of Finance, Andrej Babiš, purchased the most popular Czech newspaper from a German owner through his firm, Agrofert. His firm is the largest recipient of EU structural funds. Since the purchase, many investigative journalists have left in protest over the newspaper’s loss of impartiality. The newspaper molds public opinion in favor of Babiš, his political party and his business empire, and away from his political opponents. He has become famous for his desire to run ‘the state as a firm’, efficiently and without the hassle of endless democratic deliberations. The protracted nature of democratic governance, inefficiencies in governing, and inability to tackle wealth inequality – combined with the permanent revolving door between political interests and business interests (Guasti 2014; Innes 2014; Rupnik 2007) – contribute to the anti-establishment sentiment and democratic backsliding.

Corruption – and the populist anti-establishment backlash associated with it – have become niche party issues in the first decade of the new millennium and have contributed to the destabilization of party systems. The ability of this

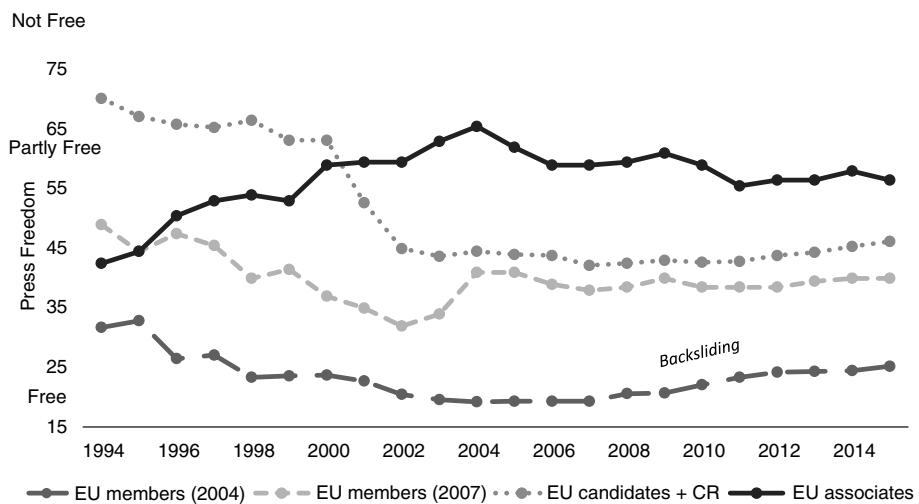


Figure 6.3 Freedom of the press in Eastern Europe

Source: Freedom House. Freedom of the Press. Ratings: Free (0–30), Partly Free (31–60), Not Free (61–100). EU members (2004): Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia; EU members (2007): Bulgaria, Romania; EU candidates + CR: Croatia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia; EU associates: Moldova, Ukraine.

niche topic to re-configure party systems along stable, programmatic lines is very limited, since it possesses only a shallow relationship to societal cleavages, and operates within a fluid party system in which parties are forced to quickly respond to corruption affairs or fabricated new issues. For example, the Czech Civic Democratic Party, which has been a dominant and stable force in Czech politics since the early 1990s, completely collapsed in 2013, due to the sex affair of its Prime Minister.

Unlike in Western European democracies, anger is more often directed at democratic institutions themselves, rather than just at untrustworthy politicians. Furthermore, mobilization based on corruption sometimes grows roots into the cleavage structure by coexisting with ethnic cleavages. In 2012, the far right party in Hungary proposed to create a list of the Jewish members of the Parliament as threats to national security. In the initial phase of the backlash, corruption was a niche issue that mapped onto identity politics. Anyone labeled as corrupt can be framed as the enemy in ethnic or identity terms. In the long run, however, the anti-establishment backlash might eventually undermine identity-based cleavages by broadening the base of voters concerned with corruption and the perceived lack of attention to the ‘people’. Therefore, anti-elitism has the ability to erode identity cleavages, further contributing to the inability of the party systems to consolidate (cf. Tavits and Letki 2014).

Ethnic identities and legacies of nationalist mobilization from pre-transition years are the most durable cleavages inherited from the past. Initially, after the

first years of transition, when states shifted to direct self-rule, identity-based cleavages were related to sovereignty and to the resurgent pride among titular nationalities, to control their own affairs. Independence from Moscow and from the central federal authorities reinvigorated patriotism and assertiveness of titular nationalities, as many newly minted post-communist political leaders rediscovered nationalism. In the case of Yugoslavia, this led to a protracted series of civil wars and ethnic conflicts (1991–2001). Those polities that remained peaceful became involved in the busy work of transition and putting on their best faces vis-à-vis the European Union. They transformed their economic, representative, and legal systems and re-invigorated their civil societies (Ekiert and Kubik 2001).

The second non-violent wave of identity politics was mostly channeled through party systems in the new millennium. The verbal viciousness of this new wave of identity politics is related to the profound disillusionment with the return to Europe as well as unfulfilled (and unrealistic) expectations of wealth accumulation (Grzymala-Busse and Innes 2003). After more than two decades of transition, very few countries can boast to have created a secure middle class, an accountable political class, and steady economic growth. Identity politics in the post-economic transformation era is mostly non-violent, but vitriolic and infused with two new topics: profound disappointment with corrupt politicians and irritation with new liberal social issues, such as minority rights as well as gay and lesbian rights, often associated with the cosmopolitan nature of the European Union and implemented by democratic elites.

Euroscepticism in Central-Eastern Europe has risen significantly in the past ten years (Mansfeldova and Guasti 2012; Taggart and Sczerbiak, 2013; Whitefield and Rohrschneider 2014: 17). According to a study by Leonard and Torreblanca (2014), overall trust in the EU has declined steeply since 2003. In 2013, only thirty percent of all EU citizens trusted the EU. Across post-communist countries, trust in the EU varies, but the overall trend is negative. In 2007, citizens from all the accession countries still trusted the EU. By 2013, most Czechs, Croats, Slovenes, Latvians, Slovaks, and Hungarians did not trust the EU. Even among countries such as Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Estonia, and Bulgaria, where most citizens still trust the EU, the overall level of trust declined between 2007 and 2013 (Leonard and Torreblanca 2014: 4).

The implications for future voting decisions are troubling. East European voters have learned their lesson from the early 1990s. The track record of the new political and administrative elites, with a few exceptions, is dreadful. The new Bertelsmann Transformation Index report for East-Central and South-Eastern Europe states that one of the main challenges facing these countries is ‘profound, persistent corruption’ (BTI 2014). The report also states that: ‘[d]emocracy has suffered in 12 of the region’s 17 countries. Two long-standing trends are responsible for this trend: majority governments disregarding the rule of law and growing mistrust in democracy’ (BTI 2014).

This disillusionment has implications for trust in democracies, since the major difference between Western and Eastern European democracies is that dissatisfaction with democracy and unaccountable politicians is increasingly being linked with anti-democratic attitudes in the latter (Minkenberg 2015). Corrupt political practices are certainly present in Western Europe at the highest levels (Warner 2007), but they are not associated with calls that challenge the nature of the democratic order. In the East, multi-ethnic arrangements and democracy are bundled together, such that the new (shallow) anti-establishment cleavage is feeding off the intensity and depth of emotion associated with a deeper identity-based cleavage grounded in ethnicity.

Nationalism and sour attitudes towards liberal democracy have three inter-linked sources. The first one is the European Union, which is associated with liberal democracy advocating for the rights of ethnic, social, and sexual minorities, and with restrictions of national sovereignty. Opposition to liberal democracy thus implies a pathway to increased sovereignty in domestic affairs, something many patriots or nationalists strive for. Second, opposition to liberal democracy is often disguised as opposition to multi-culturalism and goes hand in hand with advocating further restrictions on civic life. Third, since the democratic and economic transitions proceeded simultaneously, voters associate the introduction of free markets with democratization. The corrupt nexus of politics and economics, which was born in dual transition, has cast a shadow on democratic institutions that have often failed to plant adequate regulatory institutions of oversight to curb political corruption.

Corruption and anti-establishment attitudes engage economic issues and are certainly enhanced by feelings of economic unfairness (Klašnja et al. 2014; Hanley and Sikk 2014). For the most part, however, economic issues are bundled with identity issues, where ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ is associated with rage against the political elites that sold national interests out to outsiders, foreigners, and ethnic minorities. Retraction from a liberal democratic project is not only attempting to re-arrange ethnic relations, social issues, and ethnic dominance in some countries, but to challenge the very foundations of democracies.

Any backsliding from the commitment to liberal democracy should be primarily understood in the context of these identity-based (mostly ethnic) cleavages, not as a gut reaction to economic insecurities and inequalities, unless these are coupled with the perceived dominance of ethnic and social groups. The anti-establishment cleavage can tap into the identity cleavage, but it has a potentially corrosive effect since it can blur the boundaries of ethnic and social cleavages.

Undemocratic propositions to restrict civil society, tame unruly media, and correct excesses associated with the freedom of expression are often accompanied by desires to restrict rights of both social and ethnic minorities. This is not that hard to do as a result of the relatively higher levels of aggregate xenophobia in the East (Mudde 2005). Therefore, attempts to modify ethnic relations, which are wrapped in populist calls for a more direct relationship between voters and leaders, can be interpreted as covert calls to re-visit inclusive democracy as a

form of political representation. We can hope that regimes, which have survived for more than twenty years, will be resilient enough to remain part of the democratic West, but this outcome is far from certain.

CONCLUSION

Whereas few in Latin America or Eastern Europe dream of a return to authoritarian or communist rule, the modern democratic experience has not been rosy. This has had numerous implications for electoral behavior in these regions. In the first place, it has diminished the legitimacy of the new regimes. The regime split is particularly salient in Eastern Europe, where dissatisfaction with political corruption and infringements on national sovereignty have created a backlash against a set of young democratic systems. Political entrepreneurs in those cases have pursued a narrower definition of democracy as a community of ethnic equals and advocated for a greater national independence. In a worst-case scenario, voting in some of the new East European democracies might eventually turn into a referendum on the sustainability of tolerant and diverse societies. A classic regime-type divide has nearly dissipated in Latin America, but dissatisfaction with what modern democracy has delivered, political instability, and the success of populist leaders who dismantle traditional institutions and curb liberties all conspire to leave the issue of democratic quality and consolidation far from resolved and thus still relevant to the electoral agenda.

Collectively the two regions, Latin America and Eastern Europe, demonstrate how difficult it is to find stable equilibria in young party systems in the modern era. Electoral volatility is high and has been on the rise in both regions despite decades of democracy. Interestingly, electoral volatility centers around new party entrance and exit in both regions. Further, in both, it is accompanied by significant levels of personalism in politics, despite the fact that Latin America's systems are presidential and Eastern Europe's systems are parliamentary. According to Wilkinson's study of India, volatility is not always incompatible with a deep commitment to democracy, and the adversarial effects of volatility on democratic commitment can be exaggerated (Wilkinson 2015). In fact, one might argue that economic inequality could put democratic stability at a higher risk than electoral volatility. Unfortunately, both Latin America and Eastern Europe are also plagued by economic inequality, leaving their party systems with multiple, and potentially interacting, vulnerabilities. Although economic voting has contributed to the consolidation of party systems, inequality, market uncertainty, and polarization can and do undermine party system structuration. This observation echoes the conclusion reached in a study of party system volatility in Africa by Weghorst and Bernhard (2014), which found that inequality increases volatility because 'distributionally harsh divides' foster polarization. Therefore, economic voting may contribute to consolidation only when the distributional impact of

economic change does not lead to levels of inequality and polarization that are high enough as to jeopardize democratic stability. Those extreme cases aside, both regions testify to the primary position of the economy in voter decision calculi in newer democracies, much as this dimension occupies a central role in voter choice in older, more established democracies.

Poor economic conditions can aggravate other issues, including corruption and crime. As noted, in Latin America, the evidence is that voters are more likely to punish executives for corruption when economic times are bad. The privatization campaign in Eastern Europe – when state enterprises were being rapidly sold en masse – was a phenomenal opportunity for political entrepreneurs to enrich themselves (a process that was not unheard of in Latin America during its privatization period). Especially in Eastern Europe, economic liberalization contributed to the creation of a now well-entrenched system of non-transparent financing of political parties. Voters took note and were angered by the long-term diversion of state resources and subsidies into private pockets. In both regions, inequality that stems from or is otherwise perceived to be connected to political corruption is a highly salient issue. Such governance issues are likely to remain on the agenda alongside issues of democratic quality and party system consolidation for some time. Collectively these factors create what might be termed a ‘pessimistic equation’ (in contrast to modernization theory’s optimistic equation; see Lipset 1960), where poor governance, corruption, ineffective oversight on the economy, inequality, insecurity, and other poor output fuel or facilitate each other while undermining public confidence in the legitimacy of democracy. This type of dynamic would appear relevant to a variety of newly emerged or young democracies, not only those of Latin America and Eastern Europe.

Capitalizing on system discontent, a new cleavage around anti-establishment populist politics has emerged both in Latin America and Eastern Europe. In Latin America, this happened as traditional parties became discredited due to a failure to deliver on the promises of democracy, most notably with respect to widespread economic benefits but also – especially recently – with respect to citizen security. In Eastern Europe, the emergence of an anti-establishment cleavage coincided with the end of the economic transition and the completion of the EU accession process. In both regions, the populist cleavage presents another challenge to the ability to consolidate those party systems in the long run and, at the same time, has implications for voter behavior in a number of ways, including via new cleavages formed between those who identify with or are against the populist’s agenda.

Populism has been associated with a rise in class-based voting in both regions and in this way, among others, is strengthening the relevance of identity politics for electoral agendas. In considering material influences on the vote, we admittedly have not devoted much attention to clientelism in this chapter. In general, in mid-income countries, clientelism is often related to political patronage, access to procurement contracts, preferential distribution of subsidies, and targeted policies (Kitschelt and Kselman 2013). Yet, in a number of cases, vote-buying machines

and processes are regularly employed by parties and candidates to voters who come to expect them. This is not to say that these efforts are particularly efficient; for example, Kitschelt and Altamirano (2015) document how vote-buying efforts in Latin America constitute a type of ‘leaky bucket’, where the resources expended fail to match the returns achieved through the practice. Differences in levels and forms of clientelism differ within and across the Latin American and Eastern European regions, and the same is true when considering how such practices manifest in other regions such as Asia, where patronage is rampant, or Africa, where cash-for-vote operations can take on highly visible forms.

As we have noted from the start, electoral behavior in newer democracies shares many similarities with that in older, more established democracies, but also a number of notable differences. Some of these differences appear to be points of commonalities among newer democracies, for example, electoral volatility, shallower party attachments, and political options that stoke new cleavages and concerns in ways that may not bode well for the consolidation of programmatic party competition. Other differences are unique to each region and, at an even finer level of detail, across countries within regions. These include each country’s own experiences with the prior authoritarian regime and transition to a newly formed democratic context. They include, as well, the multitude of ways in which regular patterns of democratic party competition are subverted (or bolstered) in small, and sometimes large, ways across elections.

Notes

- 1 The radical right in Eastern Europe, for the most part, supports state interventionism and market protection (Bustikova and Kitschelt 2009; Ishiyama 2009).
- 2 Elections have been held in Colombia, Costa Rica, and Venezuela since the middle of the twentieth century, which, although oligarchical especially in the early years and not always free of controversy, have mostly met minimal requirements for democratic competition. Mexico has held regular elections for national office since the early 1900s, though these only became competitive toward the end of that century.
- 3 Between 1983 (when a fifty-year-old in 2015 would have been eighteen) and 2015, the number of years in which there have been presidential, legislative, or concurrent elections in Latin American countries ranges from five in Nicaragua to sixteen in Argentina and El Salvador. The number in the text represents the average across the eighteen Latin American countries; though note that legal voting age is lower than eighteen in some cases.
- 4 Nadeau et al. (forthcoming) show that evaluations of how the administration is handling democracy are relevant to voter choice in contemporary Latin America.
- 5 Cohen, Salles, and Zechmeister (2016) document that ‘Type A’ electoral volatility – that caused by party entry and exit – has increased in Latin America in recent times.
- 6 A dearth of questions on standardized surveys makes it difficult to compare the weight of candidate traits or charisma to the vote choice across countries within Latin America, or between the Latin American region and other regions. We hope, nonetheless, that this type of comparison will be taken up in future scholarship.
- 7 According to the New Europe Barometer, the majority of respondents in Latvia, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Romania, Slovakia, and Bulgaria think of their current economic system (2004–2005) as

- worse than the communist economic system before 1989 (Bustikova 2009). The Czech Republic was the only country that viewed the communist economy as strictly negative. The evaluation of the system of government was slightly more positive, but in many instances the communist and post-communist systems of government are viewed as on a par with the current systems (Rose, 2007).
- 8 Market reform protectionism is either advocated by unreformed communist parties, mostly in the countries of the former Soviet Union or populist-nationalistic parties in Central Europe, where former communist parties morphed into social democratic parties that embraced social liberalism, cosmopolitanism and pro-European market liberal orientation.
 - 9 The political gains that minority segments of populations achieved irritated voters, who then turned to radical right parties to reverse those gains. Voting for the radical right parties does not originate in prejudice, but rather in opposition to policies that accommodate their demands and elevate their status (Bustikova 2014).
 - 10 According to a study by Powell and Tucker (2014), which covers elections from the early 1990s to the early 2000s, the effective number of parties was 5.77. The average volatility caused by the entry and exit of parties from the political system was 31.86, and the average volatility that occurs when voters switch their votes between existing parties was 12.68. Tavits (2007) reports that the total number of new parties in the region since the early 1990s was 248. The average number of new parties per election for the whole democratic period was 5.6.

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PART II

Sociological Approaches



Age and Voting

Ruth Dassonneville

INTRODUCTION

Within the field of electoral behaviour, there are few variables that are as consistently found to affect different aspects of voting as age. First, citizens' age is found to affect the probability that they turn out to vote on Election Day. The very first scholars conducting election studies already observed a curvilinear relationship between age and turnout. This observation, of young voters being more likely to abstain and the probability of turning out to vote decreasing somewhat in old age, has since been confirmed in a large and growing number of studies (Bhatti and Hansen, 2012; Blais et al., 2004; Konzelmann et al., 2012; Leighley and Nagler, 2014; Wass, 2007; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980). Second, age is a strong determinant of the strength of partisan attachments as well, as 'older people are generally stronger partisans than younger' (Converse, 1976: 10). The consequences of this age-partisan strength relationship can also be observed in voters' behaviour, as support for one's preferred party increases with age (Gomez, 2013) and voters' electoral behaviour stabilizes as they grow older as well (Dassonneville, 2013). These findings suggest that voters' support for a particular party strengthens over their lifetime, which is clear from how attached they feel to this party and is evident from how loyal they are to this party when casting a vote. The empirical evidence confirming this pattern is large and still accumulating.

The consistency of these observations is in sharp contrast to the fierce scientific debates on how to interpret and explain the curvilinear relationship between age and turnout and how to explain the fact that older voters are more strongly attached to a political party compared with younger voters. These debates revolve

around two main issues: first, there is controversy on the substantive mechanisms explaining these observed links. For the relation between age and turnout, for example, it is debated whether the curvilinear pattern – with the highest probability to turn out to vote among the middle-aged – is the result of a life-cycle effect (Highton and Wolfinger, 2001; Smets, 2012), or of differences in terms of social pressure and civic norms (Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2012; Goerres, 2007). Furthermore, the impact of habit-formation is invoked as a mechanism and it is argued that young voters are more likely to abstain because they have not yet developed a habit of voting (Denny and Doyle, 2009; Dinas, 2012; Franklin, 2004; Plutzer, 2004). Different mechanisms are referred to for explaining strengthening party attachments as voters grow older as well, such as being repeatedly exposed to elections and the party system as voters age (Converse, 1976; Kroh, 2014), a reinforcement effect of having voted for a particular party (Dinas, 2014) or age per se – and hence life-cycle effects – explaining why young voters have weaker party attachments (Niemi et al., 1985). Second, in a largely methodological discussion, with several articles published in the 1970s, it is debated whether cross-sectional observations of the relation between age and turnout on the one hand and age and the strength of partisan attachments on the other are the result of an age effect or instead the result of cohort differences (Abramson, 1976; Claggett, 1981; Converse, 1969, 1976; Glenn, 1972; Knoke and Hout, 1974). The apparent inconclusiveness in this debate and mixed results originate in difficulties related to distinguishing different time effects empirically. For assessing whether differences between the young and the old are due to age or arise from differences between generations (for which birth cohorts are regularly looked at), the impact of a particular period of investigation should be taken into account as well. These three time effects, however – age-, cohort- and period-effects – are perfectly linearly dependent (Glenn, 1976, 2006; Mason et al., 1973). Indeed, at a particular point of time, we know what birth cohort a citizen belongs to as soon as we know how old this citizen is. As a consequence, it becomes methodologically challenging – and some would claim impossible – to disentangle the impact of each of the three time effects (Glenn, 2006). As this chapter aims to shed light on the impact of age on turnout and partisanship, this requires taking into account that there are cohort- and period-effects as well. We therefore take a methodological approach that has been implemented in previous research and estimate hierarchical age-period-cohort (HAPC) models on a series of repeated cross-sectional election surveys (Neundorf and Niemi, 2014; Yang and Land, 2008; Yang, 2008). This approach has been argued to help address the APC issue, although no single solution is perfect (Glenn, 2006). Whether observed age differences in citizens' probability to cast a vote or the strength of their party attachments are the consequences of age difference or driven by cohort effects is however of substantive importance. While differences due to age quite naturally dissipate or arise as voters grow older, cohort differences have a long-lasting impact on voters and hence on representative democracy.

Whether or not there are age differences in the extent to which citizens turn out to vote and in the strength of their party attachments is highly important. Electoral participation is a crucial element in representative democracies, and for the legitimacy of democracy it is deemed essential that turnout levels are sufficiently high (Lijphart, 1997). Additionally, partisan attachments play a key role in electoral democracies, as party identifications offer citizens guidance in dealing with politics, structuring their behaviour and attitudes (Campbell et al., 1960; Dalton and Weldon, 2007). If particular age groups are less likely to turn out to vote on Election Day or are less likely to have strong attachments to political parties and other groups, there is a clear risk that they will be underrepresented or less well represented. Differences in individuals' probability of turning out to vote or of developing strong party attachments can hence entail unequal representation. In addition, the age composition of electorates in advanced democracies is changing, with e.g. European populations ageing (Konzelmann et al., 2012; Vanhuysse and Goerres, 2012). As a result, not only are older voters already expected to be more likely to turn out or to have strong party attachments, but as the old-age group is growing in size, their voices will be heard even more strongly.

Our focus on how age affects turnout and the strength of party attachments implies that we do not address another way in which age could have an impact on voting: by affecting party preferences. Old voters in particular are regularly attributed more economically conservative and authoritarian values, which would lead them to prefer parties on the right. Previous research on this topic, however, does not find strong indications of more conservative attitudes or a preference for more conservative parties among older voters being driven by age effects (Goerres, 2008; Tilley, 2005). We thus focus on the impact of age on variables for which the literature has clearly established the presence of a relation.

This chapter consists of two main sections: a first one focusing on the relation between age and turnout and a second one on how age affects the strength of party attachments. In each section, previous empirical findings are summarized, with a focus on the substantive mechanisms explaining age differences. Furthermore, the relation between age and turnout as well as the strength of party attachments is assessed descriptively. In the theoretical section as well as in the description of trends, particular attention is given to distinguishing age effects from cohort and period effects.

AGE AND TURNOUT

Turnout over the life cycle

Age is one of the most important individual-level predictors for explaining why some voters turn out to vote while others abstain from voting, and most research hints at a curvilinear relation. As voters grow older, their probability of turning

out increases, but gradually decreases again when they reach old age (Bhatti et al., 2012; Milbrath, 1965; Wass, 2007; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980). This curvilinear relation between age and turnout is observed quite consistently, as evident from a meta-analysis on the determinants of turnout. Smets and van Ham (2013) report that 75% of the studies find support for the expected curvilinear relation between age and citizens' probability of turning out on Election Day.

This observed link between age and turnout has been interpreted as a logical consequence of life cycle effects and the fact that young people have not yet experienced a number of events that are characteristic for the transition into maturity – such as leaving school, working, owning a home, marriage or having children (Smets, 2012). In the literature, a number of arguments are given that explain the importance of these events. First of all, it has been argued that, as long as people have not experienced these events, they are simply too occupied to turn out to vote (Smets, 2012; Strate et al., 1989). As Converse and Niemi (1971: 461) have argued with regard to the impact of finding a partner and a job: 'Young single persons in their twenties are inevitably preoccupied with two rather personal quests: the quest for a mate and the quest for a suitable job. These quests are to some degree incompatible with devotion of attention to broader events'.

Besides an argument of other occupations, other mechanisms as well are referred to for explaining the importance of the life cycle. As an example, young voters are known to be much more mobile geographically. This higher level of mobility not only results in a weaker social embeddedness – which is generally thought to reduce participation – but because of the hurdle of registration it also increases the cost of voting (Conway, 2000; Highton, 2000). Furthermore, as young citizens enter adulthood, their resources increase, which affects positively the probability that they turn out to vote on Election Day (Highton and Wolfinger, 2001; Smets, 2012). Finally, the fact that they take up adult roles renders turning out to vote more meaningful as well – increasing incentives to vote. It has been asserted that having children, paying taxes, or being settled in a town for a long time renders turning out to vote a more relevant act for citizens (Goerres, 2007; Smets, 2012). In old age, citizens go through another set of transitions in life – once more affecting their probability of voting. A poorer health and physical complaints, living without a spouse or children, or disengaging from social life can all be thought to decrease the voters' resources as well as the social pressure they feel to cast a vote (Bhatti et al., 2012; Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2012; Goerres, 2007; Smets, 2012). The evidence for particular transitions in life as the mechanism driving the curvilinear relation between age and voting is somewhat mixed. Smets (2012) and Strate, Parrish, Elder and Ford (1989) offer indications that the transition into adult life is important, as taking into account a 'maturation index' explains away differences in young voters' probability of turning out to vote. Highton and Wolfinger (2001), by contrast, conclude from their study of turnout in the United States that transitions into adult life contribute relatively little to explaining turnout.

Scholars investigating the link between age and turnout have focused on young adults in particular. Scrutinizing the evolution over time of young voters' probability of voting, it has been highlighted that, among the young, the likelihood of turning out actually decreases, before increasing again until middle age – resulting in a 'roller-coaster' shaped relation (Bhatti et al., 2012). Some have argued that this drop in young adults' probability of voting is due to a first-time voter boost; the argument is that being eligible to vote for the first time increases youngsters' probability of voting, after which their initial enthusiasm decreases again. As these youngsters then grow older and take up adult roles, the likelihood of turning out to vote increases again (Konzelmann et al., 2012). Bhatti, Hansen and Wass (2012), by contrast, argue that the decrease in young voters' probability of voting is not a mere result of a first-time voter boost. Instead, the transitions in life that these young adults go through explains this particular pattern. When voting for the first time, a lot of young citizens are still living at home with their parents but as they grow older and leave the parental home, their likelihood of casting a vote subsequently decreases. The findings of Zeglovits and Aichholzer (2014) point in the same direction, as they observe that 16-year-old first-time voters are significantly more likely to turn out to vote than 20-year-old first-time voters. Only after this initial decrease in the probability of turning out to vote, and after having gone through the transitory phase of young adulthood, does citizens' likelihood of casting a vote on Election Day increase with age.

Investigating the reasons for citizens becoming more likely to turn out as they grow older in particular, scholars have drawn attention to voting being a habit. Time after time, citizens who have previously cast a vote are found to be more likely to turn out to vote in subsequent elections as well. To some extent, this is due to the impact of stable characteristics of voters, such as their socio-economic status or their socialization into politics (Denny and Doyle, 2009). Even when controlling for such time-invariant characteristics, however, a citizen who previously cast a vote has a higher probability of turning out to vote than a citizen who did not do so. A potential explanation therefore is that parties and candidates target previous voters in their 'get out the vote' campaigns (Denny and Doyle, 2009). Furthermore, one can assume the cost of voting to be strongly reduced for citizens who have already been through the process of registering before (Dinas, 2012). In addition to these mechanisms, a number of scholars claim that the act itself of having cast a vote is self-reinforcing (Dinas, 2012; Gerber et al., 2003; Green and Shachar, 2000). Most likely, this is due to a psychological process, by which citizens who turn out to vote create a self-image of a (regular) voter, that they wish to confirm by turning out to vote in subsequent elections as well (Dinas, 2012; Gerber et al., 2003). This self-reinforcing function of casting a vote serves as an explanation for the observation that young voters are more likely to abstain on Election Day, as they have not yet acquired a habit of voting (Denny and Doyle, 2009; Plutzer, 2004). Only gradually, over the course of about three elections, do the young develop a voting or non-voting

habit. Furthermore, the stability of non-voting is weaker than the stability of voting. As a result, more non-voters develop the habit of voting than vice versa, resulting in an increasing probability of turning out to vote as the young grow older (Plutzer, 2004).

In the literature, findings of a curvilinear relation between age and turnout are widespread. This particular pattern – with the probability that a citizen turns out to vote on Election Day increasing as she grows older and decreasing again in old age – is claimed to be a consequence of the transitions in life citizens go through as they grow older. For explaining pronounced differences in the extent to which young adults on the one hand and middle-aged voters on the other turn out to vote, habitual voting offers an important explanatory mechanism. Figure 7.1 looks at the relation between age and turnout among current-day voters in a large number of advanced democracies and adds further evidence for this basic curvilinear pattern. We present the estimated effect of age on turnout in a large number of OECD countries, using data on recent national elections from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) project (The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, 2015; 2016). Investigating the relation between age and turnout at an individual level by means of survey data, we have to be aware of the fact that turnout is generally overreported in election studies. To some extent this is due to sampling errors, with non-voters being underrepresented. Because of social desirability issues, non-voters that are included have a tendency to falsely report that they did turn out to vote on Election Day (Karp and Brockington, 2005; Selb and Munzert, 2013; Zeglovits and Kritzinger, 2014). As a way to partly account for the fact that turnout is overestimated in the data used, we weigh the data to correct for overreporting (Karp and Banducci, 2008; Gallego 2014). The predictions in Figure 7.1 were obtained from a series of logistic regressions estimating citizens' probability of voting by means of their age and age squared. We can note a fair amount of between-country variation in this basic pattern. In some countries we observe a clear increase in the probability of voting as voters grow older, with a limited decrease in this probability in old age. Clear examples of such a pattern are Spain or Finland. In other countries, such as France, the estimated decrease in old age appears to be as equally strong as the increase among young voters. Finally, there are some countries where we observe a strong decrease in old voters' probability of turning out to vote but virtually no increased probability among young voters. Greece offers a marked example of such a pattern. Overall, however, the basic pattern among current-day electorates is the expected curvilinear one – with middle-aged voters having the highest probability of casting a ballot on Election Day.

Generational differences in turnout?

A number of scholars have pointed out that the large turnout gap between young and old voters is not only due to life cycle effects, but that generational

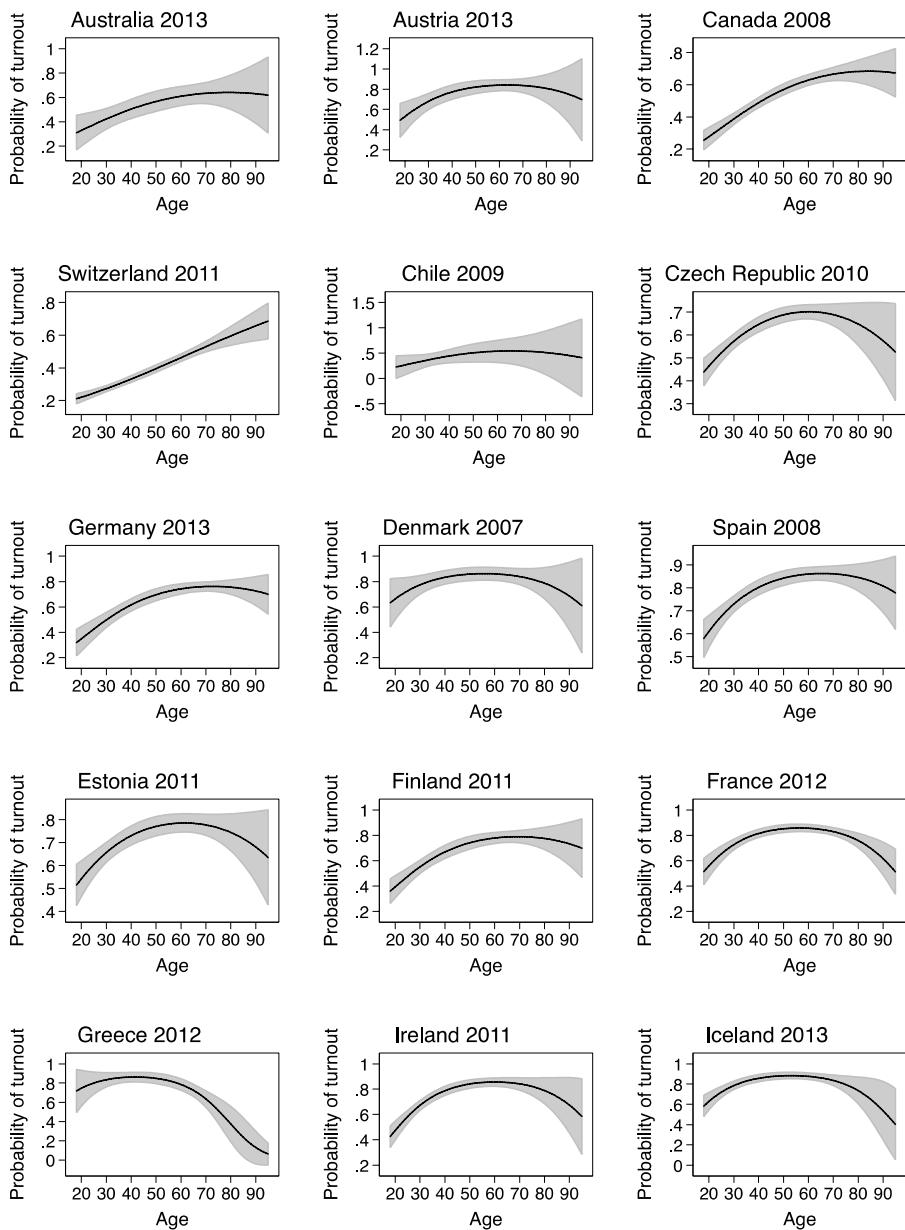
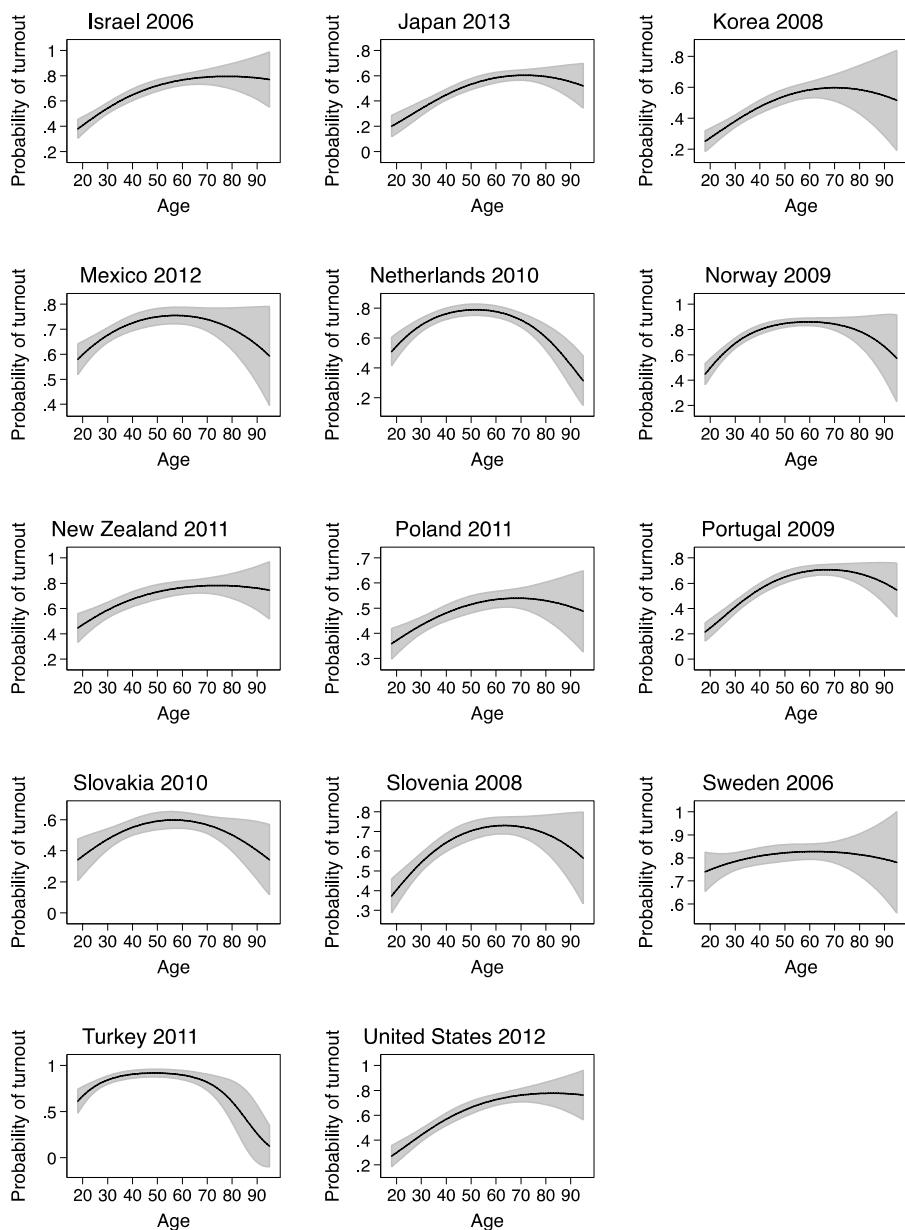


Figure 7.1 Probability of turning out to vote by age

Note: Predicted probabilities and 95%-confidence intervals. Predictions obtained after estimating logistic regression models predicting turnout (0 = did not cast a ballot, 1 = cast a ballot) with age and age squared.

Sources: CSES Module 3 (2015) and CSES Module 4 (2016). Demographic weights and a weight to correct for overreported turnout were applied.

**Figure 7.1** **Continued**

differences as well are at play. It is argued that, as new generations of young voters are growing older, they will still be less likely to turn out to vote compared with previous generations of voters (Blais et al., 2004; Franklin, 2004; Wass, 2007). The focus on generational differences originates in the observation that turnout rates are decreasing rapidly, with a marked decrease among the young in particular (Blais and Rubenson, 2013).

A precondition for generational effects to be present is that certain birth cohorts of citizens live through the same events, leaving a footprint lasting throughout their life (Mannheim, 1928). As a consequence, these cohorts of voters have similar attitudes or behave similarly. For investigating whether differences between young and old voters are the result of age differences or generational differences, scholars have to find a solution for the age-period-cohort (APC) identification problem. The problem lies in the fact that these three time-related variables are perfectly linear dependent. Consequently, one cannot distinguish between the effects of age on the one hand and cohorts on the other when analysing behaviour or attitudes in a cross-sectional study, where the period effect is a constant. Therefore, repeated cross-sectional designs or panel studies are regularly relied on to estimate the effect of different time effects on turnout. Even then, different approaches and methods are used to disentangle time effects and the debate as to the best way to do so is still ongoing, as evident for example from the papers in *Electoral Studies* on this topic edited by Neundorf and Niemi (2014). Making use of repeated cross-sectional data covering an extended period of time and using different methods, a number of scholars have drawn attention to the importance of generational effects for understanding why young voters are more likely to abstain than older voters (Blais et al., 2004; Franklin, 2004; Gallego, 2009; Persson et al., 2013; Wass, 2007). Generations of voters born after the 1950s in particular have been found to be less likely to turn out to vote compared with voters born before that time (Blais et al., 2004; Wass, 2007).

One of the most influential theories referring to generational effects for explaining the decline in turnout is Franklin's account of how lowering the voting age from 21 to 18 years, an age at which people are still in a transitory period in life, has left a low-turnout footprint on generations of newly eligible citizens (Franklin, 2004). As a result, younger generations of voters – affected by the political context of the time at which they were socialized into politics – are less likely to turn out to vote on Election Day, even though their probability of turning out still increases as they grow older. As a second explanatory mechanism for the observation of younger generations of voters being less likely to turn out to vote, Franklin highlights the impact of electoral competitiveness. As elections have become uncompetitive, new generations of voters are not turning out to vote, resulting in decreasing turnout levels (Franklin et al., 2004; Franklin, 2004). A second theoretical perspective for explaining generational differences is not focused on the changing context of elections or electoral rules but on citizens' attitudes and values. According to the proponents of this school of thought,

younger generations of voters are marked by lower levels of interest in politics and a weaker sense of civic duty, resulting in whole generations of citizens with a low probability of turning out to vote on Election Day (Blais and Rubenson, 2013; Dalton, 2007; Rubenson et al., 2004).

With the presence of generational effects, life cycle – and therefore age effects – are not ruled out for explaining differences in the extent to which age groups turn out to vote. We could even state that such differences between generations can offer an explanation for an aggregate-level paradox; even though electorates are ageing (Vanhuyse and Goerres, 2012), turnout numbers are decreasing, which is at odds with a mere life cycle effect explaining the probability that citizens turn out to vote (Blais et al., 2004).

When taking into account generational differences and period effects, what is left of the curvilinear effect of age on citizens' probability of turning out to vote? As an attempt to overcome problems due to the linear dependency of these three time-related effects, we make use of data with a repeated cross-sectional design and apply a hierarchical model to analyse these data, with individuals cross-classified in cohorts on the one hand and election years on the other. Doing so, we follow an APC analysis method suggested and applied in a number of studies (Dassonneville, 2013; Smets and Neundorf, 2014; Yang and Land, 2008; Yang, 2008). Most importantly, the approach makes use of time series of extended length, hence following Converse's suggestion that an inquiry into the effects of age, periods and cohorts probably has most to benefit from more information (Converse, 1976). However, even though we are confident of the usefulness of this approach, we still have to be aware that, for distinguishing age-, period- and cohort effects, no single solution is flawless (Glenn, 2006). To shed light on the effect of age when controlling for differences between birth cohorts and election years, we selected three countries where long time series of election studies are available: Germany, Norway and the United States. In Table 7.1 we present the results of a baseline HAPC model for each of these countries, in which only time effects are accounted for. We include age and its squared term at an individual level and we estimate the random variance in birth cohorts and election years by specifying that individuals are cross-classified in cohorts and election years. The results in Table 7.1 offer indications of substantial variation in turnout from one election to another, as well as some variation between birth cohorts. Most importantly, however, specifying that individuals born in the same cohort as well as individuals being eligible in the same election are similar, age still has the expected curvilinear effect on the probability that a citizen will turn out to vote on Election Day.

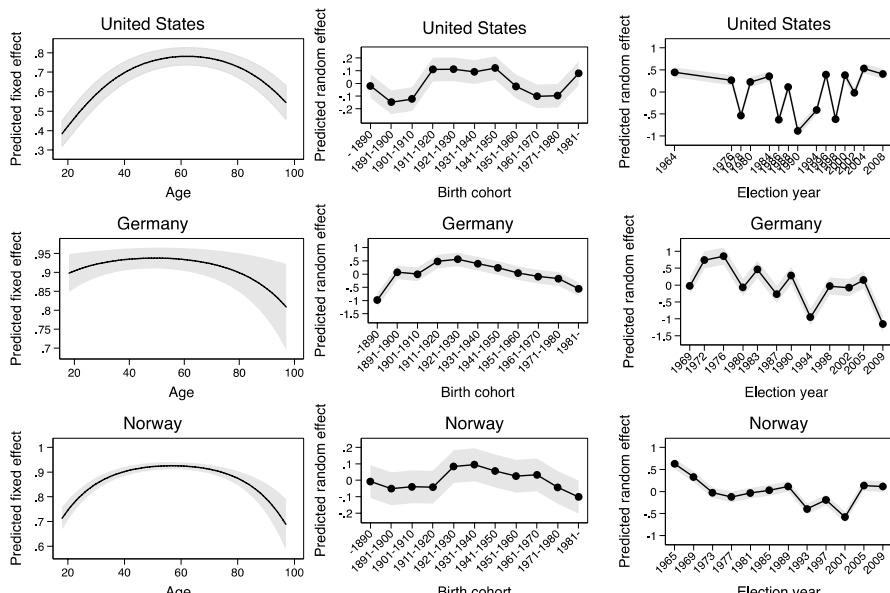
This image is further confirmed when we plot the effect of age as well as the predicted random effects of birth cohorts and election years, as is done in Figure 7.2. In the United States and Germany in particular we observe important and significant differences between birth cohorts, and in each of the three selected countries period effects are substantial as well. For the relation between

Table 7.1 Hierarchical APC model explaining turnout – cross-classified random effects

	<i>Germany b (s.e.)</i>	<i>Norway b (s.e.)</i>	<i>United States b (s.e.)</i>
<i>Individual-level fixed effects</i>			
Age	0.055*** (0.013)	0.121 *** (0.010)	0.111 *** (0.006)
Age ²	-0.001 (0.000)	-0.001 *** (0.000)	-0.001 *** (0.000)
Constant	1.373 ** (0.419)	-0.927 *** (0.219)	-2.186 *** (0.185)
<i>Variance components</i>			
σ^2 birth cohorts	0.223	0.008	0.015
σ^2 election years	0.358	0.098	0.220
N	18,491	22,382	25,535
Log Likelihood	-4,978.396	-7,936.312	-14,926.053
AIC	9,966.791	15,882.62	29,862.11

Note: Unstandardized coefficients and standard errors are presented. Estimates from a hierarchical cross-classified logistic regression model. Significance levels: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Sources: Germany: European Voter Database (1961–1998) and CSES (2002–2009); Norway: European Voter Database (1965–1997) and CSES (2001–2009); United States: ANES (1946–2008).

**Figure 7.2 Predicted fixed and random time effects on turnout**

Note: Predicted fixed (age) and random (birth cohort and election year) effects and 95%-confidence intervals on turnout. Estimates based on models presented in Table 7.1.

age and the probability of turnout, however, we observe the expected curvilinear pattern in each of the three countries, with the middle-aged voters being most likely to turn out to vote. As a result, regardless of evolutions over time in turnout and differences from one election to another or generational differences, the basic relationship between age and turnout is the expected curvilinear one. Quite consistently, we find that middle-aged citizens are the ones who are most likely to cast a vote on Election Day.

AGE AND PARTISAN STRENGTH

Learning, or life cycle effects?

Age is not only a strong determinant of turnout; it is also a regularly invoked predictor of the strength of party attachments. The observation that partisan strength increases with age was already reflected on in *The American Voter* (Campbell et al., 1960). In addition to describing this relation, Campbell and his colleagues also aimed to investigate the reasons for it. They claimed that two interpretations could be given for explaining why older voters tended to have stronger party attachments: either they were observing the consequences of older voters having been politically socialized at a different moment in time, when partisanship was stronger, which had left an imprint of strong partisan attachments on these voters, or, alternatively, older voters are always stronger partisans because they have been in the electorate and have been choosing a particular party for a longer time. It is for the latter interpretation that the authors of *The American Voter* claimed to find most support (Campbell et al., 1960). Converse (1969) has, in what is generally considered a masterpiece of political science (Dinas, 2014; Niemi et al., 1985), further elaborated on the mechanism of 'learning through exposure' leading to stronger partisan attachments (Converse, 1969: 144). At an individual level, Converse (1969, 1976) argued that, not age as such, but instead the length of experience of a particular way of voting explained the age effect. As a piece of evidence, it was shown that, for citizens who had changed party allegiances over time, not their age, but how long they had been identifying with this new party predicted the strength of their attachment to this party. The explanatory mechanism offered for this observation is that the length of time one has identified with a particular group strengthens one's identification with that group (Campbell et al., 1960: 161–65). In practice, this is claimed to be a consequence of the fact that partisans view the world and politics through a partisan lens, time after time confirming their partisanship (see also Bartels, 2002). A phase in life in particular that has been the subject of scientific scrutiny is late adolescence and early adulthood. This period in life is generally referred to as 'the impressionable years'. During this time, citizens are still open to be influenced by particular political events and experiences, which leave an imprint

throughout their lives – as they are growing older and simultaneously more resistant to change (Alwin and Krosnick, 1991; Dinas, 2013; Osborne et al., 2011). This process of becoming more resistant to change hence allows for partisan attachments to strengthen further.

Dinas (2014) has suggested an alternative individual-level mechanism for explaining why experience with the political system would strengthen party attachment. He hypothesizes that it is the actual act of casting a vote – and repeatedly voting – that matters for explaining why attachments grow stronger over time. He argues, with convincing evidence, that voting for a particular party is followed by a psychological process in which a post-decision bias leads voters to feel more strongly attached to the party they just voted for; hence behaviour acts to strengthen attitudes (Dinas, 2014).

A different perspective on the observed relation between age and strength of party attachments is offered by scholars who stress the relevance of life cycle effects. It is then claimed that it is not experience with a political system that is relevant for explaining the age effect, but instead what phase in life citizens are in. In analogy to theories explaining why young voters are less likely to participate or to turn out to vote, it is claimed that the middle-aged, freed from worries about finding a partner, a job or settling down, can finally engage in politics and develop strong party attachments (Niemi et al., 1985). This theoretical account could also explain the regular occurrence of a curvilinear pattern in the relation between age and partisan strength, with an erosion of party attachments in old age (Kroh, 2014). Niemi, Powell, Stanley and Evans's (1985) suggestion of this alternative life cycle explanation for the observed age effect originated in their observation that newly enfranchised voters – such as female voters in Switzerland or blacks in the American South – all developed strong party attachments rapidly, which was at odds with the expectation of a slow learning effect due to accumulating more voting experience.

Empirical research testing the life cycle versus the experience hypotheses, however, offers most evidence for the latter phenomenon, and tends to refute the idea of age differences in partisan strength being driven by citizens' position in the life cycle (Cassel, 1993; Kroh, 2014). Even without being enfranchised and actually taking part in elections, it seems that living in a particular democratic context already induces a learning process and the strengthening of party attachments. This idea of the time of being exposed to a particular political system being the main driving mechanism for the development of strong party attachments is also corroborated by research on the development of partisanship among immigrant groups. For these groups as well, partisan ties develop slowly, irrespective of immigrants' position in the life cycle (Black et al., 1987; Wong, 2000).

Even if not age per se, but the length of time a citizen spends in a particular electorate is the explanatory mechanism, we should find party attachments to be

stronger for older citizens. After all, on average the old age groups will still have been in the electorate for the longest period of time. This pattern, of stronger party attachments for older voters, is indeed what we observe when estimating the impact of age on the strength of party attachments in OECD countries, once more relying on the data from the CSES project. In Figure 7.3, we present the estimated strength of citizens' party attachments. The predictions were obtained from a series of regressions estimating the strength of party attachments¹ with age and age squared as the independent variables. As we also observed for the relation between age and turnout, Figure 7.3 indicates substantial differences between countries. Some countries offer indications of a strong and linear increase in the strength of party attachments as citizens become older. Australia offers a clear example of this pattern, as we note a marked increase in party attachments. The estimated strength of an 18-year-old Australian citizen's party attachment is 1.3, on a 0 to 3 scale, and this rises to 2.1 for a 95-year-old Australian citizen. In other countries, the predicted strength of party attachments hints at a curvilinear pattern. In France, for example, the plot indicates an erosion of party attachments in old age. Finally, there are a number of countries where the estimated relation is virtually flat, as is the case in Turkey. Overall and despite the observation of substantial variation between countries, however, it is fair to state that the predominant pattern is one in which the party attachments of current-day electorates are stronger as voters become older. In old age, however, we seem to be observing a ceiling effect, as the increase in strength of party attachments appears to weaken somewhat.

Generational differences in the strength of party attachments?

Converse's theory of party attachments growing stronger through learning (Converse, 1969, 1976) has not remained uncontested. The observation that partisan strength in the United States has not continued to increase – and has even eroded over time – has instigated a fierce debate on the question of whether age as such or, instead, cohort effects were primarily explaining the cross-sectional age differences noted. Abramson (1976, 1992) has claimed that the theory of stabilization through learning and hence the weight Converse attached to the impact of age cannot account for the observed aggregate-level erosion of partisanship in the United States or Britain. Instead, Abramson argues that different cohorts of voters were fundamentally different because of differences in the political context at the time these cohorts were socialized into politics. Other scholars have also – with a focus on the methodological difficulties that come with disentangling the impact of age-, cohort- and period effects – questioned the impact of age on partisan strength and have emphasized the relevance of generational differences (Claggett, 1981; Glenn, 1972; Knoke and Hout, 1974). Such accounts have not remained uncontested either, with, amongst others, Converse

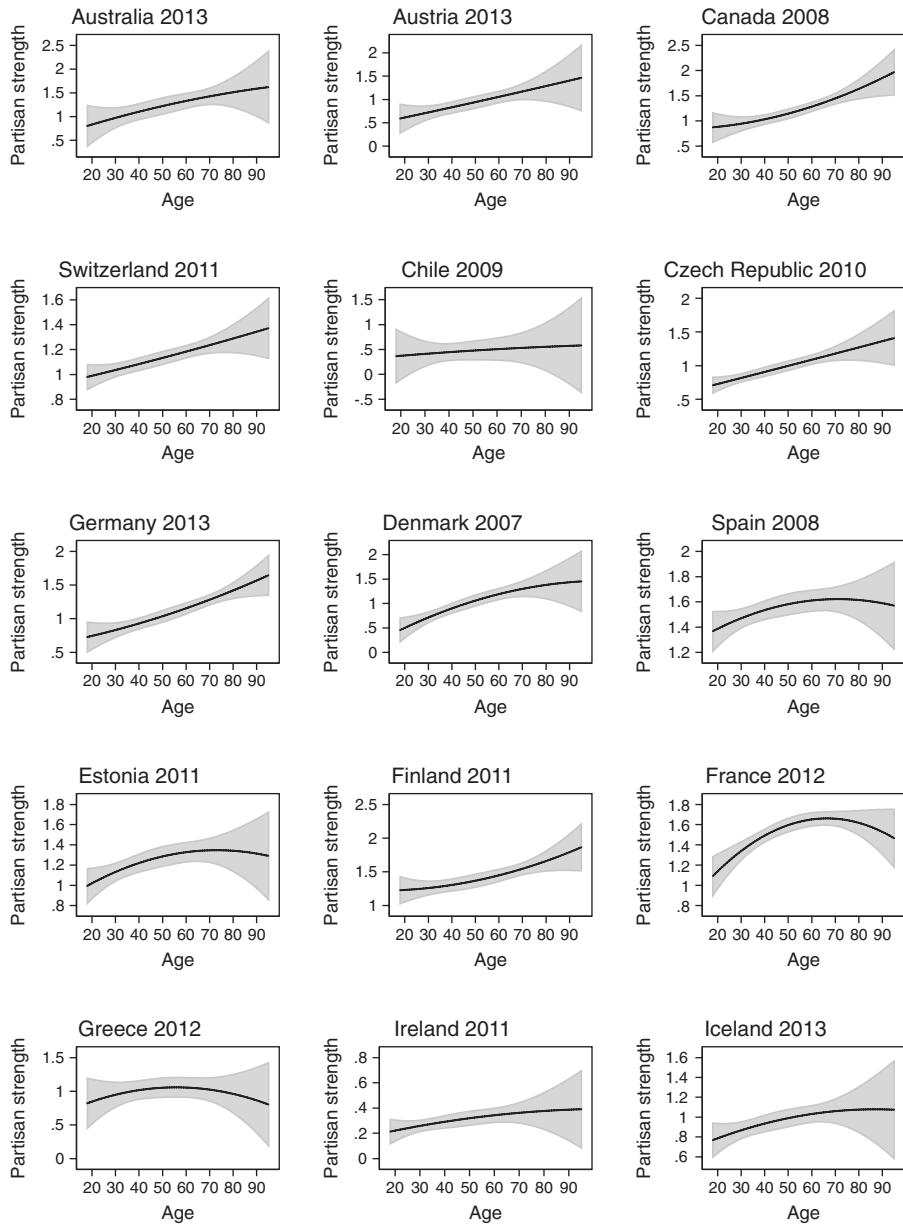
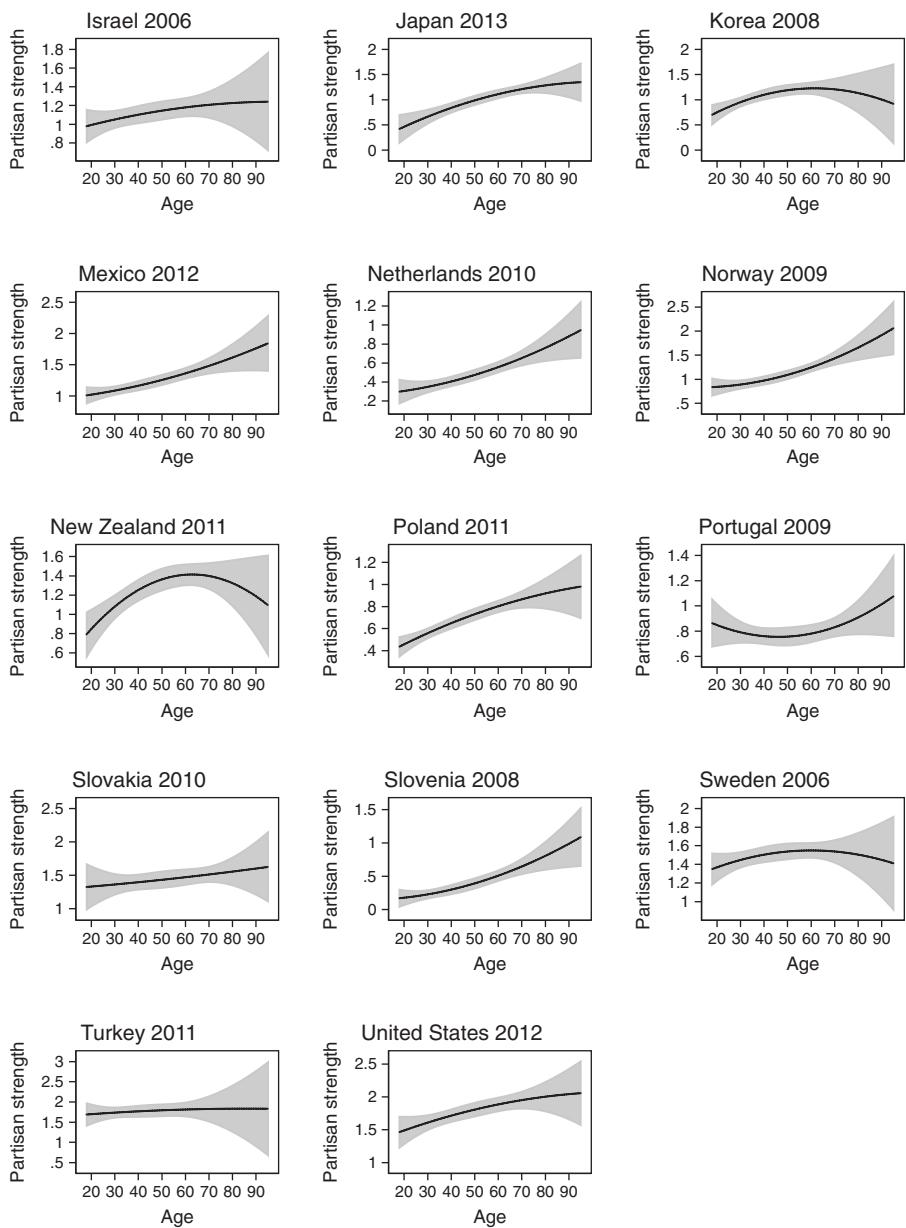


Figure 7.3 Strength of party attachment by age

Note: Estimated strength of party attachment and 95%-confidence intervals. Predictions obtained after estimating regression models predicting strength of party attachment (0 = not close to any political party or not closer to one party, 1 = not very close, 2 = somewhat close, 3 = very close) with age and age squared.

Sources: CSES Module 3 (2015) and CSES Module 4 (2016). Demographic weights and a weight to correct for overreported turnout were applied.

**Figure 7.3 Continued**

equally relying on cohort analyses to underline the importance of age effects (Converse, 1976; Shively, 1979).

The inconclusiveness in this debate continues, and is largely due to difficulties related to distinguishing age-, period-, and cohort effects. The perfect linear dependency between these three time-related effects (age equals the period minus the birth cohort) renders it technically impossible to identify the impact of each of these three time effects (Glenn, 1976, 2006; Mason et al., 1973). In line with the approach taken for investigating time effects on turnout, we also rely on HAPC modelling for analysing partisan strength as a way to deal with the APC identification problem. We estimate the impact of age and age squared on the strength of partisan attachments in Germany, Norway and the United States, while specifying that individuals in these countries are cross-classified in birth cohorts on the one hand and election years on the other. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 7.2 and offer indications of minor differences between birth cohorts – as evident from the small variance component for birth cohorts – and more sizeable differences from one election year to another. Most importantly, however, the results in Table 7.2 confirm that, when looking at a longer time frame as well, older voters have significantly stronger party attachments

Table 7.2 Hierarchical APC model explaining partisan strength – cross-classified random effects

	Germany b (s.e.)	Norway b (s.e.)	United States b (s.e.)
<i>Individual-level fixed effects</i>			
Age	0.015* (0.006)	0.041*** (0.007)	0.038*** (0.004)
Age ²	-0.000 (0.000)	-0.0002** (0.000)	-0.0002*** (0.000)
Constant	0.699*** (0.190)	-0.819*** (0.180)	0.843*** (0.117)
<i>Variance components</i>			
σ^2 birth cohorts	0.000	0.005	0.003
σ^2 election years	0.174	0.092	0.029
N	17,000	16,064	47,261
Log Likelihood	-9,378.017	-10,162.990	-17,445.090
AIC	18,766.03	20,335.98	34,900.19

Note: Unstandardized coefficients and standard errors are presented. Estimates from a hierarchical cross-classified regression model explaining partisan strength (Germany: 0 = no identification, 1 = weak, 2 = strong, 3 = very strong ; Norway: 0 = no party, 1 = not particularly convinced, 2 = strongly convinced; United States: 0 = independent/political, 1 = leaning independent, 2 = weak partisan, 3 = strong partisan). Significance levels: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

Sources: Germany: European Voter Database (1961–1998) and CSES (2002–2009); Norway: European Voter Database (1965–1997) and CSES (2001); United States: ANES (1964–2008).

compared with younger citizens. For each of the three countries looked at, the main effect of age is significantly related to the strength of party attachments.² In addition, the estimated effect of the squared effect of age is small but significant in Norway and the United States, indicating that the effect weakens in old age.

We graphically illustrate the estimated time effects on the strength of citizens' party attachments in Figure 7.4. Taking into account substantial time effects – especially election year effects – we can still confirm the presence of the basic pattern: as voters grow older, their party attachments are growing stronger.

DISCUSSION

In election studies since the 1950s, age has regularly been found to be a strong predictor of voting. Age affects the probability that a citizen will turn out to vote and additionally it impacts on the strength of party attachments. In the literature a fierce debate has arisen on the extent to which observed cross-sectional observations of the impact of age on turnout or partisan attachments are indeed age effects or the result of generational or period effects instead.

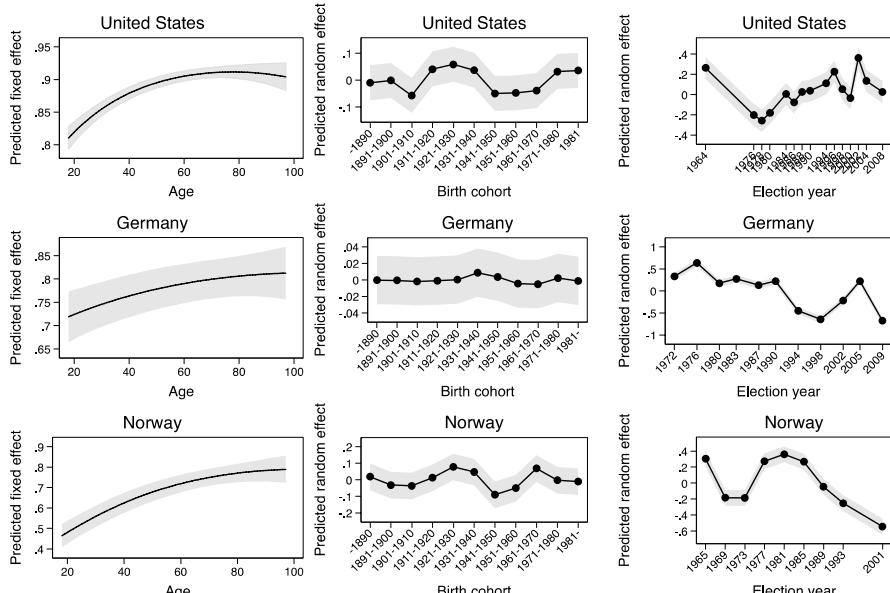


Figure 7.4 Predicted fixed and random time effects on the strength of party attachments

Note: Predicted fixed (age) and random (birth cohort and election year) effects and 95%-confidence intervals on the strength of party attachments. Estimates based on models presented in Table 7.2.

The current overview however highlights that – despite generational differences and shifts from one election to another – age consistently affects turnout as well as the strength of partisan attachments. This is evident from our description of the relation between age and turnout as well as partisan strength among current-day electorates. Even though there is substantial between-country variation in the observed patterns, the general patterns that we observe are in line with what previous literature suggests: middle-aged voters have the highest probability of turning out to vote on Election Day and older citizens tend to have stronger party attachments than the younger. Furthermore, even when explicitly taking into account differences due to cohort or period effects in a repeated-cross-sectional design, these basic patterns clearly emerge.

That these patterns are found to be so robust across countries and over time is substantively important. The implication is that inequalities in the extent to which different age groups participate or are strong partisans dissipate to a large extent as voters grow older. As there are no clear indications of a lasting imprint on particular cohorts of voters, the long-term impact of e.g. high levels of abstention among the young for representative democracy is limited, even though changes in the age composition of electorates are likely to have a profound impact on which groups are represented and how strong their voice will be heard. Here lies a major challenge for further research on how age affects voting. The debate on how we should distinguish between the effects of age, cohorts and time periods is vivid and still ongoing, but added to that comes the challenge of changing age structures. For scholars to estimate how turnout levels or the process of dealignment are evolving and will continue to change in the future, it is hence essential that the age composition of the electorate be taken into account. A number of studies are already taking such an approach, showing the way forward for research on how age affects voting (Bhatti and Hansen, 2012; Konzelmann et al., 2012).

A second aspect in which more and continued research is necessary relates to the mechanisms that are responsible for the strong age effects we observe. While the hypotheses are manifold, most research is still inconclusive on why the middle-aged are most likely to turn out to vote or why partisan attachments grow stronger as citizens grow older. More research is needed to truly disentangle the exact psychological mechanisms behind these patterns.

Notes

- 1 The strength of party attachments is measured on a 0–3 scale, with 0 = not close to any political party or not closer to one party, 1 = not very close, 2 = somewhat close, 3 = very close.
- 2 Note however that we cannot straightforwardly compare the size of the coefficients, as the scales and measurement of the dependent variable (strength of party attachments) differ from country to country.

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Gender and Voting

Rosie Campbell

INTRODUCTION

The study of gender and voting behaviour has gradually moved from the periphery of political science research to become a recurrent theme in the mainstream study of electoral behaviour, to the extent that now even economists pay attention to the issue (Edlund and Pande 2002; Oswald and Powdthavee 2010). In fact, there is a growing diversity in the field, which was originally predominately populated by women and feminist scholars but has expanded, with more men now found listed in the citations. In the sub-discipline's infancy sex/gender was often included in voting models as a control variable but significant results were often either ignored, given scant attention or on occasion explained away using stereotypes rather than sound research evidence (Goot and Reid 1975), although there were some notable exceptions (Duverger 1955). However, since the emergence of the high-profile 'modern' gender gap in US presidential elections in the 1980s (where more women than men support the Democratic candidate) gender and voting has been the subject of an ever-growing body of political research. Single-country studies focusing largely on the US (Carroll 1988; Conover 1988) were followed by analyses of other contexts (Campbell 2006; Corbetta and Cavazza 2008; Hayes 1997; Hayes and McAllister 1997; Norris 1986; Norris 1999) and then by international comparative work (Abendschön and Steinmetz 2014; Bergh 2007; Giger 2009; Inglehart and Norris 2000; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006). The dominant theoretical model employed to explain gender differences in vote choice is the

gender generation gap thesis developed by Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris (Inglehart and Norris 2000) but a diverse range of other theoretical explanations have been explored elsewhere (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004; Chaney et al. 1998; Scott et al. 2001). The range of approaches to analysing the ‘gender gap’ has also expanded to include multilevel models and survey experiments (Burden 2008). In addition to exploring whether there are gender differences in party support, researchers have assessed the impact of candidate gender on vote choice, finding that in some, limited, circumstances women voters occasionally disproportionately vote for women candidates (Dolan 1998; Plutzer and Zipp 1996) and that gender stereotypes may influence candidate evaluations (Cutler 2002; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a; McDermott 1997; McDermott 1998; Schwindt-Bayer et al. 2008), but that the effect of gender stereotypes on voting behaviour is likely to decline over time and diminishes where candidates are well known to the electorate (Brooks 2013; Dolan 2014b). Recent work has examined the radical right gender gap in Europe, exploring why parties of the populist and far right are generally less popular among women (Givens 2004; Immerzeel et al. 2013). Interest in gender and voting behaviour has increased because there are persistent ‘gender gaps’ that cannot be simply ‘washed away’ by the inclusion of other explanatory variables. Thus, the puzzle of what explains these gender gaps remains unanswered. The vast and expanding literature on the gender gap has, in recent years, focused largely on sociological accounts but increasingly researchers are recognising the need to bring the politics back in. This chapter will provide a state of the art summary of the literature on gender and voting, exploring the international and temporal trends and identifying common themes.

In contemporary Western democracies there is largely more similarity than difference in the way men and women vote. The most frequent finding in studies of political behaviour is that men and women’s political attitudes and vote choices are more similar than different; in fact, as Lisa Baldez suggests, it might make more sense to talk about ‘gender overlap’ rather than gender gaps (Baldez 2001). In general the effect of gender on vote choice is dwarfed by the impact of, for example, race/ethnicity (Seltzer et al. 1997). However, given that women make up more than 50 per cent of the adult population in Western democracies, even relatively small gender gaps of five to ten percentage points can have sizeable impacts on election outcomes. As such, scholars of electoral behaviour are increasingly aware of the need to pay attention to gender. Studies of political participation in Western democracies have demonstrated that women are no longer less likely to turn out and vote than men; in fact in some nation states women are more likely to participate in elections.¹ However, there is growing interest in whether men and women tend to cast their votes for different parties. This chapter is therefore dedicated to the issue of ‘gender gaps’ in party support. The study of gender gaps has focused largely on sociological explanations for changes in,

mostly, women's behaviour. Throughout this chapter I will return to the question of the 'missing ingredient' in studies of the gender gap, arguing that it is time to bring the politics back into the analysis.

FROM MINDLESS MATRONS TO TARGET VOTERS: THE EVOLUTION OF THE STUDY OF THE WOMAN VOTER

The way that electoral studies has treated women voters has evolved from a situation of at best benign neglect, at worst outright sexism, to one where differences between the way men and women might vote are often portrayed as critical to election outcomes.

Early studies of women voters

When electoral studies was in its infancy there was little research that considered gender differences in voting behaviour. However, two notable exceptions were Herbert Tingsten's (1937) *Political Behavior* and Maurice Duverger's (1955) *The Political Role of Women*, which both concluded that women were more likely to support Conservative parties than men – this trend is often described as the traditional gender gap (see Norris 1999). Some notable foundational studies of political behaviour were scathing about women's political inclinations: 'it would appear that women differ from men in their political behaviour only in being somewhat more frequently apathetic, parochial, conservative, and sensitive to personality, emotional, and aesthetic aspects of political life and electoral campaigns' (Almond and Verba 1963: 325). This perception was challenged by Murray Goot and Elizabeth Root, who concluded that, when early studies of political behaviour considered women at all, too often 'prejudice has posed as analysis and ideology as science' (Goot and Reid 1975: 9). In the early days of the study of voting behaviour, theoretical models of gender difference were not well developed and there was a tendency to fall back on gender stereotypes to explain any differences found between men and women, rather than testing competing hypotheses. A more sustained and systematic interest in studying gender and voting behaviour developed after the 1980 US presidential election.

The assumption that women voters blindly followed the lead of their husbands in the early period of women's suffrage has been revisited by scholars in recent years (Breitenbach and Thane 2010). Recent research re-examining women's voting behaviour in the United States immediately after suffrage also largely supports the contention that women voted Republican in greater numbers than men, although the gender gap is only evident outside the uncompetitive and Democratic-controlled South (Morgan-Collins 2015). A broad body of quantitative research has been deployed to investigate the impact that women's

suffrage had on social spending and the creation of the welfare state; the assumption being that women will demand greater spending on welfare than men. One study found that in Switzerland spending on welfare went up by 28 per cent as a result of women getting the vote in 1971 (Abrams and Settle 1999), and a US study found suffrage coincided with increases in state government expenditures and revenue and more liberal voting patterns (Aidt and Dallal 2008). A study of six European countries between 1869 and 1960 found that spending on welfare as a percentage of GDP rose by 0.6–1.2 per cent in the short term. In the long term, the effect was three to eight times larger (Aidt and Dallal 2008). Toke Aidt and Bianca Dallal argue that ‘women’s suffrage not only increased the overall level of social spending, it also shifted the portfolio of spending towards social spending’ (Aidt and Dallal 2008, 404). In her analysis of twelve industrialised democracies, Catheine Bolzendahl also showed that the proportion of women legislators influences social spending (Bolzendahl 2009). Together, these studies suggest that throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries women gave priority to spending on social welfare and that women’s suffrage translated into real policy change. Of course, the policy makers who increased social spending may have responded to a *perceived* rather than an actual sex difference in policy preferences, but quantitative research of public opinion tends to corroborate the finding that women are to the left of men on social spending (Alvarez and McCaffery 2003; Campbell and Childs forthcoming-b; Kornhauser 1987).

The ‘modern’ gender gap

In the United States, little public attention was given to potential differences between men and women voters – after the bout of consternation at the time of women’s suffrage – until a gender gap was revealed in the aftermath of the 1980 presidential election, where eight per cent fewer women than men voted for Ronald Reagan (Frankovic 1982; Sigel 1999).² In fact, there was a small gender gap in 1976, with more women supporting Carter, but this fact did not receive public attention and was dismissed by Carter’s own pollster as unimportant (Mueller 1988a: 17). The first use of the term *gender gap* to describe differences in men and women’s voting behaviour is attributed to Eleanor Smeal, then president of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1981 (Bonk 1988: 89; Sigel 1999: 5). At that time the women’s movement in the United States used the gender gap to gain public attention for a feminist conception of women’s interests, particularly the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) (Bonk 1988; Mueller 1988a). The political parties reacted strongly to the notion of a gender gap in voting behaviour and made explicit attempts to target women voters in the 1984 presidential election, particularly the Democrats as it influenced the selection of Geraldine Fararro as the Democrat candidate for vice president (Norris and Carroll 1997: 9).

The public attention given to the gender gap elicited a response from, mostly feminist, political scientists. These initial studies of the gender gap in the United States gave serious attention to political explanations and the possible influence of media content on both party positions and voters' behaviour (Bonk 1988; Carroll 1988; Carroll 2006; Frankovic 1982; Frankovic 1988; Mueller 1988a; Mueller 1988b) and many of these feminist accounts of the gender gap suggested that the parties' attempts to secure women's votes provided at least a partial account of the gender gap itself. However, the focus of much subsequent gender gap literature has been on sociological explanations for differences in the political attitudes and behaviour of women and men. Certainly the immense transformation of gender roles in Western democracies likely provides the most solid foundations for understanding changes in women's political preferences, but how these translate into party support or voting behaviour has been somewhat under theorised (Campbell forthcoming; Gillion et al. 2014). As women have shifted from domestic life into higher education and paid employment their political preferences may have moved from an emphasis on traditional values to a demand for more state support for combining work and paid employment in the form of social spending on welfare, childcare and education. The consequences of the transition from traditional to modern gender roles on voting behaviour is the foundation for Inglehart and Norris's seminal gender generation gap theory (Inglehart and Norris 2000). They contend that in Western democracies women's political priorities have shifted to the left in response to their changing personal circumstances. Inglehart and Norris's thesis is an important and valuable contribution to our understanding of the impact of gender on voting behaviour in international perspective, but to some extent it sidesteps the issue of party politics. Inglehart and Norris use a straightforward left-right classification of parties to assess the extent to which women in 'traditional societies' (where women are not well represented in higher education and paid employment) vote to the right of men and in 'modern societies' (where there has been a transformation in gender roles) women vote to the left of men.

There are various anomalies that do not fit within the global gender gap narrative, although Inglehart and Norris do find a large number of cases that are in keeping with the expectations of the theoretical model. For example a modern gender gap has not yet manifested itself at the aggregate level in Britain. In fact, in my view, the majority of gender gap studies³ – excluding early feminist research in the US (Carroll 1988; Mueller 1988b) – have not paid sufficient attention to the potential political explanations for variations in the size and direction of the gender gap across space and time. This oversight results from the focus in the literature on single-country case studies (largely US focused) or because researchers extrapolate the results of single-country case studies to other cases without paying sufficient attention to variations in party systems and party positions on gender equality and the electoral context more generally.

The gender gap in the United States

It is clear from Figure 8.1 that a greater proportion of women than men have voted for every Democratic presidential candidate since 1980 (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 1997; Burden 2008; Carroll 1999; McBride and Mazur 2002); in that time the gender gap has been relatively stable, remaining between four and eleven percentage points. In addition to aggregate-level differences between men and women's vote choice in the US there is also evidence of sub-group variation. In their study of the 1992 US presidential election Mary Bendyna and Celinda Lake found that US President Bill Clinton constantly won a majority of college-educated women's support but 'born-again' southern religious women were mainly responsible for the increase in female George Bush supporters during the Republican National Convention in mid-August (Bendyna and Lake 1994).

There are several competing, sometimes complementary and sometimes mutually exclusive theoretical, largely sociological, accounts deployed to explain the modern gender gap in the United States. The research has become ever more nuanced and sophisticated with complex models employed to explain why men and women might prefer different political parties (Alvarez and McCaffery 2000; Burden 2008; Chaney et al. 1998; Dolan 2010; Greenberg 2001). Some point to an ideology gap between men and women as the best explanation of the gender gap (Jelen et al. 1994); using US data from 1972 to 2004 Norrander and Wilcox describe an increasing gender gap in ideology both in magnitude and statistical significance (Norrander and Wilcox 2008). Much of the research focusing on an ideology gap between women and men centres on how women's movement into paid employment and higher education may have resulted in a shift in their values from moral conservatism, founded on religious values, to a demand for greater state support for combining work and family life (Campbell 2006), leading to a shift in women's political ideology, which in turn may have prompted women to transfer their support from parties of the right to parties of the left. Theoretical accounts of the gender gap that are based on a rational choice theory perspective

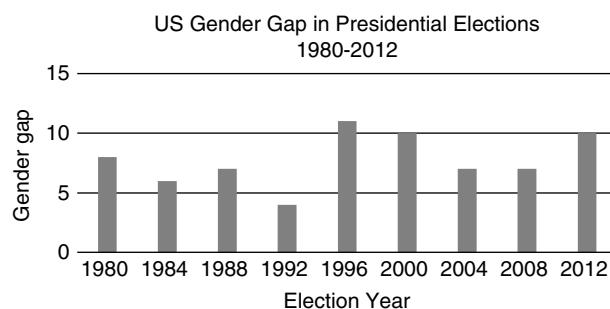


Figure 8.1 US gender gap in Presidential Elections

Source: Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP)⁴

have centred on structural differences between men and women, such as women's predominance in public sector employment and their greater dependence on welfare provision (Andersen 1999; Manza and Brooks 1998). Some economists have employed rational choice perspectives to study the gender gap, attributing it to rising levels of divorce. For example, Lena Edlund and Rohini Pande argue that men transfer resources to women in marriage and that because richer people vote Republican the rise in divorce makes men richer and women poorer, hence the emergence of the gender gap (Edlund and Pande 2002). Other researchers have argued that women view politics through a more empathetic or care-focused lens due to childhood gendered socialisation processes or the psychological impact of mothering (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 1997; Elder and Greene 2008; Lehman et al. 1995; Scott et al. 2001). These accounts contend that political preferences are influenced by gender roles such that women may prefer parties of the left if they associate them with providing care for the vulnerable. An ethics of care account of the gender gap suggests that women may be more willing than men to trade off increases in their own taxation if public spending is utilised to the benefit of society as a whole. That is, women may be more often sociotropic voters, prioritising the needs of the whole of society, than men, who may be more inclined to vote with their pocketbook (Chaney et al. 1998). Several researchers have questioned the almost exclusive focus on women in studies of the gender gap, arguing that the central reason for the gender gap in voting behaviour is the defection of men from the Democrats and not the conversion of previously Republican women (Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999; Mattei and Mattei 1998; Wirls 1986). The shift in emphasis from focusing almost exclusively on women's behaviour is evident throughout the most recent gender gap research, and changes in men's behaviour are increasingly receiving attention (particularly in studies of the populist radical right). Several authors also acknowledge the potential role of party position in the gender gap, although they do not attempt to include a measure of party position in their models (Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999: 883). Systematic interest in potential political sources of the gender gap have recently started to re-emerge. In their study of party polarisation and the gender gap, Gillion, Ladd and Meredith argue that long-standing ideological differences between men and women only began to affect vote choice as the parties polarised (Gillion et al. 2014). In fact Pippa Norris has been calling for a more integrated approach to the study of the gender gap in the United States since 2001, but to date the sub-discipline has been relatively slow to devise instruments to include political factors in its models (Norris 2001: 282).

Going global

Interest in the high-profile gender gap in US elections has spawned a comparative literature that assesses the extent to which the US gender gap can be found elsewhere (Baum and Espirito Santo 2007; Campbell 2006; Gidengil and Harell

2007; Hayes and McAllister 1997; Inglehart and Norris 2000; Norris 1999; Steel 2003; Wängnerud 2000). Pippa Norris has summarised the distinct periods apparent in the relationship between sex and vote across Western democracies (Norris 1999). The first period encompasses the 1960s and 1970s, and possibly earlier (Tingsten 1937). In this epoch the traditional gender gap was apparent: in Western democracies women were slightly more likely than men to support parties on the centre right, a pattern highlighted by contemporaneous political scientists (Butler and Stokes 1974; Campbell et al. 1960; Duverger 1955). The traditional pattern was replaced in the 1980s by a phenomenon Norris terms gender de-alignment, where any sex differences in vote at the aggregate level were insignificant (Hayes and McAllister 1997; Norris 1999). Norris describes the final phase of gender and vote as gender realignment, where a ‘modern gender gap is evident’ with women voting to the left of men. Inglehart and Norris (2000) describe the drivers of this changing gender pattern in ideology as largely structural: changes in structural factors with gender dynamics that may play a role in explaining the modern gender gap include religiosity, occupational status, education and marital status.

It is in the study of gender realignment that Inglehart and Norris extend the analysis of the gender gap in the US to consider the possibility of an international modern gender gap. They find evidence of the modern gender gap in the 1990s in several advanced industrialised nations: Japan, Ireland, Denmark, Austria, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Canada (Inglehart and Norris 2000). However, a significant difference between the vote choices of the sexes was absent in West Germany, Italy, Northern Ireland, Portugal, Iceland, Britain, Australia, France, Hungary and Belgium. Inglehart and Norris also calculated an ideology gap for a number of countries between 1981 and 1990, which showed a clear trend in all of the countries studied, except Spain and South Korea, where women moved from the right of men on the ideological spectrum to the left (Inglehart and Norris 2000: 453).

‘Feminist consciousness’ has been applied as an alternative, although potentially complementary, account of the modern gender gap (Bergh 2007; Campbell 2006; Conover 1988; Hayes 1997). According to these scholars, irrespective of the person’s sex, having a feminist consciousness can be linked to a preference for left-wing parties. As having a feminist consciousness is more common among women, this might explain their preference for left-wing parties. This effect is observable in some countries, such as Britain, the US and Norway (Hayes, 1997; Bergh 2007); however, it is not observable in others, namely the Netherlands (Bergh, 2007).

Nathalie Giger conducted a particularly impressive study comparing the gender gap in voting in twelve countries over a period of 25 years, from 1974 to 2000; she also concludes, like Inglehart and Norris, that the reversal of the traditional gender gap extends beyond the US to the rest of Western Europe (Giger 2009). One of her strongest findings is that the modern gender gap can

be partially explained by increases in women's labour force participation, but she acknowledges that the 'causes for differences in gender voting are still under debate' (Giger 2009: 486). In fact she goes on to argue that her analysis suggests that 'explanations not only differ between countries but also over time' (Giger, 2009: 88). She suggests that material explanations might provide the best explanation for the decline of the traditional gender gap but that the relationship between gender and voting today might be the result of divergence on issues. She argues that, counter to Inglehart and Norris, a gender realignment across Western democracies is not necessarily inevitable. In contrast, Johannes Bergh argues that 'Policy attitudes are important mediators in the gender effect on voting, but they are not the cause of the gender gap' (Bergh 2007: 250). Instead Bergh argues that the gender gap in the United States, the Netherlands and Norway can be best explained by 'gender differences in income, public sector employment, and feminist consciousness' (Bergh 2007: 251), although income is the only influence he finds in all three analyses. Simone Abendschön and Stephanie Steinmetz (2014) assess the gender gap in twenty-five European Union member states including individual factors alongside the socio-structural and cultural-attitudinal context. The analysis is conducted on cross-sectional data collected in 2008 and they find a modern gender voting gap in most of the countries included in the analysis, a finding that supports Inglehart and Norris's gender generation gap thesis as the number of countries where a modern gender gap is evident has indeed expanded as predicted. Yet Abendschön and Steinmetz question why Finland was a late arrival to the modern gender gap party, given that it was one of the first countries to give women the vote and is ahead of many other countries in terms of gender equality. They also find a persistent traditional gender gap in former communist countries, which again runs counter to the Inglehart and Norris thesis. They suggest that the party system might provide an explanation, suggesting that perhaps left-wing parties may behave differently in the former communist countries than elsewhere in Europe. They also identify a re-emergence of the traditional gender gap in Ireland, another case that runs counter to the gender generation gap thesis. Abendschön and Steinmetz provide a speculative account of the possible explanations for these anomalies. They include structural and cultural factors at the contextual level in their analysis but not party behaviour. They also acknowledge the limitations of using cross-sectional data. They conclude that 'the integration of contextual information is important not only for the understanding of differences in voting behavior between men and women, but also across countries' (Abendschön and Steinmetz 2014: 25). I think there is a strong case for including party ideological positions, including gender role ideology, into the battery of contextual factors used to explain gender and voting behaviour in international perspective. To illustrate my argument I have deployed a brief sketch of party positions on gender equality in the US and UK cases to show how party position may influence the 'gender gap'.

Party ideological position: the missing ingredient

In the US case it is well known that there has been a polarisation in the ideological positions of the Democratic and Republican parties (Abramowitz 2010; Theriault 2006) and this polarisation is equally apparent when we consider their gender ideology (Gillion et al. 2014). The Republican party has become more closely associated with support for traditional gender roles and the party hierarchy is more male dominated than the Democrats. The 1980 US presidential election possibly represents a critical moment in terms of the polarisation of the two main parties on gender ideology. The successful Republican presidential candidate, Ronald Reagan, was the most traditional in his view of gender roles among his Republican rivals, stating that a wife in the workforce ‘threatens the very structure of family life itself’ (Abzug 1984: 81–87). Since 1980 when the two parties’ gender ideologies clearly diverged, and also when the ‘modern’ gender gap first clearly emerged, the Republicans have remained more hostile to feminist ideology than the Democrats. As such there is potentially less opportunity for feminist political actors to secure feminist policy initiatives within the Republican party than within the Democratic party (Rymph 2005). In these circumstances we would expect the Democrats to prove more attractive to liberally feminist women voters than the Republicans; given that feminist orientation and indicators of women’s autonomy such as high education levels and professional employment are associated with the gender gap it is likely that the parties’ attitudes to women’s roles in society may constitute a significant source of the US gender gap. In the UK case, however, the main parties are much closer together in terms of gender ideology (Campbell and Childs 2015). At least since 1997, in the UK the main political parties have made significant attempts to target women voters (Lovenduski 1997; Norris 1999); New Labour actively sought to undermine the Conservative party’s post-war advantage among women. New Labour was explicitly liberally feminist; it enacted legislation designed to further gender equality and it used equality guarantees (in the form of all-women shortlists) to ensure the better representation of women on the Labour benches in the House of Commons. By 2005, however, the Conservative party was competing vigorously with Labour for the support of women voters; David Cameron adopted the language of liberal feminism, stressing the need for more Conservative women politicians and fairer access to paid employment for women (Childs and Webb 2012). Interparty competition for women’s votes has gradually brought all the parties closer together on ‘women’s issues’ such that all, with the possible exception of UKIP⁵, are competing to be viewed as at least equally liberally feminist. In this context we may not expect to see a gender gap in voting behaviour in Britain as the main parties are competing to capture ‘feminist’⁶ women’s votes. In such a context it is perhaps not surprising that a ‘modern gender gap’ (Inglehart and Norris 2000), with more women voting for parties on the left,

has not emerged in Britain. In short there is less variation in the parties' positions on gender equality in the UK than in the US, which may well help to explain the variation in the gender gap across the two countries. Thus understanding gender and voting behaviour in global perspective may require an account of both the sociological factors shifting gendered attitudes and the reactions of political actors to that shift.

The radical right

The focus of the analysis for the majority of the international literature concerned with gender and voting behaviour is explaining the 'modern' gender gap, where it is found, and its absence where it is not in evidence. However, trends in Europe have focused attention on the populist radical right and one of the most consistent findings is that these parties tend to gain a disproportionate share of their support from men (Arzheimer and Carter 2006; Immerzeel et al. 2013; Lubbers et al. 2002; Norris 2005). These studies shift the emphasis from explaining change among women to considering change among men. Many accounts of the growth in support for the radical right also draw largely on structural explanations for the sociological bases of their support. A structural account emphasises the fact that working-class men are disproportionately among the losers in the post-industrial nation states of contemporary Europe and are therefore more likely to be drawn to the radical right than women. There are many more men among the blue collar workers whose financial prospects have diminished as the result of the shift from manual to service sector employment than women, who are more often employed in the service sector (Ford and Goodwin 2014). If structural differences in men and women's employment do in fact account for the gender gap in the support for radical right parties then we would expect the gender gap to disappear when measures of employment type are included in analyses. However, Terri Givens argues that the gender gap in votes for the radical right cannot be simply explained away by controlling for structural factors (Givens 2004); she notes considerable variation by country, finding only a negligible gender gap in Denmark compared with a much larger gap in France and Norway. In their study of twelve nations Immerzeel, Coffé and van der Lippe also find considerable variation in the radical right gender gap by country and the extent to which individual level (structural explanations) or contextual level (political explanations) helped to explain the gap also varied by country (Immerzeel et al. 2013). They utilise contextual level factors such as the age and popularity of the party and its outsider status in their analysis. I also wonder whether a measure of the parties' attempts to attract women voters might yield interesting results. They conclude by recommending that future research should extend the number of countries and time points included in the analysis to boost the sample size and that expert surveys should be utilised to gather information about parties'

programmes relating to issues such as immigration and others relating to the gender gap. Given the evidence found elsewhere that the modern gender gap might be partially explained by feminist orientation, I would argue that the parties' positions on a liberal feminist axis should also be included in future research projects attempting to understand the gender gap in support for the radical right.

DO WOMEN VOTE FOR WOMEN?

The study of the gender gap in US elections has expanded to include the influence of candidate sex and candidate gender stereotypes and feminist orientation. Many studies have shown that the electorate is no longer biased against women candidates (Welch et al. 1985) but there is also some, mixed, evidence that women may tend to favour women candidates when making their vote choice in certain circumstances (Cook 1998; Dolan 1998; Dolan 2001; Plutzer and Zipp 1996). Kathleen Dolan found, for example, that candidate sex was a driver of voting behaviour for the US House of Representatives in 1992 (the election framed as 'the year of the woman' by the media, where issues of gender equality gained unusual salience in public discourse), but she found no evidence of any impact in 1994 or 1996 (Dolan 1998; Dolan 2001; Dolan 2004). Others have found that women are more likely to vote for women candidates only when they are perceived as being pro-feminist (Plutzer and Zipp 1996). Eric Smith and Richard Fox used pooled US data from 1988 to 1992 and found that well-educated women were more inclined to support women candidates in House but not Senate races (Smith and Fox 2001). By contrast, Fulton (2014) found that women are not more likely to vote for women candidates in the US, but that male Independents are somewhat less likely to vote for them. Others have found little evidence whatsoever of an association between candidate gender and vote choice (McElroy and Marsh 2010). A number of studies have found that candidate gender voting is shaped by partisan affiliation, and that people are less likely to vote for Republican women candidates than Democrats (King and Matland 2003; Lawless and Person 2008). Dolan (2004) suggests that this is because issue and trait stereotypes of women and of Democrats are generally consistent with each other, while stereotypes of women and of Republicans are more at odds with each other.

A substantial body of research suggests that voters tend to assess men and women candidates differently by using stereotypes about their perceived strengths and weaknesses (Cutler 2002; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993a; McDermott 1997; McDermott 1998; Schwindt-Bayer et al. 2008). Gender stereotypes portray women as approachable and empathetic and men as assertive leaders (Alexander and Andersen 1993; Burrell 2008; Huddy and Terkildsen 1993b; Kahn 1996; King and Matland 2003; Lawless 2004; Leeper 1991; Paul and Smith 2008;

Sapiro 1981/1982). Voters may use these gender stereotypes to assess men and women candidates' policy competencies differently, with women seen as more competent on matters of health and education and men seen as more competent on matters of the economy and terrorism (Dolan 2010). Perhaps as a result of gender stereotypes equating women with higher levels of compassion and empathy, studies have found that women candidates are perceived as more liberal than men running for election (Koch 2000; Koch 2002; McDermott 1997) and voters who are worried about levels of honesty and integrity in government have been more likely to vote for women candidates (Dolan 2004; McDermott 1998). Although women candidates often believe they have to be better than men to succeed (Lawless and Fox 2010), this is a misperception and as candidates become known to voters gender stereotypes play far less of a role, with recent evidence suggesting that gender stereotypes in candidate evaluations have no effect on vote choice (Brooks 2013; Dolan 2014a; Dolan 2014b; Dolan and Lynch 2014).

CONCLUSION

The impact of gender was of little interest to the majority of the founding fathers of the study of voting behaviour. Academic interest in gender and vote choice only really took off after feminist campaigners highlighted the gender gap in the 1980 US presidential election. Early accounts of the pro-Democratic 'gender gap' among women in the United States combined political and sociological perspectives to explain why the gap had emerged, but this interest in political factors waned in later research. The study of the gender gap has expanded from a minority feminist concern to a mainstream component of the voting behaviour literature of interest to a diverse group of scholars. The literature is now both vast and impressive. Numerous explanations for women's shift to the left have been tested. The literature has not established whether rational choice or ethics of care perspectives provide the best account of the gender gap. Rational choice perspectives claim that women have a personal interest in voting for parties of the left, because they are financially worse off than men, more likely to work in the public sector or greater users of welfare services. Ethics of care accounts stress the long-term psychological impact of mothering and childhood socialisation on women's political preferences, leading them to prioritise the social safety net over reduced taxation. It is likely that both explanatory models contribute to our understanding of the gender gap, but given that, where it exists, the modern gender gap is usually under ten percentage points, the forces shaping men and women's preferences must be more similar than different. In order to fully understand the modern gender gap, the radical right gender gap and whether voters prefer men or women candidates, parties' ideological positions must be drawn into explanatory models. The study of gender and voting behaviour and the study of gender and party politics form two distinct strands of

gendered political research but they should be more fully integrated. This is a real challenge because it requires extensive collaborative research across time and space but this is the direction of travel within the study of gender and voting behaviour.

Notes

- 1 In every US presidential election since 1980 a greater proportion of women than men have turned out to vote. http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/voters/documents/genderdiff.pdf
- 2 However, there were some notable academic exceptions. For example see: Tingsten, Herbert. 1937. *Political Behavior*. Totowa, NJ: Bedminster and Duverger, Maurice. 1955. *The Political Role of Women*. Paris: UNESCO.
- 3 Including my own research.
- 4 http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/voters/documents/GGPresVote.pdf
- 5 The UK Independence Party (UKIP) is a party that campaigns for Britain's exit from the EU and is on the softer end of the European radical right. Over time the party has moved from a position where its leader suggested abolishing maternity leave to offering a range of policies designed to enable women to combine work and family life in their 2015 election manifesto. The party's former deputy leader, Suzanne Evans, publicly acknowledged that the party has a 'problem with women voters'. Campbell, Rosie, and Sarah Childs. Forthcoming-a. 'All aboard the pink battle bus? Women voters, candidates and party Leaders, and women's issues at the 2015 general election'. *Parliamentary Affairs*.
- 6 In this chapter I refer to 'feminist' women as women who are not necessarily self-conscious feminists but whose policy preferences are liberally feminist.

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Social Class and Voting

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INTRODUCTION

After many years appearing to be in decline, the politics of class is now receiving renewed attention. In the wake of the financial crisis of 2007–2008, the emergence of radical right parties in many European societies and, most recently, in the shock results of Brexit in Britain and Trump in the USA, all of which have seen class divisions expressed in the polling booth, class is once again central to understanding politics. In this chapter I review research into class voting across many decades and many countries, elaborating the debates and directions the topic has taken and may take in the future.

First, what is class voting? Most obviously it refers to the tendency for people in a particular social class to vote for a given political party or candidate rather than an alternative option, when compared with voters in other classes. Though apparently simple, this idea has generated extensive and continued academic debate across various disciplines in the social sciences. The definition of social class has been disputed, as have the most appropriate ways to measure class positions, and attempts to estimate statistically the magnitude of class–vote linkages. Although some of these disputes concerning conceptualization and measurement remain unresolved, perhaps by their very nature, there have none the less been substantial areas of empirical and theoretical development. There is a large body of research into the empirical question of whether or not levels of class voting are stable, weakening or simply evolving, as Western societies have moved from being industrial to post-industrial. This has in turn led to a focus on the conditions under which class voting is stronger or weaker. There have also been theoretical

and empirical developments with respect to the micro-level mechanisms through which class position can shape party choice. These mechanisms have become the focus of examination not only within the paradigm of class analysis but also in areas of political economy where, although class is not usually the term used to describe labor market positions, key attributes of class position inform approaches to understanding political preference formation. Finally, there is an evolving research program examining the mechanisms driving the reciprocal dynamic relationship between class divisions and party positions. The study of class and politics would appear to be thriving.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CLASS?

Characterizations of class position have included numerous occupational classifications, employment status (e.g. owner versus employee), status rankings, income level, educational level, various combinations of education and income and occupation, and subjective class identification.¹ In voting studies it has not been unusual to treat current income as a measure of class position, though typically trichotomized into upper/middle/lower classes (e.g. Bartels 2008; Leighley and Nagler 1992, 2007). More usually, though, researchers have focused on occupational class position rather than current income. There are various reasons for this: occupational class positions are likely to be more stable than income levels and self-reported estimates of income are prone to bias and error because of ambiguity in what is considered to count as income. There is also the problem of the potential misrepresentation by respondents of their income, which is arguably a somewhat more personal level of information than simply stating a job title. Moreover, having an occupation does, to a substantial degree, account for someone's level of income – as well as a range of other resources such as working conditions, future career prospects and life-time expected income (Goldthorpe and McKnight 2006). Finally, examining relative positions within a distribution of current income tells us little about the shape of the class structure. As we shall see later, changes in the shape of the class structure can have significant consequences for politics.

Despite its common usage, however, the most effective way of measuring occupational class has been much debated. In political science a simple manual versus nonmanual occupational class distinction was used extensively in the mid-late 20th century, but has since tended to give way to more complex classifications. Many researchers studying voting behavior have tended to adopt an established, validated and widely used measure of occupational class position originally developed as a measurement instrument by sociologists, particularly Goldthorpe (1987; Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Goldthorpe and McKnight 2006). The main classes identified in this measure are the higher and lower professional and managerial classes (classes I and II), the 'routine nonmanual

class' (typically lower-grade clerical 'white-collar workers', class III), the 'petty bourgeoisie' (small employers and self-employed, class IV), and the 'working class' (foremen and technicians, skilled, semi-, and unskilled manual workers, classes V, VI and VII). Typically, the working class is composed of semi- and unskilled workers in manual or personal service occupations and agricultural workers (though not farmers, who are in class IV). Usually, these working class jobs offer lower wages, less secure regular incomes, and less secure positions than middle class jobs. They tend not to offer guaranteed sick pay, generous pensions deals, or established promotion ladders. They also tend to involve more supervised monitoring, less autonomy, less hourly flexibility, and less pleasant working conditions. They are no longer so heavily concentrated in traditional heavy manufacturing, but they have many similar constraints and disadvantages to these traditional working-class jobs. When compared with the working class, professional and managerial workers occupy relatively secure salaried positions with occupational pensions and other benefits. These are generally regarded as the most desirable positions in the labor market. Moreover, although there will be considerable variation in resources between people in senior posts and those in more junior posts, we can expect the promotion prospects embodied in professional and managerial careers to shape the political views of people in more junior posts so that they are similar to those in senior ones (Evans 1993).

It should be noted that this conceptualization of social class echoes earlier understandings of class position in its focus on security, prospects, and the way that earnings are obtained rather than income differences *per se*: 'Security is one of the basic differences between the working class and the middle class, but the working man not only lacks security of employment but also of earnings. His earnings depend not only on hours of work but also on overtime, shifts, changing conditions of work, piecework, individual and collective bonuses, the materials and machines he handles'. (Zweig 1952: 203–204). Unlike this earlier work, however, Goldthorpe and his colleagues developed rigorously validated instruments to measure attributes of occupational classes and form an empirical basis for quantitative class analysis (Goldthorpe 2015). It has been found to have both construct- and criterion-related validity for both men and women (Bergman and Joye 2005; Evans 1992, 1996). Analyses using a range of data reduction techniques (Evans and Mills 1998; Mills and Evans 2003) find a clustering of classes estimated using multiple indicators of individuals' occupations that are consistent with the criteria underlying the construction of the class schema. Its adoption as the primary component of the recently implemented NS-SEC and use in the UK Census and the European Social Survey has likewise been exhaustively developed and validated (Rose and Pevalin 2003; Rose and Harrison 2010).

Where there have been criticisms of the Goldthorpe schema, they have often been in relation to divisions within the middle class. These criticisms can be overstated with respect to the validity of the schema itself (Evans and Mills 2000), but nonetheless can identify useful distinctions. Thus various authors have pointed

to increasing divisions between old and new middle classes. The terminology and exact occupational specification varies – cf. Kriesi (1989) and Heath, et al. (1991) among others, but some authors have distinguished between technocrats and socio-cultural specialists (Oesch 2006; Güveli et al. 2007), while others have distinguished between managers and professionals (Hout et al. 1995). The growing size of the new middle class relative to the old middle class and, in consequence, its growing relative importance for vote-seeking parties, provides good grounds for including this distinction in class voting studies. The rise of this class is particularly informative for understanding the political strategies of parties that have in turn impacted on the political representation of the working class itself.

A further area of possible limitation of the class schema is the growth of self-employment in some societies, which may be associated with changes in its character and, in consequence, its politics. Jansen's (2016) study of the political preferences of the self-employed in the Netherlands indicates a growing heterogeneity, with the majority of the self-employed being professionals, both technocrats and socio-cultural specialists. This heterogeneity potentially undermines the demographic identity and shared interests of the self-employed, resulting in fragmented political preferences. This research agenda is still to be fully developed, but points to further potentially politically relevant refinements in the measurement of class.

WHY EXAMINE CLASS VOTING?

Despite the extensive program of work on class positions described above, many researchers do not include social class in models of voting behavior. In part this reflects the widespread view that class is not relevant for political preferences. This is mistaken for several reasons.

Firstly, an individual's occupation and social background is (as a rule) not a result of his or her partisanship. The processes that might result in such a pattern of influence are somewhat unlikely, at least for the overwhelming majority of the electorate. In contrast, there is a large literature on whether, for example, partisanship causes or reflects economic perceptions – and to what degree, and when. Is party identity a running tally or an exogenous influence on vote? Are issue positions real and consequential, or ‘non-attitudes’? Many perceptions and attitudes are so proximate to party choice that they constitute part of what is to be explained. In short, class position is less troubled than attitudes and perceptions by concerns about endogeneity, or ‘reverse causality’.

Secondly, we have the question of how perceptions and attitudes relating to politics are generated. A voters' class position can help to account for these ‘proximal’ influences on political choices. Why, for example, do some people endorse income redistribution while others do not? Why do some voters react more strongly to changes in unemployment levels and others to rates of inflation?

Why do some people feel more threatened by immigration than others? Social class can account for variations in these orientations, which in turn then shape electoral behavior.

Thirdly, researchers are not only trying to explain only short-term changes in electoral behavior. As the shape, or the solidity, of the class structure alters over time it can account for longer-term changes in politics. The potential for changes in class structure to impact on long-term political change also points to the value of treating class position as a set of categories that can vary in size, rather than as a point on a continuum. The use of categorical class distinctions in electoral behavior research can therefore be more useful than continuous income, prestige or status scales, for example, because it more easily allows the political consequences of the changing shape of resource inequalities to be identified. A similar point applies to cross-national comparisons of societies with differently-sized classes.

Finally, as we shall see, class *is* still relevant for voting behavior in many societies. And even where class is not strongly related to party choice, the evolution of class structure can be argued to have shaped that choice, and to have influenced the decision of whether to vote at all.

Social class is therefore likely to be important for understanding political behavior, though this can best be observed if it is effectively measured and modeled, and the experiences and orientations associated with class position are understood. To understand the development of knowledge on the impact of class on politics we shall start at (roughly) the beginning of modern, social scientific research into class voting.

THE EARLY DAYS: LET'S ASSUME TWO CLASSES AND TWO PARTIES

Classic texts in political sociology saw elections as the expression of ‘the democratic class struggle’ (Anderson and Davidson 1943) that substituted, at least in the short term, for a class-based revolution. This Marxist agenda led to a focus on class voting between just two classes, the working and the middle, and their representatives, the parties of the left and right. The best of the early studies relied on data from electoral constituencies (Siegfried 1913; Tingsten 1937), but inevitably this work had to make strong assumptions about how individuals in the classes actually voted. Modern studies of class voting have therefore focused primarily on large-scale surveys of voters. This survey database has expanded from its postwar beginnings in national election studies in the United States and a few other countries to produce an extensive body of evidence.

Early surveys observed that in general working-class voters were more likely to vote for left-wing political parties than were those in the middle class, though with substantial cross-national differences. Scandinavia and Britain displayed the

highest levels of class voting and the United States and Canada the lowest. The degree of cross-national comparability of such studies was none the less limited with, in some cases, income being used to measure social and economic position and in others education or occupation. Even when researchers used occupations to measure class position, classifications often varied from the very detailed to the very crude. In his comparison of Britain, France and Italy, for example, Lipset (1960) did not present any standardized measure of class voting. Similar limitations applied to the studies compiled by Rose (1974). The first major study to undertake a more directly comparable assessment of class voting was Alford's (1963) analysis of Australia, Britain, Canada, and the US between 1936 and 1962 using a manual versus nonmanual measure of class position. He also introduced the commonly used (and criticized) 'Alford index'. The Alford index is the difference between the percentage of manual workers that voted for left-wing parties on the one hand and the percentage of nonmanual workers that voted for these parties on the other. This became the standard instrument in many studies in ensuing decades, most of which found that class voting was in decline. Lipset (1981: 505) found evidence of downward trends in Britain, Germany, and the United States between 1945 and 1980; Inglehart (1990: 260) found evidence of a continuing decline from the early 1980s onwards; Sainsbury (1987) found a decline in class voting in the Scandinavian countries, while Lane and Ersson (1994: 94) found lower levels of class voting in nine Western industrialized nations in the 1970s/1980s compared with 1950s/1960s and higher levels in only France and Italy. Clark and Lipset (1991: 408) concluded that by the 1990s politics was 'less organized by class and more by other loyalties'.

This position was further endorsed by two more extensive cross-national studies of electoral change and cleavage politics: Nieuwbeerta (1995) and Franklin et al. (1992). This latter project modeled voting behavior ('left' versus 'non-left') in no less than 16 countries, including as explanatory variables manual/nonmanual class position and other social characteristics such as religion, trade union membership, sex, education, and issue/value orientations. It represents the culmination of the two-class/two-party approach to class voting. In his summary of the implications of the research reported in the book, Franklin observes that 'almost all of the countries we have studied show a decline during our period in the ability of social cleavages to structure individual voting choice' (1992, 385). Nieuwbeerta's study focused only on class voting, but came to a similar conclusion. As a result, by the 1990s many commentators agreed that class voting in modern industrial societies had all but disappeared. Class was thought to have lost its importance as a determinant of life chances and political interests because either the working class had become richer, white-collar workers had been 'proletarianized', or social mobility between classes had increased. At the same time, post-industrial cleavages such as gender, race, ethnicity, public versus private sector, and various identity groups had emerged and replaced class-based conflict, while new post-material values had supposedly led to the 'new left' drawing

its support from the middle classes, thus weakening the class basis of left-right divisions. Moreover, rising levels of education had ostensibly produced voters who were calculating and ‘issue oriented’, who chose who to vote for, rather than being driven by collective identities such as class (Franklin 1985; Franklin et al. 1992; Rose and McAllister 1986)

None of these explanations received unconditional support; all of them assumed that there was indeed a widespread decline in class-based voting which had then to be explained. During the 1980s a body of research emerged that questioned the validity of this assumption and argued instead that problems of measurement and analysis undermined the work that had followed Alford’s approach. In particular, it was argued that the use of a crude manual/nonmanual distinction obscured variations in the composition of the manual and nonmanual classes (Heath et al. 1985). For example, if skilled manual workers are more right-wing than unskilled workers and the number of skilled workers increases, the Alford estimate of difference between manual and nonmanual workers will decline even if the relative political positions of skilled, unskilled, and nonmanual workers remain the same. With this and similar indices the measurement of the class–vote association was thus open to confounding by changes in the shape of the class structure. In other words, this type of index confused differences in the sizes of classes with differences in the association it was supposed to measure – a problem also found with the OLS regression techniques used in, among others, Franklin et al.’s (1992) 16-nation study that represented the culmination of this tradition.

MORE COMPLEX MEASUREMENT AND MORE COMPLEX STATISTICS

In recent years, the manual/nonmanual representation of class voting has been to a large degree superseded. As noted above, the most influential class schema used currently is that developed by Goldthorpe and his colleagues, which characterizes the class structure as being constituted by up to seven classes. This shift to greater complexity in the measurement of class has been accompanied by a similar move away from the measurement of political choice as a dichotomy of left versus right (or left versus non-left) to a fuller representation of the voters’ spectrum of choice at the ballot box. This was accompanied by improvements in the statistical estimation of the class–vote association using modeling techniques which could estimate the strength of the relationship between class and vote independently of the general popularity of political parties or changes in the sizes of classes, as well as more complex class and party relationships.

The first of these new approaches to class voting (i.e. Heath et al. 1985, 1991; Evans et al. 1991) examined whether ‘trendless fluctuation’, a linear trend, or ‘one-off’ changes best captured the pattern of association in class voting over

time in Britain. These studies found little evidence of declining class voting and concluded that ‘trendless fluctuation’, or at most a ‘one-off’ change in the 1960s, best captured the pattern of association in class voting over time. The major changes over this period were in the overall popularity of the main political parties (Goldthorpe 1999). In the USA, Hout, et al (1995), examined class differentials in turnout and class/party realignment over time using a version of Goldthorpe’s class schema and found no evidence of overall decline once class voting was allowed to be understood as something more than left versus right, working class versus middle class: realignment not dealignment was the order of the day. Comparative research also came to rather different conclusions from those in the two-class, two-party tradition (e.g. Evans 1999a). While there was evidence of a linear decline in left versus non-left class voting (most notably, Nieuwbeerta 1995), it was not universal. In certain Scandinavian countries there was evidence of a decline from an unusually high degree of class voting to levels similar to those in other Western democracies. Ringdal and Hines’ (1999) study of class voting in Norway found a decline in the traditional axis of class voting between the service and the working classes. Much of this decline appeared during a relatively short period of time in the 1960s. Ironically, the reason for this change was probably the political success of class politics, in which universalistic welfare legislation has led to the erosion of middle-class opposition to social democracy (Korpi 1983). Moreover, when the measurement of both class *and* vote has been improved this declining trend is not found in Denmark (Hobolt 2013).

Interestingly, there was also evidence of growing levels of class voting over time. So, for example, levels of class voting in Britain were found to have increased during the 1940s and 1950s before falling back in the 1960s (Weakliem and Heath 1999). In at least some of the new post-communist democracies, the 1990s saw higher levels of class voting as these societies underwent the rigors of marketization (Evans 2006). Thus in the Czech Republic over a four-year period in the 1990s in which the costs of marketization became increasingly apparent, class voting realigned and polarized to approximate the left-right alignments observed in the West (Mateju et al. 1999). Similarly, Evans and Whitefield (2006) provide evidence of both the economic basis of class polarization and the role of an increasing understanding of the socially differentiated costs and benefits associated with market economies in their analysis of the emergence of class divisions in political preferences in Russia.

In recent years, the debate about the decline of class voting has arguably lost its intensity: there is evidence of decline (Jansen et al. 2013), but the cross-national picture displays considerable variation with little or no evidence of a fall in class voting in some societies, while there are trends in others (see Brooks et al. 2006, and relevant case studies in Evans and De Graaf 2013). Interest has turned instead to considerations of explanations for variations in the strength of the class-vote relationship across time and societies.

EXPLAINING THE EVOLUTION OF CLASS POLITICS: BOTTOM UP OR TOP DOWN?

Most early scholars assumed a sociological, relatively deterministic ‘bottom-up’ explanation in which the transition to a post-industrial society was accompanied by a diffusing of the class structure, resulting in weaker patterns of voting between classes. The decline in class voting was thought to have derived from general economic developments leading to the emergence of less structured societies: increased social mobility, affluence and educational expansion undermined the distinctiveness of classes, with a consequent weakening of their impact on party choice. The key assumption was that classes are no longer sources of identity and interests; they are cross-cut by other influences and in consequence have lost their impact as sources of political preferences (Clark and Lipset 2001; Inglehart and Rabier 1986; Pakulski and Waters 1996). This is summed up in Dalton’s influential comparative politics textbook: ‘Few individuals now possess exclusively middle-class or working class social characteristics, and the degree of class overlap is increasing over time’ (Dalton 2008: 156). Interestingly, recent work on class voting in Britain has simply *assumed* that class no longer matters for party choice because there are no longer meaningful social class divisions. For Clarke et al. (2004), for example, the decline of class voting has been caused by a society in which ‘class boundaries have become increasingly fluid’ (Clarke et al. 2004: 2), but no evidence is presented on increasing fluidity, or on any other social change which might have affected the political relevance of class positions.

An opposing view to this rather socially deterministic argument emphasizes the role of the political elite in the structuring of class political divisions. In short, this approach claims that ‘variations in class voting are argued to derive from differences in the redistributive policy choices offered to voters’. (Evans, 2000: 411). Often referred to as a ‘top-down’ approach, variations in the strength of social divisions in political preferences are argued to derive from the choices offered to voters by politicians and parties. Studies focus primarily on the extent to which parties take differing positions along dimensions of ideologies or values and thus shape voters’ political choice sets. To the degree that voters are responsive to the programs offered by parties, rather than simply voting on the basis of habit, or long-term party attachment, differentiation between parties on relevant ideological dimensions increases the strength of the association between class position and party choice. Conversely, where parties do not offer different choices class divisions are weaker. The key assumption is that ideological convergence reduces the strength of the signal from parties to voters and the motivation for choosing parties on interest/value grounds derived from class is weakened, and *vice versa*. In short, voter responses to party polarization and the extent to which this drives changes in the class bases of party preference depend upon the choices voters are

offered (the supply side), as well as the presence of differences in ideological and value preferences within the electorate (the demand side).

This is not a new thesis, and has many previous exponents (e.g. Przeworski and Sprague 1986) but only recently has there been thorough empirical analysis of the impact of the choices offered by parties on social divisions in voting. This has been most extensively examined in Britain (see Evans et al. 1999; Evans and Tilley 2012a, 2012b), who argue that parties have restricted voters' choice preferences by presenting them with convergent sets of policies covering a less extensive range of ideological and value positions than they used to. Where there is a spread of positions the preferences of social classes are more likely to find expression than when the parties cluster around a particular point. These preferences are also likely to find expression when parties have clear signals. When those signals are indistinct, as is often the case in the closeness of competition for the center ground, the ambiguous nature of the signals from parties to voters will make clear differentiation between the party choices of social class less likely to occur.

This idea is not new: in the 1950s Converse reasoned that if parties fail to take distinctive positions on questions relating to class, voters will be unable to use their class position as a guide for voting (Converse 1958: 395–99). In the 1980s, Kelley, McAllister, and Mughan (1985) presented a 'party-appeals hypothesis' – in which parties of the left seek support from the middle class – to account for higher levels of Labour support than would otherwise be expected given the shrinking size of the working class. Kitschelt (1994) likewise argued that the electoral fortunes of European social democratic parties are largely determined by their strategic appeals, rather than by secular trends in the class structure. However, this perspective has not been fully developed and extensively tested until recently. Evidence for this process in Britain was initially provided by Evans et al. (1999), who show a close relationship over a 20-year period between left-right polarization in parties' manifestos and the extent of class voting. A further study extended this analysis to more than 40 years and estimated that without convergence in party programs no convergence in class voting would have been observed (Evans and Tilley 2012a). Studies by Oskarson (2005) and Elff (2009) suggest that this pattern is also found elsewhere in Europe. Most recently, the 'political choice' model of class voting has been consolidated by a broad-ranging comparative combination of case studies and cross-nationally pooled over-time analyses of the relationship between party manifesto positions and the strength of class voting (Evans and De Graaf 2013). A 15-nation analysis combining up to 50 years of evidence finds a correlation of 0.42 between left-right polarization in party manifesto programs and the strength of class voting, even when controlling for other aspects of social change (Janssen et al. 2013). Further work (Rennwald and Evans 2014) refines this approach via a detailed case comparison of Switzerland and Austria, which points to the importance of the *salience* of left-party policies rather than simply their position on a left-right dimension. Complementary studies point to the importance of the

declining recruitment of working-class representatives into positions of political office for both voting (Heath 2015) and policy formation (Carnes 2012). The extent to which voters choose on the basis of policy choice or social similarity remains an area for further study, though these processes seem likely to work in conjunction with each other in framing voters' responses.

WHAT IS CLASS POLITICS: LEFT, RIGHT OR SOMETHING RATHER DIFFERENT?

The impact of choice relates not only to differentiation along lines of left and right but also to the types of issues and policies emphasized by parties. Though it has typically been assumed that class politics means left (pro-intervention/redistribution) versus right (pro-market, anti-redistribution), this has been criticized by scholars such as Houtman (2003) and Knutsen (2007) for failing to identify that the preferences of classes diverge markedly on non-economic issues. Numerous comparative studies have found high support for Radical Right Parties (RRPs) among the working class (Betz, 1994; Houtman, 2003; various chapters in Rydgren 2012). The key issues that characterize such voters are, in particular, opposition to immigration, but also Euroscepticism, support for punitive law-and-order policies, and general political disaffection. This literature draws upon the old notion of working-class authoritarianism, first highlighted by Lipset (1959), and which is strongly related to a voter's educational level. Consistent with the top-down approach referred to above, working-class support for RPPs can be motivated by changes in the programmatic appeals of left-wing parties when they move to more centrist positions (Achterberg and Houtman, 2006; Kitschelt and McGann 2005; Rennwald and Evans 2014). Most comprehensively in this respect, Spies (2013) examines support for RRPs among working-class voters in 13 West European societies for the period from 1980 to 2002. He finds that, in countries where the economic dimension of party competition has decreased in both salience and polarization, support for RRPs among the working class is considerably higher than in countries without such a trend.

In Britain, the impact of the Labour Party's shift to a pro-EU position and the consequent weakening of working-class commitment to Labour was first identified in the 1990s (Evans 1999b). More recently, Ford and Goodwin (2014) argue that the UK's own RRP, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), attracts working-class voters because they are the losers in Britain's post-industrial transformation: UKIP is 'a working-class phenomenon. Its support is heavily concentrated among older, blue-collar workers, with little education and few skills' (Ford and Goodwin 2014: 270). Others find, however, that the self-employed, traditionally the most right wing of the social classes, are more solidly pro-UKIP than the working class themselves (Evans and Mellon 2016). Comparatively also, the working class and the 'petty bourgeoisie', i.e. the self-employed and

small employers such as shop-owners, appear to provide the main sources of RPP support (Kitschelt 1995; Lubbers et al. 2002; Ignazi 2003; Arzheimer and Carter 2006). Overall, the picture is nearer to Ivarsflaten's (2005) description of RRP support deriving from an alliance between the working class and the self-employed (and small employers), than the working class *per se*: the working-class and petty bourgeoisie RRP voters are divided on economic issues, but not on the non-economic preferences addressed by RRPs. This form of class politics radically cross-cuts the economic dimension, not only in terms of its issues, but with respect also to its class basis.

SIZE MATTERS: PARTY COMPETITION AND THE POLITICAL MARGINALIZATION OF WORKING CLASS

Early voting research focused on the working class, especially in Britain (e.g. Butler and Stokes 1974), where studies explored in detail the phenomenon of 'working-class Conservatives' (Mackenzie and Silver 1968; Nordlinger 1967), as it was assumed that it was only the failure of such voters to fully express their 'true' class interests electorally that prevented a left-wing, working-class electoral hegemony. Indeed, when a major study of *The Middle Class Vote* emerged in the mid 1950s, its author struggled to identify what the middle class might be and to justify treating it as a class in the face of the dominant presence of a demographically and politically all-powerful working class: 'the party contest was not so much "wooing the middle class" as more intense competition for the working class vote'. (Bonham 1954: 35). The presence of a large working class shaped politics.

Since then, however, we have seen the marked reduction in size of the working class as industrial societies have become post-industrial, leading to it no longer constituting the largest class, nor being the primary source of left-party support (Przeworski and Sprague 1986). Recently, this process has been argued to lead to a vicious circle in which parties stop representing working-class people, who in turn stop turning out to vote, further reducing the incentive for parties to appeal to them (Evans and Tilley 2015).

Evans and Tilley (2017) demonstrate that the erosion of class divisions in income and quality of life has not happened. Many commentators have confused the declining size of the working class with its declining distinctiveness. In terms of resources and prospects, the working class remains as distinctive as it was decades ago. None the less, the transition from a 'big working class' to a 'minority working class' is an engine of social and political change that has multiple implications: some psychological, some social, some political. All have consequences for the electoral participation and political representation of the working class. The working class once had opinions on social issues that were near to the national average – in part because there were sufficient numbers of them to help

determine that average – but this is no longer the case. Changing attitudes to social issues that are badges of progress for representatives of the left are anathema to many people in the working class. As the bulk of the educated, middle-class population has become more liberal, the views of the shrinking working class have become divorced from mainstream opinion. Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, the positive references to the working class that once appeared in political rhetoric have been replaced by silence, or a focus on the poor as a problem if they're on welfare, or if they fail to share the vision of society held by many of the left-wing political elite by being, for example, opposed to immigration and multiculturalism.

This process is exacerbated by recruitment and composition of the political parties. More than ever before in the age of mass democracy, left-wing politicians are not drawn from the working class. Parties of the left who would have at one time represented the working class are dominated by professional politicians with middle-class backgrounds, an elite university education, and the values associated with such milieu (Carnes 2012; Heath 2015; Evans and Tilley 2017). Increasingly politicians on the left are socially alien to working-class voters and *vice versa*: those politicians are likely to neither understand nor approve of the preferences of working-class voters. As a result, researchers have been looking in the wrong place for class divisions in politics. Arguably the most important growing cleavage is between voting for any party or not voting at all. This was identified in the US some time ago by Quaille Hill and Leighley (1996), who linked state-level left policy programs to class differences in turnout,. This rise in non-voting among the disadvantaged can in turn work to reinforce their lack of representation. Since parties seek to win elections they are less likely to care about chasing the votes of groups that don't vote. This potentially vicious circle depends to some degree on whether those who have stopped voting can be persuaded to return, or if once participation stops it is very difficult to re-initiate. As it is, Leighley and Nagler (2013) find no increase in poor/working-class participation since the late 20th century despite the ideological polarization of main US parties: once the habit of participation is lost it is not easily recovered. Nor might left parties be that concerned. The rising new middle class has become their preferred recruiting ground and their policies are aimed at these voters (Kitschelt and McGann 2005; Spies 2013; Rennwald and Evans 2014; Evans and Tilley 2017). This class provides the numerical gravity – demographically and politically – that had once been held by the working class.

MECHANISMS: HOW DOES CLASS POSITION INFLUENCE INDIVIDUALS' POLITICAL CHOICES?

Lipset's assertion that 'in virtually every economically developed country the lower income groups vote mainly for parties of the left' (1960: 220–24) has often

been taken as sufficient explanation for class voting: poor voters want redistributive policies. Research on the individual-level mechanisms that explain observed patterns of class voting has typically been less in evidence (Evans 2010).² None the less, some studies have tried to unravel why voters in different classes vote differently, while others have investigated mechanisms of political preference formation that point to refinements in the measurement of class position.

Early studies tended to focus on identity: for example, *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960) and Butler and Stokes (1974) placed considerable emphasis on identification with a social class (Prysby 1977). The question of whether identity intensifies the impact of class position on political preferences is an area currently receiving renewed focus in a multinational analysis of the strength of class identity in post-communist societies, which provides evidence that it can serve to do so (van Taack and Evans 2015). At the same time, levels of class identity are arguably not exogenous and need themselves to be accounted for. Neither do they provide convincing explanations of changes in levels of class voting in recent decades: Evans and Tilley (2017) show that levels of class identity in Britain remain surprisingly robust over 50 years and yet the link between the class and party support was decimated during that period. Social context approaches which place emphasis on friendship choices and interpersonal influence or on constituency characteristics (i.e. Huckfeldt 1984; Andersen and Heath 2003) likewise need to show more precisely how these contexts impact on the decisions of individual voters.

Weakliem and Heath (1994) provided an early attempt to reconcile rational choice and identity-based approaches by providing evidence of the role of both issue-based and inherited parental preferences in explaining class differences in vote. More recently, Langsaether (2015) likewise finds that political value orientations play a central role in accounting for differential class-vote associations with different party families. The conditionality of these relationships is shown by research into the effects of the depoliticization of the politics of redistribution by political parties on the linkage between values and party choice. Persisting class differences in redistributive preferences can become less relevant to party choice when parties no longer offer such clear-cut choices in their programs, leading to a rapid decline in levels of class-based voting (Evans and Tilley 2012b).

The influence of class differences in values has been given greater prominence in part because of a move away from the assumption that class values and preferences are shaped by the way parties frame choices and talk about politics. Sartori (1969: 84) influentially asserted that the politicization of class divisions by parties not only influences voters' party choices but actually produces class consciousness and an awareness of class-related economic interests. Such 'preference shaping' implies that parties directly influence the attitudes of their supporters. In this case we would expect class differences in ideology and values to reflect the shifting positions taken by the parties associated with different social classes. More recent work (e.g. Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Adams

et al. 2012) indicates that sorting takes place rather than ‘indoctrination’ – thus on issues where voters differ from their party they will, over time, shift away from that party. Consistent with this, Evans and Tilley (2017) show that the distancing of the political left from the working class occurs because the left fails to carry the working class with it as it moves to new, more middle-class, positions on economic and social issues: class divisions in social and political attitudes remain robust.

Other work has focused on the characteristics of occupations that influence political choices. Weatherford’s (1979) early work indicated the differential sensitivity of occupational classes to economic events such as unemployment rates, thus pointing to plausible class differences in the voting decision calculus deriving from occupational characteristics. Evans (1993) modeled the effects of future expected rewards and the likelihood of promotion conditioned by position in the life cycle, showing how promotion prospects can account for class differences among younger age groups while aspects of current circumstance – institutional affiliations such as union membership and home ownership – are significant among older voters. The argument here is that the diminishing marginal utility of future rewards shifts the balance of interests to the present, and hence to class position and its associated resources. More recently Idema and Rueda (2011) provide an analysis of ‘expected lifetime income’ using a combination of education and age (the ‘Mincer equation’), which suggests the significance of expected income levels are likely to be more significant than current income for redistributive attitudes. Although they do not directly engage in an analysis of the effects of class, their findings about the significance of future costs and benefits are consistent with Evans’ earlier (1993) work.

The most detailed recent analysis of the impact of occupational characteristics on politics is Kitschelt and Rehm’s (2014) analysis of occupational task structures as mechanisms of political preference formation. Kitschelt and Rehm (2014) focus on the logic of the authority and task structures experienced in the workplace. They argue that people apply the kinds of reasoning and problem-solving techniques used at work in other areas of their life, including the political. In this Kitschelt and Rehm echo the influential work of Kohn and his colleagues (e.g. Kohn 1977; Kohn and Schooler 1983). For Kohn (2001: 205): ‘in an industrialized society, where work is central to people’s lives, what people do in their work directly affects their values, their conceptions of self, and their orientation in the world around them – ‘I do therefore I am’. From the 1960s onwards this body of work examined working-class authoritarianism and ‘self-direction’ as a consequence of the workplace situation of people in the working class. Kitschelt and Rehm’s analysis focuses on work experiences within the growing, post-industrial, middle classes. As noted above, the rise of the middle class since the 1960s has created greater diversification within the middle class of highly educated professionals and semi-professionals who now outnumber the working

class, as usually conceived. Kitschelt and Rehm identify the vertical dimension of workplace organization that relates to a person's autonomy and control over their own work and that of others, and the horizontal dimension relating to complexity and problem solving. Although not measured directly, these job attributes are inferred from occupational titles and are shown to predict political attitudes over and above skill indicators such as education and other controls. Kitschelt and Rehm conclude that the notion of the undifferentiated middle class is 'probably useless for many theoretical problems in political science' (2014: 1690). In this they develop on the work of authors such as Kriesi and Oesch who likewise identify occupational sub-classes within the middle class that are of consequence for the realm of politics. They also, however, point to a renewed interest in how workplace experience can play an important part in shaping the attitudes that in turn can influence party choice.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that, even in post-industrial societies, class voting increases as well as decreases. The adoption of class-relevant policy programs is associated with an increase in the class basis of partisanship. Class politics is also probably increasing in the recently marketized former communist societies of Eastern Europe. Similarly, research into the emergence and growth of European radical right parties has found extensive class voting with respect to social liberalism, anti-immigration and other 'second dimension' values and issues, thus demonstrating that a focus on 'traditional' class voting and left-right politics can underestimate the extent of class as an influence on party choice. In short, the thesis of a generalized decline in the class basis of voting no longer holds.

Class sizes have changed, but class divisions remain. The middle classes have grown in size and the strategic rationality of appealing to middle-class interests is but a new take on an old theme, one that could arguably result in an almost hegemonic party focus on the concerns of middle-class and middle-income voters – reversing the emphasis observed in the mid 20th century and leaving the working class and poor out in the cold, electorally speaking. Increasing attention is now being given to the growing under-representation of the working class amongst politicians and how this might impact on policy programs, as well as on the extent of the social connection between politicians and such voters. A growing working-middle class gap in participation, first detected in the USA, would now seem to have become more apparent, at least where electoral contexts inhibit the emergence of parties addressing working-class concerns.

A concern with how social and political context conditions class voting also now informs debates on class politics. In part this focuses on the extent to which classes differ in their patterns of party support as a function of the policy platforms

adopted by parties. There appears to be a substantial relationship between the class basis of voting and the choices available to members of different classes. Similarly, comparative research into new democracies indicates that different models are likely to apply at different points in the evolution of party systems. More generally the question of bottom-up/top-down interactions and the role of learning and signaling now occupy a more central position in debates.

Research into the micro-level mechanisms that explain class voting has also received renewed attention, with the distinctiveness of occupational characteristics such as career trajectories and workplace task structures being given more emphasis than simple differences in income levels. This growing area of research is likely to prove fruitful for distinguishing the impact of occupational class position from that of income levels and to strengthen the case for occupation rather than current income as a way of understanding the social sources of political preferences.

To conclude, the general pattern of development in this research tradition has seen a move from descriptive concerns with the identification of more or less class voting to an understanding of the sources of those differences in terms of the choices offered to voters, the dynamics of the relationships between parties and voters, and theoretical development of the explanatory mechanisms accounting for the relationship between classes and parties. These explanatory rather than descriptive concerns are likely to be the focus of most new class voting research in coming decades. The importance of this work is signaled very clearly by Brexit and Trump, both of which saw strong working class involvement in shock outcomes, indicating that class divisions in political preferences and voting are not only resilient they are capable of destabilizing the establishment order. Thus the democratic class struggle continues.

Notes

- 1 Measures of socioeconomic position that combine education, occupation and income into a composite measure of class also raise as many questions as they answer for understanding the various interconnections between them. The separation of class, education, income, and status allows the identification of their distinct effects on vote (Chan and Goldthorpe 2007).
- 2 Aggregate analyses of levels of inter-generational social mobility (i.e. De Graaf et al. 1995) indicate these can condition the class vote relationship but, in general, attempts to account for conditioning effects on patterns of class voting at the macro-level have met with limited success (Nieuwbeerta and Ultee 1999).

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Religion

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INTRODUCTION

While denominational and religious-secular cleavages have left their marks on the party systems of many European countries, it is nowadays widely assumed that their role is on the wane. Yet this story may be too simple: firstly, while the balance between religious and secular segments of a society may change in the latter's favour, this does not mean by implication that the intensity of divisions between the two recedes. In an overwhelmingly traditionally religious society, members of a secular minority may oppose the restrictions on their lifestyle imposed by religious norms and by legislation motivated by these. In an overwhelmingly secular society, members of a religious minority may oppose the expression of permissive lifestyles that they find offensive or sinful or at least may demand respect for a pious lifestyle and a provision of particular goods and infrastructure that allows them to follow a religious way of life.

Secondly, the translation of denominational and religious-secular cleavages into party systems and party politics is not a matter of course. In fact, Lipset and Rokkan (1967), who are often cited as among the most prominent contributors to the ‘macro-sociological’ approach to party system analysis and the ‘cleavage model’ of electoral behaviour (cf. von Schoultz in this Volume, Chapter 3), have pointed to the diversity in the expression of church-state cleavages in European party systems and how it is conditioned by their interaction with other cleavages, such as between centre and periphery and between landed and urban interests. Furthermore, if the expression of religious-secular or church-state cleavages is far from uniform in Europe, one can expect even more diversity if one moves

beyond that continent. An obvious example is the United States, which appears exceptional not only due to the absence of a major Labour party but also due to the conspicuous absence of explicitly religious parties.

Thirdly, there is also a variety of ways in which religious beliefs find political expression (see e.g. Madeley 1991). Although the Catholic Church appeared as a stalwart of traditional hierarchies in society during the 19th and early 20th century, Catholic moral theology could also motivate support for the economic demands of the working class and an opposition to the excesses of free-market capitalism. Moreover, the high diversity of Protestant movements and sects is also expressed in a similar diversity of political stances, which range from political activism to separation from the secular society (Woodberry and Smith 1998), and from an affirmation of monarchical authority to a demand of grass-roots self-government (Madeley 1982).

Fourthly, the electoral impact of social and religious divisions is contingent on the existence of incentives and opportunities for their expression provided by the party system. Religious-secular divisions will find expression in electoral behaviour only if there are parties particularly appealing to religious voters and parties that express a more secular stance. Of course, if religious voters are only a tiny minority of the electorate, one can expect that parties ‘representing’ this segment will hardly be electorally viable, especially in majoritarian systems, but as long as there is a substantial portion of voters it remains a matter of the parties’ decisions either to mobilise voters along religious-secular divisions or to avoid issues related to them.

The present chapter looks at the role of religion and of religious-secular divisions in the formation of electoral choices both from a theoretical and an empirical perspective. The theoretical perspective is the leading one in the next section, which looks at the ‘demand side’ of religious voting, i.e. why voters should take their religious orientation as a guideline for their voting decision, and at the ‘supply side’, i.e. why there are parties or candidates that provide voters with the opportunity to do so. This section is followed by a discussion of major research questions that are posed or left open by the theoretical considerations and related empirical findings. The chapter concludes with suggestions for the future agenda of research in religious voting.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES: CONDITIONS FOR THE ELECTORAL RELEVANCE OF RELIGION

How can religion matter for voting behaviour at all? One way is that religious voters are more likely to vote for particular candidates or parties than less religious or non-religious voters. Another way is that voters adhering to different religious denominations tend to support different candidates or parties. One could also argue that religion matters for voting in so far as the voting decisions

of electors are motivated by religious concerns, whatever party or candidate they vote for. Finally one could say that religion matters to the degree in which parties with religiously motivated policy positions are electorally successful. While these aspects of the role of religion for voting behaviour may be related empirically, they are nevertheless conceptually distinct. In the following subsections, we discuss each of these aspects in turn, first, the question about the motivations for voters to let religion be their guideline of electoral choice and, second, the question about how and why candidates and parties offer them the opportunity to do so.

Motives for religious voting

Why would religious voters differ from less or non-religious voters in terms of their tendency to vote for particular parties or candidates? Before we turn to the more genuine type of motivations, it appears useful to distinguish them from voting because of more accidental motivations, which one could call ‘quasi-religious voting’ or ‘spurious’ religious voting. One example for this could be a tendency of Catholic voters in the UK to support the Labour party rather than the Conservatives (Seawright 2000; Kotler-Berkowitz 2001; Tilley 2015) or in the US to support the Democrats rather than the Republicans (Manza and Brooks 1997). Such a pattern may result from the fact that Catholics are – due to their immigration background – disproportionately often located in the lower social strata. In this case their reason to support these parties does not so much lie in their adherence to religious values or in an affiliation to a particular religious denomination, but rather that the policies of these parties are more favourable or less unfavourable to lower strata or to immigrants. Another possibility is that membership in a denominational group is linked to a position on ethnic-national cleavages. Again the British case could be cited as an example for this: the Conservatives’ position on the Irish question in the past, and more recently on the question on Northern Ireland, may have motivated Catholic voters of Irish origin or Irish heritage to rather support other parties (Tilley 2015). While such patterns may be interesting in their own right, they cannot be subsumed under the concept of religious voting intended here, because this would dilute it so much as to deprive it from its distinctiveness.

Sociological approaches to electoral behaviour often rest on the assumption that voters who belong to a particular group, e.g. Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, etc., support certain parties, first, because they identify with this group and/or feel loyalty to it (Miller et al. 1991), and, second, because this group is represented in some way by a certain party or an alliance exists between the group and the party (Stinchcombe 1975). For such an approach it is straightforward to explain, for example, why a Dutch Catholic in the 1960s voted for the Catholic People’s Party of the Netherlands. Given, however, that an individual could conceive herself as being a member of multiple groups and that

these group memberships are not always coincident (such as being a Catholic and being of Irish heritage in the UK or the US) but could also be cross-cutting (e.g. an urban working-class Catholic may identify herself either as a member of the Labour movement or as a member of a Catholic community), a *pure group identification* approach to religious voting begs the question of why a particular group membership matters for voters. That certain voters identify themselves as Catholics may be a necessary condition for their decision to vote for a party that represents itself as a Catholic party, but is this a sufficient condition? One could cite results from social psychology (e.g. Sherif et al. 1961; Tajfel 1982) in support of a group identification approach. But given the fact that group identification can be experimentally manipulated, as in the famous Robbers Cave Experiment (Sherif et al. 1961), it is hard to understand why group identifications can be stable and coherent without external support.

Of course, to be a member of a religious group is more than just identifying with it. For a devout Catholic, Church membership also entails participation in certain communal activities, in particular religious services, and conforming to certain norms of behaviour. These norms are typically enforced by various forms of *social control* or *social pressure*. The extreme would be the threat of exclusion from sacramental acts or even excommunication. But normally this means the communication of the limits of acceptable behaviour. Such patterns of social communication have been used by scholars, beginning with Lazarsfeld et al. (1948), to explain an association between group membership and voting leading to a *social predisposition* of voting for particular parties or candidates (Berelson et al. 1954). Most religions provide for communication of norms by priests, who not only conduct sacramental acts, but also clarify what behaviour is pious and what is profane or sinful (Penning and Smidt 2000; Wald et al. 2005). Furthermore, such distinctions are standardised by virtue of these priests being members of a large-scale clerical hierarchy. The existence of such large-scale organisations is perhaps the best explanation for the relative uniformity of members of a particular group at a wider than just local level. It also explains the higher conformity of Catholics compared with other denominations, which lack the national and supra-national hierarchy of the Catholic clergy (Warren 2003).

Whatever the salience of inter-group divisions, whatever the social pressures towards intra-group conformity of behaviour, the consequences of membership in a religious group are perhaps not fully understood without reference to the *belief system* (Converse 1964) that characterises this group as its 'faith'. Of course, ordinary believers are not theologians and are not always able to deduce the implications of the principles of their faith for values, norms of proper behaviour and positions on political issues. But by receiving guidance from priests and perhaps more politically or religiously involved acquaintances, religious voters may become able to engage, in everyday life as well as in the voting booth, in a kind of 'theology by proxy'. Even if this guidance does not include cues as to which parties or candidates to vote for, it may at least give directions to where to

stand with respect to certain issues, such as religious education, divorce, abortion, euthanasia, or equal rights for homosexuals (Froese and Bader 2008; Wolf and Roßteutscher 2013).

Another linkage between membership in religious groups and voting may be created by a phenomenon that is known as *pillarisation* (Bryant 1981; Thung et al. 1982). Pillarised politics means that society is divided in mutually exclusive segments that are characterised not only by particular beliefs and/or ways of life but also by segmental organisations that take care of many aspects of life, from social assistance to leisure activities, thus integrating and providing for the members of a particular group 'from the cradle to the grave' (Andeweg and Irwin 2002). It seems obvious that pillarisation can create very stable patterns of religious or denominational voting, especially if certain parties emerge at the apex of the pillars. But the historical experience of the Netherlands, where the concept originates, shows that pillarisation cannot perpetuate such patterns indefinitely. In the 1970s the 'walls came tumbling down' (Irwin and Dittrich 1984) between Catholics, moderate Calvinists (Hervormde) and orthodox and revivalist Calvinists (Gereformeerde), and the three confessional parties ARP, CHU and KVP merged into a cross-denominational party, the CDA (van Holsteyn et al. 2000; Andeweg and Irwin 2002; Sengers 2004). Then again it is debatable whether the fusion of these parties meant an end of religious politics or rather that confessional divisions were superseded by a religious-secular cleavage (see below).

In modern democracies, membership in a religious group is no longer an inescapable destiny. Social mobility has weakened group ties for many people, especially urban residents, and governments no longer impose membership in an official or established church. Moreover, religious belief systems are not uniform and rigid and perhaps never were. Even one of the more dogmatic religious belief systems, Catholicism, has a (though moderate) variety of theological interpretation of its core principles. Arguably, it is not only a matter of choice whether to be religious or not or which religious denomination to belong to, but also which of the denominational groups one picks, or even what a particular faith entails (Ross et al. 2012). This potential of 'choice' is particularly high in the context of Protestantism with its diversity of currents, ranging from (often rather liberal) Lutherans to the (often conservative) Protestant sects. Consequently, the politics of religion do not always need to be right-wing politics. While in the US in more recent years there appears to be a connection between fundamentalist or evangelical Protestantism and conservative opposition to the welfare state, gun control, equal rights for women, the right for homosexuals to marry and a support for more conservative factions inside the Republican Party, the British Conservatives have recently received criticism from the Church of England for welfare state retrenchments that hurt the poor (Wintour and Butler 2014). Likewise, the CDU in Germany had to face criticism even from the Catholic Church for not addressing an increase in poverty (Hoffman 1996). Thus *religious conservatism* is not the only form of religious politics; *Christian humanism and pacifism* may also

lead, and occasionally has done so in the past, to an opposition to authoritarianism and nationalism, while an emphasis of *Christian charity* may lead, and has done so in the past, to a support of policies traditionally associated with the left, such as the expansion of the welfare state or the opposition to its retrenchment.

If the content of a religious belief or its implications are a matter of choice, it may well be that religious beliefs are no longer the ‘unmoved movers’ of values, attitudes and issue positions but rather an epiphenomenon. It has long been the suspicion of Marxists that religious beliefs are motivated either by their utility as justification of vested interests or social ambitions, or by the help they give in making a situation of social and economic disadvantage subjectively bearable. Such *motivated religious beliefs*, leading to ‘politics through religion’ rather than politics of religion, do not always need to rest on class interests as Marxists have assumed. Other, ‘closer to home’ motivations may lie behind conservative varieties of religion and the associated politics as well: traditionalist interpretations of the Christian faith tend to favour patriarchal family structures – a dominance of men over women and a dominance of parents over their children. So it may well be that voters adapt their religious beliefs and practices to their social or political attitudes rather than the other way around. In fact there is evidence for such an adjustment of beliefs or their interpretation to political and social attitudes (Ross et al. 2012) and of an influence of social attitudes on the avowal of religious beliefs (Hout and Fischer 2014).

Religion and the party system

The previous section discussed the motives for religious voting. The existence of such motives, however, is not sufficient for religion to matter in electoral politics. If the menu that voters find on the ballot paper is relatively uniform when it comes to parties’ or candidates’ appeal to religious motives, it is hard to argue that religious voters or voters from a particular denominational community will concentrate their vote in favour of a particular party or candidate – unless such decisions are motivated by some other reasons than religion, that is, religious voting is accidental or ‘spurious’ in the sense explained above. Simply put, for religion to matter in voting there must also be a *variation between parties* in their appeal to religious or denominational groups. Further, in order to make valid cross-country claims about the relative strength of religious voting or of related phenomena, there must be *types of parties* that typically appeal to religious voters that can be identified in a range of countries. Moreover, in order to make valid cross-temporal comparisons, the presence of type instances has to be relatively stable. If these conditions are not met, one runs the risk of comparing apples with oranges.

The concept of party families (Beyme 1985; Ware 1996; Mair and Mudde 1998) seems attractive as an explanation for the existence of such types of parties. The party families that deserve focus in the analysis of religious voting at least in

Europe are (1) Christian Democratic parties, (2) Christian People's parties, and (3) Christian-confessional parties (Hanley 1994; Kalyvas and van Kersbergen 2010). Given the potential role of religious conservatism for religious voting, it seems appropriate also to focus on (4) conservative parties. The first three types are obvious candidates for religious voting, since many of them carry the reference to Christianity in their party name. Whatever their denominational origin or historical trajectory, parties from these three families claim to represent the interests of religious voters. This is however less clear in the case of conservative parties.

Christian Democratic parties emerged either as a fusion of confessional parties (as in the Netherlands) or from movements in opposition to secular-liberal nation-builders (as in Belgium, France and Italy). While emerging as a defence of the Church and traditional values, they have tended to be more supportive of the post-WWII welfare state than their conservative or liberal-conservative competitors (such as e.g. the Dutch VVD). Whether the *Christian People's* parties in some Scandinavian countries are just a variety within the Christian Democratic family or a party family *sui generis*, might well be subject to debate. On the one hand, they share the religious motive with the Christian Democratic parties. On the other hand they are a phenomenon of Protestantism and in particular of traditionalist currents within Lutheran Protestantism, and emerged more recently than the Christian Democratic parties and their precursors (Madeley 1982, 2000). *Christian-confessional* parties are perhaps even more peculiar than the other two party families. After World War II one could find instances of this family only in the Netherlands and Switzerland. However, in the Netherlands, where inter-denominational rivalries appeared to be more intense than in Switzerland, this party family lost considerable ground after the fusion of the ARP, CHU, and KVP in the cross-denominational CDA. Before World War II, however, one could also find an instance of this party family in Germany with the Catholic 'Zentrumspartei'.

European *Conservatism* may be traced back to its opposition to the French Revolution, to Liberalism and to Social Democracy, but it is far from uniform. Some variants, such as Disraeli's 'One-Nation-Conservatism', have been critical to unfettered capitalism; other variants have a radical pro-market orientation, such as the British Conservatives in the Thatcher era, and much of the contemporary Republican Party of the US. Yet for the purposes of this chapter, one should keep in mind that not all conservative parties in Europe originated from explicitly religious origins and emphasised a more nationalist form of conservatism. The DNVP of the German inter-war period was perhaps more a national-conservative than a Protestant-confessional party. For the British Conservatives as well as for the Moderate parties in Scandinavia, religion played only a very minor role as they were not created in opposition to a secularising nation-building elite (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Madeley 2000). Thus, if one analyses religious voting, one should remain aware that, for many conservative parties, their support by

religious voters cannot be regarded as much ‘a matter of course’ as it can for the Christian Democratic and other explicitly religious parties.

The preceding discussion of party families indicates that the presence of the various sub-families of Christian parties is not universal even within Europe. This poses the question about why and when they appear and persist. A classic sketch of an explanation is provided by Lipset and Rokkan. Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967) seminal introduction to *Party Systems and Voter Alignments* is often misinterpreted as claiming the universality of four fundamental lines of cleavage along which European party systems are ‘frozen’ so that the ‘party systems of the 1960’s reflect … the cleavage structures of the 1920’s’ (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 50). While this claim has often been taken out of context to put up a straw man that can then be criticised (e.g. Lybeck 1985), the real contribution by Lipset and Rokkan is to give a simultaneously historical and systematic account of the *difference between European party systems*. According to them, these differences are explained by the country-specific patterns of alliances between and among elites and popular movements during the formation of nation states and the mobilisation of newly enfranchised mass electorates. The oft-cited ‘freezing’ of party systems is in their view a consequence of the fact that in a fully enfranchised citizenry there were no groups newly entering the electorate. Notably the type of cleavage most relevant here, i.e. church-state cleavages, were the expression of power struggles between a (secular) nation-building elite and a church organisation (mostly the Catholic Church) or nonconformist protestants in opposition to an (Anglican or Lutheran) established church. Simplifying their account, denominational and Christian Democratic parties emerged only in countries where a liberal-secular elite was at the helm of nation-building and in opposition to the transnational Catholic Church (as e.g. in Belgium, France and Italy) or where Protestant (either conservative or liberal) nation-builders confronted a sizeable Catholic minority (as in Prussia/Germany and the Netherlands). In Britain and Scandinavia, state-church cleavages emerged in the form of conflicts between an established church and nonconformist or revivalist Protestant fringe movements. This found expression in explicitly religious parties only in Scandinavia, made possible by an electoral system based on proportional representation, while in the UK Protestant non-conformism found its representation in the Liberal Party (see also Madeley 1982, 1991, 2000, 2003).

Lipset and Rokkan’s account was focused on Western Europe and this is related to the perhaps not so universal nature of the phenomena they tried to explain. The church-state conflicts that they discuss are perhaps specific to Christianity. One might perhaps find an analogy in Turkey where a secularist nation-building process eventually led to the formation of a religious and democratic mass party in the form of the AKP (Taydas et al. 2012; Alaranta 2014). But it is difficult to find such analogies elsewhere. Outside Europe, the phenomenon of an established (Anglican) Church is restricted to the Commonwealth realms and for these countries one could expect, like in the UK, a rather low salience of religious politics

because of the absence of major religion-based parties. While in Latin America the presence of the transnational Catholic Church could in principle have fostered the emergence of some variant of Christian Democracy, clear instances of Christian Democratic parties are hard to find there.

RELIGIOUS VOTING: DEBATES, RESULTS AND OPEN QUESTIONS

The previous section discussed the ‘demand side’ and the ‘supply side’ of religious voting, where ‘demand side’ refers to the motivation for voters to use religion as a guideline for party or candidate choice and ‘supply side’ refers to the parties’ and candidates’ strategies to mobilise voters along religious-secular divisions. This section is concerned with the scholarly debates and empirical findings relating to religious voting. Most of these debates and findings concern the ‘demand side’ of religious voting: they are, first, concerned with the pace of secularisation and its implications. A second debate revolves around the consequences of secularisation for denominational differences in voting and for voting along religious-secular lines. Finally, there is a debate about the ‘Culture Wars’ and whether they indicate a resurgence of religiosity and an increased polarisation of the American public along religious-secular lines. In the following we discuss the proceeds of these debates in turn.

Secularisation

Despite contrary claims (e.g Berger 1999), it is widely held that modern societies have undergone a process of secularisation and are expected to continue to do so (e.g. Jagodzinski and Dobbelaere 1995; Norris and Inglehart 2004). Following Max Weber, secularisation has often been attributed to the ‘disenchantment’ of the world (*Entzauberung der Welt*) due to science and technology (Weber 1992), or to the material security enjoyed in modern and modernising societies (Norris and Inglehart 2004; Barber 2013), which in turn may be a consequence of the development and application of science and technology in a society (but see also Karakoç and Başkan 2012).

Yet, the notion of secularisation has been questioned. Thus, a heated debate occurred in the 1990s between proponents of a rational choice theory of religious organisations, on the one hand (e.g. Stark 1999; Stark and Iannaccone 1994; Finke 1997; Chaves and Cann 1992) and the defenders of secularisation theory on the other (e.g. Gill 1993; Bruce 1999, 2001). The former pointed to consistently higher levels of religiosity in the US than in Europe, arguing that Europe is a special case because state regulation and subsidies destroyed the free market of religion. In contrast, their critics depict the US as the special case, pointing towards evidence for the continuing process of secularization worldwide, but particularly in Europe. After years of debate the issue of state regulation versus

free markets has almost disappeared from academic dispute – with inconclusive results. From a different perspective, Davie (1994) claims that a decline in religious service does not imply a decline in religious belief, but may just give way to more individualised forms of religiosity. Yet these claims are also not beyond criticism (Voas 2009; Bruce 2001; Voas and Crockett 2005). In particular the individualisation of religion may very well be seen as an aspect of decline of *traditional* religiosity, which delimits the role of traditional religious organisations (Pollack and Pickel 2007) and thus the linkage between churches and Christian parties.

Secularisation may also have other kinds of consequences for politics and policies, but when the focus is on mass electoral behaviour, the most plausible consequence of secularisation is the numerical reduction of those segments of electorates that have strong religious beliefs, or attend church regularly. And, if religious beliefs are still held, they are less important for the formation of party preferences (Miller and Stouthard 1975; Dogan 1995; Franklin et al. 1992; Kriesi 1998; Best 2011; Elff and Roßteutscher 2011). But a decline in the relative size does not by itself imply a weakening of divisions between religious and secular segments of society, but only a change in the balance between them. And if religious values lose their widespread acceptance in society and politics, religious–secular divisions may even grow in salience. First, because of a rising demand to abolish legal restrictions on lifestyles, e.g. on economic activity of women, divorce, pre-marital sex, abortion and homosexuality, which are motivated by the moral standards of traditional religiosity, and second, because, as these legal restrictions are removed, piously religious segments of society are increasingly confronted with the expression of lifestyles by others that they find contrary to their faith. Thus political phenomena such as the ‘Culture Wars’ in the US (discussed further below) are not necessarily a counterexample to secularisation, but a consequence of it.

Moreover, secularisation might not only affect religious voting but also electoral participation. It could be argued that Christian Democrat and conservative parties start avoiding clear stances on religious themes in order not to irritate the growing fraction of secular voters, and that as a consequence religious groups receive fewer mobilisation signals from these parties. As a result, decreasing turnout might be the case. Unfortunately, turnout is a blind spot in the rich literature on cleavage and religious voting. Hence, evidence is sparse and restricted to the German case. Throughout Western Europe turnout reached its peak during the 1960s and 1970s when the traditional cleavage structure was still intact. Since then, decline is the dominant pattern (Schäfer et al. 2014). For Germany we know that devout Catholics are still the subgroup with the highest turnout rate (Roßteutscher and Stegmüller 2014). In stark contrast to the socio-economic cleavage, this is the case for all age groups or cohorts. Nevertheless, in recent German federal elections from 1994 to 2013, turnout appears to be stable among Catholics and regular churchgoers, but to be in decline in groups outside

Christian Democracy's core clientele – the working class and the non-religious (Elff and Roßteutscher 2016).

The discussion about the potential consequences of secularisation tends to assume it is externally 'given'. Yet there is evidence that the process of secularisation is not an 'unmoved mover'. March (2013), for example, discovers an accelerated decline in church attendance in Ireland from the late 1990s, which he attributes to scandals involving the Catholic Church. Hout and Fischer (2002) find that many Americans who report no religious preference in surveys nevertheless hold conventional religious beliefs, but avoid disclosing them in surveys. Hout and Fischer (2014) further show that many of those who report no religious preference may still be 'unchurched believers' for whom the reluctance to state a religious preference is a symbolic statement against the Christian Right. That is, the politicisation of religion (or the lack of it) may very well feed back into changes that are usually viewed as aspects of secularisation, but this feedback is rather unfavourable for proponents of religious politics.

FROM DENOMINATIONAL CLEAVAGES TO RELIGIOUS-SECULAR CLEAVAGES IN VOTING

A natural consequence of the shrinking of religious segments of electorates is that intra-religious divisions, that is in the Christian world, divisions between Catholics and Protestants and, in the US in particular, divisions between the variants of Protestantism, become less relevant for voting. Yet it should be noted that in European countries the existence of such divisions is conditioned by the outcome of the Reformation, which in most of Europe led to an either Catholic or Protestant majority with other denominations marginalised (Madeley 1982, 1991, 2000; Rémond 1999; Roßteutscher 2009; van der Brug et al. 2009). Only in Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland did the Reformation lead to real denominational divisions, whereas in Britain the Protestant-Catholic division is intrinsically connected to divisions between Irish nationalism and British (particularly conservative) Unionism (Seawright 2000; Kotler-Berkowitz 2001; Tilley 2015).

However, a decline in the electoral role of inter-denominational divisions should not be confused with a decline of religious-secular divisions. In denominationally mixed countries the decline of divisions within this religious segment and a growing opposition of the religious segment to the social and political consequences of secularisation may be the same side of the coin (Vollaard 2013). The paradigmatic case of a decline of denominational differences seems to be the Netherlands. But if voters' denomination now plays a much lesser role for their voting behaviour than before, this is also a consequence of a changing party-system (De Graaf et al. 2001; Sengers 2004; Jansen et al. 2012). Secularisation *per se* appears not to be sufficient to cause the transformation of the cleavage

structure in Dutch voting behaviour, which cannot be understood without considering party agency.

Germany is another denominational mixed country in Europe but, after World War II, denominational divisions no longer found a direct expression in the party system, unlike in pre-Nazi Germany and the Netherlands. Nevertheless, denominational divisions did find an expression in the patterns of West German voting behaviour in so far as the Christian Democratic parties CDU and CSU did better in Catholic regions of West Germany and among Catholic segments of the electorate, despite the fact that it was founded as a cross-denominational party (Pappi 1985; Roßteutscher 2012). For a long time, the CDU/CSU attracted mainly Catholic voters, but after the 1980s devout Protestants began to see them as their political representation in an increasingly secularised society. Whether denominational divisions in voting behaviour have given way to pure religious-secular divisions still seems to be subject to debate. While Wolf (1996) claims that electoral researchers' fixation on denominational differences is outdated, Elff and Roßteutscher (2011) find moderate but persistent influence of Protestant-Catholic differences on the support for the German Christian Democrats, although it may not be ruled out that these are partly related to the still higher church attendance rates among German Catholics (see also Pappi 1985; Arzheimer and Schoen 2007; Roßteutscher 2012; Elff and Roßteutscher 2013).

Switzerland is the third country where the Reformation led neither to a clear dominance of Catholicism nor of Protestantism. And, similar to the Netherlands, but in contrast to Germany, Switzerland has both Protestant and Catholic parties. Yet unlike the Netherlands, these parties did not merge into a cross-denominational party, and among these parties the Catholic CVP remained the more important one. As a consequence, Catholicism played a major role for the support of the CVP for quite some time, but denominational differences seem increasingly to be superseded by religious-secular divisions (Geissbühler 1999).

It has been a long-accepted fact about US politics that religious denomination counts for the choice between Democrats and Republicans. The typical pattern was that Catholics and Jews would prefer the Democrats, while Protestants used to opt for the Republicans. However, since the USA did not experience the Church-State cleavage that characterised European history, a stable alignment between denominational groups and parties did not emerge. Rather, it is likely that the earlier divisions between Catholics and Protestants were, as a reflection of ethnic divisions, spurious in the sense introduced earlier in this chapter. Recently, patterns have become more complicated, with increasing differences *within* the various segments and currents of Protestantism in terms of political attitudes and voting behaviour (Manza and Brooks 1997; Layman and Green 2006). However, it appears that the main dividing line is not between liberal mainline Protestants and conservative evangelicals, but between liberal and conservative groups within the various denominations. In fact, the openly evangelical, yet Democrat

presidential candidate Jimmy Carter was able to attract a substantial support from evangelical voters (Woodberry and Smith 1998). Again, denominational differences seem to give way to religious-secular ones.

Whatever the level or pace of secularisation, it seems premature to write off the electoral role of religion. This is shown by comparative studies of Western Europe or of the UK and the US, but also of single-country studies. Elff (2007) for example finds that in the 1990s church attendance still had a strong impact on the support for Christian Democratic parties in Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Italy and West Germany, and a moderate impact in Denmark and Great Britain. Raymond (2011) shows that religious-secular cleavages continue to be salient in voting behaviour in the US, Germany and Great Britain, even though their effect is moderated by short-term factors, such as voters' evaluations of parties and their leaders. Elff and Roßteutscher (2011; 2016) find that religiosity and religious denomination have had a clear influence on support for the Christian Democrats in Germany as recently as 2009 and 2013. Aichholzer et al. (2013) report similar findings for Austria, Boterman and Hooghe (2012) for Belgium, Aardal and Oscarsson (2013) for Scandinavia and Manza and Brooks (1997) and Guth et al. (2006) for the US. Yet it appears that in Eastern Europe religious-secular divisions play a lesser role, smaller at least than other factors (Knutsen 2013). In general, whether religious-secular divisions are relevant for voting behaviour and how their impact develops appears to depend on contextual factors: the existence of parties that present themselves as members of the family of Christian Democratic, confessional, or religious parties (Elff 2007; Brug et al. 2009) or on parties' attempts to mobilise religious segments of the electorate (see also Broughton and Napel 2000; Cebolla et al. 2013; Elff 2009; March 2013; Alaranta 2014; Raymond 2014).

'Culture Wars' in America

In the 1980s and 1990s the US experienced an emergence of conflicts over issues related to values and lifestyles often referred to as 'Culture Wars' (Hunter 1992), related to topics such as gender roles, abortion, pre-marital sex and homosexuality. At first glance these conflicts might indicate a resurgence of religion in America, in line with a 'de-secularisation' claimed by authors such as Berger (1999). However, the 'radicalisation of religion' can also be seen as a *reaction to secularisation*: the religious feel threatened by an increasingly secularised environment to the effect of an emergent 'God gap' (Olson et al. 2006). The ensuing conflicts, with occasional violent manifestations, emerged from an opposition to legislation that liberalised legal prohibitions to abortion and homosexuality and to an increasing social acceptance of more egalitarian gender roles and permissive attitudes towards pre-marital sex, that is, to the realisation of the demands of the social movements that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s (Davis and Robinson 1996; Brooks 2002; Olson et al. 2006).

Not only the origin of the ‘culture wars’, but also their extent has been debated: one point of contention in these debates is whether and how much the general public is polarised about these issues. Thus it has been claimed that polarisation is restricted to the relative activist segments of the citizenry (Layman 1999; Layman and Green 2006), while the wider populace does not show an increased polarisation (Mouw and Sobel 2001; Brooks and Manza 2004). If there is evidence of a cultural values-based realignment, then it seems to be brought about by an increased emphasis given to cultural issues by candidates in US Congress elections (Knuckey 2005). And if there is an increased polarisation of the vote along religious issues, evidence suggests it to be restricted to the upper income strata (mainly whites), whereas lower income strata and particularly blacks favour the Democrats, their religious attitudes notwithstanding (Hirschl et al. 2009, 2012). Finally, as has been noted earlier, the political demands of American Christian conservatives are often restricted to matters of sexual morality, but much less so to issues regarding gender and race equality. Thus Layman (2006: 7) concludes that ‘the cultural wars are waged by limited religious troops on narrow policy fronts under special political leadership, and a broader cultural conflagration is largely a rumour’.

The culture wars are thus often interpreted as a signal that – at least in the USA – moral values gain in importance compared with the previously dominant socio-economic line of conflict (Brooks 2002; De La O and Rodden 2008). But they could also be viewed as a backlash against the questioning of theretofore dominating traditional beliefs or even a rearguard action of a shrinking segment holding traditional beliefs and values (Brint and Abrutyn 2010). The now widespread support e.g. for homosexual partnerships (Kohut et al. 2015), recently sanctioned by the Supreme Court’s decision to grant the right to homosexual marriage (Liptak 2015), lends more plausibility to this interpretation than to that of a de-secularisation of American society. It even appears that the disproportionate public attention to the political agenda of religious conservatives has been backfiring: Bolce and Maio (1999) report the rise of an ‘anti-fundamentalist’ sentiment among the non-fundamentalist sections of the electorate, leading to an alienation from (especially Protestant) organised religion (Hout and Fischer 2002, 2014).

Is the (apparent) radicalization of religion restricted to the USA? The pre-conditions are obviously also given elsewhere. Almost all countries of the West have adopted laws that liberalised abortion, equal-sex marriage, etc. As recently as 2015 in Ireland, a deeply Catholic country, a majority of the population decided in favour of legalising equal-sex marriages. Hence, the ingredients for a radicalisation of the ‘remaining’ believers are present. Yet empirical evidence is sparse. In the case of Germany, evidence shows that on each and every issue traditionally associated with religion (i.e. left-right orientations, preference for law and order, attitudes towards migrants, gender roles, abortion, welfare etc.) differences between the religious and the secular have decreased, with the notable exception

of attitudes towards homosexuals (Wolf and Roßteutscher 2013), but there is little evidence of a radicalisation of religion in Germany or in other European countries (Froese and Bader 2008). Nevertheless, empirical evidence particularly from other countries is urgently needed to allow for more robust conclusions.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we discussed the reasons why there is such a phenomenon as religious voting and the scholarly debates and empirical findings regarding it. We pointed out that one has to distinguish between genuine religious voting, where religious adherence and beliefs are the primary motivation of voters, and spurious religious voting, where the connection between religion and the vote is created by other factors, such as ethnicity or class. Another point made is that for religion or religious-secular divisions to become electorally relevant, the party system must offer the appropriate alternatives. Yet the existence of such alternatives in a country is contingent on its historical record and on the strategies of parties and their candidates.

The empirical discussion of secularisation showed that there is no reason to doubt that it is going to continue in modern (post-)industrial societies, including the US, but that religious-secular divisions in electorates are not soon to disappear. In fact the discussion of the patterns of voting indicated that these divisions matter at least as much for electoral behaviour as they may have in the past, if not more so, but that religious-secular divisions have largely displaced divisions based on religious denomination – if these ever existed in a country. As a consequence, any general statement about the persistence or decline of the role of religion for electoral behaviour will be an oversimplified one. At least, any statement with some accuracy will have to be ambivalent: the role of religion may have declined in Europe and the US, in so far as it matters less *what* religious denominations voters adhere to, but may well have increased in so far as it matters more *whether* voters have (in particular traditional) religious beliefs. Yet as the discussion of the cross-national variety of party system has shown, any generalisation has to be qualified and contextualised with regard to a country's particular setting. Finally, when debating whether the impact of religion is in decline, one should keep in mind how scarce the empirical evidence yet is with regards to religion and voting outside Western Europe and the US.

In light of these conclusions we suggest that research on religious voting should perhaps refrain from debating grand narratives and focus on *how and why* religion and associated issues affect electoral behaviour *in particular contexts*. That is, one question future research should address is *when and to what effect* parties and candidates will try to mobilise religious voters or exploit issues related to traditional morality. For a proper analysis of such questions it is necessary to take into account that the political positions of parties and their strategies

of mobilising voters are not fixed, not even for parties that are members of a party family such as the Christian Democrats. Systematic studies of these matters are just in the beginning stages (but see Elff 2009; Stegmueller 2013; Evans and Graaf 2013). A particular challenge to the analysis of the interaction of parties' strategies and the responses from religious voters is the difficulty of obtaining cross-country and cross-temporal comparable descriptions of the religious appeal of parties (Elff 2013). Nevertheless this approach seems worth pursuing since it can lead to quite different conclusions than an approach based on fixed party family alternatives (Elff 2009; Stegmueller 2013).

Another question is about the consequences of legalised secular conceptions of sexual morality and gender roles for religious-secular divisions. For example, it appears an open question whether traditionalists will accept defeat or radicalise again and try to turn back the clock. Finally, the migration of relatively traditionalist people from the global South and Middle East to the relatively secularised countries of north-western Europe may have created a potential for religious-secular divisions of perhaps a new kind. Whether and how these new divisions affect electoral politics depends on two contingencies: the first is the degree to which these migrants are actually included into the electorate. The second is whether Christian Democrat or conservative parties try to extend their appeal to these new segments of the electorate. The current situation in many European countries however seems to prevent the mobilisation of traditionalist Muslim citizens by Christian Democratic or conservative parties. Firstly, Muslim immigrants were in many countries electorally enfranchised only recently and, if at all, occasionally only against the opposition of Christian Democratic or conservative parties – such as in Germany. Secondly, Christian Democratic or conservative parties who try to extend their electoral appeal beyond traditionally religious Christianity more often attempt to exploit ethnic-national or anti-immigrant sentiments than to forge alliances between Christian and non-Christian traditionalists. So the most likely trajectory seems to be the formation of specifically Muslim parties. This in turn presupposes that Muslim minorities reach a large enough size to become electorally relevant (and in some countries, such as France, Germany and the United Kingdom, they are). But it also presupposes that for Muslim citizens divisions over religious or secular lifestyle become more salient than issues created by the exclusion Muslims still suffer in many European countries, which rather drive them towards the political left. So far, these considerations have to remain speculative, since the empirical research record on this topic is quite sparse.

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Race, Ethnicity and Elections: From Recognizable Patterns to Generalized Theories

Maria Sobolewska

INTRODUCTION

It is a sign of maturity for a scientific sub-discipline when it moves from observing and explaining empirical patterns to extending, generalizing and testing its theories on new cases and in new contexts. This chapter will argue that we are witnessing the coming of age for the study of race and ethnicity in elections. However, it will also outline some important obstacles to this development and propose a way forward.

Firstly, this chapter will trace the spread of this line of research from one specific racial minority in the US – African Americans – to other groups and elsewhere. It will argue that on the whole the existing theories and empirical patterns extended well from the study of race in the US into that of ethnicity and immigration, and into new national contexts. As a result, I will argue that the study of racial, ethnic and immigrant groups' electoral behaviour shares more theoretical fundamentals than is often acknowledged. I will also discuss how the study of race and ethnicity as an electorally relevant variable extends to the study of the white majority's voting patterns. I will argue that, despite this line of study being predominantly centred on the US, it is likely that the increasingly racially and ethnically diverse European societies will see this area of study grow in relevance, as was the case for research into ethnic minorities' electoral behaviour. In this part of the chapter I will look at the three distinct forms of electoral behaviour: ethnic and racial minority participation, ethnic and racial minority vote choice, and finally the white majority's vote choice.

Since most of the racial, ethnic and many immigrant-origin minorities' participatory and voting patterns, and very often their explanations too, were successfully generalized to other groups and have travelled the distance to other national settings, I will argue that it is now in the interest of the discipline to end the fragmentation of the distinct areas of inquiry, both geographic and group specific, and engage in a theoretical and empirical dialogue. I will then discuss the main obstacles to this dialogue and propose what I see as a main solution: an exchange of knowledge enabled by standardizing the nomenclature used. First of all, as I will argue, many of these differences spring from the fact that European researchers object to what they perceive as US-centrism of the literature and their desire to speak to European theoretical traditions applied in areas other than race and ethnicity. This, as I will argue, stunts dialogue that should travel the opposite way too: from Europe to the US. The use of common language would be more successful in engaging US scholars with European literature and thus with their traditions and ideas. Secondly, I will discuss the use of the terms race, ethnicity and immigrants as markers of the salient political distinctions within the study of elections. The lack of consensus around these terms may be irresolvable, as it springs from deep ontological debates (such as essentializing the racial groups under study) that underscore researchers' choices in their use of language. Nonetheless, it fragments the discipline into strands that rarely engage with each other to the detriment of the sub-discipline as a whole. I will defend the use of the term 'race', which is taboo in many European countries, as a meaningful marker of racialized minority status that applies to many immigrant and ethnic groups of interest in Europe; and I will try to problematize the widespread use of the term immigrant. It is time to put to bed the ghost of scientific racism and acknowledge that this is not what is meant by academics' use of the term race. Race is useful as a category denoting groups that suffer racism from the white majority, and as such the categorization as a racial minority cannot be limited to skin colour or ethnicity or immigration status.

RECOGNIZABLE PATTERNS

One of the most significant developments of the study of race and ethnicity is that, out of the widely different national, social and historical contexts in which ethnicity and race have been shown to impact electoral behaviour, astonishingly a familiar picture emerges. The main building blocks of the sub-discipline upon which to build generalizable theories that would work in many different settings are: resource inequality and political exclusion of ethnic and racial minorities; support for the left-leaning and liberal political parties among the majority of the ethnic minority groups; and a group-based calculus of vote choice. Many more specific findings also seem to generalize across groups and context; for example the role of religion and religious participation seems to travel to a

greater degree than one would guess based on the hugely varied role of religion in different societies. I will argue that not only the patterns of behaviour are similar across different contexts, but so are some of the main explanations. Since the three broad areas of study where this is true are electoral participation of ethnic and racial minorities, party choice of minorities and party choice of the white majority, I will discuss them in turn to showcase the convergences.

ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

As each sub-discipline of electoral behaviour focuses on its own smaller chunk of the puzzle it may easily be forgotten that elections are about power. Power, in even the most democratic societies, is unequal and the electoral decks are generally stacked against those who have less of it and in favour of those with lots. Those with education, wealth, stable residence and employment have more access to voting rights and other relevant resources and thus vote more than those in a more precarious position (Verba et al. 1995, Bowler [Chapter 2] and Wass and Blais [Chapter 20] in this Volume). Nowhere is it more evident than in the case of electoral rights and turnout of minorities. The study of ethnicity and race is more directly involved with the issue of power that voting gives ordinary people than most areas of electoral behaviour, as it takes interest in those either directly excluded from the electoral process or poor in relevant resources necessary to take part. Unsurprisingly, therefore, most of the existing literature about ethnicity in politics has concentrated on participation in the electoral process.

Obstacles to electoral participation are widely shared by ethnic and racial minorities in most national contexts in Western democracies. Even though in the US a hard-fought-for Civil Rights Act 1964 outlawed racial discrimination in voter registration, African Americans remain under-registered to vote. Similarly, in the UK, ethnic minorities are the most under-registered group (Heath et al. 2013). In Europe, where electoral registration is usually automatic, limits to eligibility and access to citizenship form the main barriers to participation. Lack of political resources such as local political knowledge and civic skills to participate, as well as lack of political mobilization from the political parties, is similarly found in many contexts (Verba et al. 1995, Morales and Giugni 2011, Bird et al. 2011, Sobolewska et al. 2013). Yet, the levels of participation observed in many settings for those groups without a very recent immigrant background, while generally lower than the levels of participation among white majorities, exceed the expectations based on this picture of exclusion (Bobo and Gilliam 1990, Heath et al. 2011). Therefore the African American and many settled ethnic minorities in the UK have relatively higher participation rates than many more recent immigrant groups such as Latinos, Asian Americans, or Europe's immigrant minorities (Bird et al. 2011, Wong et al. 2011, Hajnal and Lee 2011).

In addition to the similar empirical patterns, the three main theoretical models of ethnic political mobilization have been found in many different settings as well. These are the roles of religious participation, co-ethnic residential concentration and ethnic mobilization. In the American literature, group religious involvement in general has been shown to increase participation in political activities such as voting (Houglund and Christenson 1983, Peterson 1992, Verba et al. 1995, Wilcox and Sigelman 2001, Jones-Correa and Leal 2001). Although the lack of relevant data has made the European literature much less vocal on this point, a similar pattern has been shown in the UK (Sobolewska et al. 2015) and other European countries (Eggert and Giugni 2011). This mechanism is often based on the fact that religious involvement is for many racial and ethnic minorities the main form of civic involvement, which for white majorities often also includes memberships of non-religious clubs and organizations (Jones-Correa and Leal 2001, Sobolewska et al. 2015), and as such is a major resource for acquiring civic skills (Verba et al. 1995), psychological resources such as sense of political efficacy, or even just a source of access to political messages (Calhoun-Brown 1996, Brown and Brown 2003, Sobolewska et al. 2015). One of the reasons why this mechanism of mobilization travels across many different contexts, even in those countries where religion plays a less prominent role in politics than it does in the US, is another commonality between many different ethnic and racial groups: in many contexts, the groups of interest are more religious than the white majority (Bowler and Segura 2012, Voas and Crockett 2005).

Co-ethnic residential concentration has been identified as another element fostering ethnic political mobilization in many national contexts (Barreto 2004, Fieldhouse and Cutts 2008, Bhatti and Hansen 2015)¹, despite some arguments to the contrary (Cho et al. 2006). The question of the role of residential concentration of racial and ethnic minorities inevitably brings to the plate the US-based literature on racial redistricting, which created minority-majority districts. This literature is very US specific and thus cannot be extended to other countries², but the theories it has developed have been increasingly receiving some confirmation, especially in the UK, where the number of electoral districts where ethnic minorities form more than 20 per cent of the residents and thus a substantial proportion of the electorate has been increasing.

Three alternative mediating mechanisms for the influence of ethnic residential concentration on voter turnout have been proposed. Firstly, the effect of ethnic density on participation may be mediated by the rational choice calculus on the part of minority voters: the cost-benefit calculation of voting may be different for those who live in an ethnic minority community. Existence of ethnic community may lower their costs of information finding, and may make it more likely that the mobilization to vote and relevant information will come from a trustworthy source and in-group member. Conforming to a group norm of voting can also increase the individual benefits of participation, such as validation of feelings of belonging – so-called relational benefits (Uhlamer 1989), although it has been

noted that some groups, especially those of recent immigrant background, may in fact have lower levels of participatory norms and thus ethnic concentration may not serve to boost these (Cho et al. 2006). The other option is that the levels of mobilization present in high ethnic concentration areas may explain the pattern of higher turnout in these localities. Differences in the levels of mobilization between areas of high ethnic density and neighbourhoods where ethnic groups constitute a small minority have many sources. One possibility is to do with the electoral and political influence exercised by a larger group (Leighley 2001, Anwar 2001) and the greater presence of ethnic leadership and elected politicians from minority background, which in turn leads to the sense of empowerment of racial minority groups (Hajnal 2007). In the US this has been the best developed strand of the literature, with many studies showing the positive impact of black candidates and elected representatives on African American turnout (Bobo and Gilliam 1990). British literature on ethnic leadership and mobilization has not yet made the link, in general, between the levels of ethnic minority representation and their individual attitudes or participation, but it has been shown that some ethnic minority groups do show a preference for their co-ethnic candidate if they receive campaigning messages from other co-ethnics (Martin 2015). It has also been shown for immigrant-origin minorities in Belgium where they were able to use the preferential voting system to elect their chosen representatives (Teney et al. 2010). The final alternative is that the political parties and elites focus their mobilizing efforts on the areas of higher ethnic concentration in a strategic choice to win black and ethnic minority vote (Leighley 2001; Sobolewska et al. 2013).

VOTE CHOICE, PARTY IDENTITY

The other most popular line of inquiry into the role that ethnicity and race play in electoral behaviour concerns the choice made by individuals at the polling station once they have made it over the hurdles to participate in elections. This area of research seems to offer a deeper understanding of the nature of ethnicity as a social cleavage and its influence on politics beyond simple participation, since it relies heavily on measurement of individual attitudes towards their own ethnic group and wider society. It can be divided into three interlinked areas: the distribution of political interests and attitudes (Studlar, 1986, Sobolewska 2005, Bowler and Segura 2012); socio-economic explanations of party allegiance (Bowler and Segura 2012, Crewe 1983, Saggar and Heath 1999); and the link between identity and political choice (Gurin et al. 1990, Dawson 1995, Hajnal and Lee 2011, Anwar, 1998; Amin and Richardson, 1992, Heath et al. 2013).

Despite the main focus on sociological and socio-psychological traditions within the literature on race and ethnicity, some authors have also shown that rational choice explanations could work well in explaining ethnic minorities' behaviour at the polling booth. Although not incompatible with previous accounts

of identity, racial consciousness, or socialization, all of which will be discussed later, these accounts highlight an issue preference match between the voter and her chosen party. The fact is that most of the left wing/liberal parties that have earned the support of racial and ethnic minorities in the US, UK and Europe are in fact offering (and have been historically) the best match for those minorities in terms of their attitudes and issue preferences on racial equality, social provision, working conditions, and equal pay – all issues of importance to minorities worldwide. However, the snag in these accounts revolves around the issue of salience – and herein lies the reliance of this rational choice account on previous, more sociological and socio-psychological theories discussed above: many ethnic and racial minorities also tend to be more right or conservative leaning on issues such as gay rights, gender equality and even lowering taxes, which some right wing parties assume make them ‘small c’ conservatives (South Asians in the UK, or the Asians in the US). Yet most accounts agree that, despite this, the political salience of these issues is very low and minorities simply do not use them in their electoral calculus (Sobolewska 2005, Bowler and Segura 2012). Value voting does not seem to influence the vote choice as much as it does among the white majority voters, especially in the US (Hirschl et al. 2009, 2012). The sociological accounts and resulting socio-psychological mechanisms are used to explain this phenomenon and will be discussed in turn.

Traditionally the salience of socio-economic issues, including the equality agenda, over cultural ones has been explained by racial and ethnic minorities’ low class position. Most, although not all, minority groups studied in the US and Europe are placed below the white majority in the class hierarchy and even though their socio-economic advancement is documented pretty much everywhere, they are often still victims of racism in terms of both the labour market and the provision of housing and social services (Heath and Yu 2005, Waters and Eschbach 1995). Given this historical disadvantage it was therefore assumed that the disproportionate hardship and generally lower socio-economic status of minorities caused the majority of them to support the left-wing parties and their redistributive and equality-oriented policies (Wilson 1980, Leyton-Henry 1992). However, over time and with the upward mobility of ethnic minorities, this contention has ceased to fully account for minorities’ choices (Crewe, 1983, Manza and Brooks 1999). Some research in Europe finds that class divides the minority electorate in the same way, but to a much lesser extent than the white majority electorate (Saggar and Heath 1999, Wust 2004, Tiberj 2009, Heath et al. 2011).

The closer examination of the relative influences of class and ethnicity on voting has brought a new line of research into how these two cleavages interact with each other in their impact on voting. This literature mainly revolves around the perceptions of racial discrimination, its political salience, and its relationship with class. The link between socio-economic status and perceptions of racial discrimination was first observed for the Hispanic minority in the United States by Portes (1984). He found evidence that discrimination is perceived more strongly

by middle-class and second-generation migrants, because they are interacting more with mainstream society compared with their working-class and first-generation counterparts. Therefore, from their nominally equal status with the white middle class, they are better equipped to perceive racial discrimination against them, and to separate out the explicit manifestations of racism, from what can be seen as class outcomes produced by other factors such as lower levels of education and fluency in the majority language. This argument is in line with the relative deprivation theories which proposed that middle class blacks' aspirations are higher and their frame of reference is that of the white middle class rather than of the working-class members of their own racial group, and therefore their perception of relative disadvantage is larger (Hwang et al. 1998, Chong and Rogers 2005). Thus, class could be one of the deciding factors in arousing racial political consciousness. In Europe, where these attitudes have been measured more recently, these findings have been mirrored almost exactly, as second-generation minorities have been found to also perceive greater sense of racial prejudice and discrimination in society (Heath et al. 2013). A similar mechanism of shifting frames of reference between immigrants and their children has also been generalized to other political attitudes such as political trust and government satisfaction (Maxwell 2010). This pattern goes a long way in explaining why class matters less for ethnic and racial minorities' vote choice than for their white counterparts; as it has been shown, those with high levels of perceptions of prejudice in society are less likely to vote for the right-wing parties and more likely to opt for liberal and left-wing options (Tate 1991, Sanders et al. 2014).

The best account of how the generalized sense of prejudice, rather than an individualized experience of it (Sanders et al. 2014), translates into a politically salient attitude is still offered by the notion of linked fate (Dawson 1994). As individuals recognize their life chances are limited by prejudice against their whole group, a sense of shared burden emerges. This mechanism offers a glimpse of how perceptions of discrimination may turn into racial political consciousness: the realization of existing racial discrimination and the related existence of minority-specific political interests may lead to the perception of unity or a need for unity in order to achieve representation of the specific racial interests and to defend these interests (Gurin et al. 1990). Yet, a difficulty for the notion of linked fate lies in its reliance on a shared group identity. While the sense of generalized discrimination and prejudice is found among many minority groups in different countries, a shared group identity as observed among African Americans, invoking the 'social homophily' characteristic of traditional social networks (see Hooghe, this Volume, Chapter 12), is less easy to generalize to other contexts. In many other settings and for many groups the national-origin identities dominate the sense of commonality with minority identifiers that group many different national origins together. This, however, is likely to weaken with subsequent generations who are more likely to develop pan-ethnic identities, as has been observed for Muslims in the UK (Jacobson 1997). It is unclear how

much common identity matters above and beyond the sense that minorities are generally disadvantaged. It seems that, given that the latter is a good predictor of electoral behaviour (arguably better than identity itself) and that the same logical steps of linked fate can be followed to explain its influence, there could be strong arguments to replace identity as a predictor variable with a measure of this attitude.

THE ROLE OF ETHNICITY IN THE MAJORITY ELECTORATE

The study into how the white majority responds to the salience of race and ethnicity in elections is usually limited to the very few situations where these cleavages shape the axis of electoral competition. Again, since the US has experienced more of such electoral contests from the candidacies of segregationist Barry Goldwater in 1964, the Southern Strategy of Nixon in 1972, the black candidate Jesse Jackson in 1984 and more recently Barack Obama's historic election to be the first black president in 2008, US literature has developed this line of research well ahead of Europe (Carmines and Stimson 1989, Shafer and Johnston 2009, Tesler and Sears 2010). In Europe, the growing literature on the rise of anti-immigrant and far-right parties has now also started to link the support, or lack of it, for these parties to the ethnocentric attitudes or other orientations towards ethnic diversity, such as anti-prejudice norms (Ivarsflaten 2006, Ford et al. 2012, Blinder et al. 2013).

The narrower field of enquiry, but one that seems to have travelled even more successfully outside of the US context, is the study of white majority voters' reactions to racial and ethnic minority candidates. There is a considerable literature looking into how ethnic and racial minority candidates are perceived and whether their support suffers in comparison with white candidates of the same parties (Brouard and Tiberj 2011, McDermott 1998, Sigelman and Welch 1984, Sigelman et al. 1995). The main puzzle of this literature is the disentangling of the sources of any potentially negative effects of a candidate's ethnicity. Some literature argues that racial minority candidates are thought to be more liberal (McDermott 1998), while others show that pre-existing racial attitudes and even the darkness of the candidates' skin impact on the white persons' perceptions of these candidates (Terkildsen 1993, West et al. 2014). Looking beyond the appeal of the minority candidate in the decision of how to vote, there are also studies showing that the mere presence of minority candidates can actually impact the decision whether to vote at all. Gay (2001) shows that minority candidates depress turnout among the white majority as the supporters of their party stay home rather than vote for a minority candidate.

Although this literature has been mostly developed in the United States, Brouard and Tiberj (2010) analyse the French case and an increasing body of literature is emerging around minority candidates in Britain, predominantly with

aggregate data (Norris et al. 1992, Stegmaier et al. 2013) and more recently on individual level data (Fisher et al. 2015) and in experimental conditions (Campbell and Cowley 2014). On the whole in Europe the negative effect of minority ethnic candidates seems smaller than in the United States, although the studies are usually largely examinations of aggregate election results rather than survey data. In the UK it has been shown that Muslim candidates suffer the most significant electoral disadvantage (Fisher et al. 2015). Fisher, Heath, Sanders and Sobolewska also find a moderate preference for co-ethnic candidates, which has also been established in the US (Stokes-Brown, 2006).

A newly emergent literature on deracialization of racial minority candidates in the US presents a new area of research that could be extended well to Europe. Spurred on by the election of Barack Obama in 2008, this literature generally focuses on the strategies and electoral benefits of de-emphasizing race and racial issues by black and Latino candidates in the US (Citrin et al. 1990, Juenke and Sampaio 2010). The benefits of deracialization are not undisputed, as Stout (2015) argues that deracialization is not an effective vote-winning strategy in the US, as it may alienate minority voters, and may not be necessary as white voters' support may not be significantly diminished by campaigning that openly mentions racial issues. However, some evidence suggests that minority candidates in the UK may also feel they need to de-emphasize their ethnicity and race, in order to become more acceptable (Durose et al. 2013). This line of enquiry clearly holds a lot of promise for the study of electoral behaviour as ethnic minority candidates become more frequent in increasingly diverse Western democracies.

The main challenge for the literature on race and ethnicity of candidates for elected office is to further this line of argumentation beyond single-district and single-candidate case studies. As political parties become more ethnically diverse, and many strategically aim to become so in order to appear more in tune with modern diverse societies (Sobolewska 2013), we need to look beyond the effect of a single candidate. As voters usually consider the image of the party as a whole in their voting calculus, and as a huge amount of campaigning happens on a level of national narratives, consideration of the impact of parties' racial and ethnic diversity as a whole is rarely considered. However, there are many hypotheses and research questions that present themselves here. Is the rise of Far Right in Europe helped by the efforts from the many traditionally right-wing parties to attract a more diverse electorate? Do parties that try to attract minority electorates and candidates lose some of their traditional support? What role do ethnocentric attitudes play here?

OBSTACLES TO GENERALIZATION

As has been shown throughout this chapter, the study of the impact of race and ethnicity on voting is no longer a US-centric area of study. Many of the

phenomena initially found among African Americans have been extended to other minority groups in the US and elsewhere in Europe. I have argued here that many of the explanatory mechanisms and theories have travelled successfully as well. It is fair to say that there are still significant issues of comparability between different minority groups and the national contexts. It is true that the history of slavery and the Civil Rights Movement in the US is not similar to the history of British colonial subjects' immigration experience; and that the latter hardly compares to Europe's guest worker populations. It is also true that each ethnic group has its own history and culture and therefore a unique experience, which may trump any commonalities, and I have before argued that British Pakistani Muslims are hardly comparable to German Turkish Muslims (Sobolewska 2015) and arguably even less so to North American Arab Muslims. However, the commonality of the patterns of electoral behaviour of all these diverse groups in their diverse contexts belies this lack of obvious, *prima facie*, comparability. A process of generalization and theory building is not helped by focusing on the nuances and specificities of context. As Healy observes, 'nuance is fundamentally anti-theoretical. It blocks the process of abstraction that theory depends on' (Healy 2015: 2). I would argue that, while the specificities of context may differentiate which groups and identities become electorally salient, once that salience is established, we can talk about comparable processes and use generalizable theoretical approaches to the study of these diverse groups. Relegating nuances of context to the status of one of the variables, and not an obstacle to generalization, is needed for the sub-discipline to develop.

The main difficulty in pursuing the agenda of comparability and generalization is the debate about the terminology used, which prevents meaningful theoretical debates. This may vary from the more trivial refusal to adopt existing American terms in Europe, to deeper ontological and normative debates, which will be discussed in turn. However, it is especially the latter, which finds its expression in the controversies around the use of the terms race, ethnicity and immigrant.

Sources of US centrism

The main reason for US centrism of the literature on race and ethnicity is this country's advantage in terms of data. Primarily, it is related to Europe's relatively shorter history of racial diversity but, whatever the reasons, Europe must now play catch-up. Looking at the UK in 1985 Welch and Studlar wrote: 'In contrast to the United States [...] substantial studies of the political attitudes and behaviour of Britain's non-white minority are fairly scarce' (1985: 528). It is equally true today as, despite the growing number of minorities and the growing concern about their political participation and representation, most of the studies available do not have more than a few hundred minority respondents at their disposal. Although the tradition of collecting data on ethnic and immigrant-origin groups in Europe goes back to the 1980s, many of them would not contain measures of

political attitudes as political integration was deemed less crucial than integration on other dimensions. The first attempts to conduct electoral surveys among ethnic minorities or immigrant minorities were almost entirely local (for example see Anwar 1994, Fennema and Tillie 1999, Bergh and Bjorklund 2011). The tradition of conducting local studies focusing on municipalities with higher concentrations of immigrants and ethnic minorities has extended to internationally comparative surveys such as LocalMultidem (Morales and Giugni 2011). In continental Europe this approach still makes a lot of sense because of the limitations of immigrants' eligibility only to local elections in most cases. However, given more second- and in some countries third-generation immigrant origin minorities and ethnic minorities, more recently a few countries included immigrant or ethnic minority boosters to their national election studies: Britain in 1997 and 2010 (Saggar 2000, Heath et al. 2013), Switzerland in 2011 (Strijbis 2014) and Belgium in 2014. However, most of these studies limit their coverage to the largest concentrations of minorities and thus do not have a full coverage of minorities/immigrants.

In relatively data-poor Europe, research has struggled with the lack of measurement of latent concepts and mechanisms assumed to mediate ethnicity's impact on political attitudes and behaviour. Just to give a few examples, Welch and Studlar (1985) propose that the sufficient proof of ethnic socialization theory is observing that 'participation levels of British non-whites will be different from those of whites after social-class controls are applied'. A similar conclusion was reached by a Norwegian study almost three decades later: Bergh and Bjorklund (2011) conclude that evidence of group voting is shown by the sheer persistence of unexplained variance in their model of vote choice. Only in the last decade has European research attempted to rectify this situation by proposing a concept and measurement of ethnic minorities' racial attitudes. Even though the concepts developed in the US are the most readily available, the opposition to US centrism and the worries about comparability means that, even though related concepts are employed and similar phenomena with similar explanations are documented, these are rarely described using the same terminology. As a good example, mechanisms reminiscent of the concept of 'linked fate' have been described in Britain as 'Fraternal relative deprivation' (Heath et al. 2013) and a sense of widespread prejudice usually used in the US as a measure of racial consciousness has been named 'sociotropic sense of rejection' in the UK (Sanders et al. 2014). Many similar instances are too numerous to name. As a result there is no communication between the US, UK and European literatures and this undermines the additive character of knowledge.

Race, ethnicity and immigrants

The lack of consensus around the use of terms such as race, ethnicity and immigrant are particularly detrimental to the consolidation of knowledge. In the US

all three terms operate to describe distinct groups: race for African American, ethnicity for other visibly different groups and immigrants reserved for people who were born outside of the US. In the UK, by contrast, ethnicity has been adopted as the most normatively desirable term to apply to all non-white and non-Christian minority groups, with immigrant having the same meaning as in the US. In the rest of Europe, however, the term immigrant is the most commonly used, including in reference to many European-born, but visibly distinct, groups, who often engender terms such as immigrant-origin. Although in Europe visibility is of clear importance, with visibly distinct groups receiving more academic attention, with rare exceptions (Strijbis 2014, Runfors 2016) the term is not used and instead visible groups are usually referred to as non-Western or non-European immigrants. It is clear that second-generation immigrants cease to be of interest as long as they are white and Christian, while they retain either their immigrant status as bestowed by monikers based on their immigrant descent, or other minority status: racial or ethnic. It is fair to observe that this is mostly a result of the fact that second-generation white European immigrants are often indistinguishable from the white majority in their new countries, while those who are visibly different suffer discrimination and disadvantage that may translate into distinct political behaviours discussed above. Given this primacy of visible markers of difference over history of immigration in the processes of racialization that lie behind the generalizable phenomena of political exclusion extending from one ethnic group in one country to other contexts and groups, the fact that the use of race as an analytical category is rejected so strongly in Europe, and the discipline is so divided by its normative arguments about the use of language, is a serious problem.

A British debate around the definition of ethnicity, race, ethnic group membership and ethnic boundaries is a good example of the European rejection of the term race, even though it ultimately reached a different conclusion and the term race is more broadly accepted in Britain than it is in the rest of Europe. This peaked following the influential report *Ethnic Minorities in Britain* by Modood, Berthoud, Lakey, Nazroo and Smith (1997). The authors of the report sparked controversy by classifying people as belonging to minority ethnic groups on the basis of their parents' place of origin as well as their self-identification. Smith (2002) accused them of using so-called 'objective' criteria (such as physical appearance, or country of birth of parents) to classify individuals as belonging to ethnic groups, while, because of the character of ethnicity as a basis of an individual's identity and concept of self, the only suitable criterion of classification is the subjective self-reported affiliation. This objection springs from Smith's distinction between the cultural understanding of ethnicity and the more situational³ understanding of it represented by Modood and colleagues, who think of ethnicity in terms of social context in Britain, and more to the point in the context of racism and racialization of certain groups and individuals by the white majority. They adopt a view, expressed earlier in the 1980s by many sociologists

in Britain, that what makes people in Britain ethnic minorities is the fact that they are not white Anglo-Saxon Britons. Ratcliffe (1994) argues that, since formation of groups in society along racial lines, i.e. racialization, is a social phenomenon that should be analysed, the term ‘race’ should be maintained as a useful analytical tool. However, the efforts to save this term for analysis by denouncing its original biological determinism and re-constructing its meaning as a social construct (or even putting it in inverted commas) did not prevent British and European research from abandoning the term. Instead, the notion that ethnicity as a positive source of classification took the place of racialized identifications gained widespread support, in what Ratcliffe (2001) described as a quest for cultural identity for ethnic minorities in Britain. The term ethnicity became much more widespread and some commentators went further by proposing to abandon the term minority altogether as yet another negative definition based on the notion of Anglo-Saxon whiteness as a norm, and to replace it with the term ‘community’, which is assumed to have a more positive, and pro-active, connotation.

The problem with this shift in thinking and nomenclature is that it confuses two separate research problems: cultural differences between people, ‘cultural ethnicity’, and the consequences of racial categorization, ‘racialized ethnicity’ (Ratcliffe, 1994). The cultural boundaries are more easily defined in terms of subjective self-identification on the part of members of ethnic groups; the racialized categories on the other hand inherently rest on arguably more politically salient external classification. Depending on whether the object of study is cultural differences or the results of racial exclusion, these two terms have to be adopted accordingly. In the study of electoral behaviour, in which cultural and religious divisions seem to matter less than shared perceptions of discrimination, the term race seems to describe more accurately the phenomena under study. The terms ethnicity and immigrants, on the other hand, offer a much more problematic fit. I will argue that ethnicity is inefficient as an analytic category, while the term immigrant raises normative problems.

First, ethnicity, while universally agreed upon as a normatively neutral term, may be problematic when used as a marker of politically salient difference and exclusion. While it may be more sensitive to individuals’ sense of self, it denies the social reality of a mutually prescribed nature of ethnic boundaries both from within and without the group. Ethnicity obscures the fact that some ethnic distinctions matter more than others in terms of socio-economic as well as political outcomes and often visible signs of difference (including recognizability of names and dress as well as skin colour) go a long way in explaining these inequalities and differences. Race is a social construct which captures better the socially constructed ethnic hierarchies found in most countries that have been studied, highlighting those distinctions that are more salient and making a universalistic, thus imminently comparable, point about certain socio-economically and politically relevant social divisions that generalize to many different groups in many different societies. In developing a comparable and universal concept of race,

US scholarship with its very strict understanding of race as white versus non-white divide has as much to learn and adapt as European scholarship, which flatly denies the usefulness of the concept. In the US, the very group-specific allocation to either an ethnic or racial minority often leads to the use of the inelegant distinction between ‘non-Latino whites’ and others, which by including Latino whites on the same side of the wager as non-whites confuses the supposedly separate concepts of ethnicity and race. Given that these distinctions have been shown to be fluid and inconsistent (Lee 2008), there is little to be gained analytically from constructing such fixed and inflexible distinctions. The Canadian notion of visibility is better in capturing these distinctions. Visibility can be more weakly connected with biological differences of phenotype and more strongly linked with not only shades of skin colour (which have been shown to be relevant in many non-majority-white societies too), but also other visible signs of difference such as religious dress or distinct names.

Secondly, the term immigrant, so widely adopted in Europe, is as problematic from a normative standpoint as the term race, if not more so. While this term is a helpful bridge between US and European scholarship as it applies to first-generation immigrants, when dealing with second generation it presents a disjoint between US and UK research on the one hand, and European literature on the other. It also presents another instance of essentializing groups in a manner that may be unwelcome to them. While in the US and the UK second-generation immigrants either disappear from political science radar if they do not mobilize, put forward any identity claims or look visibly different (thus white, European-origin immigrants predominantly), or become ethnic or racial minorities, in Europe their classification as immigrants persists. While self-identification as a member of an immigrant-origin minority based on ethnic or racial difference can be a positive experience and in fact campaigning for recognition for minority status and difference recognition is not uncommon, as it is believed to be a first step towards overcoming inequalities and gaining representation, a persistent immigrant status for people born in the country of destination is hardly welcome. In fact, this term is reminiscent of the guest-worker regime of immigration, in which the immigrants were expected to return to their countries of origin and therefore were refused any sense of permanence and belonging in their new European homeland. To refuse this status to their children, or even grandchildren, by eternally classifying them as immigrants, or immigrant-origin, is more of a marker of exclusion than the alternative racial or ethnic classifications. As Europe’s immigrants become more historically grounded in their new European home countries it will become less defensible to maintain the label of immigrant and refuse the terminology of minority, ethnicity and race. A useful analytical term – immigrant – that describes a unique experience of developing new political attachments and habits in a new country ceases to be useful when the phenomenon under study is no longer any experience of immigration, but instead the consequences of visual difference and processes of racialization.

While I defend the analytical role that the term race could play in the sub-discipline, especially in comparison with the incongruent use of the term ethnicity and normatively loaded term immigrant, I am pessimistic about its broader adoption in European scholarship. As much as I propose that it is time to acknowledge that notions of biological racism are not in fact invoked by research using this term and put this European debate to bed once and for all, I think the chances for this are fairly slim. This pessimism is broadly shared by social theorists of race who have been making the same point:

Theorists of race and ethnicity [...] often labour alone; academics, including those who claim to be concerned by racism, fail to accord race a central place in their analyses of phenomena [...] it is possible to reject the ontological utility of racial categories while continuing to make use of race as a socially meaningful concept. Those who fail to consider race by omitting to discuss its significance or actively refuting its role in social processes are engaged in the deniability that I have argued is a key feature of the functioning of racism in a purportedly post-racial era (Lentin 2016: 385).

However, some agreement over nomenclature needs to be reached since the choice of terms divides the research community and prevents dialogue, which in turn weakens the sub-discipline. In a way the dichotomy between ethnicity and race is spurious here. Any ethnic division can be interpreted in racial terms if that division leads to similar processes as those engendered by race. Whether the basis of this group's experience is their ethnic or religious distinctiveness or visible difference matters less than the commonality of their experience. Incidentally, in the acknowledgment of this fact, the use of the term racialization is less controversial in Europe than the term race itself. While the world in which disagreement over nomenclature disappears, is clearly far from reality, using each other's body of knowledge and theories across these divides is crucial for the development of the sub-discipline. Perhaps more neutral terms such as 'minority' or 'visible minority' will replace race and ethnicity in academic discourse here, which will be useful as a way of denoting a process of differentiation from the host community that is not based on initial ethnic difference, but its social reality and political salience in the host country. However, as long as scholars do not exclude theories and literatures produced in the tradition of the study of race in electoral politics, the discipline can move forward.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has argued that, despite many seeming difficulties with comparing different ethnic and racial groups in very different national settings, the study of race and ethnicity in electoral behaviour shares more empirical findings and explanatory mechanisms than it seems, and that from these we can build a strong body of generalizable theories.

Firstly, I showed that many phenomena around the levels of electoral participation were found not only for different groups in the same country, but also in different national settings. Some of the most notable of those shared empirical patterns were the relative lack of political resources among the majority of ethnic and racial minorities, and the resulting exclusion from the political process: both through lack of eligibility and electoral registration, as well as lower turnout. However, for many groups in different countries, researchers have also found that, given the levels of political resources and formal exclusion, minority groups' turnout was often higher than expected. Here, many of the explanatory mechanisms and theories were found to generalize between distinct minority groups and settings. Religious participation as a source for ethnic and racial mobilization and the positive electoral outcomes for co-ethnic residential density were discussed as examples.

Secondly, partisanship and vote choice provided more comparable and generalizable patterns and theories. The phenomena common to most groups and in most national contexts were the left-leaning of minority groups and their support for equality and redistributive policies, as well as the seeming lack of political salience of issues usually associated with cultural and value voting, such as gay rights. The theories used to explain these patterns were shown to be distinctly similar too. The role of socio-economic position and the tradition of parties of the left to pursue an equality agenda, as well as perceptions of discrimination and prejudice in particular were given as examples of generalizable explanatory mechanisms.

Thirdly, the role of ethnicity and race as an influence on the majority electorate's behaviour has been discussed. Even though this area is less well developed outside of the US, it is of growing importance in Europe as ethnic diversity becomes an ever more salient political issue. Here again many of the empirical findings were similar across distinct settings. I analyzed the literature on the electoral fate of minority candidates, deracialization of minority candidates, and political parties seeking greater ethnic diversity, as the lack of European research on the role of ethnocentrism in political choices of white majorities did not provide a good comparator to the much better developed US equivalent. This area of research was identified as the most under-theorized, but all the more promising as a popular future field of research.

Finally, this chapter considered some issues of comparability and conflicting nomenclature as obstacles to the development of the sub-discipline. As ethnic and racial diversity grows in the globalized West and the electoral democracy extends more or less successfully to many racially and ethnically diverse countries, the study of race in politics should become one of the main areas of interest for electoral studies for decades to come. However, identifying the best way forward for the sub-discipline to expand and successfully deal with value-laden debates and terminological pitfalls is not easy. Using the existing broad body of knowledge regardless of its origin and particularly extending the

existing nomenclature to new contexts and groups despite the seemingly imperfect comparability would enable a real dialogue between researchers in different countries and studying different racial and ethnic minorities. Engaging with each other's findings and testing and refining each other's ideas will always be more productive in theory building than an inevitably more descriptive focus on nuance and specificities of context.

Notes

- 1 There are some issues of a methodological nature within the literature on minority turnout: studies focusing on different ethnic and racial groups may have different results and studies that are nationally representative for more than one group are rare. Many studies base their analysis on lists of registered voters (Barreto 2004, Cho et al. 2006), which overestimate the levels of participation for those ethnic and racial groups who are under-registered; other studies use aggregate-level data with the risk that overall lower turnout levels in ethnically diverse districts reflect lower majority turnout in these districts (Gay 2001, Fieldhouse and Cutts 2008); using survey data risks overestimating turnout due to self-reporting bias (for a rare exception using validated turnout for a survey sample, see Heath et al. 2013).
- 2 And thus is left out from this chapter.
- 3 This debate is somewhat parallel to the question of the nature of ethnicity as a social cleavage. The two positions in this argument revolve around primordial versus situational definitions of ethnicity. The first position argues that ethnicity is an 'objective' reality, while the second purports that ethnic differences are only mobilized as a divisive force in the context of otherwise ensuing conflict, be it over resources, or otherwise.

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Social Networks and Voter Mobilization

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INTRODUCTION

Elections are, almost by definition, *collective* events: a substantial part of the citizenry of an entire political system is (mostly simultaneously) taking part in this form of political participation. Taking part in elections is therefore a very distinct form of political engagement. Other forms of political behavior can be practiced by smaller and more narrowly defined groups of the population, with as a result very specific forms of mobilization practices. In contrast, voting is still the most widely practiced form of political participation, and the democratic ideal implies that it is extended to virtually every group of society, with just some highly specific exceptions (e.g. minors). Voting, therefore, is a social act and the entire decision-making process leading up to the vote has traditionally been described as a process that is strongly influenced by the social network an actor is embedded in (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944). While the voting act itself is of course purely individual, the entire process leading up to this decision can only be understood if these social effects are taken into consideration. This broad potential appeal means that voter mobilization has a number of very specific features: citizens who only have a limited interest in politics, and who most likely will not take part in any other political act, will still cast a vote during elections. Despite a trend toward declining turnout figures, it has to be stressed not only that a majority of citizens still takes part in elections, but that even more likely it is the only political participation act they will engage in at all. This implies that the mobilization toward voting might also differ from the mobilization process leading to other acts of political participation.

Despite this general prevalence of electoral participation across the population, some forms of inequality and stratification do remain present. Partly these find their origin in individual background characteristics, such as partisanship, age, profession, level of education, or political interest. Such determinants of voter turnout have been dealt with in other chapters. Network position or embeddedness, however, has an equally strong effect on voter participation and vote choice. Being part of a politicized network often implies that citizens will be targeted by specific mobilization efforts (Arceneaux and Nickerson, 2009). As a result, actors embedded within these kinds of networks are much more likely to be reached by mobilization efforts, leading to, on average, higher levels of participation. Again, this responds to the general notion that political behavior should never be seen as an isolated act, but has to be considered as a form of social behavior. The motivations leading to the act, and the act of voting itself, can therefore also be investigated as a specific form of social behavior, including various forms of social influence and/or social pressure (Zuckerman, 2005).

In this chapter, we review the role of the social context in the process of voter mobilization, introducing a distinction between three potential determinants of electoral turnout: mobilizing networks (i.e. networks, activities or organizations with the explicit goal to mobilize potential voters to participate), informal networks (i.e. not formally organized, without the explicit goal of mobilizing voters), and cultural or geographical contexts (i.e. broader settings that do not have an explicit political goal). Research on these networks and contexts has shown that each one of them can have a specific effect on voting behavior. What these interaction contexts have in common is that actors embedded in them will be inclined to take into account the expressed views of other network members when determining their own positions and preferences. Within the literature, there is an ongoing controversy on the question of how to explain this congruence between network members. In some of the literature, a rather negative interpretation of this phenomenon prevails, as it is assumed that this form of group congruence can be mainly attributed to external pressure and conformity. Following some of the classical experiments in social psychology, it is assumed that members of a group or network simply display the behavior that they assume will be positively sanctioned by the other group members. Another line in the literature, however, assumes that actors always develop their value judgments within a dialogue with others, thus constituting a specific horizon of meaning and significance. The exchange of information, positions, and arguments in this case can be held responsible for the fact that opinions of network members do resemble one another.

EXPLAINING THE NETWORK EFFECT

It has often been repeated that, for an individual voter, the odds that her/his vote will actually make a difference for electoral outcomes are extremely small. As

such, one can state that the direct incentive to cast a vote is very limited (Downs, 1957). However, various other motives can play a role in persuading individual citizens to cast their vote. First of all, ideological and expressive motivations might serve as powerful incentives. A group of voters will decide to cast a vote anyhow, even if all the available evidence suggests that this vote will not have a tangible effect at all. Considerations of civic duty have also been mentioned in the literature: if one perceives the act of voting as an element of moral and civic obligation, citizens are more likely to take part in elections, even if there is no material selective incentive to do so (Blais, 2000, Wass and Blais, this Volume, Chapter 20). A more fundamental solution for the problem that was posed by Downs, however, is to take into consideration that voting is not just an individual act: voters are part of a social group, and it is within that group that they are being mobilized to vote, but also that they make a decision on whether a specific vote is meaningful or not. Political behavior, therefore, can only be understood as the result of a social process (Zuckerman, 2005).

Various elements play a role here. First, actors receive all kinds of information and hints from their network members, encouraging them to take part in the electoral process. Already in *The American Voter* (Campbell et al., 1960), voting was considered to be an inherently social act where the behavior of individuals can only be understood if we take into account the actions and the beliefs of other relevant interaction partners. Election results matter at the aggregate level: while it is indeed the case that an individual vote most of the time does not matter, if actors identify with a larger group, they do have a stake in what will be the final outcome of the electoral process. The literature on group and network influences introduces a distinction between two possible ways in which this group effect might be effective. Group effects can be partly explained by processes of conformism, as individuals have a tendency to adapt their own behavior to the prevailing behavioral norm of their direct interaction context (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995). This tendency occurs independently of whether actors are actually convinced of the accuracy of the group norms (Irwin and Simpson, 2013). In this case, group conformity would imply that citizens go out to vote, even in the absence of any intrinsic motivation to cast a vote, because they know this is a group norm and that there is a likelihood that group members will react negatively if they fail to comply with these norms. Other authors, however, stress the fact that actor-network congruence can also be based on a more cognitive process, or a process of moral dialogue and moral development. Given a tendency toward homophily in social networks, it is likely that actors, through their network position, will be exposed predominantly to information that supports or at least is compatible with the prevailing group norms. Based on the information and the cues they receive, it might be considered a rational process to develop the attitudes that are congruent with these information flows. As it is assumed that actors in general try to avoid cognitive dissonance, one might expect that

attitudes will develop in line with the information that is accessible to an individual (Brechwald and Prinstein, 2011).

Although there is ample empirical evidence showing that these kinds of network effects occur, thereby providing an underpinning for the continued relevance of social groups in voting (e.g. Evans, Chapter 9, Elff, Chapter 10, this Volume), other studies tend to question the importance of this kind of group resemblance. First, it has been argued that network studies often depart from a rather simplistic design, as their goal is to situate an individual within a specific interaction network. Huckfeldt, Johnson and Sprague (2004) have argued that this is a strong simplification of reality. In real life, individuals are not just embedded in one specific network, but they interact in totally different contexts and simultaneously belong to sometimes highly segmented networks, where totally different norms might prevail. While they might have self-selected their network of personal friends and their own partner, they have not necessarily selected their colleagues, wider family, neighbors or other interaction partners in the local community. This multiple embeddedness in different networks almost automatically implies that individuals are never exposed to just a single network effect, but that these effects will occur simultaneously and might counteract one another. Furthermore, there is also an intense debate on the role of agreement within networks. Often we do not even know how much agreement there actually is within a network, as this would imply interviewing all network members. These studies therefore often rely on aggregate measurements or on reported preferences, but it has been shown that actors have a strong tendency to overestimate the extent to which their significant others agree with them (Klofstad et al., 2013). This is a fundamental observation, as this alleged resemblance is often used as evidence for network effects, while it could be partly explained by the tendency to assume that others will agree with one's own individual attitudes and preferences. Furthermore, the cognitive approach assumes that networks will mainly have an effect if there is agreement within the network about the prevailing norms, so that individuals subsequently can and will adapt to these norms. Other studies, however, show not only that there tends to be rather high levels of disagreement within networks, but also that this disagreement as such might have a mobilizing effect. The debates and the discussions with those that defend opposing views might in fact engage potential voters in ongoing debates, and therefore mobilize them to go out and vote (Mutz, 2002).

In the context of this chapter, our ambition is not to make a more global assessment about which one of these mechanisms would be more effective in the field of voting behavior. It can be noted in this regard, however, that in the literature on voter mobilization one does not observe all that much difference between acts of voting that can be clearly observed, and thus are more likely to be susceptible to social pressure and conformity, and acts of voting that cannot be observed (e.g. absentee voting or internet voting), where it can be assumed that external conformity hardly plays a role. This observation renders it less likely that external

conformity would be the sole process that can help us to explain the occurrence of network effects. Apparently, network and group effects also occur when there is no way that individuals could be sanctioned if they do not comply with group norms. No matter what causal mechanism exactly is involved, suffice it to say that most electoral research indeed assumes that group processes play a role in voter mobilization, and that is the main focus of this chapter. These kinds of effects can occur on different levels, and emanate from different kinds of networks.

Political networks

Political parties and electoral candidates are among the most important actors with regard to voter mobilization efforts. Two steps in the process of voter mobilization have to be distinguished: first, citizens have to be mobilized to register and to vote and, subsequently, the aim of a party or a candidate is of course that this voter casts a vote for that specific party. This division poses a very specific challenge for campaigns by a political party. On the one hand, it has to be made clear that the election is salient and important, and that therefore the potential voter ought to register and vote. There is no point in having a lukewarm sympathizer for a party, if that person is not sufficiently motivated to go out and cast a vote. Therefore, just mobilizing voters by itself is and remains important, especially in electoral systems where voters have to register. However, these efforts need to be specifically targeted, as it is even more damaging for the result of a political party to mobilize citizens who end up voting for another, competing party. This explains why for political parties there is a strong incentive to limit mobilization efforts to what they consider to be their own specific constituency (in terms of class, religion or language), where they can assume that a large group of the citizenry will finally vote for them. Political parties, and their affiliated groups, do not have an incentive to invest resources in general mobilization campaigns that reach the entire population and that might mainly benefit their competitors.

Throughout electoral history, political parties have therefore predominantly invested resources in efforts to mobilize those they consider to be their potential voters. This is especially important in electoral systems that have lengthy and/or cumbersome registration procedures. In some cases, it means that potential voters have to register, even long before the electoral campaign has started and electoral politics has become more salient for public opinion. Historically, ‘political machines’ have used a number of different incentives and methods to entice their constituency to turn out on Election Day. Given the secrecy of the ballot that has become general practice during the 20th century, this often amounted to a mobilization of electoral turnout as there was no longer a way to ascertain whether the targeted voters actually did cast a vote for a specific party or candidate (Nichter, 2008). While it can be assumed that in advanced electoral democracies this way of mobilizing voters to a large extent has become discredited, given the rather

ambiguous nature of this kind of recruitment, it has to be noted there is very little empirical research on its prevalence or the practices being used. Furthermore, this kind of mobilization effort at least did ensure that political parties devoted resources to stay in touch with groups of the population that routinely do not take part in various forms of political communication and participation.

But even if we limit ourselves to practices that comply more fully with current norms of electoral integrity, the manner in which political parties try to mobilize voters has changed rather dramatically in recent decades. The traditional model of party mobilization relied heavily on the effort of rank and file members who usually had a very good knowledge of their neighborhood or professional group. These members were actively engaged by their party and its local chapters to reach out to potential voters (Whiteley and Seyd, 2003). Before the 1970s, when political parties could still be considered as large membership organizations, these members were often strongly involved in electoral mobilization campaigns. Local activities, door-to-door canvassing or mobilization at the workplace were tools that were largely used. This kind of mobilizing effort could be targeted, both toward traditional strongholds of a specific party as well as toward constituencies that were considered to be strategically important. Furthermore, research shows that mobilization activities involving this kind of face-to-face contact tend to be highly effective as potential voters respond to this appeal by an increased willingness to turn out to vote. Research relying on official vote records has furthermore shown that face-to-face contacts, even in a controlled random setting, do lead to substantially higher turnout levels in local elections (Green et al., 2003). The assumption is that, because of the direct contact with a campaigner, this kind of mobilization strategy has a stronger impact on potential voters than other, more anonymous forms of contact. In practice, most of this face-to-face activity is conducted by party members or volunteers, because costs are prohibitive if professionals are hired to conduct this kind of campaign. A large pool of enthusiastic party members and supporters is an invaluable resource for politicians using this kind of campaign.

Grass-roots campaigns are indeed highly successful on an individual level, as research consistently shows that an individual contact with a voter can have a direct impact on her/his motivation to vote. However, their overall importance for an electoral campaign, let alone for electoral results, should not be overestimated (Bergan et al., 2005). Even in the most highly contested elections, parties and candidates do not have the means to reach out to every potential voter individually: the cost for an individual contact simply does not allow this kind of mass coverage of the electorate. Even in this kind of intensive campaign, a vast majority of potential voters will never be reached personally. Therefore, mass media continue to be of overwhelming importance to reach out to the mass of potential voters.

This traditional model of voter mobilization has come under pressure in recent decades as party membership rates have declined sharply in almost all stable

democracies. As political parties have been transformed into more professional organizations, campaign activities too have become strongly professionalized. The role of party members has diminished, in favor of the involvement of professional marketing experts, relying on mass communication tools. It does seem clear that the impact of communication tools such as leaflets, e-mail or letters is much lower than that of face-to-face contact, but the financial costs per potential voter being reached are much lower. The appeal of printed materials or television commercials is that they allow a large number of potential voters to be reached in a very brief time, delivering a uniform and controlled message.

A more recent development is that political parties and candidates do not just have to rely on mass media, but are also increasingly using electronic media to get their mobilizing messages out. This is an important development, because various forms of social media and electronic messaging are successful in reaching a younger audience, who are very much connected in their daily lives. Normally these younger age groups are not reached by the more traditional media that are deployed by candidates and political parties. New electronic media, in general, can indeed have a strong mobilization effect and their use is positively associated with levels of political participation (Boulianne, 2015). One of the reasons for this effect is that they combine two distinct elements. The flow of information can be determined by the sender, just as in more traditional forms of communication. But, simultaneously, the fact that this information is shared and forwarded to peers also allows for the occurrence of network effects.

Thus far, there are only a few studies that investigate the effectiveness of electronic communication during election campaigns. Aldrich, Gibson, Cantijoch and Konitzer (2016) found that online contacts by parties and candidates were positively correlated with turnout among young people in the UK, and that online informal contacts by friends and acquaintances increased turnout among older respondents in the US. An additional advantage of electronic communication is that there might be a snowball effect, as it is easy to spread political campaign messages in one's own personal network. This would hint at the occurrence of a multiplication effect, where reaching one person might in turn offer the opportunity to reach several other potential voters. If these kinds of findings are replicated in future research, the informal further distribution of campaign messages in one's own network might indeed have a powerful effect on electoral campaigns. In fact, this kind of sharing and forwarding behavior to some extent offers a functional equivalent to the party members who are no longer available to political parties. Forwarding an electronic message from a candidate can serve as a powerful endorsement, as messages that are received from personal friends are attributed with a much higher level of credibility than messages received from political organizations.

The effectiveness of commercially operated forms of voter mobilization can also be increased by micro-targeting, where messages are sent out only to

specific groups (e.g. specific professional groups, or strategic areas) in order to reach just the group of voters that is strategically important for the party and/or the candidate. For this kind of micro-targeting, it can be observed that in some markets commercial companies have specialized in providing very targeted lists of potential respondents, while in other countries this kind of practice, partly because of restrictions imposed by privacy regulation, is virtually non-existent (Tenscher et al., 2012).

These kinds of direct mobilization efforts, however, are not always conducted by the political party itself. A defining characteristic of catch-all parties is that they can often rely on a network of affiliated organizations, ranging from trade unions, to women's groups, cultural associations or youth associations. In particular, political parties that historically had a link with the labor movement were embedded in such a network of affiliated organizations. Historically, these associations too have played an important role in trying to mobilize voters for their network party. In this regard, most of the available research is focused on the role of trade unions, since they constitute the largest and politically most active kind of organization. Unions traditionally have mobilized their members to vote for socialist or labor parties and on an aggregate level one can observe a positive relation between union density, voter turnout and the vote share of leftist parties. Historical and anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that this positive correlation can be partly explained by specific mobilization efforts and campaigns by trade unions. Two structural trends, however, have eroded the importance of this mobilization mechanism (Gray and Caul, 2000). First, union density shows a tendency to decline in most advanced industrial societies, so that trade unions simply have fewer means to reach a large audience. Although there is less research available on other party-related associations, the available evidence there too suggests a tendency toward lower membership rates. The affiliated organizations, therefore, have a much smaller pool available to recruit potential campaigners and voters. Second, on an organizational level, too, the relations between trade union organizations and political parties have become much more distant. While in some cases trade union members were automatically also a member of mainly the Socialist party, in most countries this practice has been abandoned, and this makes it much more difficult for trade unions to mobilize for one specific party. Some authors therefore argue that the decline of trade unions is one of the causes of the observed trend toward lower voter turnout rates: as unions and other related organizations continue to lose members they are less able to mobilize voters who, because of their relatively low level of available resources, are less likely to cast a vote (Gray and Caul, 2000). The declining role of trade unions, therefore, implies that not just turnout in general will decline, but that this trend will be concentrated most strongly among a rather lowly educated segment of the population. With regard to electoral outcomes, it could be expected that especially parties that are affiliated with the labor movement will lose some of their political power because of this social trend.

Partly as a reaction to an observed decline in voter turnout, especially among specific groups of the population, in various countries non-partisan ‘get out the vote’ initiatives have been initiated. This kind of campaign can be targeted toward both encouraging potential voters to register, as well as toward mobilizing registered voters to actually cast their vote. In the electoral history of the United States, these kinds of initiatives have been important in ensuring turnout among specific ethnic communities that were historically characterized by lower levels of electoral participation. The most obvious example is the Freedom Summer campaign in 1964, which was focused on helping Afro-American residents of the state of Mississippi, who historically were often prevented from casting their vote, to register as voters and to take part in the elections. Although we do not know how many potential voters actually registered as a direct result of the Freedom Summer campaign, symbolically this campaign did mark the end of the Jim Crow era, which was characterized by segregation and a lack of political power for Afro-Americans in the southern states of the US. But also since the 1960s, ‘get out the vote’ campaigns have often been targeted toward very specific groups (e.g. women, elderly, young, ethnic or linguistic minorities) as their electoral participation is often seen as instrumental for increasing their leverage on the political agenda. Generally, this kind of ethnic mobilization effort is considered to be non-partisan, and campaigns to mobilize ethnic groups with a lower socio-economic status are often seen as a consensus issue. However, given patterns of ethnic bloc voting, in practice this kind of effort can often turn out to be in favor of one specific party. Experiments with get out the vote campaigns targeted toward Latino voters, for example, were not only more successful in reaching out to Democrats, but also proved to be significantly more effective among Latino voters with a preference for the Democratic party (Michelson, 2003). For other ethnic and cultural groups, too, it is well known that they tend to concentrate their vote toward one or a number of specific parties (see also Sobolewska, this Volume, Chapter 11). The possibility that this kind of partisan effect might occur also explains why not all political parties or office holders will be equally inclined to support this kind of initiative. It has been claimed that, in some states, voter registration laws are designed in such a manner that they discourage electoral participation from groups that are assumed to be less inclined to the incumbent party (Avery and Peffley, 2005). To express it differently: in these specific circumstances political parties might also experience a strong incentive *not* to mobilize potential voters.

The available evidence does not suggest any obvious differences between non-partisan campaigns and party mobilization efforts with regard to effectiveness. For non-partisan campaigns, too, face-to-face efforts such as door-to-door canvassing still seem to be the most effective method, which implies that these campaigns can be more successful if they target constituencies that are geographically concentrated, as is routinely the case among ethnic minorities. This kind of campaign often builds on a momentum that gradually becomes stronger during the electoral

campaign, and self-evidently reaches its climax on election day itself, although it has to be mentioned that some studies suggest that interventions early on in the electoral campaign can be equally effective (Panagopoulos, 2011a). This kind of collective timing in practice is important, as it can strengthen individual-level mobilization effects. Research indeed shows that when voters do not all vote on the same day, e.g. as a result of a generalization of the system of early voting, mobilization campaigns can be less effective with, as a result, lower turnout rates (Burden et al., 2014). In these cases, the visibility of the campaign effort, and the resulting campaign momentum effect, appears to be diluted. Other studies, too, point in the direction of clear network and mobilization effects. It was found e.g. that church attendance, with the accompanying possibility to interact with other congregation members, has a powerful effect on voter turnout, which is more important than the effect of religious beliefs as such (Gerber et al., 2016).

Furthermore, the effectiveness of mobilization efforts can be enhanced by invoking social pressure: a get out the vote campaign that stressed the argument that voting records can be made publicly available was shown to be more effective than a campaign that did not use this exposure argument (Gerber et al., 2008). Apparently, voters do take this kind of potential effect on their reputation within the community into account when they decide to go out to vote or not. More subtle forms of social pressure, however, could be equally effective, as it is assumed that potential voters do not just worry about their reputation, but that they also want to have a positive self-image of themselves as a good and responsible citizen (Mann, 2010). Finally, a more gentle process of just thanking voters for having voted in a previous election could even have the same impact, indicating that, in this case too, behavioral conformity clearly is not the only motivating causal factor (Panagopoulos, 2011c). Panagopoulos (2011b), on the other hand, did not find any indications that social pressure effects would be any stronger in small-scale communities than in large electoral districts.

With regard to political networks, we do see a strong change in recent decades. The focus on reaching out to specific constituencies by means of targeted campaigns by volunteers has been replaced by a generalization of professional and electronic campaign efforts. While in some cases these modern and professional campaign tools can be just as effective, they do raise the problem of inequality and stratification as it is less likely that they will reach groups of the population with traditionally low levels of political sophistication and electoral turnout. The demise of churches and labor unions could have as an effect that the communities that are traditionally served by these kinds of organizations will be less frequently targeted by electoral campaigns.

Informal networks

Mobilizing voters, however, is not just an effect of political parties and affiliated organizations, as informal networks are equally important. Research has shown

repeatedly that the family in this regard remains highly relevant. In what has been called ‘the social logic of politics’, Zuckerman and his colleagues have demonstrated that within families political attitudes and behavioral patterns are shaped, with strong mutual influences between significant interaction partners. Although most likely weaker, a similar effect has been found for friends, colleagues, and other frequent discussion partners (Zuckerman, 2005). The prevailing mechanism here is based on well-established tendencies toward social homophily. The interaction partners in one’s network are very likely to share the same socio-economic status, education level, religious tradition, and cultural habits. Because of this resemblance they also become relevant as potential political role models that to a large extent have the same interests and ideological preferences. Their presence and the ongoing interaction with them, therefore, is likely to reinforce specific political options and preferences. For those who are exposed to this kind of interaction, it can be expected not only that these values will be more salient, but that in principle they should also remain more stable over the life cycle.

With regard to this kind of family interaction, however, the same kind of caveats apply that we have already discussed for political networks. First, we do not know exactly how strong the overlap is between the attitudes and political preferences of all family members. Usually in this kind of study, only a limited number of family members are interviewed (sometimes even only one member for every household), and this informant might overestimate the resemblance of opinions within the family (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995). Comparing assessment congruence within the family with actual measured opinions indeed shows that large differences might occur (Hooghe and Boonen, 2015). But even if we do arrive at a reliable measurement of the prevailing political preferences within the household, not all studies actually show that a homogeneous interaction context really has the alleged positive effect on forms of political participation. Fitzgerald and Curtis (2012) show that the opposite phenomenon might even occur. In families where both parents have discordant political preferences, children were shown to be more likely to participate politically. A possible explanation for this phenomenon might be that, because of the disagreement, politics might be rendered more salient within these families, rendering more political discussions, and thus mobilizing further political action (on politicization and party instability, see also Dinas, this Volume, Chapter 13). The children might also be exposed more frequently to political information, as the disagreement should be associated with more lively debates within the family. McClurg (2006) shows evidence that the effect of disagreement might also depend on the level of political sophistication that is present within the network: high levels of political expertise should have a more mobilizing effect than disagreement in the absence of political knowledge and interest.

Smith (2015) offers a possible explanation for the apparently contradictory results in this kind of analysis, by showing an effect of the party systems. While

in some political systems disagreement might lead to a stable political preference, in others it can be expected that increased discussion in fact has a mobilizing effect on interaction partners. Nir (2011), on the other hand, states that this kind of study should also pay attention to the type of disagreement within the network: while some forms of disagreement might inhibit political participation and mobilization, the opposite is true for forms of participation that offer a more politicizing environment for the interaction partners. The conclusion from this line of research, anyhow, is that the discussion with others on political affairs could have an independent effect on the motivation to take part in elections.

While most of the studies on socialization within the family try to explain the occurrence of participation acts, exactly the same mechanisms can also be used to explain detrimental effects on the motivation for electoral participation. As Partheymüller and Schmitt-Beck (2012) have shown, non-voting to a large extent is also contagious. Actors who have strong family and friendship ties with other non-voters will be far more likely to abstain from voting than individuals who are not exposed to this kind of information. This kind of study reminds us of the fact that socialization effects never occur just in one direction. If mechanisms are established to explain the occurrence of socialization effects, e.g. within the family, it is just as likely that these mechanisms will be used to spread values that are seen as compatible with contemporary standards of democracy, as they might spread values that run against this ethos.

Furthermore, research has also clearly established that the nature of political socialization effects within the family has changed dramatically throughout the 20th century. Older studies, conducted just after the Second World War, still largely departed from a hierarchical model, where it was assumed that especially the father within a family served as an opinion leader, having a strong impact on both his spouse and the children within the family. Quite often, the other family members were just seen as passive receivers of these kinds of political messages, as it was assumed that the male members of the household had higher levels of political knowledge, interest, and efficacy. Current research suggests that men are still more actively involved in political discussions within the family context, but most of the studies now assume a reciprocal effect, whereby not only gender inequalities have disappeared, but also hinting at the fact that younger generations can influence the generation of their parents with regard to political behavior and political preferences. Especially with regard to emerging political sensitivities in society, it has been documented that younger age groups more rapidly pick up these signals and interiorize them in their own value pattern. As a result of the ongoing dialogue within the family, they are much more likely to communicate their own preferences toward the older generation in the family than the other way around. In Fitzgerald's (2011) study it was shown that, if the children within a family are in favor of voting for a Green party, they are effectively able to communicate this electoral preference to the generation of their parents. The current line of research, therefore, still assumes the existence of political socialization

effects within the household, but most likely these effects are much more reciprocal than was assumed in the past.

Within this line of research on the occurrence of informal socialization effects, several caveats apply. First of all, little is known about the actual causal mechanism that is responsible for the resemblance between family members. The socialization perspective assumes that the communication and the dialogue within the family exerts an effect on the political attitudes of the family members. It is rather challenging, however, to find sufficient evidence for the occurrence or the strength of this specific causal mechanism. Here too, one often has to rely on reported assessments of the intensity and frequency of political debates within the family, but it would be rather cumbersome to try to arrive at a more reliable measurement. Other elements, therefore, have also been mentioned in the literature. First of all, it has to be remembered that members of the same family will share at least some of the basic background variables with regard to socio-economic status. Given the fact that this position might have an effect on political preferences, the resemblance therefore could also be explained as a result of this joint background. In some of the more recent studies, it has also been suggested that genetic characteristics of a person might have an effect on their political attitudes and behaviors. If this is the case, here too the shared genetic material of family members should explain some degree of resemblance.

Various researchers have furthermore emphasized that mass media too can function as a political network. More specifically, voters self-select into specific media networks, in which they will be exposed to information about the elections. Usually, this will be associated with a stronger salience being attached to the elections, and therefore also a stronger willingness to take part in the elections (Gunther et al., 2007). Partly, the media have this effect because of their agenda-setting function: the topics they select will most likely also be picked up by readers and viewers (Scheufele, 2000). To a large extent, for media networks too, we find in the literature the same discussion about the consequences of heterogeneity and diversity. Some of the older research noted that, at least in the US, citizens are exposed to more diverse views in their media network than in their face-to-face network (Mutz and Martin, 2001). It remains to be investigated, however, to what extent this conclusion still holds in the present day media environment, which is usually portrayed as being more strongly polarized. Some evidence furthermore suggests that strong disagreement, e.g. during political debates, indeed arouses a stronger political interest among viewers. Simultaneously, however, it can also lead to a more distrustful or cynical attitude toward the political system, and that should normally lead to a lower willingness to take part in elections (Mutz, 2015).

Geographical contexts

It is not just networks that have been shown to have an effect on electoral behavior, but also the geographical context citizens reside in. To some extent, it might

be expected that both effects overlap as the community in which people reside also to a large extent determines the characteristics of their network of friends and family. Family and friends often share the same geographical context and, to the extent that this context is more homogeneous, this will also have an effect on the homogeneity of these networks. In smaller constituencies, politicians and candidates themselves might be part of these networks. A rather straightforward finding in this line of research is that the likelihood that one will vote for a specific candidate is higher if that candidate lives close to the potential voter (Arzheimer and Evans, 2012, J. Evans, Volume 2, Chapter 28).

The geographical context can have an effect on electoral behavior in three distinct ways (Johnston and Pattie, 2006). First, inhabitants of the same region will most likely share at least some background characteristics. In rural areas, agriculture might still be an important economic sector; in specific regions language might be a salient and mobilizing issue, etc. As a result, the inhabitants of this region will be more inclined to vote for the parties that are assumed to defend these interests, and their geographical concentration makes it easier to mobilize these groups of the constituency. In general, groups that are geographically concentrated are easier to mobilize politically than groups that are spread more evenly across the territory of a country. Second, processes of self-selection might occur. Especially in political systems with a large degree of autonomy for regional or local government, there can be an incentive for specific groups of the population to migrate to regions where their preferred party has a hold on power. This effect of self-selection has been documented most notably for the United States, where supporters of both the Democratic and the Republican party apparently avoid relocating to a stronghold of the opposing party. In particular, the fact that these parties can leave their mark on the regional or local education, health, and judicial systems might have a discouraging effect on supporters of the opposing party. Other examples, however, have also been documented. Members of the gay community, for example, show a tendency to relocate to specific urban centers, where they can constitute an important electoral force. An obvious example would be the way in which the gay community in cities such as San Francisco or Tel Aviv mobilized themselves to have a clear effect on the policy pursued by city government. Third, it can be assumed that inhabitants of a region are influenced by the social and/or cultural climate that prevails within a specific geographical context. The fact that they are exposed to the some kind of stimuli and information, therefore, might also have an effect on their electoral choices.

Within the subfield of political geography, a recurring finding is that local contexts can indeed have a strong impact on electoral behavior. It has to be noticed, however, that causality in this case might also be reversed. Politicians have an incentive to make sure that electoral law, and especially the rules determining the boundaries of electoral districts, are in line with their own interests. The fact that specific groups of the population end up in one specific electoral district, therefore, might just as well be the effect of some form of

gerrymandering (i.e. the practice of outlining electoral districts in such a manner that the constituency of a political party is concentrated in that district).

The general expectation in the literature is that levels of electoral turnout will be lower in districts with fewer resources, e.g. because of lower average income or higher levels of unemployment. Oliver (2001), however, has argued that tendencies toward suburbanization within American society also have a negative impact on the willingness to participate. His main argument is that suburbanization means that residents are integrated into large metropolitan areas, therefore losing their identification with a small community that could serve as an incentive to participate actively. The large scale of these urban regions also implies that the weight of their individual vote will become diluted. A second element might be that suburban communities are equally characterized by a large degree of socio-economic and ethnic homogeneity, and this implies that this possible source of electoral participation too might be less important in these conditions. Again we are confronted here with the question of whether homogeneity or disagreement has the strongest effect on electoral turnout. The argument Oliver puts forward is that ‘too much’ homogeneity in local politics might discourage participation, as this means that elections will not be highly contested, while the ideological distance between candidates will be small. In these conditions, there is only a weak incentive to take part in elections.

The effect of geographical context on voting behavior does pose a challenge for research, because the various levels are obviously interrelated. Voters with a working-class background are more likely to reside in working-class districts, so that it is rather difficult to disentangle individual-level and district-level effects from the vote decision. A British longitudinal study (Gallego et al., forthcoming) did observe a correlation between place of residence and political attitudes, but the study was able to document that most of this relation is due to self-selection and not to any socialization effect occurring after moving to a specific neighborhood. In many countries, ethnic and cultural diversity has become a salient political issue, but it can be expected that those who are most firmly opposed to this kind of diversity will move out of the districts where diversity levels are highest. This selective relocation pattern helps to explain why political parties that thrive mainly on opposition to the presence of ethnic minorities often perform equally well in districts where these minorities themselves are hardly present.

This kind of evidence suggests that geographical segregation patterns might increase tendencies toward political polarization. Because of the specific electoral system and the trends with regard to mobility, this kind of self-selection effect is assumed to be most strongly present in the United States. There is some reason or concern about this trend, as the end result might be that specific groups will be concentrated in specific areas, where the corresponding party most likely will exert power. This pattern of segregation means that this group will no longer be exposed to the countervailing effect of other groups, and this might lead to further polarization and a lack of tolerance.

DISCUSSION: CHALLENGES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The literature reviewed in this chapter makes clear that electoral behavior to a large extent is socially embedded. This poses a challenge for the dominant approaches toward electoral behavior, which often depart from a methodological individualism. This kind of individualism at first sight makes sense: the individual makes a specific vote decision, and in electoral surveys information about this decision is also obtained from the individual. The empirical material, however, makes clear that the individual does not reach this decision in isolation. The individual decision should be seen against the backdrop of mobilizing campaigns from candidates, interaction with friends and family members, and the example of neighbors and local candidates. It can be assumed, however, that all of these effects occur simultaneously, which makes it all the more difficult to investigate information flows. More sophisticated forms of network analysis or geo-coding should allow us to employ more complex models in research in the years ahead.

What we have seen in this review is that there a number of recurring themes, which most likely will continue to remain salient in research during the years ahead. More specifically, we focus on the nature of interaction, the role of social pressure and conformity, and the role of discussion and disagreement.

It does seem clear that traditional forms of face-to-face contact will continue to lose ground in the years and decades ahead. This can be related, not just to the trends with regard to the way political parties function, but also to broader social trends, where electronically mediated information flows are becoming increasingly important. Political communication simply follows this trend. This broader social development leads to two important research questions. First, in the years ahead it will remain a challenge to determine the effectiveness of electronically mediated information. As we have seen, thus far the available studies do not allow for any pessimism in this regard, as social media have been shown to have a strong mobilizing effect. The question, however, does remain whether this effect is also present with regard to more demanding forms of participation. Insights from social psychology do point to the specific effects of face-to-face contact, where various forms of non-verbal communication (appearance, sympathy, familiarity, character, ...) can strengthen the mobilizing effect. Much of this non-verbal communication is absent in social media interaction. Apparently, this does not seem to matter that much if one makes rather simple requests to potential voters. It does remain to be investigated, however, what could be the long-term impact of this kind of mobilization. Opposition parties, for example, can remain in opposition for a very long time, so it becomes increasingly difficult for them to convince voters about the effect of a vote. Thus far, we do not have all that much information about the sustainability of electronic campaigning, but some anecdotal evidence does suggest that potential voters who have been targeted in this way also tend to lose interest quite rapidly.

A second important research question remains regarding the effect of conformity and social pressure. Traditionally voting has been a public and highly visible act, with most of the population of a neighborhood coming together in the same polling station. This high level of visibility might lead to behavior that is socially desirable, or at least it leads to the idea that neighbors or colleagues might actually notice that one did not vote. In most developed democracies, there is a tendency toward forms of convenience voting, by allowing postal voting, or various forms of internet voting. All these developments imply that 'election day' no longer has the pivotal role it used to have, and for the time being we do not yet know what all of this means for campaign dynamics. How do political parties react if they are confronted with an electoral system where voting is no longer concentrated on one day, but stretches out over a longer period of time? Theoretically, this highlights the more fundamental question of whether social pressure indeed plays a role. If the voting act itself becomes further individualized, and 'invisible' to one's peers, we should assume that observed effects will become weaker. As we have seen, the family does remain an important context for political socialization. If there is a fixed election day, family members usually observe one another voting, and it might even be a tradition that the household goes to the polling booth together. Convenience forms of voting diminish this social aspect of voting, and it remains to be investigated therefore whether this also implies a weakening of traditional forms of mobilization.

Third, as we have seen, the role of disagreement does remain heavily disputed in the literature. The traditional model is based on the effects of homophily: for a variety of reasons, actors interact most intensively with those who have more or less the same opinions and attitudes, and this by itself reinforces pre-existing attitudes and preferences. Within the field of social psychology there is ample evidence to support the existence of such a causal mechanism. Other authors, however, have shown that politics, and especially electoral politics, is also a matter of conflict and disagreement. This opposition by itself might have a mobilizing effect, as it does make clear that there is something at stake during the elections. The idea that some effort is needed to allow one's opinion to prevail in the electoral context might be an incentive to go out and vote. It does seem clear that there is quite some evidence for both of these mechanisms to occur, so the research rather seems to be under what condition the effect is most likely to be stronger. Most actors will indeed try to avoid social networks that uphold fundamentally different normative points of view, and in this case there might be a tendency toward a larger similarity within the group. But as Huckfeldt et al. (2004) have shown: the idea that one would solely interact with others who have exactly the same opinion does not seem to be very realistic. The question about the role of disagreement and homogeneity has become all the more salient, because new developments make it all the more likely that actors will seek the company of like-minded others. Trends toward geographical segregation could lead to the result that one interacts mostly with people who share not just the

same background effects but also the same political opinions. The alleged moderating impact of discussion with people who hold different opinions in this context is weakened. Electronic media, however, could just as well lead to this kind of segregation and accompanying polarization. Electronic media make it much easier to ignore opposing points of view, and to seek interaction only with the small group of people who have exactly the same preferences. In some cases, this might also make it easier to develop radical attitudes and patterns of political behavior.

The fundamental idea behind the ‘social logic of politics’ is that individuals are embedded in social networks and groups, and that this social effect has an impact on their political preferences and behaviors (Zuckerman, 2005). Indeed, within the social sciences, this has been an important insight since the 19th century. The question does become, however, how important this insight remains in the 21st century, which is characterized by a strong tendency toward individualization. Demographic changes imply that there is less of a fixed family and household structure, and that individuals are much more likely to develop a distinct set of family relations. Changes in the labor market could have the effect that there is no longer a distinct set of ‘colleagues’ who one really interacts with over a longer period of time. Finally, the geographical context too might become less pre-determined for an individual across the life cycle. All these stable bonds and institutional background characteristics, therefore, will most likely continue to weaken. Self-evidently, this does not mean that individuals become atomized: networks do remain important, but they become more fluent, they are less dependent on one specific geographical or family location, and they change more rapidly. Human relations as such, therefore, are changing more rapidly than ever before. This general trend toward de-traditionalization and de-institutionalization has an impact on family relations, religion, and participation in the labor market, and there is no reason to assume that it would not have an equally powerful effect on political and electoral behavior.

There is even some reason to assume that the effect on voting behavior might be stronger, because of the fact that elections are an aggregate process, where the strength is in numbers. One might compare this to religion: believers tend to enjoy gatherings of their congregation, and they derive satisfaction from the interaction with their fellow-believers. However, even if the congregation became very small, or different people showed up every week, the intrinsic value of religious worship might still serve as an incentive to continue this tradition. For voting, however, the collective incentive is predominant, as there are very few people who are so interested in politics that they would continue practicing politics on a purely individual basis, without any form of electoral success.

Elections can be characterized as a form of mass behavior in contemporary democracies. In the decades following World War II, voter turnout reached extremely high levels. In Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, and Finland, turnout figures of more than 85 percent were considered normal. There are indeed very few other forms of behavior that have an almost universal outreach across the

population. Processes of individualization render this kind of universal participation more unlikely in the future. In Italy, for example, voters of the Communist Party turned out to vote for their preferred party for decades, even though it was systematically kept out of any form of government power. The ideological fervor, the group pressure, and the sense of determination had as a result that decade after decade they continued with this effort, even if there was no result at all to show. Social networks play an important buffer role in this regard: even if one's preferred political party loses again and again, and does not succeed in obtaining some political power, group norms do ensure that people show up to vote again and again, sometimes for decades. Even if one is not intrinsically motivated to vote, being targeted by a mobilization effort might still result in participation. In a climate of declining levels of turnout, however, exactly the opposite phenomenon might occur. If there are fewer, or weaker, mobilizing networks in the community, the tipping point might also lead to an even more rapid decline of levels of electoral turnout. There does not seem to be any doubt that new, more fluent or electronically mediated forms of communication could have a mobilizing effect on voter turnout. While research is still necessary to determine the exact conditions for this, it is evident that there is a clear mobilization effect. From a historical perspective, however, the challenge is not just to mobilize potential voters, but to do so as effectively as the older and more traditional forms that were based on intensive face-to-face interaction with candidates, party members, family members, colleagues, and neighbors. If the effect of new mobilization tools is not equally strong, we can envision further declining levels of electoral turnout in the decades ahead.

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PART III

Partisanship



The Evolving Role of Partisanship

Elias Dinas

INTRODUCTION

Party identification (party ID) presents itself as the explanation to many puzzles not only in the voting behavior and public opinion literature, but also in the fields of democratization and political economy. Focusing on individual level phenomena, party identification has provided an answer to questions such as why people participate in politics (Powell 1986: 30; Finkel and Opp 1991; Shachar 2003); why they vote the way they do (Bartels 2000; Campbell et al. 2011); why they get actively involved in electoral campaigns (Huddy et al. 2015); how individuals form and crystallize their political attitudes (Carlsson and Karlsson 1970); why some people are favorable towards redistribution whereas others are critical (Margalit 2013); how people perceive government's economic performance (Evans and Andersen 2006); and even why some people respond to information whereas other do not – and among those who do respond, how they do so (Groenendyk 2012; Carsey and Layman 2006). Aggregate-level examples involve questions such as why some democratic regimes are more fragile than others (Converse 1969; Shively 1972); why countries differ in their redistribution policies (Shayo 2009); and what determines whether party competition is clientilistic or programmatic (Stokes et al. 2013).

Given the variety of applications employing party identification as an explanation of other phenomena, one would be led to expect that the notion itself is well understood. As many students of party identification would be willing to acknowledge, however, this is not the case. Indeed, it seems a puzzle to many

that a concept that has been so much studied and so often used to account for other phenomena of interest remains largely a puzzle itself. Pending issues relate to the formation and development of party identification as well as its attitudinal and behavioral consequences. All these questions, however, either directly or indirectly, are motivated by and linked to an overarching question that merits further exploration, namely the nature and conceptualization of party identification. Haunted by two diverging theoretical traditions, the literature has struggled to reach a consensus on what party identification stands for and how it forms and develops over the life span. This chapter revisits these exact questions in the light of the new developments in the literature.

The first section of the chapter reviews the classic debate between the two schools of partisanship. The second section revisits the question about the formation of partisanship, focusing on the role of family socialization, political events, elections, and political actors. The third section tries to merge the two main approaches in the study of party identification into an encompassing framework, which builds on insights from behavioral economics, social identity theories, and cognitive psychology.

THE TWO TRADITIONS

Originally formulated by the Michigan school as affective orientation towards political objects (Campbell et al. 1960), party identification has been framed as an enduring attachment towards political parties, originating primarily in early political socialization. The stylized partisan that emerges from this tradition learns about parties before learning about politics. Parental signals are translated by offspring in a normative binary fashion. A classic quote of an eleven-year-old Jennifer by Greenstein (1969), that '[a]ll I know is we are not Republicans, my father isn't' exemplifies this logic. As Denver (1994: 31) puts it, through family socialization individuals get to know who are the 'goodies and the baddies' in their political environment. Consequently, partisan predispositions precede a cognitive and coherent understanding of politics. Although later experience with political affairs might qualify early socialization messages, the imprint of family remains vivid even after the offspring leave the parental home. Empirical studies confirm this link: the levels of partisan similarity between parents and offspring remain moderately high and erode only gradually along the adult life trajectory (Butler and Stokes, 1974: 45; Niemi and Jennings 1991). Thus, for the Michigan school, partisanship develops as a form of identity, rooted in early socialization and operating as a perceptual screen of contemporaneous political attitudes (Campbell et al., 1960; Bartels 2002; Green et al., 2002).

Perhaps the most well-known observational implication of party identification as theorized by the Michigan school is attitudinal stability. Since the party forms part of one's identity, short-term fluctuations are permitted but are far

from common.¹ Partisanship is built exogenously to period shocks. Consequently, the idealized Michigan partisan is characterized by high levels of continuity in their voting patterns and attitudinal orientations. This rather stringent picture of partisan immunization (McPhee and Ferguson 1962) has fallen short of the empirical evidence. The period following the 1950s has been marked by increased levels of electoral volatility. The short-lived partisan dealignment that shaped American politics since the mid 1960s and throughout the 1970s contrasted sharply with the image of the American voter as an ‘unmoved mover’ (Campbell et al. 1960). As a way to cope with the new empirical reality, a new theorization of party identification emerged. Party identification, according to this new, revisionist, view is not rooted in identity-forming experiences; neither does it need to lead to fixed political preferences. Rather, it is formed gradually as a result of repeated experience with political parties. According to this conceptualization, partisanship remains largely endogenous to contemporaneous political stimuli. Voters, the argument goes, retrospectively evaluate the performance of the government and reach their conclusions on the basis of this assessment. As the number of elections accumulate, partisanship forms as a ‘running tally’ of past, mainly economic, evaluations (Fiorina 1981). The idealized partisan according to this tradition resembles a ‘rough-and-ready Bayesian updater’ (Clarke et al. 2004: 9): new information is added in the stock of prior experience with parties’ records and their issue stances (Franklin and Jackson 1983; Franklin 1984). Without precluding patterns of continuity, this more flexible visualization of party identification makes changes not only possible but also likely, insofar as parties’ profiles change over time. Bayesian models of partisan learning formalized this dynamic component (Achen 1992; Gerber and Green 1998; Grynaviski 2006). Issues and actual policy stances become now more important than socialization experiences. The present matters equally to (Achen 1992) or more than (Gerber and Green 1998) the past. Voters are not locked into partisan habits; rather they continuously assess parties’ records and weight new information against their stock of past information about the parties. Continuity co-exists with change. Moreover, parties do not guide voters into the world of politics; rather, voters use them as shortcuts to save resources (Shively 1979). As soon as parties’ images change, these shortcuts fail to be useful and partisanship might well wax and wane.

For many years, the literature has been dominated by a long-lived debate between the two traditions. Since the most notable empirical difference between the two theories relates to the observed patterns of attitudinal change, assessing the level of partisan continuity became the omnibus test of whether party identification is endogenous or exogenous to current political evaluations. Accordingly, much of this discussion has been devoted to methodological issues regarding the extent to which the observed fluctuations at the individual level are true or the product of measurement error (Green and Palmquist 1990; Schickler and Green 1997). Given that different methodological choices have led to different conclusions, this debate gradually eroded without having reached a consensus as to

the nature and underlying roots of party identification. As Green and Schickler (2009) point out, an important limitation of this research is that it rests on observational data. Subtle conceptualization differences, which however constitute the most pertinent questions when it comes to party identification, cannot be addressed without using designs that facilitate a more direct and straightforward test of the expectations stemming from the two theories.

This is exactly the route that various new studies on party identification have taken and in so doing they have enriched this debate by providing more nuanced insights into key questions related to the formation, individual-level dynamics and behavioral implications of party identification. In addressing these questions, this work has also helped to shed light on the more fundamental question regarding the nature of party identification. Most of this work exploits leverage from experimental and quasi-experimental designs and has fruitfully used new democracies as a playground for the testable predictions of the two traditions. It is to this new wave of studies that we now turn, classifying them according to the types of questions they have purported to address. After discussing their findings, I point to their implications for the conceptualization of party identification along the lines of the two traditions.

FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PARTY ID

Although party identification is the amalgamation of a vast number of individual- and contextual-level influences, a few of these factors have attracted most of the research attention: history, family, political events, and elections.² We look at each of these factors in turn.

Historical legacies

A simple way to appreciate the role of historical continuities in partisan orientations is to observe the electoral map of the city of Berlin after the 2013 federal election, which took place fourteen years after the fall of the Berlin wall. One can trace the wall by looking at the division between the constituencies won by *Die Linke*, the successor of the DDR ruling party in the Eastern part of the city, and the SPD/Green-dominated West.³ More systematic evidence comes from Peisakhin (2012), who used a natural experiment generated by the fact that the borders between the Russian and the Austrian empires, as formulated after partition of the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth in the late 18th century, were set in the western part of Ukraine. This separation generated two regions within Ukraine, only one of which was part of the early Soviet era. Peisakhin conducted a survey in the region and found that those who were part of the Soviet Union since the interwar period were also more favorable towards the Russians and towards Communism and differed in their political and partisan orientations

(see also Dinas 2014a). Without looking explicitly at differences in partisanship, Peisakhin's findings illustrate the impact of historical legacies on people's current political outlooks. These historical divisions explain persistent geographical differences in voting patterns among demographically similar regions. Analogous evidence comes from Neundorf (2010), who finds that the cohort mostly embedded within the mobilization period of the communist regime in Eastern Germany – those coming of age during the 1950s – still remain most skeptical about the way capitalist democracy operates (see also Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2013). Moving beyond general political attitudes and focusing more on partisan orientations, Balcells (2012) shows that the victimization experience during the Spanish civil war engendered enduring ideological and partisan identities that remained vivid even after the democratic transition. Wittenberg (2006) also finds remarkable patterns of continuity in the voting shares of the right between the last election before the authoritarian backlash and the first post-transition election after the transition to democracy in Hungary. Whereas in the case of Spain the driving force of this continuity relates to the local dynamics of violence during the Spanish civil war, in Hungary the explanation is more organizational and gives pride of place to the role of the Catholic Church. In all these instances, the observed voting patterns illustrate the importance of past events in the formation of distinctive partisan regularities. Without being in a position to empirically trace the micro-foundations of this intergenerational continuity, these studies emphasize the weight of history in people's understanding of political parties and the political world in general.

Family

Even when not explicitly referred to, family socialization is the implied mechanism fostering the type of intergenerational continuities alluded to above. Indeed, the early literature in political socialization has given pride of place to the role of parents as key socialization agents, introducing offspring into politics while transmitting their political values and ideological and partisan predispositions (Jennings and Niemi 1968; Beck and Jennings 1975; Niemi and Jennings 1991). Even if the levels of similarity have been far less impressive than with other social identities, such as religious denomination (Green et al. 2002), and even if the parental imprint seems to erode as offspring grow up and leave the parental home, parental party identification remains one of the most robust predictors of one's direction of partisanship (Jennings et al. 2009). Evidence extending from the American two-party system into European multi-party contexts confirms this view. Even if the direct transmission levels are reduced, they remain high when one classifies parties into ideological categories. Children seldom declare a partisanship with the rival of the party to which the parents are loyal (Zuckerman et al. 2007; Neundorf et al. 2011).

Rather than questioning this link between parents and children, more recent work has delved into the mechanism through which family socialization operates. Although the observed parent-to-child partisan concordance has been partially attributed to genetic (Fowler and Dawes 2009; Alford et al. 2005, 2011; Hatemi et al. 2009, and Bergner and Hatemi, this Volume, Chapter 17) and sociodemographic (Jennings et al. 2009) similarities between household members, a more in-depth examination of the conditions that enhance the parental legacy suggests a process that bears resemblance to the social learning model. Transmission is strengthened when parents discuss politics at home (Wolak 2009), provide salient, unambiguous and consistent cues over time and when the stimuli are themselves clear and straightforward (Jennings et al. 2009). All these conditions facilitate offspring developing accurate beliefs about their parents' opinions. Party identification represents a relatively simple stimulus and thus the level of perceptual accuracy among the offspring is higher when compared with other political attributes (Westholm 1999). In accordance with the transmission model, parents are more successful in inculcating their partisan orientations when they are highly politicized and when they hold homogeneous political views (Jennings et al. 2009).

Although these findings shed light on the factors that increase the success of transmission while children are at home, they remain agnostic about the conditions under which the parental influence might persist after the offspring leave the parental home. In some instances, parental legacy remains relatively intact whereas in others it diminishes. New evidence on the dynamics of parental socialization tries to account for this heterogeneity. It seems that an important factor explaining the longevity of parental partisan cues is family politicization.

Once the offspring leave the parental home, they encounter new socialization agents and experience new political events that might either reinforce or contradict the parental views. The weight attached to these potentially change-inducing circumstances depends on the attentiveness of young adults, which in turn is a function of their interest in politics (Achen 2002). This is where parental socialization comes in. Parents do not only bequeath a partisan label but they also play an important role in inspiring the child to take an interest in the political world (Verba et al. 2005). Thus, by fostering the child's political interest, politicized parents might be more successful in transmitting their partisanship to their children while they are at home but at the same time they enable other socialization agents to qualify these views during early adulthood. Indeed, evidence from two generations in the US and the UK suggests that the transmission rates of partisan preferences decline more rapidly when children become young adults among politicized than among non-politicized families (Dinas 2014b). Using data from the German Household Panel, Kroh and Selb (2009a) also find that partisanship is more stable among less politically interested respondents, as one would expect if lower levels of parental politicization leads to opportunities among young adults to maintain their initial partisan inclinations.⁴

Rather than questioning the role of parental socialization, this new strand of research shows that parental influence is more complex and multi-faceted than the simple transmission model assumes. Moreover, by looking at what remains of the family influence after the child leaves the parental home, this research links the two stages in one's life trajectory that have been deemed to be particularly formative, namely adolescence and early adulthood (Alwin and Krosnick 1991; Sears and Funk 1999; Osborne et al. 2011). Within this period, apart from the role of family, political events and the actual experience with politics are key determinants in the process of partisan crystallization. We consider each of these two factors in turn.

Events

In an influential study on the development of parental transmission over time, Beck and Jennings (1991) acknowledged that parental influence is mediated and often questioned by 'the forces of the times'. Few things determine more the direction of these forces than salient political events. Political debates are driven by events and media and parties' responses to these events might shift public opinion from time to time. Importantly, however, they are more likely to affect some segments of the public than others. Evidence both in the US and other contexts confirms that one of the factors influencing the weight attached to political events is age: the impact of events is typically stronger when they are experienced during people's early adulthood. It is during these 'impressionable years' (e.g. Delli Carpini 1989; Sears 1983) that young adults are more responsive to changes in their political environment (Dinas 2013; Franklin 2004). These responses tend to leave a long-term imprint on their attitudinal profile (Ghitza and Gelman 2015; Stoker and Jennings 2008). In contrast, for older people it seems that the prior stock of political information is already too heavy to allow new shocks to generate significant changes in their attitudinal outlooks (Schuman and Corning 2012).

This logic has already found considerable support among sociologists. Building on earlier findings from social psychologists and cultural theorists, Schuman and his colleagues (Schuman and Corning 2012; Schuman and Rieger 1992) have investigated which events stick most vividly in people's memories. Two main hypotheses are tested, namely the vicinity of the event to the date of the survey and the period in one's life trajectory in which a given event takes place. All in all, the results tend to provide more support for the impressionable years hypothesis: the impact of an event seems to last longer when it takes place during the period of adolescence and early adulthood (Schuman and Corning 2012; Schuman et al. 1994; Schuman et al. 2003). Similar findings have been found when one focuses on political events. Dinas (2013) has used the Watergate scandal, the Iran-Contra affair under Reagan's presidency and an extramarital affair scandal by Gary Hart – candidate for the Democratic presidency until May

1987 – to test the relative weight of events according to people's age. All three cases confirm that these events are more likely to have affected the partisan orientations of young adults. Erikson and Stoker (2011) have also provided evidence about the long-term implications of political events. Using the lottery draft inaugurated by Nixon in 1969, the authors examine the long-term effects of policy on political attitudes. Individuals with higher likelihood of being drafted according to their date of birth ended up more likely to develop anti-war sentiments, dislike Nixon, and harbor more pro-Democratic preferences.

These findings also seem to have very significant cumulative implications. In a very interesting adaptation of Converse's classic *Of Time and Partisan Stability*, Stoker and Jennings (2008) examine the generational roots of partisan polarization within American public opinion (Levendusky 2009). The authors show that, at least in part, the increasing levels of partisan polarization and sorting can be accounted for by a simple model that takes into consideration that events matter more during early adulthood and that these events lead to partisan anchoring via increased levels of party-issue constraints as individuals become older. A combination of generational replacement with cohort-specific party-issue constraints then helps to explain why Democrats and Republicans have become more ideologically distinct than they were in the past (Nadeau et al 2009).⁵

Functional partisanship and the role of elections

At least since Converse's seminal *Of Time and Partisan Stability* (1969), a stubborn empirical pattern has marked the literature of party identification: partisan ties appear to strengthen as people age. This finding has been replicated and confirmed using a variety of cross-sectional and longitudinal data from different political contexts (Markus 1979; Alwin and Krosnick, 1991; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). Less consensus has emerged, however, about the micro-foundations of this finding.

Based on work by Miller (1976), Shively (1979) has developed a functional account of partisanship, originating in the idea that parties operate as shortcuts, thus helping individuals reach consistent decisions without having to collect information about specific political issues. Under this perspective, lack of resources is compensated for by strength of partisan attachments (Kroh and Selb 2009b: 109). According to this line of argument, one would expect age-related differences in the strength of partisanship because having strong partisan ties is more useful for the old as a source of information than it is for the young. By the same token, educated people should register lower levels of partisan affiliations than their non-educated counterparts.

As argued by Green and Schickler (2009: 196), however, the idea that partisanship is generated because it serves as a heuristic cue conflates its function with its etiology. People form identities, which are typically products of their social interactions and converge with the way they see themselves in social, ideological, and

political terms. These identities can also be used as information shortcuts but this is not the reason for the formation of such identities. The example put forward by the authors is a telling one: religious denominations typically arise as a result of an amalgamation of early socialization experiences. Although having a religion helps people choose which holidays to celebrate, it is hardly unlikely that this is also the reason why people acquire their religious denomination in the first place.

An alternative explanation for this age gap comes from Converse (1969), who attributed the age-driven gap to repeated experience with elections. Electoral participation helps voters accumulate information and thus reinforces prior predispositions, thereby leading to a positive association between aging and strength of partisan commitment (Markus and Converse 1979). More recent work has shed more light on the underlying mechanisms making elections pivotal for the reinforcement and crystallization of partisan predispositions.

Building on insights from cognitive and social psychology, Mullainathan and Washington (2009) hypothesized that converting an attitudinal preference into a behavioral choice through the act of voting should be accompanied by a need for dissonance reduction, which should in turn strengthen people's prior predispositions. They test this idea using two groups of individuals, only one of which was eligible to vote in the previous presidential election. They find that this group was also more likely to hold positive views towards the leader and the party voted for in the next election than those who were slightly younger and thus non-eligible to cast a ballot in the previous election. Employing a set of placebo tests with groups that had similar age differences but the same eligibility status, the authors find no significant differences between them in a variety of attitudinal measures. Taken as a whole, their findings provide consistent support for the argument that the observed effects are due to the act of voting rather than the age gap between the two groups. Their findings echo those by Besley and Joslyn (2001), who attribute the post-electoral increase in strength of party support to the need for dissonance reduction generated by the act of voting. Similar findings are reported by Meredith (2009), who used data from California to distinguish between a group of eligible and a group of non-eligible voters, separated by only one week in their date of birth. Meredith finds that those eligible to vote registered higher levels of partisanship four years after their first election. Moreover, Dinas (2014c) looks at a nationwide sample of 1,965 high-school seniors, only some of whom were eligible to vote in the 1968 election (the last one with voting age set at 21). The author finds that those eligible to cast a vote in that election were also more likely to register higher levels of partisanship in 1973, i.e. five years after their first eligible election and already a year after the 1972 presidential election, in which both groups were eligible to vote. More tests indicate that, rather than eligibility inducing an increase in political interest, the effects are driven by the act of voting itself. Once again, increasing levels of partisanship appear to be the product of a feedback loop from behavior to attitudes. While using a different identification strategy, Bølstad, Dinas and Riera (2013) reach a similar conclusion: taking

advantage of the extensive use of strategic voting in Britain, the authors find that the act of voting reinforces affective orientations towards the party originally opted for on strategic grounds.

When combined, these findings indicate that, as with other types of behavior, voting behavior operates according to the expectations set by cognitive dissonance and self-perception theory: either because it leads to rationalization bias or because it simply makes individuals infer their attitudes by looking at their behavior (Bem 1972), the act of voting induces more favorable sentiments towards the leader and the party opted for. In doing so, it strengthens and crystallizes people's prior partisan predispositions.⁶

The role of political elites

The experience of new democracies has raised questions for two of the main pillars in the literature of party identification. First, early survey measures consistently found non-trivial levels of partisans even soon after the democratic transition in these countries (Miller and Klobucar 2000; Brader and Tucker 2001). More importantly, partisans were not simply stemming from supporters of the old regime. It seems difficult to combine this pattern with the idea that partisan attachments are simply formed early in life through family socialization and remain robust to future experiences with politics. Family socialization cannot easily account for partisan attachments with parties in a party system that is formed after one has already entered early adulthood. Evidently, personal experience with politics in these countries needs to be taken into consideration.

Second, in contrast to Converse's model of democratic stability, gradual and uninterrupted accumulation of elections did not always translate into a partisan equilibrium. Levels of volatility have remained relatively high and although in many countries party systems consolidated, fluctuations in the number and relative strength of parties have not disappeared. Clearly, repeated elections are not enough to produce stable patterns of voting behavior.

New research into the dynamics of party identification in new democratic regimes has shed light on these puzzles, by looking at the role of political elites. There are various interesting findings stemming from this research. First, in the absence of well-established parties with long historical records, strong partisan attachments need to be mapped upon more encompassing ideological divisions. When elites avoid priming such divisions, party competition becomes more personalized and hence partisan ties do not form so easily. A comparison between Chile and Argentina eloquently shows how important political elites are in enabling consistent ideological schemas, upon which partisan ties can be built. Whereas parties embraced such divisions in Chile, they refrained from doing so in Argentina and this led to lower levels of consistency in partisan support (Zechmeister 2006).

A second important finding relates to the role of uncertainty, put forward by Lupu and Riedl (2013). Defined as the imprecision with which political actors are able to predict future interactions, uncertainty leads parties to more flexible organization, short-sighted behavior when it comes to forming coalitions, clientilistic mobilization practices and high variance in their issue stances. By opting for these strategies, parties cannot develop unambiguous reputations. Uncertainty with respect to future rounds of competition also motivates individual politicians to shift partisan labels, thereby exacerbating voter uncertainty about what parties stand for.

All these developments explain why partisan orientations are more labile among developing democracies. In forming their partisan identities, voters search for a comparative fit, which is broadly defined as ‘what makes my party stand apart from other competitors’. Since parties in these systems lack even a core set of credible commitments and stances, it is difficult to find such a comparative fit and even more difficult to find the same fit over time. This creates room for maneuver, which results in electoral volatility despite the accumulation of elections and experience with political parties. Experimental evidence from Argentina provides supportive evidence for this line of reasoning. Partisanship strengthens when subjects are introduced with treatment that reduces uncertainty about parties’ positions (Lupu 2013).

REVISITING THE MEANING OF PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Without explicitly targeting this question, the new literature on party identification has shed light on the debate about the meaning of party identification. First, by pointing to the importance of historical legacies, these studies have illustrated the enduring linkages of parties with salient divisions within the country. Parties are not simply evaluated on the basis of their current performance and their issue stances, but they also develop reputations on the grounds of their role in historical conjectures. Although generational replacement should result in the weight of history being gradually replaced by the cumulative experience with current political affairs, political socialization does much to retain these continuities.⁷ The overall pattern seems to deviate significantly from the Bayesian updating paradigm, lending support to the identity framework. As Bartels and Jackman (2014: 17, see also Gerber and Green 1998) argue, the weight of the past is simply too heavy to be accounted for by tidy Bayesian learning models. Partisanship seems to rest on the formation of identities that transcend multiple cohorts.

The role of family socialization also points to similar conclusions. Parental transmission of political views consists of a learning process that is centred around easily recognized labels. In two-party systems, offspring learn to which party they belong in social, ideological or historical terms. In multi-party systems,

they learn the broad ideological camp to which they belong. Although within-camp movements are frequent, jumping categories is rarely observed (Rico and Jennings 2015). This discontinuous modelling process facilitates the formation of identities. Children do not learn parents' ideal points along issue dimensions, but form beliefs regarding broad ideological or partisan categories. Evidence provided by Kroh and Selb (2009b) seem to confirm this argumentation. The authors find that, for those inheriting the partisanship of their parents, PID bears more resemblance to an affective orientation, which comes closer to the identity conceptualization. In contrast, when partisan imprinting through the family is absent, PID acquired later in one's trajectory resembles the revisionist view, based on the cognitive evaluations of parties' records.

That said, by looking at the broader influence of family not only on the transmission of partisanship but also on the transmission of political interest, one can still find room for a partisan formation process that operates according to the revisionist school. The intervention of new social contexts, political events and salient issues that emerge after offspring leave the parental home facilitates a process of rational updating. Even if initially adopting their parents' partisan identities, offspring who have inherited their parents' political interest are more likely to be influenced by political cues coming during their early adulthood. Since the cognitive ability in early adulthood is higher than in childhood and adolescence, qualifications in partisan outlooks are more likely to be based on evaluations of parties' records and policies during this period.⁸ The question of course is whether this process of updating is continued throughout the adult life trajectory. New evidence on the dynamics of party identification points to the contrary. Bayesian models that flexibly estimate the weight attached to political stimuli along the lifespan find greater gains in crystallization of partisan beliefs during adolescence (Bartels and Jackman 2014) and early adulthood (Ghitza and Gelman 2015). It seems that, even when parental political interest leads young adults to further adjustments in their partisan orientations, it only postpones the crystallization process from earlier in the pre-adult life to early adulthood. It is still what happens during this period, however, that leaves an enduring imprint on individuals' partisan profiles. The pattern goes far from a linear-like decrease in the weight of stimuli, as the stock of information increases. Instead, the picture comes closer to a sigmoid curve with initial stimuli being weighted much more than those taking place after the transformative period of early adulthood. Once partisan categories are well defined, attitudinal stability is the norm and change becomes the exception. This pattern provides mixed evidence for the two schools of partisanship.

New evidence on the role of elections also contributes to the discussion about the nature of party identification. Bayesian updating presupposes adaptation to new information. The act of voting does not provide new information to voters. In contrast, it helps individuals link themselves to the prototype of a party supporter (Dinas 2014c). In doing so, it enhances the perceptual fit between

individuals who voted for a given party and partisan supporters of the same party. As Grofman et al. (2009: 69) describe it, a partisan identity requires evidence that one's behavior matches the behavior of a typical partisan. Therefore, by reinforcing partisanship, the act of voting seems to provide support for the identity-based conceptualization of party identification. By expressing their preferences via their votes, individuals see themselves more clearly as members of the reference group.

Finally, the new wave of research about the role of parties in fostering partisan attachments in new democracies provides important evidence in favor of the identity school of party identification. One of the building blocks of the revisionist school is the evidence for attitudinal instability in the levels of partisanship. In effect, the running tally approach implies that stability emerges only as a result of stable party signals and cumulative experience of their records by voters. On the other hand, the conceptualization of the Michigan school implies stable identity-based attachments that should lead to attitudinal continuity and stability. Recent work by Lupu (2013) qualifies this view. As part of social identities, partisan identities are based on group memberships, which operate via prototypes, i.e. patterns of behavior that a typical member of the group is expected to follow. The problem arises when such a coherent pattern of behavior is missing. Uncertainty in the political environment prevents parties from retaining consistency in their physiognomy. This makes prototypes less reliable, inhibits the creation of party brands and as a result weakens voters' identity with the party. While in old democracies most parties carry important brand names and thus policy shifts do little to change parties' physiognomy, partisan brands are typically either non-existent or fragile in developing democracies. This is why parties' stances and their over-time consistency become pivotal in the creation of strong partisan ties. In the absence of such consistency, partisan attachments might not be forged even after the consolidation of the party system. This model makes loose and labile partisan ties compatible with the identity logic of party identification when parties fail to produce stable policy platforms.

PARTISANSHIP AS A CATEGORIZATION MODEL OF POLITICAL INFERENCE

The trajectory of the literature on party identification mimics a pendulum that seems to be reaching equilibrium. First, consider the debate about the origins of party identification. From an exclusive focus on early family socialization the literature moved to consider a wide array of long- and short-term determinants of partisanship to converge in a more nuanced framework, which takes into account the differing weight attached to various influences along the life trajectory. Second, consider the debate over the pace of attitudinal change. The initial view of 'unmoved movers' was gradually replaced by that of running-tally

updaters to finally converge in a flexible identity-based conceptualization of partisanship, whereby change is possible, compatible with both schools but still less frequent and more discontinuous than among non-partisans. Third, consider the debate about responsiveness of partisans to new information. While initially thought of as shaping individuals' political worldviews, party identification soon became the mere product of repeated policy evaluations only to converge now into a view according to which partisan identities matter, create biases but at the same time allow room for responsiveness. Thus, the new trend in the literature seems to recognize the role of identities, allowing them, however, to be driven more by what parties and voters do than by established social benchmarks. Although sticking to the Michigan school, this view is inherently more dynamic and prone to adjustments as a result of changes in the political environment.

While allowing more flexible patterns of attitudinal change, the new conceptualization of party identification rests upon one of the most fundamental pillars of the Michigan school, namely the process of identity formation through categorizations and self-classifications. Categorization refers to individuals' tendency to group observations into categories and to form evaluations on the basis of where they see themselves with reference to these categories. New work in the field of behavioral economics enriches established insights about the way categorization operates. In this last section of the chapter, I want to refer to these new developments as a way to suggest new avenues for research in the conceptualization of party identification.

Categorical thinking is not only observed in politics. Rather it forms part of how humans reach inferences in more general terms. Categorical thinking can be best viewed as an alternative to the Bayesian paradigm of opinion change. Bayesian learning theories constitute the dominant paradigm in the study of attitudinal change. According to this framework, individuals are deemed to constantly update their views in the light of new information. Although in some applications the rate of change is allowed to vary according to the stock of priors, attitudes and beliefs about objects are prone to amendment so as to fit the data.

Categorical thinking postulates that humans think in a coarse way. They develop broad disjoint categories which partition the posterior (response) space and choose the category that best fits the data (Mullainathan 2002). The final decision stage considers only the alternatives within the chosen category (Manzini and Mariotti 2012). These categories encompass various types of finer distinctions and serve as heuristics that reduce complexity. Forming categories has implications about how individuals evaluate objects. Experimental evidence suggests that categorization leads to in-group favoritism: after having placed objects into categories, individuals are found to evaluate objects falling in their preferred category more positively than before placing them into categories (Krueger and Rothbart 1990; Stangor et al. 1992).

This coarsened logic has important implications for the study of political attitudes and perceptions. Bølstad and Dinas (2016) have employed this framework in the study of issue voting. In their application, however, categories are broader

than parties, formed on the basis of ideological labels. Categorization generates in-group biases within the left and the right, which create significant deviations from the classic spatial voting theories. Greene (2004) has also applied measures derived from social identity theory to examine the impact of partisanship in generating accentuation and contrast effects. Increases in strength of psychological identification with the preferred party were associated with more positive evaluations of the preferred party but were not found to be significantly related to out-group derogations.

Applying this logic to the study of party identification helps to reconsider the theoretical underpinnings of some key facts related to party identification. One example is the dynamics of attitudinal change. The categorical model reaches different expectations about how people change their views than the Bayesian learning model. Change, according to the categorization model, does not take place in a smooth, progressive way. Instead, it is the result of the accumulation of signals that contradict the existing category scheme. Individuals, therefore, remain unaffected by new political information up to the point at which they overreact, i.e. they revise their categories and relocate themselves and political objects in the newly formed space. Rather than engaging in an attitudinal zigzagging that accommodates each new piece of information, people tend to change in an abrupt fashion and only after they have received sufficient information to alter their existing set of categories.

Empirical evidence in the study of attitude change among partisans provides tentative support for this process. The classic view of partisan updating as a result of new information is that of the perceptual screen, whereby information is funnelled through the party. When it causes a voter to see the party's position as incongruent, it is either disregarded or interpreted through a partisan lens (Carsey and Layman 2006). More systematic evidence on how information is managed by partisans, however, offers a more nuanced picture about the role of party identification. Partisans also respond to unfavorable information even if they hold much higher barriers to opinion change (Gaines et al. 2007). This is compatible with the idea of shifting categories. Rather than gradually updating their views, individuals remain observationally inactive to new information until the point at which they fail to see themselves within the same coarse categories as their party. Change is then not only likely but also more abrupt.⁹ The categorization view of partisanship thus helps to reconcile this Bayesian updating paradigm with the observed evidence of persistence among partisans.

Another example relates to uninformative updating. Based on the idea of categorical thinking, more recent persuasion theories suggest that individuals change their minds about objects after incorporating information that is seemingly uninformative with respect to the specific object. This is done because coarse thinking leads to transference (Mullainathan et al. 2008). Since categories are more encompassing than single objects, a stimulus that might affect one object is transferred and applied to other objects within the same category. This is because of

individuals' tendency to group situations within the same category and to apply the same model of inference to all contexts within the same category. The lack of differentiation between co-categorized situations leads to a message that is informative in one context, while also guiding responses in a different context where the message does not apply.

This process might explain why partisanship seems to affect other cognitive evaluations. An information shock that might not affect partisanship as such may still be transferred onto other attributes such as cognitive evaluations about the performance of the government or the state of the economy (Evans and Pickup 2010). This means that the effect of partisanship on other attitudes might not signal a perceptual screen. Instead, it might be due to the fact that party identification represents the epicenter of coarsened categories within which other more peripheral political attributes are also included.

Partisanship is here to remind us that politics is about sides, i.e. about choosing friends and enemies. Doing so requires perceiving the political world not as a continuum but as a set of disjoint categories, with in-groups and out-groups. Although these categories serve as heuristics that reduce complexity, they are not formed on such utilitarian grounds. Rather they are the product of a coarsened category-based view of the political world, which already starts in early political socialization and is maintained thereafter. Parents do not transmit their ideal policy points to their offspring. Through the indirect learning process of the social learning model, they provide signals about core values and preferences, all of which are readily applied within a categorical framework. The notion of bounded rationality exemplifies this process (Zuckerman et al. 2007). In two-party systems, offspring learn the party in which they belong. In multi-party systems, they learn the ideological camp within which they belong. Although within-camp movements are frequent, crossing these well-defined ideological thresholds is rare. And even if gains in cognitive ability allow a more refined perceptual scheme later in adulthood, the political space is already marked by discontinuities. To be sure, parties are not the only source of coarse schemas. That said, they do represent popular targets of such categorizations. Categorizations then lead to self-classifications, which in turn lead to the formation of identities. In contrast to the Michigan school, however, these identities are more flexible and despite increased resistance to change can still shift as a result of changes in the political context. More research towards this category-based conceptualization of party identification is likely to shed more light on the role of coarse thinking in the formation of partisan identities.

Notes

- 1 A typical example in this respect is the impact of leadership evaluations in the case of Eisenhower, who managed to attract votes from self-declared Democratic partisans (Campbell et al. 1960).
- 2 Another important factor that has been considered in the literature is genetics. This review does not look at these developments in detail but refers to the role of genetics when discussing the

- mechanisms underlying the continuity of partisan beliefs within the family. See Bergner and Hatemi in this Volume (Chapter 17) for an in-depth consideration of genetic factors in voting.
- 3 Many different visualizations are available on the internet, e.g. <http://berlinwahlkarte2013.morgenpost.de>.
 - 4 The authors interpret this finding as evidence for a functional usage of partisanship. A critical summary of this theory is presented below.
 - 5 This point opens a broader question about the interplay between ideology and partisanship. Although this discussion exceeds the scope of this chapter, it is worth noting that the two can operate sometimes as mutually reinforcing and at other times as competing anchors for the loyalty of the voters. In France, for example, Party ID and ideology compete with each other (Lewis-Beck, Nadeau and Belanger 2013), whereas in Portugal they seem to be at play (Lewis-Beck and Lobo 2011).
 - 6 One should avoid exaggerating the extent to which these individual-level dynamics translate into aggregate patterns of partisan learning, however. If this were the case, frequency of elections should lead to aggregate partisan stability. This is not the case, however, since frequent elections indicate fluctuations in the patterns of coordination among partisan elites. The examples of post-WWII Italy and the 4th French Republic provide indicative evidence in this regard. Adding elections does not automatically increase aggregate levels of partisanship, unless the institutional and partisan context also remains stable.
 - 7 The example of post-Communist party systems illustrates the historical origins of parties' reputations. Parties are still either penalized or advantaged by their stance during the transition period, leading to a distinction between negative and positive partisanship: some attachments are formed on the basis of the party that is favored whereas others are defined by opposition to specific parties.
 - 8 Part of this debate has focused on the relationship between partisanship and economic perceptions. Mounting evidence suggests that partisanship does not blind voters to real changes in the economy (Lewis-Beck, Martini and Kiewiet 2013; Nadeau et al. 2013; Fraile and Lewis-Beck 2014). This evidence, however, has been challenged by the proponents of endogenous economic perceptions (Evans and Pickup 2010; Pickup and Evans 2013). Recent work has gone beyond the Yes/No approach, looking at the conditions under which partisanship and economic perceptions interplay (Chzhen et al. 2014; Stanig 2013; Parker-Stephen 2013).
 - 9 Even then, however, resistance to change is strong. An interesting example comes from Groenendyk (2012), who finds that, when voters do come to recognize unfavorable information about their party, they may still stick to their party preference by judging the rival party to be an even worse alternative than before, thus adhering to a 'lesser of two evils' strategy.

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Party Identification: Meaning and Measurement

Donald P. Green and Susanne Baltes

INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960), the concept of party identification has played a central role in the study of electoral behavior. Breaking from previous sociological theories that emphasized the causative role of social position and group membership (e.g. Berelson et al. 1954), the book's core thesis is that voters' psychological sense of attachment to a political party guides their evaluation of candidates, not to the exclusion of all other factors, but profoundly and in election after election. Not all Americans of the 1950s or today describe themselves using partisan social group labels such as Democrats or Republicans, but those who do tend to harbor self-conceptions that remain stable over long stretches of time and to express their partisan sentiments when asked to evaluate candidates, policies, or news events. Party identification is said to cause vote choice on the grounds that the social-psychological inclination to support a given party is rooted in group attachments formed early in adulthood that predate a voter's awareness and evaluation of the specific candidates and issues that emerge in subsequent election contests. A classic instance of this relationship was later documented by Jennings and Niemi (1991), whose panel study of high school students first interviewed in 1965 found that party attachments expressed at that time predicted these respondents' vote choice in the 1980 presidential election.

This micro-level causal process has important implications for aggregate electoral outcomes. When large segments of the electorate identify with a political

party, the amplitude of electoral swings is reduced. Scandals, issue stances, economic conditions, and personal charisma still affect vote choice, but less than they would if voters were not tethered to their longstanding party attachments. Party identification anchors the political system by making it difficult to win overwhelming majorities. When landslides do occur, the balance of party attachments tends to reassert itself, causing aggregate election outcomes to equilibrate to the ‘normal vote’ (Campbell et al. 1966).¹ A corollary to the idea that election outcomes, on average, reflect the distribution of underlying party attachments is the notion that geographic regions have enduring partisan complexions (Erikson et al. 1993), typified by the classification of American states as ‘red’ and ‘blue’ (Gelman et al. 2008).

Although those who study electoral politics widely agree that survey respondents express party attachments that strongly predict their vote choices, controversy surrounds the claim that party identification *causes* vote choice. Some critics suggest that party identification predicts vote choice due to flaws in the way that party identification is measured in surveys. Instead of gauging respondents’ identification with partisan groups, survey measures of party affiliation merely invite respondents to summarize their past voting behavior or their future voting intentions (Dalton and Wattenberg 1993; Bartle 1999). According to this argument, the correlation between party identification and vote choice is not causal in any interesting sense, and one could just as easily claim that vote choice causes party identification. Another line of criticism argues that party evaluations, not affiliations, are what voters are expressing when they describe themselves as Democrats or Republicans. The most influential critique of this sort (Fiorina 1981) characterizes party identification as a ‘running tally of past performance evaluations’ rather than a longstanding group identity. In effect, voters base their affiliation on how well each party performed when it held the presidency. In support of this performance-based account of party affiliations, its proponents note that the public tilted Republican during the Carter presidency of economic downturn and foreign policy setbacks, as well as during the economic resurgence of the Reagan presidency (MacKuen et al. 1989); conversely, the public tilted in the Democratic direction after George W. Bush’s approval ratings plummeted during his second administration (Jacobson 2009). A third line of criticism takes aim at the notion that party identification is more stable than other political attitudes. One version of this critique contends that partisanship is subject to short-term movement; another critique is that an assortment of attitudes, such as views about social welfare policy, are as stable as party identification (Achen 1975; Ansolabehere et al. 2008). This critique upends the claim that party identification takes shape before political evaluations that are tied to specific candidates or issues.

These challenges to the original conception of party identification have for decades been the subject of lively debate in part because they map onto larger debates about the role of rationality and information in the etiology and

expression of public opinion. The original conceptualization of party identification focused on its dual role as an attitude, an enduring predisposition to respond to a class of stimulus objects, and as an attachment, an affective bond or sense of loyalty. Party identification also played an important cognitive function. In the original theoretical framework, party identification persists over time in part because it acts as a ‘perceptual screen’ that filters out information that is unfavorable to one’s partisan orientation (Campbell et al. 1960, p.133). During a Republican presidency, Republicans take a more buoyant view of the economy than Democrats and are more skeptical about allegations of scandal or wrongdoing, but Democrats adopt this mindset shortly after a Democrat president takes office (Gerber and Huber 2010). The advent of rational choice models of voter behavior led to a reinterpretation of party identification as something other than an emotional attachment or source of distorted information processing. Instead, party identification was taken to be an assessment of how the parties are likely to perform in office on issues of importance to the voter, an assessment based on accumulated experience and therefore especially stable among older people (Achen 1992). Party identification serves as an economical shortcut for cognitive misers, who can make political choices based on party labels without having to devote time to researching each candidate or issue.

A large research literature has attempted to test the empirical implications of these competing perspectives. Much of this literature focuses on the rate of change in party attachments over time; another sizable literature assesses whether party identification changes in the wake of short-term forces, such as shifting evaluations of incumbent performance. Most researchers draw upon individual-level panel surveys, but many of the recent works have tracked aggregate time series. Decades of investigation span many countries, with the bulk of scholarly attention focusing on the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Italy, Russia, and Japan.

The thesis of this chapter is that the answers rendered by studies of partisan stability are very sensitive to questions of measurement. Seemingly minor changes in the way party identification is measured can fundamentally alter inferences about the rate of partisan change and the resilience of party attachments to short-term forces. We therefore focus attention on the conceptualization and measurement of party identification. The chapter is organized as follows: we begin by discussing the validity of various measures of partisanship, focusing in particular on the distinction between measures that tap party identities and those that tap evaluations of the parties. Next, we discuss the statistical implications of measurement error and show how multi-item survey assessment can overcome the biases associated with unreliable measurement in individual-level panel data. We discuss the recent experimental literature on partisan change, describe the time-series literature on ‘macropartisanship’, and reflect on the theoretical significance of instances in which party systems have changed, leading to abrupt and lasting changes in attachments. Finally, we conclude by discussing a potential

anomaly for the theoretical perspective that stresses social identity, the growing correlation between party identification and ideological self-description.

VALIDITY

Before assessing the validity of any proposed measure, we must first define the latent orientation that we seek to measure. One possible target might be ‘partisan attitudes’, which would encompass a broad range of evaluations of the parties, their platforms, and their supporters. In principle, one could do so party by party, making no assumptions about whether positive evaluations of one party imply negative evaluations of other parties. Some early research on partisan attitudes went down this path, using ‘feeling thermometers’ – ratings that expressed respondents’ ‘warmth’ toward partisans of each party on a scale from 0 to 100 – to assess whether Americans’ partisan attitudes were arrayed along a single dimension or whether each party’s supporters were evaluated along a distinct dimension (Weisberg 1980). Initial results showed surprisingly weak correlations between the ratings of Democrats and Republicans, but this finding was later shown to be a methodological artifact; when response biases specific to the feeling thermometer were corrected using alternative measures, the underlying correlation between evaluations of the two parties was -0.81 (Green 1988). In the American two-party setting, it appears that thinking well of one party and its partisans coincides with thinking ill of the other, although a nontrivial share of the electorate takes a dim view of both.

Alternatively, a researcher could attempt to measure what Achen (1992) terms the ‘party differential’, which refers to how voters evaluate the relative benefits they expect to receive if one party were in power instead of another. This construct is primarily cognitive in nature, which means that an affect measure, such as a feeling thermometer, might not be appropriate, although one might imagine that a party perceived to provide greater net benefits would be rated warmly. Measures with clearer face validity than overall ratings include questions such as ‘Which political party – the Republican, or the Democratic – will do a better job of keeping the country prosperous?’ or ‘Looking ahead for the next few years, which political party do you think would be more likely to keep the United States out of war – the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?’² While vague with respect to the policy initiatives that might allow one party to better ‘handle’ the economy or foreign affairs, these items do tap into assessments of the net benefits of one party’s stewardship.³ One noteworthy feature of such ratings is that they have been known to shift markedly over relatively short time periods. For example, swings of more than ten points in the span of a year or two regarding the prospective evaluation of which party would do a better job of keeping the country prosperous have occurred frequently (Green et al. 2002, p.123). Prospective evaluations of which party would do a better job keeping the country out of war

are marked by similarly drastic swings. These abrupt changes in party ratings are theoretically significant in two respects. Shifts of this speed and magnitude stand in sharp contrast to patterns of over-time change in party identification, which, as we point out below, tend to be quite muted. Second, the fact that evaluations change in the wake of events suggests that people do not reject information that runs counter to their partisan proclivities. Partisan perceptual screens evidently let a considerable amount of light shine through.

A third approach is to assess respondents' ideological proximity to the parties. In the 1970s, the American National Election Studies facilitated the assessment of this construct by asking respondents to locate themselves on an issue continuum (e.g. government should guarantee that everyone has a job and a decent standard of living versus government should let everyone get ahead on their own) and to locate the parties on the same continuum. This measurement paradigm made it easy to gauge how far the respondent was from each party on each issue or on the liberal-conservative continuum (Franklin and Jackson 1983; Franklin 1992). The problem with this measure is that the ratings of ideological location may be colored by 'projection' and 'persuasion' (Brody and Page 1972). Projection occurs when respondents place themselves on the continuum and then place their preferred party close to themselves and the opposing party far away, without regard to the actual ideological locations of the parties. Persuasion occurs when respondents express their partisan affinities by placing themselves close to where they intend to place their preferred party. Persuasion may be a momentary artifact of survey measurement, or it may reflect a broader phenomenon: supporters of a party tend to adopt the issue positions that the party endorses (Lenz 2012). There seems to be no satisfactory solution to these threats to valid measurement of ideological proximity. At most, researchers working with these data sidestep the problem of projection by computing the ideological distance between a respondent's own position and average location of the parties expressed by all respondents (cf. Franklin 1984).

Although one could reasonably argue that people vote for candidates of a certain party because they feel warmly toward that party, because they expect that party to perform well in office, or because they feel close to the party's stances on leading issues, scholars of electoral politics have often frowned at explanations of this sort. One complaint is that, even if these constructs were measured perfectly, it is theoretically uninteresting to say that people vote for candidates of the better party, where better is defined according to feelings of warmth, performance evaluations, or policy proximity. No one doubts that a party's candidates would attract more votes if the party were more likeable, competent, or ideologically appealing. This complaint is amplified by concerns that the measures described above are far from perfect. As noted, the ideological proximity measure may also reflect respondents' attitudes toward the parties that are not rooted in issue-based evaluations. Similarly, a respondent might say that Republicans are better suited to handle the economy due to a global affinity

toward the Republican Party that is not rooted in a specific evaluation of economic stewardship. What appears on the surface to be a cold calculation about which party is most competent might actually be a rationalization based on which party one likes best.

The appeal of party identification as an explanatory construct derives in part from the fact that, in theory, it is distinct from and causally prior to party evaluations. As James Campbell and colleagues point out in their review of the literature,

Party identification is an attachment to a party that helps the citizen locate him/herself and others on the political landscape. As thus conceived, partisans are partisan because they think they are partisan. They are not necessarily partisan because they vote like a partisan, or think like a partisan, or register as a partisan, or because someone else thinks they are a partisan. In a strict sense, they are not even partisan because they like one party more than another. Partisanship as party identification is entirely a matter of self-definition. (Campbell et al. 1986, p.100)

Valid measurement of party identification requires the researcher to zero in on this self-definition without inadvertently leading the respondent to report past voting preferences or future vote intentions (Converse and Pierce 1986). By the same token, feeling thermometers are invalid measures of party identification because they may tap short-term evaluations that are distinct from self-conceptions. Abrupt change in thermometer ratings (Kabashima and Ishio 1998) does not mean that respondents are changing their underlying party attachments. When one's party is hit by scandal, disaffected partisans may lower their thermometer ratings without changing their self-conceptions in much the same way that diehard football fans may feel disappointment with their team while remaining loyal to it.

In an effort to highlight long-term self-conceptions, the traditional ANES wording of its party identification measure starts with the initial question 'Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?' The phrase 'generally speaking' stands in contrast to the short-term focus of 'In politics as of today', which has long been used to preface the party ID measure used by the Gallup Poll¹⁴. 'Generally speaking' and 'usually think of yourself' guide the respondent toward a more synoptic assessment of group identification, but the wording could be strengthened to leave no ambiguity. A version of the party ID question that explicitly asks the respondent to put aside short-term considerations is taken from a 1973 NORC survey analyzed by Green and Schickler (1993): 'No matter how you voted in the last couple of national elections or how you think you might vote in next November's national election – do you basically think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?' Ironically, the branching format of the traditional ANES question asks those who initially call themselves 'independents' the follow-up question: 'Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?' This question does not satisfy the self-definition criterion for valid measurement of

group identification because it refers to parties rather than groups, and the word ‘closer’ could refer to social distance or ideological distance. Thus, the long-standing question (Petrocik 1974) of whether independent ‘leaners’ – those who initially describe themselves as independents but later express a sense of closeness to one party – harbor a genuine party identification cannot be discerned from responses to these two questions alone.

In a similar effort to highlight long-term self-conception and independence of such self-conception from electoral support, Bartle (1999) has proposed to change the traditional British Election Studies question ‘Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat or what?’ to ‘Many people think of themselves as being Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat (or Nationalist), even if they don’t always support that party. How about you? Generally speaking do you think of yourself as Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, Nationalist, or don’t you think of yourself as any of these?’⁵

A noteworthy alternative question format that measures self-conceptions without guiding respondents to consider their long-term outlook is to present respondents with a series of group labels (e.g. ‘Democrat’). A 1990 *Times-Mirror* poll described in Green and Schickler (1993) used the wording:

Now I’d like to ask you a question about how you regard yourself. On a scale from 1 to 10, where ‘10’ represents a description that is perfect for you, and ‘1’ a description that is totally wrong for you, how well do each of the following describe you? ... A Republican ... A Democrat.

Each respondent’s party difference score is computed by subtracting the score given to the Democrats from the score given to the Republicans. The advantage of this format for surveys conducted outside the US is that it can be adapted to accommodate multiple parties and multiple identifications. In multi-party systems such as Argentina, where the parties periodically enter into coalitions, voters may identify with more than one party, at least to some extent (Lupu 2013). In cases where the number of parties is so large as to be unwieldy, respondents may be presented with three or four randomly selected parties, or a mixture of large parties and randomly selected small parties.

One limitation of each of the party identification questions discussed so far is that they presuppose that the language in which the question is asked contains a noun that denotes people who identify with a given party (e.g. Democrats). Some countries have such nouns (e.g. Conservatives in the UK), but many do not. For example, in Germany there is no noun to refer to identifiers with the SPD or the CDU/CSU. Thus, when the self-description items were posed to respondents in a recent three-wave panel survey, the traditional German survey question on party identification ‘Many people in Germany are inclined towards a certain party over long periods of time, even though they vote for a different party from time to time. How about you: Do you, generally speaking, lean towards a certain party?’⁶ was followed up with the question: ‘Independently of a long-term inclination, do

you also, generally speaking, think of yourself as a supporter of any of the following parties?⁷

Other countries have chosen different solutions to this problem. The Dutch, for example, ask ‘Many people think of themselves as an adherent to a particular political party. Do you think of yourself as an adherent or not as an adherent to a political party? (To which party)?’, while, in Italy, spatial proximity is invoked: ‘Do you consider yourself to be close to any particular party (or political movement)? If so, to which party (or political movement) do you feel closest?’ The same holds for the multi-country Comparative Study of Electoral Systems survey. An overview of selected countries and their most commonly used party identification questions can be found in Table 14.1.

Rather than ask respondents whether they think of themselves as party supporters, another option is to use more projective questions that invite respondents to react to encounters with fellow partisans or opposing partisans. This approach, which traces its intellectual origins to multi-item psychometric assessments of

Table 14.1 Selected international examples of party identification question wording

Country	Survey	Party ID question
US	American National Election Studies (ANES)	‘Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat / Republican, an Independent, or what?’
Britain	British Election Study (BES)	‘Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat or what?’
Germany	Politbarometer / Forschungsgruppe Wahlen	‘Many people in Germany are inclined towards a certain party over long periods of time, even though they vote for a different party from time to time. How about you: Do you, generally speaking, lean towards a certain party?’
Netherlands	Dutch Parliamentary Electoral Studies	‘Many people think of themselves as an adherent to a particular political party. Do you think of yourself as an adherent or not as an adherent to a political party? (To which party)?’
Italy	Italian National Election Survey (ITANES)	‘Do you consider yourself to be close to any particular party (or political movement)? If so, to which party (or political movement) do you feel closest?’
Multi-country	Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)	‘Do you usually think of yourself as close to any particular political party? (What party is that)?’

social distance, was introduced by Greene (2002) and used more recently by Huddy, Mason and Aarøe (2015). Examples include survey questions such as ‘When talking about [Democrats / Republicans], how often do you use “we” instead of “they”?'; ‘When someone criticizes [Democrats / Republicans], it feels like a personal insult'; ‘I act like a [Democrat / Republican] to a great extent'.⁸ Unfortunately, relatively few studies have used this approach in large-scale panel studies, perhaps because researchers are hesitant to devote resources to extensive multi-item measurement. Little is known about how these scales behave over time when asked of panel respondents. The same may be said for more elaborate measurement techniques, such as the implicit attitude test, which has only recently been used to assess party identification (Hawkins and Nosek 2012; Theodoridis 2015).

An overview of different types of party identification questions outlined above can be found in Table 14.2. A final validity consideration arises when respondents are asked to name a party that they support or identify with, namely, whether to invite open-ended or close-ended responses. This decision can yield dramatically different results. For a discussion of the French case, see Lewis-Beck (1984); for the United States, see Groenendyk (2013).

RELIABILITY

The measurement of party identification in the United States has too often come down to the traditional seven-point scale based on the branching question that we critiqued above. Although the stem question is clearly worded, each of the three main options is bound to attract a heterogeneous group of people whose degree of identification varies. The possibility of misclassification is especially plausible given the appeal of the ‘independent’ option, which sounds attractive to many ‘closet’ partisans in the United States (Keith et al. 1992). When no independent option is offered, many of those who would otherwise call themselves independents describe themselves as Democrats or Republicans (Green and Schickler 1993).

The tradition of measuring PID with a pair of branched questions was something of a departure from measurement approaches of the 1950s and 1960s, which often used multi-item batteries to measure constructs such as authoritarianism or conservatism. As Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder (2008) have noted, early use of multi-item scales by the ANES might have taken the field in a different direction by generating quite different empirical results and accompanying theoretical explanations. This point is not always well appreciated among those who study party ID, both in the US context and internationally. Studies such as Clarke, Sanders, Stewart, and Whiteley (2008), Thomassen and Rosema (2009, Netherlands), LeDuc, Clarke, Jenson, and Pammett (1984, Canada), LeDuc (1981 for the Netherlands, Canada, Britain,

Table 14.2 Overview of party identification question types and sources

Emphasis of question	Source	(Example) Question
Longer-term retrospection	American National Election Studies	'Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?'
Shorter-term considerations	Gallup	'In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent or what?'
Independence from vote history and vote intention	NORC 1973 Amalgam Survey	'No matter how you voted in the last couple of national elections or how you think you might vote in next November's national election – do you basically think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?'
Self-conceptions	Times-Mirror poll	'Now I'd like to ask you a question about how you regard yourself. On a scale from 1 to 10, where "10" represents a description that is perfect for you, and "1" a description that is totally wrong for you, how well do each of the following describe you? . . . A Republican . . . A Democrat.'
Feelings towards parties or partisans	American National Election Studies	'How would you rate [Democrats / Republicans]? Please choose a rating number between 0 and 100. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the group. Ratings between 0 and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the group and that you don't care too much for that group. You would rate the group at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the group.'
Burden and Klofstad (2005)	Gallup	'Generally speaking, do you usually feel you are a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?'
Performance evaluations		'Which political party – the Republican, or the Democratic – will do a better job of keeping the country prosperous?'; 'Looking ahead for the next few years, which political party do you think would be more likely to keep the United States out of war – the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?'
Ideological proximity to the parties	ANES	'Should government guarantee that everyone has a job and a decent standard of living or should government let everyone get ahead on their own – which comes closest to your view?'
Partisans as social groups	Greene (2002); Hudly, Mason and Aarøe (2015)	'When talking about [Democrats / Republicans], how often do you use "we" instead of "they"?'; 'When someone criticizes [Democrats / Republicans], it feels like a personal insult'; 'I act like a [Democrat / Republican] to a great extent'.

Note: Used in multi-item measurement contexts

and the US), Kabashima and Ishio (1998, Japan) or Schmitt-Beck, Weick, and Christoph (2006) report analyses in which instability of party identity is inferred by analyzing a single survey measure over time and counting the number of ‘movers’.

There are two basic approaches to analyzing multi-item measurement of PID. The low-tech version is simply to standardize each item (dividing by its standard deviation) and average them together. This method works pretty well when the different measures use different wording and response formats so that the errors of measurement are uncorrelated across items. For example, the 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study shows a 0.93 correlation between the seven-point pre-election measure of party identification and the same measure asked after the election (Green and Schickler 2009). An alternative measure of party identification may be constructed from respondents’ ratings of whether the word ‘Democrat’ describes them well on a scale from 0 to 10 and their corresponding ratings of the word ‘Republican’. Subtracting the Democrat rating from the Republican rating generates a scale from –10 to 10. The correlation between these pre- and post-election ratings is 0.91. If we standardize the traditional party identification measure and add it to the standardized party identification difference scale, the correlation between the pre-election index and the post-election index rises to 0.96. Notice that as we expunge measurement error from the assessment of party ID, the over-time correlation rises.

But even this method does not fully expunge error, especially since we are using just two survey measures. If we want to approximate what would happen if we had a large supply of (valid) questions at our disposal, we could build a simple statistical model to characterize the measurement of party ID in the pre-election and post-election survey.

This model-building process begins by positing an underlying identification variable for each survey respondent in the pre-election wave (*PRE*) and an underlying identification variable for respondents in the post-election wave (*POST*). These latent variables are not directly observed; we instead observe survey responses to the traditional scale and the party difference scale. The slippage between the latent variables and the observed scores denotes measurement error. For example, if we let *TRAD_PRE* denote the traditional measure of party ID in the pre-election wave, the error for this measure (*ERROR_TRAD_PRE*) may be expressed as

$$\text{ERROR_TRAD_PRE} = \text{TRAD_PRE} - \text{PRE}$$

Rearranging the terms in this definition, we obtain a formula that looks like a regression model in which the outcome, the observed measure, is expressed as a function of the true latent score and the error term:

$$\text{TRAD_PRE} = \text{PRE} + \text{ERROR_TRAD_PRE}$$

A corresponding equation may be written for the post-election survey:

$$TRAD_POST = POST + ERROR_TRAD_POST$$

Notice that the correlation between $TRAD_PRE$ and $TRAD_POST$ will not typically reveal the true correlation between PRE and $POST$. The correlation between these latent variables is

$$\frac{Cov(PRE, POST)}{SD(PRE)SD(POST)}$$

but the correlation between the observed variables is

$$\frac{Cov(TRAD_PRE, TRAD_POST)}{SD(TRAD_PRE)SD(TRAD_POST)} = \frac{Cov(PRE, POST) + Cov(PRE, ERROR_TRAD_POST) + Cov(POST, ERROR_TRAD_PRE) + Cov(ERROR_TRAD_PRE, ERROR_TRAD_POST)}{SD(PRE + ERROR_TRAD_PRE)SD(POST + ERROR_TRAD_POST)}$$

If we make the assumption that the errors of measurement are random (i.e. independent of each other and independent of latent party identification at each wave), this decomposition simplifies to

$$\frac{Cov(PRE, POST)}{\sqrt{(Var(PRE) + Var(ERROR_TRAD_PRE))(Var(POST) + Var(ERROR_TRAD_POST))}}$$

which understates the true correlation when the measurement errors have positive variance. This is the well-known statistical principle that random measurement error attenuates correlations.

Of course, one might worry that survey items that share the same wording and response categories might elicit response errors that are related to one another over time, in which case the observed correlation may be expressed as

$$\frac{Cov(PRE, POST) + Cov(ERROR_TRAD_PRE, ERROR_TRAD_POST)}{\sqrt{(Var(PRE) + Var(ERROR_TRAD_PRE))(Var(POST) + Var(ERROR_TRAD_POST))}}$$

By relaxing the assumption of random measurement error, we allow for the possibility that attenuation bias may be offset to some degree by what is typically a positive bias in the numerator.

The complications presented by random and nonrandom measurement error may be overcome by measuring party identification using more than one valid measure in each wave. Suppose the party difference measure were asked in each wave. Again, we can define measurement error to be the difference between the observed score and the latent score, but we also include a scaling parameter (λ) to account for the fact that we are measuring the latent score using the metric of the traditional party ID measure. The scaling parameter puts the seven-point

traditional measure on the same metric as the difference measure, which runs from -10 to 10 . In the pre-election wave, the difference measure $DIFF_PRE$ may be expressed as:

$$DIFF_PRE = \lambda PRE + ERROR_DIFF_PRE$$

The same scaling is assumed to hold in the post-election wave as well:

$$DIFF_POST = \lambda POST + ERROR_DIFF_POST$$

This model may be used to prove the following result: assuming (1) errors of measurement are independent of the latent identification scores (PRE , $POST$) and (2) errors of measurement associated with the traditional party ID scale are independent of errors of measurement associated with the difference measure of party ID, a consistent estimator of the underlying correlation between PRE and $POST$ is

$$\sqrt{\frac{Cov(PRE, DIFF_POST)Cov(POST, DIFF_PRE)}{Cov(PRE, DIFF_PRE)Cov(POST, DIFF_POST)}}$$

Let's see how this estimator plays out using the 2006 CCES survey data. The values in Table 14.3 below the diagonal show covariances while the values above the grey diagonal show correlations.

Plugging the observed covariances into the formula above, we obtain

$$\sqrt{\frac{10.2687 \times 10.7424}{10.2754 \times 11.2653}} = 0.976$$

which is similar to but more defensible than the correlation between the standardized average score at each point in time. The simple standardized average is easy to compute but does not allow for correlated measurement errors that may arise when the same survey item is asked at different points in time. This ability to expunge measurement error with fewer and more explicit assumptions is the great advantage of multiple measure assessments of party identification.

Table 14.3 Correlations (above the diagonal) and covariances (on or below the diagonal) among pre- and post-election measures of party identification, 2006 CCES Panel Survey

	<i>PRE</i>	<i>DIFF_PRE</i>	<i>POST</i>	<i>DIFF_POST</i>
<i>PRE</i>	3.69173	0.9070	0.9297	0.8898
<i>DIFF_PRE</i>	10.2754	34.7664	0.8978	0.9134
<i>POST</i>	3.62501	10.7424	4.11839	0.9243
<i>DIFF_POST</i>	10.2687	32.3468	11.2653	36.0722

How do we interpret this correlation substantively? The squared correlation (0.953) tells us the proportion of the variance in the true post-election score *POST* that is predicted by the true pre-election score *PRE*. This number is a descriptive statistic that is specific to the respondents in this survey; it does necessarily apply to populations elsewhere. Nevertheless, the squared correlation conveys a sense of the rate at which underlying partisanship changes, and this rate can be tracked over time or compared to other kinds of attitudes or evaluations.

Although party identification is sometimes caricatured as an ‘unmoved mover’, the notion that party attachments are perfectly stable is merely a straw man. Even core social identities such as religious affiliation can change over time. The standard is not absolute stability but rather whether partisanship is stable vis-à-vis other kinds of political evaluations that are said to influence both party identification and vote choice. Comparing the stability of party identification with that of party affect and presidential approval ratings, Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002) find that in eight out of nine panel studies that included measures on both party identification and party feeling thermometers, the estimated correlation between waves (corrected for measurement error) was larger for party identification than for the corresponding measure of party affect, while the estimated correlations were identical in the remaining case. Compared with presidential approval ratings, estimated correlations for party identification were stronger in every instance that included both questions. And as we saw above, analysis of the 2006 CCES suggests that underlying party identification scarcely changes during the final months of an election campaign, and the same result holds across a myriad of panel surveys that span an election season (Green and Palmquist 1994). As more time elapses between survey waves, the squared correlation gradually falls, although surveys conducted in the United States and elsewhere attest to the remarkable stability of party attachments even over periods of four years or more (Schickler and Green 1997). Although many scholars have expressed concern that party identification reflects short-term evaluations and vote intentions, it is remarkable how accurately party identification measured in the first wave of a multi-wave survey predicts vote choice in the final wave years later. Indeed, a cautious approach to explaining vote choice would be to use a well-measured assessment of party identification from a panel survey that long predates the circumstances of a subsequent election.

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES PARTY IDENTIFICATION CHANGE WITH SHORT-TERM FORCES?

Addressing the biases associated with measurement error is important not only for properly assessing over-time stability in partisan attitudes; it is crucial when party identification is modeled as a function of past partisanship and such

short-term forces as voters' assessment of the incumbent party's performance in office or their ideological proximity to the candidates for office. These kinds of modeling exercises have gradually fallen out of favor as the field of electoral studies has moved away from analysis of non-experimental data and toward analysis of field and survey experiments. Nevertheless, a large and still influential literature attempts to demonstrate that party identification changes in the wake of changes in short-term evaluations.

In the American context, the best-known examples of this type of panel analysis are Fiorina (1981) and Franklin and Jackson (1983). Both of these works were early applications of two-stage least squares to estimate the effects of short-term forces on party identification while addressing the possibility that short-term evaluations might themselves be colored by partisan attitudes. Fiorina (1981, Chapter 5) found in two panel studies that party identification in 1960 and 1976 was affected by retrospective performance evaluations concerning the economy and foreign affairs, controlling for past party identification, which was instrumented by demographic predictors such as age, class, and religion. However, this finding evaporates when one allows for measurement error in the assessment of past partisanship (Green and Palmquist 1990). Franklin and Jackson found that party identification is affected by voters' perceived issue proximity to the parties. Their analysis focuses on the 1956–60 and 1972–76 NES panel studies and uses a set of more than ten demographic variables as the instrumental variables, which they assume affect issue proximity but have no direct effect on party identification.⁹ This identification strategy seems rather ad hoc, and a closer look at the model reveals that it produces anomalies that, when corrected, reverse the main finding (Schickler and Green 1995). Analyses of data outside the United States are fragile in much the same way; correction for measurement error in past partisanship reverses findings that seem to suggest that partisanship changes in the wake of candidate choice or other short-term forces (Schickler and Green 1997; Green and Schickler 2009).¹⁰

The problem with these modeling exercises is that they rely on strong assumptions. Most analysts assume that, conditional on past partisanship, the change in short-term evaluations is as if randomly assigned. Conditioning on past partisanship, however, means conditioning on *true* past partisanship. If one's measure of past partisanship contains measurement error, the estimates will tend to be biased: the stability of partisanship will be underestimated, and the influence of short-term forces on partisanship will tend to be overestimated (Green 1991). This type of bias afflicts a wide array of works purporting to show how party identification changes in response to short-term forces. A simple way to assess whether these estimates are robust to measurement error is to make measurement error in party identification an explicit feature of the estimator.¹¹ This adjustment is sufficient to overturn the conclusions of some of the best-known demonstrations of the endogeneity of party identification.

Measurement assumptions – and modeling assumptions more generally – become much weaker when experimental designs are employed. A typical experiment divides a pool of subjects into two groups. A treatment group receives some form of treatment, usually information that is thought to be relevant to subjects' assessment of the parties. A control group receives nothing or a stimulus that is thought to have no bearing on partisan attitudes. Because random assignment creates treatment and control groups that are identical in expectation, measurement of past partisanship is unnecessary for unbiased inference (although such measures can be useful insofar as they allow for more precise estimation of the effect of the treatment).

The experimental literature on party identification is telling precisely because of the difficulty that researchers have had when trying to induce changes in partisanship. Cowden and McDermott (2000) conducted a series of laboratory studies that sought to influence party attachments through roleplaying exercises in which undergraduate subjects articulated a pro- or anti-Clinton position. None of these interventions succeeded in changing party attachments. Short videos extolling the virtues of one of the two parties had weak effects on the party attachments expressed by Mechanical Turk respondents under lab-like conditions, and no trace of an effect remained after a few days (Coppock and Green 2014).

On the other hand, a small number of survey experiments have found that party identification changes when respondents are provided with information about party platforms or performance. Building on the Russian, Polish, Hungarian, and British split-ballot survey experiments reported by Brader and Tucker (2008) and Brader, Tucker, and Duell (2013) respectively, Lupu (2013) finds that Argentinian party identification strengthens when respondents are given information about parties' distinctive platforms, weakens when respondents are told about the alliances that parties have formed with one another, and remains unchanged when they are provided with both types of information. Short-run effects were also observed among Indian survey respondents, who were presented with randomly varying vignettes describing allegations of corruption and criminal behavior against hypothetical candidates in a nearby village. The vignettes varied the party and caste of the accused. Banerjee, Green, McManus, and Pande (2012) find that respondents who were exposed to vignettes in which allegations of corruption or criminality were lodged against a given party were about five percentage points less likely to describe themselves at the end of the survey as 'close to' this party.¹² This finding suggests some short-term adjustment of partisan evaluations, but the 'close to' wording leaves open the question of whether party identification changed.

Unfortunately, these experiments do not measure whether information effects persist over time, a limitation that makes it difficult to interpret the small and contingent treatment effects that these authors report. One of the few studies to track attitudes over a period as long as two weeks is a field experiment conducted in the days leading up to Mexico's 2009 municipal elections (Chong et al. 2015). Prior to the launch of the study, a federal audit of municipal governments documented

accounting irregularities indicative of corruption; the auditors also noted whether local administrators had failed to spend federal grant money, suggesting a low level of administrative competence. The researchers conducted a precinct-level leafleting campaign designed to publicize some aspect of the auditors' reports. One leaflet publicized the degree to which the municipality failed to spend federal grant funds. A second publicized the failure to spend grant funds that were supposed to aid the poor. A third graded the municipality according to the amount of evidence of corruption. Two weeks after the election, the authors surveyed 750 respondents from 75 of the precincts. Chong, de la O, Karlan, and Wantchekon find that negative report cards addressing corruption (but not failure to spend grant money) diminished respondents' identification with the incumbent's political party. Unfortunately, no follow-up surveys were conducted to assess whether these effects persisted beyond two weeks.

Another noteworthy field experiment looks at the effects of encouraging independent voters to register with a political party. In January 2008, as the presidential primaries of both parties were intensifying, Gerber, Huber, and Washington (2010) conducted a survey of registered voters in Connecticut who, when registering, declined to affiliate with any political party, making them ineligible to vote in the upcoming presidential primaries. Among those who declared themselves in the survey to be independents, half received a letter informing them that they must register with a party in order to vote in that party's presidential primary election. The letter also included a registration form. Five months later, respondents in both treatment and control conditions were re-interviewed. The authors report that the treatment group became more likely to identify with a political party, although it is not clear whether the effect is due to reflections about the parties stimulated by the letter, the act of registering with a party, or subsequently voting in the party's primary. Like the results reported in the Chong, de la O, Karlan, and Wantchekon study, the results reported by Gerber, Huber, and Washington are borderline significant and await replication; nevertheless, they hint at a causal link between party registration and party identification.

MACROPARTISANSHIP

Another strand of research that bears some surface resemblance to experimentation is time-series analysis in which aggregate poll results are tracked over time. The dependent variable in these studies is sometimes termed 'macropartisanship' (MacKuen et al. 1989). In the American context, this variable is defined as the proportion of all party identifiers who call themselves Democrats, and analogous coding could be applied to any party in a multi-party system. The accumulation of a large number of polls over an extended period of time makes it possible to track macropartisanship and to assess whether it moves systematically in response to short-term forces, such as scandal, economic

conditions, or approval of the incumbent administration. Just as only a small number of individual panel studies gauge partisanship over time, only a small number of countries have extensive enough polling to facilitate aggregate time-series analysis.

The analysis of macropartisanship is subject to four methodological concerns, apart from debates about question wording discussed above. The first is that, when independent random samples of adults are sampled at different points in time, change in the distribution of party identification may reflect cohort replacement rather than change at the individual level. In other words, even if everyone were to maintain precisely the same party identification over time, young people and immigrants coming into the population may have different party loyalties from emigrants or the recently deceased. A second concern is that aspects of survey measurement may change over time. For example, if the apparent victory of one candidate in a presidential debate reduces the likelihood that supporters of the losing candidate respond to a poll (Gelman et al. 2016), the partisan distribution may lurch in the direction of the winner even when everyone's partisan identification remains stable. Another example of changing survey measurement occurs when poll questions leading up to the measurement of party identification call attention to a recent scandal or short-term concern; if the emphasis of the questions changes from poll to poll, respondents may be primed to respond differently to the party identification question. A third concern arises when a given survey is used to measure both macropartisanship and evaluations of the incumbent or the economy. This practice can lead to a spurious relationship between macropartisanship and short-term forces, because when random sampling draws an extra dollop of Republicans to survey, chances are that the incumbent Republican will be given better than expected evaluations.

A fourth and final concern is statistical. Macropartisanship is typically modeled as a function of past partisanship and short-term forces. For a given presidential administration, a typical time-series regression model takes the form

$$Y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Y_{t-1} + \beta_2 STF_t + U_t,$$

where Y_t represents macropartisanship at time t and Y_{t-1} represents macropartisanship lagged one period. STF_t denotes a measure of some type of short-term force (e.g. approval of the incumbent), and U_t is a disturbance term comprising all of the unmeasured determinants of macropartisanship. The parameters of this model indicate the dynamic relationship between macropartisanship and short-term forces. β_2 indicates the instantaneous effect of short-term forces on macropartisanship. β_1 represents the autoregressive effect of lagged macropartisanship; the closer this parameter is to one, the

more persistent are any short-term influences or disturbances. If short-term forces were to rise permanently by one unit, the long-term change in macropartisanship would be

$$\frac{\beta_2}{1 - \beta_1}.$$

Although it is tempting to estimate this equation using ordinary least squares regression, doing so risks bias insofar as both right-hand side variables are measured with error. This type of error simply reflects the sampling error associated with any given poll's reading of macropartisanship and short-term forces. (Ideally, these two variables would be measured by different polls so that these sampling errors are independent.) Consistent estimation requires either specification of the sampling error variance or some other correction, such as two-stage least squares.¹³

What does the analysis of macropartisanship suggest about its responsiveness to short-term forces? A simple time-series graph of macropartisanship in the United States suggests that it tends to move gradually in the wake of changes in incumbent approval. As noted above, this pattern is subject to multiple interpretations, but for the sake of argument, suppose that this change were due to individual-level movement, not cohort replacement or changes in survey measurement. Using CBS/New York Times polls (which use the 'in general' wording of the party identification question) to measure macropartisanship and Gallup polls to measure presidential approval, Green and Schickler (2009) estimate β_1 and β_2 to be 0.967 and 0.013, respectively, from quarterly data from 1976 through 2007. These estimates imply that a one percentage point increase in approval sustained over a four-year presidential term translates into just a 0.17 percentage point movement in macropartisanship. Thus, a 20 percentage point increase in presidential approval sustained over a four-year period translates into 3.4 percentage points of macropartisanship, which is barely noticeable to the naked eye of a poll watcher.

In other words, macropartisanship moves perceptibly only in the wake of extraordinary and sustained shocks to short-term evaluations. This pattern stands in marked contrast to other aggregate time-series such as evaluations of which party is better able to manage economic affairs, which tend to move abruptly with changes in economic conditions.

TELLING INSTANCES OF UNSTABLE PARTISANSHIP

Marked change in partisanship in the wake of changing perceptions of incumbent performance would be more in keeping with Fiorina's 'running tally'

characterization than the original social identity characterization. As the previous section suggests, however, retrospections typically generate subtle changes in partisanship, and the same goes for other short-term forces, such as shifts in perceived issue positions of the parties and candidates. Indeed, one of the most telling experiments conducted to date found that, when elected officials announced issue positions contrary to the positions expressed by respondents to a panel survey, these respondents moved their positions closer to the elected officials' and rated them higher (Broockman and Butler forthcoming). No comparable experiment has been conducted on the announced positions of political parties, but perceived issue stances of the parties tend to be updated slowly (Lenz 2012).

Sometimes, however, party identification does change abruptly and in a long-lasting manner. Is this inconsistent with a social identity characterization of partisanship? Describing party identification in Argentina, Lupo (2013, p.50) points out that 'a social identity conception of partisanship need not imply partisan stability' when party stereotypes are themselves in flux. After 1983, a series of party alliances in effect 'rebranded' old parties, and voters' self-definitions changed as well. Fluid partisan attachments are typical in party systems that experience upheaval, such as Italy in the 1990s, when the longstanding objects of party attachments, the Communist Party and the Christian Democratic Party, collapsed.

In the United States, the New Deal realignment occurred before the advent of survey research, but we can trace the realignment of conservative whites in the South from the Civil Rights Movement through the Reagan Administration, especially after the Voting Rights Act in 1965 brought a wave of newly enfranchised blacks into the Democratic Party. Interestingly, this realignment played out over two decades. Conservative southern whites entering the electorate after 1965 were overwhelmingly Republican, but their older counterparts weakened their Democratic ties gradually. This pattern suggests that preexisting party attachments fade when the social basis of party attachment changes, although the process in this case arguably represents a combination of racial and ideological sorting.

Yet, in other cases, party identification might not have had sufficient time to develop for a broader electorate, as would be the case after an upheaval in the party system or the emergence of a newly democratic system (Converse 1969; Green et al. 2002). It is unclear how quickly party identification takes root in the wake of such upheavals. Some evidence suggests that identifications form and express themselves rather quickly (Brader and Tucker 2008). In fact, even in a country such as Brazil, which has been described as a case of 'party underdevelopment' due to its fragmented party system and ideological convergence of its two main parties, party identity appears to exist and shape policy evaluations (Samuels and Zucco 2014).

THE ANOMALY OF INCREASING CORRELATION BETWEEN PARTISANSHIP AND IDEOLOGY

For those who contend that party identification is a social identity akin to identification with a sports team or ethnic group, an important anomaly is the increasing correlation between party identification and ideological self-placement. Unlike the 1950s, when the ranks of Democrat and Republican elites were ideologically heterogeneous, the American parties are now ideologically distinctive. The ideological distributions of each party's Congressional delegations now show very little overlap; gone are the liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats (Hetherington 2001). The mass public is much less polarized than are party activists, but, compared to the 1950s and 1960s, fewer Democrats now describe themselves as conservatives, and fewer Republicans describe themselves as liberals. Abramowitz (2014) points out that, while in 1972 the correlation between the seven-point party-identification scale and the seven-point liberal-conservative scale among voters captured in the American National Election Study (ANES) was 0.34, this measure increased to 0.67 in 2012. In the 2012 ANES, of those respondents who identified themselves as Democrats and did not decline to answer the question about their ideological leanings, roughly 13% called themselves 'conservative' while 51% called themselves 'liberal', with the remaining 35% going to self-proclaimed 'middle of the road' stances. Even more starkly, only roughly 5% of Republicans call themselves 'liberal' while 78% call themselves 'conservative', with the remaining 18% opting for 'middle of the road'.¹⁴ This phenomenon is sometimes described as partisan 'sorting' (Levendusky 2009) and seems to pose a challenge to the view that Americans adopt party identities using social identity roadmaps. Partisan sorting seems to suggest instead that, as the ideological divide between the parties has grown sharper, voters have gradually attached themselves to the party that is most ideologically congenial (Freeze and Montgomery 2015). Put somewhat differently, as American parties have become more like the ideologically polarized parties of Europe during the Cold War, American party identification has taken the ideological tinges of European party identification from that era.

This thesis is an important one and its many empirical implications warrant further investigation. The hypothesis that people change partisanship when they find themselves ideologically out of step with their party could be tested using the experimental paradigms discussed above. For example, suppose a panel study is conducted in which the initial wave measures party identification and liberal-conservative self-description. Do conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans change their partisanship when, at some future date, they are presented with information about the ideological location of one or both parties? Which kinds of information move subjects' party attachments more – references

to party stances on specific issues or synoptic depictions of the parties' ideological profiles? Or does this information instead induce respondents to follow the ideological lead of the parties and adjust their own issue positions or ideological self-characterizations? If the latter were the case, the implication would be that 'sorting' reflects the public's growing awareness of ideological terminology and how to apply it to the parties. A parallel experimental intervention would introduce information about the social bases of partisan support rather than about issue stances per se. Here, the hypothesis is that the ideological polarization of American party elites coincides with increasing clarity in social stereotypes, as groups such as Southerners, Evangelical Christians, feminists, and environmentalists become more homogeneous in their support of one party. Lacking much understanding of ideological terms, the public may nevertheless apply the labels of liberal and conservative to themselves based on their evaluations of social groups (Brady and Sniderman 1985). Although the research literature on partisanship is vast, the experimental investigation of partisanship's ideological underpinnings remains underdeveloped and a fruitful avenue for future research.

Notes

- 1 Scholars have suggested that partisan ties have diminished over time in the United States and many other countries, making elections more volatile (Dalton 2013). For an update of the empirical propositions in *The American Voter*, see Lewis-Beck, Jacoby, Norpoth, and Weisberg (2008).
- 2 Both questions appeared in Gallup Polls. See Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002).
- 3 It remains unclear how to weight survey responses so that the overall index reflects the weight that respondents accord the economy, foreign affairs, and other policy domains when formulating their overall subjective assessment of the party differential, but given the high correlation among competence ratings in different domains, a simple additive index seems serviceable.
- 4 However, Bishop, Tuchfarber, and Smith (1994) find that the Gallup question format is no more responsive to short-term forces than the ANES wording.
- 5 In addition to attempting to distance the question from past voting preferences, Bartle also invites respondents to decline having a party ID in the latter part of the question.
- 6 In German: 'Viele Leute in der Bundesrepublik neigen über längere Zeit einer bestimmten Partei zu, auch wenn sie ab und zu eine andere Partei wählen. Wie ist das bei Ihnen: Neigen Sie – ganz allgemein gesprochen – einer bestimmten Partei zu?'
- 7 In German: 'Unabhängig davon, ob Sie einer Partei über längere Zeit zuneigen: Würden Sie sich im Allgemeinen als Anhänger/in einer Partei bezeichnen?'
- 8 See Greene (2002) and Huddy, Mason and Aarøe (2015) for additional examples. Response options for the latter two statements: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree.
- 9 These variables are: age, born before 1910, nonwhite, Catholic, Jew, urban and rural residence, northeast or southern residence, union membership, years of school completed, college graduate, income, and father's Democratic or Republican partisanship.
- 10 Others analyze aggregate partisanship trends to assess the impact of short-term forces on partisanship. On the role of unemployment and inflation, see Weisberg and Smith (1991); on the role of election campaign dynamics and events see Allsop and Weisberg (1988).
- 11 In Stata 14, the command to do this is 'eivreg', which allows users to specify the reliability of the independent variables. Depending on the statistical model, corresponding error adjustments for the measurement of short-term forces may make little difference (see Green 1991).

- 12 The wording of this question is less than ideal as a measure of identification: 'Among only the four following parties, which party do you consider yourself being closest to?'
- 13 Another way to adjust for sampling error in macropartisanship is to estimate an autoregressive moving average model. See Beck (1991).
- 14 Some of these figures do not sum up to 100% due to rounding.

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Cognitive Mobilization

Todd Donovan

INTRODUCTION

The concept of cognitive mobilization can be traced to the works of Ron Inglehart and, most specifically, to a rich body of work by Russell Dalton. Inglehart (1970) advanced the idea that European society was changing in the 1960s in ways that were disseminating post-materialist values and changing how people were oriented to European (vs. national) institutions. He linked the concept of cognitive mobilization to earlier ideas about ‘social mobilization’ drawn from Lerner (1958) and Deutsch (1961). For their part, Lerner and Deutsch were interested in earlier processes of social change associated with new feelings of nationalism that displaced attachments to older empires. That process of change was said to be brought about by the rise of new communications networks (mass media) that expanded the horizons of wealthier and better-educated people beyond word-of-mouth communications of earlier eras. Social mobilization involved the demise of older modes of communications that limited people to narrow, parochial concerns, and the rise of new modes that provide people with richer information about a larger world.

The cognitive mobilization thesis, as developed by Ronald Inglehart and applied to partisanship and political behavior by Dalton, has evolved considerably over time, but there are enduring elements to how it has been defined and operationalized. Among the enduring elements are a focus on societal change associated with changes in media and formal education. Inglehart posited (circa the late 1960s) that formal education and mass communications in Europe were

promoting transnational attitudes, as well as broad national concerns. He used the term cognitive mobilization to describe a ‘broader process’ of ‘the increasingly wide distribution of the political skills necessary to cope with an extensive political community’ (Inglehart 1970:47). He described cognitive mobilization as a process whereby formal education ‘increases the individual’s capacity to receive and interpret messages’ (1970:47). His 1970 study defined cognitive mobilization in terms of the spread of formal education in the mass public and the simultaneous increase in public exposure to new forms of mass media (e.g. television). These factors were seen as linked to the acquisition of new political values, new attitudes, and changes in political behavior – in the case of Inglehart’s 1970 study, the new value being support for a European polity.

COGNITIVE MOBILIZATION DEFINED

Dalton (1984) applied the concept to describe another shift in political attitudes and behavior – a movement away from mass partisanship. Citing Inglehart (1977) and others (Allardt 1968; Shively 1979), Dalton, writing well before the rise of twenty-four-hour cable television news networks, live satellite news feeds, and the Internet, wrote that:

the dramatic spread of education in advanced industrial democracies is producing a qualitative change in the political sophistication of Western mass publics...at the same time, these societies have experienced an information explosion through the mass media and the information cost of political information has decreased substantially. Because of this cognitive mobilization, more voters now are able to deal with the complexities of politics and make their own political decisions. (Dalton 1984:265).

Given this ‘socioeconomic transformation’ of society ‘during the latter half of the 20th century’ (Dalton 2007:275), Dalton proposed a decline in the mass public’s need for partisan cues as a guide for decision-making and as a force in mobilizing political participation. As the result of an increase in the public’s ability to process political information, and decreased cost of information, fewer people required party labels as a shortcut or heuristic when evaluating their world and when making political decisions. The cognitive mobilization (CM) thesis proposes that more people are now able to ‘deal with the complexities of politics’ on their own, without having to rely on ‘affective, habitual party cues’ (Dalton 2007:276; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000:11).

Dalton (1984:270; 2007:277; 2013:40) distinguishes between party mobilization and cognitive mobilization, with the former measured by strength of party identification, and the latter measured by an index combining formal education and interest in politics. He acknowledges (1984:267) that measures of the two concepts are inter-related: non-partisans scored low on the cognitive mobilization measure, while people who said they were close to a party scored high. The

relationship between the measure of cognitive mobilization and strength of partisanship, however, is far from perfect.

Dalton also distinguished his CM logic from the Michigan/*American Voter* model (Campbell et al. 1960; Converse 1976) with an explicit argument about inter-generational change that echoed Inglehart's explanation of social change. *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960) might be read as explaining partisanship as a life-cycle process – where a psychological attachment to partisanship is the product of early socialization processes and subsequent life experiences that generally act to strengthen a person's initial partisanship over time. The original Michigan model, however, is not well suited to explain how partisanship might weaken in an electorate across generations. In his article about cognitive mobilization and partisan dealignment in Europe and the US, Dalton wrote 'there may be a large generational component to this [CM] dimension' due to increased educational levels in younger cohorts, and because younger people 'are more attuned to the political information provided by the mass media, especially television' (1984:268).

Cognitive mobilization, then, can be seen, in part, as a process of generational change affecting political attitudes and behavior, and change over time that is precipitated by rising access to higher education and the spread of new information technologies. The dynamic component to this process is similar to that underlying Inglehart's post-materialism thesis and Pippa Norris's concept of the 'critical citizen' (Norris 1999). Dalton develops the generational dynamic more explicitly in his 2007 book, *The Good Citizen.*, in which he describes an American society transformed between the 1950s – when few attended college – and the late 2000s, when affluence had increased leisure time, political skills, and a majority of adults attended college. This most educated generation 'in the history of American democracy ...contributes toward a more expansive and engaged image of citizenship' (Dalton 2007:11). The new, younger generation of 'engaged citizens' are less trusting of politicians, less deferential to authority, and less likely to vote or join a party, while being more engaged with non-traditional modes of participation such as non-violent protest, boycotts, and petitioning.

THE MOBILIZATION TYPOLOGY / COGNITIVE PARTISAN INDEX

Cognitive mobilization is operationalized by Dalton (1984; 2013) with a four-category typology whereby individuals are classified based on their strength of partisanship and their level of cognitive mobilization. People are classified on the partisan dimension based on responses to the two standard American National Election (ANES) party identification questions, or (as in the 1984 article) based on their response to a question about whether they felt 'close' to a political party. They are classified on the second dimension based on their level of education and interest in politics (see Peterson 1978), with categorical measures of

Figure 15.1 The cognitive mobilization typology

	<i>Independent (pure and leaners)</i>	<i>Partisan (strong or weak)</i>
High cognitive mobilization	Apartisan	Cognitive Partisan
Low cognitive mobilization	Apolitical	Ritual Partisan

Sources: Dalton (2013:40); Dalton (1984:270).

education and interest used to construct an index (discussed below). Respondents scoring above a certain cut point are classified as high cognitive mobilization, while those below the cut point are classified as low cognitive mobilization.

Figure 15.1 reproduces Dalton's classification schema as he operationalized it with the ANES data. Given how partisanship is used, anyone who claims to identify with the Democratic or Republican parties will be classified as a cognitive or ritual partisan. Ritual partisans may be seen as representing the traditional (Michigan) model of partisanship. Party cues play a large part in structuring their behavior – where party cues are available they vote and are involved out of habit, but lacking party cues they may not (Dalton 1984:270). Cognitive partisans, in contrast, are the newer breed of partisans who have more resources at their disposal when approaching politics and should be engaged whether or not party cues are present (Dalton 1984:271).

Any respondent who reports they are independent on the first, three-category ANES partisanship item is classified as being either apartisan (no party ID, with high cognitive mobilization) or apolitical (no party ID, with low cognitive mobilization). Apoliticals are closely analogous to the Michigan Model's 'pure' independents: people who have neither the psychological attachment to politics nor sufficient political sophistication to be engaged. Apartisans, in contrast, were the newer independents who had the cognitive resources to be engaged with politics despite having no attachment to parties. Indeed, apartisans and cognitive partisans are at the heart of the process of social change that the cognitive mobilization thesis is based upon. Writing in 1984 (271), Dalton stated 'the apartisan group is the focal point of this study', and his 2013 book explaining electoral change and dealignment was titled *The Apartisan American*.

DEALIGNMENT, INDEPENDENTS, AND COGNITIVE MOBILIZATION

Although it is not explicitly argued, the thesis strongly suggests that social change should be producing electorates that have more cognitive partisans and, perhaps more central to the thesis, more apartisans. Given dealignment and the growth of people who do not identify with a political party, and given rising levels of education, there should be more apartisans now. A key question here is: more apartisans now, as opposed to when? These dynamic implications are

examined in a section that follows. Before that, however, it is important to give brief consideration to how the cognitive mobilization thesis meshes with (or fails to mesh with) partisan dealignment. One thing that should be noted is that the classification typology discussed above leaves little room for the concept that independent ‘leaners’ are ‘closeted partisans’ who behave similarly to traditional strong partisans. Anyone who initially identifies as independent on the first ANES partisan question is placed in the apartisan or apolitical categories. The growth of independent identifiers (and decline in partisan identification) is accepted as reflecting a fundamental behavioral and attitudinal shift in electorates, rather than reflecting change in how people approach survey questions about political parties (e.g. Keith et al. 1984; Petrocik 2009).

Dalton (1984; 1999; 2007; 2008) and others (Dalton and Kuchler 1990; Dalton and Wattenberg 2000; Dalton et al. 2000) identify cognitive mobilization as a force causing dealignment from established parties, and causing shifts in behavior away from class-based politics, party memberships, and traditional modes of political participation such as voting. Where some might see the growth of self-described independent voters, and a weaker role for parties as a threat to democratic systems (see Diamond and Gunther 2001; Stokes 1999), from the CM perspective, this trend may be benign, if not positive. Whereas partisans may defer to the simplicity or certainty of habitual party cues when voting, and may be mobilized based on ‘duty-bound’ deference to tradition and authority (Dalton 2007), cognitively mobilized citizens may still be engaged with politics albeit with different values and skills that correspond with non duty-based modes of political engagement: social movements, protests, boycotting, petitioning, etc. (also see Norris 1999; 2011).

When extended in one logical direction based on continued growth in access to education and information, the CM argument would predict that ‘ritual’ partisans (partisans who lack cognitive resources) and ‘apolitical independents’ (non-partisans who lack cognitive resources) are being replaced in electorates by high cognitive mobilization ‘cognitive partisans’ and ‘apartisans’. Moreover, it follows that if partisan dealignment means that a growing proportion of people in an electorate lack party attachments – that is, as more identify as independent – we might expect most change over time to be reflected in a growing proportion of the electorate who are ‘apartisans’ – high cognitive mobilization and having no party identification. We return to the dynamic implications of the cognitive mobilization thesis below.

One of the more appealing aspects of the cognitive mobilization thesis as it applies to independents and dealignment is that it offers a structured explanation for why, decades after *The American Voter* was published, fewer Americans (and fewer people in other established democracies) claim to have a party identification. The CM thesis suggests that broad forces of social change have altered what we are measuring with survey questions about partisanship (on broader measurement issues, see Green and Baltes, this Volume, Chapter 14). As Dalton noted (2007:274), the ANES study found roughly 25 percent of respondents said

they were independent in the 1950s, whereas 41 percent reported this in 2000. The 2008 (40 percent) and 2012 (38 percent) ANES measured similarly high levels of self-reported independence. To Dalton and others (Wattenberg 1984; Craig 1985; Dalton 1999; Bowler et al. 2009), this is evidence of the weakening of partisanship and partisan dealignment caused by new social forces associated with growth in education, political interest, and access to new media.

Any discussion of survey measures of partisanship presents the unavoidable conundrum of what survey questions are measuring when they ask people if they think of themselves as a partisan or independent. The same applies when people are asked questions about whether or not they feel ‘close’ to a party. We might see the rise of independent identifiers as either a long-term, continuous, incremental process of the erosion of party loyalties precipitated by cognitive mobilization. Conversely, a decline of people claiming a partisan affiliation could reflect a less meaningful attitudinal change that affects a person’s willingness to admit they affiliate with a party; a change that may have been produced by a discrete number of events (e.g. scandals, realignments) that altered how people viewed parties in the short term. Nonetheless, a key assumption of the CM thesis is that the decline of party identifiers reflects fundamental attitudinal and behavioral changes in the electorate.

As noted above, the CM thesis also makes assumptions about social change and generations. Citizens in established democracies were living with rising affluence, rapid growth in education, and increased access to media information (television) when the thesis was developed. Party cues are said to be less relevant because these social changes increased political skills for many citizens. Dalton has long maintained (1984; 2008) that CM should be expressed as differences across generations, with younger generations not only being less partisan, but also more engaged with politics when non-traditional modes of participation are examined. This suggests a constant process whereby forces of change continue to disrupt, particularly among the youngest age cohorts.

Analysis of the 2005 World Values Survey (Denemark et al. 2016) demonstrates that, in Canada and many European nations, patterns of political involvement across generations are consistent with Dalton’s (2008) argument that newer generations were less engaged with voting and political parties, but more engaged with non-duty-based political activities than their predecessors. However, results from Australia, New Zealand, the US, and the UK demonstrate other forms of non-duty-based political activity are not offsetting the decline in traditional political engagement among younger cohorts.

THE DYNAMIC ELEMENTS OF COGNITIVE MOBILIZATION. OR NOT?

All of this raises interesting questions about the temporal, dynamic manifestations of cognitive mobilization on the composition of electorates. For example,

in 2015 (at the time of this writing), should we still expect these social forces to have the effects they were said to be having in the 1970s? Have rising levels of education and changes in mass media corresponded with increased interest in politics? How does the thesis stand today given the new, fragmented media environment with self-selection of news (Lodge and Taylor 2000; Nyhan and Reifer 2014) and news avoidance (Prior 2005)?

As far as the potential generational aspects are concerned, if social forces have operated since the 1960s as proposed by CM, why would we continue to expect engaged partisans to remain concentrated among the youngest cohorts? At some point would we expect expanded access to education to neutralize differences in cognitive mobilization across age cohorts? Related to this, have some applications of the CM thesis mistaken a lifecycle effect (in any era, young people vote less and protest more) for generational change?

It is not possible to assess all of those questions here, but it is important to consider, more than thirty years after the thesis was developed and applied to our conception of mass partisanship, how much key assumptions about CM carry forward over time in the established democracies that Dalton was considering. That is, do we consider the cognitive mobilization thesis in terms of three scenarios? Under one scenario, we might see cognitive mobilization as a finite period of transition that occurred after World War II but has run its course, producing contemporary electorates that are now more educated and interested than those in the past. Under a second scenario, cognitive mobilization might be seen as a continuing process of political transformation, whereby increasing proportions of citizens in the established democracies continue to become more educated and more interested in politics. A third scenario might have CM as something unique to a particular generation. At some point in the past, young people may have become less traditionally partisan and more interested in politics than their elders, but those generational differences (if they existed) are no longer evident (see also Dassonneville, this Volume, Chapter 7).

Put differently, did Germany, Great Britain, the United States, and other established democracies experience an episode of political and social change whereby after the 1950s their populations received greater formal education and use of mass media, which left these countries with new batches of high cognition partisans and cognitive partisans – where countries quickly reached a fairly static new equilibrium mix of traditional partisans, cognitive partisans, and partisans? Or are electorates, over time, increasingly defined as being cognitively mobilized such that traditional partisans are disappearing while gradually being replaced by partisans?

Under the first scenario, the social changes that begat cognitive mobilization may have had ceiling effects, such that the change that occurred was analogous to an intercept shift. At some point, there may be limits to how many more people experience the transformative effects of education, or limits to the transformative effects of innovations in mass media. Budget constraints, immigration, and/or

the pressures of liberalization and globalization may place fiscal and political limits on the proportion of a country's population that can have access to the sort of education that facilitates high cognition. The major transformative political effects of innovations in mass media dissemination of political information may have also been a phase-shift limited to the middle of the 20th century, where (local) print and radio mediums gave way to a more widely accessible (global) visual medium. As a crude example, a person's ease of access to information about the US war in Vietnam may have been fundamentally different from a similar person's access to information about World War II or World War I, but the mass public's access to information about Vietnam was not so very different (or of lower quality) from their access to information about the US war in Iraq.

In effect, there could have been a social transformation from the 1950s to the 1980s (or some such interval) that created electorates in the established democracies that now comprise a new steady-state mix of cognitive partisans, ritual (habitual) partisans, apartisans and apolitical independents. Levels of interest in politics, likewise, could have reached a new steady state as the effects of education and 'new' media reached a plateau. Under this scenario the relative proportions of people in each electoral group in Figure 15.1 should look different when 1985 is compared with 1955 (if we could do this), but we would not expect the proportions of cognitive partisans, ritual partisans, apartisans, and apolitical independents to look much different when we compare electorates in 2015 with those from 1985. There may have been fewer habitual partisans in 1985 than 1955, but we would not expect as much difference in the share of people in these groups when we compare 1985 with 2015.

There is a second scenario where we might see CM as a process that is ongoing and continuous. Indeed, Dalton continually refers to 'a changing public' in recent work (Dalton 2013:29). In earlier work (Dalton 1984:265) he also referenced a dynamic process where 'the need for [partisan] cues declines as the political skills of the voters increase and information costs decrease', and where 'the dramatic spread of education' is producing an expansion of political sophistication. But how long does this process run? Under a second scenario, advanced democracies may have begun at a post-World War II starting point where very few people had access to quality secondary or tertiary education. Over time, increasingly larger proportions of a country's population are experiencing more education, so it could take several generations, or centuries, for most or all citizens to reach higher levels of cognitive sophistication that results from increased access to education.

The transformative capacity of mass media, likewise, could also be seen as a continuous process of change. After the 1950s, broadcast television displaced newspapers and radio as vehicles for lower-cost access to political information. By the 1990s, cable television and global satellite technology expanded the scope, quantity, and immediacy of information beyond what was possible with broadcast television. Cable TV and satellite made low-cost political information more

readily available. In the 21st century, the growth of the Internet, social media, and mobile devices could be seen as further transforming and broadening access to political information by increasing the quantity of political information (but see Mossberger et al. 2003), increasing the number of access points to information, while lowering the costs of access. After all, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other messaging apps have changed how modern political campaigns communicate and these new media were instrumental in destabilizing totalitarian regimes during the Arab Spring. New media technologies that we cannot yet anticipate could continue this process of increased access and exposure to information and thus increase the proportion of people who are interested in and involved with politics.

Under this second scenario the proportion of an electorate that would be rated high on cognitive mobilization in Figure 15.1 (recall, CM is an index that combines level of education with level of political interest) should be increasing over time. This could be driven by increased access to education alone. But this presents additional questions about how dynamic the CM thesis may be. If increased access to education means that a greater proportion of an electorate scores high on cognitive mobilization, should cognitive partisans and apartisans eventually displace and overwhelm the proportion of an electorate who are ritual partisans and apolitical? And how do we reconcile this with research that shows education and political interest correlate with stronger party attachments? (Campbell et al. 1960; Albright 2009). The second scenario requires us to consider whether or not high cognition citizens continue to identify with parties. If they do, we would expect steady growth of cognitive partisans. If they do not, we should expect an increase in apartisans – particularly if overall levels of attachments to parties are declining. The main point is that, under a scenario where the process of cognitive mobilization is ongoing, we should observe some continuous process of change in the electorate. Put differently, electorates in 1985 should have looked substantially different from those in 1955, and electorates in 2015 should look substantially different from those in 1985. We might thus expect a steady increase in political interest – a key component of the CM measure.

The third scenario describes another potential dynamic aspect of the cognitive mobilization process – a cohort effect. Whereas the first two scenarios described above reflect broad social forces that may have affected many countries simultaneously in the same manner, cohort effect scenarios could be more idiosyncratic. Under one such scenario applied to the US case, there may have been societal and political changes that occurred at some point in the post-World War II through 1960s period that defined a generation. These forces might include high distrust of government precipitated by Vietnam and Watergate, the coming of age of the first wave of first-generation university students, or by forces such as a short-term sorting in the two-party system precipitated by the civil rights era. As a result, the proportion of highly interested (younger) might increase – but as that generation ages and is replaced, change that might be attributed to CM could decay over time.

I present some simple data here in an attempt to illustrate which of these three scenarios might best describe the dynamics of CM. These data – limited to the American and Australian cases – by no means allow any definitive tests. These data are presented here only for the purpose of illustration and discussion, not for hypothesis testing. Ideally, we would have rich, individual-level panel survey data measuring political interest from pre-World War II until today, from several nations. Data spanning this period describing rates of formal education and spending on education would also be illustrative. Unfortunately, these data do not exist or are not readily available. However, there are some relatively lengthy time series that measure components of the cognitive mobilization index that Dalton employed in his analyses (Dalton 1984:267 note 4; Dalton 2013:41 note 197).

Two of these time series are the American National Election Study (ANES) and the Australian National Election Study (AES). The ANES time series included a four-category measure of respondents' reported level of education, and a four-category measure of respondents' reported interest in 'public affairs', used to construct the CM index. Each of the ANES items are coded 1–4, and they are combined here just as they were by Dalton to form an index that ranges from 2 (low) to 8 (high cognitive mobilization). The ANES time series interest item was measured in a constant fashion from 1964 to 2008. A similar item asking respondents about their interest in politics has been placed on the Australian Election Study in a consistent manner since 1987.

Trends in political interest

Trends in political interest displayed in Figure 15.2 (USA) and Figure 15.3 (Australia) are remarkably stable. The percentage of respondents reporting that they followed what was going on in government and public affairs 'most of the time' has been largely unchanged since the 1970s, and was actually lower in 2008 than it was in 1968. Although there was a trivial increase since the 1970s in the percentage who said they followed things 'some of the time', the levels of this in 2008 were lower than in 1964. Political interest in Australia, although measured with a question worded slightly differently, shows a similar pattern of stability. Levels of interest in politics in Australia have also been flat since the time series began in 1987. Additional ANES measures (not displayed) of the percentage of Americans who said they followed campaigns was similarly flat (87 percent in 1960, 86 percent in 2008).

At best, this suggests a rather static view of the cognitive mobilization thesis described by the first scenario above. However, the trends in Figure 15.2 and Figure 15.3 do not extend far enough back in time to test if the levels of interest observed at the start of these trends was higher than what existed earlier (it should be, given assumptions of social change). Political interest is important to the CM measure because, combined with education, it is expected to describe people who have the resources and motivation to actively reason about politics such that they

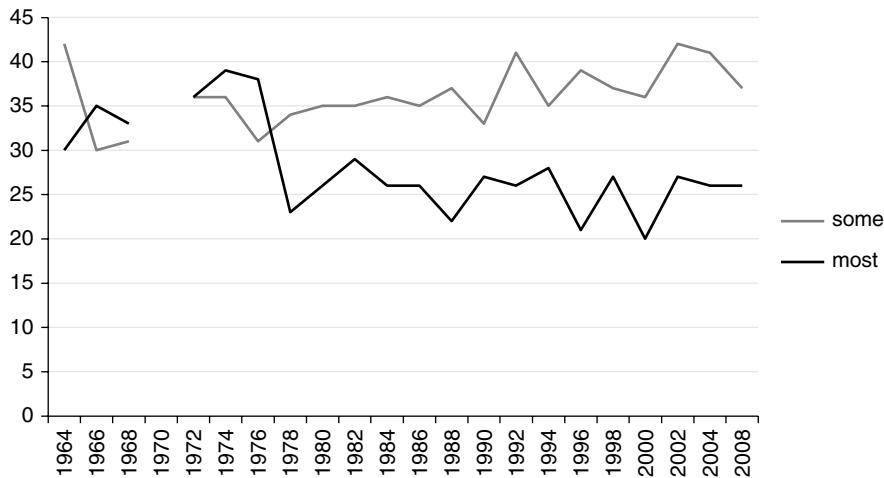


Figure 15.2 Interest in public affairs, USA 1964–2008

Note: Question wording, 'Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether or not there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?' Not asked in 1970.

Source: ANES.

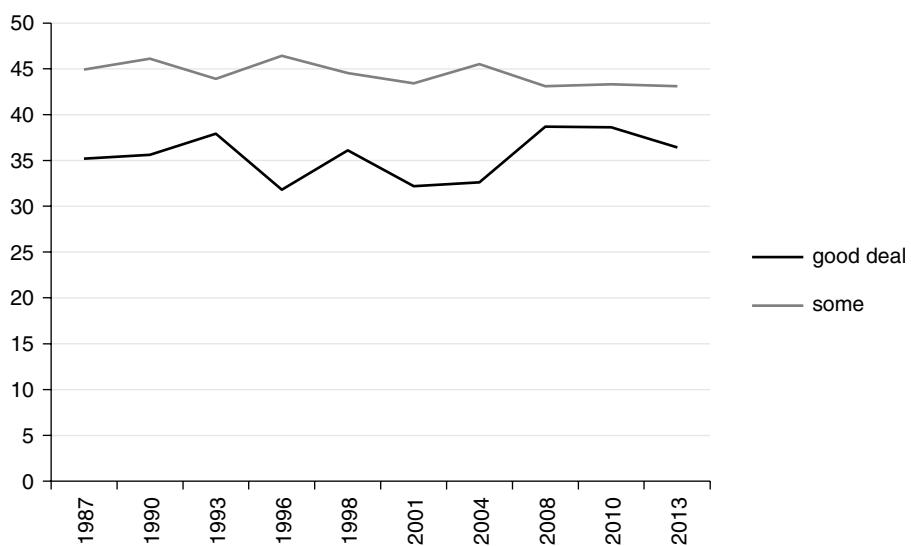


Figure 15.3 Interest in politics, Australia 1987–2013

Note: Wording, 'Generally speaking, how much interest do you usually have in what's going on in politics? A good deal, some, not much, or none?'

Source: AES various years.

need not rely on party cues. If interest is static (as we observe here), the proportion of people in the electorate who are in the high cognitive mobilization categories in Figure 15.1 (cognitive partisans and apartisans) could remain static over time – unless the growth of cognitive partisans and apartisans is driven simply by increases in education.

Ideally, we could trace these attitudinal data back farther in time, but the ANES interest item was not included in this form until 1964, and the AES began in 1987. Given that the CM thesis is largely one of social and generational transformation that is changing (or changed) the electorate, if there were data on political interest going farther back we should observe lower levels of interest prior to the time periods illustrated in Figure 15.2 and Figure 15.3. These truncated time series, however, might be consistent with a scenario where there was an (unobserved) upward shift in interest before 1964 that produced a new (higher) level of interest that has remained constant since then.

There is another way to assess how interest in politics has changed over time, even with data that only date back to 1964. The CM thesis, and Dalton's work, does suggest there should have been change since 1964 in the proportion of an electorate who are interested in politics. We do not see this in Figure 15.2 and Figure 15.3, but it could be that there are generational differences buried in these data. Older generations in the early ANES surveys, for example, are expected to have been socialized differently (less education, less media access) than younger people surveyed at the time. The younger cohorts may have experienced the cognitive transformation of expanded education and media resources that increased interest in politics, and may have had greater interest than older respondents.

Figure 15.4 plots trends in generational differences in the political interest of Americans from 1964 to 2004. The trends illustrate the net difference in political interest between people over 55 and older and people 35 and younger. A value of (positive) ten percent indicates that ten percent more young people reported the relevant level of political interest than people 55 and over, while a value of negative ten percent illustrates that there were ten percent fewer young people reporting the relevant level of interest. The figure displays the difference across generations in those who report being interested in politics 'most of the time' and 'some of the time'.

In the early years of this ANES time series, we can see some evidence of a generational difference that might be consistent with the CM thesis. From 1964 to 1976, more younger people than older people reported being interested in public affairs 'some of the time', and in 1968 only 7 percent more of the older cohort reported being interested 'most of the time'. However, at every point of time here, fewer younger people reported being interested in politics 'most of the time'. There was never a survey that found a plurality of younger respondents saying they were interested 'most of the time', yet this was the modal response for older people most years. Furthermore, since the 1970s there has not been much difference between the number of older and younger people being

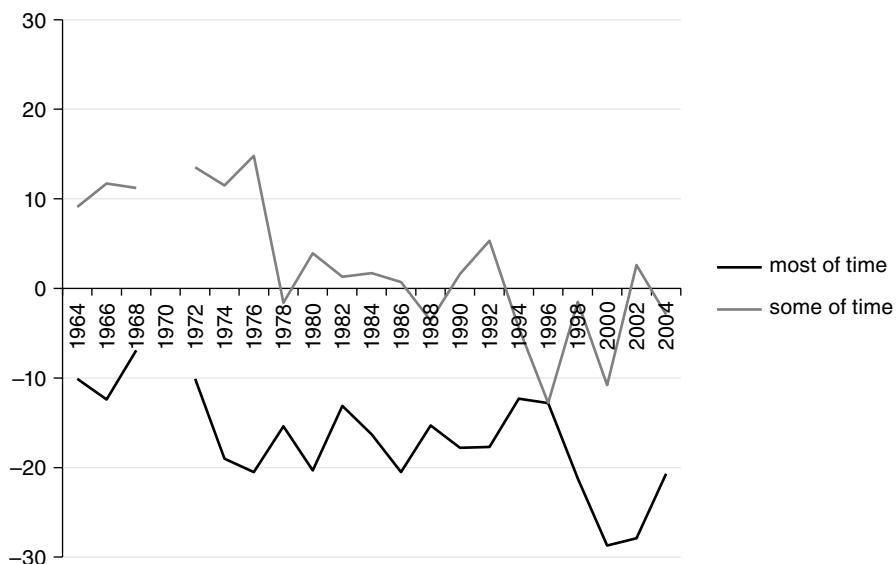


Figure 15.4 Differences in political interest across age cohorts (35 and under vs. 55 and older), 1964–2004

Note: Values are the percentage more young respondents expressing each level of interest.

Source: ANES cumulative file 1964–2004, 2008 ANES.

interested ‘some of the time’, and as we move forward in time – with the exception of the survey taken closest to the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks – younger people were increasingly less likely to say they were interested ‘some of the time’ or ‘most of the time’.

Figure 15.4 might be seen as weak evidence of a CM cohort effect consistent with the third scenario discussed above. People who were 35 years old in 1968 reported relatively high levels of interest compared with older respondents at that time (although not as high), a finding that fits the CM thesis. By the time those 35-year-olds from 1968 were 55 in 1988, people over 55 were noticeably more interested in politics than young people. A 35-year-old from 1968 would have been 67 by the year 2000, and that year older people were substantially more interested than the younger cohort. If not establishing a cohort effect, the results in Figure 15.4 are inconsistent with the idea that there was a sustained increase in cognitive mobilization – expressed as interest in public affairs – among younger people in America. In fact, Figure 15.2 masks the fact that there has been a substantial decline in political interest among young Americans since 1976.¹ Likewise, a similar cohort analysis conducted with the Australian data (not shown) found that, since 1987 (the beginning of that time series) and every year the survey was conducted, about 20 percent fewer young people were in the highest category of political interest, compared with people over 55.

Trends in education

Trends in interest in politics, at least in the United States and Australia, do not appear consistent with a scenario where cognitive mobilization is a continuous process of change that is transforming electorates. But what about education? The second component of the CM index examines respondents' self-reported level of education. Figure 15.5 plots trends in respondents' self-reported level of education from the ANES (1964–2008 from the Cumulative Data File, with 2008 added). Here we observe dramatic, and continuous, change. From 1964 to 2000 there was a threefold increase in the percentage of ANES respondents who reported having a college education. The change in the percentage of people with an 8th-grade education or lower is even more striking: there were five times as many people in this category in 1964 as there were in 2004. Figure 15.5 also suggests some of the complications involved with operationalizing cognitive mobilization. After 1998 the non-incremental growth and decline in the proportion of ANES respondents reporting a college education would seem to be out of step with the actual education trends that were playing out in the US population.²

Whatever the measurement or sampling issues there may be with the ANES time series measure of self-reported education, the general upward trend in higher education displayed in Figure 15.5 (but perhaps not the short-term spikes) likely reflects something real that was not exclusive to the US. Access to education – particularly tertiary education – expanded rapidly after World War II, although measuring this substantively is problematic. In addition to self-reported measures from opinion surveys (if they were available over time across a range of countries), we can examine years of formal education in a country, or spending

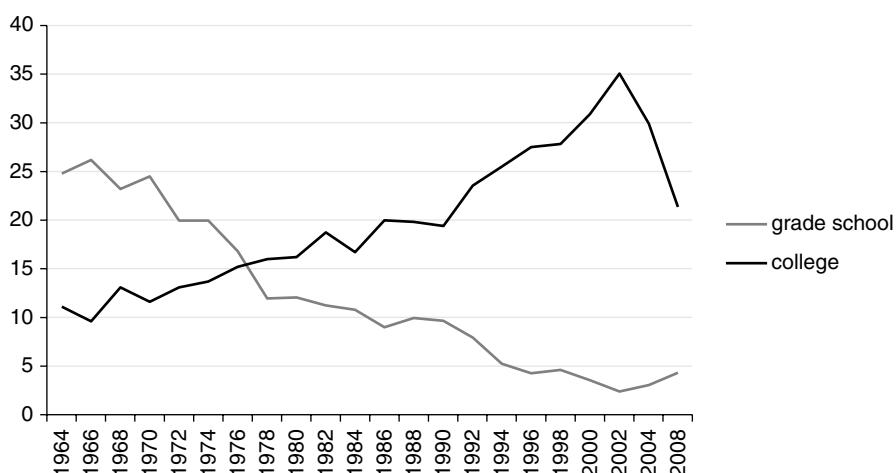


Figure 15.5 Trends in self-reported education, USA 1964–2004

Source: ANES cumulative file 1964–2004, 2008 ANES.

on education, to assess trends in a public's access to education. Neither of these aggregate-level measures may perfectly capture the quality of how education increases cognitive resources, but they might serve as surrogates for the forces shaping how many people are receiving higher levels of education at different points in time.

Table 15.1 displays data that, depending on how we read them, might suggest that access to higher education has continued to expand over the past several decades with no ceiling effect – suggesting a force that could continue to grow the proportion of electorates scoring high on CM. The World Bank reports measures of 'gross enrolment ratio' – the percentage of the total population of the five-year age group (regardless of age) following on to tertiary education from secondary education. These data show steady growth since the 1980s in established democracies. For some countries, these data may be consistent with a scenario in which cognitive mobilization is an ongoing process, as they suggest larger proportions of the electorates in many nations are experiencing post-secondary education, with room for growth in the proportion having the resources that allow them to reason about politics without relying on party labels. There may also be ceiling effects here. In Finland and the US, there is little room for increased access to higher education under this measure.

It is important to note, however, that much of this growth in access to tertiary education illustrated in Table 15.1 (and, perhaps, Figure 15.5) is driven by enrollments into 'short-cycle' (two years or less) tertiary education: technical, vocational, and labor skills programs. Table 15.2 paints a slightly different picture of trends in access to education in the established democracies. Spending on education (as a share of a nation's gross product) has increased much more slowly than

Table 15.1 Percentage enrolling in tertiary education following on from secondary education. World Bank data.

	1980	1995	2010–12
Australia	25	75	86
Belgium	n/a	54	71
Finland	32	67	92
France	25	49	54
Italy	27	41	62
Netherlands	29	46	77
New Zealand	27	58	80
Norway	25	54	74
Sweden	36	42	70
Switzerland	18	31	56
United Kingdom	19	48	62
United States	53	78	94

Note: Includes 'Short cycle tertiary, Bachelors or equivalent' (thus includes a substantial amount of 2-year technical, trade, and labor skill education).

Table 15.2 Percentage of GDP spent on education. World Bank Data.

	1980	1995	2010–12
Australia	5.6	5.1	5.1
Belgium			
Finland	4.9	7.0	6.8
France	4.4	5.9	5.7
Italy	n/a	4.5	4.3
Netherlands	6.4	4.9	5.9
New Zealand	4.3	5.8	7.4
Norway	5.8	7.9	6.6
Switzerland	4.6	5.4	5.3
Sweden	6.9	6.5	6.8
United Kingdom	5.3	5.1	6.2
United States	n/a	4.9	5.2

enrollment in tertiary education and in several nations (Australia, Netherlands, Sweden, Italy, Switzerland) it has been flat or in decline.

Trends in cognitive mobilization

How then might these trends in political interest and education inform us about how (or if) electorates are increasingly defined less by traditional partisans and apolitical independents, and more by cognitively sophisticated partisans and apartisans? The flat trends in political interest reported above would suggest that any growth in the proportion of people who score high on cognitive mobilization in the US would be driven almost exclusively by changes in education.

We can illustrate change in levels of cognitive mobilization in an electorate in two ways, by trends in the electorate's aggregate annual score on the CM measure that ranges from 2–8 (the four-item interest measure + the four-category education measure), and by plotting the percentage of people surveyed each year who score above the cutoff point that Dalton used to define high cognitive mobilization (6 or above). Figure 15.6 displays change (or lack thereof) in the American electorate's average CM score from 1964 to 2008 (using the ANES data). Taken this way, there would appear to be fairly little change. In 1964 the average score was 5.01, with the average at the last three time points being 6.0 (2002), 5.76 (2004), and 5.49 (2008). However, given the limited range on the CM measure, a full point or half point increase on average could bump a substantial portion of respondents beyond the cut point (a score of 6) that would have them qualify as high cognitive mobilization. This is illustrated in Figure 15.7, which displays the percentage of the electorate who scored over 6 (high) on Dalton's CM scale. The trend in Figure 15.7 is relatively stable until 1990. After that point, there was a substantial increase in the proportion of the American electorate who qualify for the high cognitive mobilization category – a 13 percent increase over 1964.

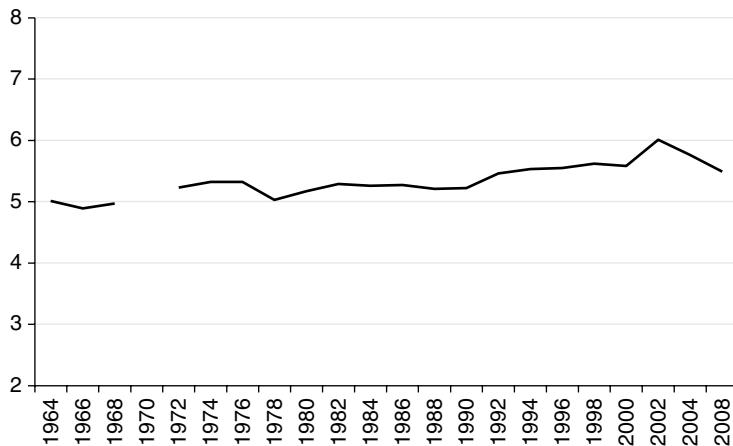


Figure 15.6 Average cognitive mobilization score, USA 1964–2008

Note: Average score on 2–8 scale. Education = 1 (low) through 4 (high). Interest = 1 (low) through 4 (high).

Source: ANES Cumulative data file; 2008 ANES.

A comparison between the trends in the percentage of ANES respondents reporting they had a college education (Figure 15.5) and the trend in the percentage who were high cognitive mobilization (Figure 15.7) show that the increase in the CM scale mirrors the increase in the percentage of ANES respondents who reported having college-level education.³ In other words, the American electorate was more highly educated in 2008 than in 1964, but it was not necessarily any more interested in politics.

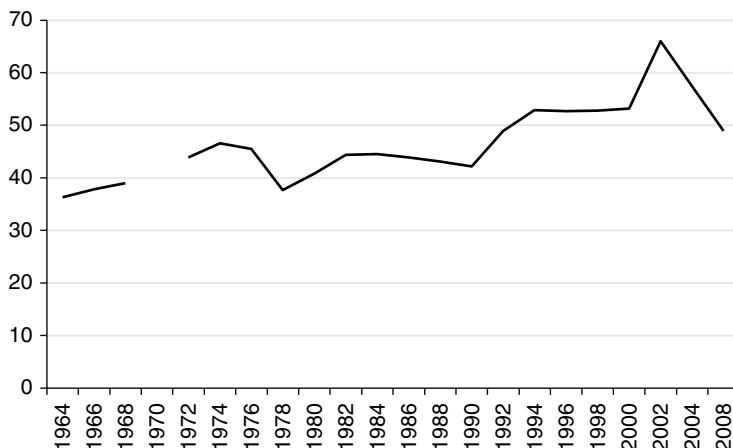


Figure 15.7 Percentage high cognitive mobilization, USA

Note: Percentage of respondents scoring 6 or higher.

Source: ANES Cumulative data file; 2008 ANES.

Trends in cognitive mobilization by partisan identification

Another major dynamic aspect of the cognitive mobilization thesis involves the long-term decline in the proportion of citizens who identify with political parties. Partisanship is supposed to become less important in shaping mass attitudes and behavior. Indeed, much has been written documenting and debating the decline (Petrocik et al. 1979; Wattenberg 1984; Craig 1985; Dalton 1999; Bowler et al. 2009) or lack of decline (Keith et al. 1984; Bartels 2000; Hethrington 2001; Petrocik 2009) in meaningful partisan identification. The latter studies argue that too much has been made about the decline in partisanship, and that, among strong identifiers at least, by the end of the 20th century party identification was as strong or a stronger force shaping political behavior than it had been in the late 1960s (Bartels 2000).

Trends in partisan identification are well known, and do not need to be displayed here. Party memberships are down in the established democracies, and fewer people claim party loyalties than they did 50 years ago. In the 1960s, three-quarters of Americans said they identified with a political party, yet in recent decades a plurality stated they were independent. While the proportion of ‘pure’ independents in the US has been rather static over this period, most of these self-proclaimed independents report being closer (leaning) to one of the two major parties. These independent ‘leaners’ behave like partisans on some matters (Keith et al. 1984), but were less supportive of the two-party system and were far more likely to abandon their party when other choices were present (Bowler et al. 2009).

For those advancing the cognitive mobilization argument, the question is not so much about whether or not partisanship is weakening. This is largely assumed. Indeed, the decline of party, and social changes that made party less relevant to politics, have been central features of the process of change that underlies the cognitive mobilization argument. Somewhat recently, Dalton wrote (2013:42) that ‘partisanship has obviously weakened, and thus the question is whether these new independents are located primarily among the apartisans or the traditional independents’. But, given the importance to this argument of the dynamics of the decline of partisanship generally, we should also focus on what has been happening to trends in party identification generally among those who score high on cognitive mobilization. That is, are they moving away from parties?

Figure 15.8 illustrates the change reported in partisanship among Americans (as measured with ANES data) who scored low (5 or lower) on the cognitive mobilization scale. Traditional (ritual) partisans and ‘apoliticals’ are defined here with Dalton’s coding. Traditionals are low CM respondents who reported identifying with a political party on the initial 3-item party identification question; ‘apoliticals’ are low CM respondents who identified as independents. Figure 15.9 displays the trends for high CM respondents. In Figure 15.8, again using Dalton’s coding, people who scored high on the CM index and identified with a party are classified as cognitive partisans; people who scored high on CM and identified as independents are classified as apartisans.

Given different potential scenarios regarding the dynamic aspects of the cognitive mobilization thesis, what do we expect these trends to look like, and what do we observe? Under any scenario, we might expect the action to be with the apoliticians – people who scored high on cognitive mobilization who do not need to rely on parties to structure their political world. If the effects of the changed social forces that produced a more cognitively sophisticated electorate (e.g. access to media, education) occurred but have largely played out in previous years, we might expect to see a shift, followed by some amount of stability in the proportion of the electorate in various categories. Conversely, if the social forces behind cognitive mobilization are still playing out, we might expect trends that reflect a gradual, but constant, change in the electorate – particularly among high cognition apoliticians.

Trends in Figure 15.8 and Figure 15.9 leave us a bit of a mixed bag given these expectations. The most obvious change here is that fewer Americans fall into the traditional partisan category, and that many more Americans are now in the cognitive partisan category. But does this reflect a transformed (dealigned) electorate, or does it simply reflect the dynamics of increased access to higher education (or both)? Figures 15.8 and 15.9 suggest a scenario where partisans still clearly dominate the electorate – but with more of them having college (two-year or four-year) education. There is a large amount of stability in the percentage of traditional partisans and cognitive partisans from 1972 to 1990, followed by a rise in cognitive partisans that closely matches the trends in the percentage of all ANES respondents reporting a college education after 1990.

Recall that the CM typology of the electorate is composed of 1) whether a person identifies with a party or not, and 2) whether or not the person scores high on cognitive mobilization (defined by level of interest + level of education).

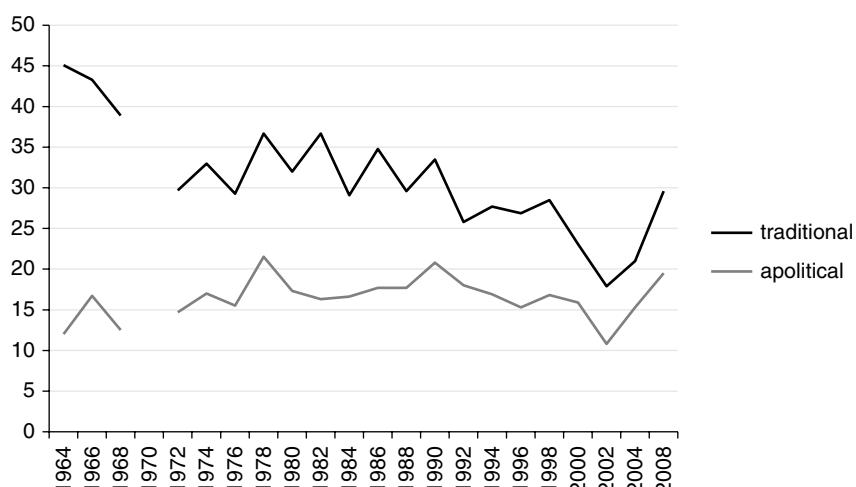


Figure 15.8 Low cognitive mobilization: Partisans and independents

Source: ANES Cumulative data file; 2008 ANES.

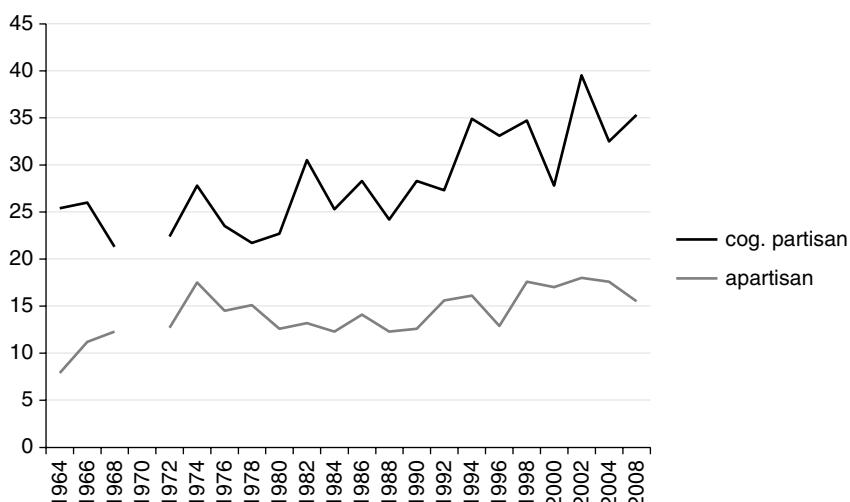


Figure 15.9 High cognitive mobilization: Partisans and independents

Source: ANES Cumulative data file; 2008 ANES.

The most non-incremental change in the ‘types’ of partisans in the American electorate appears to have occurred between 1964 and 1972, and then after 1990. Since change in the ANES self-reported education measure (Figure 15.5) was fairly steady in the earlier period, this suggests change in the electorate in the earlier period might have involved some movement away from parties – thus we see a slight increase in apartisans and apoliticals from 1964 through the mid 1970s. But there has been little change since then in the proportion of apartisans and apoliticals. From the 1970s to 2008 the percentage of Americans classified as apartisans has held steady at around 15 percent. After the 1970s, it would seem that the apparent growth of cognitive partisans simply reflects growth in the proportion of partisan respondents who reported a college education. These trends should be considered alongside Albright’s (2009) results from individual-level analysis showing that measures of cognitive mobilization continued to be associated with stronger party attachments in the US and Europe. In the United States, at least, increased access to higher education since 1964 does not appear to correspond with growth in the proportion of the electorate who score high on cognitive mobilization and lack attachments to parties.

CONCLUSION

Broadly considered, the cognitive mobilization thesis is a rather optimistic and appealing portrait of citizens in the advanced democracies; an antidote to the minimalism of *The American Voter*. Freed from habitual, party-based voting,

apartisan citizens will have more and better information when evaluating their representatives, and representatives, in turn, might thus be more responsive to and reflective of an informed electorate. The cognitive mobilization thesis describes a process of social change whereby citizens in advanced democracies continue to acquire (or at some point in the past acquired) new levels of sophistication and interest such that fewer people are left relying on political parties to structure their orientation to the political world. This chapter represents a rather simple and largely inadequate attempt to assess how this process might have been affecting electorates over the past few decades. If cognitive mobilization is a process that continues to unfold, we might expect to see increases in levels of interest in politics, and growth in the cognitively mobilized proportion of the electorate who have moved beyond parties – apartisans.

However, trends in AES data suggest that people in Australia were no more interested in politics twenty-eight years beyond what was measured in 1987. Trends in ANES data also suggest that Americans, likewise, were no more interested in public affairs thirty-four years beyond what was observed in 1972. Nor is there evidence that there were more apartisans in America in 2008 than in 1972. By the measures used here, since the 1970s the American electorate was no more partisan – nor any more apolitical – in 2008 than it was in 1972. Partisans in 2008, however, had more education than those in the 1970s. The downward trend in the proportion of traditional partisans, and the corresponding (and intrinsically linked) rise in the proportion of the electorate classified as cognitively mobilized partisans, reflects not so much a movement away from parties (as measured by the ANES 3-item question) or growing interest in politics as it reflects increased access to post-secondary education – a force that may be linked with greater use of partisanship at the individual level (Albright 2009).

Only about 15 percent of the American electorate would be classified as cognitively mobilized apartisans in the early 1970s. The same held in the late 2000s. Given that the CM argument placed so much emphasis on the decline of party loyalties it is somewhat surprising that there was so little movement in the proportion of Americans who were classified as apartians. It may be, then, that cognitive mobilization as a social process redefined electorates in the advanced democracies shortly after World War II, with the process continuing, perhaps, in the 1960s. In the US, at least, this process may have created an electorate in which attachments to political parties weakened and political interest increased by the 1960s but, since then, these forces may have been largely static. Partisans remain – at over 60 percent of the electorate in the early 1970s and over 60 percent in the late 2000s, albeit with higher levels of education in the latter period.

All of this said, the CM thesis is a powerful argument about how and why electorates are different today than they were in the 1950s. The world has changed. Parties play a different role, more citizens have access to higher education, and access to mass media is fundamentally different. The CM thesis may be a valid explanation of dealignment, of the rise of politically sophisticated apartisans,

and of a newer breed of cognitively sophisticated partisans. However, given that time series data on key political attitudes and opinions begin in the mid 1960s, it remains difficult to fully illustrate how the American electorate changed from 1950 to 2015.

Notes

- 1 From 1964 to 1976, roughly two-thirds of people 35 or younger reported being interested in politics some or most of the time (as high as 72% in 1972). Since the 1990s, just about half of this age group reports such levels of interest (as low as 41% in 2000).
- 2 The ANES Cumulative Data file Codebook states (p. 22) that a value of 4 on the 4-category education measure reflects 'College or advanced degree'. A value of 3 reflects 'some college', (13 grades or more but no degree). Following this, junior college/community college are included as 'college'.
- 3 The 15% increase from 1990 to 2002 in ANES cumulative file respondents reporting college education likely reflects real growth in access to higher (tertiary) education, as well as ANES sampling issues.

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PART IV

Voter Decision-Making



Strategic Voting

Thomas Gschwend and Michael F. Meffert

INTRODUCTION

Strategic voting deals with that most crucial of questions in political behavior research, how voters make their vote decisions – assuming, of course, that they go to the polls in the first place. The common denominator of all theories of voting behavior is that voters cast their ballot for the most preferred option among the available choices, whether it is an individual candidate or a political party, and no matter whether policies, candidates or other factors drive such a preference. The decision for the most preferred option is called a *sincere vote* in the strategic voting literature.

But the literature on strategic voting does not stop here. The most important departure from other theories of electoral behavior is the assumption that voters not only take their preferences for the different options on the ballot into account but also form and include expectations about the outcome of the upcoming election in this decision. In other words, a voter's decision-making process involves weighting the anticipated benefits from voting for each option on the ballot by the expected likelihood that these benefits will be realized via an electoral victory. Such a decision is then a product of preferences and expectations and a typical example of an expected utility approach (Downs, 1957; Riker and Ordeshook, 1968; McKelvey and Ordeshook, 1972). It formally incorporates voters' preferences and their expectations about the outcome of the election in a unified analytic framework.

A *strategic voter* is a voter who not only casts her vote in order to maximize the expected utility of a vote decision but also deviates or defects from her most

preferred option due to her expectations about the outcome of the election: a less preferred option might simply have a higher chance of realizing the expected benefits, and thus has higher utility. Only under these circumstances do we call such a vote a *strategic vote*. The classification is, in the end, not based on the nature of the decision-making process but (post hoc) on the final outcome. Thus, sincere voters can never be strategic voters even if they appear to behave strategically. It might sound counterintuitive, and it certainly contrasts with most other behavioral theories of voting, but a strategic voter does not vote for the most preferred option on the ballot. How do voters combine preferences and expectations? They try to maximize the expected utility by weighting the preference for each party or candidate with the expectations that this party or candidate will be successful in the next election. Hence, in such a utility function the effect of preferences is conditional on a voter's expectation about the outcome. A high chance of electoral success can give even a less preferred option the highest utility and lead a strategic voter to defect from the preferred choice. Electoral expectations make the difference in this case.

This decision logic can for example explain why instrumental voters hesitate to support non-viable parties or candidates. The latter would score devastatingly low in the expected utility calculus. A simple example to which we will come back throughout the chapter can help to illustrate the logic. Let's assume that three candidates, *L* (left), *C* (center) and *R* (right), compete to win in a first-past-the-post election. It could be a presidential election or a single-member district race. Suppose that voters expect a tight race between *C* and *R* while *L* is considered to be a hopelessly trailing and thus non-viable candidate. If supporters of *L* were to follow an instrumental decision-making logic, they would not 'waste' their vote on the preferred but trailing candidate *L* but rather vote strategically for their second choice between the viable candidates *C* and *R*. If expectations did not matter, our voter would simply receive the highest utility from voting for *L*, but with expectations included, her utility of an *L*-vote decreases essentially to zero, a wasted vote. Due to the much higher electoral expectations for *C* and *R*, one of them would deliver the higher utility despite scoring lower in terms of preferences (most likely *C* if we assume that both candidates and voters can be placed on an ideological left-right dimension). Such a theory could be further refined if one wants to specify how those preferences are determined. Some might opt for a weighted combination of valence and policy while others might combine so-called 'fundamentals' such as partisanship, issues (e.g. economy), and candidates as explanatory factors.

The basic logic and the example outlined above capture the core model that underpins current research on strategic voting. In the following sections, we will address and elaborate the key conceptual and methodological issues in the literature on strategic voting, starting simple and adding more complexity along the way. In the following (second) section, we introduce the traditional Duvergerian understanding of strategic voting, the classic and arguably most simple model of strategic voting.

In the third section, we focus on the role of electoral expectations because they play a crucial role in strategic voting. As we will see, expectations are about much more than simply avoiding a wasted vote for a non-viable party. Expectations can and need to be formed about different aspects and steps of an election outcome, ranging from immediate electoral results to successful government formation. For strategic voters, any particular aspect of an election outcome might become relevant, and expectations about each step are necessary to make the best possible decision.

In section four we present two complementary approaches in the literature that try to capture the logic of strategic voting more systematically. We highlight the fact that different electoral systems will provide different incentives to form expectations about different aspects of ‘the outcome of an election’. And these different incentives and expectations lead to a number of decision-making strategies that go well beyond avoiding a wasted vote.

In section five we provide an overview of various research designs and methods that are used to study strategic voting. We distinguish different conceptualizations and measurement strategies of strategic voting because there is no consensus in the current literature as to how this should be done. Finally, we conclude this chapter by adding a normative aspect to the discussion: whether strategic voting leads to a misrepresentation of voters’ preferences or rather produces more optimal outcomes.

DUVERGER AND ALL THAT: THE TRADITIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF STRATEGIC VOTING IN SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICT (SMD) SYSTEMS

Strategic voting is best documented for vote choice scenarios in single-member district systems where the party or candidate with a plurality of the votes wins the district seat. This is the case in the example we introduced earlier. With a strategic vote, supporters of a lost cause such as *L* make their vote actually count towards determining the outcome of the district race rather than merely being counted. This logic applies to all supporters of all candidates in a district who are not expected to win the election. Also note that electoral expectations are formed in this situation about one specific aspect of the election outcome only, whether or not a candidate is able to win representation in parliament (excluding other aspects such as government formation).

The early political science literature on strategic voting was more interested in systemic consequences of this type of behavior, in particular how vote concentration on viable candidates affects the size of the party system. Written originally as a study of how electoral institutions determine party systems, Duverger’s (1954) seminal contribution to the theory of strategic voting is a causal mechanism at the individual level that attempts to explain how electoral systems determine party

systems in a fashion known as *Duverger's Law*. More precisely, Duverger proposes a combination of two processes working together to generate this causal path. The first process is 'mechanical': electoral laws translate votes into seats in parliament, which tends to result in the overrepresentation of large parties and, conversely, the underrepresentation of small parties. This becomes visible when comparing a given vote distribution across parties with the number of seat shares those parties eventually obtain in parliament. Thus, unlike a Robin Hood system where the poor get compensated by redistributing spoils from the rich, the mechanical effect works to privilege large parties (the rich) at the expense of small parties (the poor).

The second process is 'psychological'. Duverger theorizes that voters in an electoral system with plurality voting feel that they will waste their vote if they vote for a minor party or candidate and rather opt for a lesser evil to prevent the greater evil from attaining victory – the process we defined earlier as strategic voting. Thus, the mechanical effect from electoral institutions and the psychological effect at the voter level combine to generate the causal path between electoral institutions and party system.

We can draw one important lesson for political behavior from the early attempts to study strategic voting. Voters are not mere servants of their preferences, as traditional models of voting behavior would have us believe. Quite to the contrary, as in Goldoni's famous play, voters are 'servants of two masters': of their preferences for parties and candidates, and of their expectations about the outcome of the election.

Duverger was actually interested in other electoral systems as well. He suggested that the wasted vote logic should not apply to proportional representation (PR) systems because even marginal parties can expect to gain seats in such systems. This claim has been more problematic and, in fact, proven misguided. In particular Leys (1959) and Sartori (1968) expect significant amounts of strategic voting even in PR systems, as a function of district size. As district magnitude becomes smaller, fewer seats are awarded per electoral district. The so-called Leys-Sartori conjecture (Cox, 1997) therefore posits that strategic voting at the primary district level (the smallest geographic unit in which seats are allocated) increases as district magnitude becomes smaller. Using data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) project, Gschwend (2009) presents evidence from survey data supporting this conjecture, and Reed (1990) finds evidence for stronger vote concentration and, thus, supposedly more strategic voting in smaller districts using district-level data from Japanese elections. He argues, though, that the dominant mechanism is rather one of strategic entry decisions by parties than strategic voting by citizens.

Cox (1997) generalizes these arguments further to any multi-member systems and formalizes them. He proposes an ' $M+1$ ' rule, indicating an upper bound for the number of viable parties or candidates a voter has to expect in a given electoral district with district magnitude M . He closely follows the Duvergerian

logic that voters should strategically desert all other parties that are not expected to be viable to win a district seat. Evidence to support these claims are based on studying the number of parties that compete successfully at the district level in British, Columbian, and Japanese elections (Cox and Shugart, 1996; Cox, 1997). A more direct test for the presence of Duverger's psychological factor – and hence for strategic desertion – is provided in studies using German district-level data (Cox, 1997; Bawn, 1999). For instance, Cox (1997) regresses the 'desertion rate' among voters of the two small parties FDP and Greens – the difference between their (national) party list vote and their (district-level) candidate vote share in a given district – on the margin of the district race. In close district races, we should expect a higher desertion rate and therefore more strategic votes because strategic FDP or Green voters should feel a stronger incentive not to waste their candidate votes. They could make a difference and help elect the local candidate of the larger coalition partner. In fact, using district-level data from federal elections in 1987 and 1990, Cox does find that the desertion rate among FDP and Green voters is significantly higher as the district race gets closer. Bawn (1999) also employs the desertion-rate concept, but with a different dependent variable, using district-level data from six federal elections between 1969 and 1987. Controlling for incumbency effects, she finds that the desertion rate in favor of major-party candidates increases as a district race becomes closer. The Duvergerian logic of avoiding a wasted vote thus has robust support. For example, the empirical implication that parties that did not win a seat in the last election and therefore will not be considered as viable competitors in the next election has been supported by studies using district-level data from Portugal (Gschwend, 2007), Finland (Gschwend and Stoiber, 2012), and Spain (Lago 2008). Without going into extensive detail, research on plurality systems provides considerable evidence for strategic voting (e.g. Alvarez and Nagler, 2000; Blais and Nadeau, 1996; Johnston and Pattie, 1991; Lanoue and Bowler, 1992; Evans and Heath, 1993; Heath, 1991; Galbraith and Rae, 1989; Abramson et al., 1992; Cain 1978, Niemi et al., 1993; Fujiwara, 2011; Hall and Snyder, 2015). In short, the basic model of strategic voting is well established.

PREFERENCES ARE NOT ENOUGH: ELECTORAL EXPECTATIONS AS SECOND CRUCIAL INGREDIENT

Electoral expectations are crucial for strategic voting because voters have to weight their preferences for different parties or candidates by their electoral expectations to derive their expected utility. Expectations determine to a large extent when defection from the most preferred is warranted.

There are two main processes by which voters are thought to derive expectations. First, politically engaged voters pay attention to political developments, especially during election campaigns, and follow the discussions about the

success of parties and candidates in the media (widely defined), most notably based on pre-election polls and, in multiparty systems, about potential coalition governments. It seems clear, however, that this process can only have an impact on the decision calculus of attentive and therefore politically aware and informed voters. But even less attentive voters do not start with a blank slate in the voting booth. Even voters who do not follow a campaign very closely seem to form expectations, for example by adopting an electoral history heuristic. As ‘cognitive misers’ (Fiske and Taylor, 1991), individuals frequently employ heuristics to simplify their decision-making processes. Voters look back at previous elections. Even if they cannot recall the precise results of these elections, they can easily form beliefs about the rough outlines of the electoral landscape, such as which parties are large and small, how competitive or close the election might be, or who the winners and losers are expected to be. Inferences based on these beliefs need not be particularly accurate. It is sufficient that voters have an idea about who the strong contenders are or which coalitions are typically formed. Both processes, full attention or the reliance on heuristics, help voters to cope with the uncertainty about an election outcome and help to generate expectations about the success of candidates, parties, and coalitions. This process can be viewed as Bayesian updating because voters either create new expectations or update their prior beliefs about the outcome of an election. Formal theorists employ a similar argument to make the assumption of ‘rational expectations’ more plausible (Cox, 1997; Cox and Shugart, 1996; Fey, 1997). Experimental evidence for example supports the notion that the electoral history heuristic facilitates the formation of consistent expectations (Forsythe et al., 1993).

There is another reason why expectations are so crucial. Only they can turn a defection from a preferred party into a strategic vote decision. There are, after all, many conceivable reasons why voters deviate from their most preferred party or candidate, often for expressive reasons. For instance, voters might want to voice their protest or signal single-issue preferences. Voters in two-vote systems might also want to split their votes between the parties of their most preferred coalition. In all these instances, voters do not deviate from their most preferred party because they expect a vote for a different option to have a more effective impact on the outcome of the election. Such voters do not behave strategically.

Even though we have established the central role of electoral expectations for strategic voting by now, it is also quite obvious that the classic understanding of expectations about the election outcome is very limited. Voters seem to merely think about which party or candidate is viable and able to win representation. In plurality elections, common in the USA and the UK, this assumption works quite well, and it will also apply to multi-member district systems where viable candidates or parties can win representation by gaining one of the district seats. But, as we will show in the next section, this understanding of strategic voting is very restrictive because it ignores other aspects of an election outcome, in particular the need for coalition governments in multiparty systems. To make this shift in

perspective very salient, we will use the term *strategic coalition voting* in the following discussion.

DIFFERENT ELECTORAL SYSTEMS, DIFFERENT INCENTIVES, DIFFERENT STRATEGIES: THE COMPLEX MOTIVATIONS OF STRATEGIC COALITION VOTING

Strategic voting is about more than just trying to avoid wasting one's vote, and the beneficiaries are not necessarily a few large parties. Different electoral contexts and rules allow – in fact require – voters to form expectations about different aspects that characterize the political decision-making process before, during, and after an election. It is about much more than the mere representation of a party or candidate in parliament. For example, SMD and PR systems can induce very different motivations and require voters to employ different strategies to translate their political preferences into the most optimal decision and election outcome. One voter might merely anticipate the outcome of an election in terms of whether a certain party will gain representation in parliament while another might consider how the anticipated election outcome will affect the coalition government formation process. The interplay of specific characteristics of an electoral and party system and the individual preferences and interests of voters add enormous complexity to the strategic voting process.

To clarify the basic motivation, we conduct another thought experiment with our supporter of small party *L*. If this supporter were eligible to vote in a UK general election, then she would be primarily motivated to anticipate the outcome of the local SMD race in order to figure out whether *L* is viable and competitive in this district or merely a wasted vote. However, if the same voter were eligible to vote in the *Tweede Kamer* elections in the Netherlands, a national contest in a PR system, the incentives would be different. Whether or not *L* wins representation is definitely not the most salient question on the voter's mind because even small parties gain representation in a PR election with essentially no minimum vote threshold. Our hypothetical voter is much more likely to try to anticipate the government formation process and cast her vote strategically, for instance, by supporting the most preferred party among those that are likely to join the new coalition government, if her most preferred party is not among them. Incidentally, the 'winner' in such an election is not necessarily the largest party but might very well be one of the small parties that will join the coalition. In both examples, our hypothetical voter tries to anticipate the election outcome, but the particular aspect she focuses on is quite different in different political contexts.

While voters form expectations about the election outcome in order to behave strategically, the concept 'election outcome' is not always determined by who will likely win the election. An election (night) outcome might merely be the starting point of a government formation process involving negotiations among

multiple parties that will eventually form a coalition government, which in turn determines the policies for years to come. And if this is not already complicated enough, some voters might also consider as part of the election outcome whether some parties get represented in parliament. Specific institutional rules and aspects such as a minimum vote threshold will affect supporters of small parties differently than supporters of large parties – primarily a question of representation for the former and a question of coalition formation for the latter.

This initial discussion is, in one sense, bad news. The current literature on strategic voting has not been able to develop a single and universal (formal) model that can capture all these different conditions and aspects. Instead, we find various attempts to identify certain conditions under which strategic voting can be expected and tested. On a more positive note, there have been a number of attempts to offer more systematic assessments of how strategic voting works under the given and specific circumstances. We outline two approaches that capture the logic of strategic voting more systematically, one using a formal process logic of rational voters and the other a more psychological goal-based logic that highlights the main motivations and strategies of strategic voting. These are not mutually exclusive explanations but should rather be seen as complementary.

A formal process logic: translating a vote into policy

The classic case was simple. A strategic voter in an SMD election forms expectations about the outcome of the ‘local’ election and thus the representation of a candidate (or party or issue) in parliament. The winner will affect the legislative process, and a vote for a marginal candidate is wasted. However, if we realize that most Western democracies are parliamentary systems with coalition governments, this approach to strategic voting is rather restrictive and misses many of the aspects mentioned above.

At the same time, moving from classic and simple strategic voting in SMDs to strategic coalition voting in multiparty systems with proportional representation, minimum vote thresholds, and coalition governments creates a number of conceptual and theoretical challenges, starting with a clear and more comprehensive definition of strategic coalition voting. The (mixed) existing empirical evidence only helps to a limited degree. Different approaches to strategic voting usually address only specific voting strategies. The most useful existing framework is offered by Cox (1997) who differentiates two stages in which votes are translated into (optimal) policy output, seat maximization and portfolio maximization. A good case can be made to differentiate these steps from vote to policy even further by also including the stage of legislative behavior (Linhart, 2009; Linhart and Huber, 2009).

Thus, in addition to representation, the policies that will be implemented by the next government are the second key aspect to account for. Which policy is going to be implemented depends, most importantly, on who is in government

and, specifically, on who controls a majority in the legislature (Austen-Smith and Banks, 1988; Cho, 2014; Indridason, 2011; Kedar, 2011; Linhart, 2009). Table 16.1 summarizes the most important steps or stages as a sequential decision-making process from the pre-electoral campaign to post-electoral government formation and the subsequent legislative process. Under ideal circumstances, a strategic voter would consider all information to anticipate the outcomes of these decision steps and, using backward induction, would determine her optimal vote decision. Such decision processes are difficult to capture in formal models because formal solutions for multiparty models with coalition governments and many equilibria are very difficult to obtain. For more than a conceptual outline, the interested reader might consult the formal treatments by Linhart (2009), Cho (2014), Duch, May, and Armstrong (2010), and Indridason (2011).

The starting point is the information available during election campaigns, most notably the party positions on relevant policies, the strengths of the parties in pre-electoral polls, and any pre-electoral coalition signals by parties, journalists, and other experts that can help to narrow down the possible election outcomes and government formation. Such a voter would use this information to anticipate the likely seat distribution after the election, the subsequent government formation process (including the selection of a formateur as well as negotiations of potential coalition partners and over the coalition portfolio or policies), and the eventual policy output of the subsequent legislative process (Austen-Smith and Banks, 1988; Bargsted and Kedar, 2009; Cho, 2014; Indridason, 2011; Linhart, 2009). Depending on the political system, the policy output might also depend on other veto players such as a second chamber (especially in federal systems) or a president.

Thinking about the election outcome in terms of policy that will eventually get implemented allows voters to form expectations about each step in this chain of action. This will result in a variety of different strategies that we will introduce in the next section. It is important to keep two points in mind. First, only a small

Table 16.1 Sequential decision-making process and formation of expectations by strategic voters

→ Sequential Decision-Making Process →				
<i>Stage:</i>	<i>Campaign</i>	<i>Election Result</i>	<i>Government Formation</i>	<i>Legislative Process</i>
Factors:	– Party Positions – Polls (Party Strength) – Coalition Signals	– Seat Distribution	– Formateur Selection – Government (Coalition Parties) – Government Portfolio	– Veto Players – Policy Output

← Voter Expectations (anticipation by backward induction) ←

number of voters will usually find themselves in a situation that provides the appropriate incentives and opportunities for strategic voting (e.g. Alvarez et al., 2006). In most cases, a sincere vote is also the optimal vote. Second, strategic voting is based on a combination and interplay of individual preferences and expectations on one side and the incentives provided by the institutional context on the other – as far as recognized and perceived by the voter. This is difficult to capture in a single formula and formal model and implies a fairly sophisticated and instrumental decision-making process. Including three or more stages, however, makes the assumed decision process extremely complex and thus rather unlikely (in fact, virtually impossible) to reflect any actual decision making by voters – some political scientists exempted. A more straightforward decision logic is necessary.

A psychological goal-based logic: a typology of motivations and strategies

Given these challenges, our goal here is to offer a conceptual classification of common motivations and plausible strategies for strategic coalition voting at a very general level that are not specific to particular countries or elections. It is useful to distinguish four major motivations for strategic voting and a number of specific decision strategies to accomplish the given and predominant electoral goal. The first motivation is universal for all electoral systems and the classic motivation for strategic voting per se, *avoiding a wasted vote* for a party or candidate that has no chance of being represented in the next parliament. In such a situation, a strategic voter realizes that, in order to have an electoral impact, it is more useful to cast the ballot for one of the viable parties. The next two motivations are specific for strategic coalition voting because they aim at the next coalition government. The focus might be on *coalition composition*, that is, the parties that will become members of the next coalition government. A good example is the rental vote (or threshold insurance) strategy well known in Austria, Germany, and Sweden when supporters of a major party cast their vote for a preferred small coalition partner who is in danger of falling short of the electoral threshold (Fredén, 2014; Gschwend, 2007; Gschwend et al., 2016; Shikano et al., 2009; Meffert and Gschwend, 2010). It is also possible, with two or more small parties competing for a place in the next coalition, to strengthen one of the parties in order to give it a competitive advantage over the other (coalition) parties (Irwin and Van Holsteyn, 2012).

But even if the next coalition government is more or less certain, a strategic coalition voter might still try to influence the *coalition portfolio*, that is, the strength or weight of the parties within an expected coalition that determine the policies pursued by the coalition (Aldrich et al., 2005). The impact on policy might be small but nevertheless beneficial for a strategic voter. The fourth and final motivation assumes that a voter takes the larger institutional context of the

policy-making process into account and follows a *checks-and-balances* logic by taking the political control of different chambers of parliament or the presidency and parliament into account. Voters concerned about checks and balances might for example engage in *strategic balancing* and vote in a way that prevents a single party or coalition controlling all the major institutions (e.g. Geer et al., 2004; Gschwend and Leuffen, 2005) if the political consequences in terms of policy output are seen as too extreme.

These four major motivations cover four distinct and principal reasons why strategic voters might defect from their preferred party in order to have an effect on the next government. This classification is conceptual and not based on systematic evidence but rather should help future research. Besides these major goals, the existing research has identified a number of specific strategic coalition voting strategies that voters might use to accomplish these goals (summarized in Table 16.2).

The first strategy is to *defect from a losing party* in order to avoid a wasted vote. The emphasis is on cutting losses and not on gaining benefits, even though the latter is the implicit consequence of such a strategic vote. Under proportional representation, most votes count toward the distribution of seats and are thus not wasted per se. The only fairly clear and obvious exceptions are parties that are certain to fail the minimum vote threshold for seats in parliament. Here, the classic wasted vote argument works very well, at least in theory. It strongly implies that short-term instrumental rational voters should defect from very small parties if they want to affect the formation of the next government.

If a voter is really concerned about the next coalition government, she will have to take coalitions into account, no matter the size of the most preferred party or the ideological position of the voter. In other words, if the most preferred party is unlikely to play a role in the next coalition or affect government formation

Table 16.2 Strategic coalition voting motivations and strategies

	Motivation			
	Avoiding a wasted vote	Coalition Composition (Parties)	Coalition Portfolio (Policy)	Checks-and-balances
Strategy				
– Defection from losing party	X			
– Rental vote/threshold insurance		X		X
– Destructive vote		X		X
– Strengthen expected coalition party	X		X	
– Formateur selection/strategic sequencing	X		X	
– Strategic balancing		X		X
– Strategic abstention	X	X		X

more indirectly, a strategic voter should rather vote for a party that makes the most acceptable among the viable coalitions more likely. Such a *coalition voting* strategy is thus the most general statement of strategic coalition voting.

As already mentioned above, a well-known strategy is *threshold insurance*, when a voter, usually a supporter of a strong major party, casts a *rental vote* for a preferred small coalition partner, which is in danger of falling short of the minimum vote threshold. A variation of this strategy is a *destructive vote* when a voter can make a more beneficial coalition government more likely by weakening her preferred party. Such a scenario is possible when polls and coalition signals suggest a close competition between a left-wing and a right-wing coalition. Neither option is attractive to a centrist voter who would prefer a centrist government. This, however, requires that the ‘extreme’ coalitions do not succeed and moderate but reluctant parties are forced to form a centrist coalition. To accomplish this, our centrist voter might opt to strengthen a strongly disliked and extreme ‘pariah’ party that takes enough seats away from the ‘extreme’ coalitions. An example is a vote for the far-left *Die Linke* in the 2005 German election in order to make a centrist coalition between Christian Democrats (CDU) and Social Democrats (SPD) more likely by undermining the chances of the more traditional center-left (SPD and Greens) and center-right (CDU and liberal FDP) coalitions (see Linhart, 2009; Huber et al., 2009). Both rental vote and destructive vote strategies aim at changing coalition parties but might also serve the goal of checks-and-balances.

Even if a specific coalition is fairly certain to win the election, strategic coalition voting can make sense for voters whose preferred party is not among the coalition members (Aldrich et al, 2005). As long as the electoral strength of a party does influence its weight in the coalition and its influence over coalition policy, a vote for a coalition member party might directly influence coalition policy. Bargsted and Kedar (2009) suggest such behavior for Israel, at least for supporters of moderate parties. The strategy of strengthening an expected coalition party follows primarily the goal of strengthening an expected member of the next coalition in the coalition formation process, leading to a more desirable coalition portfolio and beneficial policy outcomes.

In the case where the status of the largest party gives it a formateur status, strengthening a competitive large party can be a useful strategy to secure its crucial role during coalition formation, also called strategic sequencing by Cox (1997). A voter more concerned about a single party (or coalition) controlling all institutions of government might opt for *strategic balancing*, trying to secure shared control of the major institutions.

Last but not least, even *strategic abstention* might be an optimal strategy under some circumstances. The logic is similar to the ‘destructive’ version of threshold insurance: a weakening of the preferred party can make a preferred coalition government more likely. In this case, the reason for abstention differs radically from other, more common reasons for such behavior such as a lack of political interest,

political cynicism, or protest. It is entirely based on the expectation of how the next government will be formed.

A reader might note the absence of ticket splitting in this discussion, a decision possible in mixed-electoral systems that combine for example a (national) party list vote with a (local) candidate vote. The reason is quite simple. Merely splitting one's vote between a candidate of one party and a different party on the party list does not say anything about the reasons for such a decision. As Gschwend (2007) shows, several different strategies can lead to the observationally equivalent split-ticket patterns. But they might also reflect simply expressive considerations such as support for a well-liked candidate from an otherwise disliked party. Thus, we do not count ticket splitting *per se* as a specific strategy of strategic coalition voting. If ticket splitting is used strategically, the driving motivation is almost certainly already covered by one of the motivations and strategies discussed above.

This list of strategic coalition voting strategies does not claim to be exhaustive. The complexity of coalition formation in multiparty systems creates opportunities for many different, often context-specific strategies that are impossible to enumerate here. The strategies discussed above are mentioned in the literature or follow a compelling logic, but they are only a plausible subset of all possible strategies. It is also important to keep in mind that these strategies and goals are often not clearly distinct but rather overlap and thus are difficult to distinguish empirically.

RESEARCH DESIGNS AND METHODS TO STUDY STRATEGIC VOTING

Strategic voting is studied in quite different ways. In the following section we will highlight the advantages and disadvantages of different research designs to study strategic voting such as survey research, experimental designs (i.e. lab and field experiments), simulations, and studies using official statistics (e.g. election returns). The main focus will be on how these different designs can be used to identify (with direct or indirect measurements) and analyze strategic voting in mass elections. Given that there is so far no consensus on how strategic voting should be conceptualized, it should not come as a surprise that there is not even a universally accepted measurement strategy.

Four major approaches to measure strategic voting

Following Alvarez and Nagler (2000), Blais, Young, and Turcotte (2005), and Artabe and Gardeazabal (2014), we can distinguish at least four different approaches to measure strategic voting: (1) the *aggregate inference* approach, (2) the *self-reporting* or *direct* approach, (3) the *inference* or *indirect* approach,

and (4) the *counterfactual* approach. Researchers following the *aggregate inference* approach use aggregate election returns to identify certain split-ticket patterns, changes in vote shares (see Muller and Page, 2015 for a nifty nonparametric approach), leveraging of different incentive structures in concurrent elections (Lago, 2011; Hall and Snyder, 2015) and natural experiments (Spenkuch, 2015), changes from first- to second-round elections (Kiss, 2015), desertion rates across ballot types, or to show the impact of close elections (using concepts such as the district margin) to study strategic voting at the electoral-district level (Cox, 1997; Spafford, 1972; Cain, 1978; Galbraith and Rae, 1989; Johnston and Pattie, 1991; Gschwend, 2004: Chapter 5). Official election statistics are a reliable and often readily available data source, but without any information about individual-level behavior. This poses a major challenge for testing strategic voting, essentially a micro-level theory about individual behavior. Any attempt to use aggregate-level data for this purpose immediately raises the so-called ecological inference problem (Achen and Shively, 1995; King, 1997; Gschwend, 2004: Chapter 4). At best, it is possible to identify aggregate patterns that correspond to theoretically expected patterns assuming individual-level strategic voting, a highly inferential and indirect, but sometimes very useful approach.

Researchers following the *self-reporting* or *direct* approach use survey questions that directly ask respondents about their reasons for casting their vote. For instance, the inventory of the British Election Study asks respondents why they voted the way they did, offering explicitly the option ‘I really preferred another party but it had no chance of winning in this constituency’. British election researchers are very fond of this question and convinced about its usefulness (Fisher, 2004; Heath, 1991; Niemi et al., 1992; Evans and Heath, 1993). Some caution about the validity and reliability of this measure is warranted because respondents are asked post hoc to justify and explain their earlier behavior, a task that easily elicits response biases (faulty memories, rationalizations, and misperceptions). While this question fits the British SMD context quite well, this measure becomes highly problematic and ambiguous when applied to the different forms of strategic coalition voting outlined above. Consequently, this measure has not been widely used outside the UK.

Researchers following the *inference* or *indirect* approach identify strategic voters by using different survey items including party preferences, vote decisions (intended or cast), but also voter expectations about relevant aspects such as election outcomes or likely coalitions (e.g. Alvarez and Nagler, 2000; Elff, 2014; Herrmann and Pappi, 2008; Herrmann, 2014; Lago, 2008, Shikano et al., 2009). This approach offers the closest match to theoretical models of strategic voting. But even here some caution is warranted. While any defection from the preferred party is often considered strategic, a more careful operationalization of the theory of strategic voting would have to take the expectations into account in order to make a strategic vote out of a merely ‘insincere’ vote. Therefore, it is conceptually important to think *a priori* about the context in which a certain type

of voter is motivated to employ a particular strategy (Alvarez et al., 2006). Not every voter will always be motivated to use every conceivable strategy. Think about our hypothetical supporter of L from the example at the beginning of this chapter. If L is expected to be viable to win the district race, our supporter will have no incentive or motivation to vote strategically. The sincere vote counts and will not be wasted. Using this insight, Meffert and Gschwend (2010), using data from the 2006 general election in Austria, *a priori* define different decision contexts that might provide incentives to behave strategically for certain subsets of the voter population in order to identify whether voters employ certain strategies. Another caveat is that vote choices themselves are not sufficient to infer whether voters behave strategically. Scholars need to assume that voters correctly perceive the particular competitive context and react in the same way to it. Recently Elff (2014) developed a finite mixture model that allows this assumption to be relaxed.

Researchers can also combine features of both approaches using a so-called *counterfactual* approach, pioneered by Artabe and Gardeazabal (2014). They start with survey items to identify two different groups of voters; sincere voters using the *inference* approach and seemingly strategic voters identified in the tradition of the *self-reporting* methodology. In the next step, they fit a sincere vote choice model to only the subset of previously identified sincere voters. Using the estimated coefficients from this model, they then generate out-of-sample vote-choice predictions for the subset of seemingly strategic voters. This yields a counterfactual prediction: how each seemingly strategic voter would have voted if she were to behave like a sincere voter. Finally, the *counterfactual* approach classifies only those seemingly strategic voters as strategic if their self-reported vote choice turns out to be different from the predicted counterfactual vote choice. It should be noted that the degree of covariate balance between the *a priori* identified groups of sincere and seemingly strategic voters is crucially important because the groups are self-selected and not randomly assigned. Ideally, the counterfactual approach should be employed to a selected subset of sincere voters with covariate values similar to those of the strategic voters. The major advantage of the *counterfactual approach* is that the classification of a strategic voter does not rely on problematic measures to assess how voters form expectations about the outcome of an election.

Measuring expectations

In order to assess the impact of voters' expectations about the success of parties and candidates, there are generally two conceivable measurement strategies. First, some scholars ask respondents directly about the prospects of parties or candidates in that election. Abramson et al. (1992), for instance, investigate strategic voting on Super Tuesday in the 1988 presidential primaries. They measure the probability that a given candidate will get the nomination via a normalization

procedure applied to a hundred-point scale. Blais and Nadeau (1996) also rely on subjective measures for voter expectations using the 1988 Canadian Election Study. The main problem with this approach is that subjective measures are prone to projection effects, that is, voters are wishful thinkers who perceive their favored candidates as having better chances to win than others (Bartels, 1988; Brady and Johnston, 1987; Meffert et al., 2011). One way to deal with this problem is to model projection effects directly using a systems-of-equations approach. Abramson, Aldrich, Paolino and Rohde (1992) follow this strategy and purge their candidate probability scores to win nomination from projection biases. This strategy requires strong assumptions about the factors that are presumably not contaminated with projection effects in order to model them. A more promising way to deal with projection is to simply design instruments that minimize such effects. Pappi and Thurner (2002), for instance, employ a 4-point Likert scale to measure voters' expectation of whether minor parties in Germany will gain seats in the next election. Similar measures have become part of election study inventories in various countries (e.g. Germany, Austria, Sweden) in recent years.

A second measurement strategy is to employ 'objective' measures of voter expectations. Such context variables are often based on actual election returns (Black, 1978, 1980; Cain, 1978). Alvarez and Nagler (2000) provide an interesting application of this strategy with data from the British general election in 1987. The basic crux of this approach is to construct a vote choice model for sincere voting in a multiparty setting based on individual-level data, and to add the district-level results of the previous election as a measure for the 'expected' closeness of the district race. Indeed, they find that third-party supporters are more likely to desert their party if they 'expect' a competitive district race. Some scholars prefer clearly exogenous measures for voter expectations and employ district results of the previous election (e.g. Alvarez and Nagler, 2000; Elff, 2014). Presumably, such knowledge is readily available to voters. Other scholars prefer to employ results of the current election (e.g. Gschwend, 2007; Guinjoan et al., 2014; Herrmann and Pappi, 2008) because they better approximate pre-election polls in that district, which often do not exist. Such district-level polls are by no means a standard outside the UK. If voters are expected to form expectations about the government formation process, the 'objective' history of coalitions between parties and actual coalition signals provides valuable information for strategic voters (Armstrong and Duch, 2010; Duch et al., 2010; Gschwend et al., 2017; Irwin and van Holsteyn, 2012).

Testing the causal mechanisms of strategic voting: experimental approaches

The research covered so far relies for the most part on either survey data (mostly pre-election studies if expectations measures about the outcome of an election

are used) or on official statistics such as district-level election returns, or a combination of both types of data. Both are not ideal to establish causal relationships at the individual level. Thus, we turn to two alternatives, experiments and simulations, and their relative advantages and disadvantages to investigate strategic voting.

When studying the conditions under which voters employ a particular strategy and deviate from their most preferred party to cast a strategic vote, scholars are interested in testing the effects of expectations on vote choice. We know that voters use heuristics and contextual cues such as polls, previous election results, and coalition signals to form expectations about various aspects of the election outcome. This raises a number of methodological issues. The vast majority of studies about strategic voting at the individual level are based on cross-sectional surveys, conducted before or after a single election. This makes a causal test more or less impossible. This is a particularly serious problem when the relationship of preferences and expectations is unclear and possibly reciprocal. Second, looking at a single election does not usually provide much variation in the polls and coalition signals. Both are fairly stable and consistent before elections, and every voter will receive more or less the same information. As a consequence, it is nearly impossible to establish a causal link from exposure to polls and other signals to political behavior. Even if objective conditions favoring strategic voting exist, they might only affect a small part of the electorate. In short, it is very difficult to establish a clear link between cause and effect.

As an alternative, experiments can overcome the problem of establishing causality by clearly separating cause and effect, giving this approach high internal validity (see Johns, this *Handbook*, Volume 2, Chapter 39). They allow for a careful construction of seemingly objective conditions such as a close election. Moreover, when the key explanatory factor lacks variance, that is, when no observable data to test a theory are available, experiments can provide an elegant solution for this problem. Experimental designs enable the researcher to create the necessary variance within the explanatory variable by manipulating it, i.e. by providing information for the treatment group and withholding it for the control group.

Experiments can take many different shapes and forms. The settings can range from a tightly controlled lab environment over a real-world field setting to (representative) surveys. Following McDermott (2002), we distinguish two traditions of experimental designs, experiments done in the economic tradition or in the psychological tradition. Experiments in the behavioral economic tradition tend to confront participants with abstract, context-free, and transparent decision scenarios. The information made available to participants might be incomplete, creating uncertainty, but it is never deceptive or false. In order to rule out confounding influences, preferences or expectations are induced and assigned by the experimenter and not based on existing preferences of participants. For instance, parties will not have familiar labels but have abstract names because participants will not have developed a strong attachment to, say, party *L*. This gives the experimenter

in economic experiments a very high degree of control. The abstract nature of these experiments and the induced preferences and expectations make it possible to assess the quality of decision making in a straightforward manner. Because the experimenter knows the correct decision, it is very easy to determine optimal and wrong decisions. Participants experience success and failure as monetary gains and losses.

Previous experiments have tested the impact of different decision rules (Cherry and Kroll, 2003; Forsythe et al., 1996; Rapoport et al., 1991; Yuval and Herne, 2005; Gerber et al., 1998), pre-election polls or similar information about preference distributions (Eckel and Holt, 1989; Fisher and Myatt, 2002; Forsythe et al., 1993, 1996; Plott, 1991; Rich, 2015), voting histories (Forsythe et al., 1993; Williams, 1991), Duverger's law (Forsythe et al., 1993, 1996), and sequential or repeated voting (Eckel and Holt, 1989; Morton and Williams, 1999; Williams, 1991), sometimes framed as a primary or general election and sometimes as a small group or committee decision-making task. But, for the most part, these experiments have focused on a very limited set of choices, usually three candidates or parties. The advantage of these 'simple' decision scenarios is that they usually have formal solutions and known equilibria that allow a straightforward assessment of optimal decision making.

Multiparty setups or coalition governments have been addressed in only a few experiments. Using economic experiments, several studies (e.g. McCuen and Morton, 2010; Meffert and Gschwend, 2007, 2009; Linhart and Tepe, 2015) suggest that, if voters are in a strategic decision mode and face decision scenarios that provide clear incentives for strategic voting, then a majority of voters appears to be able to engage in strategic voting, at least as long as the decision context is fairly transparent. Blais, St-Vincent, Pilet, and Treibich (2016) show in their laboratory experiment that participants need to rely on electoral history as a heuristic in order to cast a strategic vote. Moreover, in one experiment by Goodin, Güth, and Sausgruber (2008) some participants play not only the role of a voter but also function as a party leader to include the coalition formation stage as well.

Experiments in the social psychological tradition try to create realistic decision scenarios, not in terms of mundane realism, but in the sense that they rely on pre-existing preferences of the participants and try to pose decision scenarios that capture the attention and involvement of the participants (McDermott, 2002). A key difference to economic experiments is the frequent use of deception for experimental manipulations. The information given to participants is optimized to create a convincing manipulation, not to provide objective and verifiable facts. From an ethical perspective, the use of deception makes it mandatory that participants are debriefed at the end of the study. Psychological experiments of electoral decision making rely frequently on fictitious scenarios in order to control the amount and content of information available to participants. However, it is very common to use existing parties and existing party preferences, relinquishing much more control than economic experimenters do.

Meffert and Gschwend (2011) embedded such an experiment in two actual state election campaigns in Germany, to test the effects of coalition signals and poll information on voting behavior for real parties in the laboratory. The decision scenario presented to participants was thus highly realistic, and most information provided to participants was taken from the actual party platforms. A crucial advantage of experiments in the psychological tradition is the possibility to tap into and use the actual party preferences of participants, making a strategic voting decision psychologically more ‘costly’ compared with purely fictional parties and campaigns.

Laboratory experiments usually use convenience samples that pose a challenge to external validity, the extent to which the results can be generalized to the world outside. In this respect, cross-sectional surveys with a general population sample have a clear advantage over laboratory experiments, even if they fall short when assessing causal relationships. Survey experiments can often combine the advantages of randomized manipulations and control of laboratory experiments (internal validity) with the representative nature of general population surveys (external validity). Fredén (2013), for instance, uses a survey experiment to systematically manipulate coalition signals and poll results in order to estimate their effects on the probability of voting strategically. Irwin and Van Holsteyn (2008, 2012) operationalized coalition signals as part of vignettes in a survey experiment in the Netherlands. These vignettes presented respondents with hypothetical but plausible results of opinion polls and their consequences for the formation of the next coalition government. Using a similar survey experimental design, Gschwend, Meffert, and Stoetzer (2017) show that coalition signals increase the importance of coalition considerations and, at the same time, decrease the importance of party considerations in voters’ utility function. Given the different advantages and disadvantages, experiments and surveys complement each other and both have and will continue to make useful contributions to the study of strategic voting. Both should have their place in the toolbox of the discerning researcher.

Testing formal mechanisms and consequences of strategic voting: simulations

Other tools that have become more popular in recent years are agent-based simulations and computational models. They are very common in the hard sciences to study problems that are too difficult to solve analytically. The same applies to formal models of strategic coalition voting because the identification of clear equilibria in realistic situations of mass elections with several parties, coalition formation rules, and voting thresholds has remained elusive so far. Simulations can help to establish how voters (or parties) behave if they are endowed with certain attributes. This approach allows the researcher to derive implications about what would happen given a certain mechanism. By comparing the

simulation results with observable outcomes, one can make an argument about whether a certain mechanism seems to operate in the real world. Shikano (2009) uses simulations to see what would happen to voters, and ultimately to a party system, in a mixed electoral system if voters simply take the national result as a heuristic to form their expectation about who is viable at the electoral-district level. By comparing the outcome to observable patterns of party competition in Germany, he finds evidence that some voters strategically desert their most preferred party because they formed incorrect expectations about the election outcome in the electoral district. Clough (2007) similarly addresses the role of information in addition to institutional characteristics to predict under what conditions voters are likely to avoid wasting their vote on hopeless parties or candidates. Voters need information to form expectations. The results underline that, without information through polls or the electoral history heuristic, voters cannot see who is viable and therefore do not systematically desert minor parties. Finally, Meffert (2015) uses simulations to assess the mechanisms and how often various voting strategies maximize a voter's expected utility in a (highly simplified) multiparty system with proportional representation, minimum vote thresholds, and coalition governments. The results indicate that such a political system in fact provides many different opportunities for strategic voting, contrary to what the traditional literature based on Duverger suggests. While theoretically expected, it often remains a challenge to obtain empirical evidence on whether real voters actually use such strategies. As with aggregate inference approaches, the link to observable individual-level behavior is weak.

STRATEGIC VOTING, FOR BETTER OR WORSE, IS HERE TO STAY

There are some basic messages we want the reader to take home from this chapter. First, strategic voting is about much more than it once seemed, and certainly more than merely acknowledging that some voters cast their vote for a less preferred option on the ballot in order to avoid wasting their vote. Depending on a voter's decision context and her preferences for the options on the ballot, there might be several different features that characterize the election outcome she forms expectations about. Most prominent is the fact that in most countries a coalition of several parties is needed to form a government. The anticipation of who will form the new government is likely to introduce expectations that differ from considerations of whether a certain party or candidate is viable to win representation. In order to maximize their expected utility from voting, strategic voters deviate from their most preferred option because of their expectations. Consequently, for testing observable implications of strategic voting we should conceptualize voters to have a utility or vote function that implies that the effect of preferences is conditional on expectations. Not all studies do that yet.

Second, despite all the complexity of strategic coalition voting, especially in multiparty systems, voters can do it – even without obtaining a PhD first. Strategic voters can maximize their expected utility from voting by relying on cues, heuristics, and coalition signals to simplify the decision task. At the same time, it is also true that strategic voting is not a mass phenomenon, either because many voters do not let their expectations moderate their preferences and rather vote expressively or because the electoral context does not provide incentives for strategic voting. Any time the most preferred party is viable and competitive, there is simply no incentive to vote for a different party short of trying to influence the composition of a coalition government.

Third, although the number of voters who deviate from their most preferred party because of some expectation about the election outcome might be low, strategic voting has undoubtedly important real-world consequences. Even though a few strategic voters might change who is winning in a particular district, it is hard to assess in which electoral districts the impact of strategic voting might have changed the outcome of the district race. Standard survey designs do not allow us to compare preferences and voting behavior of more than a handful of individuals in each electoral district. Typically, this is not enough to reliably estimate the number of strategic voters at the district level, although new approaches using small-area estimation techniques get around that problem (Hermann et al., 2016). Moreover, actual vote shares of parties at the national level are crucially important when party leaders negotiate a new coalition government that needs a majority in parliament. When looking at election results in multiparty systems, there are countless examples that two percentage points systematically cast for certain parties and withheld from other parties might lead to different coalition governments, and therefore completely change the outcome of the election. By taking the role of coalitions in post-electoral bargaining processes and especially voters' expectation of how they will play out more seriously, this chapter should remind scholars that the electoral rules in PR systems provide plenty of opportunities for strategic voting, more than is commonly assumed. Moreover, these findings also have important implications for the transformation and consolidation process, particularly for newly established democracies. Strategic voting does not automatically facilitate the development of a stable party system because not all strategies favor large parties over marginal parties. The evidence reviewed in this chapter suggests that small parties can also benefit from strategic voting and thus might facilitate rather than prevent the fragmentation of a party system – something that might be of interest to electoral engineers when drafting new election laws.

Fourth, major challenges remain. Theoretically, the full inventory of strategic coalition voting is far from established, and formal models that can better capture the high complexity of the decision-making process are needed. Methodologically, the measurement of strategic voting especially with observed data such as surveys remains a challenge. Theory and research on strategic voting

are actively developed and will continue to bring new insights and answers to old questions.

Finally, we turn to more normative aspects of strategic voting that we have conveniently neglected so far. Behaving strategically means by definition that voters support a party that does not reflect their highest preference. The fact that strategic voting decisions are not only based on preferences but also voters' expectations about the election outcome raises concerns for many people. We will address two of the most prominent criticisms in the remainder of this chapter. The first criticism of strategic voting goes as follows:

1 Strategic voting is bad for democracy because voters' expectations can easily be manipulated.

Strategic voting requires voters to form expectations about particular aspects of the election outcome and to include this information in their decision-making process. Depending on those assumptions, voters eventually decide to cast a vote for a party other than their most-preferred one. In the previous sections, we have pointed out that there are various sources of information voters rely on in order to form their expectations about the election outcome. This information will not always be correct. We agree with observers who warn us that the media providing citizens with such information could abuse their power by trying to manipulate the election outcome. But it only works if very few and exclusive sources provide voters with the necessary information. For national election, this is a very unlikely scenario. National polls are typically not exclusively done by one firm or sponsored by only one customer. There seems to be a healthy competition between polling firms, at least in advanced and highly developed democracies. Polls are not the only source of information voters can rely on. As we have shown above, there is rather evidence that voters or journalists seem to draw on other heuristics such as the electoral history (Forsythe et al., 1993; Gschwend, 2004, 2007; Lago, 2008) to form expectations. Even if polls are not available one can still rely on the election results of the last election (that are readily available) in order to form expectations about the likely outcome in a particular electoral district in an upcoming election. If polls are available, they are often treated with a healthy dose of skepticism – rightly or wrongly – especially when other sources to form expectations do provide a different message. After all, voters are not fools, in particular those that have an instrumental motivation.

While the first point addressed the issue of expectations, the second prominent criticism does address the issue of whether elections accurately represent voters' preferences.

2 Strategic voting is bad for democracy because voters 'misrepresent' their preferences.

Some voters do not vote for their most preferred party (or candidate) and, if they do this because of their expectations of the election outcome, those voters behave

strategically. It might appear that these voters misrepresent their preferences. Some journalistic accounts even get judgmental and suggest that this type of behavior is similar to lying (e.g. Warburton 2015). According to the critics, misrepresenting preferences through strategic voting is undemocratic because the resulting vote tally is biased and therefore does not truly reflect the ‘real’ distribution of preferences of the public.

Voting is not about lying. On the ballot, it typically says something like this: ‘place an X next to the party you wish to vote for’. Ballots do not instruct voters to cast their vote for the party they like most. They don’t have to. Neither is someone forced to vote strategically. Voters choose to do so. And we think that there are good reasons for it.

First, voters have to decide to support one option that is offered on the ballot. This already ‘misrepresents’ a voter’s preference because he or she cannot vote for him or herself. Paraphrasing a former United States Secretary of Defense, strategic voters work with the parties they have, not the parties they want. In the best-case scenario, he or she votes for a most preferred party or candidate on the ballot. This most-preferred option might still not represent a voter’s preference on every potential issue. In representative democracies voters vote for parties (or more abstractly for policy bundles as some might have it), but they cannot cast different votes, one for each relevant policy. There will never be a Rousseauian world in which a resulting vote tally could ever truly reflect the *volonté générale* – the general will as reflected by the distribution of ‘true’ preferences of the public. Even if everyone voted for his or her most-preferred party, this does not imply that an election outcome represents the will of the people on every issue. PR systems are not better in this regard than majoritarian systems.

Second, let’s entertain the idea that everyone has to vote for her most preferred party. Is that a more democratic alternative? Thus, our hypothetical supporter of *L* actually casts a sincere vote. Suppose that all supporters of *L* prefer *C* over *R* and together would give *C* a majority, but *R* wins the plurality vote because the opposition *L* and *C* did not coordinate. The election outcome would be that *R* determines policy although a majority would have preferred a different outcome. While hypothetical, such an outcome is not uncommon. In new democracies such as Albania and other Central Eastern countries large shares of the votes cast were wasted because they went to hopeless candidates or parties that did not win representation in parliament (Birch, 2003). Such an outcome is not unproblematic either because it threatens the legitimacy of the electoral process after votes have been translated into seats. The electoral process would be an inefficient way to aggregate preferences. In real elections, we will always find situations where parties compete without having a clear chance of winning. They might run this time to be in a better position for the next general election, or they might hope to be more successful in other elections, for instance, at the local, state, or European level. Some parties do not compete to win but in order to get reimbursed for part

of their campaign costs. If voters care about making their votes count rather than merely being counted, just voting for their most-preferred party is not a reasonable option. Consequently, strategic voting or ‘voting with your head’ can be a good thing for democracy, while ‘voting with your heart’ could pave the way for an inefficient outcome.

Thus, we maintain that strategic voting is good for democracy. It is a valid way for citizens to use the electoral rules to translate their preferences into a desirable government and the best possible policy outcome they can expect. Strategic voting can help to arrive at a more representative outcome in which voters’ sincere preference distributions are reflected more closely in the subsequent policy output. It might not happen all the time, but there is a good chance that such an outcome compares favorably to the outcome of an entirely sincere electorate. Thus, rather than being ‘undemocratic’, strategic voting can be a desirable feature given how the institutional mechanics of a representative democracy work.

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Integrating Genetics into the Study of Electoral Behavior

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Humanity is part of nature, a species that evolved among other species. The more closely we identify ourselves with the rest of life, the more quickly we will be able to discover the sources of human sensibility and acquire the knowledge on which an enduring ethic, a sense of preferred direction, can be built. (Edward O. Wilson, *The Diversity of Life*: 348)

Until recently, explanations for the origins, maintenance, and variation of political preferences and electoral behaviors had principally, if not exclusively, relied on Durkheimian (1919) logic, whereby social forces, conditioning and external stimuli are considered the only causes of variation in human behaviors (Bandura 1977; Hyman 1959; Langton 1969). This view, however, began to erode under a consistent flow of research that found most ‘social’ traits are, in part, biologically regulated. The diversity of techniques utilized and topics explored has resulted in a paradigm shift across academic disciplines in how researchers view social behaviors. For example, functional magnetic resonance imaging and event-related brain potential models have isolated neurological pathways for stereotyping, self-awareness, decision-making, cooperation, empathy, and relational cognition (Carr et al. 2003; Gusnard 2005; Hart et al. 2000; Iacoboni et al. 2004; Kosfeld et al. 2005; Sanfey et al. 2003); lesion studies, which focus on damage to specific regions of the brain, have explicated the neuroanatomy of working memory, social interaction, and moral and rational decision making (Hadland et al. 2003; Koenigs et al. 2007; Manes et al. 2002; Müller and Knight 2006); endocrinological, neurochemical, and psychopharmacological explorations have revealed the importance of hormones and modulating peptides, such as oxytocin, vasopressin, serotonin and dopamine, on a wide range of social

behaviors closely related to politics, including affiliation, affect, aggression, anxiety, cognition, emotion recognition and regulation, empathy, fear, fight or flight response, inhibition, leadership, parenting style, pro-sociality, reward dependence, risk taking, stress, theory of mind, and trust, to name a few (Canli and Lesch 2007; Ebstein et al. 2010; Fries et al. 2005; Heinrichs, von Dawans and Domes 2009; Kumsta and Heinrichs 2013; Meyer-Lindenberg, Mervis and Faith Berman 2006; Myers et al. 2014; Uzefovsky et al. 2012; Walter 2012; Walum et al. 2012; Zaki and Ochsner 2012). All of these can be linked to genetic differences; molecular genetic and kinship analyses have provided evidence that genetic influences operate on nearly all social traits. In the last two decades alone, our understanding of the intricate relationship between biology, the environment, and behavior has advanced profoundly.

Of specific interest to our discipline, contemporary political orientations and electoral behaviors have also been found to share functions with biologically based and evolutionarily fundamental processes, particularly those that revolve around cooperation, defense, reproduction, and survival (Alford and Hibbing 2004; Lockyer and Hatemi 2014; Lopez, McDermott and Petersen 2011; McDermott and Hatemi 2013). Mounting evidence argues that the evolution of the human brain may have been stimulated by a need for enhanced social cognition to solve explicitly political problems, that is, those circumstances that surround group living (Alexander 1974; Axelrod 1986; Axelrod and Hamilton 1981; Buss 1989; Cosmides and Tooby 1997; Darwin 1859; Geary, Vigil and Byrd Craven 2004; Hammond and Axelrod 2006; Kurzban and Leary 2001; Lopez and McDermott 2012; Lumsden and Wilson 1981; Ridley 1993; Rushton, Littlefield and Lumsden 1986; Thornhill, Fincher and Aran 2009; Tooby, Cosmides and Price 2006; Trivers 1971; Wilson 2000). Importantly, while being ‘political’ appears universal across human societies, there is great variation in the nature and degree of such traits, and the source of such variation has been found to be as much biological as it is social. Beginning in the 1970s, Eaves, Eysenck and Martin (1974; 1989; 1986) found genetic influences accounted for more than 40% of the variation in social and political attitudes, while Wahlke and Lodge (1972) began to identify physiological mechanisms that predicted political behaviors and attitudes. In the 1980’s, Madsen’s (1985,1987) experiments found higher whole blood levels of serotonin predicted power-seeking. By the 2000’s, a nascent revolution in political behavior research emerged, with studies appearing in academia’s top journals, utilizing techniques such as quantitative and statistical genetics, neuroimaging, physiology, and molecular biology; all providing empirical support that environments alone do not account for how and why individuals differ politically (Alford, Funk and Hibbing 2005; Bouchard and McGue 2003; Fowler and Schreiber 2008; Hatemi et al. 2014; Kaplan, Freedman and Iacoboni 2007; McDermott 2009; Meyer-Lindenberg et al. 2006; Schreiber and Iacoboni 2012; Schultz, Dayan and Montague 1997; Westen et al. 2006).¹

In this chapter, we move beyond the discussion of empirical studies that describe the role of genetics and genomics on individual differences in political attitudes, behaviors, and identities, by addressing the questions of why these findings are important and necessary to integrate with our core theories of electoral behavior, and how including biology not only informs the questions we have asked in the past, but changes the questions we should ask, and the ways we should ask them in the future. This chapter will seek to provide the foundation for a more complete discussion of the consequences that biological theories and approaches have on explicating the questions of most interest to political science.

FROM GENES TO BRAINS TO BEHAVIOR

Perhaps no research approach at the intersection of biology and human behavior has generated more interest than genetics. And, given that DNA is often conceived as the building blocks of life, perhaps there is no better place to begin a discussion of how differences in one's biology may operate on complex traits, such as those surrounding modern-day politics. Technological advances in mapping the human genome have produced extraordinary insights into thousands of human traits, increasing our understanding of diseases, pathways to better physical and mental health, and processes of cognition and emotion (Ebstein et al. 2010). Nevertheless, despite the media's portrayal of a futuristic world, where one's genes determine all aspects of life, and a single gene can govern any trait, genetics do not operate in that manner. Rather, a gene is a segment of a DNA molecule responsible for encoding proteins, the primary functional tools of cells, promoting and inhibiting the release of biochemicals including neurotransmitters. These essential substrates subsequently activate variegated downstream pathways that alter cognitive, perceptive and emotional structures dependent upon environmental circumstance to generate behaviors and traits. The general idea is not that one can find the 'gene' 'for' any given social or political trait, but instead an understanding that the road from genotype to complex behavior is malleable, convoluted, and tortured, and while genes play an important role, their influence is only part of a very complex pathway to behavior (Hatemi, Byrne and McDermott 2012).

Before turning to explicitly political behavior, it may be useful to provide an illustration of the biological mechanisms underlying a better-explored trait, one common to all human experience: fear. Fear is a physiological reaction to a perceived threat – this fight or flight response is characterized by increased heart rate, blood flow, and opening of the sweat glands to get the body and brain ready for action. Working both top down from these symptoms and bottom up from genetics, researchers have identified the intermediate biological phenotypes and novel pathways associated with fear, noting the activation of the adrenal and sympathetic nervous systems to produce a hormonal cascade secreting catecholamines,

norepinephrine and epinephrine, and other specific neural structures and activity related to fear response.

More specifically, two critical pathways have been identified in fear processing. When the brain perceives a threatening stimulus, neurons trigger one pathway straight from the thalamus to the amygdala. This ‘short route’, largely emotional and based on shortcuts and heuristics, conveys immediate and imprecise information regarding the fearful situation. Another pathway is activated from the thalamus to the cortex to the hippocampus to the amygdala. This ‘long route’ permits a thorough cognitive assessment of the stimulus, including memory, to determine if the threat is legitimate. Both of these pathways terminate in the amygdala, a part of the brain known to mediate our learning of the emotional values of stimuli. Utilizing neurobiological and genetic methods, researchers have identified the neurotransmitters and proteins related to the regulation of fear, particularly within the amygdala, including GABA, serotonin, and dopamine, which has in turn led to novel pathways and potential points of intervention (Hariri et al. 2002; Harris and Westbrook 1998).

Consider the role of one specific excitatory neurotransmitter, NMDA, in fear conditioning. By blocking NMDA receptors in the amygdala, researchers were able to prevent the learning of fearful stimuli (Fendt 2001). Though none of these neurotransmitters act alone, working in conjunction or opposition, these biological chemicals activate, suppress, and mediate the fear response in the amygdala. Of importance for our purposes, individuals differ in the activation of and reliance on these pathways. Some rely more heavily on the short route, others the long route. Some are more sensitive to threats, and others less. And different genotypes and differences in gene expression account for part of these differences. Ultimately, genes encode neurotransmitters that regulate the processing of fearful stimuli, including GABA, serotonin, dopamine, and NMDA. Upon exposure to an environmental stimulus perceived as threatening, the activation of distinct neural pathways triggers the release of these neurotransmitters. The neurotransmitters bind to receptors within the amygdala, and the individual experiences fear. Downstream effects on the hypothalamus initiate hormonal reactions that result in manifest signs of fear. Similar processes are expected to operate on political traits.

GENETIC INFLUENCES ON ‘POLITICAL’ TRAITS

Political traits, orientations, and ideologies, including those participatory acts such as voting, donating, and volunteering, encompass fundamentally the same issues of cooperation, reproduction, and survival surrounding group life that confronted our ancestors; the general decision-making processes are the same because they involve the same interpersonal traits (Apicella et al. 2012; Axelrod 1984; Boehm 1999; Cosmides and Tooby 1997; Eaves, Eysenck and Martin

1989; Fowler and Schreiber 2008; Hatemi, Gillespie, et al. 2011; Hatemi and McDermott 2011a; Hibbing and Smith 2007; Hibbing, Smith and Alford 2013; Lumsden and Wilson 1981; Petersen and Aaroe 2012; Ridley 1993). Modern-day ideological issues surrounding sexual freedoms, mores, and parenting are reflected in the prehistoric need for access to mates and to ensure the survival of offspring; policy views on immigration are little different from the primal need to recognize and protect against unknown, unlike, and potentially ‘dangerous’ others²; codified laws, policing, and punishment are akin to dealing with mores violators in hunter-gatherer societies; taxes and social welfare programs essentially revolve around questions of the best way to share resources for group living; foreign policy and military are matters of protecting one’s in-group and defending against potential out-groups. Some issues, such as universal health care, encompass numerous evolutionary domains, including at the very least reproduction, fairness, cooperation, individual and group survival, allocation of resources, and security.

In a similar manner, electoral-specific behaviors are not only a function of modern institutions or ‘politics’, but are also modern expressions of root human behaviors. Voting in an election, partisanship, donating to parties or special interests, volunteering, or communicating with civic and political leaders are ‘political-specific’ reflections of group identity, pro-social behaviors, trust, and cooperation. The manifestation of these issues and behaviors appears much more complicated because of the shift from small bands of humans to large-scale societies with complex modern social structures, such as states, governments, and institutions combined with technological advances in mobility, communication, and warfare, among others. Laws and institutions are not needed to address mores violators in groups of ten individuals; social sanction is enough. Whereas, in a group of 300 million, institutions, and policies that guide those institutions, are necessary. Nevertheless, the same emotional and cognitive processes are instigated when individuals are faced with small group decisions on how to cooperate, take part in group life, and make political choices, as they are when asked particular questions about their attitudes, or whether to participate in elections, or how one votes for a particular party, platform, policy, or person. For example, it is not uncommon for citizens to have a visceral hatred of a politician that they have never met, as much as they may hate a personal rival. While the labels and often meanings of issues change across time and cultures (McDermott and Hatemi 2013) and the medium through which preferences are communicated have changed from direct, immediate, and interpersonal (e.g. person to person, group sanction, etc.) to indirect, latent, and impersonal (e.g. internet, voting for a person you have never met, etc.), the underlying connection between the core issues that are important to humans, revolving around cooperation, defense, reproduction, resources, and survival, remains (Hatemi and McDermott 2011a, 2012b; Hibbing, Smith and Alford 2013; Lockyer and Hatemi 2014; Lopez, McDermott and Petersen 2011).

Equipped with the knowledge that all traits, political or other, result from both genetic and environmental influences, that such influences are not deterministic, genes only operate through environmental stimuli, and modern-day politics are more complex expressions of ancestral group living, the door is opened to a more complex understanding of electoral behavior. It is from this view that we ask: what have we learned in the last 10 years at the intersection of biology and politics? And how do we better integrate this knowledge into our discipline?

Almost all political traits, including those surrounding electoral behaviors, are influenced in some manner by differences in one's DNA. Utilizing kinship approaches, which rely on the average genetic relatedness of two or more types of relatives, most often twins (Medland and Hatemi 2009), examinations of attitudes, ideologies, participation, political donations, trust, turnout, and vote choice, among other traits, have been found to be, partly heritable, with genetic influences accounting for 20 to 70 percent of the variation (Dawes and Fowler 2009; Fowler, Baker and Dawes 2008; Fowler, Dawes and Settle 2011; Fowler and Dawes 2008; Hatemi, Alford, et al. 2009; Hatemi and McDermott 2012b; Hatemi et al. 2007; Klemmensen, Hatemi, Hobolt, Petersen, et al. 2012; Klemmensen, Hatemi, Hobolt, Skytthe, et al. 2012; Littvay, Weith and Dawes 2011; Loewen and Dawes 2012; Oskarsson et al. 2012). This holds true for all those traits that influences electoral behaviors, such as civic skills, cognition, communication, educational attainment, emotion, political efficacy, sophistication and interest, resources, and social values, among many others, not to mention the genetic influences identified on all those foundational antecedents of political choices, such as trust, cooperation, and pro-sociality (Anokhin et al. 2014; Ebstein et al. 2010; Loewen et al. 2013; Rietveld et al. 2013; Rushton et al. 1986; Rushton, Littlefield and Lumsden 1986). Such findings are not isolated to a handful of studies or small samples, but rather have been validated across different Western democracies, time periods, and cultural conditions (Dawes et al. 2014; Hatemi et al. 2014; Klemmensen, Hatemi, Hobolt, Petersen, et al. 2012; Klemmensen, Hatemi, Hobolt, Skytthe, et al. 2012; Oskarsson et al. 2015; Oskarsson et al. 2012).

Figures 17.1 and 17.2 provide summary estimates of the relative genetic and environmental influences on many political traits and their correlates, respectively, including some of the general psychological constructs that are believed to underlie electoral behaviors. As we can see in the figures, genetic influences account for a substantial portion of the variation of why individuals differ. For those unfamiliar with genetic analyses, it is important to clarify how to interpret these results. First, heritability estimates partition the relative source of variance within a population: that is, it is not that genetics explains 60% of political sophistication; rather, around 60% of the variance, or individual differences in political sophistication, within (not across) populations studied, is accounted for by the aggregate of all genetic influences. Heritability estimates explain how people in the same population differ. They are estimates of the population, not

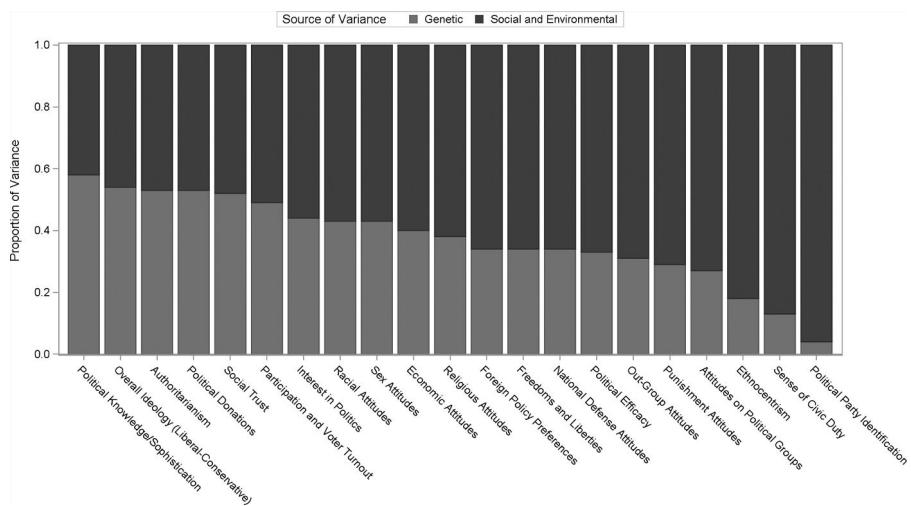


Figure 17.1 Relative genetic and environmental influences on electoral traits; the chart is constructed from published review articles, meta-analyses and a summary of individual articles referenced in this chapter. The chart displays the relative proportion of variance on each trait explained by the aggregate effect of genetic (additive and nonadditive) and environmental influences (non-genetic or epigenetic influences shared among family members, other social influences and unique experiences).

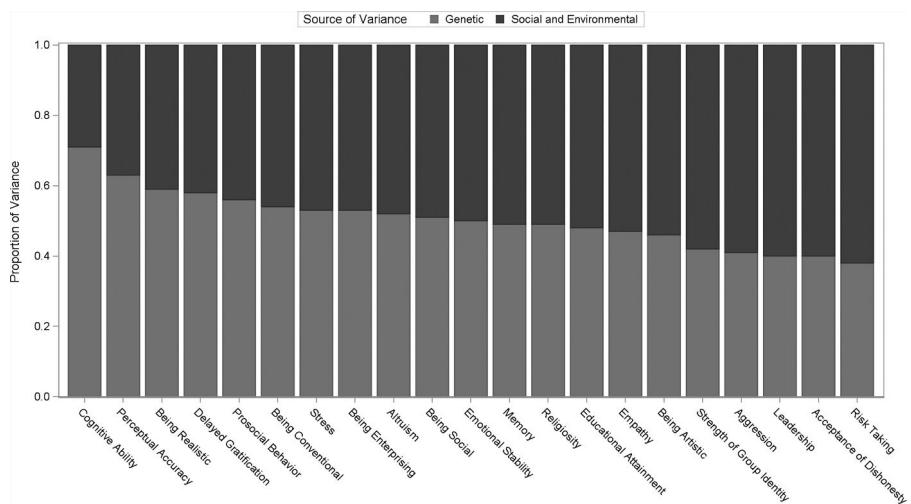


Figure 17.2 Relative genetic and environmental influences on related social traits; the chart is constructed from published review articles, meta-analyses and a summary of individual articles referenced in this chapter. The chart displays the relative proportion of variance on each trait explained by the aggregate effect of genetic and environmental influences (non-genetic or epigenetic influences shared among family members, other social influences and unique experiences).

an estimate of the percentage within any given individual. Second, all heritability estimates are population and time specific; the environmental characteristics of the population, the meaning of the measures, and the genetic profile can be unique for every population. For example, what is considered welfare in the US is quite narrow compared with the scope of social welfare programs in Scandinavia. The meanings of the measures across time and cultural contexts are important and the exact same survey questions, for example, might elicit entirely different cognitive, and emotive systems (and genotypes) based on the meaning of those items in unique contexts. Third, genetic estimates, such as those presented in Figures 17.1 and 17.2, are not immutable. They are to be interpreted as one would interpret any statistical estimate from a typical social science model; differing environmental circumstances may mediate or moderate those influences. For example, gene–environment covariation and interaction models account for selection into environments based on one’s genotype and the effect different environmental conditions have on genetic influences on a trait-by-trait basis (Hatemi 2013).

Recall, our focus in this chapter is not to provide a complete review of the specific estimates or identify all of the genotypes or systems identified for political traits, though we do provide summaries. Rather, we address the larger questions of what this research can bring, and how to integrate such work into our field. Therefore, we guide those readers interested in more details to a number of important review articles and books that focus on the theory (Eaves 1976, 1977; Eaves, Eysenck and Martin 1989; Hatemi, Byrne and McDermott 2012; Hatemi and McDermott 2012a, 2012c, 2012d; Lockyer and Hatemi 2014; McDermott and Hatemi 2013; Rushton, Littlefield and Lumsden 1986), methods (Eaves et al. 2011; Keller et al. 2009; Medland and Hatemi 2009; Medland and Keller 2009; Verhulst and Estabrook 2012; Verhulst and Hatemi 2013), and the specific size of the genetic and environmental estimates and genotypes related to political traits (Dawes et al. 2014; Eaves, Eysenck and Martin 1989; Hatemi, Dawes, et al. 2011; Hatemi and McDermott 2012b, 2014; Hatemi et al. 2014; Hibbing, Smith and Alford 2013; Oskarsson et al. 2015).

Finding that genetic influences operate on political traits is not to argue that environments do not drive variation on electoral behaviors – they most certainly do – nor is it to argue that there is an explicit delineation of what is genetic and what is environmental. All empirical techniques naturally have some form of reductionism that provides estimates of relative importance. The combination of environments and genetically informed psychological dispositions operate in a complementary and recursive manner. What we learn from genetics changes how we interpret and understand the role of the environment and vice versa. It is not that people are simply born to being on the left or right, or more or less participatory, or that social forces move everyone in the same manner. Single genes or large groups of genes rarely have a direct role in any behavior and certainly do not for complex social traits. Rather, people with certain genetic dispositions are

more or less likely to seek out or find themselves having certain experiences, and perceive and react to those experiences differentially – the totality of such interactions through one's life, and all the differences in skills, opportunities, constraints, emotional reasoning, and so forth, result in higher or lower probabilities of donating to an election, being mobilized by a campaign, writing one's member of parliament or congressperson, or simply showing up to vote, for example (Fazekas and Hatemi 2016). Environments don't simply have effects; they have effects through one's biology and by influencing other environmental aspects, through an endless cycle. The same goes for genetic influences. Environments trigger and suppress gene expression and, without this expression, behavioral differences resulting from differences in one's DNA cannot be realized. In short, without biology we cannot fully explain why people differ under the same environmental conditions and, without the environment, we cannot explain why people with the same DNA differ in behavior outcomes.

Molecular approaches

While studies of kinships have yielded insight into the relative sources of variation of political behaviors and orientations, advances in molecular biology permit the discovery of the precise combination of neurobiological and environmental systems that operate on those emotional and cognitive processes that regulate, govern, and/or influence political choices. That is, identifying specific genetic variants that are significantly related to political traits will provide insight into the larger pathways and the neurological functions and hormonal processes that influence different aspects of emotion, cognition, and perception that are accessed when people make political choices. By narrowing down the genome, scientists take a reverse-engineering approach to understanding the etiology of orientations and behaviors and can potentially identify novel mechanisms on how people make decisions. Such a research program is important as there are countless theories proposing how political choices operate, whether through self-interest, group affiliation, reactions to fear and threat, morality, emotion, risk taking, aggression, and pursuit of power, to name a few (Brader 2005; Campbell et al. 1960; Haidt 2012; Iyengar and Westwood 2015; Kam 2012; Madsen 1985; McDermott et al. 2009; Riker and Ordeshook 1973). Despite the elegance of these theories, and the significant correlations found between measures, exactly how they influence political decision making, the precise mechanics and points of intervention, remains largely unknown. And of greater interest, overwhelmingly, they explain only small portions of the variance and provide no leverage on what is not known. Biological approaches are necessary to address these lacunas.

Molecular genetic research has identified a number of neurobiological processes operating on psychological and social traits related to politics. Dopamine and serotonin are perhaps the two most frequently cited mediators of social

behaviors. Broadly speaking, dopamine and the genetic variants that regulate its release and uptake are involved in a multitude of behavioral mechanisms related to electoral behaviors including, cognition and memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, and social attachment, to name a few (Beaulieu and Gainetdinov 2011; Wise 2004). Serotonin receptor genes have been similarly implicated in diverse behavioral traits related to electoral behaviors including aggression, anxiety, assertiveness, compulsivity, cooperation, executive control, impulsivity, learning and memory, mood regulation, perceived fairness, and stress, among others (Berger, Gray and Roth 2009; Caspi et al. 2010; Crockett et al. 2008; Hariri and Holmes 2006; Munafò, Brown and Hariri 2008).

Extensive research has also demonstrated a significant role for the neuropeptides oxytocin and arginine vasopressin and their receptors in the regulation of diverse social interactions, including trust, bonding, and social decision-making (Heinrichs, von Dawans and Domes 2009; Israel et al. 2009; Kosfeld et al. 2005; Zak, Stanton and Ahmadi 2007). This has substantial import for understanding electoral behavior because social organization is often characterized by trust and relationships. Various other politically related social behaviors and traits have also been correlated with specific molecular genetic mechanisms. Table 17.1 summarizes these findings.

Genotypes related to political traits

Unlike studies of kinships, which have been continually developed since the early 1900's, the human genome was only mapped in the early 2000's. Due to the only recent recognition of the role genetics have on electoral behaviors, there have been only a handful of molecular genetic studies focused on explicitly political traits. As of 2016, we could find only three published genome-wide studies that attempted to identify specific genetic variants for political traits (Benjamin et al. 2012; Hatemi, Gillespie, et al. 2011; Hatemi et al. 2014).³ None reached the criteria for significance; that is, the marker has to be significant at a level of 5×10^{-8} or better, and be replicated in independent samples.

Candidate gene studies, which rely on the *a priori* selection of genes that are likely candidates to be associated with a given trait, have, however, identified several potential markers. For example, working under the theory that voter turnout is some function of pro-sociality, Fowler and colleagues (2009; 2008, 2013) tested whether two genetic variants in the dopaminergic system (DRD2 and DRD4) and two genes involved in the serotoninergic system (5-HTTLPR and the serotonin-degrading enzyme MAO) were related to turnout and political ideology. These variants were previously implicated in pro-social traits due to their links with cooperation, reward sensitivity, and emotional processing, as we noted above. Only limited replication has been performed based on these findings however (Deppe et al. 2013), and it will take several more studies to verify the results.

In general, candidate gene approaches more often return significant results versus GWA analyses due to the less stringent statistical requirements, and the idea of some place to start. They are however, more prone false to positives. This is because candidate gene approaches have a higher potential for publication bias (Duncan and Keller 2011), and are based on a subjective selection of candidate genes (Zhu and Zhao 2007), and analyses may be biased because they are made in absence of all other genetic markers. Therefore, substantial replication of candidate gene studies, including verification from GWA, is required before results are considered definitive.

In summary, so far, no single genetic variant has been found to account for a substantial portion of the variance on any political trait with a strong degree of certainty. This is not surprising given the research program is only in its infancy. While molecular genetic approaches, specifically genome-wide analyses, have uncovered a remarkable number of novel pathways and significant variants for a wide array of psychological and health-related traits (Consortium 2011; Sladek et al. 2007), genetic influences on complex social traits will be composed of thousands of markers of very small effects, that are environmentally contingent. For example, Rietveld et al.'s (2013) genome-wide analysis of educational attainment, a trait similar in complexity and measurement to political behaviors, found several significant genetic markers, but they required a sample of over 125,000 people to do so. Therefore, it will require sample sizes in the hundreds of thousands to have enough power in order to identify specific genes related to political traits (Fisher 1918). Consortia are now forming to tackle these obstacles. This was a successful strategy for the study of breast cancer, schizophrenia, and a number of other traits, and we look forward to the results from such efforts.

WHAT DOES GENETICS BRING TO THE STUDY OF ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR?

There are now hundreds of published articles at the intersection of genetics and politics in high impact interdisciplinary journals, including *Science*, *Nature* and the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (Cesarini et al. 2008; Dawes et al. 2012; Eaves and Eysenck 1974; Fowler and Schreiber 2008; Martin et al. 1986; McDermott et al. 2009; Oxley et al. 2008), and the discipline's top journals, including the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *American Political Science Review* and the *Journal of Politics* (Alford, Funk and Hibbing 2005; Alford et al. 2011; Dawes et al. 2014; Dawes and Fowler 2009; Fowler, Baker and Dawes 2008; Fowler and Dawes 2008,2013; Hatemi 2013; Hatemi, Funk, et al. 2009; Hatemi, Gillespie, et al. 2011; Hatemi et al. 2010; Hatemi et al. 2013; Hatemi, Medland and Eaves 2009; Madsen 1985,1987; McDermott, Tingley and Hatemi 2014; Orbell et al. 2004; Petersen 2012; Smith et al. 2012; Smith et al. 2007). The findings have received great public interest, and wide

media attention in the form of print articles, and radio and television appearances in outlets such as the *Economist*, the *New York Times*, the *Daily Show*, *CNN*, and *NPR*, among others (Carey 2005; Rathi 2012; Simon 2014). This research is not simply focused on the methods of genetics, but speaks directly to core political science theories and engages fundamental debates in the study of electoral behavior around rational choice (Hatemi and McDermott 2011a; McDermott 2004, 2009; Smith et al. 2007), social learning and behaviorism (Arceneaux, Johnson and Maes 2012; Hatemi, Gillespie, et al. 2011; Orey and Park 2012), social push (Boardman et al. 2011), moral foundations (Smith et al. 2015), Michigan and Columbia approaches to partisanship and voting behavior (Hatemi, Alford, et al. 2009; Hatemi et al. 2007; Klemmensen, Hatemi, Hobolt, Skytthe, et al. 2012; Verhulst 2012), issue salience (Fazekas and Littvay 2012; Fazekas and Littvay 2015), hard and easy issues (Eaves and Hatemi 2008), gender (Hannagan, Littvay and Popa 2014; Hatemi, McDermott, et al. 2011; Hatemi, Medland and Eaves 2009; McDermott and Hatemi 2011), parental socialization (Alford, Funk and Hibbing 2005; Alford et al. 2011; Hatemi et al. 2010), life course (Hatemi, Funk, et al. 2009), personality (Hatemi and Verhulst 2015; Smith et al. 2011; Verhulst, Hatemi and Eaves 2012), civic culture and social capital (Fazekas and Hatemi 2016; Sturgis et al. 2010), clash of civilizations (Hatemi and McDermott 2012c), and the need for cognitive closure (Fowler and Schreiber 2008; Littvay, Weith and Dawes 2011; Oskarsson et al. 2015; Schreiber et al. 2013; Verhulst, Hatemi and Eaves 2012), to name only a few.

Yet, a review of citations over the last 10 years shows the conversation is largely one-way and little research at the intersection of genetics and politics has been integrated into the mainstream research programs of the discipline; the findings, which in some cases turn the discipline's core foundations on their head, have yet to significantly alter the basic thrust of empirical research on electoral behavior. On the one hand, this is expected; when new approaches emerge it takes time to change direction; new skills are required, change in training regarding PhD programs develops very slowly in the social sciences, and it takes time to obtain funds for new studies and even more time to collect appropriate data. And, for approaches that challenge core theories, there will also always be some resistance in the form of path dependence and self-interest.⁴ These tend to fade over time. There is however, an additional barrier regarding the inclusion of biological approaches – a knowledge gap in basic science. There is truly a great chasm between those that recognize the implications and importance of the findings from research utilizing genetic methods and those that do not (Alford and Hibbing 2008). Even some of our most accomplished scholars have approached biological research with dismissive comments, such as, ‘Your genes influence your political views. So what?’ (Bartels 2013). Differences in knowledge and training contribute to difficulties in integrating fields of research. We could not identify a graduate program in the United States that required a basic science course to earn a PhD in political science.⁵ Earlier we identified a number of

comprehensive reviews exploring the methods, findings, nuances, limitations and important details from genetics research. In most instances, such empirical research can and does speak for itself. But, when a large gap in knowledge exists, as is the case, there is an additional need to provide a higher level discussion of what this research means, what it offers, and how it is going to change the study of electoral behavior once fully included. We dedicate the rest of this chapter to begin addressing these questions.

What genetics offers

Before we discuss the value of research at the intersection of genetics and politics, it is important to clarify exactly what ‘genetics’ is for the purpose of political science. Genetics and politics is not a subfield or an agenda. To use labels such as ‘genopolitics’ or ‘biopolitics’ is akin to labeling survey based research ‘survey politics’, or use of regression models ‘regression politics’, or to create any such labeling for any approach. The question drives the research, not the method, and the majority of scholars utilizing genetics methods to better understand social traits see genetics as an approach with strong theoretical underpinnings and a suite of methods to better understand the pathways that lead to traits of interest and, importantly, why people differ. They are not to replace other methods or approaches, but to provide additional information. We recognize some scholars are particularly dedicated to the alternative view and prefer to have a distinct label, or to advocate for a single approach to studying behavior. But when labels wrongly categorize research, they unduly marginalize the research produced and create the illusion that the findings are separate or distinct from the remainder of the field.

We would need a book, or perhaps a book series, to even begin to provide a comprehensive list of all that genetic approaches may offer to the social sciences, and the study of electoral behavior explicitly. We start modestly here with six tangible, applicable, and accessible benefits to the field.⁶ These are not the only ones, and perhaps not even the most important ones, but they nevertheless have profound implications for the study of electoral behaviors.

Benefit 1: Genetics offers a broader theory of human preference formation and behavior, that is, evolution. One cannot separate genetics from the theory of evolution and a substantial body of literature has fully articulated evolution as a viable theory of political behavior (Apicella et al. 2012; Hatemi and McDermott 2011a; Klofstad, McDermott and Hatemi 2012; Lockyer and Hatemi 2014; Lopez and McDermott 2012; Lopez, McDermott and Petersen 2011; McDermott and Hatemi 2013; Petersen 2015; Petersen and Aaroe 2012; Petersen et al. 2012; Thayer 2004). Certainly we cannot review the depth of these studies here. However, briefly, in this view behavior is not all socialized, all experience or all biology. Nor are behavior outcomes simply manifestations of the current environment. Rather, the human brain and body developed over the course of

thousands of generations, carrying with it multifaceted systems that have evolved to be highly adaptable to face increasingly complex dilemmas and social structures. As we noted above, modern-day political choices are more complex forms of basic decisions around group life. Instead of viewing attitudes on immigration, for example, in a narrow sense as some combination of the current political climate, time, culture and a function of symbolic and personal risk and rewards for any given individual, evolution includes these elements but expands the scope by considering the core cognitive and emotional decision-making processes accessed when one is posed with a question on, and forms an attitude on, immigration, in view of natural selection pressures.

In an evolutionary view, political choices are not simply a series of traits of interest only to social scientists but, instead, they are the choices around which humans evolved. In most respects, they are not a byproduct of human development but central to how humans developed, and to why we are the way we are today. Survival, reproduction, cooperation, security, risk, affiliation, in-group, and so many other concerns at the core of modern-day politics reside at the very core of evolutionary selection pressures. Continuing with our example of immigration, viewing it as a modern issue only about borders, economics and social identities results in a very limited understanding of the issue. Even our best models that focus on a combination of symbolic, security, and self-interest approaches leave much to be desired. This is true because there are thousands of processes that operate on these choices. Some processes reflect the time and issue salience, whether rational, or symbolic; others, however, reside on a much deeper psychological level, where emotional shortcuts are instigated that may compete with or inform cognitive reasoning. Relying on an evolutionary approach, Navarrete and Fessler (2006), for example, find that anti-immigration attitudes represent an evolved function designed to avoid disease and protect individuals from unlike others. These ancient processes reside in all humans to varying degrees, accounting for some part of the variation of why people differ. Without evolutionary theory, social learning, rational choice, and other traditional theories of political choices are blind to such possibilities. Just a small unconscious negative affect instigated to greater or lesser degrees can make all the difference in how one takes in new information, or defensively excludes positive traits and overemphasizes negative ones when viewing physically unlike others (Antony et al. 2005). That difference has a snowball effect on downstream processes and results in attitudes.

Evolution's scope requires inclusion of the past and focuses on both short and long-term forces that operate, often unconsciously, on all those emotional and cognitive processes that inform political preference formation and behavior. This is a critically important addition to understanding the nature of modern politics. Most political scientists consider ideologies, in some form, as the result of top-down processes driven by elites, party cues, and social forces, perhaps even self-interest, and scholars focus their attention on the current time. Such an approach is valuable, but will only provide an understanding of people's views for a narrow

location and point in time. Evolutionary models, which utilize genetic methods, consider ideology as a result of both a top-down and a bottom-up process (Hatemi, Eaves and McDermott 2012), and as ingrained in our physiology as much as our sociology. Our physical being has some role in how we perceive, select into, find ourselves, interpret, and react to elites, social forces, partisan cues, and the world in general.

A theoretical approach that considers politics part and parcel of being human, that political traits in part have driven human evolution, and fundamental core human traits share biological processes with modern political traits, opens the door to revolutionize our field. Evolution broadens the scope of how we ask questions and offers a much greater tool kit of how to answer them and where to look for answers. If genetics offered nothing else, this alone has begun, and will likely continue, to have a profound influence on our field. In a practical sense, we face an increasingly hostile climate towards political science (see 2014 US Congressional legislation to restrict National Science Foundation funding to the social sciences and political science in particular). The inclusion of evolution is an important addition that may help move our field of research toward the credibility given to the natural and physical sciences.

Benefit 2: Empirical verification that people are different; we are not blank slates. Whether explicitly stated, or simply implied in the vast majority of research on political traits, electoral traits included, people are viewed as the same, with the exception of some social difference. Even when psychological constructs are measured to explain why people differ, those constructs have been argued to be the result of social conditions or environmental exposure. Genetics changes this. Genetic expression is reliant upon environmental stimuli, yet one's chromosomal sequence does not change over the life course, barring some radical event; and, while humans are mostly the same, and share more than 99% of their genetic make-up, there are hundreds of millions of combinations of polymorphic markers that differ between people (Harpending and Cochran 2002). These polymorphisms lead to differences in cognition, perception, emotion, reasoning and behavior. Fundamentally, this provides powerful evidence that one of the tenets from our core theories in social science, the blank slate, is not valid. Molecular genetic data may prove helpful in understanding variation in reaction to social forces, or public policy effects across individuals, and be useful for uncovering treatment-effect heterogeneity in experimental studies. Updating theories of electoral behavior to address these findings and to include genetic information has profound implications for the study of political behaviors.

Benefit 3: Perhaps the questions researchers at the intersection of biology and political behavior have most often been asked are, 'What can genetics specifically tell me about my trait of interest?' and 'How do I use this information?' Genetics speaks to one of the most fundamental goals of empirical work: identifying causality. Any leverage scholars can gain on the nature of covariance and causal inference is a boon to science in general and certainly to the study of

electoral behavior. First, genetic models are not simply used to provide evidence that people differ based on their genetic profile or that genetic influences account for substantial portions of why people differ politically. Rather, by partitioning the source of variation on a trait and then modeling the relationships between sources of variation between traits, we can gain some insight into whether the nature of the covariation resides largely in an underlying genetic factor or in similarity of environments or some combination of the two. If traits are mostly related at a genetic level then an explicit causal relationship is unlikely. This is true because there is no one-to-one mapping of genes to a trait. Instead, individual genes have a role in thousands of traits, and thousands of genes have a role in a single trait.

Using techniques that estimate the proportions of genetic, common environmental, and unique environmental variance of multiple variables simultaneously (Hatemi, Alford, et al. 2009; Hatemi et al. 2007), traits once thought to be exogenous to electoral values and behaviors have been found to be largely related at genetic level (Hatemi et al. 2013). For example, the majority of the covariance between educational attainment and political participation resides in genetic and not environmental factors (Oskarsson et al. 2015). The same is true for political efficacy and participation, where 80-90% of the covariation is driven by a common genetic factor (Klemmensen, Hatemi, Hobolt, Petersen, et al. 2012). These findings imply that it is not education or efficacy that drives participation, but it is their genetic profile that mutually drives both processes even though temporally one may appear to precede the other. That is, whatever relationship exists between these traits is not where one predicts the other, but where both traits contain components that are different representations of the same underlying construct, as is often expected under evolutionary theory. In other words, an environmentally driven causal theory is not suitable to model the relationships between these traits.

Perhaps the most prominent research in this vein revolves around personality and political attitudes. Social scientists have considered personality to form a causal path to attitude formation. Verhulst and colleagues, utilizing longitudinal and genetic models, provided evidence that personality does not cause political orientations. They found that genetic influences account for the majority of the covariance between personality and political attitudes, a common latent genetic component underlies both personality and attitudes, changes in personality over a 10-year period does not predict changes in political attitudes, political attitudes are often more stable than the key personality traits assumed to be predicting them, and no additional variance is accounted for by the causal pathway from personality traits to political attitudes (Hatemi and Verhulst 2015).⁷

Such findings challenge the vast majority of extant research that modeled the relationships between these traits as explicitly causal. Yet, the findings make sense because genetic influences are polygenic and multifactorial. And complex social traits, such as those surrounding electoral behaviors are a function

of both genes (i.e., mutation, genetic drift, assortative mating, recombination) and environments (i.e. culture, institutions, social learning, experience, and ecological adaptation), including downstream neural, hormonal and social pathways that reciprocally influence one another (Hatemi, Byrne and McDermott 2012). These models have only been applied to handful of relationships, yet they have the potential to validate or challenge the proposed causal paths toward many electoral behaviors and result in more accurate theoretical and empirical models in the future.

Causal leverage may also be gained using molecular data, though such research has only begun. Utilizing specific genotypes, it may be possible to control for genetic correlates of traits of interest, controlling for variation that would otherwise be absorbed in residuals, and reduce omitted variable bias. Genetic markers, may also be used as instrumental variables to infer causal effects; such an approach is present in epidemiological research. For example, Rietveld et al.'s (2013) genome-wide association study of educational attainment found several significant loci that have been previously associated with health, cognitive, and central nervous system processes; their bioinformatics analyses suggested the anterior caudate nucleus region in the brain was involved. These markers may now be used in future studies to explore traits related to educational attainment, including political sophistication, interest, and political cognition, among others.

Benefit 4: Novel pathways. Identifying genetic markers and their related cognitive and emotional systems (e.g. anxiety, threat, affect, etc.) will allow confirmation of current theoretical models linking self-report measures of psychological traits with electoral traits, explicate the mechanics behind such relationships, and lead to novel hypotheses regarding the nature and manifestation of political preferences and behaviors. We rarely have means of true discovery in social science. Rather, we most often seek to empirically validate what is observed. Genetics help identify the unobserved and may help explain why people faced with the same social stimulus have different perceptions, reactions, and individual trajectories. In this way, the influence of genes is not about what one genetic variant might account for, but signals the pathways for particular behaviors, as we demonstrated in our fear example earlier.

Benefit 5: Understanding biological influences and genetics leads to greater understanding of the environment, and sources of intervention. In a genetic and neurobiological view, the environment is far more encompassing than the external stimuli that people experience. Rather, the environment refers to internal cellular processes, the external forces operating on an individual over their life course and the evolutionary past of the population and the species. The parent's environment before, during, and after childbirth, the individual's cellular environment, diet, parenting, family environment, social and economic conditions, and all experiences across the lifespan are part of the environment. Everything inside and outside the body before and after an individual was born is considered. And, because people differ by genotype, the objective nature of a given stimuli

is often less important than the subjective way, based on genotype and environment, in which it is interpreted and assimilated in light of a person's history and unique physiology. Utilizing genetic theory expands, not restricts, the role of the environment.

To illustrate Benefits 4 and 5, oxytocin has been established to play a central role in the regulation of social interactions, such as eye gaze and emotion recognition, generosity, positive communication, altruism, willingness to accept social uncertainty and trusting others (Barraza et al. 2011; Ditzén et al. 2009; Guastella, Mitchell and Dadds 2008; Kosfeld et al. 2005; Zak, Stanton and Ahmadi 2007). In the context of electoral behaviors, trust and risk acceptance have tangible effects on an individual's approval of incumbent elected officials, assessments of political institutions, and evaluations of public policies (Hetherington 1998). Knowing which genes are implicated in trust allows for the discovery of novel environmental interventions to alter cognitive, affective, and behavioral states. For example, studies have demonstrated that expression of oxytocin genes, resulting in higher levels of oxytocin spike after physical contact (Grewen et al. 2005). Given the implications of increased oxytocin on affect, the pathway from an external environmental stimulus to observable behavior is dramatic: the act of shaking hands, a hug, or a hand on the shoulder heightens interpersonal trust and people carry that affect going forward when making future evaluations as proponents of hot cognition can attest (Lodge and Taber 2005). This knowledge may shed some light on the pathway and import of candidate contact with key local mobilizers. In particular, a voter's electoral behavior could be influenced by a voter's level of trust, which could be influenced by a voter's genetic expression of oxytocin, which could be influenced by the environmental stimuli presented to the voter (e.g. advertisements depicting warm embraces).

Benefit 6: Apart from critical health discoveries, perhaps the most important benefits genetics has provided, and may continue to provide more of, are increases in knowledge leading to increases in tolerance and changes in public policy. There are many examples of changes in policy based on DNA research, but we can think of none more politically salient than those that revolve around sexuality and equal rights. Although the results from the original study remain debated, after Hamer's (1993) team at the US National Cancer Institute implicated genetic loci for homosexuality, the public's view of sexual preference began to shift from one that viewed homosexuality as deviant and a matter of choice to one of tolerance and inherent disposition (Hatemi and McDermott 2011b, 2012b). Though not the only factor, genetics research had a critically important role in US state supreme court decisions, shifting elite discourse and legal policies on homosexuality, which influenced public opinion, leading to increased tolerance of differences, thereby potentially reducing health risks and hate crimes (for a review, see Donovan, Tolbert and Smith 2008; Haider-Markel and Joslyn 2008; Halley 1994).

Table 17.1 Genes implicated for political traits and related social traits. For notes: see bibliography references (Bachner-Melman et al. 2005; Bakermans-Kranenburg and van IJzendoorn 2008; Burt 2008; Byrd and Manuck 2014; Canli and Lesch 2007; Conner et al. 2010; Fowler and Dawes 2008,2013; Gossen et al. 2006; Guo, Roettger and Shih 2007; Hatemi, Gillespie, et al. 2011; Hatemi et al. 2014; Israel et al. 2009; Kuhnen and Chiao 2009; Lesch and Merschdorf 2000; McDermott et al. 2013; McDermott et al. 2009; Noble 2000; Parks et al. 1998; Richardson-Jones et al. 2010; Rietveld et al. 2013; Shalev et al. 2009; van den Oord et al. 2008; Van IJzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg and Mesman 2008; Virkkunen et al. 1995; Wu, Li and Su 2012).

Phenotype	Gene	Marker/ polymorphism	System Description	System Phenotypes	Method	Replication?
Aggression	MAOA	2,3 and 5 repeat allele vs.,..,5- and 4- repeat alleles	Monoamine Oxidase A	Antisocial behavior, a disposition toward violent behavior, conviction for violent criminal offenses, emotional regulation, cognitive control, aggression, delinquency, decision-making	Candidate, family-based	Replicated
	5-HT1A		Serotonergic	Aggression, anxiety, assertiveness, compulsivity, cooperation, executive control, impulsivity, learning and memory, mood regulation, perceived fairness, stress, fear avoidance, novelty-seeking, behavioral despair, resilience, anger, hostility, hyperactivity	Replicated	
	5-HT1B		Serotonergic	Aggression, anxiety, assertiveness, compulsivity, cooperation, executive control, impulsivity, learning and memory, mood regulation, perceived fairness, stress, fear avoidance, novelty-seeking, behavioral despair, resilience, anger, hostility, hyperactivity	Mixed	Replicated

(Continued)

Table 17.1 Continued

Phenotype	Gene	Marker/ polymorphism	System Description	System Phenotypes	Method	Replication?
	D2/Dat1		Dopaminergic	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood, attachment, bonding, social affiliation, territoriality	Candidate	Replicated
Altruism and Prosocial Behavior	AVPR1a	rs3	Arginine Vasopressin	Intimacy, bonding, maternal care, social affiliation, emotion, cognition	Candidate, experimental	Replicated
	OXTR	multiple	Oxytocin	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood, planning	Candidate, experimental	None attempted
	DRD4	D4.4	Dopaminergic		Candidate, family-based	
	IGF2	Apa I ("G")	Insulin-like growth factor		Candidate, family-based	None attempted
	DRD5	146 and 148 bp repeat	Dopaminergic	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood, planning	Candidate, family-based	None attempted

Antisocial Behavior	MAOA	L version of MAO-A	Adrenergic	Antisocial behavior, a disposition toward violent behavior, conviction for violent criminal offenses, emotional regulation, cognitive control, aggression, delinquency, decision-making	Candidate	Replicated
Cognitive Traits	SNAP-25	rs363050	Synaptosomal-Associated Protein	Memory, learning, intelligence	Candidate, family-based	Replicated
	CHRM2 MDM4, LRN2, AFF# OXTR	rs324650 rs9320913, rs11584700, rs4851266 multiple	Cholinergic	Memory, attention, IQ Health, cognition, educational attainment	Candidate GWAS	Replicated None attempted
Empathy	Ideology (liberal-conservative)	NAA15/ NARG-1 GRIN1	Oxytocin Glutamate Glutamate	Social affiliation, maternal care, emotion, cognition Memory, learning, cognition, fear conditioning, spatial recognition, social interaction, aggressive behaviors Memory, learning, cognition, fear conditioning, spatial recognition, social interaction, aggressive behaviors, substance dependence, hyperactivity, fight or flight response	Candidate	Known non-replication None attempted
	DBH	Dopaminergic	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood	GW-Linkage	None attempted	(Continued)

Table 17.1 Continued

Phenotype	Gene	Marker/ polymorphism	System Description	System Phenotypes	Method	Replication?
	LCN1	Lipocalins/ olfaction	Reproduction, odor transport, taste reception	GW-Linkage	None attempted	
	OLFM1	Olfactomedin	Reproduction, odor transport, taste reception	GW-Linkage	None attempted	
LCN6,8-12,1		Lipocalins/ olfaction	Reproduction, odor transport, taste reception	GW-Linkage	None attempted	
OBP2A		Odorant binding protein	Reproduction, odortrans port, taste reception	GW-Linkage	None attempted	
KYNU		Kynurenine/ Glutamate	Memory, learning, cognition, fear conditioning, spatial recognition, social interaction, aggressive behaviors, substance dependence, hyperactivity	GW-Linkage	None attempted	
HTR1E		Serotonin	Aggression, anxiety, assertiveness, compulsivity, cooperation, executive control, impulsivity learning and memory, mood regulation, perceived fairness, stress, fear avoidance, novelty-seeking, behavioral despair, resilience, anger, hostility, hyperactivity	GW-Linkage	None attempted	
MANEA		Mannosidase, endo-alpha G protein- coupled receptors	Substance dependence	GW-Linkage	None attempted	
GPR63, GPR6		Olfactory	Cognition, organization, information processing, metabolism	GW-Linkage	None attempted	
OR2N1P	rs9295794; rs4713201			GWAS	Known non- replication	

OR21J	rs9295794; rs929579; rs9393945; rs7766902	Olfactory 7R	Dopamine	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood, planning	GWAS	Known non-replication
DRD4						
Impulsivity	DBH MAO	L version of MAO-A	Adrenergic Monoamine oxidase A	Fight-or-flight response Antisocial behavior, a disposition toward violent behavior, conviction for violent criminal offenses, emotional regulation, cognitive control, aggression, delinquency, decision-making	Candidate	Replicated
CSF 5-HIAA	SLC6A4		Serotonergic	Aggression, anxiety, assertiveness, compulsivity, cooperation, executive control, impulsivity, learning and memory, mood regulation, perceived fairness, stress, fear avoidance, novelty-seeking, behavioral despair, resilience, anger, hostility, hyperactivity	Candidate	Replicated
CSF/TPH 5-HIAA/ 5-HT	SLC6A4		Serotonergic	Aggression, anxiety, assertiveness, compulsivity, cooperation, executive control, impulsivity, learning and memory, mood regulation, perceived fairness, stress, fear avoidance, novelty-seeking, behavioral despair, resilience, anger, hostility, hyperactivity	Candidate	Replicated

(Continued)

Table 17.1 Continued

Phenotype	Gene	Marker/ polymorphism	System Description	System Phenotypes	Method	Replication?
Neuroticism/ Emotional Instability	5-HTTLPR	short-form allele	Serotonergic	Aggression, anxiety, assertiveness, compulsivity, cooperation, executive control, impulsivity, learning and memory, mood regulation, perceived fairness, stress, fear avoidance, novelty-seeking, behavioral despair, resilience, anger, hostility, hyperactivity	Candidate	Known non-replication
	MAMDC1	rs7151262, rs1288334, rs1959813, and rs3007105	Dopaminergic	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood, planning	GWAS	Known non-replication
Parenting	DRD4	DRD4-7Repeat	Dopaminergic	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood, planning	Candidate	Replicated
	COMT	val/val or val/met	Dopaminergic	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood, planning	Candidate	None attempted

HTTLPR	SCL6A4	Serotonergic	Aggression, anxiety, assertiveness, compulsivity, cooperation, executive control, impulsivity, learning and memory, mood regulation, perceived fairness, stress, fear avoidance, novelty-seeking, behavioral despair, resilience, anger, hostility, hyperactivity	Candidate	None attempted	
OXTR	rs53576	Oxytocin	Intimacy, bonding, maternal care, social affiliation, emotion, cognition	Candidate	None attempted	
DAT1		Dopaminergic	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood, planning	Candidate	Replicated	
Partisan Attachment	DRD2	A2	Dopaminergic	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood, planning	Candidate, family-based	None attempted
Popularity	HTR2A	rs6311	Serotonergic	Aggression, anxiety, assertiveness, compulsivity, cooperation, executive control, impulsivity, learning and memory, mood regulation, perceived fairness, stress, fear avoidance, novelty-seeking, behavioral despair, resilience, anger, hostility, hyperactivity	None attempted	(Continued)

Table 17.1 Continued

Phenotype	Gene	Marker/ polymorphism	System Description	System Phenotypes	Method	Replication?
Reward Sensitivity	DRD2	A1 allele	Dopaminergic	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood, planning	Candidate	Replicated
Risk Taking	HTTLPR	5-HTTPLR	Serotonergic	Aggression, anxiety, assertiveness, compulsivity, cooperation, executive control, impulsivity, learning and memory, mood regulation, perceived fairness, stress, fear avoidance, novelty-seeking, behavioral despair, resilience, anger, hostility, hyperactivity	Candidate, experimental	None attempted
DRD4	D4		Dopaminergic	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood, planning	Candidate, experimental	Replicated
Social Stress	BDNF	Val66Met	Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor	Depression, mood regulation	Candidate, experimental	Replicated

Violence	5-HTTLPR	SLC6A4	Serotonergic	Aggression, anxiety, assertiveness, compulsivity, cooperation, executive control, impulsivity, learning and memory, mood regulation, perceived fairness, stress, fear avoidance, novelty-seeking, behavioral despair, resilience, anger, hostility, hyperactivity	Candidate	Replicated
	COMT DRD2	TaqI	Adrenergic Dopaminergic	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood, planning	Candidate	Replicated
	DAT1	40-bp variable number of tandem repeats VNTR	Dopaminergic	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk-taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood, planning	None attempted	
	CSF 5-HIAA	SLC6A4	Serotonergic	Aggression, anxiety, assertiveness, compulsivity, cooperation, executive control, impulsivity, learning and memory, mood regulation, perceived fairness, stress, fear avoidance, novelty-seeking, behavioral despair, resilience, anger, hostility, hyperactivity	Candidate	Replicated

(Continued)

Table 17.1 Continued

Phenotype	Gene	Marker/ polymorphism	System Description	System Phenotypes	Method	Replication?
Voter Turnout	MAOA	5 repeat -291 and 321 allele vs. 336, 351, and 381 base-pair alleles	Monoamine oxidase A	Antisocial behavior, a disposition toward violent behavior, conviction for violent criminal offenses, emotional regulation, cognitive control, aggression, delinquency, decision- making	Candidate	Known non- replication
	5-HTT	long 528 allele vs. shorter 484 basepair allele	Serotonergic	Aggression, anxiety, assertiveness, compulsivity, cooperation, executive control, impulsivity, learning and memory, mood regulation, perceived fairness, stress, fear avoidance, novelty-seeking, behavioral despair, resilience, anger, hostility, hyperactivity	Candidate	Replicated
	DRD2	A2 allele	Dopaminergic	Cognition, learning, memory, impulsivity, motivation, processing of visual stimuli, novelty-seeking, reward dependence, risk- taking, social attachment, locomotion, arousal, pleasure, openness, appetite, endocrine regulation, exploration, attention, mood, planning	Candidate	None attempted

CONCLUSION

What does genetics offer to the study of electoral behavior? For those interested in science, any ethical means to gain a better understanding of how things work is all that is necessary to provide value. We could end here because genetics certainly meets this bar. But as we noted, genetics is more than a theoretical exercise and provides more than mere point estimates of how much genes influence a trait, or which genes influence a trait. Inclusion of genetics explains more trait variation than without it, reveals novel pathways for the traits we seek to understand, contributes information on the source of covariation and direction of causality between traits, can be used to test our core theories, such as providing evidence that people are different prior to socializing agents and an ability to map life trajectories based on one's disposition, provides information on why and how people select into and perceive experiences differently, provides novel information on the environment and points of intervention, and has real-life policy implications with normative value.

If we care at all about questions such as: Why are some people activated and others repressed through negative campaigns? What mechanisms are accessed when people are exposed to fear messages and can the effect of those messages be mediated? Are people more or less likely to be mobilized by self-interest based on their biological disposition? Are some programs tailored to increased turnout bias based on inherent dispositions? How and why does cognitive dissonance occur so readily for political issues for some but not others? Why are some attitudes hard and others soft? The only way to fully answer these questions and many others is to understand individual differences and take both top down and bottom up approaches, that is, to both identify the outcomes and to understand the mechanisms that drive them. We have seen the important discoveries and advances in knowledge gained by sociological and economic approaches over the last 100 years. We look forward to what the inclusion of biological and genetic approaches will bring to the study of electoral behavior in the next 100 years.

Notes

- 1 For reviews see, (Bouchard and McGue 2003; Hatemi, Byrne and McDermott 2012; Hatemi, Dawes, et al. 2011; Hatemi and McDermott 2012b, 2012d; Hibbing and Smith 2007; Lieberman, Schreiber and Ochsner 2003).
- 2 'Dangerous' could be physical and resources security, different social norms, or even introduction of new pathogens.
- 3 Genome wide approaches (GWA) scan the entire genome for a genetic marker or region displaying a significant association with a particular trait. GWA is data driven and free from subjective biases. They are designed to reveal novel pathways to the trait under observation. Once significant genetic markers are found, researchers can use the information to gain a better understanding of the pathways that lead to trait formation.

- 4 For a detailed discussion see the 'Epistemological Challenges' section in Hatemi and McDermott (2012b).
- 5 A handful of progressive PhD programs have begun offering the option however.
- 6 These benefits are not mutually exclusive and can be subsumed within each other.
- 7 Not all relationships are related at a genetic level. The source of covariation between social desirability and political ideology, for example, is almost all environmental.

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Emotions and Voting

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INTRODUCTION

Politics may generally be about ‘who gets what, when, and how’ (Lasswell 1936), but elections focus on more narrow questions of voter information, candidate strategies, and the structure of the electoral system. In any election, these factors interact to create the electoral environment and thus define the choices in front of voters. For much of the political science behavioral revolution (roughly beginning post-WWII), scholars interested in voter decision making spent little time investigating the process by which voters come to decisions, a process that is understandably quite difficult to observe.¹ Instead, research focused on more readily observable indicators, such as partisan preference, political knowledge, awareness (or lack thereof) of issues, and the like. In seminal works such as *Voting* (Berelson et al. 1954) and *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960), and in many other books and papers, researchers in the American electoral context explicated theories of sociological and psychological approaches to voting; these theories have also influenced many scholars examining other democracies (some recent examples include Oppenhuis 1995; Van der Brug et al. 2008; Tavits 2005; and Anderson 2000). But, due in part to the methodological limitations, relatively little thought was given in developing these theories to the black box of voter decision making, the part that comes between the inputs – partisanship and ideology, issues, groups, and the general campaign milieu – and the output – the voter’s behavior once inside the voting booth.²

A great deal of debate did occur around the margins of *The American Voter* – for example, how much do issues matter to voters (a very significant debate in the

1960s and 1970s), is partisanship a running tally (Fiorina, 1981) or a psychological attachment (Campbell et al. 1960), and what role is played by information versus heuristics in voting (Bartels 1996; Lau and Redlawsk 2001; 2006). But, for the most part, quantitative studies of voting behavior focused on identifying the correlates of the vote with an eye towards identifying ‘laws’ such as the ‘funnel of causality’ (Stokes et al. 1958). And, while scholars of voting research were not completely uninterested in what goes on inside the voter’s head, the lack of data other than those provided by the voter herself through survey responses limited the extent to which voter decision-making models aimed at opening up the black box could be fully developed.

One common finding arising out of this early research is that voters (at least in the American case) are not very good at what they are expected to do. That is, voters consistently fail to meet basic tenets of citizenship, knowing (and maybe even caring) little about the issues driving any given election (Berelson et al. 1954), guided instead by some sense of partisan attachment or even simply voting on group affiliation and the ‘nature of the times’ (Campbell et al. 1960; Stokes et al. 1958.) Voters are ideologically innocent even to the extent of expressing non-attitudes (Converse 1964) when pressed to take issue positions, given their low levels of actual political knowledge (Delli et al. 1996). While there was early debate as to whether the evidence truly demonstrated that voters were too incompetent to maintain democracy (Lane 1962; Pomper 1972; Kessel 1972; Nie et al. 1976) and some researchers argued that democracy worked just fine with minimal attention and effort from citizens (Neuman 1986; Mueller 1992; Page and Shapiro 1992), few scholars disputed the normative standards of citizen competence; the good citizen was supposed to adhere to the notion of the ‘rational actor’, who gathers and weighs information in a cool, dispassionate way (Lau and Redlawsk 2006) and makes the choice that will maximize his or her utility (Downs 1957). Thus, the rational voter gathers all necessary information about all of the choices on the ballot, stopping only when the marginal utility of the next piece of information outweighs its cost, evaluates that information using an appropriate calculus, and integrates it all by making whatever tradeoffs (between ‘guns and butter’, for example) are necessary to come to a decision to vote for the candidate most likely (perhaps allowing a discount for uncertainty) to promulgate utility-maximizing policies for the voter.³ This normative view requires voters to focus on reason, not feeling, and to make unbiased assessments that are not influenced by ‘irrelevant’ considerations, of which emotions might well be one. In a sense this approach is informed by an underlying dualism in Western thought – that emotions and reason are not only different, but reason must trump emotion.

Recently, however, many scholars have turned away from the idea that voters must be, or even can be, ‘rational’ actors of this sort (Redlawsk and Lau 2013; Lau and Redlawsk 2006; see also Green and Shapiro [1994] on untenable requirements of rational choice). Popkin (1991) argues that voters do not need

to be classically rational to do a ‘good’ job. Instead they can make sense of the world without following the traditional precepts of rationality, through the use of the heuristics, or shortcuts, that come with everyday life. Using this kind of ‘gut rationality’ voters can do a *reasonable* job of choosing from amongst available candidates and parties. Others have taken up the idea of heuristics as well (Lupia, 1994; Lupia and McCubbins, 1998; Sniderman et al. 1991), although some researchers are less convinced that heuristics can solve problems of low information and failures of rational voting (Kuklinski and Quirk 2000; Bartels 1996; see also Lau and Redlawsk 2001 for conditions under which heuristics do and do not seem to work.) Nonetheless, this initial work, based in part on Simon’s (1957; 1979) conception of rationality as ‘bounded’, seems to have turned the tide so that the idea that voters *can* conform to precepts of rationality seems to be less in vogue these days.

Beyond the research on heuristic processing, the reason rationality is less in vogue is simple: scholars of electoral behavior have discovered (or perhaps re-discovered) *emotions*. While the heuristics literature itself tends not to address emotions, its supporters’ rejection of normative rationality may have paved a way to move beyond a cognitively focused approach to voter decision making. To be fair, emotions (or affect)⁴ have been recognized in political science for a long time (Neuman 2007). For example, the social-psychological approach of *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960) views partisanship as a psychological attachment that necessarily includes affect, given that a prevailing model of attitudes included cognition, affect, and behavioral intent (Rosenberg and Hovland 1960; Redlawsk 2006a). The idea of affect has also been enshrined in the American National Election Studies’ open-ended questions on what voters like and dislike about parties and candidates. In ‘Philosophical Psychology with Political Intent’, Neblo (2007) reminds us that political philosophers have embedded perspectives on emotions (or passions) for perhaps millennia, and notes that Richard Lazarus (1991) called Aristotle the ‘first cognitive theorist of the emotions’. And of course there is a long line of social-psychological research that has been known to electoral behavior scholars, including cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957), balance theory (Heider 1958), and belief dilemmas (Abelson 1959), which makes clear that people have various cognitive *and* emotional motivations in evaluation and choice. Even in the midst of the ‘cognitive revolution’ (see below), Roseman, Abelson, and Ewing (1986) made the case that emotions and cognition could not be separated. The direct application of all of these to politics is self-evident. People do not just think about politics and in particular voting decisions. They both think and feel (Redlawsk 2006a).

But, nonetheless, until relatively recently there was little detailed theorizing about the role of emotion in the voter decision-making literature. This has changed over the past couple of decades, as political psychologists, armed with new research from burgeoning neuroscience-oriented fields (Gray 1982; Damasio 1994; LeDoux 1996) as well as evolutionary biology (Lazarus 1991)

and adopting Zajonc's (1980; 1984) perspective of affect as both independent of and influencing cognition, have developed models of political decision making that fully engage, and even set at the forefront, the emotional responses citizens have to political stimuli. There have been a number of recent assessments of this burgeoning literature (e.g. Brader and Marcus 2013; Valentino et al. 2011; Gilovich and Griffin 2010; Isbell et al. 2006; see also Steenbergen 2010, who brings it to a European readership), which provide various perspectives on the questions of emotions in politics. It is not our purpose to duplicate this work here; in fact we would direct readers who are interested in broad and useful reviews of the current literature to turn to any of these. Instead, we focus specifically on voting behavior and the processes that lead voters to make a choice amongst the candidates and parties available to them during an election. In particular, we focus on three lines of political psychology research that have successfully made the point that emotions cannot be ignored, even if the three disagree in fundamental ways on the role affect and emotion play in voter decision making.

These three research programs are: *Affective Intelligence* (AIT) (Marcus and MacKuen 1993), which argues for considering the effects of discrete emotions and which has been further developed and extended since the original book; *The Rationalizing Voter* (Lodge and Taber 2013), which sums up and extends many years of research on hot cognition, motivated reasoning, and automatic processes, proposing a model they call John Q. Public (JQP); and *The Ambivalent Partisan* (Lavine et al. 2012), which at its core challenges both JQP and AIT, in particular suggesting AIT is at most a subset of a more general theory of expectancy violation (EVT) (Johnston et al., 2015). These three perspectives on voters' affective processing each bring important ideas to the table, even as they have different approaches to emotions (discrete for AIT, a general positive/negative valence for JQP, and some focus on both for EVT) and differing expectations for how emotions influence voter decision making, perhaps by motivating learning, among other things (AIT), or by generating ambivalence in the face of expectancy violations, or simply as prior to cognition and thus influencing the response to all informational inputs (JQP).

Before we review these three important research programs on emotions and voting, we briefly introduce the social psychology cognitive revolution. In our view, this revolution, with its emphasis on information processing inside the black box of the voter's mind, rather than a simple focus on the antecedents of the vote, was a necessary precursor to modern emotions research. Then, following our summary of the three approaches, we discuss some key theoretical questions that we believe must be addressed, and offer a possible methodological approach that might help to resolve some issues, although we will not attempt to reconcile conflicts between the three research programs here.

Throughout this chapter, one of our goals is to identify the use of emotions by voters not as a failure of rationality and voter competence, but instead as a necessary, if not always obviously helpful, part of the voter decision calculus.

The question of voter competence runs through all of this. If voters cannot be cool, emotionless reasoners, then what role do emotions play in supporting, rather than limiting, voters' abilities to make 'good' choices?

PRECURSOR: THE COGNITIVE REVOLUTION

One key distinction between political *behavior* and political *psychology* has been the explicit interest of the latter in the processes that undergird expressed attitudes and observed outcomes. Political psychologists interested in mass political behavior take as a key part of their task opening up the 'black box' of mental processing, seeking not simply to describe the results that come from the interplay of candidates, voters, and campaigns, but to understand how voters connect the dots.

Initial efforts along these lines developed a cognitively focused information processing paradigm (see Lau and Sears, *Political Cognition*, 1986) often referred to within social psychology as the 'cognitive revolution'. While not the first use of system 'inputs' and 'outputs' (see Easton 1957), this paradigm borrowed a great deal of its terminology from the developing computer sciences, seeing the antecedents to the vote as the 'inputs' and the vote itself as an 'output', with the voter's brain acting like a 'central processing unit' (CPU) that gathers the inputs and compares them to existing information in its 'memory banks', in order to assess whether the contents of memory should be updated and, if so, how. Making a vote choice was essentially a matter of recalling from memory whatever information is needed and acting on it. While 'evaluation' would have to take place and thus the voter would have to develop preferences, the resulting judgment would be the outcome of this explicitly cognitive assessment process (see Hastie 1986 for a primer on information processing theory).

Information processing oriented approaches were presaged by Kelley and Mirer's (1974) 'Simple Act of Voting', in which the voter is thought to make a moment-of-decision choice, by canvassing her knowledge about the choices in front of her, and evaluating each item thus retrieved as good or bad. The good and bad items are totaled (unweighted) and the voter chooses the candidate with a higher net positive evaluation.⁵ This model turns out to be highly predictive, given knowledge of the voters' likes and dislikes about the candidates, and raises two notable points about the treatment of emotions in voter decision making. First, while Kelley and Mirer do not specify at all how evaluations are made, they talk explicitly about likes and dislikes, that is, valenced assessments of candidates. And, second, even as 'liking' and 'disliking' are explicitly parts of the model, Mirer and Kelley say nothing about emotions. Instead the 'simple act of voting' is a cool, calculated one, with affect simply following from the cognitive (and perhaps 'rational') appraisal of the candidates' traits, characteristics, and policy proposals.

The cognitive revolution led to a focus on the processes used by voters to reach their decisions, as epitomized by Lau and Redlawsk's *How Voters Decide* (2006), which identified four decision models evident from information processing data. Two of these models, Model 1: Rational and Model 3: Fast and Frugal, are primarily cognitive, focused on how much information is processed and the use (or lack of use) of heuristic processing (Gigerenzer and Todd 1999). The other two models, while also presented in a cognitive framework, seem to require affective processes as a means of motivation. While Lau and Redlawsk (2006) do not explicitly address emotion, Model 2: Confirmatory suggests a goal of maintaining an existing affective state with information search designed to support existing partisan evaluations. Their Model 4: Intuitive is even more dependent on something outside of cognitive processing. Model 4 decision strategies require limited information search, which ends when something tells the voter that good enough is good enough. In the context of Lau and Redlawsk's models, that 'something' is a cognitive assessment of whether a candidate meets a set of requirements that act as a minimum standard (satisficing, Simon 1972, or elimination by aspects, Kahneman and Tversky 1979; 1982). So, rather than maximizing utility, as per the rational Model 1, Model 4 voters simply decide that an efficient decision is a good decision.

But how does the voter really know when he or she has enough information to make a choice, and when that choice is good enough? It seems likely that emotion (or affect), processed through an independent, but parallel, system operating much faster than the cognitive system (Gray 1987; Damasio 1994; Marcus et al. 2000) acts as a check on the decision-making process. Damasio (1994), in particular, posits what he calls the somatic marker hypothesis (SMH), whereby a brain-body link – what might be termed 'gut' feelings, physiological changes that are transmitted to the brain – makes connections to prior experiences and direct decision making toward or away from particular possibilities. While there are a number of potential critiques of SMH, the point for this essay is that it seems probable that emotional responses and cognitive responses to stimuli – including campaign information that leads to voter decision making – interact, together conditioning the processes of judgment and choice.

Of course, this strongly suggests that the normative desire for a cool, calculating utility-maximizing voter is a non-starter. In a sense, the cognitive revolution in voting behavior began with the idea that humans could act 'as if' they were computers (though very limited ones) and may have been complicit in the long-time dominance of rational models as the gold standard even when they recognized well-established cognitive limits (Miller 1956; Hastie and Dawes 2001), as summarized in Simon's (1947; 1957) idea of bounded rationality. The view of humans as limited information processors is enshrined in behavioral decision theory (Edwards 1961; Redlawsk and Lau 2013) but seems to fly in the face of classical rational choice models, leading to serious questions about voter competence, to which we will return.

THEORIES OF AFFECT AND EMOTION IN VOTING

We turn next to the three currently prominent theories of political preferences formation which have combined to refocus research on the effects of emotions in politics. The three differ in a number of ways, but most importantly in their measurement of emotions as discrete – examining the effects of individually labeled emotions such as anxiety, anger, and enthusiasm – or valenced, that is, simply conceived of as either positive or negative, with no need to attempt labeling beyond that point. Two of these programs, Marcus and colleagues' affective intelligence and Lodge and Taber's affective partisan, developed more or less simultaneously, with AIT most completely developed in Marcus et al. (2000), building on earlier papers such as Marcus (1988) and Marcus and MacKuen (1993). At roughly the same time, Lodge and Taber were reporting on a series of experiments that examined online processing (Lodge et al. 1989; 1995), motivated reasoning (Lodge and Taber 2000), and hot cognition (Lodge and Taber 2005), the building blocks of the rationalizing voter (Lodge and Taber 2013).

The third research program, most fully realized in Lavine et al.'s (2012) *The Ambivalent Partisan*, springs from work first published in the late 1990s; prominent among these are Lavine et al (1998) writing about the 'ambivalence-moderated primacy of affect effect' and Lavine (2001), which examined ambivalence's effects on the presidential vote, seeing its effects as larger than, and independent of, partisanship, and suggesting that voter ambivalence was a 'largely ignored aspect of belief systems and electoral choice' (Lavine 2001: 915). Basinger and Lavine (2005) extend ambivalence to US House elections, showing that, as ambivalence among voters increases, reliance on party identification decreases, one of the core ideas in the book; ambivalent voters are less reliant on partisan preference and more open to deeper information processing.

Discrete emotions – affective intelligence

Affective Intelligence Theory, detailed by George Marcus, W. Russell Neuman and Michael McKuen in their 2000 book *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment*, argues that specific emotions (measured as affective appraisals of candidates) have varying effects on voters. Enthusiasm, a positive emotion, motivates voters to actually vote. Anxiety, a negative emotion, interrupts routine information processing and motivates voters to pay attention to the campaign, ultimately learning more than non-anxious voters do and thus processing campaign information more deeply. More recently, the authors have posited that a third emotion – the aversive one of anger – generates defensiveness and an unwillingness to reconsider prior beliefs (MacKuen et al. 2010). Emotions, then, operate to determine whether a voter will rely on habit – partisanship – or, when

anxiety is raised about a co-partisan candidate, will become more deliberative, searching for information to confirm or deny the anxiety that has been evoked. These affective systems are always operating and scanning the environment; ultimately there are no either/ors here – all three emotional states can be raised or lowered at any time.

A key argument of AIT is that scholars of emotions and politics must consider multiple emotions, and the ones that seem key to political activity, primarily enthusiasm, anxiety, and anger, must be measured to understand the nuanced effects of affect on voter decision making (Mackuen et al. 2007). Emotional appraisals are pre-conscious and relevant to the voter's goals (Zajonc 1980). Affect acts as a monitor; enthusiasm is generated when positive goal-seeking actions are successful. When all is well, this positive emotion focuses on execution of the task, for example, making a partisan decision, which requires little attention or effort, and as such, is the epitome of a system 1 process, that is, fast and simple, with little conscious effort (Evans 2003). On the other hand, when novel and unexpected/uncertain situations arise, the surveillance system recognizes the mismatch between expectations and reality, and takes over, inhibiting system 1 processing, and drawing attention to the anxiety-causing stimuli (say, something your party's candidate said that is opposite your preferences.) This turns processing to system 2: where more analytic processes take over, including increased information search.

Dimensional affect – the rationalizing voter

Unlike the Marcus team, Lodge and Taber see no reason to theorize about the role of discrete emotions; in their model, the key point is whether emotional reactions to political stimuli are positive or negative, that is, dimensional rather than discrete. Instead, they posit a dual-process system of information processing, where unconscious affective responses to information come prior to cognitive response (Zajonc, 1980) and condition the cognitive response. But the dual systems presumed by Lodge and Taber are quite different from that described by Affective Intelligence, since these systems are implicated in the recall of and actual assessment of information rather than in the motivation to search (or not) for more information.

As specified in the John Q. Public (JQP) computational model (Kim et al. 2010), the effects of affect rely on the associative model of long-term memory (LTM) (Anderson 1983), along with hot cognition (Abelson 1963; Lodge and Taber 2005), whereby the concepts in memory are tagged with positive and negative affect, and online processing. The fact that LTM is tagged affectively, and that the affective subsystem operates 'faster' than the cognitive one, sets up a 'primacy of affect' (Zajonc 1980) such that, as new stimuli are perceived, the affective tag of the relevant LTM concept node is retrieved, and conditions the evaluation of the new information. The updated evaluation – the affect tag – is then

returned to LTM. When there is no mismatch between the affect associated with the new information and that already in LTM, processing is online (Lodge et al. 1989; Redlawsk 2001), with little conscious thought, as in system 1. However, if there is a mismatch, for example learning something bad about a liked candidate, processing will become deeper, akin to system 2. But, unlike AIT's anxiety, this mismatch does not necessarily lead to learning and better voters; instead it may trigger motivated reasoning (Kunda 1990; Taber et al. 2001; Redlawsk 2002), whereby voters try to protect pre-existing evaluations from challenges.

Thus, affect in this approach makes decision making potentially less accurate if accuracy is defined as updating in the correct direction and at an appropriate strength. However, if one conceives of the online tally as a valid indicator of past positive and negative reactions to political stimuli, then the resistance to attitude change in the face of new information may actually be a rational strategy (see Lodge and Taber 2013, pp. 227–34).

A little of both? The ambivalent partisan

Where the prior two theories make clear arguments for either discrete or dimensional perspectives on emotions, the position of *The Ambivalent Partisan* seems less obvious, especially in the context of the expectancy violation theory that undergirds it. Lavine et al. (2012) argue that voters who are simultaneously interested in making efficient but ‘good’ decisions typically rely on the heuristic of partisanship in evaluating political information; however, when a favored politician or political party engages negative emotions, some voters become ambivalent – torn between their long-standing party loyalty and their current negative appraisals – and thus switch to more effortful thinking when rendering their political judgments. This effortful thinking is triggered not simply by a sense of anxiety as in Affective Intelligence, but rather by the interplay of expectations with emotions. The ambivalence project differentiates between responses to in- and out-party candidates, arguing that political effects of emotions depend on whether they are expectancy-violating or expectancy-confirming. Expectancy-violating information pushes the partisan toward ambivalence, which leads to an effort to learn. In this sense, ambivalence seems somewhat like AIT, but in other ways the theory takes on a flavor of motivated reasoning in positing that partisans who are not ambivalent are biased processors.

In a new paper, Johnston, Lavine, and Woodson (2015) focus on expectancy violation, building on the idea that voters can (and probably do) have expectations about candidates from both their own party and other parties. They examine AIT-type discrete affective responses to both kinds of candidates and find that the violation of expectations can happen on either side – liking something about the other party candidate (enthusiasm for the other side) is just as likely to create in-depth information processing as feeling anxious about the in-party candidate. Thus, while examined in terms of discrete emotions, the expectations for what

those emotions do are conditioned upon their target. In this sense, EVT seems dimensional – either expectations are violated, or they are not.

PRESSING THEORETICAL ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF VOTING AND EMOTION

That affect and emotions undergird political decision making and judgment now seems an unassailable proposition. As our summary above suggests, political psychologists have done impressive work over the last twenty to thirty years in documenting key ways in which emotion and affect influence political preferences. But of course this work, while providing us with strong theoretical and empirical perspectives on emotions and voting, has also raised new questions. In this section, we identify some pertinent issues in the study of emotion and voting that call for more sustained theoretical development and, perhaps, resolution. Our goal is to focus on a series of issues that scholars should address if we are to make further progress in understanding the role of emotion in voter behavior.

Emotions: discrete or dimensional?

A major question is whether the existing disparate theoretical approaches to the concept of emotion can (and should) be integrated or whether one approach will become ascendant within political science. While those who study emotions as a primary focus – that is psychologists and neuroscientists, among others – may have more nuanced perspectives, as our review of current approaches indicates, research on emotion in political behavior is fractured into two primary camps: those studies that employ a dimensional conceptualization of emotion, in which the key property of interest is the valence – positive or negative – of one's emotional state (e.g. Lodge and Taber 2013; Lavine et al. 2012; the broader literature on motivated reasoning); and those studies that focus on discrete affective reactions, such as anger, anxiety, or fear (e.g. Marcus et al. 2000; Brader 2005; Huddy et al. 2007; Johnston et al., 2015).⁶ To be sure, this divide in some ways reflects an ongoing and vigorous debate among scholars as to the structure and measure of emotion. Thorough reviews of the emotions literature published almost contemporaneously tout both the discrete model (Keltner and Lerner 2010) and the dimensional perspective (Mauss and Robinson 2009). Proponents of the discrete view argue that there are a number of distinct emotional states that are universal to all people, although research is divided as to precisely how many emotions there are. Estimates range from as few as five (Ekman 1992) to seventeen or more (Roseman 1996). Crucially, the principal claim of the discrete theorists is that, not only do these disparate affective reactions engender unique appraisal tendencies, but also that we can reliably measure these emotions via

either self-reports, observation of facial cues, outward behavior, or automatic nervous system responses.

Those who take a dimensional approach question both of these claims, claiming that emotions are not universal, but instead culturally constructed and contingent phenomena (Barrett 2006). As such, dimensionalists are unconvinced that current measurement techniques have been successful at uncovering unique behavioral signatures for each of the presumptive discrete emotions under consideration (Mauss and Robinson 2009). Given these theoretical and methodological issues, dimensional approaches favor a simpler conceptualization of emotion that focuses on the positive or negative valence of affective reactions. Typically, these positive and negative reactions are seen as orthogonal to one another, so that a person may simultaneously experience good and bad emotional responses to a given stimuli (Tellegen et al. 1999).

Measurement issues have infiltrated political science studies on the influence of discrete emotions on political judgment, complicating some of the early inferences made by researchers as to their effects on political behavior. For instance, Brader et al. (2008) report that anger and anxiety load onto a common factor in their analyses and have similar statistical effects on the dependent variable, even as Marcus et al. (2006) find that anger and anxiety differentiate in the case of responses to President Bill Clinton, but fail to do so when the target is Sen. Robert Dole, his 1996 presidential campaign opponent. They suggest that ‘aversion is a dynamic phenomenon, drawn out by some stimuli but not others’ (2006, p. 40); arguing that it remains important to measure even if it does not always appear.

But, when Valentino et al. (2009) attempted to prime anger, anxiety, and enthusiasm in an experimental study, they found that anger appeared in subjects in both the anxiety and enthusiasm conditions, while anxiety was also present among subjects in the anger manipulation. Similarly, a study of the effects of anger and fear on evaluations of terrorist threat by Lerner et al. (2003) found that anger comingled with fear in the treatment groups. In a pointed critique of Marcus et al.’s (2000) AI theory, Ladd and Lenz (2008) suggest that some of the results that Marcus and colleagues attribute to anxiety and the surveillance system obtain equally as well when substituting in an alternative valence measure of positive affect, casting doubt on the validity of anxiety measure employed by Marcus and colleagues. While these findings do not necessarily vitiate discrete approaches to the study of emotion, the likelihood that multiple emotions are present during any given judgmental task does suggest some caution is in order when interpreting the results.

The Ladd and Lenz paper underscores an additional measurement problem particular to studies of emotion and political behavior that rely on self-reports of affective states and require their recall sometimes long after the fact. Research has shown that retrospective evaluations of prior emotional states may be biased by the particular traits or current emotional state of the reporter (Barrett et al. 1998,

Levine 1997; Robinson and Clore 2002). This suggests that questions such as ‘has [candidate] ever made you feel angry?’ – the typical survey question that informs AIT – are problematic; at best there will be significant error in recall. Even so, traditional survey research methods seem limited to this approach of asking people to label what they remember feeling at some time in the past. Nor are experiments necessarily better in this regard, as some studies have relied on subjects’ abilities to recall how encountering information made them feel (Redlawsk 2001; 2002).

It appears that much of the variance in self-reports of emotional experience can be accounted for with a dimensional approach (positive-negative and high-low arousal; Russell and Barrett 1999; Mauss and Robinson 2009), and scholars who attribute causal effects to discrete emotions based on self-reports may be assuming more than they can demonstrate. Yet we should not be too quick to discard the discrete approach, even if Occam’s razor might suggest the simplest approach that appears to explain what we observe. Evidence does exist that anxiety, in particular, has measurable effects on political behavior in both American (Albertson and Gadarian 2015; Parker and Isbell 2010; Redlawsk et al., 2007) and European politics (Bogdan 2013; Erisen 2013), even if the effects of aversive emotions like anger may be more conditional. Efforts to identify these effects with experimental studies that prime particular emotions could be on a firmer footing, although, as noted above, researchers should be cognizant of the possibility that, even when intending to prime one particular emotion, others may result. However, as we suggest below, experiments where subjects encounter information and immediately record their affective responses could move things further along, even if they remain reliant on the cognitive assessment of affective reactions, that is, putting a name to a feeling rather than some means of direct measurement.

Integrating emotions into theories of voter decision making

Resolving some of the issues with conceptualization and measurement in the study of emotion and political behavior may well be necessary to address a second major theoretical concern: integrating emotions into current theories of decision making. The three most prominent models of emotion and judgment in the political psychology literature make seemingly contradictory claims about the role affect plays in voting and preference formation. AIT, focusing on discrete emotions, argues that the particular experience of anxiety or enthusiasm is associated with different types of processing strategies. Specifically, anxiety is held to facilitate more effortful cognition and encourage citizens to rely less on habit when voting (Marcus et al. 2000, Ch. 4). Under AIT, experiencing anxiety about the in-party candidate should trigger individuals to become more vigilant and to base their judgments on more relevant and diagnostic information. The end result of such a process, according to Marcus and colleagues, is that anxious voters are

more likely to defect from their party when voting, particularly when they perceive their parties' candidate to endorse policies incongruent with their own.

Since the appearance of Marcus et al.'s theory, empirical support for their claims about the role of anxiety in information search and decision making has been mixed, as we noted briefly above (Ladd and Lenz 2011). Brader's (2005) experimental test of the hypothesis that feeling threatened (i.e. anxious) motivates increased vigilance finds evidence that subjects primed with fear-inducing music while watching a campaign advertisement were more susceptible to persuasion and less reliant on their prior preferences when choosing a candidate; however, Brader also finds that subjects in the fear condition were no better at recalling information about the ad than those in the control condition and were also no more likely to seek out additional information, results that seem contrary to the claim that anxiety spurs voters to be more vigilant and attentive to political messages.

Similarly, two later experiments on attitudes towards immigration by Brader and colleagues (Brader et al. 2008) found that in one study anxious subjects were more likely to request information when presented with a negative portrayal of an out-group (Latinos), but less likely to do so when the negatively portrayed target was a person of similar ethnicity (European). The second study found no effect of anxiety on information seeking at all. While some studies have certainly shown that anxiety can influence attitudes towards political events, particularly those such as terrorism and the Iraq War that are fraught with emotional connotations (Huddy et al. 2005; 2007), more work needs to be done on the specific consequences of anxiety for voting (Ladd and Lenz 2011).

Most recently, Albertson and Gardarian (2015) have undertaken a comprehensive examination of the effects of anxiety on judgment. Rather than seeing anxiety as solely a positive force in voter decision making, the authors argue that anxiety, by triggering attention to politics, has both positive and negative effects on democracy. In particular, Albertson and Gardarian find that, while fear (anxiety) does follow AIT's expectation in increasing learning, the problem is that it also makes voters focus on threats, biasing attention in ways that further increase anxiety and influencing how citizens think about politics, potentially leaving them open to manipulation.

The AIT model of information processing in which the specific emotion of anxiety has a salutary effect on political judgment stands in stark contrast to the two-dimensional approaches to emotion and political decision making we have reviewed above. Lodge and Taber's (2013) JQP model of information processing conceptualizes affect as either positive or negative, and mostly works beneath the level of conscious awareness. According to this model, experiencing negative affect towards a preferred candidate does not engender the kind of thoughtful consideration of information and openness to persuasion presumed by AIT, but rather stimulates a process of motivated reasoning (Kunda 1990) in which the voter strives to justify his or her prior preferences. Ultimately, the JQP theory

suggests that information incongruent with one's current attitudes and beliefs is simply rationalized away (Redlawsk 2002, Taber and Lodge 2006).

Lavine and colleagues' ambivalent voter theory, with its expectancy violation framework, is also primarily a dimensional approach, but proposes a still different chain of events. Ambivalence theory suggests that, while 'univalent' partisans are prone to the sort of motivated reasoning and reflexive dependence on their partisan identities that the JQP model proposes, ambivalent partisans, defined as those who evince both positive and negative appraisals of their preferred party, engage in more objective and less biased judgmental strategies when voting. In support of this claim, Lavine and colleagues show that voters who espouse both positive and negative affect towards their preferred political party are more likely to defect from their 'normal vote', more likely to hold accurate perceptions of the political facts, and more attentive to economic issues, but not social ones, when forming their judgments.

Lodge and Taber's JQP model and Lavine and colleagues' ambivalent voter theory have not come under as much critical scrutiny as the AI model to date, but the very different affective processes comprising each calls for further theoretical development and empirical testing as the experience of negativity affects voter decision making functions quite distinctly in each. In terms of Lodge and Taber's theory, a natural question to explore is whether the rationalization process must at some point end. The motivation toward cognitive consistency is thought to be a strong one (Festinger 1957; Greenwald 1980), but people are not free to believe anything they wish (Kunda 1990); at some point, it would seem that cognitive conservatism must give way to the weight of the evidence, perhaps transforming rationalizing voters into anxious voters or ambivalent ones. Suggestive data on this point come from a study by Redlawsk et al. (2010), who find that voters in a simulated primary election did reach an 'affective tipping point' after being exposed to a significant amount of negative information about their preferred politician. Subjects in this study did attempt to maintain their prior preferences for a time, but eventually they began to downgrade their evaluations of their initially preferred candidate as they encountered more and more countervailing evidence. The result appears to offer a connection between AIT and motivated reasoning; the data suggest one reason the tipping point is reached may be due to the increase in negative affect – anxiety in particular –as more 'bad' information is encountered about an otherwise 'good' candidate. While motivated reasoning effects are evident at low levels of this incongruent information, at high levels the effect disappears while anxiety appears to increase. However, the study does not provide a necessary causal link between the two, simply showing a correlational relationship.

One pressing question with Lavine et al.'s ambivalence theory that requires further study is whether the tendency to exhibit mixed feelings about a political candidate is itself a dispositive trait rather than a situational tendency (see the authors' discussion of this point on p. 220 of Lavine et al. 2012). Voters who are

willing to admit that they harbor both positive and negative feelings about their particular party may also be those who have a greater tolerance for ambiguity or less of a need for cognitive closure (Budner 1962; Webster and Kruglanski 1994). If this is the case, then perhaps Lavine and colleagues' results are less an indicator of the effects of competing affective reactions on judgment and more a reflection of the processing style characteristic of certain types of individuals. Lavine and colleagues seem to acknowledge such a possibility when they lament that, while the behavior of ambivalent voters may be more consonant with the normative expectations of democratic theorists, there may be little that can be done to manipulate the political environment to induce more ambivalence in citizens (Lavine et al. 2012, p. 222).

Whether future research can reconcile the tenets of the discrete theories such as AIT and dimensional ones such as JQP in the context of voter decision making remains to be seen, but we suspect that any resolution of these competing views may require scholars to investigate more thoroughly the role of moderating variables in the judgmental process. As examples of the value of this type of research, an experiment by Valentino et al. (2009) on the effect of anxiety on information seeking found no main effect for anxiety on subjects' willingness to engage in balanced information search about political candidates. When the value of the information was manipulated, however, by instructing some subjects that they would have to later justify their candidate preferences, anxiety did lead participants to examine more information. Similarly, a study by Lavine et al. (2005) found that the type of information subjects sought out when in a 'threatening' environment differed by the subjects' degree of authoritarianism. When highly authoritarian subjects were made anxious, they were more likely to seek confirmatory information, although no such effect was found for those participants who had less of an authoritarian bent. AIT theory, the rationalizing voter (JQP), and ambivalence theory all display an admirable level of elegance in the breadth and depth of their theoretical scope, however, the complex influences of emotion may require more contingent theorizing.

While we cannot settle the differences between these programs here, we should note that Johnston, Lavine, and Woodson (2015) have made an initial attempt to reconcile the ambivalent partisan model's expectancy violation approach with AIT – to the disadvantage of AIT. They argue that AIT is at best a subset of EVT, and that it fails to consider the case whereby a voter has a positive affective response to an out-party candidate, a phenomenon upon which AIT is silent. But it is certainly possible that voters also respond emotionally to out-party challengers. For instance, Redlawsk et al. (2007) show that both preferred and rejected candidates (in a primary election where partisanship is not a factor) generate discrete emotional responses, in parallel ways, based on issue distance. They also show that anger may be generated by greater issue distances between candidates and voters, while anxiety may arise in response to a smaller gap between the two. In another context, Redlawsk, Tolbert, and

McNeely (2013; 2014) show that discrete emotional responses to presidential candidates of both parties can influence how emotions condition racially resentful attitudes when an African American candidate is on the ballot.

It is this conditional nature of anxiety and enthusiasm that AIT neglects, according to Johnston et al; while liking what an in-candidate says generates enthusiasm under AIT, learning something positive about an out-party candidate may do the same thing. A similar finding relates to anxiety. In sum, the authors contend, enthusiasm for an out-party candidate and anxiety or anger toward an in-party candidate all violate expectations, thus leading to the partisan ambivalence that drives their theory.

Although Johnston and colleagues attempt to reconceptualize AIT as a specific case of EVT, they do not address the fact that, in essence, the Lodge and Taber JQP model is also about expectancy violation (as is motivated reasoning generally). It is only when there is a mismatch between prior evaluations and the evaluation of new information that motivated reasoners attempt to maintain the prior evaluation. The problem remains: if AIT is a subset of EVT, and EVT is also in some sense a basis of JQP (though not necessarily specified that way), then the argument that the ambivalent partisan is necessarily a ‘better’ voter may be problematic, since such a partisan might also respond to expectancy violation with motivated reasoning. Thus, the specter of the JQP model of biased processing still lurks in the background. What sort of violations stimulate motivated reasoning and which lead to more systematic judgment processes? This would seem a necessary area for investigation in any effort to adjudicate between the current approaches.

Operationalizing ‘good’ vote choices

As the previous discussion has suggested, one of the fundamental questions arising from studies of emotion and voting is whether affect leads to better or worse voting decisions. Indeed, the issue of voter competence has long been a concern of political scientists (Berelson et al. 1954; Campbell et al. 1960) and affect-based theories such as AIT and EVT both offer predictions as to the type of emotional reactions that are likely to lead to more normatively desirable voting strategies.⁷ But, despite the prominence that the question of decision quality has enjoyed in the literature, studies on the topic have been hampered by a lack of clear and consistent standards of better and worse political preferences, leading some critics to bemoan both the arbitrary operationalizations of opinion quality used by scholars (Kuklinski and Quirk 2000 as well as the ‘elitist’ assumptions that underlie them (Pierce and Rose 1974; Lupia 2006). Before asserting that anxiety or ambivalence produce better voters, it will be necessary to develop consistent methods of evaluating what it means to be a ‘better’ voter.

To illustrate some of the potential pitfalls with the current research on voter judgment, consider some of the claims made by Marcus et al. (2000) about the

superior judgmental strategies of anxious citizens. Anxious voters, according to AIT, are more interested in seeking out information and more responsive to relevant diagnostic information. But these behaviors in and of themselves are not necessarily a sign of a better judgmental strategy. As previously noted, Lavine, Lodge, and Freitas (2005) found that anxiety led authoritarian individuals to engage in more confirmatory information search, an activity seemingly inconsistent with notions of good voting. Similarly, in a process-tracing experiment in which the researchers catalogued every piece of information subjects used while making their voting decisions, Redlawsk et al., (2007) find that anxiety increased information search only about the voters' preferred candidate and then only when the overall information environment contained largely negative messages about that politician; the implication of this finding is that, while anxiety may make voters more attentive to their own candidate's policies and positions, they seem no more interested in learning about the alternatives, a behavior that again stands in contradiction to notions of 'informed choice'. Additionally, in Brader et al.'s (2008) study of immigration attitudes, the researchers find that anxiety actually *increased* reliance on irrelevant information. These studies emphasize the need for further attention to the general claim that anxiety produces better voters and suggest that future research might need to account for contingent factors.

One standard that may bring some additional insight to the question of voter competence is Lau and Redlawsk's correct voting metric (Lau and Redlawsk 1997; 2006; Lau et al. 2008; Lau et al. 2014; Ha and Lau 2015). Although the correct voting metric was developed in the choice environment of a two- (or at most, three-) party election in the American system, it has also been employed in investigations of elections outside of the US context (e.g. Nai 2015; Lanz and Nai 2014; Rosema and de Vries 2011; Lau et al. 2014). In addition to its wide applicability to voting studies, the advantage of the correct voting measure is that it uses the voters' stated policy preferences as the baseline from which to adduce the quality of the vote decision.⁸ Based on calculations of the distance between voter preferences and the policy positions of the candidates in the choice set, researchers can determine whether a person votes for the politician whose policy proposals most closely match his or her own – i.e. whether the voter 'voted correctly'. This method has the advantage of being 'naïve-normative'; it is naïve in the sense that the correctness of a vote is based not on any assumptions of the researchers as to what sort of policies a given voter should prefer but rather on the voter's own stated preferences, and normative in the sense that it presumes a voter should vote for the politician whose policies most closely match his or hers.

In a demonstration of how the correct voting concept could aid studies of emotion and voting, consider that both Marcus et al. (2000) and Lavine et al. (2012) suggest that, when it comes to the actual vote *choice*, relying less on partisan identification – and in some cases defecting from one's 'normal vote' – is evidence of a better quality decision (e.g. Marcus et al. 2000, pp. 108–20; Lavine

et al. 2012, pp. 159–69). But, as the studies on anxiety and information search indicate, such claims may need further corroboration; after all, depending on the ideological distance between candidates and the totality of the voter's own policy preferences, defection may actually lead to a worse decision (Lau and Redlawsk 2006). Work that integrates the correct voting metric into studies of anxiety and ambivalence may thus provide unexpected insight into voter decision quality and illuminate under what conditions affect leads to better or worse voting judgments.

A correct voting metric also has the advantage of avoiding the simplifying assumption that turning from routine processing and reliance on partisanship necessarily indicates 'better' voter decision making. But it also means that the unrealistic normative view of 'good' decision making as rational choice must be dispensed with, as the kind of 'rationality' envisioned in correct voting is driven by a voter's own internal preferences. Rational choice partisans would likely not see this as rational, unless the internal preferences met an unrealistic standard that includes complete consistency and processes that entail extensive tradeoffs (Redlawsk and Lau 2013; Lau and Redlawsk 2006; 1997).⁹

A METHODOLOGICAL SUGGESTION

One of the significant challenges in addressing the theoretical questions raised by the three major research approaches we have detailed here is in identifying the emotions voters experience as they encounter campaign information and turn that into reasons for their votes. As we have noted, a core question is how to measure emotional responses by voters in the first place. A second, related question, is whether, for the purposes of understanding voter behavior, we need to conceive of emotions as discrete or whether simply recognizing their valence gets us far enough along to build good theory and empirics on voting. Both of these questions are about how voters process campaign and candidate information and the role emotion plays in that process.

We suggest that scholars interested in the effects of affective processes on voter judgment might do well to consider employing process-tracing experiments in their research. In essence, claims about the effect of emotion on decision making are claims about the particular information-processing strategies of information processing that a voter employs; survey data are simply ill-suited to address such questions. Experiments, on the other hand, allow researchers to define environments wherein they can control extraneous factors, while manipulating aspects of those environments, leading to the ability to identify causal processes (Campbell et al. 1963; Morton and Williams 2010). But the kind of experiments we have in mind are not those in which subjects are exposed to a single (or even a few) stimuli and then asked how they 'feel' upon viewing them.

Instead, or at least in addition to the typical experimental approach, the Dynamic Process Tracing Environment (DPTE) software developed by Lau and

Redlawsk (2006; Redlawsk and Lau 2009) offers scholars a tool to better understand how emotion influences the ‘decision how to decide’.¹⁰ Process-tracing studies can provide researchers with an unprecedented amount of data on the information-gathering strategies of voters as they carry out a decision task in an experimenter-designed campaign environment. It may be that DPTE experiments can help to settle claims as to precisely how affect influences the vote process.

The key to this will be developing experiments with realistic campaign environments in which subjects are motivated to act as they would when making a vote decision in the real world. While observation of the process *in situ* would be preferred in a perfect world, as social scientists we generally cannot go around observing actual voters in the day-to-day lives as they encounter information about candidates. We may be able to devise field observations of a sort that get close, given new social media technology – for example, asking real voters in real life to record on their phones every time they encounter and have a reaction to campaign stimuli. But, in order to control the environment, to get reliable measurements, and to test theories, we may well need to continue to rely on our old approaches – survey research and experiments. While survey data can be very rich and valuable, experimental data from DPTE can give us moment-to-moment responses to an information environment that can mimic reality and can be better controlled by the experimenter.

Lau and Redlawsk have used versions of DPTE experiments to develop their correct voting standard (Lau and Redlawsk 1997), to examine heuristic processes (Lau and Redlawsk 2001), and to build the case for motivated reasoning (Redlawsk 2001, 2002; Redlawsk et al. 2010), among other foci. Others have used process tracing to study voters: for instance, Utych and Kam (2014) examine candidate viability, while Mirisola and colleagues (2014) study right-wing authoritarianism in Italy; both use the DPTE system.

Porat et al. (2015) use a similar software environment to uncover information acquisition strategies in the context of intractable conflicts in Israel.

The DPTE system may also lend itself to studies in which subjects encounter and respond to a complex simulated campaign while they record their emotional responses as they happen, with a dial system, or perhaps even by being ‘wired’ to instruments that can record affective arousal in real time. Such approaches would not only allow experiments in a relatively realistic information environment, but could move the measurement of emotional response away from after-the-fact participant self-reports.

CONCLUSION

In their review of behavioral decision theory, Redlawsk and Lau (2013) note that some scholars (citing Bueno de Mesquita and McDermott 2004) have argued

that, as emotion becomes better understood, it may serve as a bridge between rational choice and psychological theories of decision making. In particular, they point out that the JQP computational model, as described by Kim et al. (2010), with its combination of affective and cognitive processing, does a better job of accounting for the observation of motivated reasoning effects found in recent studies of how voters evaluate candidates than does a Bayesian model. Without understanding emotion, we are left with questions that simply cannot be answered. These questions may lead us to see emotions as both enhancing decision quality, telling us when we have gathered enough information, and focusing our motives on doing a good job, or alternatively degrading decision processes as voters attempt to support existing candidate or partisan evaluations even when they should not. Or perhaps, as is likely, emotions play both roles.

Undoubtedly, the burgeoning interest in the consequences of affect for political behavior in general and voting in particular stems from a long-standing belief that, when it comes to political judgment, reason and the passions are at odds with each other. Many of our theoretical approaches to decision making and political preference formation, with their focus on the pursuit of interests, political information, and expertise, and ‘rationality’, seemed to implicitly reject a role for emotion in the judgment process or explicitly assert that affect degrades the quality of democratic participation. That position, however, seems no longer tenable. Although the question of whether emotion creates ‘better’ or ‘worse’ voters is still an open one, it is clear that continued inquiry into this topic calls for more research into the nature of emotion, the standards by which we judge political decisions, and the criteria that we use to determine expert political judgment.

Notes

- 1 It is worth clarifying the distinction between *behavioralism* in political science and *behaviorism* in psychology. In political science, behavioralism was the intellectual movement towards a more ‘scientific’ approach – rooted in the exploration of observable phenomena via the scientific method – to the study of politics. The behaviorists in psychology believed that mental events, such as decision making and attitudes, were unobservable and thus superfluous to their theories and research.
- 2 Or, to be more accurate, the voter’s expressed *vote intention* as given to survey researchers, since the actual vote is generally unobservable.
- 3 Redlawsk and Lau (2013) note the underlying issue relating to the stopping point for information search under the rational choice paradigm: how does the voter know that the marginal cost of the next piece of information does not exceed its marginal utility without actually gathering and examining it?
- 4 We will use these words more or less interchangeably, even though in a strict sense the terms probably represent different aspects of affective systems. Psychologists have debated the definitions for years. See, for example, Batson, Shaw, and Oleson (1992) and Panteleimon (2013).
- 5 If this process results in a tie, then the voter defaults to party identification; if not a partisan, the citizen simply does not vote (Kelley and Mirel 1974, p. 574).
- 6 MacKuen et al. (2007) also suggest a third possibility, in which emotional intensity or arousal is an important factor.

- 7 Notably, Lodge and Taber (2013) tend to avoid the normative implications of their theory for voter behavior. The authors do offer a few thoughts in a concluding chapter, admitting that their theory is in many ways at odds with traditional conceptions of the rational voter (pp. 227–234).
- 8 In their book on affective intelligence theory, Marcus et al. use a separate but somewhat related measure that compares the voters' policy preferences with their *perceptions* of the policy stances of the candidates (2000, p. 110), whereas the Lau and Redlawsk measure typically uses outside experts to provide the policy ratings of the politicians.
- 9 To be sure, some proponents of bounded rationality posit that even behavior that falls short of the normative demands of information processing is still utility maximizing (e.g. Lupia and McCubbins 1998). Even Simon himself has said that 'virtually all human behavior is rational' (Simon 1995).
- 10 The DPTE system is available to researchers at <http://www.processtracing.org> and has been supported by grants from the US National Science Foundation.

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Referendums

Alan Renwick

INTRODUCTION

When we think of elections – and, by extension, of electoral behaviour – we tend to think of votes to choose representatives. But elections can involve other sorts of choices too. In fact, contemporary politics involves two important classes of public election: representative elections on the one hand and policy elections – votes to choose specific policies – on the other. In order to avoid confusion, we typically refer to the second class of elections as referendums.

Thus, a referendum is a public vote on a specific policy question. As the first section of this chapter will show, such votes have become an increasingly frequent feature of politics in recent decades, raising important questions about their contributions to democracy as a whole. Supporters of greater use of referendums argue that they empower the people – the *demos* – and thereby advance the goal that policy should serve the interests and desires of the community as a whole, rather than those of a narrow elite. Opponents counter that referendums can very easily be hijacked by narrow interests or that most of us lack the time to work out which policy choices would best serve our goals and that we are much better off electing representatives to do that work for us (for overviews of such arguments, see e.g., Butler and Ranney 1994b; Qvortrup 2005).

Resolving such debates requires us to explore a wide range of both normative and empirical questions, and it will be impossible to address all of these in this chapter. The chapter will not deal in detail, for example, with the substantial literature on the policy effects of referendums (e.g., Gerber 1996; Hug 2005, 2011),

nor will it look at referendums in non-democratic or weakly democratic contexts (e.g., Altman 2011: 88–109; Qvortrup 2014).

Rather, the chapter will focus on three questions that relate directly to the topic of voting behaviour – the three most important questions in empirical research on referendums. First, how many people vote in referendums, who are they and what determines such turnout? Claims that direct democracy is superior to representative democracy are undermined if voters are less inclined to turn out for referendums than for representative elections, or if the voters who do turn out are more skewed towards particular segments of the population. Second, how do citizens decide how to vote in referendums? Whether voters base their decisions on detailed knowledge of the issues or not – and whether this actually makes a difference – has constituted the hottest topic in referendum studies for some years. Third, how does opinion change in the course of referendum campaigns? For anyone interested in whether to call or demand a referendum or seeking to predict how a vote might go, this is a crucial matter.

The bulk of the chapter will address these three questions in turn. Before getting there, the first section will address some important definitional issues and set out patterns in the incidence of referendums over recent years.

DEFINING AND TRACKING REFERENDUMS

A referendum is defined here as any public vote on a specific policy question. That definition reflects usage around much of the world and also in much of the political science literature: Butler and Ranney, for example, the founding fathers of modern comparative referendum research, say, ‘In a referendum, a mass electorate votes on some public issue’ (1994a: 1).

It should be noted that, in the United States and some other countries, this broad class of votes is normally subdivided and the term ‘referendum’ is reserved only for votes on matters already decided or chosen by the legislature. Votes on proposals nominated by voters are ‘initiatives’. Lupia and Matsusaka (2004: 465), for example, following this tradition, say, ‘The referendum is a process that allows citizens to approve or reject laws or constitutional amendments proposed by the government’, while ‘The initiative is a process that allows ordinary citizens to propose new laws or constitutional amendments by petition.’ They add, ‘The main difference between initiatives and referendums, therefore, is that citizens can write the former whereas only government officials can draft the latter’ (Lupia and Matsusaka 2004: 465). Altman (2011: 10–12) goes further still, differentiating ‘referendums’ from both ‘initiatives’ and ‘plebiscites’.

None of these definitional approaches is more right or more wrong than any other. The broadest definition of referendums is employed here partly because

it is prevalent in comparative politics and partly because our focus here is not on how public votes on policy matters are initiated, but on how citizens decide whether and how to cast their ballot when the vote itself takes place. In that context, how the vote was initiated is a potential influence over voting behaviour that we might want to investigate, but there is no *a priori* reason to highlight it over a wide range of other potential factors.

Analysis of referendum voting behaviour is becoming increasingly important because referendums are increasingly common in contemporary democratic politics. Figure 19.1 shows data for three indicators of the frequency of referendums since the first modern referendums were held in the wake of the French Revolution in the 1790s. The top line shows the total number of questions asked in national referendums each decade. This shows the total number of issues put to a public vote. But it may be skewed by single referendum events in which large numbers of questions are asked: on 3 November 1985, for example, voters in the Northern Mariana Islands were asked forty-four separate questions, amounting to almost a quarter of all the referendum questions asked around the world that decade. The next line down therefore shows the number of distinct referendum ballots, where multiple questions asked in a single vote are treated as one ballot. Again, the overall picture here could be skewed by one country holding very large numbers of referendums: almost a quarter of the referendum ballots included in this analysis have been in Switzerland. The lowest line therefore shows the number of countries holding national referendums in each decade.

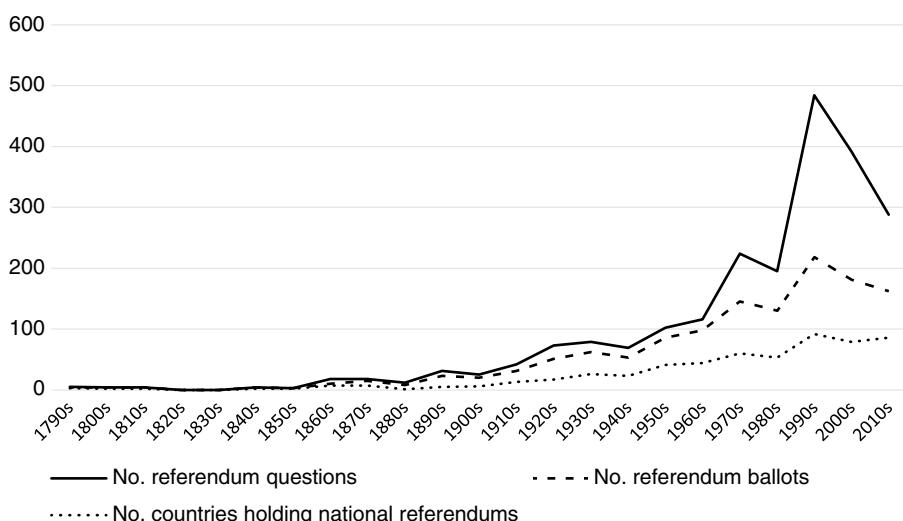


Figure 19.1 Frequency of national referendums, by decade

Note: Figures given for the 2010s are the figures from 2010 to 2014 multiplied by 2.

Source: Author's calculations using data in SUDD (2015).

As is apparent, the frequency and geographical spread of referendums have increased markedly over the decades. Indeed, more than half of all the questions ever asked in national referendums have been asked since 1990. A peak was reached during the 1990s, since when the frequency of referendums has slipped back again. Whether this slippage marks a long-term trend is, however, much too early to judge. In any case, the frequency and spread of referendums remain higher than in any decade before the 1990s.

The patterns in Figure 19.1 appear clear, but whether they show that referendums play a greater part in contemporary democratic politics than in the past might be questioned on two grounds. First, Figure 19.1 includes all referendums, but not all referendums occur in democracies. It is therefore important to check the figures for democracies alone. Second, a rise in the number of democratic referendums might just reflect a rise in the number of democracies, rather than a rise in the frequency with which referendums are used within democracies. Figure 19.2 presents evidence on these points. The lines show the raw numbers of national referendums in democratic contexts per decade since 1900. The bars show for each decade the number of referendums per year of democracy. Democracies are defined here as countries with a Polity score of 6 or more in any given year in the Polity IV dataset (Center for Systemic Peace 2014).¹ Switzerland is excluded, as it has asked almost as many referendum questions as all other democracies combined.

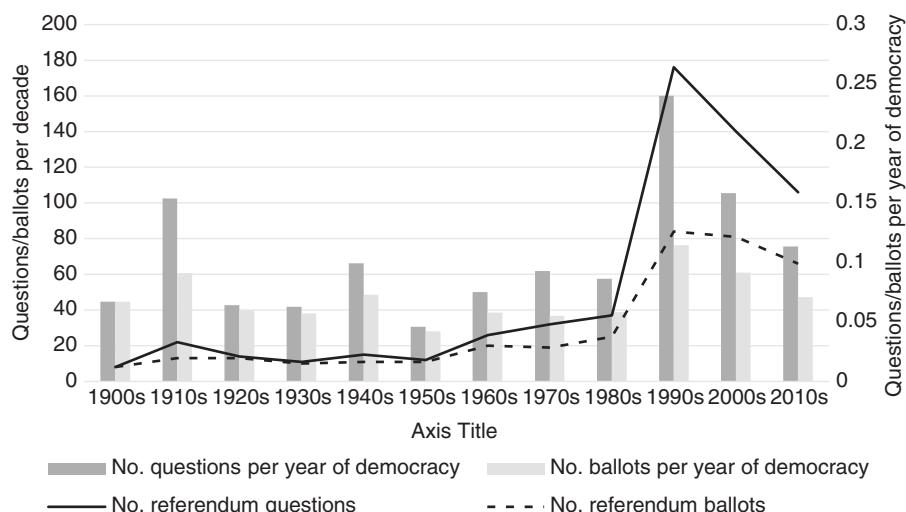


Figure 19.2 Frequency of national referendums in democracies, by decade

Notes: Democracies are defined as countries with a Polity IV score on the Polity variable of 6 or more (Center for Systemic Peace 2014). Switzerland is excluded. Figures given for referendum numbers in the 2010s are the figures from 2010 to 2014 multiplied by 2.

Source: Author's calculations using data in SUDD (2015).

The lines show that the rise in the number of referendums is a feature of the democratic world as much as it is of the world as a whole. The bars confirm what we would expect: the rise in the number of referendums in democracies partly reflects the rise in the number of democracies, such that the frequency of referendums within democracies has not risen so dramatically. Nevertheless, the rate at which referendums are held within democracies was higher in the 1990s and 2000s than in any earlier period. Though there was some dip in the first half of the 2010s, the rate remains higher than in most earlier decades, and the period is too short to draw firm conclusions from it. Overall, referendums evidently play a bigger role in contemporary democracies than they did in the past.

The United States is one of a very small group of established democracies never to have held a national referendum. State-level referendums (including initiatives) are, however, familiar in the politics of many states, and these too have become more frequent in recent years: data from the Initiative and Referendum Institute at the University of Southern California show that just over a third of the initiatives voted on since the first such ballot in Oregon in 1904 have taken place since 1990. Nevertheless, as Figure 19.3 shows, experience of direct policy votes has a deeper history in (some) US states than elsewhere in the world, a substantial earlier peak in the frequency of initiatives having occurred during the progressive era of democratic reform in the early twentieth century (Cronin 1989: 50–9).

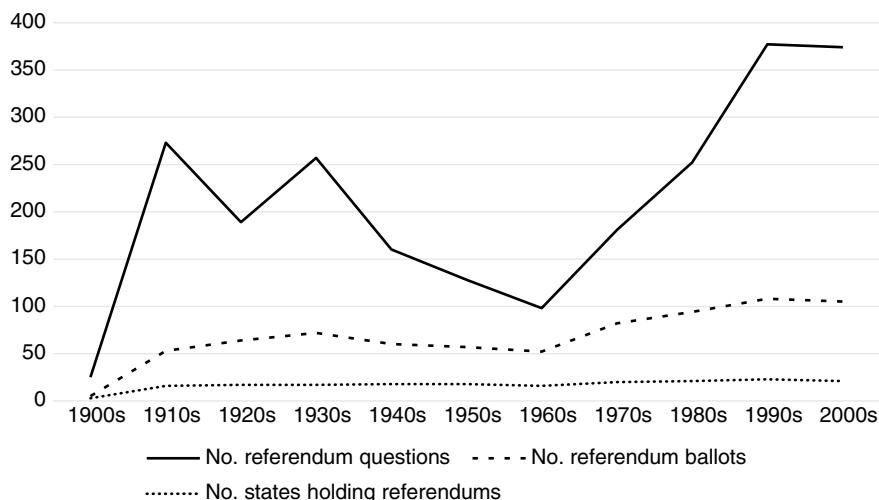


Figure 19.3 Frequency of state-level citizen-initiated referendums in the United States, by decade

Note: Data cover citizen-initiated referendums (initiatives) only. Figures given for referendum numbers in the 2010s are the figures from 2010 to 2014 multiplied by 2.

Source: Author's calculations using data in IRI (2015).

WHO TURNS OUT IN REFERENDUMS?

If we are interested in comparing the merits of representative and direct democracy, the first question to ask concerns turnout: does a larger proportion of the eligible electorate turn out to vote in representative elections or in referendums? If elections elicit higher turnout than referendums, that gives one reason to think representative democracy may produce outcomes that better reflect the will of the population as a whole, whereas higher turnout in referendums would suggest the opposite.

For most countries we can answer this question directly, as in most countries elections and referendums are generally held separately. In such cases, the pattern is generally that turnout is lower in referendums than in elections. But there are also exceptions: in some referendums, turnout is very high. LeDuc describes the pattern thus:

Turnout tends to fluctuate more widely in referendums than it does in national elections. In general, it tends to be lower, but it can sometimes rise to much higher levels when a particular issue engages wide voter interest or when an intense campaign is waged by interest groups. (LeDuc 2007: 27)

The accuracy of this description is demonstrated by Table 19.1, which compares all national referendums held in stable democracies between 1990 and mid 2015 with national legislative elections held in the same countries over the same period. I define stable democracies here as countries that have been continuously rated as ‘Free’ by Freedom House since 1991 (Freedom House 2015).² The analysis is restricted to countries with populations of at least 300,000. These criteria yield a population of forty-four countries in total. Eight of these – Belgium, Chile, Germany, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Namibia and the United States – have held no national referendums since 1990. Switzerland is excluded as previously, because the frequency of its referendums – 237 since 1990 (SUDD 2015) – renders it a unique case. That leaves thirty-five democracies that have held at least one referendum. In total across these countries, 263 referendum questions have been asked in 152 separate referendum ballots. In these same countries over the same period, 234 general parliamentary elections have taken place. Elections and referendums have almost always been separate: on only eighteen occasions have elections and referendums occurred concurrently.

As Table 19.1 shows, average turnout across this population of cases has been 74.5 per cent in elections but only 54.1 per cent in referendums. We might suspect that this pattern exists because referendums are more frequent in countries that typically see lower turnout: indeed, we might suspect that frequent referendums would *lead to* lower turnout through a ‘voter fatigue’ effect (Franklin 2004: 98–9). But, while voter fatigue might indeed be a real phenomenon

Table 19.1 Turnout in elections and referendums in democratic countries since 1990

Country	Number of		Average turnout in		Standard deviation of		Lowest turnout in referendum? referendum?
	elections	referendum questions	referendum ballots	referendums (%)	election turnout	referendum turnout	
Australia	9	2	1	94.7	95.1	0.9	–
Austria	8	2	2	81.4	67.4	3.7	15.0
Bahamas*	5	7	2	91.3	45.0	0.8	–
Belize	5	1	1	78.9	46.6	6.0	–
Botswana	5	11	2	78.3	10.8	3.3	5.9
Bulgaria	8	1	1	63.1	20.2	10.8	–
Canada	7	1	1	63.5	74.7	3.5	–
Costa Rica	7	1	1	72.0	59.2	6.1	–
Cyprus	5	1	1	88.8	89.2	5.3	–
Czech Rep.	8	1	1	72.0	55.2	12.6	–
Denmark	7	6	6	85.6	74.6	1.6	12.9
Estonia	8	4	3	65.0	71.3	6.3	8.3
Finland	7	1	1	66.9	70.8	1.3	–
France	5	3	3	62.5	56.4	5.2	18.5
Greece	8	1	1	72.8	62.5	6.4	–
Hungary	7	8	5	65.0	39.4	4.3	13.5
Iceland	7	8	3	85.3	62.1	2.2	11.0
Ireland	5	26	19	66.8	51.1	2.5	10.5
Italy	7	53	13	82.5	43.7	3.7	16.1
Latvia	9	10	9	70.0	50.9	9.9	23.5
Lithuania	6	21	11	55.6	54.8	9.5	19.1

(Continued)

Table 19.1 Continued

Country	Number of elections		referendum questions		Average turnout in elections		Standard deviation of referendum turnout		Highest turnout in referendum? referendum?	
	referendum ballots	(%)	referendum ballots	(%)	referendums	(%)	election	referendum	turnout	turnout in referendum? referendum?
Luxembourg	5	4	2	89.7	88.7	2.0	1.7	—	—	Yes
Malta	6	3	3	95.1	79.1	1.5	8.4	—	—	Yes
Netherlands	7	1	1	77.3	63.3	2.7	—	—	—	Yes
New Zealand	9	12	9	81.3	65.7	4.5	18.7	—	—	Yes
Norway	6	1	1	77.0	89.0	1.1	—	—	—	Yes
Poland	7	7	3	47.5	44.7	4.3	10.9	—	—	Yes
Portugal	7	3	3	62.9	41.2	3.4	6.9	—	—	Yes
Romania	6	7	6	59.5	48.5	14.8	12.3	—	—	Yes
Slovakia	8	18	8	72.9	28.2	13.9	13.4	—	—	Yes
Slovenia	7	22	16	67.3	37.8	10.0	18.4	—	—	Yes
Spain	6	1	1	74.0	41.8	3.7	—	—	—	Yes
Sweden	7	2	2	83.9	82.9	2.5	0.4	—	—	Yes
United Kingdom	5	1	1	67.2	42.2	6.8	—	—	—	Yes
Uruguay	5	12	9	90.5	88.0	0.9	3.2	—	—	Yes
Total	234	263	152	74.5	54.1	13.2	22.3	No	No	Yes

(e.g. Qvortrup 2005: 25–41), it does not account for lower referendum turnout, for that pattern is replicated within as well as across countries. Of the twenty-one countries for which we have turnout data from more than one referendum ballot, referendum turnout has been higher on average than election turnout in only one (Estonia).

Table 19.1 also confirms LeDuc's observation of higher fluctuation in referendum than in election turnout: across all the cases, standard deviation of turnout in referendums is 22.3, compared with just 13.2 in elections. Again, this pattern is replicated within as well as across cases: of the twenty-one countries with turnout data from more than one referendum ballot, turnout deviation in referendums exceeds that in elections in seventeen.

Finally, the last two columns in Table 19.1 illustrate a little of what these statistics mean in practice. As the combination of lower average and higher standard deviation would lead us to expect, the lowest turnout of the last quarter century has been recorded in a referendum rather than an election in most (twenty-six) of the countries. But the high standard deviation also means that, despite the low average, a significant minority of the countries – nine out of the thirty-five – have seen their highest turnout over this period in a referendum. Indeed, in five countries, referendums account for the instances of both highest and lowest turnout.

Election and referendum turnout levels are harder to compare in the United States, because representative elections and ballots on policy matters almost always happen simultaneously. In fact, most of the literature relating to turnout in the United States has focused on the issue of whether the inclusion of policy questions on the ballot increases turnout at concurrent *candidate* elections. The consensus that has emerged is that such questions do boost turnout – certainly in mid-term years (Schlozman and Yohai 2008) and probably to a degree also in presidential election years (Tolbert et al. 2009). That is hardly surprising: many issues are likely to attract some voters to the polls who would not bother to turn out if the choice was just between party representatives. But this does not help us get at the issue of whether elections or referendums do the better job of eliciting the views of a larger segment of the population.

Some of the American literature does, however, address this issue by examining voting figures in relation to different choices on the same ballot paper. Magleby (1984: 83) defines ‘drop off’ as ‘the proportion of voters who cast ballots but who do not vote in a particular candidate race or on a proposition’. Comparing voting figures in three states between 1970 and 1992, he finds that drop off is higher in propositions – which are here called referendums – than in any candidate elections. Whereas presidential elections show drop-off rates of 2 or 3 per cent, those for propositions are 13 or 14 per cent (Magleby 1994: 247). It therefore appears that, as elsewhere, referendums in the United States attract fewer voters than do representative elections.

The reasons for these patterns – both globally and within the United States – appear clear: many referendums ask questions that large numbers of voters do

not find very interesting, but a few referendums do powerfully capture the public imagination (cf. LeDuc 2007: 27). Several studies confirm that referendum turnout is closely related to the degree to which the issue on the agenda captures the public imagination as measured through campaign intensity (e.g., Kriesi 2007: 120–3; Hobolt 2009: 239).

We might additionally suppose that institutional features of referendums themselves would affect turnout. One aspect of institutional variation among referendums, as already noted, relates to their initiation: some policy votes are initiated by citizens through petition, while others are initiated by politicians. We might hypothesize that more citizens would be engaged by votes that have reached the ballot paper through popular demand than by votes dropped upon the electorate from on high by politicians. Indeed, Magleby finds exactly that pattern in his analysis of US state-level ballots: drop off is markedly lower among those propositions placed on the ballot by citizen initiative than among those put there by the state legislature (Magleby 1994: 247).

In the cross-national sample of referendums used here, however, the reverse is true: average turnout reaches 53.8 per cent among elite-initiated referendums, but only 43.6 per cent among citizen-initiated votes (a difference that is significant at the 0.001 level in a two-tailed t-test). Nevertheless, it appears likely that this reflects the character of the issues placed before voters in these referendums rather than the identity of their initiators: citizen-initiated referendums are likely more often to involve matters that are of great concern to some voters but that do not rank high on the wider political agenda.

Another formal distinction among referendums differentiates those with binding effect from those that are, at least in formal terms, only advisory (e.g., Bogdanor 1994: 25–33). It would be reasonable to hypothesize that turnout should be higher where a vote is binding and voters therefore know that the result will make a difference. Again, however, the evidence confounds this expectation: turnout among non-binding referendums is around ten percentage points higher than that among binding votes (significant at the 0.01 level). This likely reflects the fact that whether a referendum is binding in formal legal terms often makes little difference to the degree to which it is binding politically (Hobolt 2009: 10).

So far this section has examined overall turnout rates. To understand the representativeness of the voting public, however, we need to know not just how many people vote, but also who they are: the degree to which they form a representative sample of the eligible electorate. In broad terms, turnout in referendums is related to the same demographic and political factors as is turnout in representative elections: citizens are more likely to vote if they are more educated, older, richer and have higher levels of political knowledge and interest (Kriesi 2007: 127–36; LeDuc 2007: 27–8; Neijens et al. 2007: 155). What we need to know is whether referendum voting is *more* skewed towards these groups than election voting.

Some of the evidence from the United States suggests that it might not be, and that the opportunity to vote on specific issues attracts to the polls voters

who are otherwise less likely to engage with electoral politics, such as independents (Donovan et al. 2009) and those who have received less formal education (Tolbert et al. 2009). But this tells us only about those voters who do turn out for (some) referendums but not for elections, not those who do the opposite.

Magleby (1984: 106–18), drawing on evidence from California between 1972 and 1980, in fact finds that rates of drop off in referendums compared with elections are higher among voters with less education, on lower incomes and in lower-skilled occupations, and among non-white voters and older voters. Thus, the unrepresentativeness of referendum voters relative to the population as a whole is in most respects greater than is the unrepresentativeness of election voters. Little further work has been done subsequently to explore this relationship further (though see Feig 2009, who shows that drop off in the US is higher among African American than white voters). Clearly, evidence from a wide range of settings would be desirable – this should be a priority for future research. On the basis of the evidence that we have at present, however, it appears that voters in referendums are typically less representative of the eligible electorate as a whole than are voters in elections.

Finally for this section, it should be noted that unrepresentative turnout is a matter of concern primarily when the referendum result has an effect. Some countries apply quorum rules, such that the result is invalidated if too few voters participate. In Italy, for example, 50 per cent turnout is required for the vote to count, while in Hungary until 2011, 25 per cent of eligible voters (as well as 50 per cent of actual voters) had to support a measure before it passed. Sixteen of the thirty-five countries in our sample that have held national referendums since 1990 have imposed quorum rules of some kind for at least some of these votes. Extrapolating effects of such rules from voting figures is difficult, as the rules change voters' incentives to turn out or abstain (Herrara and Mattozzi 2010). Simply on the basis of the votes cast, however, seventy referendums that would otherwise have passed have been rendered invalid by these rules – sixty of them in Italy, Lithuania, or Slovakia (on Italy, see Uleri 2002) – and a further nine have been made non-binding.

HOW DO VOTERS DECIDE?

The next issue to consider is how voters who do cast a ballot in a referendum decide which way to vote. Do they vote on the basis of an informed understanding of the specific issues raised by the referendum question? Or do they vote according to extraneous considerations or random selection or some other mechanism? More work has been poured into this set of questions than any other in the field of referendum studies. This matter has a crucial bearing not only on our positive understanding of how referendums work, but also on our normative judgements as to the value of referendums within the democratic process.

There are three principal models of the immediate factors that shape voters' referendum choices:

- 1 For the first, voters decide on the basis of their attitudes towards the specific issue that the referendum question asks about. Voters thus understand what the referendum is about and express their preferences on that issue (e.g., Siune and Svensson 1993).
- 2 On the second model, voters do not express views on the particular issue. Rather, they vote according to the positions taken by others – particularly parties and party leaders – within the debate. Such 'cue-following' may take two main forms. First, voters who lack their own views on the subject of the referendum but are keen to make the 'right' choices may use the cues offered by actors whom they trust as information 'shortcuts' (Lupia 1994; Lupia and McCubbins 1998). Second, voters who care little about the referendum issue in itself may use the ballot as an opportunity to express their feelings on other matters – particularly their support for or opposition to the government in power. On this view, voters treat referendums as 'second-order' contests (Reif and Schmitt 1980; Franklin et al. 1995; Garry et al. 2005). Whichever of these routes voters follow, they vote in line with their preferences not on the particular issue, but on parties and politics more generally.
- 3 Finally, according to the third model, voters do not vote according to clear preferences at all. Many voters lack any clear indicator of why they should vote one way rather than another. If they nevertheless turn out at the ballot, they are likely, given our general tendency towards risk aversion, to cling to the security of the devil they know and therefore opt for the status quo (Bowler and Donovan 1998: 33–5; Mendelsohn and Parkin 2001: 11).

We may call these three models the *issue-based* voting model, the *cue-based* voting model and the *anxiety-based* voting model. Certainly, other models have been suggested: Garry (2014), for example, explores the role of emotions beyond anxiety – specifically, anger. These three models have, nevertheless, dominated the literature.

In the past, this choice of models has sparked some heated debates among advocates of the competing perspectives. In a study of the Danish referendum on the Maastricht Treaty on European integration in 1992, for example, Siune and Svensson (1993) argued that the outcome had been determined overwhelmingly by Danes' attitudes specifically towards the treaty itself: particularly their fear it would lead to a 'loss of sovereignty' (1993: 103). The authors contended that 'Danish voters have made up their own minds on the balance between economic and political aspects of EC co-operation to such an extent that they behave more or less independently of the advice given by their own party' (Siune and Svensson 1993: 105). The following year, Franklin, Marsh and Wlezien (1994) countered with a rival interpretation. Drawing on evidence from Maastricht referendums in Denmark, France and Ireland, they concluded that 'in none of these countries did the public make up its mind about the treaty based on its assessment of the treaty itself' (Franklin et al. 1994: 118). Rather, they contended, these votes were referendums 'on the performance of the national government' (Franklin et al. 1994: 117). Franklin, van der Eijk and Marsh (1995) subsequently explored the same theme in further detail. This dispute continued to rumble on into the present century (e.g., Svensson 2002; Franklin 2002).

In reality, this debate was never as polarized as its rhetoric sometimes suggested. In their very first contribution, for example, Franklin, Marsh and Wlezien (1994: 117) specified conditions in which they posited a referendum might be swung by cue-based considerations: ‘In domains of low salience, such as foreign policy, we might expect opinions to be coupled to those in domains of high salience, such as governments’ handling of the economy.’ In subsequent writings, the authors on both sides have agreed, in essence, the same conclusion: if a referendum addresses a high-salience issue that engages voters’ interest, issue-based voting will tend to dominate; if it focuses on a low-salience issue that voters do not clearly understand, other forms of voting will come to the fore (Franklin 2002; Svensson 2007).

A wide range of other authors have reached a similar, balanced view in relation not just to referendums on European integration (e.g., Garry et al. 2005; Hobolt 2009), but also to votes on a variety of other issues, such as electoral reform in New Zealand (Lamare and Vowles 1996; Aimer and Miller 2002) and the United Kingdom (Whiteley et al. 2012) and issues of sovereignty and devolution in Canada (Clarke and Kornberg 1994) and the UK (Denver 2002). Bowler and Donovan (1998), similarly, find that a mixed model best accounts for voting in state-level initiatives in the United States. Most of the literature has focused on the choice between the issue-based and cue-based models of voting. But studies that explore the anxiety-based model also find similar patterns: voters who are less informed about the issues and less engaged by the referendum debate are more likely to support the status quo (e.g. Christin et al. 2002; Whiteley et al. 2012); equivalently, voting for the status quo is higher when more voters are undecided in the last pre-election poll (Bowler and Donovan 1998: 49).

We can therefore state with confidence that voters decide how to cast their ballots in referendums in a variety of ways: as the three models suggest, some develop views on the particular issue in hand, others follow cues, while others still, facing uncertainty, opt for the status quo. The prevalence of each of these forms of voting varies, most notably, in response to the saliency of the issue in the referendum question.

The battle of the models may thus have been resolved, but that does not mean all important questions relating to how voters decide have been answered. The most important outstanding issue is whether voters in referendums make well-informed decisions. One aspect of this question relates to whether voters who follow cues vote in the same way as voters who decide on the basis of the issue itself. Interest in this point stems from the idea that widespread cue-based voting might devalue referendum outcomes: it might cause those outcomes to be based on thinking that has nothing to do with the issue at stake in the referendum question. Franklin, van der Eijk and Marsh, for example, remarked that

our findings call into question the entire rationale of referenda conducted in parliamentary democracies. If referendum results are so regularly coloured by the standing of the government that proposes them, then their use to ratify government policies will, in many cases,

be little more than a gimmick that simply restates the approval of the government whose policies they are. (Franklin et al. 1995: 115)

On the other hand, that cue-based voting should be less well grounded than issue-based voting is far from clear. Recall the point made earlier that cue-based voting is not necessarily synonymous with second-order voting. Franklin, van der Eijk and Marsh suppose in the passage just quoted that cue-based voters decide how to vote on the basis of entirely extraneous considerations. Equally, however, cue-based voters could regard a referendum question as of first-order importance and feel that their surest route to the correct choice is to follow the advice of those with whom they generally agree on other matters. In that case, and if the cue-givers themselves give well-informed cues, cue-followers can be expected to vote as if they were issue-followers.

A range of authors have investigated this point by comparing voting patterns among issue-based voters with those among cue-based voters. In the best known study, Lupia (1994) found that voters who lacked knowledge of the referendum issues were nevertheless able to vote as though they did possess such knowledge if they knew the positions of key actors. Bowler and Donovan (1998: 58–65) also found that voters were able to glean useful information from simple cues. On the other hand, analysing 136 referendums in Switzerland, Christin, Hug and Sciarini (2002) were able to replicate this finding only in some cases – though they cautioned against placing too much confidence in their conclusion, emphasizing that it could reflect difficulties in measuring the key variables.

No matter how similar cue-based voters may be to issue-based voters, however, a further aspect of the question of whether referendum voters make well-informed decisions needs also to be considered: namely, whether issue-based voters are themselves, on the whole, well informed. In a study of European integration referendums in four countries, for example, Glencross and Trechsel (2011) find that issue-based voting clearly predominates over cue-based voting. But they do not conclude that all is therefore well. Rather, they suggest that further research should analyse what voters' issue understandings are based on, particularly through examination of the content of referendum campaigns (Glencross and Trechsel 2011: 769). If voters' views are based on widespread misinformation, we will still have cause to worry. Lupia's classic study (1994) to some extent overcomes this difficulty by measuring voters' actual knowledge of the referendum topic. Even here, however, responses to a few simple survey questions do not necessarily indicate great depth of understanding.

In order to address this issue, a small number of systematic studies of referendum campaign content have now been conducted. On the whole, these do not give cause for optimism about the quality of information that voters are exposed to. Several studies of a referendum on electoral reform in Ontario in 2007 find that coverage in the print media was strongly biased towards one side of the debate (LeDuc 2009: 35; Pilon 2009: 8–9). LeDuc, indeed, describes the coverage as

'hysterically negative' and as giving readers a misleading impression of how the reform proposals were devised and what they would contain (2009: 34–6). Pilon finds, in addition, that the newspapers typically made unsubstantiated claims, without providing evidence to back them up (2009: 10–11). Building on this, my own analysis of the electoral reform referendum in the UK in 2011 found again that coverage was weighted towards one side (particularly once the newspapers' differing circulation numbers were taken into account), that few claims were backed up by either evidence or logic and that many claims were either straightforwardly wrong or plainly intended to mislead (Renwick and Lamb 2013).

All three of these campaign studies related to referendums on electoral reform – a topic that rarely fires the public imagination. We might expect a subject of greater public interest to spark better debate. More studies than we have at present would be needed to examine this proposition in detail: a wider range of campaign studies is an important area for future research. Again, however, those studies that exist do not give reason for optimism. De Vreese and Semetko find that coverage of the Danish referendum in 2000 on whether to join the euro was more negative about the Yes side than the No side in both public and private broadcast media (2004: 710) and that it focused more on campaign strategies and performance than on the issues (2002; cf. Cappella and Jamieson 1997). Media reporting of the campaign preceding the referendum on European Union membership in the UK in 2016 was also sharply slanted towards one side (Loughborough University Centre for Research in Communication and Culture 2016) and was characterized by high levels of misinformation (Renwick et al. 2016).

Furthermore, there is also evidence that such media coverage affects public perceptions. De Vreese and Semetko (2002) find that exposure to strategic media coverage increased public 'cynicism' about the campaign. Vowles (2013: 259), drawing on panel surveys conducted early and late in the campaign for the UK's 2011 electoral reform referendum, found that voters became more likely to believe statements that were false and less likely to accept statements that were true.

Finally, a related strand of analysis examines the impact on referendum results of campaign spending: can referendum outcomes be swung by a few individuals or organizations with very deep pockets? A few early studies found little evidence of any such effect. Notably, Owens and Wade (1986: 688), drawing on detailed statistical modelling of propositions in California, found that 'there is at best only a modest connection between campaign spending and the vote'. But most analysts have concluded that campaign spending does have an important effect upon outcomes. Analysing evidence from the 1970s and 1980s, Cronin (1989: 123) concluded that the capacity of money to determine a referendum result should cause us serious concern: 'Although money is not always a decisive factor, it is always an important one, and big money, well spent, can usually defeat ballot questions'. Bowler and Donovan (1998) and Gerber (1999) reached nuanced conclusions: campaign spending effects are not always

straightforward, but they are nevertheless widespread and important. Among the most recent studies, De Figuereido, Ji and Kousser (2011) and Rogers and Middleton (2015) find consistent effects.

Thus, even where voters decide on the basis of issue knowledge, we cannot presume they will vote in a way that is consistent with their underlying interests and values. Of course, whether decision-making by referendum performs any better or worse in this regard than decision-making by elected representatives is a much wider question, and not one we can examine here.

HOW DOES OPINION CHANGE DURING REFERENDUM CAMPAIGNS?

The final question that we explore here concerns opinion change over the course of referendum campaigns: How do voters' views shift as a referendum issue is discussed and voting day approaches?

We have already seen that there is considerable variation among referendums both in the degree to which they attract voters to the polls and in the ways voters decide how to cast their ballots. It is reasonable to expect that, where voters have existing strong views on the matter at stake in a referendum, their views are unlikely to change much over the course of a referendum campaign. By contrast, if the issue is one to which most voters have not given serious thought, their initial responses to the pollsters might give little indication of how they will vote once the arguments have been aired and prominent actors have stated their positions. Thus, we should expect referendums to exhibit sharply varying levels of opinion volatility, with some showing high levels of opinion change, others not.

This expectation is clearly articulated by LeDuc. 'Referendums on issues which have been debated extensively in political arenas *other* than that of the referendum campaign', he argues, 'or in which there are strong linkages to the positions taken by political parties, generally display less campaign volatility' (LeDuc 2007: 31). By contrast:

The most volatile referendum campaigns are likely to be those in which there is little partisan, issue, or ideological basis on which voters might tend to form an opinion easily. Lacking such information, they take more time to come to a decision, and that decision becomes highly unpredictable and subject to change over the course of the campaign, as new information is gained or new events unfold. (LeDuc 2007: 41)

Elsewhere, LeDuc presents data from twenty-three referendums across a variety of democracies between 1980 and 1999, comparing opinion as expressed in polls taken before or early in the campaigns with final voting patterns (LeDuc 2002: 151–4). These cases indeed show substantial variation in the degree of opinion change: in three of these twenty-three referendums, support for the Yes option

changed from the poll to the final result by fewer than 3 percentage points, while in two it changed by 40 percentage points or more. Most cases show marked change: as LeDuc remarks, ‘The average absolute shift of seventeen percentage points found for these twenty-three cases taken together is impressively high’ (2002: 154).

But we can seek to go beyond the observation that opinion during referendum campaigns – especially those where prior views or cues are weak – is often volatile: we can strive to say something also about the direction in which opinion is likely to shift. The three models of referendum opinion formation outlined in the preceding section have varying implications as to the likely direction of change. The clearest implications are those of the third, anxiety-based model. Voters, on this model, tend to vote for the status quo because they are unsure of what change might bring. While, early in a campaign, they might find the idea of something new attractive, as the campaign proceeds and the real decision time approaches, they may begin to harbour doubts. Furthermore, campaigners are likely to exploit this: in particular, advocates of retaining the status quo are likely to talk up the risks and uncertainties associated with trying new arrangements that may be unfamiliar and untested. The third model thus predicts a clear tendency for opinion to shift in favour of the status quo.

By contrast, the first, issue-based, model yields no expectation that opinion will tend to move systematically one way or the other. It posits that opinion change will be limited if voters already have clear views before the campaign begins. Even if their views develop over the course of the campaign, this model gives no *a priori* reason for changes to tend in one direction rather than the other.

Finally, for the second, cue-based, model, what matters is the clarity of the partisan and other cues that emerge over the course of the campaign, as well as whom these cues come from. If a prominent and popular actor comes out in favour of one side, this may shift opinion that way, whether that is for or against the status quo. In general terms, therefore, this model, like the first, yields no expectation as to the likely direction of change. As we saw in the previous section, however, the thought underlying this model is often based on the logic of second-order elections, and particularly the idea that voters tend to use referendums as opportunities to express their views on the government. If contemporary voters generally incline towards disgruntlement with incumbent governments, this may suggest, again, a tendency for opinion to shift away from voting Yes in government-initiated referendums.

These considerations suggest that, to the extent that anxiety-based voting is important in referendums, we should expect opinion to shift during campaigns towards the status quo. And to the extent that second-order cue-based voting is a factor, opinion should shift towards the status quo in government-initiated referendums, particularly if the government is old or unpopular.

Existing evidence suggests that, indeed, opinion does tend to shift against the status quo. Of the twenty-three referendums covered in LeDuc's study (2002), seventeen show a shift of opinion during the campaign away from a Yes vote. In my own recent work, I have updated LeDuc's analysis, finding that opinion moved against change in twenty-three out of thirty-four cases. Furthermore, I noted that the size of shifts against reform is generally much greater than that of shifts in its favour (Renwick 2014).

Nevertheless, these studies are based on small and rather ad hoc case sets: much more detailed analysis is needed if we are to explore hypotheses in detail. Table 19.2 makes a step in that direction by including all of the nation-wide referendums – thirty-nine in total – that were held in Anglophone democracies (other than micro-states) between 1990 and 2016. The sample here is small, but it has the advantage of including all of the referendums held in these countries over this period (except three for which no polling data were found), rather than an ad hoc selection tending to favour the more prominent votes. The data in Table 19.2 relate to support for change from the status quo, which, in the great majority of cases (though not quite all), means support for a Yes vote. The first data column shows average support for change in polls conducted more than thirty days before the referendum itself. Subsequent columns show support for change in polls conducted no more than thirty days from the referendum and then in the referendum itself. The final three columns give the percentage point changes between these time periods.

Again, the direction of opinion change overwhelmingly favours the status quo – as the mean values in the bottom row of the table show. Twenty-eight of the thirty-nine cases show a fall in support for change over time (comparing either early polls with the result or, if early polls are unavailable, late polls with the result). Furthermore, as in the previous research, the shifts away from change tend to be much larger than those towards it: only four votes saw opinion move towards change by more than 5 percentage points, while twenty-four saw it shift the other way by that amount; indeed, in twenty-three of these cases, the move was at least twice that size.

The conclusion appears to be confirmed that opinion during referendum campaigns tends to shift towards the status quo. Quantitative analysis of factors underpinning this pattern would need a larger dataset. More qualitative observations can, nevertheless, be made at this stage.

First, though the number of citizen-initiated referendums in Table 19.2 – five – is small, it is notable that four of these are among the minority of referendums that saw no substantial shift of opinion towards the status quo. That might suggest that, where the referendum is not being promoted by the government, voters are less likely to turn against it. This fits with the idea that anti-government sentiment is generally an important driver of referendum voting: where the government has initiated the referendum, opinion is more likely to shift towards the status quo. Still, we should be cautious, as there

Table 19.2 Opinion change during referendum campaigns

Country	Date	Topic	Support for change in...			Change between...	
			Early polls*	Late polls**	Actual result	Early and late polls	Late polls and result
Australia	06/11/1999	Republic	58	45	45	-13	0
Australia	06/11/1999	Constitutional preamble	56	44	39	-12	-5
Canada	26/10/1992	Federal reform	66	46	45	-19	-1
Ireland	18/06/1992	EU treaty (Maastricht)	84	68	69	-15	1
Ireland	25/11/1992	Abortion/contraception (info)	76	79	60	3	-19
Ireland	25/11/1992	Abortion (travel overseas)	76	74	62	-2	-12
Ireland	25/11/1992	Abortion (suicide risk)	60	52	35	-8	-17
Ireland	24/11/1995	Divorce	67	55	50	-13	-4
Ireland	28/11/1996	Bail (refusal)	89	n/a	75		-14
Ireland	30/10/1997	Cabinet confidentiality	n/a	77	53		-25
Ireland	22/05/1998	Good Friday Agreement	79	93	94	14	2
Ireland	22/05/1998	EU treaty (Amsterdam)	81	76	62	-6	-14
Ireland	07/06/2001	EU treaty (Nice)	n/a	66	46		-20
Ireland	07/06/2001	International Criminal Court	n/a	84	64		-20
Ireland	07/06/2001	Death penalty (abolition)	n/a	64	62		-2
Ireland	06/03/2002	Abortion (protection of life)	53	53	50	0	-3
Ireland	19/10/2002	EU treaty (Nice)	58	61	63	3	2
Ireland	11/06/2004	Citizenship extension	74	71	79	-3	8
Ireland	12/06/2008	EU treaty (Lisbon)	64	55	47	-9	-8
Ireland	02/10/2009	EU treaty (Lisbon)	67	70	67	3	-3
Ireland	27/10/2011	Parliamentary committees	n/a	81	47		-35
Ireland	27/10/2011	Judges' salaries	97	93	80	-4	-13
							-17

(Continued)

Table 19.2 Continued

Country	Date	Topic	Support for change in...			Change between...		
			Early polls*	Late polls**	Actual result	Early and late polls	Late polls and result	Early polls and result
Ireland	31/05/2012	EU treaty (Fiscal Compact)	56	60	60	4	0	4
Ireland	10/11/2012	Children's rights	n/a	95	58	-37	-37	-37
Ireland	04/10/2013	Court of Appeal	n/a	77	65	-12	-12	-12
Ireland	04/10/2013	Senate abolition	61	61	48	0	-13	-13
Ireland	22/05/2015	Presidency minimum age	42	31	27	-11	-4	-15
Ireland	22/05/2015	Same-sex marriage	79	73	62	-6	-11	-17
New Zealand	19/09/1992	Electoral reform	69	n/a	85	16	16	16
New Zealand	06/11/1993	Electoral reform	63	n/a	54	-9	-9	-9
New Zealand	26/09/1997	Pensions	26	13	8	-12	-5	-17
New Zealand	27/11/1999	Criminal law reform	n/a	89	92	3	3	3
New Zealand	27/11/1999	Size of parliament	n/a	80	81	1	1	1
New Zealand	21/08/2009	Smacking	12	14	12	2	-1	1
New Zealand	26/11/2011	Electoral reform	44	42	42	-2	1	-2
New Zealand	13/12/2013	Privatization	33	n/a	32	-1	-1	-1
New Zealand	24/03/2016	National flag	32	36	43	7	11	11
New Zealand	05/05/2011	Electoral reform	50	42	32	-8	-10	-18
UK	23/06/2016	EU membership	48	50	52	2	4	4
Mean			60	56	51	-4	-8	-8

* Polls conducted more than 30 days and less than a year before the referendum

** Polls conducted 30 or fewer days before the referendum

Notes: Where polling fieldwork spanned several days, the middle of this range is used as the poll date. Mean values of support for change in the final row are calculated only across those cases for which polling data are available in both the early and late periods. Mean values of change between periods are calculated across all the cases for which the comparison can be made.

Sources: Collated by the author from numerous sources. Details available upon request.

could also be other explanations. All of the citizen-initiated referendums in the sample come from one country (New Zealand), where particular dynamics may be at play.

Second, many of the remaining cases that do not show substantial erosion of support for change belong to the category of what I have called ‘reversion point reversal’ (Renwick 2014). The reversion point of a referendum is the situation that prevails in the event of a No vote (Hobolt 2009: 45–6). Normally, the reversion point is the status quo. But reversion point reversal occurs when what is formally the change option comes to be seen as the option that will best preserve the status quo. That is, advocates of the change option may succeed in persuading voters that voting for this change will provide stability and security, whereas voting against the change will not maintain things as they have been, but rather create great uncertainty. In Ireland’s two repeat referendums on European integration, for example, campaigners suggested that a second vote against the treaties in question – Nice and Lisbon – would endanger Ireland’s future relationship with the European Union (e.g., Garry 2013: 97). In the vote on the European Fiscal Compact in May 2012, fears over the consequences of rejecting the deal on offer helped to produce a rising (and majority) Yes vote first time round (Garry 2014: 242–3). The Irish vote in 1998 on the Good Friday Agreement on the future of Northern Ireland also falls, at least in part, into this category: whereas a Yes vote would have had few direct effects on most voters’ everyday lives, a No vote would have left the peace process in great peril; voting Yes was therefore the safer option. This was, however, not just a result shaped by anxiety: support in the Republic for the peace settlement was always overwhelming among both politicians and the general public (Gilland 1999); the referendum was an opportunity to embrace the hopes of the future and shake off the fears of the past. In other cases – such as the referendums in New Zealand on smacking in 2009 and on electoral reform in 2011 – the change on offer was a reversion to a previous status quo (or a move in its direction), not to an unfamiliar new model.

Third, one further referendum in which opinion moved sharply in favour of change – the New Zealand electoral reform referendum of 1992 – was highly unusual, in two respects. First, it was only the first step in a two-stage process: the effect of voting for change would be no more than that another referendum would be held a year later to make a final decision. Second, most politicians in both the government and the mainstream opposition were against change. In this context, the risks attached to voting against the status quo were low and an anti-politician bandwagon could build in favour of reform.

Though referendum voting is often volatile, therefore, it is not always entirely unpredictable: we understand much about whether and to what extent opinion is likely to shift in one direction or the other. Yet further study is needed to confirm and give greater nuance to these patterns.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined three questions about voting behaviour in referendums, relating to voter turnout, the determinants of vote choice, and opinion change during referendum campaigns. In all three areas, we have seen that referendum voting patterns are highly heterogeneous: turnout is generally lower than in elections, but occasionally is higher; voters' decisions as to how to vote can be influenced by at least three quite different sets of considerations; most referendums see declining – often, rapidly declining – support for change over the course of the campaign, but some do not. This variety reflects the fact that referendums are themselves diverse. The most important source of variation lies not in institutional differences such as who initiates the vote or whether that vote is formally binding – though such details may certainly matter – but rather in whether the referendum addresses an issue that engages voters' interest.

All this variety suggests a mixed answer also to the normative question of whether referendums have a desirable place in the democratic system. The issues considered here are clearly insufficient on their own to ground a full answer to that question: we would need also to consider, for example, the degree to which decision-making in a democracy should reflect simply the will of the majority and whether greater use of referendums undermines the representative institutions that necessarily also survive. The evidence explored here suggests, however, the conclusion that some referendums are better than others. Referendums on issues that voters have little interest in will struggle to yield reasoned decisions. But referendums on questions that do capture voters' imaginations may provoke considered and inclusive debate that confers strong legitimacy upon the decisions that are reached.

Yet these conclusions must remain tentative, for our understanding of voting behaviour during referendums remains incomplete. Much research has been conducted, but each of the sections of this chapter points to areas in which further work would be desirable. On patterns in the frequency of referendums, it will be important as time goes by to investigate whether the recent fall in numbers is just a passing blip or suggests that the 1990s surge was largely a short-term consequence of widespread democratizations and other constitutional upheavals. On turnout, we still lack detailed comparative work on whether referendum voters are more or less representative of the eligible electorate as a whole than are election voters, and how this varies depending on the issues in hand. As to how voters make up their minds, more research is needed to gauge discourse quality during referendum campaigns and compare this with the quality of discourse surrounding other decision-making processes. Finally, in relation to opinion change during referendums, we know there is a tendency to shift towards the status quo, but that there are also many exceptions; more research is needed to help us understand which are the referendums likely to exhibit which patterns.

Referendums are much more varied than representative elections. That makes them harder for politicians to use as tools of policy-making, and also harder for political scientists to research. But it also means that opportunities abound for further work aimed at deepening our understanding of why particular referendums take the form they do and what implications this has for their likely effects upon policy outcomes and democracy.

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Notes

- 1 This is an imperfect measure, but it allows us to capture broad patterns over the long term. I adjust for one oddity in the dataset by including France between 1958 and 1968. The Polity IV dataset covers only countries with a current population over 500,000, so smaller democracies are excluded.
- 2 I have made a slight allowance on this criterion in the cases of Estonia and Slovakia.

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20

Turnout

Hanna Wass and André Blais

INTRODUCTION

Why do people vote? The theoretical and empirical research conducted during the past 70 years has resulted in numerous responses to this question and in a bewildering number of correlates of voting. People participate in elections because they are interested in politics, are attempting to influence the result, feel pressured by others, become mobilized by churches, voluntary associations, informal social networks, and political organizations, have altruistic objectives, consider voting as a necessity to sustain democracy, or live in competitive districts or in countries that enforce compulsory voting. These are only some examples of a multitude of motivations.

So, why does it matter whether people vote? The level of turnout is often treated as a test of the overall condition of the political system and functioning of the democratic process. High participation rates thus imply that citizens consider voting as a meaningful and effective channel for expressing and promoting their preferences.¹ Elected representatives may also use a high turnout as an indicator of the legitimacy of their ‘representative claims’ (Saward 2010). At the individual-level, turnout functions as a generic measure of social and economic (in)equality. Far from being a periodic single act, voting reflects a person’s deep values as well as his/her overall level of well-being, social connectedness and life situation. Thus various types of inequalities are directly translated into electoral participation.

The purpose of this review is not to provide a history of turnout research or an extensive account of all the institutional- and individual-level factors that have been linked to electoral participation (for exhaustive reviews, see e.g. Blais 2000, 2009; Cancela and Geys 2016; Geys 2006; Harder and Krosnick 2008; Smets and van Ham 2013; Wass 2008). Instead, we focus on three tasks, followed by our suggestions for future approaches in turnout studies. First, we argue that it is useful to distinguish between distant, proximate and immediate causes of turnout. Reflecting the abundance of findings discovered in past research, the field is now mature to move from an approach addressing correlates to a funnel of causality model of voting. We propose a ‘funnel model’ of turnout, including three basic immediate reasons for an individual’s decision to vote: the convenience of voting, the desire to express an opinion, and the perception of voting as a civic duty. Such immediate reasons may interact with proximate causes, such as the level of political interest, or more distant institutional and contextual characteristics, such as the (effective) number of parties and the competitiveness of elections.

Our second task relates to the fact that non-voting is not always purely an individual’s own choice. In his often cited essay, Lijphart (1997) remarks that turnout is not evenly distributed in most democracies but instead systematically skewed in favor of the better-educated and more affluent citizens. Reflecting this notion, Brady et al. (2015) have emphasized the need to gain a deeper knowledge of the mechanisms transmitting economic and social stratification into inequalities in electoral participation and other types of political engagement. In this respect, family political socialization is a highly relevant factor since, like education and wealth, voting is transmitted from parents to offspring. In addition, other biases in turnout, such as health and migration background, can be identified. Growing disparities in indicators of well-being further highlight the importance of understanding how social and economic disadvantages are reflected in voting and, eventually, political representation and the decision-making processes (e.g. Butler 2014; Enns and Wlezien 2011; Gilens 2012; Verba et al. 1995).

Third, we discuss the extent to which these inequalities in electoral participation can be reduced by legislation, institutional arrangements, and voter facilitation. We address those facilitation policies that are expected to benefit the disadvantaged groups identified in the second section of this chapter. As various facilitation instruments (e.g. early, postal, online and proxy voting and voting outside the polling stations) are often introduced to raise turnout among all potential voters, they might not necessarily lead to more equal participation. In fact, empirical evidence from the US suggests that voter facilitation has actually increased the socioeconomic bias in turnout by mobilizing those groups that were more active to begin with. However, with regard to less privileged voters, voters with special needs or ethnic minorities, some institutional-level practices and conditions, such as voter-ID requirements, location of polling places, and online voting, maybe highly relevant.

A FUNNEL MODEL OF TURNOUT

Studies conducted in the field of electoral participation since the late 1940s have established an impressive list of factors that increase a person's propensity to vote. These studies are usually categorized between institutional- and individual-level analyses. The former approach, also considered by Bowler in this Volume (Chapter 2), is often comparative as the interest lies in the characteristics that are related to higher turnout in some countries and lower in others. In the latter case, the differences across individuals are examined. While institutional-level factors are mostly related to the 'supply' side of voting (the options available to voters), individual-level correlates reflect the 'demand' side (voters' attributes and preferences). However, there are an increasing number of analyses that take both levels into account simultaneously (e.g. Bühlmann and Freitag 2006; Fieldhouse et al. 2007; Gallego 2015; Kittilson and Anderson 2011; Quintelier et al. 2011; Singh 2011; Söderlund et al. 2011a).

Altogether, the literature has identified hundreds of correlates of voting. In his meta-analysis of 83 aggregate-level studies, Geys (2006; see also Cancela and Geys 2016) refers to twelve potential causes of turnout: population size, population concentration, population stability, population homogeneity, lagged turnout², closeness of elections, campaign expenditures, political fragmentation, electoral system, compulsory voting, concurrent elections, and registration requirements. In their corresponding account of 90 individual-level studies, Smets and van Ham (2013) identify more than 50 specific factors associated with six analytical frameworks, namely resource, mobilization, socialization, rational choice, and psychological models.³ These factors include gender, age, generation, race, citizenship, marital status, parenthood, education, income, occupational status, occupational type, home ownership, region, residential location, residential mobility, religious attendance, religious denomination, mobilization (partisan and non-partisan 'get out to vote' (GOTV) attempts), media exposure, political advertising exposure, organizational membership, union membership, union density, social capital, parental social class, education and income, political discussion, vote in previous elections, general propensity of vote, being a new voter, caring about the outcome of elections, evaluation of national economic situation, evaluation of own economic situation, evaluation of candidates, civic duty, personal benefits of voting, costs of voting, institutional and social trust, satisfaction with democracy, alienation, political interest, political efficacy, political knowledge, party identification, ideological self-placement, ethnic identification, cognitive ability, ambivalence, mental health, and personality.

The aforementioned meta-analyses illustrate the fact that, in order to make sense of the decision to vote or not to vote, we need to assess which of the myriad of correlates of voting are most meaningful and which ones have less relevance. Correspondingly, it is important to specify which factors are immediate

or proximate and which factors are more distant and thus presumably have only an indirect effect on voting. For that purpose, we propose a funnel of causality approach in which the decision to participate is assumed to work in stages. Each stage includes a block of variables defined in terms of their ‘causal distance’ from the final outcome. Such an approach was first suggested and implemented in *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960) and later refined in *The New American Voter* (Miller and Shanks 1996). It was also utilized as a conceptual framework for the study of vote choice in Canadian elections (Blais et al. 2002; Gidengil et al. 2012).

As far as we can tell, such perspective has never been applied to the study of electoral participation. Given the fragmented state of the field, there is a substantial potential benefit in thinking about a funnel of causality in which the various factors are organized in terms of a sequence made of blocks of variables coming into play in some sort of order. Our proposal of a funnel model of turnout, presented in Figure 20.1, is constructed along these lines.

Notably, there is one important elaboration to the original Michigan model. Whereas the latter was conceptualized to make sense of vote choice in a specific election within a single country, our model is suitable for comparative accounts of turnout by including institutional and contextual characteristics at the upper level. In the funnel of causality, these can be considered as relatively distant causes of turnout, which may be mediated by more proximate individual-level factors or which may moderate their impact.

There are several examples of such cross-level interactions. The number of parties, for instance, might condition the influence of political efficacy. The differences in voting propensity between voters with high and low level of efficacy may be more pronounced when the number of parties is high (Kittilson and Anderson 2011). While low-efficacy voters find such context demobilizing, presumably because of a more complex decision-making process, high-efficacy voters might instead be stimulated by a wider range of choices (Blais and Carty 1990; Grofman and Selb 2011; Lakeman 1974). In similar vein, the degree of competitiveness seems to be particularly important in low-salient elections among voters who are not interested in politics and thus need some additional impetus to overcome their initial predisposition (Söderlund et al. 2011a). The educational gap in electoral participation, in turn, appears to be lower in countries where public broadcasters have a larger share of the audience (Gallego 2015), which suggests that the less educated have less access to political information in market-oriented media systems (Iyengar et al. 2010).

The middle part of the turnout model addresses individual-level characteristics, which are considered as more proximate causes of turnout. Here, our model has close connections with two influential approaches, namely the civic voluntarism model (Verba et al. 1995) and the calculus of voting (Downs 1957). In their seminal work, Verba et al. (1995, 16–17) suggested three main reasons

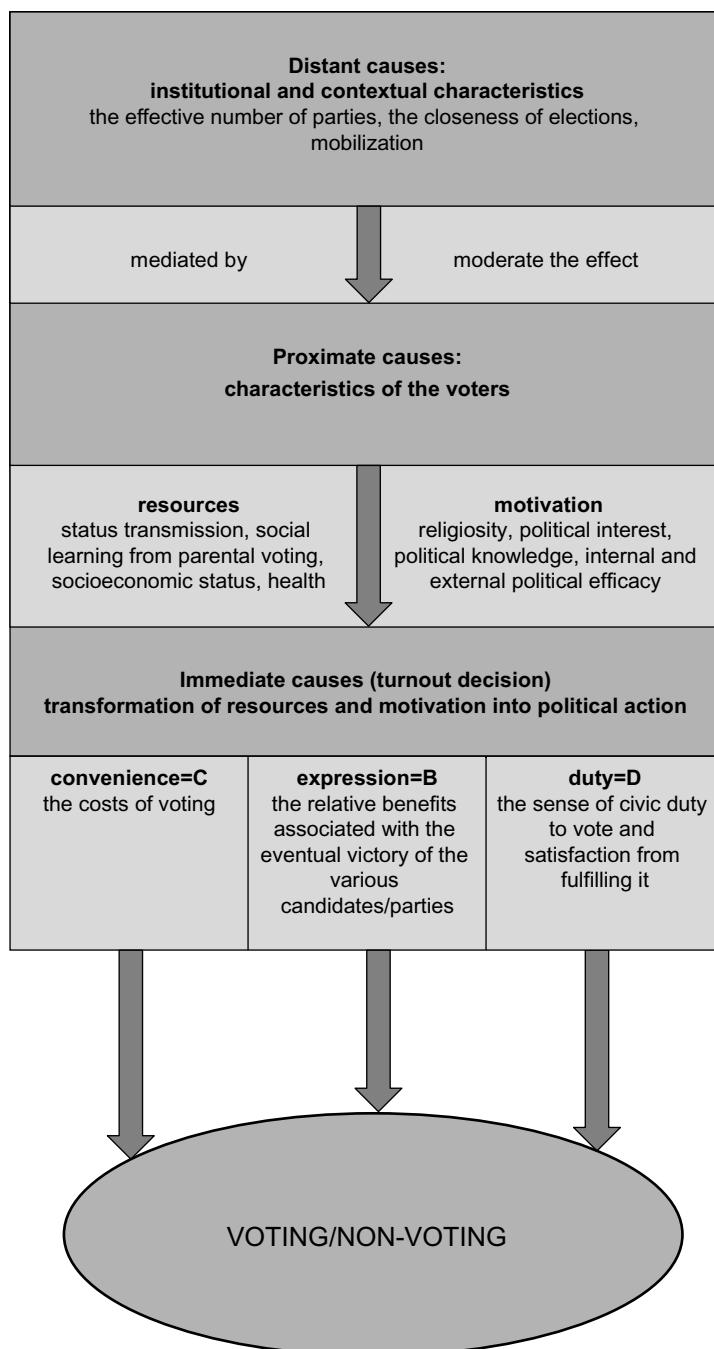


Figure 20.1 The funnel model of turnout

why people don't take part in politics: because people can't (resources), because they don't want to (motivation) or because nobody asked them (mobilization). In our model, mobilization is included among the distant causes as a part of institutional and contextual characteristics while resources and motivation are considered equally important proximate causes. This differs from the original Michigan model where voters' sociodemographic characteristics are placed at a longer distance from voting compared with motivational factors. Our decision resonates with a growing level of inequality (e.g. Atkinson 2015; Dorling 2013; Putnam 2015; Stiglitz 2012; Therborn 2013) and its implications on the distribution of prerequisites for political participation. In short, resources have become one of the key mechanism causing differentiation of civic action.

The association with the voting calculus model is related to the lower level of our turnout model. It is constituted by three factors that help to transform an individual's resources and motivation into political action, namely a decision to vote in elections. These immediate causes include convenience, expression, and duty to vote. In the following, we discuss each of these components of turnout decision in more detail.

THE TURNOUT DECISION: CONVENIENCE, EXPRESSION, AND DUTY TO VOTE

In the lower part of our turnout model, we identify three immediate reasons why people choose to vote: because it is easy or convenient, because they want to express an opinion, and because they feel they should. And, logically, there are three 'basic' reasons why people choose not to vote: because it is difficult or complicated, because they are indifferent, and because they do not feel obligated to do so. While these considerations apply to the turnout decision in general, it is important to note that their strength might vary between high- and low-salient elections. For instance, the role of personal motivation in terms of political interest seems to be more important in elections for the European Parliament compared with first-order national elections (Söderlund et al. 2011a).

As already pointed out, these three components of the turnout decision have a connection to the rational choice model of voting, initially developed by Downs (1957) and subsequently elaborated by Riker and Ordeshook (1968). According to this model, the propensity to vote depends on four factors: B (the relative benefits associated with the eventual victory of the various candidates/parties), P (the probability of casting a decisive vote), C (the cost of voting), and D (sense of civic duty). The B term is akin to expression and C to convenience, while the D term is identical with duty. These associations are also indicated in Figure 20.1. The main difference is that we do not include the P term, which appears to be the least meaningful part of the voting calculus (Blais 2000, Chapter 3; Gallego 2015, 37).⁴

The first reason to vote is that it is easy or convenient both physically and intellectually. Perhaps the most compelling evidence in this regard is that those who have to travel long distances to go to the polling station, for instance, or who have to vote in a new polling station, are less likely to vote (Brady and McNulty 2011; Dyck and Gimpel 2005). A consideration of convenience may also be influenced by contextual-level characteristics.⁵ The (effective) number of parties, for instance, appears to matter. Most empirical studies report a negative impact of the number of parties on turnout (Blais and Aarts 2006), which seems logical when considering the amount of information to be collected in order to reach a decision.⁶ Everything else being equal, it is easier to make a vote choice when there are only two parties to choose from than when there are multiple options (Blais and Carty 1990, 173; Blais and Dobrzynska 1998, 248–9).⁷ Furthermore, a higher number of parties increases the probability of coalition governments, in which case elections tend to be less decisive (Jackman 1987). This may present additional complexity and uncertainty for voters (Gallego 2015, 90). Consistent with this perspective, Gallego finds that the education gap in turnout is more pronounced in systems with high levels of government fractionalization.

Another important contextual characteristic that relates to ease of voting is the degree of electoral competition. It can also be defined as the degree of uncertainty in the outcome of an election (Blais and Lago 2009). Theoretically, the closeness of elections is connected to two different hypotheses, one assuming direct and another one indirect effects (Cox and Munger 1989, 217). From a rational choice perspective, the closeness of elections enhances a voter's feeling that his/her vote might be decisive, thus increasing the benefits of voting (e.g. Cox and Munger 1989, 218). According to Cox and Munger (1989), however, the effect is not direct since the possibility of casting a pivotal vote is extremely small even in close contests. The second possibility is that the closeness of elections accelerates mobilization efforts by parties (Cox 1999, 393; Cox and Munger 1989), which in turn increases the amount of information about the parties and candidates that is easily available to voters and thus makes the decision-making process (and concomitantly voting) less complicated.

Some of the factors that account for 'correct voting', namely a voter's ability to choose the alternative that best corresponds to his/her preferences, may also facilitate the voting decision. These include information availability (media density), voting rules (i.e. party vs. personal vote), clarity of party choices (ideological distinctiveness), and clear lines of responsibility (single party vs. coalition governments) (Lau et al. 2014).

The second consideration related to turnout decision concerns expression. The basic intuition is that, if someone has an opinion or a preference, s/he would like to indicate it at the ballot box and conversely that there are few reasons to vote when one does not really care who will be elected and/or will form the government. This is the perspective advocated by those who argue that voting is essentially an expressive action (Brennan and Hamlin 1998;

Schuessler 2000; Tyran 2004). Several individual-level characteristics may enhance expressive motivations for voting, such as political efficacy, political knowledge, and partisanship. Voters with a higher sense of political efficacy consider voting as a meaningful way of bringing about social and political change and consider themselves as competent actors in the electoral process (Balch 1974; Campbell et al. 1960). The more interested and better-informed voters are, in turn, more inclined to have relatively clear preferences about the parties or candidates. When voters are uncertain, they feel better equipped to look for other pieces of information that will help them decide. Finally, voters who feel close to a party wish to show their support in elections, even if the party does not have a genuine chance of success.

Hence, there are at least three reasons why a voter is lacking expressive motivations. The first is that s/he is completely uninformed and thus does not have any preference among the various options. Then the obvious question becomes why s/he does not decide to become more informed. One possibility is that s/he feels overwhelmed, which could reflect a sense of internal political inefficacy, which feeds the perception that politics is too complicated.

The second option may be that the person views all parties as undesirable choices. Such an attitude has been called ‘alienation’ in the rational choice literature and refers more broadly to political trust (or mistrust), cynicism, or low sense of external political efficacy. The basic idea is that some people begin with an ‘optimistic’ view of politics, politicians, and parties, and are thus predisposed to find at least one of the options ‘valuable’, while others are pessimistic and negative and thus prone to think that none of the candidates can be trusted. From that perspective, the decision to vote or not to vote reflects an individual’s general feeling about politics. Attitudes such as general interest in politics, trust, cynicism, and external political efficacy all belong to this category.

The third reason why a voter is not willing to express an opinion is that s/he does not have a clear preference. This is called ‘indifference’ in the rational choice framework, to be distinguished from ‘alienation’, which entails the rejection of all the alternatives (Adams et al. 2006; Davis et al. 1970; Enelow and Hinich 1984). Such an attitude might become more common as the proportion of partisans is declining in many Western democracies (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000), although party identifiers still constitute a substantial fraction of the electorate.⁸

Besides convenience and a desire to express an opinion, an individual may also have normative reasons for voting. This is the third dimension of turnout decision, namely a duty to vote. In that case, the impetus for voting is related to the inner perception that an individual has a moral obligation to vote in elections. Such an ethical view drives a voter to the conclusion that s/he ought to participate, however difficult, unpleasant, and inconsequential it may be, simply because this is what the good citizen is supposed to do (Blais and Achen 2015). The famous duty (D) term, introduced by Riker and Ordeshook (1968), tried to make sense of the fact that many people vote regardless of the fact that it is not

instrumentally rational to do so in a large electorate, given the tiny probability of being pivotal.

This normative consideration of voting essentially differs from the expressive one. While the expressive approach assumes that a person chooses to vote when s/he has an opinion to convey, voting is perceived in moral and ethical terms in the normative approach. Voters with high level of sense of duty regard voting as ethically desirable and non-voting as unacceptable behavior. They thus feel obliged to vote, even if they have no clear preference about the candidates, or feel obliged to search (perhaps minimally) for information to develop an opinion and some kind of preference. The dutiful citizen, therefore, does not necessarily ‘want’ to vote or particularly ‘like’ the voting act. As a consequence, according to Blais and Achen (2015), the impact of civic duty is stronger among those who do not care much about the outcome of the elections.

That being said, those who are more interested in politics and have a more positive view of politics are probably more inclined to think that people have a moral obligation to participate in elections. However, sense of civic duty should also depend on non-political attitudes, that is, some people may be more prone to think in terms of duties and ethics, and these more personal views should also influence a person’s propensity to consider the act of voting as a moral obligation. In particular, those who score high on ‘consciousness’ (one of the Big Five personality traits) should have a stronger sense of duty, a hypothesis that has been supported by Gallego and Oberski (2012). Along the same line, Blais and Labbé St-Vincent (2011) show that altruism is positively correlated with the view that citizens have a moral obligation to vote.

In addition, sense of civic duty may be influenced by an individual’s social environment. Social pressure by family members, friends, and works associates may lead a person to accept the public norm that the good citizen should vote. A similar idea is presented in what is labelled the ‘relative education model’, suggesting that part of the mobilizing effect of education is channeled by social networks (for reviews, see Persson 2013, 2015). Individuals with higher social status are exposed to social networks that encourage political participation.

Our argument is thus that it is fruitful to consider the decision to vote or not to vote in an election as being the outcome of three basic proximate considerations. The first is how easy or complicated it is to vote (or decide how to vote), which corresponds to the cost of voting. The second is how much or little one cares about the outcome of the election, which we would define as the intensity of preference among the options. The third is how the voter defines the act of voting, either as an ethical decision or simply as a matter of personal choice, which corresponds to sense of duty.

While these three dimensions are useful in accounting for the turnout decision, it is important to recognize that non-voting is not always purely based on an individual’s own choice. If we solely concentrate on individual-level motivational factors and their interaction with contextual factors, it is easy to ignore the fact

that many societal inequalities are directly reflected in political participation. For instance, poor health or disability may not only hamper the functional ability to participate, but also the motivation to do so (Denny and Doyle 2007a, 56; Schur and Kruse 2000, 572–3). Another example is foreign-born voters whose lower turnout is to a large extent attributable to their lower socioeconomic position (e.g. Wass and Weide 2015). Furthermore, as with many other types of behavior and attitudes, pre-adult socialization plays a significant role in voting. Thus, it might not only be an individual's personal resources that count but his/her parents' economic *and* political resources. These are the issues which we discuss next.

INEQUALITIES IN TURNOUT

The notion that there is a strong socioeconomic bias in turnout is not a novel observation. Historically, voting rights in most nations were restricted to property owners and long residency. Reflecting polarized social cleavages in Europe, many conservatives were hesitant to enfranchise working-class citizens, who were expected to vote them out of office (Dalton 1988, 38). Already the first empirical studies of political participation revealed that the fear of the 'tyranny of masses' was unwarranted (for a review, see Lijphart 1997, 1). In fact, socioeconomic status and voting proved to be positively correlated: the higher the level of education and wealth, the higher an individual's propensity to vote.

It is not difficult to think of reasons for the socioeconomic bias in turnout. Those with less education may be less inclined to express their preferences in elections since they have lower levels of knowledge about politics and lower cognitive skills to process the available information (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, 18; Donovan, this Volume, Chapter 15). Likewise, their sense of civic duty may be weaker since education usually fosters the norm of active citizenship. A lack of financial resources, in turn, can reduce a person's ability to pay attention to politics, as a lot of energy needs to be invested in making a living (Rosenstone 1982, 26). Furthermore, less well-off citizens face fewer opportunities for political recruitment, which has been shown to focus on citizens who possess a higher level of resources, i.e. who are employed, belong to associations, or hold key positions at the workplace or their community, and are educated, affluent, and strongly identify with a political party (Rosenstone and Hansen 2003, 31–2).

The difference in electoral participation between voters with high and low socioeconomic status is usually more pronounced when the overall level of turnout is low. This 'law of dispersion', originally formulated by Tingsten (1937), was recently empirically supported by a natural experiment in the Swedish context (Persson et al. 2013). A comparison of two successive elections in one county council showed that, when turnout was reduced almost by half (from 80.6% to 44.1%), inequality in terms of age, education, income, and political

interest substantially increased. This is an especially important finding given the declining levels of turnout in many Western democracies.

However, some aspects of the socioeconomic bias in turnout still remain puzzling. In spite of a myriad of analyses, it is still not fully understood why those groups that could benefit the most from political participation, such as the poor and the unemployed, have the lowest propensity to vote. While we do not pretend to fully solve the issue here, we pay attention to three patterns that clearly demonstrate the role of resources in voting. These include pre-adult political socialization, the association between health and turnout, and participation among foreign-born voters.

It is well established in the literature that parents are the principal agents in pre-adult political socialization (Hyman 1959). Numerous studies suggest that parents influence their offspring's political orientations, although the magnitude of transmission from parent to child varies according to the type of political attitude and the level of political homogeneity between the parents, as well as contextual features such as the general political climate and the party system (Abendschön 2013; Jennings et al. 2009; Urbatsch 2014). Furthermore, the contribution of parents in the political socialization process seems relatively stable over time (Corbetta et al. 2013).

Although much of the transmission takes place through learning from parental behaviour, parental socioeconomic and political resources are also a noteworthy factor (Pacheco 2008; Pacheco and Plutzer 2008; Quintelier 2015; Verba et al. 2005). Brady et al. (2015) argue that political science is still in its infancy in understanding the intergenerational reproduction of political participation as it has almost exclusively concentrated on political socialization (i.e. learned psychological and behavioural patterns).

Several recent studies using extensive datasets and sophisticated research designs have provided novel insights to this important issue. Analyses based on individual-level register data, in which parents' and their adult children's voting records are combined using personal identification numbers and linked with data on socioeconomic background characteristics, have highlighted the strong intergenerational association in voting. Bhatti and Hansen (2012a) found that 18- to 21-year-olds were substantially more likely to vote in Danish municipal elections if their parents voted as well. Correspondingly, a decline in electoral participation among young voters during the first years after enfranchisement seems to be largely attributable to moving away from parents and becoming more influenced by peers with lower turnout (*ibid.*).

A Finnish study relying on similar type of register data from 18- to 30-year-olds and their parents demonstrates that both parental education and voting influence the turnout of young adults, although parental voting rather than the transmission of education from parent to child appears to be the more important mediating factor (Gidengil et al. 2016). Notably, the effect of parental voting was only slightly attenuated by controlling for the parents' and child's education and

income. The link persisted even after adult children left home and was still considerable among adults approaching their thirties.

Perhaps the most convincing results so far have been reached in a study in which Swedish adoptees' voting records were linked to those from their biological and adoptive parents (Cesarini et al. 2014). The findings show that adoptees were more likely to vote when both their birth parents and their adoptive parents were voters. This observation not only highlights the role of parent political socialization but also lends support to scholars claiming that voting is partly attributable to genetic predispositions (Deppe et al. 2013; Fowler et al. 2008; Fowler and Dawes 2008; Hatemi et al. 2007; and Bergner and Hatemi, this Volume, Chapter 17; for a critical perspective, see Charney and English 2013). In order to account for unobserved heterogeneity in pre-birth factors, the authors also compared the effect of parental education and income on turnout among both own-birth and adopted adult children. While the link between parental socioeconomic status and offspring voting was stronger among biological children, it could also be detected among adopted children.

One interesting indicator of the increasing awareness of the importance of early political socialization relates to education, considered as the most relevant individual-level resource for electoral participation. Instead of having a causal effect on turnout, education has been suggested to partly or even fully proxy pre-adult dispositions and experiences (for reviews, see Persson 2013, 2015). These include factors such as an individual's cognitive abilities, personality traits, and parental influence (Kam and Palmer 2008). Using a sibling-based design that mimics the logic of a controlled experiment, Gidengil et al. (2015) found that the empirical association between education and turnout was considerably reduced once observed (parental voting and parental education) and unobserved family characteristics⁹ that are shared by siblings were taken into account. However, a significant relationship between educational attainment and voting persisted even allowing for these factors.

Taken together, what do these findings mean? As Kroh (2012) observes, from the viewpoint of political equality, a close link between family background and political participation is problematic since it implies a persistent bias (see also Pacheco and Plutzer 2008). Experiencing a parental example to vote in elections can be considered as a resource that facilitates the acquisition of civic skills (Gidengil et al. 2016). In that respect, citizens are already in unequal positions when facing their first elections. However, these inequalities pose a less serious challenge if they can be compensated for by resources received later in life (Brady et al. 2015, 158). A recent study suggests that intra-generational social and economic mobility can function as a concrete mechanism to constraint the socioeconomic gradient in turnout (Lahtinen et al. 2017). Using individual-level register-based data, the study examined the extent to which changes in adults' social class and income between 2000 and 2011 influenced voting propensity in the 2012 Finnish municipal elections. The results show that turnout among

socially mobile voters settled between the stable members of their socioeconomic group of origin and destination.

Poor health is another example of a situation in which it is not meaningful to consider abstention as solely an individual's own decision. Poor health raises the costs of participation, making it more inconvenient and less appealing (Söderlund and Rapeli 2015, 32). Interestingly, the link between health and participation can be traced back to adolescence. Using the data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Pacheco and Fletcher (2015, 106) remark that health is an independent pre-adult resource that contributes to political inequality that persists across generations. This seems warranted since the same factors that are proven to correlate with self-rated health status¹⁰, such as poverty, family structure and neighborhood characteristics, are likely to influence political behavior as well (*ibid.*, 105). Accordingly, their analysis reveals that, even after controlling for socioeconomic status and other relevant correlates, an adolescent with excellent health had a seven percentage point higher probability of voting five years later than his/her peer with poor health.

On the other hand, poor health may reduce the cognitive capacity and physical mobility required for voting, and weaken motivational factors, such as political efficacy and involvement in social networks (Denny and Doyle 2007a, b; Mattila et al. 2013). The financial burden related to ill health, including medical expenses and temporary or permanent loss of employment, decreases options for political donations, which in turn decreases the probability of being contacted by campaign organizations (Pacheco and Fletcher 2015, 107).

Interestingly, the effect of poor health depends on the type, length, and sequence of illness. A US study based on the 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey indicates that, after adjusting for sociodemographic characteristics and some health-related confounding factors, voters with health disease are less likely to participate whereas having a cancer diagnosis in fact increases voting propensity (Gollust and Rahn 2015).¹¹ Likewise, Finnish register-based study by Sund et al. (2017) shows that diabetes is negatively associated with turnout whereas there may be a positive association between cancer and voting. Using the 1998 General Social Survey and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Ojeda (2015) shows that depression suppresses turnout even after controlling for sociodemographic characteristics, church attendance, the strength of partisanship, general health, and happiness. Moreover, the negative effect of adolescent depressed mood is partially mediated through educational attainment and party identification and weakly mediated through social interaction with friends.

The study by Mattila et al. (2015) further demonstrates that ill health constitutes a severe challenge for equal participation. Based on individual-level register data with information on sickness allowance episodes they show that influences voting mainly through other mechanisms than concrete short-term restrictions caused by a temporarily weakened physical condition. Falling ill at the time

of the elections did not have a stronger demobilizing effect than other sickness absence periods of equal length. Chronic health impairments, indicated by long-term absences, are more harmful for voting than acute but temporary illness.

Whereas the study of the health-turnout relationship is in a relatively early phase, much more is known about the effect of disability on voting (e.g. Schur and Kruse 2000, 2014; Schur et al. 2002, 2013a, b, 2015; for a review, see Ward et al. 2009). In general, persons with functional limitations face several types of barriers for voting due to mobility, visual, auditory, cognitive or manual dexterity impairments (Tokaji and Colker 2007, 1030). They are also more affected by those factors that increase the cost of voting for all citizens, such as long queues (Schur et al. 2013a). In a survey conducted after the 2012 US elections, the most common obstacles mentioned by voters with disabilities were difficulty in reading or seeing the ballot (11.7%), understanding how to vote or use the voting equipment (10.3%), waiting in line (8.3%), finding or getting to the polling place (5.9%), writing the ballot (4.5%), and accessing the ballot place (3.6%) (*ibid.*). In addition to physical hindrances, voters with disabilities may be discouraged by interactions with poll workers who lack the adequate knowledge to deal with disabilities and to offer assistance (Schur et al. 2013b, 108; Ward et al. 2009, 80).

Foreign-born voters are the third example of a politically disadvantaged group who often lack adequate resources for participation. This is not by any means a minor issue since one in ten people living in the EU and OECD areas in 2012 was born abroad (OECD/European Union 2015). Certain socioeconomic variables associated negatively with turnout, such as young age and lack of economic resources, are over-represented among immigrants (Bevelander and Pendakur 2011, 72; Bäck and Soininen 1998, 36). In fact, the lower turnout among enfranchised immigrants¹² is largely attributable to differences in socioeconomic status between native and foreign-born voters (Cassel 2002; Uhlaner et al. 1989; Wass and Weide 2015; Xu 2005). A recent study based on individual-level register data from the 2012 Finnish municipal elections shows that turnout is higher among voters born in Somalia than among native citizens, when controlling for the level of education, social class, income, and housing tenure (Pirkkalainen et al. 2016).

On the other hand, the existing socioeconomic models of participation do not seem to apply so well to ethnic minorities (Heath et al. 2011; Sobolewska, this Volume, Chapter 11). In what could be called the *different response hypothesis*, Cho (1999, 1143–4) argues that the expectation that education increases voting because of increased satisfaction from supporting the political system by voting or sense of duty is not necessarily relevant among foreign-born voters. What matters is the education attained in the new home country (*ibid.*, 1144). This becomes particularly evident in the case of Asian Americans whose high level of pre-immigration education is not accompanied by the resources required for political participation in the new context (Xu 2005, 686).

We have now identified three potential sources for various types of disadvantages in voting: pre-adult political socialization, poor health or disability, and

migration background. The obvious next question relates to the implications of inequalities for the functioning of the democratic process. As is well known, biases in turnout may influence the degree of opinion congruence between representatives and citizens. In the case where the values and interests of non-voters differ from those of the voters, citizens who cast their vote are substantially better represented (e.g. Teixeira 1992, 102).¹³ While several studies have reported no clear differences in the preferences of voters and non-voters, some biases have been detected (for reviews, see Gallego 2015, 172–4; Lutz and Marsh 2007). Related to groups identified here, it has been shown that healthy and less healthy citizens differ in terms of policy preferences, especially in the area of social benefits, healthcare, and employment policies (Gastil 2000; Henderson and Hillygus 2011; Robert and Booske 2011; Schur and Adya 2013).

In addition, studies conducted in the US have shown that political decision-making better represents the interests of wealthier citizens (e.g. Butler 2014; Enns and Wlezien 2011; Gilens 2012). Corresponding results have also been reached in a cross-country comparison (Giger et al. 2012). The under-representation of new ethnic minorities among candidates and legislators (Bird et al. 2011) is particularly problematic in this respect given their unprivileged economic situation.

The second, related, question is what can be done to compensate such disadvantages and thus facilitate a more equal participation. In his influential essay, Lijphart (1997, 10) concluded by recommending compulsory voting. His main argument is that it would contribute to high and relatively equal turnout. In addition, in the same way that participation in churches, workplaces, and voluntary organizations has shown to have a spill-over effect on political participation, compulsory voting could stimulate other types of political activity. This would be particularly important in the case of young voters. Those who learn to vote during their first few elections usually continue to do so in later stages of life (Franklin 2004). In this respect, compulsory voting would compensate for the inherited advantages stemming from the fact that a politically active family environment increases a young citizen's propensity to become a habitual voter (Plutzer 2002).

If voting were mandatory, the first-time boost associated with an individual's first election (Bhatti et al. 2016b) would make a bigger difference. Related to age, generational differences in turnout (e.g. Bhatti and Hansen 2012b; Blais et al. 2004; Konzelmann et al. 2012; Lyons and Alexander 2000; Wass 2007) would also be reduced. There is strong evidence of a generational effect in voting alongside the life-cycle effect (see also Dassonneville on age effects, this Volume, Chapter 7), suggesting that younger cohorts tend to maintain their lower level of participation even when they age.

The empirical evidence on the equalizing effect of compulsory voting is inconsistent. Quintelier et al. (2011) report in their analysis of 36 countries (of which 9 have compulsory voting) that compulsory voting does not abolish educational differences in the propensity to vote. This is related to the fact that compulsory voting also increases participation among the highly educated. In his comparative

account of 36 countries, Singh (2011) also comes to the conclusion that individual characteristics, such as age, education, income, and political efficacy are important regardless of institutional rules concerning voting. The most recent work by Singh (2015), based on exhaustive comparative data, shows opposite findings. The results demonstrate that turnout is less dependent on age, income, political knowledge, political efficacy, and partisan attachments when voting is compulsory.

In conclusion, compulsory voting might be an effective way to reduce social inequalities in voting. However, as Lijphart (1997, 10) notes, the possibility of adopting it in countries that do not yet have it is very small. Even more importantly, making voting compulsory certainly does not make it easier for those who find participation inconvenient due to reasons related to poor health or migration background, for instance. These could be more efficiently tackled by policy measures that aim to facilitate participation. This is the topic of the following section.

FACILITATING A MORE EQUAL TURNOUT

In order to make voting more convenient, many countries have implemented various types of voter facilitation procedures, such as advance voting, absentee voting, assisted voting, proxy voting, and mobile voting stations specifically targeted for voting in hospitals and other institutions (Karlawish and Bonnie 2007, 885). By reducing the costs of voting, these facilitation instruments are expected to not only increase the overall participation but also the sociodemographic representativeness of the electorate, thus reducing different sorts of bias in turnout (e.g. Berinsky 2005, 471; Karp and Banducci 2000, 223–4; Tokaji and Colker 2007, 1023).

The empirical results are, however, rather discouraging. Postal voting as well as early voting and absentee voting in general seem to have mainly mobilized those with a higher propensity to participate (e.g. Barreto et al. 2005; Berinsky et al. 2001; Karp and Banducci 2000, 2001; Neeley et al. 2001; Rallings et al. 2010; Rallings and Thrasher 2007). Furthermore, evidence from Switzerland suggests that, although lowered costs due to postal voting activated voters with lower average education, the implications for policy representation were unexpected (Hodler et al. 2015). Being less politically informed, new voters may be more sensitive to political advertisement and influence by various interest groups. This appears to be the case, since the introduction of postal voting was related to lower government welfare expenditures and lower business rates, policies that hardly benefited the less advantaged voters.

These examples demonstrate that increasing the aggregate level of turnout by facilitation does not necessarily reduce the socioeconomic bias in turnout. This is because facilitation instruments benefit all voters alike (Berinsky 2005, 472). While voter facilitation has proved to be rather successful in terms of retention,

i.e. keeping habitual voters in the electorate even on occasions when they are confronted with some election-specific hindrances, it has been much less efficient in stimulating habitual non-voters (Berinsky et al. 2001; Berinsky 2005, 475–7). Since the former group has a higher level of resources, attempts to make voting more convenient may thus have decreased the socioeconomic representativeness of the electorate, contrary to the original aim (Berinsky 2005, 477–8).¹⁴

It thus seems obvious that one-size-fits-all facilitation is not an optimal way to reduce barriers to voting caused by unequal resources. If the goal is to make voting more equal, it might be more effective to develop facilitation measures that are specifically suitable for voters with various types of special needs (Tokaji and Colker 2007, 1017). In the following, we discuss a number of instruments that could compensate for the lower level of resources related to factors addressed in the previous section, namely pre-adult political socialization, poor health or disability, and migration background.

People who have not seen their parents voting may not only be unfamiliar but also uncomfortable with the practical arrangements for voting. They may thus have negative ‘conative attitudes’, i.e. self-confidence in practicalities associated with the voting process (e.g. ‘Will I know where to go and which line to stand in?’) and self-image as a voter (Green and Shachar 2000, 570). These kinds of psychological hindrances could be overcome by Internet voting where participation takes place in the privacy of one’s own home. Although originally feared to increase the class bias in voting because of factors such as the digital divide (e.g. Alvarez and Nagler 2001), the evidence from Estonia, the only European country that uses Internet voting, is reassuring. Online voting has not contributed to socioeconomic bias but has instead allured casual voters, i.e. individuals who reported voting ‘from time to time’ or ‘never’ (Alvarez et al. 2009, 501–2).

The other option to compensate for missing parental example is to strengthen civic education in the school (for a wider discussion, see Campbell 2006, 150–6). While the most obvious instrument is to increase civic classes in the curricula, it can hardly be considered as voter facilitation as such. A more direct, yet related, policy reform concerns lowering the voting age. The original argument by Franklin (2004, 213) in favor of this is that, since first-time voters would still be at high school, the habit of voting could be acquired in the context of a civic class project. As with Internet voting, empirical findings from Austria, where 16-year-olds are entitled to vote in all elections have been promising. Schools have organized various types of activating campaigns and other projects and increased civic and citizenship education (Schwarzer and Zeglovits 2014, 73–4). The level of political interest has also grown among 16- to 17-year-olds after the enfranchisement (Zeglovits and Zandonella 2013, 553). However, it remains to be seen whether lowering the voting age has a lasting effect and whether it is able to reduce the bias in voting caused by a demobilizing family environment.

There are also several ways to make voting easier for those suffering from health impairments or disabilities. However, few studies of voter facilitation have

addressed these segments of the electorate. Schur and Kruse (2014) found in the US context that turnout was substantially higher among four disability groups (hearing, visual and mobility impairments, and difficulty going outside) in all-vote-by-mail states than in states where a reason for voting by mail is requested. All-vote-by-mail systems also reduced the likelihood of reporting not voting because of illness or disability. Full online registration increased turnout among voters with cognitive impairments, while Election Day registration had a corresponding effect only among people with hearing impairments and without disabilities. Rather surprisingly, devices to assist voting for people with disabilities did not have a significant impact and the availability of early voting in fact decreased the likelihood of voting among those hampered by cognitive or mobility impairments.

In their analysis of 30 European countries, Wass et al. (2017) hypothesized that three facilitation instruments (voting by mail, proxy voting, and voting outside polling stations) could reduce health-related differences in turnout. The advantage of mail voting is related to the fact that voting can take place in the privacy of one's home and a trip to the polling place, which may be inaccessible, is not required. Proxy voting could even be a better option as it can tackle some of the difficulties related to mail voting, such as requesting an absentee ballot, marking the choices on the ballot, and returning it, which are particularly burdensome for voters with visual and cognitive impairments (Tokaji and Colker 2007: 1036; also Schur et al. 2013b: 109). The obvious downside of proxy voting is that it may risk electoral integrity (Tokaji and Colker, p. 1044). The most optimal solution could thus be to vote outside polling stations (e.g. from home or from hospital). However, the results showed that only proxy voting worked as expected when using activity replacement as a health measure¹⁵. Not only are the main effects of voter facilitation insignificant, but that voter facilitation actually interacts in a negative manner with poor health/functional ability. The authors concluded that health-related inequalities in turnout are exacerbated in those countries where the strongest efforts are made to ensure voting is made easier.

There are many facilitation instruments to potentially mobilize voters with health impairments that have not yet been empirically tested, such as online voting and ballots in Braille (Prince 2014, 95). In addition, new computer technologies may improve conditions for political participation among voters with disabilities through increased access to information, networking, and recruitment (Schur et al. 2013b, 111). Even wider environmental factors can make a difference. Clarke et al. (2011) found that voters with difficulties in mobility had a considerably lower propensity to vote when they resided in areas characterized by poor street conditions.

Much can also be done to make voting more accessible for foreign-born voters. In general, voters from non-democratic countries have a lower propensity to participate in elections in their new home country (Pikkov 2011; Wass et al.

2015; Wüst 2012). This observation suggests that newcomers whose political socialization process started in non-democratic regimes could benefit from political education.¹⁶ The acquisition of basic information about elections in different languages as well as campaigns for raising electoral awareness could be important in motivating voters who are not familiar with the electoral process or have concerns regarding electoral integrity.

Practical arrangements matter too. In their exhaustive study, Logan et al. (2012) examined the effect of various voting regulations and state policies on turnout among voters with migration background. These included voter identification, absentee and early voting policies, and bilingual ballot provision. Whereas voter ID requirements dampened participation and more liberal absentee voting policies boosted it, the other two measures did not turn out to be statistically significant factors. However, the most noteworthy facilitation measure in the US relates to registration. For voters with immigrant origin who on average have a lower level of education, it constitutes a substantial barrier for voting (Jones-Correa 2001, 45–6). Reflecting this, the tendency of some states to drop non-voters from registration rolls has hindered participation among Latino voters (*ibid.*).

CONCLUSION

In this review, we have presented a funnel model of turnout, including three proximate reasons for the decision to vote, examined the sources of structural inequalities in electoral participation, and discussed various policies that could reduce these inequalities. Stating the obvious, these present only a limited selection of approaches available in studies of turnout. In addition, there are a number of interesting avenues for future inquiries. In the following, we mention three such options.

First, much can be done to gain a deeper understanding of causality. There is already a growing strain of literature, some referred to in this review, re-examining the expected causal association between education and turnout. With new sources of data, such as government-issued register data and information produced by natural experiments, combined with sophisticated techniques, the prospects for these types of inquiries seem promising. With political authorities and election administrators paying increasing attention to declining turnout, there is an appetite for testing the impact of new measures designed to boost turnout, ideally through controlled field experiments.

Second, more is to be learned about the effect of various life-cycle events on electoral participation. As we underlined at the beginning of this chapter, voting is closely connected to all aspects of life. It is thus important to understand the political implications of various types of life transition and role adaption, such as the acquisition of adult roles (Highton and Wolfinger 2001), marriage (Stoker

and Jennings 1995), pregnancy (Bhatti et al. 2016a), parenting (Pacheco and Plutzer 2007; Voorpostel and Coffé 2012) and widowhood (Hobbs et al. 2014).

Third, processes such as globalization and democratization highlight the need to broaden the scope of turnout studies to a wider set of countries. As briefly reviewed here, analyses conducted among foreign-born voters suggest that some of established models of turnout might be less relevant in accounting for participation among voters socialized in non-democratic regimes. A recent analysis of 76 countries shows that the association between income and voting is positive in some countries and negative in others (Kasara and Suryanarayanan 2015). The authors point out that the US, where most of the empirical studies addressing the link between socioeconomic status and voting have been conducted, is in fact an outlier in this respect. Correspondingly, the previous analyses in non-Western countries that have found an inverse relationship between socioeconomic status and turnout have been treated as anomalous (*ibid.*, 614). Consequently, much novel information can be acquired by studying new and developing democracies. As demonstrated by Blais and Dobrzynska (2009), many of the factors that seem to affect turnout in Europe, for instance, do not seem to matter as much outside Europe. The increasing number of democracies allows us to test more systematically the robustness of previous findings in turnout studies.

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Notes

- 1 However, declining levels of turnout are not always seen as a threat to democracy but as a consequence of changing conceptions of an active citizenship and a growing selection of alternative channels of political engagement (for different interpretations of passivity, the quality of democracy, and system stability, see Amnå and Ekman 2014, 264).
- 2 These five factors illustrate the fact that not all institutional-level characteristics relate to the supply side but might also be attributes of the electorate in general.
- 3 In addition to these five models, the political-institutional model included much of the same factors as tested in the aggregate-level analyses by Geys (2006), plus voter facilitation rules.
- 4 While making this comparison, we are not arguing that the rational choice model provides the most compelling explanation of the decision to vote or not to vote. Quite the contrary; in fact, its empirical contribution is limited (Blais 2000). Our point is rather that it constitutes, with some amendments, a useful conceptual framework to think about the proximate correlates of the turnout decision.
- 5 The last section of this review discusses more closely the impact of the various measures that have been developed to facilitate turnout.

- 6 However, this negative association is puzzling given that proportional representation (PR) systems are, on average, found to have a higher turnout than majority or plurality systems. Although the literature has not been able to ascertain the exact mechanisms accounting for the strong effect of electoral system on voting, the mobilizing effect of PR appears to be closely connected to the number of parties, either directly or indirectly via district magnitude (Söderlund et al. 2011b, 92; for a 'puzzle-solving approach', Grofman and Selb 2011).
- 7 On the other hand, a wider range of parties increases the choices available to voters (Blais and Carty 1990; Grofman and Selb 2011; Lakeman 1974).
- 8 For instance, Norris (2004, 132) noticed the median proportion of party identifiers in the countries included in CSES (Comparative Study of Electoral Systems) to be 45 percent.
- 9 Such unobserved family characteristics can include a number of features in the family environment that influence turnout in adulthood, ranging from the extent to which the parents discuss politics to wider environmental factors such as the character of the neighbourhood and the family's social networks (Gidengil et al. 2015, referring to Abendschön 2013, 3).
- 10 Self-rated health status (SRHS) is one of the most widely used indicators of health and also a strong predictor of mortality (Jylhä 2009).
- 11 This somewhat surprising result suggests that there may also be activating mechanisms related to chronic conditions, such as self-interest and social identity (Gollust and Rahn 2015, 1121–1124). First, voters with health impairments may have higher stakes in elections, especially when health care issues are politicized. Denny and Doyle (2007b) make a corresponding argument. They hypothesize that poor health may be associated with higher interest in supporting policies that aim to ensure public spending, although their empirical results point towards a negative impact in line with previous analyses. Second, voters suffering from certain types of illnesses, such as cancer, may form a collective identity aiming to transform illness-caused marginalization into a collective resource based on a shared experience. Third, some advocacy organizations may play an important role in mobilizing their members into political activity. It is also worth mentioning that, whereas poor health depresses turnout, it actually increases the propensity to contact decision-makers and take part in demonstrations (Söderlund and Rapeli 2015).
- 12 Studies that report turnout differences among native and foreign-born voters include, for instance, Bäck and Soininen 1998; Bevelander and Pendakur 2011; González-Ferrer 2011; Heath et al. 2011; Sanders et al. 2014; Togaby 2014; Wass et al. 2016; Wüst 2012.
- 13 This argument is, however, problematic in a sense that non-voters might be indifferent to some policy issues, which, in turn, leads to lower desire to express an opinion and thus vote. Lijphart (1997, 4) points out that, once mobilized to vote, it is likely that previous non-voters would have rather different opinions compared with their responses in opinion polls.
- 14 Burden et al. (2014) also conclude that their unanticipated finding that early voting actually decreases the turnout by several percentage points is related to the direct and indirect costs of voting. While electoral reforms are usually targeted to decrease direct costs, they tend to ignore indirect mobilization effects by media, campaigns, interest groups, and family and friends. These agents can either lower or increase indirect costs by offering information and social incentives for participation. The authors argue that mobilization of less engaged voters was easier when all election activities and media coverage were concentrated around one single day. The social pressure is also less intense when voting is offered during a longer period of time. In addition, early voting does not ease the registration requirements, which means that the original gap between registered and unregistered voters remains and the latter group is unable to take advantage of the convenience provided by early voting.
- 15 Health was measured with two separate questions included in the European Social Survey: 'Are you hampered in your daily activities in any way by any longstanding illness, or disability, infirmity or mental health problem?' (yes a lot, yes to some extent, no) and 'How is your health in general?' (very good, good, fair, bad or very bad).

- 16 In the US context where only citizens are entitled to vote, it is embedded in a naturalization process which requires that immigrants become familiar with US institutions and pass a basic course on civic responsibility (Barreto et al. 2005, 80).

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The SAGE Handbook of Electoral Behaviour



Volume 2

Edited by
Kai Arzheimer, Jocelyn Evans
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PART V

Issues and Attitudes



Ideology and Core Values

Robert N. Lupton, Adam M. Enders, and
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INTRODUCTION

Within any democratic political system, the mass public typically is confronted by a steady stream of information covering various aspects of multiple stimuli such as parties, candidates, and policy issues. The numbers of such objects generally are quite large, and usually there are multiple channels of communication through which political information is transmitted to the electorate. For the citizens who are the intended audience of these communications, the sheer amount of information can be daunting; the continuous parade of facts and commentaries is too much for even a committed public-minded citizen to comprehend in any meaningful way. At the same time, politics is generally quite distant from the experiences of everyday life; therefore, the incentives to attend to the information stream from the political world may not be very strong. For both of these reasons, most people rely on cues and ‘shortcuts’ to reduce the waves of political information to manageable proportions, thereby enabling coherent reactions to the content of political stimuli (e.g., a proposed policy for dealing with some social problem) and facilitating reasonable choices when confronted with two or more objects (e.g., candidates for public office) that imply conflicting courses of action. This chapter will examine recent research regarding two factors that are often believed to serve as such heuristic devices: ideology and core values.

Among various influences on political orientations and voting behavior, ideology and values are distinctive because of their pervasiveness. On the one hand, these factors often are believed to exert direct effects on electoral choice.

For example, journalists referred to Ronald Reagan's elections as manifestations of a conservative tide in American politics, thereby involving ideology. More recently, they have used the term 'values voters' when discussing people who are concerned primarily about social, rather than economic, issues. Scholarly researchers also have examined the impact of both liberal-conservative self-placements and feelings about specific values on voting choices.

On the other hand, ideology and values have additional importance because of their capacity to influence and organize other political orientations. Here too the popular press recognizes ideological influence at least implicitly when discussing how liberals and conservatives should react to new issues such as immigration and climate change. And they focus on values when covering the impact of strongly held beliefs about human life and family arrangements on personal stands with respect to issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage. Of course, there is a very long line of academic research devoted to ideology and its effects on mass belief systems, and scholars generally have admitted the importance of core values for understanding policy issues, even if they have been subjected to a bit less direct scrutiny than other psychological structuring mechanisms (at least in the political science literature).

At the outset, it is useful to define more specifically the two concepts that are the central focus of this chapter. That is a particularly important task in the present context because ideology and values are often treated almost synonymously – at least, some scholars seem to believe that a person's values define his/her ideology. But such a view does not enable a fully articulated investigation of either concept. While values certainly can influence ideology (and perhaps vice versa) they are not the same thing.

For our purposes, ideology can be defined as a view of the ideal society along with the means of achieving it. Thus an ideology is inherently sociopolitical in nature. A well-developed ideology provides explanations for major social problems and implies the kinds of solutions that are appropriate. While ideology certainly has consequences and implications for individual behavior, it really is oriented in an outward direction, defining appropriate forms of stratification and authority, along with the range of concerns that should come under the purview of public action. Ideology functions as an evaluative standard for judging government, political actors, and events, and it provides guidelines for political action.

Values, on the other hand, represent an individual's abstract, general conceptions about the desirable and undesirable end states of human existence. Thus, values are broader in scope than ideology because they touch on all aspects of life. Values essentially define what is good and bad in the world. Good things are those that are associated with desirable end states or positive values. Bad things are those that are related to undesirable end states or negative values. Thus, values are some of the fundamental building blocks of human behavior.

Major lines of modern research on ideology and values extend back at least to the 1960s. This chapter will briefly describe the seminal works that set the

academic stage and shaped subsequent inquiries regarding these two concepts, but our main focus will be on more recent developments over the last 25 years or so. We will see that major advances have been made in scholarly understandings of the nature, sources, and consequences of both ideology and values. However, we also believe there are some potential issues that exist in current work. For example, ideology research may have stalled on certain fronts over the past decade. At the same time, values research in political science often has not been consistent with psychological theories of values. For these reasons, we believe that more work will be necessary on both fronts.

IDEOLOGY AND BELIEF SYSTEMS

Ideology is theoretically and empirically among the most central components of individuals' belief systems. Indeed, ideology is believed to influence virtually every political orientation, including (but not limited to) issue attitudes (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998; Huckfeldt et al. 1999; Jacoby 1991, 1994, 2000; Kuklinski et al. 1982; Rudolph and Evans 2005; Sniderman et al. 1991), information processing (Hamill et al. 1985; Lau and Redlawsk 2001; Taber and Lodge 2006), and candidate choice (Jessee 2009; Jost 2006; Knight 1985; Levitin and Miller 1979; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Stimson 1975). Yet, more than five decades after Philip E. Converse's seminal 1964 exposition on the topic, the conceptual waters of this critical predisposition remain muddied due to protracted theoretical and methodological disagreements regarding the meaning, prevalence, and structure of ideology among the mass public. In this section of the chapter, we briefly sketch the origins and history of ideology research in the U.S. – highlighting along the way the most salient conflicts and controversies in the literature – and document and discuss current scholarly understandings of ideology. We hope that our synthesis, as well as critiques, of both previous literature and ongoing scholarly research streams will enrich readers' understanding of ideology and serve as a useful guide for moving the conversation forward.

The traditional view of ideology

The predominant view of ideology that continues to motivate research in this field is provided in Converse's seminal 1964 book chapter, 'The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics'. Converse describes ideology as a coherent worldview governed by a small set of principles, or 'crowning postures', that animate individuals' attitudes toward the political world. Ideology thus provides a shared source from which a vast number of issue attitudes emanate, and its hallmark property is constraint, or what Converse calls the 'functional interdependence' of issue attitudes (1964, 209). That is, ideology is useful precisely because it enables the individual to formulate and maintain attitudes toward an otherwise

potentially dizzying array of policy questions ranging from government spending to health care, regulation, the environment, gun control, and abortion. In other words, ideologues' attitudes across disparate issues arise from, or are 'constrained' by, the same few principles.¹ What crowning postures, or 'capping abstractions', does ideology represent?

The primary structuring mechanism for political attitudes in the United States is the liberal–conservative continuum, with the left–right continuum taking its place in most European democracies. Ideological liberals espouse the need for an active government in order to redress social ills, whereas conservatives underscore the importance of enlarging Americans freedom in all of its forms. Liberals prefer an activist government in the economy, embrace broad notions of social change and promote the value of equality, whereas conservatives prefer a more laissez-faire government, work to protect traditional social arrangements and promote the value of individualism (e.g., Brewer 2003a; Feldman 1988; Feldman and Steenbergen 2001; Feldman and Zaller 1992; Jacoby 2006, 2014; Jost et al. 2009; Keele and Wolak 2006; McCann 1997; McClosky and Zaller 1984). Abstract ideas (or, to anticipate the next section of the chapter, values) such as equality, freedom, and moral traditionalism thus provide a basis for political belief systems and underlie political attitudes.

But what proportion of the mass public really are ideologues? That is, to what extent do ordinary citizens coherently apply abstract concepts in the formation of their political attitudes? How frequently is the left–right, liberal–conservative continuum actually used as a tool for organizing and structuring political attitudes among the mass public? The question may seem to be straightforward, but the most vociferous debates and disagreements that have riven this literature surround precisely the prevalence of ideological thinking in the mass public. Early research resoundingly answered this question with 'very little', finding that only a scant percentage of citizens approached politics ideologically.

Indeed, even before Converse reported starkly that 'large portions of the electorate do not have meaningful beliefs' (Converse 1964, 245), he and his co-authors of *The American Voter* described the limited structure of mass political attitudes as the 'problem of ideology' (Campbell et al. 1960). The authors investigated the question primarily by separating citizens into strata according to the ways they organized their political thinking (Campbell et al. 1960; Converse 1964). The resultant measure, termed the 'levels of conceptualization', revealed that citizens evaluated candidates and parties according not to ideological criteria but rather to the benefits that sociodemographic groups received from political actors and events, the nature of the times, or other idiosyncratic criteria. Only about 12% of the public showed any evidence of liberal–conservative thinking.²

Converse (1964, 1970, 1975) reaffirmed these conclusions in examining the correlations between citizens' policy positions on a host of issues across diverse policy domains. One important, but sometimes overlooked, aspect of Converse's study is his comparison of the attitude structure of the mass public to that of

elites. He discovered that the paucity of ideological thinking in the mass public contrasted sharply with the reliance on ideology as a structuring principle among his sample of congressional candidates.³ He argued that political sophistication, or expertise in the realm of politics – the cognitive capacity, interest and motivation required to develop coherent political attitudes – explained the observed difference.

Responses and refinements

Given the normative importance of the claim that most citizens do not understand or process ‘what goes with what’ in the realm of politics or structure their political attitudes similarly to their elected representatives, the sizable amount of scholarly attention devoted to these early findings is not surprising. Initial critiques focused on measurement error, the appropriateness of the use of correlation coefficients as indicators of attitudinal constraint, and the survey instruments used to capture issue opinions (Achen 1975; Erikson 1979; Judd and Milburn 1980).

A substantive debate also emerged regarding changes in the nature of policy reasoning among the mass public. Namely, researchers argued that ideological thinking had increased considerably over time in response to changes in the political environment. These scholars discovered significant increases in both ideological thinking and policy voting from the staid, relatively consensual period of the 1950s to the divisive 1970s, arguably because contentious issues such as the Vietnam War and urban unrest stimulated interest in, and attention to, politics among the mass public in the later era (Boyd 1972; Field and Anderson 1969; Nie and Andersen 1974; Nie et al. 1976; Pomper 1972). However, subsequent work showed that these changes owed more to artifacts of question wording rather than durable changes in ideological thinking among the mass public (Converse and Markus 1979; Bishop et al. 1978a; Bishop et al. 1978b; Norpoth and Lodge 1985; Margolis 1977; Sullivan et al. 1978; for summaries and reviews of this debate, see Abramson 1983; Bartels 2010; Converse 2000, 2006; Jacoby 2010; Kinder 1983).

Additional research confirms that political sophistication is a precondition for ideological thinking. Studies measuring the former variable as recall of political facts (Federico and Hunt 2013; Federico and Schneider 2007; Zaller 1992), education (Sniderman et al. 1991), accuracy of candidate and party placements (Palfrey and Poole 1987), indices of education and conceptualization (Jacoby 1988), education, political interest, and knowledge (Knight 1985), and intelligence, political interest, and knowledge (Luskin 1990) all conclude that the liberal–conservative continuum is profoundly more relevant for sophisticates than their less sophisticated counterparts. Nonetheless, the controversy regarding the extent to which citizens organize their attitudes according to the liberal–conservative continuum – the dimension upon which elite political rhetoric and party behavior is structured – despite waning, never disappeared in the ensuing decades.

Cross-national research on ideology

We would be remiss to neglect the existing wealth of cross-national research investigating the important and enduring role of ideology in the voter decision-making process, especially in Western Europe (e.g., Adams et al. 2005; Blais et al. 2001). For example, individual country studies show that ideological self-identification is important to electoral choice in France (Bélanger et al. 2006; Fleury and Lewis-Beck 1993), the Netherlands (van der Eijk and Niemller 1987), Portugal (Lewis-Beck and Costa Lobo 2011), and Spain (Fraile and Lewis-Beck 2012). Duch et al. (2010, 712) find support for their strong theoretical claim that ideology is ‘universally important in influencing vote choice’ across 30 countries. Moreover, voters in multiparty systems are able to infer correctly parties’ and governing coalitions’ left-right policy positions (Adams et al. 2014; Adams et al. forthcoming; Fortunato and Stevenson 2013).

A voluminous literature similarly explicates potential differences and similarities in the structure of political attitudes between the U.S. and multiparty systems. For example, some scholars argue that multiple crosscutting dimensions structure European party competition (Gabel and Hix 2002; Hix 1999; Hix et al. 2006; Kriesi et al. 2006; Warwick 2002). However, other evidence suggests that a single socioeconomic left-right dimension underlies elite competition, as in the U.S. (Van Der Brug and Van Spanje 2010). Still others studies find that multiple, correlated dimensions underlie both parties’ and citizens’ issue attitudes (Gabel and Anderson 2002; Hooghe et al. 2002; Marks et al. 2006; Marks and Steenbergen 2002; Stoll 2010). Bakker et al. (2012) incisively demonstrate that the extent to which three dimensions – economic left-right, social left-right and European integration – are correlated illustrates the dimensionality of the policy space in a given country. More generally, research show that less proportional electoral systems, such as the US with its single-member districts, foster a unidimensional political space (Singh 2012), in addition to fewer parties (Benoit 2001; Blais et al. 2011; Fiva and Folke 2016; Singer 2013).

Ideology and polarization

Indeed, immense and unabated elite polarization in recent decades has renewed scholarly interest in the potential for greater ideological thinking and attitudinal constraint among the mass public. This attention is reasonable because evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates the existence and influence of the polarization phenomenon in all (or nearly all) arenas of American politics, including congressional roll call voting (McCarty et al. 2008; Poole and Rosenthal 1997; Theriault 2008), candidate positioning (Anscombe et al. 2001; Burden 2004), party donor networks (Bonica 2014), and party activists attitudes (Layman et al. 2010). Simply put, Democrats and Republicans at the elite level are now more ideologically extreme relative to previous decades, and the American political pageant

now features nearly uniformly liberal Democrats opposing nearly uniformly conservative Republicans at every turn. Some scholars see this ideological polarization reflected in the attitudes of the mass public.⁴

The primary evidence used to support the claim that the mass public is polarizing ideologically is the increasingly high correlation observed between citizens' ideological and partisan identifications, as well as among their individual attitudes (Abramowitz 2010; Abramowitz and Saunders 2008; Ansolabehere et al. 2008; Bafumi and Shapiro 2009). Scholars in this camp argue that ideological considerations now form the basis of citizens' partisan identities and issue positions. However, other researchers attribute the increasingly close empirical relationship between ideology and partisanship to the process of 'sorting'. Due to elite realignment, they argue, self-identified liberals and conservatives now also identify more as Democrats and Republicans, respectively, relative to the past, but that the change has not been accompanied by increased attitudinal polarization (DiMaggio et al. 1996; Fiorina and Abrams 2008; Fiorina et al. 2006, 2008; Levendusky 2009a, 2009b, 2010).

The most recent evidence in this tradition demonstrates the persistence of profound differences between the attitude structure of elites and that of the mass public; it finds little evidence of heightened ideological polarization in the electorate (Hill and Tausanovitch 2015).⁵ Moreover, this work shows that increased ideological thinking and attitudinal constraint is mostly confined to politically sophisticated citizens (Baldassarri and Gelman 2008; Claassen and Highton 2009; Carmines et al. 2012; Jewitt and Goren forthcoming; Lupton et al. 2015), consistent with other studies documenting the heterogeneous response to elite polarization among citizens of varying level of political sophistication (e.g. Layman and Carsey 2002a, 2002b; Carsey and Layman 2006; Zaller 1992). This evidence supports Luskin's (1987, 862) idea that 'sophistication and abstraction are theoretically and empirically entwined'.

Both the ideologue and the lay person confront the same complex political world. But the crucial difference is that the ideologue is able to organize and distill the otherwise overwhelming volume of information he/she encounters using a cognitive structure that connects fundamental predispositions to myriad individual issue positions, producing highly interrelated political attitudes arrayed along the unidimensional left-right continuum. In contrast, the attitudes of the lay person, lacking an overarching ideological structure, are often 'scattered croutons floating in the undifferentiated cognitive soup' (Luskin 1987, 860). This discussion is not intended to disparage the political acumen of the general public, nor do we mean to insinuate that citizens do not approach the political world reasonably, maintain other non-ideological sources of attitudinal constraint, or employ useful heuristics to guide their voting behavior. Rather, our commentary is intended only to highlight the sharp distinction that remains between the attitude structure of politically sophisticated ideologues and that of other citizens.

Current themes in research on mass ideology

To where, then, does the existing research guide us? Rather than revive past debates or continue the empty search – in our reading – for evidence of widespread ideological thinking among the mass public, we argue that the social science community would be best served if scholars sought instead to explore the principled approaches that citizens can and do apply to the political world.⁶ We will identify core political values as one promising source of reliable, stable sources of mass opinion later in the chapter. Here, though, we wish to encourage scholars to ponder one specific role that ideology has in fact been shown to serve in public opinion. Specifically, we believe that recent work examining the role of ideological symbolism helps explain both the contradictory conclusions reached in previous research and the place of ideology in the contemporary American electorate.

Liberal–conservative self-placements have long been regarded as a symbolic political orientation with strong, pervasive effects on issue attitudes (Sears et al. 1980; Sears and Henry 2003) and other consequences for individual behavior even in the absence of fully articulated ideologies (Levitin and Miller 1979). More recently, a burgeoning stream of research pivots away from the debate regarding ideological constraint and, in our view, promises to reorient ideological research productively by situating citizens' ideological commitments within social identity theory. Building on psychological studies showing that people tend to internalize group membership easily, leading them to favor their in-group and discriminate against, or evaluate unfavorably, their out-group (i.e. Tajfel 1970; Tajfel and Turner 1979), this new research conceptualizes individuals' 'liberal' and 'conservative' ideological self-identifications as a social identity (Iyengar et al. 2012; Devine 2015; Mason 2015).⁷ The work demonstrates that even if individuals' ideological self-labels do not convey the policy content we would expect based upon a classical understanding of ideology, liberals and conservatives nonetheless are perfectly disposed to evaluate each other negatively.

Individuals' emotional hostility toward ideological out-groups, sometimes called 'affective' or 'social' polarization, neatly squares with expectations that hostility and attitudinal polarization among elites will cascade to the mass public with the consistent finding that most of the electorate simply does think ideologically. Given that citizens are largely capable of perceiving party differences and locating the major parties on the proper side of the liberal–conservative continuum (Hetherington 2001; Jacoby 1995), as well as increasingly willing to locate themselves at a non-neutral midpoint on the traditional seven-point ideology scale (e.g. Abramowitz and Saunders 2008), they also should be able to identify correctly the political 'other' and thus translate elite cues into simple evaluative judgements against their ideological opponents. Increasingly negative evaluations of individuals' ideological opponents indeed demonstrates that polarization is altering citizens' use of ideology in accordance with this expectation without requiring us to assume heroically that citizens possess the requisite political

knowledge, interest, and involvement to imbue their ideological identifications with a large amount of policy content.

Of course, we would be remiss not to acknowledge the debt that the social polarization literature owes to the work of Stimson (2004) and Ellis and Stimson (2009, 2012), whose explicit separation of the meaning of ideological labels from the policy content that they are traditionally believed to represent helps us understand the observed inconsistency between individuals' ideological self-identifications and issue attitudes.⁸ Indeed, we believe that ideological symbolism, ideological affective polarization, and ideological social identity offer related approaches for understanding the changing relevance of citizens' liberal-conservative self-placements in the age of polarization that do not resort to the hackneyed skirmishes of yesteryear. Recent work connects ideological identity – independent of individuals' policy preferences – to elite cue taking (Malka and Lelkes 2010; Popp and Rudolph 2011) and vote choice (Devine 2015), and future research would do well to explore further the evolving nature of the relationship between ideological self-identifications and other fundamental predispositions and identities (e.g. Claassen et al. 2015), especially the consequences that conflicts among them might hold for the composition of the major party coalitions.

Our hope for scholars to consider more fully the cleavages in the mass party coalitions relates to a second, related aspect of ideological research that we seemingly view as fatigued. Namely, scholars have argued variously that ideology, rather than being a unidimensional construct, is multidimensional (Luttbeg 1968; Marcus et al. 1974; Weisberg and Rusk 1970), hierarchical (Peffley and Hurwitz 1985), or even non-dimensional (Conover and Feldman 1981). Arguments that ideology should be properly considered multidimensional have become more prominent as cultural and religious issues have gained ascendancy (e.g. Brewer 2005; Gibson and Hare forthcoming; Layman 1997; 2001). Treier and Hillygus (2009), for example, argue that the electorate is ideologically 'ambivalent' in that many citizens simultaneously maintain conservative economic attitudes and liberal social attitudes (and vice versa). Similarly, Feldman and Johnston (2014) report that mass ideology is more complex than previously acknowledged for the same reason – namely, they find that two dimensions, consisting of economic and social issue attitudes, respectively, underlie mass opinion (see also Carmines et al. 2013). Although we believe that studies in this vein are valuable for illustrating the various principles that guide citizens' approach to particular policy domains, we are less enthusiastic about defining 'ideology' in terms of constellations of issue attitudes without explicating fully the underlying structure of those attitudes, their relationship to the wider political environment, or the nature of the connections between broad abstract principles and specific issue stands.

Additionally, ideology is fundamentally a mechanism for simplifying a large number of disparate attitudes into a coherent whole, belying the notion that a higher dimensional structure evinces greater attitudinal complexity than a lower dimensional one, as does the fact that elites and political sophisticates among the

mass public clearly exhibit unidimensional attitude structures. Thus, although this recent work counters to some extent notions that mass public attitudes are incoherent by showing that citizens' policy attitudes relate to each other within policy domains, conflating these findings with ideology risks further confusing this already complicated literature.

A better angle for pursuing the nature of citizens' approaches to the political world, in our estimation, involves understanding the diversity of party coalitions and the nature of the agreements and disagreements that elites forge in both major parties in an attempt to unlock the causes of party identifiers' stances across issue domains. This investigation might allow scholars to uncover what aspects of cultural and political rhetoric resonate with citizens' values and other identities to produce the attitudinal inconsistency that has been observed among the mass public throughout five decades of empirical public opinion research.

VALUES AND BELIEF SYSTEMS

Milton Rokeach is generally recognized as the founder of modern empirical research into the nature and structure of human values (Mayton et al. 1994).⁹ Perhaps Rokeach's main contribution to this literature is his concise, and oft-cited, definition of a value as 'an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence' (1973, 5). In other words, values represent condensational preferences about fundamental personal and social outcomes. These basic feelings are relatively stable over time (Rokeach 1973)¹⁰ and hence provide reliable guidelines for ongoing human behavior relating to all aspects of life, including politics.

Values are general feelings about modes of conduct and states of affairs. As such, they stand in contrast to other constructs, such as beliefs and attitudes, which are inherently linked to specific stimuli (e.g. Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Jacoby 2002). This is important because values provide a general standard that people can use to evaluate the world around them. Shalom Schwartz – almost certainly the most prolific values researcher since Rokeach – describes values as 'transsituational' phenomena (Schwartz 1996). That is, a given value provides guidance that transcends specific events or situations such as public policy issues or presidential election cycles (Schwartz and Bilsky 1987). It is precisely this broad applicability that gives values their theoretical importance.

It probably is impossible to designate the complete set of values that is relevant for any individual (Kuklinski 2001), but all researchers agree that people maintain feelings about multiple values. The predominant view in psychology is that individual value orientations are structured in a hierarchical manner (Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992). People possess rank-ordered *systems* of values, with the ranking of each value determined by the importance that the person attaches to

that particular end state. Important decisions often involve conflicts between different values. When that is the case, a person simply follows the course of action that promotes values falling at higher positions in his/her personal hierarchy, and avoids actions that promote values that occur at lower positions.

Much of the research on values emphasizes their importance for individual behavior, but it is important to recognize that value preferences can be aggregated upward to the societal level. In fact, several prominent lines of research hold that *culture* is actually defined in large part by the predominant values that exist within a society (Inglehart 1990; 1997). Schwartz (1992) refines this general view, arguing that the basic structure of values (i.e. the understanding about which values are complementary and which ones are contradictory) is constant across nations. Variability occurs only across the societal distributions of preferences for particular values within the commonly perceived structure.

Recent work has begun to distinguish more explicitly between two broad categories of values: human (personal) and political (e.g. Hitlin and Piliavin 2004; Rathbun et al. forthcoming). Rokeach made no such distinction, merely referring to the orientations he examined as ‘human’ values. According to Schwartz and colleagues (Schwartz et al. 2014), human values are beliefs that guide human thought and behavior of all kinds, while political values are beliefs that are oriented more specifically toward goals regarding government, citizenship, and society. Common examples of the broader principles guiding all human thought and behavior include conformity, achievement, universalism, and benevolence (Schwartz 1992). Frequently investigated political values include equality, moral traditionalism, freedom, and law and order (Goren 2005; Jacoby 2006). While this broad categorization may be useful in some instances, the role and basic nature of values – whether human or political – are still considered to be roughly equivalent. Given the general congruence between these value types, we use the term ‘(core) values’ to represent both types throughout this chapter. Our current focus on values stems from their potential importance for understanding individual belief systems. As we have already discussed, relatively few people organize their thinking about politics and society according to broad abstract principles such as ideology or group affect, despite the potential advantages of doing so. Feldman (2003) contends that values fill the structural void left in the belief systems of such individuals who are unconstrained by ideology. Indeed, he finds that core political values are used as structuring principles for political orientations that are within the psychological reach of most citizens. Recent work by Barker and Tinnick (2006) provides further support that values contribute to constraint among political attitudes. Thus, a somewhat tongue-in-cheek description could be that values function as the ideology of the unsophisticated.

Measuring value structures

A specific value may be represented by a single word or phrase, such as ‘equality’, ‘freedom’, or ‘economic security’. But each one represents a potentially complex

idea with far-reaching implications. As such, individual values are sometimes the objects of attention themselves (for example, see Hochschild 1995 on equality, Feldman 1983 and Kinder and Mendelberg 2000 on individualism, and Feldman and Steenbergen 2001 on humanitarianism). But, when trying to understand the influence of values on other orientations and behavior, it is important to recognize that people are rarely affected by single values in isolation from other values (Sniderman et al. 1996; Davis and Silver 2004). Instead, values have their strongest consequences when people are forced to choose between the ends implied by one value versus those associated with some other value (e.g., Schwartz and Bilsky 1987; Schwartz 1992; 1996; Verplanken and Holland 2002). Such choices should be determined by the content of a person's personal value structure. Thus, effective measurement of value structures seems to be essential to an empirical understanding of the ways that values affect human behavior.

Again, the earliest efforts to measure value structures go back to Rokeach. Working from the conceptual definition we reviewed above, Rokeach designed a measurement instrument that requires subjects to make choices between values in order to understand their subjective assessments of relative value importance.

The Rokeach Value Survey, as originally designed, asked subjects to rank order a set of 18 human values according to how important they were as guiding principles in the individual's life. Perhaps most relevant to political scientists, these values included equality, freedom, and natural security, though seemingly less political values such as true friendship and wisdom also populated the survey instrument. Rokeach argued that the individual rank-orders provided reliable and valid representations of value structures. Reliability was established using repeated administrations of the Value Survey in panel studies. Rokeach found that the Spearman rank correlations of individuals' value arrays across multiple waves were always very high, indicating that choices between values were stable over time – an important manifestation of reliability. Furthermore, high correlations between the rankings assigned to specific values, on the one hand, and substantively related attitudes and predispositions, on the other hand, provide important evidence that the measurement instrument is a valid representation of the value system that Rokeach hypothesized to exist. Rokeach's value survey was replicated in many different settings with similar results in most cases (e.g. Searing 1978). Thus, there appears to be strong support for the widespread existence of individual-level ordered value systems.

Shalom Schwartz's theory of values is consistent with Rokeach's approach in its emphasis on hierarchically arrayed individual value structures (e.g. Schwartz 1994), but his measurement strategy for operationalizing value structures is very different. Citing the cognitive and practical burdens involved in large numbers of rank-ordered objects, Schwartz's procedure has experimental subjects and survey respondents provide rating scale judgments about the importance of each of 56 values (Schwartz 1994). The evaluations are correlated across the values, and the correlation matrix is used as input to a multidimensional scaling routine. This strategy produces a model in which the values are represented as 36 points in

space. The relative positions of the points are arranged such that the higher the correlation between any pair of values' ratings, the smaller the distance between the points representing those values, and vice versa.

Schwartz's results show that a two-dimensional space is sufficient, with the value points arrayed in a roughly circular structure called a 'circumplex'. Where Rokeach's conception of value structures focuses on the rank-orders associated with each individual, Schwartz's model shows that an aggregate structure is sufficient to represent the ways that almost everyone thinks about values. Speaking broadly, the circumplex is divided into four quadrants. Adjacent quadrants contain values that imply relatively similar outcomes, while those that fall at opposite sides of the circumplex represent contrasting end states. So, values associated with openness to change (e.g. stimulation, self-direction) are opposed to values associated with conservation (e.g. conformity, security), and self-enhancement values (e.g. achievement, power) fall opposite to self-transcendence values (e.g. benevolence and universalism). Schwartz and his colleagues have replicated the values circumplex in many different societies and cultural groups. Accordingly, advocates of this approach argue that it truly does provide 'a nearly-universal system of values' (Piurko et al. 2011, 540).

Both of the preceding strategies for operationalizing value structures have had their detractors. For example, Rokeach's value survey had respondents judge the relative importance of 18 different instrumental values and the same number of terminal values. Therefore, the approach has been criticized for the cognitive difficulties that almost certainly arise when people are asked to rank-order a large set of objects, and for requiring people to rank the entire set of values. Tied rankings are not allowed, so the values survey may be forcing distinctions that do not really exist for the individuals who are completing the rank-ordering task (e.g. Krosnick and Alwin 1988; Maio, et al. 1996; McCarty and Shrum 2000; Rankin and Grube 1980; Reynolds and Jolly 1980). In addition, the rank-orders comprise ipsative measures that are difficult to analyze by standard methods (Alwin and Krosnick 1985). Turning to Schwartz's theory, recent work has failed to replicate a circumplex, or even quasi-circumplex, using other types of measurement models such as factor analysis (Perrinjaquet et al. 2007). Others have found support for a two-dimensional structure underlying responses to Schwartz's Personal Values Questionnaire items, but failed to reproduce the circumplex structure (Hinz et al. 2005). Finally, the interpretation of the circumplex has been repeatedly questioned, particularly because the separation of the value space into value domains is technically arbitrary (that is, not empirically determined) (Schwartz and Bilsky 1987).

AMBIVALENCE AND VALUE CONFLICT

Most of the social-psychological research on values has assumed that people really can make meaningful choices between values. This is necessarily the case

from a theoretical perspective because, otherwise, rank-ordered value structures would be impossible. In fact, the basic existence of orderly value structures has rarely been subjected to rigorous empirical testing (Hitlin and Piliaven 2004; Goren n.d.). This is a very serious omission because there definitely are reasons to suspect that many people cannot make clear choices between values.

From the field of social psychology, Maio and Olson (1998) argue that values are actually ‘truisms’. Rather than important influences on human behavior, they merely represent shallow responses to vaguely conceived stimuli. As such, they cannot be combined into meaningful psychological structures, and their relevance for understanding other orientations is highly attenuated (Bernard et al. 2003). From this perspective, people have difficulty making choices because they are indifferent to the values under comparison.

Political science has taken a different perspective on the question of value choices, focusing on the potential for intra-individual value conflict that produces ambivalence. Unlike indifference, ambivalence inhibits value choices because ambivalent individuals are pulled in opposing directions by positive feelings toward both values under consideration. Feldman and Zaller (1992) examined belief systems through the lens of values and found that ideological groups are differentially affected by conflict between salient political values. They show that liberals are more intensely plagued by value conflict when it comes to attitudes about social welfare because they simultaneously hold the competing values of activist government and economic individualism in high regard. This produces ambivalence which reduces the intensity of political commitments among liberals. Conservatives face no such ambivalence because they favor individualism and oppose activist government. Hence, conservative political action tends to be more strongly motivated since its influences point in a uniform direction.

Alvarez and Brehm (2002) extended the idea of value conflict to ambivalence about political issues, arguing that adherence to opposing values makes it more difficult to predict individual policy attitudes, and show that factors reasonably assumed to be associated with value conflict are correlated with the error variance in statistical models predicting individual attitudes about abortion (Alvarez and Brehm 1995), racial policies (Alvarez and Brehm 1997), and the Internal Revenue Service (Alvarez and Brehm 1998). While their theory of value conflict has face validity, Alvarez and Brehm are limited by the fact that their models do not incorporate direct measures of value conflict. Therefore, the heteroskedasticity that they find in the statistical models could be due to other factors besides values.

Subsequent research on value conflict has employed explicit measures of values. Nelson et al. (1997) apply value conflict to the issue framing process, showing that varying the values contained in rhetorical appeals affects the degree of public tolerance for the activities of unpopular political groups. Brewer (2001), in another study of value framing, finds that political elites can persuade the mass public to adopt certain issue positions toward welfare reform policies

when such positions are framed to evoke values. Grant and Rudolph (2003) and Rudolph (2005) extend the work of Alvarez and Brehm to attitudes about campaign finance, finding that group attachments help individuals resolve conflict between values by ‘tipping the balance of considerations’ one uses when forming attitudes.

The most recent work on value conflict has included explicit measures of conflict between values. Craig et al. (2005) developed a formula for capturing individual value conflict as the simultaneous endorsement of egalitarian and moral traditionalism values. Individuals’ desire to both extend rights to all and preserve traditional marriage roles explained ambivalence in attitudes about gay rights. Finally, Keele and Wolak (2006) modify the heteroskedastic modeling approach developed by Alvarez and Brehm (1995) by including explicit measures of conflict between egalitarianism, moral traditionalism, and humanitarian values in the variance component of their model. As we might expect, given the fundamental position of values in belief systems, conflict among core values is a non-trivial source of instability in partisan self-identifications.

Although a great deal of work has examined the nature and effects of value conflict and ambivalence, there is much work to be done. For instance, most of the work on these topics has been conducted with an orientation toward American politics. Thus, a more substantial investigation of value conflict across other cultures, societies, and political systems is warranted. Furthermore, the differences between findings of value ambivalence with respect to analyses of value effects versus structure must be considered more thoroughly. More specifically, Jacoby’s (2002; 2006) repeated finding of transitivity in choices among values directly contradicts the notion of value conflict. This incongruity may be the product of the research topic, measurement technique, or something else, but it is a glaring disparity that should serve as a call to values researchers to be circumspect in accounting for the basic structure of value systems when examining the role of value choices in other socio-political phenomena.

Values and subsequent orientations

As discussed at the outset of our exploration of the role of values in belief systems, there is an intimate connection between ideology and values when it comes to the organization of belief systems. While Feldman (1988) contends that values replace ideology as the principal organizational mechanisms, many others believe that values also inform ideological predispositions. Indeed, ideology can be conceived as a general categorization of preferences toward and against sets of certain values. McClosky and Zaller (1984), for instance, view the principles of resistance toward change and acceptance of social inequality as underlying liberal–conservative ideology in America. Using different data and statistical methodology, Swedlow and Wyckoff (2009) find that the same types of value are the primary mechanisms by which liberals and conservatives are differentiated.

The relationship between values and ideological predispositions has been confirmed via a diverse set of research programs across disciplinary boundaries (Caprara et al. 2006; Hetherington 2009; Jacoby 2014; Jost et al. 2009; Keele and Wolak 2006; Michaud et al. 2009; Piurko et al. 2011).

Evidence regarding the relationship between values and partisan self-identification is more mixed. As previously discussed, Keele and Wolak (2006) find that conflict between values contributes to instability in party identification. Lupton et al. (2015) show that core values have strong effects on partisanship, although their influence is weakened somewhat by disagreements within personal discussion networks. Work by Goren (2005) and colleagues (Goren et al. 2009), however, finds support for the opposite causal relationship. That is, they find that partisan identifications affect value choices rather than the reverse. Goren's (2005) structural equation model applied to panel data reveals that party identification affects later measurements of beliefs about equal opportunity, moral tolerance, traditional family values, and limited government. An experimental approach to the same question revealed that partisan cues influenced endorsement of the the same values (Goren et al. 2009).

Many studies have demonstrated consequential effects of value choices on attitudes across a wide swath of policy issues. Since Alvarez and Brehm's original work, Weisberg (2005) has reinforced the effect of core values on attitudes about abortion and Feldman and Huddy (2005) have done the same with respect to attitudes about racial issues. Values have also been found to exert some effect on attitudes about tolerance judgements (Ben-Nun Bloom and Bagno-Moldavsky forthcoming; Peffley et al. 2001), gay rights (Brewer 2003a, 2003b; Craig et al. 2005), foreign policy alternatives (Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; Kertzer et al. 2014), and several social welfare issues (Feldman and Steenbergen 2001; Jacoby 2006; Tesler 2012). Interestingly, while the impact of values is consistent and usually statistically significant, the effect sizes are often quite limited. This is certainly not what one would expect if values really are fundamental building blocks of human behavior.

Several studies from diverse settings show that values are related to voting behavior. One of the main findings in Feldman's (1988) early study of values emphasized their relevance for evaluating presidential candidates. More recently, Schwartz et al. (2010) find that political values influence vote choice in Italy, but the nature of the connection between values and elections is not clearcut. The preceding studies contend that values are one of the factors affecting individual electoral decisions, but McCann (1997) argues that the electoral environment – manifested in campaign events – actually shapes individual values. Again, it is difficult to reconcile this finding with theories that presuppose values as stable and central psychological orientations.

Finally, the transcendental characteristic of core values, while conceptually straightforward, holds great implications for the importance of core values across nations, cultures, and time. Schwartz and his colleagues (Schwartz and Bilsky

1987; Schwartz 1992) have found that a fairly small set of core values are structured similarly in up to 20 different countries throughout Europe and Asia, in addition to the United States and Canada. Taken together, a parsimonious, two-dimensional structure characterizes the psychological organization of core values with respect to each other in countries that represent at least eight different religions and 13 languages. Also as in the American case, values have been found to exhibit great aggregate and individual-level temporal stability (Inglehart 1985) and influence theoretically subsequent political behaviors such as vote choice in many different countries with widely varying political systems (e.g. Caprara et al. 2008; Stubager 2009). Each of these studies and many more confirm the fundamental importance of core values to the attitudes and behavior of individuals around the world.

Back to basics in values research

Our basic criticism of recent values research is that much of it does not conform to psychological theories of values. But it is also the case that the latter are not very specific in their specifications of human values. So, for example, Rokeach postulates rank-ordered value structures without directly assessing the validity of the ranked value choices. Schwartz constructs the circumplex, but does not provide any way to incorporate the individuals who are reacting to the values within the model. In virtually all political science research, values are incorporated one at a time – that is, models test the impact of, say, equality separately from that of, say, moral traditionalism. This approach is problematic because values exert influence when people are required to choose between them. By not taking choices explicitly into account, these models misspecify the impact of values on subsequent orientations and behaviors.

Some of our own recent research has been aimed at evaluating the validity of ordered value structures and operationalizing these structures in ways that are amenable to empirical analysis. Rather than beginning with rank-ordered values, our approach asks people to make pairwise comparisons of value importance and then examines whether the resultant judgments about relative importance are transitive. For example, if a person says that economic security is more important than equality, and that equality is more important than freedom, then transitivity implies that the person should say that economic security is more important than freedom. Simply having people rank-order values (as Rokeach did) does not enable an empirical assessment of transitivity, because transitivity is a necessary condition for fully ordering the objects. But if a set of respondents are asked to make all pairwise comparisons among a set of values, then transitivity can be tested explicitly. And empirical tests on several nationally representative samples have shown that pairwise value choices are overwhelmingly transitive at the individual level (Jacoby 2002; 2006; Ciuk and Jacoby 2015). So, there is strong empirical support for the existence of rank-ordered value structures in American public opinion.

One of the major objections to the use of hierarchical value structures is that rank-orders can be very difficult to analyze.¹¹ Jacoby (2014) addresses this issue, however, by developing a scaling technique for summarizing individual-level value rankings in their entirety via a single numeric value. This representation of value structures is similar to Schwartz's model in that it shows values as points within two-dimensional space; again, the distances between the points reflect the similarity with which people rank the corresponding values. Jacoby's model differs from the Schwartz model in that it also explicitly includes the individuals who are ranking the values. Specifically, each person is shown as a vector emanating from the origin of the space. The individual vectors are positioned so that, to the greatest extent possible, the ordering of the perpendicular projections from the value points onto each person's vector corresponds to that person's rank-ordering of the values according to their importance. This vector model of value choices provides a parsimonious visual representation that captures both the aggregate structure of values and the variability across individual choices among those values. It can be used very easily to represent the predominant value orientations that exist within various ideological, partisan, and sociodemographic groups (Jacoby 2014).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined recent research on two very important influences on mass political behavior: ideology and core values. For each of these concepts, useful progress has been made. For the former, the focus of research has shifted from the 'distributional question' to the question of consequences. In other words, early research on mass-level ideology was concerned primarily with the prevalence of liberal-conservative thinking. What proportion of the public really organized their political orientations around abstract evaluative criteria such as an ideological dimension? Beginning in the 1980s, scholars shifted their attention to the results that flowed from ideological thinking. What impact does the liberal-conservative continuum have on subsequent beliefs, attitudes, and behavior among that stratum of the public that does use this standard to evaluate the political world? We believe that this is a very beneficial movement in research efforts and that it has greatly increased the scope of what we know about ideological thinking in the general public.

As already noted, the volume of research that political scientists have devoted to values is less than that for ideology. But here, too, important progress has been made. The most important result so far has been to show that stable value structures do seem to exist at the mass level, even though there is some disagreement about the precise form of those structures. In addition, feelings about values apparently feed into more specific political orientations. So, feelings about equality, freedom, morality, and the like join with other symbolic orientations, such as party identification and ideology, to shape issue attitudes and candidate evaluations. At the same

time, manipulating the salience of values affects the dynamics of public opinion; several scholars contend that values are the key to the issue framing process. And value choices undergird the lines of political polarization in the modern world; recent research has shown that the current strong divisions between partisan and ideological groups conform to stark differences in feelings about equality, morality, patriotism, freedom, and other fundamental values.

Of course, much work remains to be done. Part of this is due simply to the evolution of the political world. Over time, new social problems and issues develop and new public figures emerge on the political stage. It always is interesting to see how emergent political stimuli are located relative to existing ideological stands and value orientations. Innovations in policy controversies and candidate stands, however, also affect the nature and content of ideologies, and challenge existing interpretations of desirable and undesirable end states of existence. Stated simply, ongoing research always will be necessary to understand the continuing relevance of ideology and values.

At the same time, we believe strongly that future research efforts need to be more attuned to scholarly theories of ideology and of values. Otherwise, scholars will use new tools to repeat some of the errors of the past or expend their efforts in ways that do not really capture the heart of the relevant theoretical concepts. In the area of ideology, for example, sophisticated item response theory models may have replaced tables of correlations as the main tools for examining attitude constraint, but unless empirical attitude structures (however they are measured) are connected explicitly to abstract organizational principles then they cannot be interpreted as ideologies. With values, psychological theories clearly hold that their importance emerges only when values are juxtaposed against each other and people are forced to make choices between them. But almost all political science research (at least until recently) has taken individuals' feelings about the importance of single values as discrete explanatory variables; thus, it misses the very mechanism through which values exert their influence. Because of these and other similar concerns, we contend that ideology and values research needs to 'take a step back', consider the operant theories of each concept, and ensure that future work constructs and tests models that are fully consistent with those theories. That has not always been the case with existing research, and we believe that this limits the theoretical relevance of the results. But an optimistic take on this assessment is that both fields – ideology and values – are wide open for additional research efforts. We are confident that scholars in political science will rise to the challenges that this presents.

Notes

- 1 Note that one conceptual stumbling block in this literature has been the treatment of constraint as ideology, rather than as an observable implication of ideological thinking. Ideology is a coherent political attitude structure – one that is 'particularly elaborate, close-woven, and far-ranging'

(Campbell et al. 1960, 192) – and interrelated attitudes, evidenced by a strong correlation among an individual's policy preferences (for example), are the consequence of an individual maintaining an ideology. More specifically, ideologically constrained attitudes means that we are able to predict the ideologue's position on any political issue given that we know her position on at least one issue. As Converse writes, 'Economy and constraint are companion concepts, for the more highly constrained a system of multiple elements, the more economically it may be described and understood' (1964, 214).

- 2 Note that early critics of this work questioned the validity of the levels of conceptualization (e.g. Smith 1980), but the levels' validity and reliability as a measure of ideological thinking in the electorate since has been well-documented (Hagner and Pierce 1982; Knight 1985). See Abramson (1981) for a particularly cogent rebuke to Smith's (1980) criticism of this important element of ideology research.
- 3 Reviewing the literature examining elite attitude structures and the basis of elite party competition lies beyond the bounds of this chapter. However, we wish to note that liberal–conservative ideology divides the major parties' elected representatives (Poole and Rosenthal 1984, 1991, 1997), judicial appointees (Martin and Quinn 2002; Segal and Cover 1989), donor networks (Bonica 2014), and activist coalitions (Jennings 1992; Layman et al. 2010; Noel 2012, 2013).
- 4 Although we note again that detailing the causes and consequences of polarization would require a review extending far beyond the length of the current chapter, we urge readers to see Carsey and Layman (2006) for a discussion of the causes of polarization in American politics writ large, as well as Hetherington (2009) for a review of polarization's influence on citizens' attitudes, beliefs, and evaluations.
- 5 One especially notable exception to this work is that of Hare et al. (2015), who demonstrate that differential item functioning – or individual differences in the use of the traditional ideological self-placement scale – understates the extent to which the mass public maintains non-centrist policy positions.
- 6 This call echoes that of Carmines and D'Amico (2015), and readers should see Kinder (1983, 1998) for similar, and of course much earlier, advice.
- 7 Devine (2015) is the first to construct an explicit measure of ideological social identity (ISI) capturing the extent to which individuals' self-conceptions are tied to those of their ideological group (i.e. liberals or conservatives). Note that social identity theory has dominated conceptions of partisanship for some time (e.g. Green et al. 2002; Greene 1999, 2004), and this conception is itself a reformulation of the original reference group theory of party identification (Campbell et al. 1960). New evidence suggests that affective partisan polarization is at least as intense as racial polarization in the U.S. (Iyengar and Westwood 2015), and that 'negative partisanship' – unfavorable evaluations of the opposite party – helps explain the resurgence in partisan voting in the American electorate (Abramowitz and Webster 2015).
- 8 The authors find that a particularly common mismatch between ideological self-identifications and issue attitudes exists among individuals who identify as 'conservative' on the seven-point scale but report liberal preferences (Stimson 2004; Ellis and Stimson 2012). See Free and Cantril (1967) for a much earlier articulation of the seemingly 'schizophrenic' characteristic of mass public attitudes.
- 9 Of course, other researchers examined values before Rokeach (e.g. Allport et al. 1960), but their work was not based on the type of rigorous, empirically grounded research design that Rokeach brought to bear on the concept.
- 10 Note that a dearth of individual-level panel data has left the credibility of stable value preferences up for debate (Rokeach and Ball-Rokeach 1989).
- 11 A related concern is that it can be very difficult to collect data on hierarchical value choices. Alwin and Krosnick (1985) point out that it is virtually impossible to have survey respondents rank-order stimuli in a telephone survey. Since face-to-face surveys now are very rare, this may seem like a serious concern. The use of internet surveys, however, creates new possibilities that may make it easier to elicit ranked judgments about value importance. For example, Jacoby (2011) uses

two-wave panel data from a nationally representative internet survey to compare individual value structures constructed from replicated pairwise comparisons of value importance with responses to a rank-ordering task on the same values. He finds that the value structures obtained by the two sets of survey items are very highly correlated. This suggests that respondents to internet surveys can provide rank-ordered judgments about value importance quite easily.

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Issue Ownership: An Ambiguous Concept

Wouter van der Brug

INTRODUCTION

The notion of issue ownership was first coined by Budge and Farlie (1983) when they proposed a saliency theory of party competition. Their model was developed as an alternative to spatial models of electoral democracy (e.g. Downs 1957). In Downs' model, policy positions and preferences of parties as well as of voters could be represented by positions in an ideological space (on the concept of voter ideology see Lupton, Enders and Jacoby, this Volume). Voters were expected to vote for the nearest party because, by doing so, they would choose the party that they agreed with most. A party would have an incentive to offer a combination of policy positions that would attract the largest group of voters. One of the criticisms of this model came from Stokes (1963), and much of the work in the field of issue ownership is implicitly or explicitly influenced by his contribution. Stokes argued that many political issues do not fit a spatial model. Some 'valence' issues (as considered by Green and Jennings in this Volume), such as crime, a clean environment or corruption, have essentially only one position, because everyone agrees on the ultimate goal to be achieved. Party competition on these issues typically takes the form of prioritizing some issues over others, rather than taking opposing stands (Green-Pedersen 2007). In other words, parties compete on the salience of different issues vis-à-vis each other.

Scholars who studied the campaign platforms of parties noted that not all issues conform to the basic premises of the spatial model. In particular, direct confrontations between opposing policy stands are relatively rare (e.g. Robertson

1976; Budge and Farlie 1983; Budge et al. 1987). Instead, parties selectively emphasize those topics where they feel they have a good reputation, and de-emphasize other topics. On the basis of these findings the saliency theory of party competition was developed. This starts from the notion that, within a certain historical context, most political actors favour the same course of action when addressing a particular problem (e.g. Budge 2001). Each of the parties has a set of policy issues that they ‘own’ – that is, policy areas where they have a relatively good reputation. Parties expect to gain electoral support by increasing the salience of each of ‘their’ issues during a campaign, which gives them an incentive to consistently emphasize these topics. Empirically it has been shown that aggregate election results are indeed affected by the salience of particular issue types during the campaign preceding the election (Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996).

So, issue ownership theory originated in a focus on *saliency*. Parties would emphasize some issues and thereby signal to voters their intention to give *prior-ity* to those issues. When they were successful in increasing the salience of these issues, they would expect to benefit electorally. While *prioritizing* issues was a central component of issue ownership theory, Petrocik (1996, 826) defined the concept not just in those terms, but, additionally, in terms of *competence*. He defined ownership as ‘a party’s reputation of being better able than other parties to “handle” a problem facing the country’. By emphasizing certain problems in an election campaign, a party signals to voters that it ‘is more sincere and committed to doing something about them’ (Petrocik 1996, 826). So, the first part of his definition – ‘being better able than other parties to handle an issue’ – refers to a party’s competence. The second part – ‘being sincere and committed’ – refers to a party’s priorities. Ever since, two different perspectives on issue ownership have been present in the literature, some of which focus on the importance of issues while others focus more on competence. A recent literature review by Walgrave et al. (2015) shows that the latter conceptualization, which focuses on competence, is the most widely used in electoral research.

However, Petrocik’s conceptualization of issue ownership was developed in the context of an aggregate level study in the US, which is in many ways the big outlier in comparative research: a country in which the electoral contest is restricted to two parties only. While it makes intuitive sense to expect parties to benefit when a majority of the voters see them as competent to deal with an issue, translating the notion of competence to the individual level as well as to elections in multiparty systems turns out to be problematic. In a recent contribution Budge (2015, 761), who originally coined the term ‘issue ownership’, now refers to it as an ‘ambiguous’ concept – and rightly so, as I will argue.

The first part of this contribution provides a brief sketch of the existing research on issue ownership, as both dependent and independent variables. The second and main part of this contribution focuses on conceptual issues. In the concluding section, I will discuss avenues for further research.

A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LITERATURE ON ISSUE OWNERSHIP

The saliency theory of party competition, outlined above, formed the basis for the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) (Budge et al. 2001); a project that started in 1979 to content analyse election manifestos of most of the major parties in many contemporary democracies.¹ The coding scheme is based on the idea that parties compete by selectively emphasizing those issues on which they feel they have a good reputation. The coding scheme defines 56 categories (themes). Quasi-sentences from the texts are categorized; the more sentences are devoted to a certain theme, the more a party is seen as emphasizing that specific issue.

In a next step, Budge and Farlie (1983) demonstrated that aggregate election outcomes could be predicted quite well on the basis of the themes that dominated in the news. This is when they introduced the term ‘issue ownership’. Voters associate certain issues with some parties, and parties have become ‘owners’ of those issues. If ‘their’ issues dominate in the campaigns, voters are ‘primed’ to think of those issues when they decide which party to vote for (Petrocik 1996). If they think of issues on which left-wing parties have a competitive advantage, they are more likely to support the left and if they think of issues on which right-wing parties have a better reputation, they are more likely to turn to the right.

Even though the term issue ownership was introduced in the 1980s and revitalized by Petrocik in the 1990s, Lefevere et al. (2015) show that most of the work in this area has been done in the last ten years. This could be because ideological differences between the larger mainstream parties have become smaller, which makes it more difficult for voters to choose among parties on the basis of those small differences. The spatial model would then lose much of its explanatory power. Consequently, several scholars have proposed that elections are increasingly decided on the basis of valence issues instead of position issues, so that ‘parties are judged on competence in place of ideological differentiation’ (Green 2007, 630; see also Clarke et al. 2004, 2009; Green and Hobolt 2008). Similarly, Green-Pedersen (2007, 609) argued that ‘positional competition’ has become increasingly replaced by ‘issue competition’, which he defines as ‘getting the issues that a party prefers to dominate the party political agenda’.

Most of the early studies on issue ownership used this concept as an independent variable to predict aggregate level election outcomes (e.g. Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996), individual level vote choice (e.g. Van der Brug 2004; Nadeau et al. 2001; Bellucci 2006) or campaign strategies of parties (e.g. Budge and Farlie 1983; Sellers 1998). These studies generally tended to support the main idea behind issue ownership theory. It turned out that parties did indeed privilege certain issues over others and the aggregate as well as early individual level studies did show that a party would benefit electorally if its issues would play a prominent role in the campaign.

However, various scholars started to become critical of the notion of issue ownership. As far as I know, I was the first to question the double meaning of ‘ownership’ in terms of competence at solving problems as well as commitment at giving priority to those issues (Van der Brug 2004). I argued that perceptions of competence were (at the individual level) largely endogenous to 1) party preferences and 2) substantive agreement with a party’s policy positions. Therefore, I proposed to define issue ownership only in terms of priorities, as that was originally the crux of the saliency theory, and I proposed indicators that measured issue ownership in those terms. More recently, Walgrave et al. (2012) have largely followed my reasoning, but instead of proposing to drop the concept of ‘issue competence’ altogether, they propose to distinguish between the ‘competence dimension’ and the ‘associative dimension’ of issue ownership. The ‘competence dimension’ refers to a party’s reputation at dealing with the issue, while the associative dimension refers to how important the issue is for the party. Their results show that ‘associative issue ownership’ affects party choice, even when controlling for issue competence.

In a literature review, Walgrave et al. (2015) show that a large number of studies are now focusing on the ‘associative’ dimension of issue ownership and several survey items now exist that ask about perceptions of the commitment of parties to addressing certain issues (e.g. Bellucci 2006; Aalberg and Jenssen 2007; Lachat 2014; Meyer and Müller 2013). In addition, the Chapel Hill Expert Survey now contains questions measuring ‘how important is [ISSUE] for each of the parties’ (e.g. Hooghe et al. 2010). It is perhaps not surprising that all of these authors are comparativists whose main work is on party competition in multiparty systems. Multiparty systems often include small parties that are clearly associated with certain issues, such as radical right parties associated with the issue of immigration and Green parties associated with environmental protection. However, even though these parties are clearly seen as committed to these issues, they are often not seen as particularly ‘competent’ to deal with them. I will elaborate on this below.

In addition to these problems, which are in many ways particular to multiparty systems, the concept of issue ownership was also questioned when scholars began to study perceptions of issue competence as a dependent variable. These studies showed that perceptions of competence were dependent upon party preferences (e.g. Bélanger and Meguid 2008; Stubager and Slothuus 2013; Walgrave et al. 2014) and upon substantive agreement with a party’s policies (e.g. Bellucci 2006; Wagner and Zeglovits 2014; Stubager and Slothuus 2013; Sanders et al. 2011). Partially as a result, the research agenda changed recently from an emphasis on issue ownership as an independent variable to research trying to explain ownership (e.g. Bélanger 2003; Martinsson 2009; Green and Jennings 2012). How do parties come to be associated with certain issues, under which circumstances do they uniquely emphasize their issues and under which circumstances do they address issues that are not to their advantage? While Budge and Farlie

(1983) spoke of parties ‘owning’ issues, Budge recently argued that this terminology was ‘perhaps misleading [...] it might be better said that parties cannot disown them, and just have to try to play them to best advantage’ (Budge 2015, 766). Over the course of political campaigns parties often address the same issues (e.g. Green-Pedersen 2007; Walgrave and De Swert 2007; Brasher 2009); they feel forced to respond to each other and hence both pay a great deal of attention to issues that they do not ‘own’ (e.g. Spoon et al. 2014; Dahlberg and Martinsson 2015; Van der Brug and Berkhout 2015) and try to ‘steal’ ownership by ‘trespassing’ (e.g. Tresch et al. 2015; Arceneaux 2008). De Sio and Weber (2014) explain variations over time in the issue emphasis of parties on the basis of their ‘yield’ in terms of likely gains and losses in party support. The ‘yield’ of an issue is in turn based on distributions of issue positions. So, the latest literature on issue ownership suggests that ownership of issues is fluid and temporary (see also Christensen et al. 2014), even though it appears to be more stable in the context of the American two party system (e.g., Egan 2013). A party can gain ownership and other parties may lose it. Moreover, if we think of associative issue ownership, we can also think about it as a matter of degree. Some parties are more strongly associated with an issue than other parties.

While this research has produced much knowledge regarding the dynamics of party competition, there is much conceptual confusion in the literature around ‘issue ownership’ (see also Walgrave et al. 2015; Budge 2015). I will devote the main part of this contribution to addressing these conceptual points.

CONCEPTUALIZING ISSUE OWNERSHIP

Three points will be discussed in this section. First, when discussing models of issue voting, including issue ownership, we should define the meaning of a ‘political issue’. Issue ownership is often theoretically intertwined with the valence aspect of political competition, building upon Stokes’ (1963) notion of valence issues. Yet, in practice we cannot draw a clear distinction between valence and position issues, as will be outlined below. Second, most of the issue ownership literature defines it as a party’s perceived competence at handling an issue. However, the notion of ‘competence’ is under-theorized. If we think of competence as the ability to solve difficult problems, does it make sense to think of parties as being ‘competent’ in one issue area, but not in another? At the individual level, evaluations of competence are largely endogenous to party preferences, which makes it highly problematic to use these as predictors of the vote. Moreover, they are also influenced by agreement with the substantive policies of the party. I will argue that, in an important sense, we are in fact testing a spatial model by employing the notion of issue specific competence. Third, all of these problems are exacerbated in research on multiparty systems. For small parties it is rational to emphasize issues on which they are *not* seen as competent by a

majority of the voters, but which they are nevertheless associated with. In this section I discuss these three points and conclude that students working on issue ownership would do well to drop issue based competence from their models and focus on salience (e.g. Van der Brug 2004; Walgrave et al. 2012).

Political issues: valence, position or both?

When discussing issue ownership, the first question that one might ask is what constitutes a (political) issue. In the literature on issue voting, issue evolution, issue ownership and so on, one rarely finds a definition of an ‘issue’. Petrocik (1996, 826) says explicitly that he uses the words ‘issues’ and ‘problems’ interchangeably. In the seminal article in which he introduces the difference between position and valence issues, Stokes (1963) does not provide a definition of an issue either. In many studies in which issues are being addressed, the term ‘issues’ refers loosely to ‘themes’, as also observed by Guinaudeau and Persico (2013) in their rare attempt to define ‘issues’: they define a ‘policy issue’ as ‘a question of public policy, as demarcated defined and specified by political actors, possibly giving rise to one or several positions’ (2013, 316).

This seems to be a useful definition. When reading through the literature, it becomes clear that not all problems are considered political issues. The notion of a political issue excludes all sorts of private and/or personal ‘problems’. A ‘problem’ becomes a political issue only when actors call for government action. So, it is not the nature of the ‘problem’ that defines whether or not it can be considered a political issue, but the perception of different actors that it is a problem that requires actions on the part of local, regional, national or transnational governments. For a long time and in many countries domestic violence was and sometimes is still seen as an important social problem belonging to the private sphere. As long as the topic is treated as one that does not require government interference, it is not a *political issue* (e.g. Van der Brug et al. 2015).

Guinaudeau and Persico (2013) refer in their definition to ‘positions’, which is a notion taken from spatial models. In spatial models of electoral competition, issue positions represent an ‘ordered set of alternatives of government interventions’ (Stokes 1963, 372). So there should be at least two alternative courses of government action for the issue to fit the spatial model. However, as Stokes points out, in many cases there is no disagreement about the most appropriate form of government intervention. From this observation Stokes derives his famous distinction between position and valence issues, *position issues* being those where different actors propose different forms of government intervention and *valence issues* being those ‘where actors generally take the same position’ (1963, 372). Stokes does not say ‘where all actors propose the same type of government intervention’ to distinguish valence issues from position issues, but instead he defines valence issues as ‘those that merely involve the linking of the parties with some condition that is positively or negatively valued by the electorate’ (1963, 373).

These are issues that evolve around the question ‘where credit and blame ought to be assigned’ (1963, 373). Moreover, using the example of economic policies, he argues that this could have developed into either a position or a valence issue. The reason why it developed into a valence issue is that ‘there is overwhelming consensus as to the goals of government action’ (1963, 374).

Consequently, valence issues have been described in the literature mostly as issues where there is general agreement on the *goals* of government action. However, empirically it turns out to be very difficult to distinguish between goals and means. Whether or not there is agreement upon the goals depends mainly on the level of abstraction. At the highest level of abstraction all parties share the same goal of ‘a just society’, ‘world peace’, etc. However, differences arise once we start to make more concrete what we mean by a just society, for instance, or how we will create a society that is more just. Where most citizens of the US and UK agreed that world peace and democracy are desirable goals, there was disagreement as to whether invading Iraq was the best way to reach those goals. Since there were clearly different kinds of government interventions proposed by parties, the Iraq war was clearly a position issue, even though most US and UK citizens would agree about the desirability of the goals set by their governments.

While people agree that less crime is to be preferred, the political left and right disagree on whether crime should be reduced by repression or by prevention through social work. Surely, we all agree that a clean environment is to be preferred over a polluted environment, but that is not what is debated. The debate is about whether we should aim for a cleaner environment even if this is achieved at the expense of economic growth.

In the conceptualization of position vs. valence issues, the idea has been for a long time that position issues were problems in which different actors disagreed on the goals of policies, while valence issues were those in which there was general agreement on these goals. When a position issue was at stake, parties would compete by offering different policy proposals, which could be presented as positions. When a valence issue was at stake, the competition would be about who is most competent to handle the problem concerned. A party with a ‘good’ reputation on a specific issue would try to increase the salience of the associated problems, as this would help to focus attention on the issue where the party was advantaged. By emphasizing specific issues a party would also signal to voters that it ‘is more sincere and committed to doing something about them’ (Petrocik 1996, 826). So, in this conceptualization, salience and competence are both elements of ‘valence issues’ (see also Green and Hobolt 2008). Yet, this distinction is highly problematic. Questions of competence are not limited to ‘valence’ issues, where different parties have similar positions. When the website that supported the execution of the Affordable Care Act (also known as ‘Obamacare’) experienced all sorts of technical problems, this backfired on the reputation of the competence of the administration, advantaging the quite different position of the opponents. The same is true for the Iraq invasion, which many groups opposed,

particularly in the UK. When the security situation in Iraq started to deteriorate after the initial military victory, the leaders of the incumbent party appeared less competent.

We may thus conclude that competence questions are not restricted to issues that many would label ‘valence issues’. The same thing can be said for priorities. Immigration is certainly a position issue: some propose more restrictive migration policies, others feel that we should be more welcoming. However, this does not mean that the issue of immigration is equally important to every actor. In line with this, several scholars have recently argued that salience and position should be distinguished and that both play a separate role in politicizing an issue (e.g. De Sio and Franklin 2012; De Sio and Weber 2014; De Vries and Hobolt 2012; Guinaudeau and Persico 2013; Van der Brug et al. 2015).

In conclusion, we need to distinguish three largely independent factors that might each play a role in the electoral process: 1) positions, 2) salience/priorities and 3) competence. Three main points have been made. First, positions pertain to different views on the most desirable government interventions. These different views may stem from differences in how we evaluate the desirability of certain goals or from differences in the means to realize those goals; but the distinction between means and goals is not helpful. Second, not all desirable goals can be realized at the same time, so politics is as much about setting priorities as it is about proposing alternative policies. Priority setting takes place in instances in which all actors agree about the most appropriate line of government intervention, but also when different lines of government intervention are proposed. Finally, voters’ perceptions of competence or incompetence are not restricted to issues in which different actors agree about the most appropriate forms of government intervention. Perhaps the largest threat to a party’s reputation of being competent occurs when a position issue is at stake and a governing party pushes policies through against the will of the opposition. If things go wrong, the opposition has more ammunition to harm the reputation of governing parties than in the case where the opposition did not offer alternatives.

The concept of issue competence

The most popular operationalization of issue ownership is in terms of a party’s ‘issue competence’: which party is best able to handle a specific problem that the country faces (e.g. Petrocik 1996). At face value it makes sense to think that voters would find a party more attractive when they think it is capable of solving certain important problems. Walgrave et al. (2015) made an inventory of the different definitions and operationalizations of the concept of issue ownership employed in 35 studies. They show that most voter studies focusing on issue ownership operationalize the concept by some form of question about which party ‘can handle [the issue] best’ (e.g. Petrocik 1996; Bélanger 2003; Benoit and Hansen 2004; Green and Jennings 2012), ‘is best placed to deal with [issue]’

(Walgrave and De Swert 2007), ‘would do a better job on the following issues’ (e.g. Arceneaux 2008; Egan 2013; Therriault 2009), ‘is best at solving the following issues’ (Stubager and Slothuus 2013). So, in all of these cases, competence is ascribed to *a party or politician in relation to an issue*. Theoretically there can be three reasons why a respondent would think party A is competent at handling issue B: 1) the respondent thinks that the party has a good track record in finding competent people who are able to govern the country, the city, or whatever; 2) the respondent thinks that the party attracts politicians who are particularly competent in the specific issue in which the party has ‘ownership’ (which is the implicit idea of issue competence); or 3) the respondent agrees with the substantive position of the party on a specific issue. I will discuss all three in turn.

We might think of competence as the ability to solve difficult problems in general. Sanders et al. (2011) distinguish ‘spatial calculations’ from ‘valence judgments’ in models of party choice. Evaluations of leaders are among the ‘valence judgments’ that they consider, and this makes sense. Competence is one of the important personality traits that is often included in studies on political leadership (e.g. Kinder et al. 1980; Popkin et al. 1976; Stewart and Clarke 1992; Greene 2001; Johnston 2002; Bittner 2011), albeit that sometimes other labels are used, such as ‘leadership effectiveness’ (e.g. Bean and Mughan 1989; Funk 1999) or ‘political craftsmanship’ (Aaldering and Vliegenthart forthcoming). If voters choose a party because they think the party has a ‘competent’ leader, ‘valence judgments’ clearly play a role (e.g. Sanders et al. 2011). However, this could be independent of the specific issue at stake, so a test of the effect of leadership evaluations on the vote is *not* by itself a test of any model of *issue voting* or *issue ownership*.

In the literature on political leadership competence is described as a characteristic of a person who is capable of ‘achieving difficult things’, ‘solving difficult problems’, ‘doing a good job’ and so on. Since these perceptions of competence are usually seen as personality traits of individual politicians, it seems a bit of a stretch to ascribe these characteristics also to collective actors such as political parties. However, when a party has in the past often recruited competent politicians it could be the case that voters come to see the party as being ‘competent’, in the sense that people would trust a party to ‘do a good job’, or ‘to take the right decisions’. Evidence suggests that this might be the case for some groups of voters. For instance, Bélanger and Meguid (2008) show that party identifiers tend to name ‘their’ party as the most competent to deal with almost any issue (see also Kuechler 1991; Wagner and Zeglovits 2014; Stubager and Slothuus 2013). This means not only that perceptions of competence are endogenous to party preferences but also that the perceptions of these people are *independent* of the specific issue at stake. To apply these measures, then, in a model of *issue voting* seems to be somewhat problematic, to say the least.

But not all voters do this. Many respondents consider one party as more competent to handle one issue but another party to be more competent at solving other issues. If these issues were primarily valence issues, where all parties agreed about

the line of action to take, we could indeed interpret these differences as reflecting people's perceptions of the competence of parties in solving specific issues. This assumption is at the heart of much of the work on issue ownership. One could theoretically think of instances where this could be the case. A party leader might be an economist and claim to be particularly good at solving economic problems, or be an ex-policeman and claim to be good at fighting crime. However, these cases are quite rare and this would add to a party's ability to gain issue ownership only during the time when the respective person is leading the party, while the studies on issue ownership suggest that this concept refers to a long-term association between the party and the issue. So, it seems quite far-fetched to argue that the issue specific competence of a party stems from the issue specific competences of the leaders. If a voter thinks that a party is best able to handle a specific problem, rather than the party leader being competent at handling problems in general, it seems plausible agreement with the party's policies on the issue (the party's *issue position*) plays an important role in this evaluation of 'competence'.

One might think that many issues are valence issues on which there is general agreement, but it is seldom the case that an issue arises where all parties agree about the proper actions to take. Often there is disagreement between parties if not about the goals then about the means to achieve them. Various studies have now shown that perceptions of competence are strongly affected by agreement with the policy positions of parties. Sanders et al. (2011) demonstrated this in a survey panel study of British voters, Stubager and Slothuus (2013) present similar findings on the basis of the Danish National Election Study 2007 and Therriault (2009) demonstrated the effect of policy preferences on various operationalizations of issue competence perceptions in a survey embedded experiment in the US context. Finally, Wagner and Zeglovits (2014) conducted 20 in-depth interviews to explore how people answer the question 'Which party is best at handling [an issue]?' . Many of them refer to their agreement with the party's policies.

The implications of these findings are more far-reaching than suggesting a 'simple' endogeneity problem. In its original form, Budge and Farlie proposed the saliency model as an *alternative* to a spatial model of party competition. The central assumption underlying the theory was that parties competed not by taking different positions but by emphasizing issues that they owned: issues in which they were seen as having a 'competitive advantage'. In the ensuing literature the idea of ownership was further specified as issues on which parties were seen as most competent. However, if voters tend to consider a party more competent *because* they agree with their position, the notion of issue ownership becomes almost indistinguishable from a Downsian spatial model.

Issue ownership of small parties

In my discussion of the literature I noted that attempts to measure the associative dimension of party ownership rather than the competence dimension all came

from comparativists who mainly study multiparty systems. This is probably because it is problematic to apply the notion of aggregate level competence in the context of a multiparty system. In the context of a two-party system, the notion of competence is reasonably straightforward. If a majority of the voters think that the candidate of the Republican party is best able to bring down crime it makes sense for this candidate to emphasize crime in his campaign. A lot of attention to the issue of crime in the news would benefit this party in the election, even if we as academics would not know whether this would be evidence of valence judgements (most people see the candidate as competent) or positional considerations (most people want harsher sentences for criminals and support a candidate who they see as ‘tough on crime’).

In multiparty systems things become much fuzzier. First of all, parties do not compete for the support of a majority of the voters but with ideologically similar parties for the vote of their potential electorate. In order to be competitive they would want to emphasize those issues that help to distinguish them from their direct competitors. Yet, these could be issues that are considered important by only a small subgroup of the electorate. As a case in point, most Green parties in Europe do not expect to get more than 10 per cent of the votes in a national election. So, for them it is important to be attractive for a small group of voters with strong feelings about the environment and who agree with the party’s position on this issue. So, even if 90 per cent of the voters disagree with a Green party and most voters do not see environmentalism as one of the ‘most important problems facing the country’, it could still be rational for a Green party to emphasize the issue of environmentalism in the campaign. If 10 per cent of the voters would agree with the policies that the Greens propose on environmentalism and if those 10 per cent also feel that the issue needs to get more priority, a Green party could try to attract those 10 per cent by trying to bring attention to this issue and hence prime voters to make environmentalism a more important factor in the calculus of voters (see also Van der Brug and Berkhout 2015).

A second point is that the notion of competence is complicated in the case of small parties that have no prior experience in office. How are voters to judge whether or not such a party is ‘competent’? What does it mean when a respondent says in a survey interview that a radical right party that has never been in office ‘is best able to handle the issue of immigration’? Let’s take a step back and think of the three components that feature in the research agenda on issue voting/issue ownership: 1) competence, 2) salience/priorities/commitments and 3) policy positions. What kind of information is available to this respondent on the three components? Since the party has never held office there is no real information available about competence. Moreover, radical right parties have a notoriously poor track record at recruiting competent politicians (e.g. Mudde 2007), which makes it even more unlikely that the respondent really thinks that the party will be able to ‘solve the problems of immigration’ because of the managerial capabilities of the leader. There is, however, sufficient information available

about the other two components, priorities and positions. By emphasizing immigration, the party will signal its commitment to addressing the issue and there can also be no question about its policies: more restrictions on immigration. So, when a respondent says that UKIP is ‘best able to handle immigration’, my guess is that she means: ‘I agree with UKIP that migration needs to be restricted and that this is an issue that needs to get more priority.’ Yet, if this is what we are really measuring in an indirect way, why not develop more direct measures of priorities and positions instead of using the ‘issue competence’ question that turns out to be so problematic?

CONCLUSION AND MOVING FORWARD

The concept of issue ownership originated from the saliency theory of party competition, which was proposed originally as an alternative to spatial models (e.g. Robertson 1976; Budge and Farlie 1983). The idea was that direct confrontations between parties were quite rare and that instead parties were often selectively emphasizing issues that they ‘own’: topics on which they have a ‘competitive advantage’ or a ‘good reputation’. So, the competition would be about ‘valence’ – who is best able to deal with the most important problems (e.g. Petrocik 1996) – rather than about different policies. Reviewing the literature, Budge (2015) concluded that ‘issue ownership has turned into an “ambiguous” concept’. I wholeheartedly agree. In my view the origin of the confusion stems from two ambiguous concepts: valence and valence issues on the one hand and ‘issue competence’ on the other.

If ‘valence’ referred to the problem-solving capacities of a political leader or of his/her party, it would not be a problematic concept. It seems perfectly sensible to expect voters to consider not only the issues at stake and the positions that parties take on those issues but also whether the leaders of different parties would be competent to run the government. There is a whole literature on the effects of those leadership evaluations on the vote. The main point here is that in the large majority of cases these leadership effects are *independent of the issues* that are at stake.

Ever since Stokes (1963) introduced the concept of a valence issue scholars have been struggling to clearly distinguish between position and valence issues. Clearly Stokes was struggling with this himself when he defined *position issues* as those in which different actors propose different forms of government intervention and *valence issues* as those ‘where actors generally take the same position’ (1963, 372). ‘Taking the same positions’ is subsequently described as there being ‘overwhelming consensus as to the goals of government action’ (1963, 374). Had Stokes defined valence issues as those ‘where different actors agree about the most appropriate forms of government intervention’, the distinction between position and valence issues would have been clear. However, very few issues would then really count as valence issues. The scholars who invented the saliency theory soon

found out that many of the topics in their coding scheme needed to be represented by two categories: ‘military positive’ and ‘military negative’, ‘traditional morality positive’ and ‘traditional morality negative’ and so on. So, many issues clearly have opposite sides and the salience of each side varies over time and place. So, rather than thinking about an issue being either a valence or a position issue, it makes more sense to think of issues as being more or less polarized in terms of positions and being more or less salient at different moments in time (see also Kriesi et al. 2012; De Sio and Franklin 2012; De Vries and Hobolt 2012; Guinaudeau and Persico 2013; De Sio and Weber 2014; Van der Brug et al. 2015).

The notion of valence has been ‘translated’ in much of the literature as the competence of leaders or parties to solve specific issues (e.g. Petrocik 1996; Bélanger and Meguid 2008), also by authors who acknowledge that valence and position issues are hard to distinguish empirically (e.g. Green and Hobolt 2008). To measure issue ownership of parties these authors employ some form of the question about which party is ‘best able to deal with [an issue]’. In this chapter I pointed at four major problems attached to the use of these questions to measure issue ownership. First, competence is by no means restricted to the types of issue that are often called ‘valence’ issues. On the contrary, the largest threat to the reputation occurs when incumbent parties mess up on an issue about which opposition parties have proposed alternative lines of government action.

Second, evaluations of ‘which party is best at handling [an issue]’ are strongly affected by party preferences (e.g. Kuechler 1991; Bélanger and Meguid 2008; Wagner and Zeglovits 2014; Stubager and Slothuus 2013). To the extent that perceptions of competence are affected by party preferences, these evaluations are *independent* of the specific issue at stake. Needless to say, this undermines the validity of the variable as a measure of issue ownership.

Third, when voters distinguish between the competence of parties on different issues, these perceptions are strongly affected by agreement with the policies the parties propose (e.g. Bellucci 2006; Sanders et al. 2011; Stubager and Slothuus 2013; Therriault 2009). So, when a voter sees a leader as good at handling crime and immigration, but bad at handling abortion and euthanasia, the voter is not evaluating the ‘competence’ of the leader. She simply agrees with the positions of this leader on crime and immigration, but disagrees with him/her on abortion and euthanasia. So, while the issue ownership model has been developed as an alternative to spatial models, the core concept of the issue ownership model is measured by means of variables that are contaminated by issue positions, which, needless to say, are at the heart of those spatial models.

Finally, these problems are boosted when the concept of issue competence is applied to small and/or radical parties that have no established track record of government responsibility. In those cases voters have no information to judge the parties’ issue competence, which makes it even more plausible that they are judging agreement with the policy positions of these parties as well as their commitment to the issue.

For these reasons it is probably less surprising that the literature has increasingly paid attention to ‘associative issue ownership’ instead of ‘competence issue ownership’ (e.g. Van der Brug 2004; Bellucci 2006; Walgrave et al. 2012; Budge 2015; Walgrave et al. 2015). The associative dimension captures the extent to which an issue is seen as *important for a specific party*. It thus focuses exclusively on the extent to which a party is expected to prioritize an issue over other issues. This perspective puts less emphasis on the long-term competitive advantage implied by the term ‘ownership’, but perceives the extent to which parties are associated with certain issues as more dynamic.

Associative issue ownership does not have the four disadvantages connected to issue competence. How important an issue is for a party is unrelated to classifications of issues as being valence or position issues. Moreover, these perceptions are unlikely to be contaminated by party preferences or policy positions. Even a multiculturalist who feels disgusted by the rhetoric of an extreme right party would probably agree that immigration is an important issue for such a party. Finally, a clear advantage is that even a small and unpopular party might be seen as an issue owner when people agree that the issue is very important to the party. So, this assessment of issue ownership depends neither upon a party’s popularity nor upon the popularity of its issue positions (Van der Brug 2004; Walgrave et al. 2012, 2015).

So, to move our research agenda forward we are well advised to focus on the associative dimension of issue ownership, which is conceptually much closer to the saliency model of party competition. By emphasizing an issue, a party shows its commitment to addressing the specific issue. That is an important signal to voters who want parties to give more priority to addressing that specific issue. Such a conceptualization is not far off the conceptualization of Petrocik (1996). After all, he argued that by emphasizing certain problems in an election campaign, a party signals to voters that it ‘is more sincere and committed to doing something about them’ (Petrocik 1996, 826). If this is the causal argument, we do not need to bring in the confusing concept of ‘issue competence’.

To be sure, I am not advocating that we should drop the notion of competence altogether. Voters’ perceptions of leaders can play an important role in their calculus. So, voters may decide to support a party when they see its leader as being sympathetic, decisive or competent at managing complex problems. Yet, these considerations should not play a role in models of *issue voting*. When modelling the role of issues in elections, we should restrict ourselves to the two components of issue competition: position taking and priority setting.

Note

1 The list of countries has expanded over time. By now, 56 countries are included: <https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/>

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Valence

Jane Green and Will Jennings

INTRODUCTION

‘Valence’ refers broadly to performance and competence. In its most simple form, a voter makes a valence-based vote choice when they make a choice based upon the performance of a party or candidate. This can be contrasted with positional voting, when a voter makes a choice based on a preferred policy goal, with identity-based voting – such as a choice based on class, ethnicity, religion or gender, or when a voter makes a choice consistent with their pre-existing party attachment – their partisanship. But the simplest definition of valence voting hides a variety of different definitions, operationalizations and debates, precisely because this general definition opens up the potential for a myriad of interpretations, and those different interpretations lead to competing claims based on different tests and assumptions. This is not to say that the concept of valence is not useful and important. Valence voting increasingly represents one of the most popular explanations for electoral choice, and with good reason, as we will show. But with this increasing popularity comes a need for common concepts and measurement and for new strides in a field characterized by strong literatures which do not always speak the same language. This chapter highlights insights from the valence field as well as the problems in the many uses of the concept of valence. It seeks to offer syntheses, solutions and new directions.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A VALENCE ISSUE?

The first problem comes in the definition of what a ‘valence issue’ is, and indeed whether any issue should be defined as a discrete concept and in such a static way.

The seminal work on valence (in the political science literature) is Donald Stokes' article 'Spatial Models of Party Competition', published in 1963. Stokes was responding to the dominant spatial explanation of vote choices (advocated by Downs 1957). Stokes argued that these accounts did not fit the empirical reality of how electorates or leaders behave. There are some issues on which there is no real competition about different policy alternatives; competition is rather about performance, competence, handling, trust and managerial success, or failure. These policy issues were called 'valence issues'.

Stokes (1963; 1992) defined position issues as 'those that involve advocacy of government actions from a set of alternatives over which a distribution of voter preferences is defined' and valence issues as 'those that merely involve the linking of the parties with some condition that is positively or negatively valued by the electorate' (Stokes 1963: 373). Stokes argued that, among the symbolic components of valence, success or failure appear most important, and 'valences' are learnt by the electorate 'from its experiences with the parties and the leaders, and the results they achieve, over time' (Stokes 1992: 150). He noted, in addition, that '(P)arties may be unequally linked in the public's mind with the universally approved conditions of good times, and the universally disapproved conditions of bad times' (1992: 144). If the condition has passed, the evaluation focuses on credit or blame for past performance. If the condition is a future or current state, then the 'argument turns on which party, given possession of the government, is the more likely to bring it about' (Stokes 1963: 373). The linking of a party with 'good times' or 'bad times' is not dissimilar to one of Converse's (1962) five categories of voters, whose choices are not based on ideology but on the 'nature of the times', associating particular parties with states of prosperity or war. Stokes argues that there are some issues on which choices are about valence, whereas Converse argues that there is a category of non-ideological voters who, in effect, make choices based on valence.

It would be a misunderstanding to assume that Stokes' definition of 'valence issues' relates to issues of policy alone. Stokes did not confine the term 'valence issues' only to policy outputs and handling. He included definitions such as good times and bad times, good economic times and hard times, war, American prestige abroad, low levels of crime, economic growth and success or failure in government (Stokes 1963; 1992). Clark (2009) helpfully highlighted how, for Stokes, valence issues include both policy characteristics (such as economic prosperity) and non-policy characteristics (the absence of corruption). These policy and non-policy characteristics have continued in definitions of 'valence issues' including, for example, the ability to deliver on policy, commitment and/or managerial competence on an issue, a nation safe from external enemies, a clean environment, a well-educated citizenry (Egan 2008), peace, prosperity or virtue in government (Stone and Simas 2010), prosperity, a scandal-free administration and the absence of inflation (MacDonald and Rabinowitz 1998). Clark (2009) used the concepts of scandal and corruption to develop a measure of valence using Keesing's *Record of World Events* to code political scandals, intra-party divisions and events that undermine party elites' reputations for competence.

A further misunderstanding arises where researchers treat issues as falling into either valence or positional categories, as if those categories were permanent and discrete. Valence issues tend to represent goals shared by voters and parties alike (Green 2007), whereas the preferences of both parties and voters must be distributed ‘over an ordered set of alternatives for the spatial model to work’ (Stokes 1963: 474). However, these are overlapping categorizations, and they ought to be changing characterizations as a function of time, context, political competition and framing, and also as a function of the heterogeneity in individual voters’ perspectives.

An issue could be positional or valence depending on whether it refers to ends or means (Fiorina 1981). Valence issues most commonly relate to shared ends, such that the majority of or all citizens agree on those ends (for example, peace and prosperity, or lower crime), whereas position issues relate to disagreements over the means to those or different ends (such as more or less military intervention, which fiscal policies to pursue, whether to prioritize tougher prison sentences or rehabilitation programmes, to tax more or to spend less). Stone and Simas (2010: 372) touch on the distinction between ends and means when they say:

political outcomes often turn on which party is associated with valued outcomes such as virtue in government, peace, and low unemployment. It is true that position issues relate to how best to achieve these valued outcomes, but election outcomes are sometimes more dependent on which party is associated with such outcomes (or blamed for their opposites) than on which party is closer to the electorate on how best to achieve them.

But most policy issues concern both ends and means, and whether an evaluation equates to a ‘valence issue’ or a ‘position issue’ will invariably depend on how that issue evaluation is defined and empirically operationalized. Issue preferences are measured in different ways; sometimes they are about ends (whether incomes should be equal, for example) and sometimes about means (whether to tax progressively). The example of inequality highlights a point. Not all relatively consensual ends will be supported by all; there is often a significant overlap between valence and position. Most policy issues exhibit both aspects and, if they don’t, they might be considered to be representative of underlying moral ‘values’ (represented by different attitudes towards gay marriage, abortion, euthanasia and so on). This somewhat ignores the non-policy characteristics of valence topics, but it suggests that almost any policy issue could be valence in nature, and any issue could be positional, depending on its political and electoral framing. This could also change over time, such that an issue may be more or less consensual. In addition, issues on which there is more or less consensus in public opinion still have a positional element. It would be highly unusual, then, to assume that a consensual issue contains no information relevant to a spatial model of voting and electoral competition, and vice versa. As argued by Egan (2008: 3), ‘it is sensible that on valence issues, voters evaluate candidates with regard to both position (that is, the solution they propose to a particular public

policy problem) and valence (the likelihood that they and their party will enact the solution should they be elected'). Even an issue such as the economy cannot be viewed in a discrete category of valence (Sanders and Gavin 2004; Lewis-Beck and Nadeau 2011). Voters will evaluate a government on its economic approach from an ideological perspective, and also its success, or otherwise. As Stokes (1963: 373) said himself, position issues 'lurk behind' many valence issues.

The main definition for Stokes is whether the major terms of the political debate – and the electoral and political salience of the issue – concern the question of which party can deliver or which policy means will achieve it. Valence issues relate to the politicization of competence, handling or delivery. Even a relatively consensual policy issue does not become a valence issue for Stokes, therefore, unless the political debate concerns delivery, trust, handling or competence towards that issue (see Green and Jennings forthcoming for a test of this argument). And position issues can also be transformed into valence issues if the terms of the debate concern which party can deliver on a widely held policy end or on the handling of a war, the way out of recession, the reduction of crime, the delivery of public services and so on. Thus the debate about whether issues are 'valence' or 'position' by definition is misleading. The key for Stokes (and for us) is whether the electorate is making a decision on the basis of valence or on the basis of position, depending on how the particular issue becomes contentious – in either valence or position terms – in mainstream political debate.

These clarifications call for greater precision in the specification of models and assumptions based on 'valence issues', and better measurement of when valence considerations are important. We might not look just to measures of electoral preferences and evaluations but also to the content of political competition and coverage. This is an area of analysis which has not yet been undertaken, but, according to Stokes, when the choice is predominantly about performance a valence-based electoral decision should be more important. When the choice is predominantly about ideological choice, position-based electoral decisions should be more important (see Green 2007; Green and Hobolt 2008 for theoretical specification and analyses of the latter argument; see also Lupton, Enders and Jacoby, this Volume, on the role of ideology and core values).

VALENCE ISSUES AND ISSUE OWNERSHIP: CONCEPTUAL OVERLAP

The literature on valence rarely intersects with the literature on issue ownership (see Petrocik 1996; Petrocik et al. 2003; see also Budge and Farlie 1983; Egan 2013; van der Brug, this Volume), and yet there is an aspect of the concept of issue ownership that relates to performance and competence on issues – that is, to valence. Just as the notion of a 'valence issue' offers only a fine distinction

between a competence evaluation on an issue and a positional evaluation, however, so the notion of issue ownership has combined – or conflated – two aspects of a party's reputation and rating on a policy, meaning that these literatures have thus far failed to use a common conceptual language.

Petrocik (1996: 826) explained that issue ownership is:

the ability to resolve a problem of concern to voters. It is a reputation for policy and program interests, produced by a history of attention, initiative and innovation toward these problems, which leads voters to believe that one of the parties (and its candidates) is more sincere and committed to doing something about them.

Petrocik described the changing issue agenda as the point of between-election variation, but issue handling reputations and the voters' bias towards the party advantaged by the issue as 'critical constants'. Petrocik (1996: 827) continued, 'Party constituency ownership of an issue is much more long-term (although it can change and occasionally exhibits fluctuation) because its foundation is (1) the relatively stable, but different social bases, that distinguish party constituencies in modern party systems and (2) the link between political conflict and social structure'. Petrocik also referred to 'short-term' ownership, where the definition of ownership is a positive competence or handling 'lease', rather than trust and competence being an outcome of long-term party constituency representation, innovation and initiative. This, we suggest, is the most obvious 'valence' component of the concept of issue ownership. Making this distinction may open up a range of useful ways to understand both how valence advantages are won and lost and the impact of those assessments. It is also, then, important to disentangle valence assessments from long-term constituency-representation 'ownership'. This constituency representation means that parties come to be associated with issues in the minds of voters. Hence issue ownership is in part 'associative' (Walgrave et al. 2012; 2015).

The valence aspect of Petrocik's concept of ownership is very similar to Stokes' explanation of valence issues. Indeed, where Petrocik refers to 'performance issues' when he speaks of 'short-term ownership' we might substitute 'valence issues'. Budge and Farlie (1983: 42) also referred to 'performance issues' as issues owned by neither or any party. Petrocik et al. (2003: 602) outlined that:

Short-term circumstances can change the advantage on performance issues when, for example, foreign policy failures or economic downturns occur. Candidates or parties can even lose control of their issues in the short term because dissatisfied voters will be inclined to deny the party or candidate with whom they are unhappy any redeeming qualities.

In this sense, the notion of ownership as a performance-based lease seems entirely consistent with the notion of a 'valence issue' (Stokes 1963), as long as this performance-based lease is the basis of political framing and of voting decisions. Petrocik described how policy performance in government can afford

an opposition party a lease on an issue. ‘The record of the incumbent creates a handling advantage when one party can be blamed for current difficulties … wars, failed international or domestic policies, unemployment and inflation, or official corruption can happen at any time and provide one party with a “lease” – short-term ownership – of a performance issue’ (Petrocik 1996: 827). Thus, insofar as ownership is a ‘critical constant’, it is only a constant within an election itself, rather than a between-election constant which might be inferred by the long-term association of a party with an issue.

The notion of long-term party reputations on issues may also be consistent with an evaluation based on valence if the representation of constituencies and the history of attention, innovation and so on comes to prime voters to consider a choice based on performance rather than position. We suspect that there is a strong positional component to long-term issue ownership and a strong valence-based component to the idea of a short-term performance-based lease, with some elements of the other in each (see also Wagner and Zeglovits 2014). We argue elsewhere (Green and Jennings forthcoming) that the former should be defined as ownership and the latter as a more straightforward evaluation for policy performance. This allows us to separate explanations for origins, changes and the consequences of public opinion about competence relating to longer-term party strengths on issues and to short-term volatility in performance assessments.

STRETCHING ‘VALENCE ISSUES’ TO A RANGE OF PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Until this point, this chapter has referred to ‘valence issues’, and has included a discussion of how the term valence has been applied to non-policy characteristics such as corruption, peace and ‘good times’. Just as the term ‘valence issue’ can be interpreted broadly, so its operationalization has been broadened, and significantly so. The breadth of possible concepts in the term ‘valence’ has led to a breadth in the way ‘valence’ is measured.

The British Election Study (BES) has been a leading source of electoral data and analysis since 1964. The team running the study for the 2001, 2005 and 2010 British general elections advocated a focus on valence to understand electoral choice in these elections. Indeed, three important books published by the BES team (Clarke et al. 2004; 2009; Whiteley et al. 2013) argued that valence should always have been the dominant explanation of electoral choice in Britain, such is its explanatory power in models of vote choice. This focus moved attention to the proximate factors in the funnel of causality – those factors voters use to choose between parties based on their recent and current performance, rather than factors more distant in the causal chain, such as voters’ class identity, ideological preferences and values and geographic context.

Clarke et al. (2004; 2009; see also Whiteley et al. 2013; Clarke et al. 2011; Sanders et al. 2011) use a range of performance-based measures to reflect their model of valence, such as assessments of party handling on a range of policy issues and ‘the most important issue’, leader evaluations, economic judgements and, perhaps most controversially, party identification. This latter decision reflects the view that partisanship is updated in response to the performance of parties and leaders, in line with Fiorina’s (1981) ‘running tally’ model (see below for further discussion of this definition and its alternative). A model including these ‘valence variables’ is a powerful predictor of vote choice. This is the case for several reasons, of course: (i) performance judgements are slightly easier for survey respondents to make than, for example, self- and party-placements on different ideological scales, meaning that there is likely to be less error and therefore greater statistical power in assessments of performance. This may, however, simply under-estimate the importance of policy positions. (ii) Performance evaluations probably exhibit greater variance than voters’ class identification, partisanship or other variables further back in the causal chain. These individual-level ‘constants’ may be highly important but exhibit apparently less explanatory power. (iii) Many issue-based performance variables are asked in ways which make them likely to be related to party choice. Asking whether a *party* has handled or will handle an issue well, or which ‘*party* is best’ on the most important issue, leads to a strong amount of party priming, encouraging voters to give responses consistent with their vote choice.¹ They are also commonly asked in close proximity in surveys, which may inflate the relationship between these evaluations and reported vote choice. (iv) Performance judgements may be especially important in some elections because parties successfully (or unintentionally) make the choice about competence. We shouldn’t necessarily conclude that performance-based models are a ‘one size fits all’ solution. (v) Finally, we should expect a performance-based model to have greatest explanatory power simply because these judgements are the most important. But it should be clear that it is quite difficult to isolate this as the only reason for the importance of valence assessments in electoral choice.

Clarke et al. (2004; 2009; see also Whiteley et al. 2013) have made a hugely important contribution to the focus on valence in electoral politics, extending the performance model of electoral behaviour. The use of ‘valence’ to define all performance models suggests that there is a significant conceptual overlap between ‘valence’ and the existing concepts in the electoral politics literature – others covered in this Volume. We might even call much of political science a focus on valence, thereby recognizing the broad foundations in the discipline as a part of our understanding of valence: those scholars analysing economic voting, presidential approval and leadership effects, the impacts of events, of wars and foreign policy, and the literature on macro-partisanship. The term ‘competence’ or ‘valence’ has rarely if ever been previously used to define it.

If we think of valence as competence or performance – those traits associated with the competence and effectiveness of leaders, and associated with the

management and performance of the economy (Johns et al. 2009) – then these ‘valence variables’ are among the most important in electoral research.² If defined more narrowly, there is still an important hinterland of scholarly literature highlighting the importance of ‘competence’.

In the U.S. context, competence has long been viewed in terms of candidate qualities and specific presidential issue handling strengths. McCurley and Mondak’s (1995) work is perhaps the best-known analysis of candidate competence. Voters evaluate congressional candidates according to how effective – in terms of competence and integrity – they will be as agents. McCurley and Mondak’s focus on effectiveness was central to their evaluation that voters are concerned with the quality of their representatives in government. Incumbent integrity was directly associated with vote choice, and competence has an indirect effect via the influence on the behaviour of challengers. The weaker the incumbent in terms of competence, the stronger the challenger’s competence was found to be, suggesting that parties select on competence traits when they perceive there to be a competitive competence-based advantage. Luttbeg (1992) assessed the relationship between media ratings, where scores were based on dimensions of competence and integrity, and the electoral success of state legislators, finding that legislators with the highest evaluations experienced 12 per cent higher re-election rates. Personal integrity and competence are valued by constituents who cannot monitor every decision their representatives make (Bianco 1994). Such candidate competence traits may find their roots in policy reputations and incumbency (Carmines and Kuklinski 1990). Kinder (1986) divided candidate trait ratings into four content dimensions labelled competence, leadership, integrity and empathy. Recent work by Todorov et al. (2005) even reveals that fine-grained trait evaluations are not necessary to predict candidate evaluations and election outcomes; a brief one-second exposure to candidate faces is sufficient to elicit an unreflective trait inference effect based on the appearance of competence.

The literature on presidential approval has focused more directly on policy performance than on character strengths and reputation. Researchers have analysed the issue of foreign policy and its effects on presidential approval (Aldrich et al. 1989), the electoral consequences of presidential handling of war (Krosnick and Brannon 1993), the effects of crime levels and economic mismanagement and issue handling upon trust in government (Chanley et al. 2000; Citrin and Green 1986) as well as presidential issue handling and its relationship to presidential vote (Miller and Wattenberg 1985; Cover 1986). These investigations are all focused on U.S. politics, where leadership studies naturally follow presidential races, popularity and performance, but their lessons are applicable to parliamentary systems as well.

The economy is argued to be the classic ‘valence issue’, where a strong and growing economy is believed to be valued and supported by all. But the economic voting literature rarely refers to its focus as a focus on valence. The economy is undoubtedly one of the (if not the) most important and influential policy

issues (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000; Stegmaier, Lewis Beck and Park, this Volume). Economic growth is eventually tied to public spending on a range of other policy issues, and arguably at an individual level the financial welfare of any household may come above concerns over other domestic policy. But there is enormous heterogeneity within the electorate, and there is contextual heterogeneity in the importance of the economy over time (Lewis-Beck 1990). It is curious that the economy has been so widely theorized and analysed to the relative exclusion of similar or even modest theorizing of other policy issue effects. Conversely, the literature on issue ownership has not dealt separately with the issue of the economy (for a rare exception, see Bélanger and Nadeau 2015). We might question whether a party really ‘owns’ the issue of the economy, but a lack of thinking about these two literatures means that any theoretical distinctions are absent. And the deep theoretical work on economic voting could usefully be applied to a wider range of ‘valence’-based considerations, policy and otherwise.

CAUSATION AND VALENCE: THE PARTY IDENTIFICATION DEBATE

Some scholars argue that measures of party identification represent indicators of public opinion about performance (see Dinas, this *Handbook*, Volume 1, for a definition of this). The notion of party identification as a running tally of events and information about competence is argued strongly by Fiorina (1981), MacKuen et al. (1989), Clarke et al. (2004; 2009) and Whiteley et al. (2013; 2016), and argued equally strongly against by others (e.g. Green et al. 1998; Gerber and Green 1998; Green et al. 2004; Evans and Andersen 2006; Evans and Chzhen 2016; Pickup and Evans 2013). As discussed above, Whiteley et al. (2005) and Clarke et al. (2006) analyse the effects of valence considerations on vote choices in the 2005 British general election using respondent’s ratings of party issue handling alongside party leadership images, ‘malleable partisan orientations’ and attitudes towards the Iraq War. This is also consistent with models used by Clarke et al. (2004; 2009) and Whiteley et al. (2013). Sanders et al. (2011) estimate models using what they call ‘valence heuristics’: namely, party leader images, party performance evaluations and ‘mutable partisan attachments’.

Scholars arguing against the running tally model suggest that partisanship is far too close to vote choice to be used as an explanatory variable, and evaluations of competence are endogenous to (caused by) partisanship, where partisanship is viewed as a source of evaluative bias. For example, Evans and Andersen (2006) demonstrate the endogeneity of economic perceptions to partisanship (see also Pickup and Evans 2013; see Lewis-Beck and Costa Lobo, this Volume, for an alternative perspective on this) and Evans and Chzhen (2016) demonstrate how assessments of handling on different policy issues are also endogenous, a point contested by Whiteley et al. (2016) (see Wlezien 2016 for a helpful reply to this theoretical and methodological debate).

The debate represents a fundamental disagreement about how we analyse and understand the electoral importance of ‘valence’. Either party identification constitutes an important measure of valence that has substantial macro- and individual-level explanatory power, or models adopting this decision and measure significantly over-estimate the contribution of valence, due to the endogenous nature of competence assessments as a function of partisan affiliation. The conceptual disagreement is also important; either partisan identification represents an essential measure to capture the bias, assimilation and projection effects arising from individual-level psycho-social identification with political parties, or it represents a summary measure of subjective updating of performance.

We advocate a focus on the following question: ‘when and under what conditions does party identification represent a running tally of performance evaluations and when do performance evaluations flow from partisanship?’ It is plausible that some political contexts will lead to stronger relationships between partisanship and performance assessments than will others. Indeed, we expect that this contextual expectation of stronger or weaker partisan effects is consistent with research investigating the contextual nature of the changing relationship between partisanship and positional voting. Analysis of elite polarization in the U.S. by Carsey and Layman (2006), for example, finds that under conditions of strong elite polarization, when party differences are salient, policy preferences have a stronger causal impact upon partisanship, but when those policy differences are not present or salient partisanship more often guides voter’s policy preferences. Conversely, Milazzo et al. (2012) find that when the British parties depolarized during the 1990s left-right preferences had a weaker effect upon partisanship. When there is strong party-based cueing of valence-based considerations, such that parties are clearly differentiated on valence, and when valence is high in salience, we might likewise expect the endogenous effect of one’s partisan biases to be weaker. However, if a voter lacks information about the performance or competence of a party they may be likely to rely on their partisanship as a reliable heuristic. Hence, Green and Jennings (2012a), consistent with Fiorina’s (1981) expectations, find a stronger relationship from vote choice to competence evaluations for parties in opposition (when voters have less reliable information about the performance of a challenger party, and so make a hypothetical judgement) and a stronger relationship from competence evaluations to vote choices for parties in government (when voters can assess their experience of the governing competence of a party). For governing parties, and in periods where there are strong salient cues about competence for a party, these evaluations should exert a greater effect upon partisanship. Even a strongly aligned supporter of a party may recognize that their party has failed to be managerially competent. We propose these arguments as possible ways forward in this literature, but we by no means yet have the answers ourselves to this debate.

What we do know is that some survey measures look as though they are more prone to problems of endogeneity than others. Using measures such as the ‘best

party on the most important issue' leads to an overall correspondence with party identification far stronger than the correspondence of party identification and retrospective issue-based evaluations such as simple evaluations of whether a policy outcome has got better or worse. Given the party-based priming of measures such as 'best party' assessments on issues, and whether a party has or would handle an issue well, we advocate analyses of which survey measures are more and less prone to concerns over endogeneity. This might enable further insights into when – and using which measures – the stronger relationship is from competence to partisanship, and vice versa.

A CATCH-ALL TERM IN THE FORMAL LITERATURE

The term 'valence' is applied not only in the empirical literature; its use in the formal theoretical literature has been even broader, perhaps even simply denoting everything that is not a spatial parameter in any formal equation. But there are also some useful insights from this sub-field.

Formal theories of spatial voting and party competition have most often incorporated the notion of valence in order to explain divergent and extreme party policy positions, or to make predictions of party depolarization and moderation. Parties or candidates vary in their 'score' on a valence dimension and the implications of these valence scores are considered for spatial position-taking (e.g. Enelow and Hinich 1982; Anderson and Glomm 1992; Cameron and Enelow 1992; Londregan and Romer 1993; Harrington and Hess 1996).

A range of scholars argue that candidates or parties with a higher 'valence score' or an advantage on a 'valence dimension' will tend to take more moderate spatial policy positions (MacDonald and Rabinowitz 1998; Ansolabehere and Snyder 2000; Groseclose 2001). This expectation received empirical support from Adams et al. (2011), where valence was defined as a personal character advantage for a competing candidate. Valence advantages may have different predictions for competing parties. Groseclose (2001) theorized that if the valence characteristics of two candidates are roughly equal, a valence advantage increase will cause one candidate to move toward the centre and the candidate's opponent to move away from the centre. Adams et al. (2011), differentiating between character valence and strategic valence, found that challengers who are superior to the incumbent in their character-based valence have incentives to moderate their policy positions. In a more complex set of considerations, Schofield (2004) found that parties' vote-maximizing positions are a balance between a centripetal tendency, due to exogenous valence (such as candidate quality), and also a centrifugal tendency. This is induced by activist valence – the electoral benefit provided to candidates by party activism. We might therefore expect a candidate with a valence advantage to pursue more moderate policies, unless a countervailing force is stronger with respect to motivating activists in the candidate's campaign.

Others have argued that a valence advantage can account for extreme spatial policy positions that might not otherwise be explained by spatial utility-based parameters. Assuming that most candidates wish to pursue their own policy-seeking preferences, a valence advantage is argued to permit candidates to do so, an expectation which receives some support in the formal modelling of Bruter et al. (2010), in empirical evidence at the level of parties using a corruption and scandal-based measure of valence (Clark 2014) and in the empirical analyses of U.S. congressional voting. House members with strong personal reputations have greater leeway to take risks with their voting decisions, withstand constituency pressure and vote contrary to their district preferences (Fenno 1978: also see Burden 2004). Serra (2010) argues that valence polarization is correlated with platform polarization such that, if one candidate spends much more in a campaign than another (valence polarization), candidates will adopt different platforms if they have different levels of valence. Kim (2005) introduced a valence parameter to models with major parties and minor extreme parties, arguing that valence could explain the divergence of major parties when competing with minor extreme parties. Zakharov (2009) treats valence as endogenous. Candidates act in a two-stage process whereby they will choose divergent policy platforms strategically at the first stage in order to economize on the cost of ‘buying’ valence at the second stage, where valence is campaign spending.

The aforementioned models treat valence as a separate dimension to spatial position, but this assumption has also been relaxed. These models provide insight into the potential ways candidates and parties may increase their valence or suffer a valence disadvantage. As argued by Ansolabehere and Snyder (2000: 333), ‘the issue positions that parties or candidates take depend on their relative advantages on the valence issue’. Schofield (2004), conversely, links a positional strategy that is closer to the policy positions of activists to an increase in party valence by adopting a definition of valence as activist support. He also defines another kind of ‘exogenous’ valence as the high or low valence of a leader (Schofield 2004). Ashworth and Bueno de Mesquita (2009) argue that there is a negative relationship between polarization and valence, such that higher polarization leads to lower valence scores and vice versa. Serra (2011) suggests that parties choose to adopt primary elections in order to increase the ‘valence’ of their candidate, especially if they are unpopular and/or in opposition. Similarly, Meiowitz (2008) argued that a disadvantaged candidate will exert more effort to increase his or her valence, given the necessity of gaining an advantage in this valence dimension.

Valence has been especially associated with the qualities of candidates. Models assume that candidates vary in their ability to deliver services to constituents, and study the implications for shirking, the advantage of incumbency and voter control (e.g. Rogoff and Siebert 1988; Rogoff 1990). Stone and Simas (2010) examine the valence qualities of candidates, defining campaign and character dimensions of candidate valence, or personal quality and strategic quality. Adams et al. (2011) reveal how character valence, which includes candidate competence,

experience, credibility, honesty and dedication to public service, is beneficial to voters after an election. Strategic valence includes factors that are useful only to gain votes during the electoral campaign, and includes funding, name recognition and campaigning skills. Galasso and Nannicini (2011) define a high valence candidate as one with higher education, prior market income and local government experience; low valence candidates are party loyalists.

Furthermore, there are indicators that valence will be more important to a voter's utility calculation – and therefore to party and candidate considerations – under certain contexts. One such context arises from the multiplicative effect of valence and position. Hollard and Rossignol (2008) suggest that the degree of candidate corruption (their definition of valence) matters more if the candidate proposes a high level of public spending. Another interesting suggestion by Zakharov (2009) is that valence (defined as campaign spending) is more important the higher the number of non-partisans in the voting electorate, because valence can be more decisive for the outcome. Greatest attention, however, has been given to the policy-based differences between competing parties or candidates. It has been argued that, if parties adopt similar policy positions, this makes a candidate with a valence advantage difficult or impossible to defeat, increasing the imperative on valence (Aragones and Palfrey 2004; Berger et al. 2000; Feld and Grofman 1991). Groseclose (2001) incorporates such an effect into his dynamic model of competing incentives. If one candidate moderates and chooses a position closer to an opponent this results in a de-emphasis of policy, even if this move is motivated by a policy-based utility gain. This is beneficial only if the candidate also has a valence advantage. Groseclose (2001: 863) says 'In effect, she causes the median voter to say "Well, if the candidates are so similar on policy, I'll vote for the one who is superior on valence"'. Empirical support for this contention has been found in the U.K. by Green and Hobolt (2008) and argued for by Green (2007). But if a measure of positional dispersion is used across a party system, research suggests that the more ideologically dispersed the parties in a system, the higher the effect of (character-based) valence upon electoral choice (Clark and Leiter 2014).

VALENCE SOUP

The above applications of 'valence' demonstrate how important the concept has been in the development of a wide range of theories of candidates, parties and elections. But these applications also demonstrate how the term 'valence' can be used to capture almost any positive candidate or party characteristic, sometimes with a specific definition but often undefined.

Thus far authors have defined valence as a valence dimension, a party valence score, valence as a candidate's character or strategic advantage, a leader advantage or disadvantage, valence as a strategic advantage, as candidate quality, candidate

experience, education or the lack thereof, as party activism, the level of activist support, candidate spending, the reputation of candidates, scandals and corruption (or their absence) in political parties and corruption at the level of candidates. A wider search of the literature (in applications too numerous to detail) reveals valence defined as incumbency (Zakharov 2009), the degree of uncertainty associated with candidates' locations on positional issues (e.g. Enelow and Hinich 1981; Bernhardt and Ingberman 1985; Hinich and Munger 1989; Ingberman 1992) or simply 'the personal vote' (Anscombe and Snyder 2000). To this list we can add high levels of name recognition and goodwill among electorates (Mayhew 1974; Fiorina 1977), charisma, name recognition and greater campaign funds (Kim 2005; Serra 2010), superior character or intelligence (Groseclose 2001), the skills, assets and resources that candidates need for campaigning (Serra 2011), campaign spending on advertising (Zakharov 2009), negative campaigning (Curini and Martelli 2010) and even better handshaking skills (Holland and Rossignol 2008)! And the list doesn't stop there. Some authors define valence as honesty and integrity (Wittman 2005) or the knowledge and reputation of a party's staff and activists (Enelow and Hinich 1982). From the precise to the general, valence has been defined as the variation in popularity of each candidate in the electorate (Schofield 2003), 'the candidate advantage where one candidate is more popular than the other' (Bruter et al. 2010: 157), a dimension orthogonal to policy; a non-policy attribute of candidates (Serra 2010) and a non-policy advantage.

These varied definitions beg the question of what kind of valence matters most, or when, and whether different definitions of valence would lead to different theoretical and empirical predictions. They also raise the question of whether valence is about competence, strength or performance *per se*, or whether it denotes the effect of any positive attribute or non-policy electoral benefit or asset. Few of the theories above are developed using empirical evidence or testing empirical implications (for exceptions see MacDonald and Rabinowitz 1989; Stone and Simas 2010; Adams et al. 2011; Clark 2014). Only one example engages with the widely used argument that policy issues can be valence or position issues (Stokes 1963; 1992) or with competence, handling or delivery on any policy issue *per se*: Anscombe and Snyder (2000: 328) adopt a similar definition of valence issues to Stokes, showing that the presence of valence issues in multidimensional competition results in equilibria in the spatial model. They single out the ability to provide foreign policy leadership as an example of a valence issue, arguing: 'if one candidate has a large enough advantage on a valence issue, then that candidate will win the election almost regardless of where the candidates locate in the policy space, so equilibria will be positive' (Anscombe and Snyder 2000: 328). There is also a very noticeable mismatch between the formal literature on valence and the many ways in which competence and performance have been analysed in the empirical literature, with respect to both the general concepts of competence and performance, and the literature on competence on policy issues and associated theories of party competition.

There exist a range of formal uses of the term valence which are so diverse that they raise problems for empirical validation. And many of the definitions – campaign spending, candidate strengths, activist levels and so on – can be independently measured and conceptualized. They may improve a candidate's electoral prospects, but any electoral asset does not need to be defined as competence. We should differentiate between 'valence as asset' and 'valence as competence'. The latter is conceptually and empirically distinct.

NEW DIRECTIONS

We propose three concepts for analysing public opinion about *issue* competence, or valence (Green and Jennings forthcoming), and we distinguish these conceptually and in measurement terms from economic evaluations, leader evaluations and partisanship. The three concepts we advocate are: i) issue ownership, where this is defined as long-term reputations of parties on issues. We suggest that there is a valence aspect to long-term associations, but long-term ownership is primarily about constituency representation, although even this 'long-term' ownership is subject to substantial variability. (ii) Changes in performance-based issue evaluations, akin to Petrocik's idea of a lease which parties are given on 'performance issues' but separate to a notion of 'ownership'. (iii) Generic evaluations of party competence across issues, which capture the degree to which public opinion tends to move in common across policy issues, following the ideas of heuristics, transfer and shared variance in public opinion over time. Until now we have described valence and/or performance and issue ownership as independent variables, most commonly explaining vote choices and party strategies in campaigns. But valence is also a dependent variable, or it can be treated as such. Teasing out clearer conceptual distinctions makes it possible to analyse the causes of issue ownership, explanations of ownership change, the impact of government performance on public opinion about performance and the nature of cycles of popularity – or 'costs of governing' in generic competence (see Green and Jennings forthcoming).

The third aspect of competence or 'valence' represents a new concept in the literature, but is consistent with Stokes' (1963) notion of general handling and reputation. Competence can be theorized as a generalized reputation – a prevailing opinion among citizens concerning the capability of a party or a candidate for governing (see Green and Jennings 2012b). Serious failures of policy handling, mismanagement of prominent crises or emergencies and scandals relating to politics or policy cause voters to update their perceptions regarding a party or candidate across the board. Because competence evaluations are subject to common variance, shocks to confidence or trust can lead to losses (or gains) across a wider portfolio of issues. As such, allegations of impropriety or corruption might signal to voters that a party or candidate is not to be trusted on a wide range of

policy issues. As we noted, research has demonstrated the empirical impact of scandals and corruption and treated corruption as a ‘valence issue’ (e.g. Stokes 1963; 1992; Clark 2009; Stone and Simas 2010; Abney et al. 2013).

Some of the factors that Petrocik (1996) identifies as giving rise to a ‘handling lease’ would similarly not be expected to impact on evaluations of specific policy issues in isolation. Petrocik (1996: 827) argues, ‘The record of the incumbent creates a handling advantage when one party can be blamed for current difficulties … wars, failed international or domestic policies, unemployment and inflation, or official corruption can happen at any time and provide one party with a “lease” – short-term ownership – of a performance issue’. In practice, while parties in opposition might be able to gain a lease on certain policy issues, incumbents hold responsibility for wars, foreign affairs, economic downturns and other policy problems, and major events of this sort can come to symbolize wider losses of trust and competence. A reputation for corruption would also be likely to translate to a deterioration of trust across the issue agenda. Petrocik et al. (2003: 602) further argue:

Short-term circumstances can change the advantage on performance issues when, for example, foreign policy failures or economic downturns occur. Candidates or parties can even lose control of their issues in the short term because dissatisfied voters will be inclined to deny the party or candidate with whom they are unhappy any redeeming qualities.

Where discontented voters are resistant to any positive information about a party or candidate, there is a much greater likelihood that this will lead to a drop in competence evaluations overall, rather than in relation to any specific performance issue. Bellucci (2006: 555) offers a similar characterization of party competence, defined as ‘people’s perception of party handling capacity *across* issues, that is to conceive it as a “general ruling competence”, the capacity to pursue policies effectively’. There is good reason, then, to believe that parties’ reputations for competence in part reflect generalized assessments of their performance across policy issues.

We have argued that there are two ways in which competence judgements are formed that give rise to a prevailing mood in public opinion on issue competence, or ‘macro-competence’ (Green and Jennings 2012b). The first is via experience with an issue and the performance of the government. When a voter receives a cue about performance, such as through salient events and economic shocks, we suggest that these cues are used to make inferences about performance on many issues; voters may transfer their evaluations in the sense that information about performance becomes a heuristic for judging a party on different issues. As Zaller and Feldman (1992: 609) explain, ‘the making of these judgements requires an aggregation of one’s feelings across frequently diverse concerns’. Second, we have suggested that these evaluations accumulate, so that voters accrue information over a period of office, most obviously for a party in government.

Evidence from the U.K. indicates that there is a strong underlying latent dimension in the public's evaluations of issue competence (Green and Jennings 2012b). Based on aggregate-level ratings of party issue handling over more than 50 years, it reveals a prevailing mood in public opinion about competence which accounts for more than 50 per cent of variance in these evaluations across all issues. This generalized evaluation of party competence, 'macro-competence', is found to respond to major political events – such as the Falklands War, the Exchange Rate Mechanism Crisis and the run on the Northern Rock bank – consistent with the idea that salient events or shocks can have a lasting impact on the reputation of parties for governing competently. Political and economic events provide important information to voters that enable them to update their competence evaluations and which are transferred across issues. These empirical findings also suggest a systematic pattern of decline in competence ratings for parties in office consistent with the 'costs of governing' and the accumulation of performance information over time.

Importantly, and reflecting the debate over the degree to which such performance evaluations are related to party choice and other evaluations, it is also found that, while macro-competence is a function of leader evaluations, partisanship, economic perceptions and events, this measure of issue handling captures distinct variation over time that is not simply reducible to other measures of public opinion or partisan support: 'While these broad movements in the public mood are affected by leader evaluations, partisan identification, events, economic shocks and time in office, the reputation of political parties for competence across issues are persistent and distinct from leader, partisan and economic effects' (Green and Jennings 2012b: 340). Further, evidence reveals a substantive and significant effect of competence in models of party support in the U.K. over the period between 1979 and 2008. This generalized reputation of parties across issues is therefore shown to have consequences for electoral behaviour. Comparative findings (Green and Jennings forthcoming) suggest similar dynamics in the formation of mass opinion on party competence and its consequences for party choice.

CONCLUSION

The term 'valence' has grown in prominence in electoral behaviour research as scholars have focused on the performance aspects of political evaluations and their very important electoral consequences. We have long known that economic evaluations hold central currency in explanations of electoral choice, and leader evaluations can be equally decisive. Adding partisanship to this mix, if partisanship is viewed as a running tally, and adding issue-based evaluations for competence and handling, results in models of party choice that explain large amounts of statistical variance in explanatory models of electoral choice. This very broad definition of valence builds on a hinterland of political science literature.

This chapter has sought to add greater clarity to uses of the term ‘valence’, reassessing the definition of ‘valence issues’ by Stokes to include policy characteristics and non-policy characteristics. Most importantly, we have highlighted how the distinction between position issues and valence issues is much more overlapping and fuzzy than assumed. Positional evaluations often include a valence aspect, and valence issues often include a positional aspect. Indeed, much of this comes down to political context, and also down to how public attitudes and opinions are measured: whether they are focused on means or ends. Furthermore, a very large part of whether an election is centered on valence concerns whether performance and/or competence is a central part of political competition and debate; valence has to be a salient part of an electoral contest for the election to be based on valence. This focus on campaign content is an important and most fruitful area for future research.

We have highlighted the problems of the use in the formal theoretical literature of the term ‘valence’ to mean almost anything and everything. We have argued that there is an important valence aspect in a literature that never mentions the term ‘valence’: in the literature on issue ownership, and how combining those insights might lead us to a better understanding of the nature of valence in electoral choice, and therefore in party competition.

This chapter has also highlighted a disagreement in the conceptualization of partisanship as a running tally assessment of performance or as a vital control variable to prevent analysts from over-estimating the explanatory power of competence, performance of ‘valence’. We have sought to provide some ways forward in resolving these two different perspectives, first by suggesting some contexts under which valence may be especially causally important and second by giving greater attention to the ways that public opinion about valence, or competence, is measured (specifically, eliminating as much partisan cueing in survey questions as possible).

Finally, in adding clarity to the literature on valence, we have offered a way which builds on the work of Stokes (1963) and on the party-competition literature on issue ownership (Petrocik 1996; see also Budge and Farlie 1983). We advocate conceptual clarity (see Green and Jennings forthcoming) that distinguishes between the long-term associative aspect of issue ownership but which includes analysis of any valence-based component of this association; the short-term performance evaluations that parties can gain and lose on issues (which we argue should not be termed ‘ownership’); and the generalized evaluations of a party on competence, which is based upon the generic evaluation of a party across the issue agenda, and associated with – but conceptually distinct to – the economy, leadership and party identification.

Notes

1 Assessments of the ‘best party to handle the most important issue’ also combine measurement of handling and of the importance of issues, with the latter having been shown to be a function of the

- problem status* of issues (see Jennings and Wlezien 2011), which makes it impossible to separate the effects.
- 2 The importance of being able to maintain a strong, stable economy is also listed in some formal work examining the consequences of candidate valence (see Ansolabehere and Snyder 2000).

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Value Cleavages

Romain Lachat

INTRODUCTION

The concept of ‘value cleavages’ has emerged in the literature on New Politics to denote new divisions among the electorate. It is most directly linked with the work of Inglehart (1977, 1984, 1990), who emphasized the emergence in advanced industrial societies of a new conflict between materialist and postmaterialist value orientations. Much empirical evidence was provided to show that the development of postmaterialist values among younger generations was a significant change and one that could be observed in a variety of countries. Following Inglehart, this value opposition had the potential to become a central dimension of political conflict. He argued that this division was strong and stable enough to durably affect the patterns of party competition. This led Inglehart and others to expect that this new value dimension could become as important as the traditional cleavages for structuring electoral competition and explaining voting choices. The concept of a ‘new value cleavage’ or ‘materialist–postmaterialist value cleavage’ (Inglehart 1987) was used to denote this emerging line of political conflict.

The hypothesis of a new cleavage, opposing citizens with materialist priorities and those with postmaterialist preferences, has led to intense debates in the literature. Part of this scholarship has focused on the nature of the process of value change identified by Inglehart. While most authors share the underlying intuition that new values and issues have emerged since the 1960s, the theoretical value model suggested by Inglehart has been criticized. The opposition

between materialist and postmaterialist orientations may not adequately reflect the nature of the divisions resulting from the process of value change (Flanagan 1987; Flanagan and Lee 2003). The use of the term ‘cleavage’ to denote such value-based dimensions of political conflict has also been criticized. The concept of cleavage, as considered by von Schoultz (this *Handbook*, Volume 1), usually implies an opposition between social groups that can be clearly defined and have a sense of common identity. It is far from being clear that the ‘new value cleavage’ fulfils this condition. Finally, other possible value cleavages have been identified, such as a libertarian–authoritarian dimension (Kitschelt 1994) or an integration–demarcation dimension (Kriesi et al. 2008). These often include the materialist–postmaterialist opposition as one element of a broader conception of the new value cleavage that reflects further social and economic changes influencing the structure of citizens’ attitudes.

This chapter will address these various aspects of the literature on value cleavages. As this concept is sometimes a source of confusion, the next section will define more precisely what a value cleavage is and it will distinguish it from traditional cleavages and other types of political divides. Then, the third section will turn to the materialist vs. postmaterialist value cleavage identified by Inglehart and review evidence on the strength and development of this dimension of conflict. The fourth section will address some of the critiques of Inglehart’s hypothesis and discuss alternatives conceptions of how New Politics issues have altered the structure of political alignments. Finally, the fifth section will present an empirical analysis of new value cleavages in Europe. It will discuss to what extent value-based oppositions can be considered as cleavages by examining both their social–structural basis and their impact on voting choice. These results, together with the evidence provided by other studies, will serve as a basis to offer a concluding evaluation about the relevance of the value cleavage concept for the comparative analysis of electoral behaviour.

VALUE CLEAVAGES OR VALUE DIVIDES?

Before discussing the role of value cleavages in the analysis of electoral behaviour, it is important to start by defining more clearly the underlying concept. This task is particularly important as the concept of value cleavage is to some degree ambiguous. The source of this ambiguity lies in the nature of political conflicts that have been described as value cleavages. They do not necessarily meet the conditions identified in the literature for a political opposition to be qualified as a ‘true’ cleavage, and, as Lupton, Enders and Jacoby consider in this Volume, emphasis on such oppositions are not necessary to the use of values in other, social–psychological approaches to political predisposition. Thus, it is necessary to begin by defining the more general concept of cleavage and to then discuss under which conditions it can be applied to value-based oppositions.

The notion of cleavage comes from the work of Lipset and Rokkan (1967). They described four central types of political conflict in West European countries: class, religion, centre–periphery and urban–rural. The identification of these cleavages was important for a number of reasons. They allowed explanations of similarities and differences in the structure of party competition in Western Europe. They also offered tools to explain the stability of voters' behaviour and of the structure of party systems. The concept of political cleavages is thus central to the analysis of electoral behaviour and party systems. For an exact definition of a cleavage, most authors refer to the work of Bartolini and Mair (1990). According to them, a political conflict can be denoted as a cleavage if it meets three conditions. It must entail a division between social groups (the empirical or structural element) that share common interests and values (the normative element), and for which these interests are articulated at the political level by parties or other organizations (the organizational or behavioural element).

Although the opposition between materialist and postmaterialist value orientations is often referred to as a 'value cleavage', it is not clear whether the use of the term cleavage is appropriate in that case. Many authors do not consider that this divide strictly meets the three aspects mentioned above. While the normative element is central to the materialist–postmaterialist divide, the structural element is less well defined. The following sections will offer a more detailed discussion of the possible social–structural roots of value cleavages. For the moment, however, we can mention that Inglehart linked the emergence of postmaterialist value orientations to specific socio-demographic characteristics. These new values should be more prevalent among younger generations, citizens with a high level of education and the new middle class. However, even in that case, the underlying social divisions are not as clear-cut as for the traditional cleavages. These social groups do not represent the same degree of closure as do social classes or religious groups (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Knutson and Scarbrough 1995). A similar critique against the use of the cleavage concept for value divides was made regarding its articulation by political parties. Some parties, such as the greens, emphasize New Politics issues and are close to the political positions of postmaterialist citizens, but they do not exclusively articulate the corresponding value priorities (Knutson and Scarbrough 1995).

Referring to a value-based conflict, such as the divide between materialists and postmaterialists, as a cleavage may thus be a source of confusion. Unfortunately, while the definition of a cleavage is well established, there is no agreement among scholars about what to call conflicts that lack one or two of the three dimensions that make up a cleavage. Deegan-Krause (2007) has suggested using the term 'divide' to refer to a political division that lacks one of the three aspects of a cleavage. Following his suggestion, the materialist–postmaterialist value cleavages would correspond to an 'issue divide' – that is, a political division that entails normative and organizational elements, but for which the empirical element is absent or less clearly structured. Yet, this concept of 'issue divide' is not well established in the literature.

Another way to distinguish value cleavages from traditional cleavages is to refer to them as ‘post-cleavage conflicts’ (Knutsen and Scarbrough 1995: 497). One advantage of this proposition is that it emphasizes clearly that value-based oppositions do not simply represent one possible additional cleavage. Rather, their emergence is intimately linked with the decline or weakening of the traditional political cleavages (Dalton et al. 1984; Franklin et al. 1992). The concept of electoral dealignment refers to this diminishing role of cleavages in the explanation of electoral behaviour. It is a consequence of a process of societal modernization, which is linked with a number of developments at the individual and societal levels (Thomassen 2005): an increase in educational levels (and a concomitant rise in cognitive mobilization, as considered by Donovan, this *Handbook*, Volume 1); the growth of the tertiary sector; growing levels of social and geographical mobility; a secularization process (see Elff, this *Handbook*, Volume 1); and the growing diversity of mass media, among others. These developments have blurred the traditional social divisions on which the central cleavages were based. But, at the same time, they also have contributed to the emergence of new values.

This should lead us to conclude that the divides that are usually referred to as ‘value cleavages’ are not, in fact, proper cleavages. Denoting them as value divides may seem more appropriate. Even when value preferences can be linked to specific social groups, as in the case of Inglehart’s argument, the social–structural basis is not as strong as in the original formulation of the concept by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) or Bartolini and Mair (1990). In contrast with this rather pessimistic view about the possibility of identifying new value cleavages, some authors have suggested that the classical definition of cleavages may be too restrictive. Enyedi (2008: 288), for instance, proposes that value divides may give rise to enduring political divisions. ‘The conflicts may be rooted in primarily political-cultural differences and the mechanisms that sustain the politicized collective identities may have little to do with social categories measured by censuses’. In the standard definition of cleavages, value differences and collective identities are the product of one’s location in the social structure. That is why the structural component is central for leading to stable cleavages. Yet, in the case of the materialist–postmaterialist divide and other new value oppositions the normative component may be the most important one. While traditional cleavages emerged from structural divisions, the new cleavages oppose social groups which are ‘defined more by the values individuals adhere to than by social-structural categories’ (Kriesi 2010: 678). Furthermore, rather than being only the product of citizens’ structural location, values may have an independent impact on political preferences or on the choice of occupation or employment sector. Thus, ‘values and attitudes should be considered not simply as integral elements of cleavages but also as their potential base’ (Enyedi 2008: 293). This approach would offer more reasons to qualify value divides as cleavages. The following sections will review in more detail whether a structural basis can be identified for the materialist–postmaterialist and other value cleavages. The concluding section will come back to this conceptual aspect.

THE MATERIALIST–POSTMATERIALIST VALUE CLEAVAGE

The hypothesis of the emergence of a materialist–postmaterialist value cleavage was suggested by Inglehart (1977, 1981, 1987). He formulated a general model of value change to describe and explain a transformation process that could be observed in a number of advanced industrial democracies. Without going into too many details about his model, a few central aspects must be emphasized in order to better understand how this might lead to the emergence of a new value cleavage. Inglehart's model rests on two central hypotheses. The scarcity hypothesis suggests that ‘people tend to place a high priority on whatever needs are in short supply’ (Inglehart 1977: 22). The socialization hypothesis claims that ‘people tend to retain a given set of value priorities throughout adult life, once it has been established in their formative years’ (Inglehart 1977: 23). In Western countries, the decades following World War II were characterized by an unprecedented level of prosperity, by the absence of military conflicts and by the development of the welfare state system. According to Inglehart, this has led to the development of new value orientations among the younger generations that were socialized during that period. The original formulation of Inglehart's model was linked to the idea of a hierarchy of values, based on the work of Maslow (1954). This framework suggests that people should attach more importance to ‘higher’ values, such as a desire for belonging or esteem, or intellectual and aesthetic goals, once their materialist, physiological needs are fulfilled. The idea of a fixed hierarchy of values was, however, criticized (e.g. Flanagan 1987), and later formulations of Inglehart's model did not rely on Maslow's hierarchy of values (Inglehart 1987). But the central claim remained that individuals socialized in a period of physical and economic security should develop postmaterialist values.

For our purpose, it is important to assess whether this process of value change might represent the basis for a new value cleavage. There is strong evidence that postmaterialist values, as defined by Inglehart, have been rising in Western countries. While there has been a lot of debate on the measurement and definition of postmaterialist values (e.g. Clarke and Dutt 1991; Davis and Davenport 1999; Davis et al. 1999; Duch and Taylor 1993), there is also much evidence about the growing importance attached to non-materialist goals (Inglehart and Abramson 1994; Scarbrough 1995). There also appear to be relatively clear generational patterns, with younger cohorts being more likely to prioritize postmaterialist goals over materialist ones. Support for postmaterialist values is also positively associated with citizens' education level (e.g. Dalton 2013), and differs between social classes. The new middle-class and white-collar workers are more likely to prioritize postmaterialist goals than are members of the working class or of the old middle class (Scarbrough 1995). This gives some support to the idea that a structural basis for the materialist–postmaterialist value cleavage can be identified. Furthermore, materialist and postmaterialist citizens also differ in their

political behaviour. Inglehart and others first emphasized the impact of postmaterialism on non-electoral forms of participation (Dalton 2002: 90ff.; Inglehart 1990). Citizens with postmaterialist values are more likely to support new social movements that defend environmental protection and gender equality or oppose nuclear energy. In a comparative analysis of a dozen West European countries, Gundelach (1995) also finds a strong and systematic impact of postmaterialist values on the likelihood of participating in unconventional forms of political participation, such as attending a demonstration or signing a petition.

This link between postmaterialist values and non-conventional forms of political participation shows that the value opposition identified by Inglehart may have behavioural consequences. Inglehart also suggested that the materialist–postmaterialist divide might have partisan or electoral consequences (Inglehart 1984). However, the step from value differences to partisan differences is not automatic. As long as voters are mobilized on the basis of the old politics cleavages, their value preferences might not be reflected in their party choices. A precondition for the partisan articulation of a new political opposition is the weakening of the traditional lines of conflict. In other words, a process of dealignment must first occur for a realignment to be possible. Yet, as mentioned above, the process of societal modernization that has led to the emergence of new values also contributes to the weakening of the traditional cleavages. The social groups that are most likely to adopt postmaterialist values – that is, the younger generations, the new middle class, citizens with a higher level of education – are also those that are less clearly aligned on the traditional class and religious oppositions (Dalton 2002).

Value differences tend to cut across the traditional alignments based on the central cleavages, in particular class and religion (Knutsen 1995: 478). This means that the rise of new values not only has the potential to change the issues that influence citizens' party preferences but should also lead to tensions and divisions within political parties and between their traditional electoral segments. Postmaterialists concerns are more widely shared among members of the new middle class, who are better off economically and socially. 'Though recruited from the higher-income groups that have traditionally supported the parties of the Right, they themselves tend to support the parties of the Left' (Inglehart 1984: 28). At the same time, the new postmaterialist issues 'may stimulate a materialist reaction in which much of the working class sides with the Right to reaffirm the traditional materialist emphasis on economic growth, military security, and domestic law and order' (Inglehart 1984: 28). This implies that the alignments emerging from value differences cut across social class differences, and may contribute to weakening class-based voting. Mainstream left-wing parties face a potential conflict between their traditional core group of voters from the working class and their middle-class supporters, as these groups are likely to have divergent views on New Politics issue.

The parties most likely to articulate the preferences of postmaterialist citizens should be found among green parties, new left parties and some centrist

parties that emphasize the environment and related issues (Knutsen 1995). Most prominent among these are green parties, which emerged in European countries from the late 1970s. There is much evidence that differences in party choice are structured to some degree by this value divide. Focusing on the contrast between left-wing and right-wing parties in Western Europe in the 1970s, Inglehart (1984) shows strong differences between materialist and postmaterialist citizens. The level of support for left-wing parties is almost 30 percentage points higher in the latter group. However, at the time, the overall impact of that divide was still not as strong as that of the religious and class cleavages. More recent studies have confirmed that materialist vs. postmaterialist value orientations are linked to party preference (Dalton 2002; Knutsen 1995). Their impact is not as strong as that of the issues that structure the (economic) left-right scale, but they exert a systematic impact on voting choice that appears to have increased since the 1970s (Knutsen 1995).

THE LIBERTARIAN–AUTHORITARIAN VALUE CLEAVAGE

While there is much evidence about the emergence of non-materialist values and changes in the structure of political conflicts, the framework suggested by Inglehart is not the only way to conceive of this process. Whereas Inglehart identified one New Politics axis, opposing materialist and postmaterialist values, alternative approaches have been suggested. Central among these is the argument developed by Flanagan (1987; Flanagan and Lee 2003). He agrees with Inglehart about the general idea of a process of value change, but he offers a different conception of the nature of this change, and of the resulting dimensions of political conflict. Following Flanagan (1987), an opposition between materialists and postmaterialists would not adequately capture the existing configuration of value preferences. Inglehart claims that the process of value change has given rise to one new axis of political competition, between materialist and postmaterialist goals. In contrast to this model, Flanagan supports the idea that two distinct value cleavages should be identified. The first one centres on the importance attached to economic concerns over non-economic concerns, and represents an opposition between ‘old politics’ and ‘new politics’. The second value dimension is an opposition within the domain of new politics, between authoritarian and libertarian positions. Based on this structure of value conflicts, Flanagan identifies three poles or groups: the ‘libertarians’, the ‘authoritarians’ and the ‘materialists’. The libertarians correspond to what Inglehart calls the postmaterialists. They give more importance to non-economic goals and take culturally liberal positions. The authoritarians also emphasize non-economic issues, but favour authority, law and order, as well as traditional moral and religious values. Both of these groups belong to the new politics camp. Flanagan’s materialists are defined in a narrower sense than in Inglehart’s model. They give priority to economic issues and to goals such as

economic growth or a low level of inflation – but a concern for national defence or law and order is here not part of the definition. This third group thus attaches more importance to the issues emphasized by ‘old politics’ parties. Flanagan argues further that the materialist–postmaterialist value scale used in Inglehart’s empirical analyses does not allow this constellation of value positions to be captured. The category of materialist goals on which Inglehart relies includes both ‘old politics’ items and authoritarian items. Flanagan (1987; Flanagan and Lee 2003) shows that, once these two clusters of items are separated, the libertarian–authoritarian dimension is not related to the importance attached to old politics issues (that is, to materialism as he defines it).

The configuration of value conflicts described by Flanagan thus replaces one possible new value conflict (materialism vs. postmaterialism) with two value dimensions: old politics vs. new politics and libertarian vs. authoritarian. Note that this may still be an incomplete conceptualization of the main axes structuring value orientations, as the group of citizens who give priority to materialist goals is far from being a homogeneous one. There are also divisions within this group. While both the working class and the old middle class are usually expected to attach more importance to economic, materialist issues, they are opposed on a traditional economic left–right axis (Flanagan 1987). In order to assess the usefulness of Flanagan’s value dimensions for explaining electoral behaviour and party competition, it is thus important to analyse how they relate to the existing dimensions of political conflict. As in the case of the materialist–postmaterialist dimension, it is only likely to result in a new value cleavage if it cross-cuts the existing issues on which citizens are being mobilized by political parties. A number of authors have analysed how the New Politics issues and the underlying process of value change have modified the structure of political conflicts. The most common conception in that regard is that electoral competition is structured by two dimensions (e.g. Kitschelt 1994; Kriesi et al. 2006). One corresponds to a left–right economic axis and is similar to a large degree to the dimension underlying the traditional class cleavage. The second dimension is structured by non-economic issues. There is more disagreement among scholars about the exact nature of this second dimension, and the issues with which it is most strongly associated are likely to vary between contexts. Yet, in general terms, this non-economic dimension corresponds to the libertarian vs. authoritarian value divide emphasized by Flanagan. The old politics vs. new politics divide, in contrast, is more difficult to map onto this two-dimensional representation of the political space. Rather than a conflict between different policy positions, it can be viewed as a divide about the relative importance attached to each of the two dimensions, economic and non-economic.

Of the two value conflicts identified by Flanagan, the divide between libertarian and authoritarian values thus seems to be the most likely to form a new cleavage. Many authors have included such a non-economic dimension in the analysis of electoral competition, referring to it as a libertarian–authoritarian

dimension (Kitschelt 1994, 1995; Stubager 2009), a New Politics dimension (Knutsen and Kumlin 2005), a ‘GAL/TAN’ dimension – standing for green, alternative, libertarian vs. traditional, authoritarian, nationalism – (Hooghe et al. 2002), or a ‘libertarian–universalistic’ vs. ‘traditionalist–communitarian’ opposition (Bornschier 2010). The issues that are usually considered to polarize parties and citizens in this dimension relate to cultural liberalism, traditional values, personal freedoms and rights, the national community and ethnic, religious and other minorities. There are some differences between these authors regarding the exact definition of this conflict. For Stubager (2013), the core values that structure position in this dimension centre on social hierarchy and tolerance for nonconformity. Authoritarians place much weight on hierarchy and reject those who deviate from conventional norms, while libertarians have opposite values. Kitschelt (1994) relates it to different visions and organizational principles of the community. Hooghe et al. (2002) also stress the connection between the New Politics dimension and national sovereignty. ‘Immigrants, foreign cultural influences, cosmopolitan elites, and international agencies’ (Hooghe et al. 2002: 976) are perceived as threats to national sovereignty, and may result in a negative response from traditional, authoritarian and nationalist parties and citizens. For that reason, they also find the European integration issue to be strongly connected to the New Politics dimension. Kriesi et al. (2006, 2008) also suggest that European integration is an important component of that dimension. They emphasize the national political consequences of globalization and European integration. These processes lead to new conflicts between the ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of globalization and of the opening-up of borders. In terms of the non-economic dimension of electoral competition, these conflicts are related to immigration, ethnic diversity, the national community and the process of European integration.

In the remainder of this chapter I will rely on the term ‘libertarian–authoritarian’ to refer to this potential new cleavage. But this is understood in a broader sense than Flanagan’s conception. Conflicts over immigration and European integration, for instance, are considered to be part of this broader dimension, even if they were not part of the original debate on the rise of non-materialist values. To some degree, the dimension identified by Inglehart could also be subsumed under this libertarian–authoritarian value conflict. While many authors have criticized Inglehart’s model, these different conceptions of the libertarian–authoritarian divide are empirically strongly related. In fact, postmaterialism is sometimes included as one of the indicators for the authoritarian–libertarian dimension. This is the case, for instance, in the analyses of Kitschelt (1994), who uses it as the main indicator for citizens’ position on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension, along with religiosity. In his view, the Inglehart scale, ‘primarily measures libertarian versus authoritarian views’ (Kitschelt 1994: 28). Similarly, Knutsen and Kumlin (2005) consider that Inglehart’s dimension is closely related to the authoritarian–libertarian dimension.

Having defined more precisely the characteristics of the libertarian vs. authoritarian divide, I now address the question of whether or not it can be considered to form a cleavage. Regarding a potential structural basis, several authors have emphasized that value differences may be associated with education and social class. Kitschelt (1994) expects that the type of occupation influences the perception of other individuals and of the community. This is expected to be a key factor in explaining citizens' position on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension. His contention 'is that experiences in the occupational world primarily influence people's communitarian political preferences [...] Work environments that offer job autonomy and involve communicative skills reinforce preferences for social reciprocity and individual creativeness over monetary earnings' (Kitschelt 1994: 16). This implies that social class and occupation, as well as variables associated with them (such as education and gender), should lead to systematic differences in value orientations. Following Kitschelt (1994), libertarian values should be particularly strong among people working in high-skill jobs and in occupations which involve social interactions and communication. At the authoritarian extreme of that value dimension one should find individuals working in low-skilled jobs, both in services and in industry, as well as the petty bourgeoisie. Individual values may also be associated with gender and age, as women and younger age cohorts are more strongly represented in occupations that require communicative skills. While the data he relies on do not allow all of these structural elements to be captured, he finds systematic relations between structural factors and individuals' position on the authoritarian–libertarian dimension. In the eight West European countries that he analyses, libertarian values are stronger among younger and more highly educated citizens, as well as among white-collar workers and students (Kitschelt 1994: 134; see also Kriesi 1998; Oesch 2006b).

Another potential structural basis for the new value cleavage is education (Enyedi 2008; Kriesi et al. 2008). Citizens with a higher education level are more likely to have cosmopolitan, libertarian values. A lower level of education, in contrast, is linked with more conservative and authoritarian values, as well as with stronger concerns about immigration, law and order and traditional morality issues. The link between education level and the value preferences on an authoritarian vs. libertarian axis has been strongly emphasized by Stubager (2008, 2009, 2013).¹ His argument goes further than simply emphasizing an empirical connection between education and values. Rather, based on evidence from the Danish case, he claims that education might represent the structural basis for a full-fledged cleavage. He shows that educational groups differ from one another in their orientation towards libertarian vs. authoritarian values, but not towards economic values. This goes hand in hand with both the idea that education is linked to a value opposition and the hypothesis that this divide cross-cuts the economic left–right axis. Furthermore, he also provides evidence for the development of an education-based identity and the emergence of a group consciousness. That is, he finds that people with a high or low level of education tend to identify

with the corresponding group of individuals. They also tend to share a common image of the role of these groups in society – what Stubager (2013) refers to as group consciousness. Finally, he also finds a clear connection to electoral choice. People with a higher level of education are far less likely to vote for the right-wing populist Danish People's Party and more likely to support parties with a libertarian position on the cultural dimension, such as the Social Liberal Party. His analysis of the Danish case offers thus strong support for the hypothesis of an education-based cleavage, which may represent the structural basis of the authoritarian vs. libertarian value cleavage. Analysing the development of this new group identity and consciousness is, however, more difficult in a comparative perspective, requiring specific items that are not yet included in comparative research projects. However, as far as the association between education and values is concerned, the results of Stubager for Denmark are in line with those of Kriesi et al. (2008) for other West European countries.

In terms of the partisan articulation of the libertarian–authoritarian divide – the cleavage's behavioural component – the pattern observed by Stubager (2013) is typical of that of other countries. This value opposition is most clearly expressed in the competition between New Left and New Right parties. On the libertarian side of this divide, green parties are probably the party family that most clearly embodies the issues and goals of New Politics (Dolezal 2010). But other parties have emerged that defend goals close to the new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and many established left-wing parties have moved in the direction of the New Left movements (Kitschelt 1994; Rohrschneider 1993). Among New Right parties, the various right-wing populist parties that have emerged in a number of European countries are those which most clearly articulate authoritarian values (Bornschier 2010; Kriesi et al. 2008). But, in some cases, the libertarian–authoritarian cleavage is mobilized by former centrist or right-wing mainstream parties, which have moved towards right-wing populist positions (Kriesi 2010).

EMPIRICAL ANALYSES

In order to offer additional evidence on the role of the libertarian–authoritarian divide in European countries, this section will investigate both its social–structural basis and how strongly it influences voting choices. To this end, the analysis relies on two main sources of data. At the individual level, I use data from the European Social Survey (ESS), which has been conducted at two-year intervals since 2002. It provides information on citizens' left–right positions, as well as a number of more specific attitudinal items, which have often been used to measure people's underlying value orientations. In addition, respondents to the ESS were asked about their voting choice in the previous national elections and about various social–structural characteristics, such as education and social class. In order to be able to interpret patterns of voting choice in relation to the

expected value cleavage, additional information on the political positions of parties in the various countries is required. For that, I draw on a second source of data, the Chapel Hill expert surveys (Bakker et al. 2015). These surveys include experts' assessment of parties' positions on a number of dimensions, including a general left-right scale and an authoritarian-libertarian dimension.

The individual-level variables required for the analysis and the additional party-level data are not available for all countries that participated in the ESS or for all waves of that survey. The analysis will include respondents from 24 countries² in up to five surveys (covering the years 2004 to 2014).³ At the individual level, five types of socio-demographic characteristic are considered: age (in years), gender (a dummy taking the value 1 for female respondents), education level, religiosity and social class. Education is a five-point scale, ranging from 0 (lowest education level) to 4 (highest level).⁴ A five-point scale of religiosity is also included, based on the frequency of attendance of religious services.⁵ The operationalization of social class (see Evans, this *Handbook*, Volume 1) requires a slightly longer development. The most frequently used classification of social classes is probably the EGP schema (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Erikson et al. 1979). However, this approach does not capture some of the crucial differences within the new middle class. This group is heterogeneous and comprises segments with different occupations and work situations (Kitschelt 1994; Kriesi 1989, 1998; Müller 1999). Accordingly, I rely on the class schema developed by Oesch (2006a, 2006b), here in the eight-group version.⁶ Within the new middle class, this classification distinguishes between three groups (technical professionals, managers and socio-cultural professionals) that are expected to differ in their value orientations.

As far as value orientations are concerned, the ESS provides data related to three dimensions of conflict: a general left-right scale, preferences regarding State intervention in the economy and a libertarian-authoritarian dimension. Left-right positions are measured on an 11-point scale (coded from -5 to +5). For economic preferences, I rely on a question asking citizens whether they agree or not with the statement 'Government should reduce differences in income levels'. Answers are coded on a five-point scale, ranging from 'agree strongly' (value -2) to 'disagree strongly' (value +2). For the libertarian-authoritarian dimension a larger number of indicators are available, which relate to three types of issue: immigration, European integration and attitudes towards gays and lesbians. In order to combine these items into a common scale, I rely on a principal-component factor analysis.⁷ At the level of parties, the Chapel Hill expert surveys include the location of parties on various dimensions. Three scales are used in this analysis, which correspond to those at the individual level: a general left-right scale, a party's position on economic issues and a libertarian-authoritarian scale.⁸

I first address the question of the structural basis of the libertarian-authoritarian divide. Of particular interest are the differences associated with social class and with education. Based on the research of Stubager (2008, 2009), one would expect to find large differences in value orientations between educational groups.

Citizens with a higher degree of education should support libertarian values more strongly. To test this hypothesis, I will focus on the value gap between citizens with a high and low level of education, respectively.⁹ Similarly, social classes should differ in terms of their average positions on the libertarian vs. authoritarian dimension. Following the work of Kitschelt (1994) and Kriesi et al. (2008), social classes should differ depending on their skill levels and work environments. This analysis will focus on the gap between production workers and socio-cultural professionals. These groups are expected to offer the strongest opposition in terms of their value orientation.

In almost all countries, the educational gap is statistically significant at the 0.1% level (i.e. $p < 0.001$), with highly educated respondents having more libertarian values than respondents with a low level of education. There are only two exceptions: Romania, where the difference is only significant at the 5% level, and Lithuania, where the difference is non-significant. Furthermore, the magnitude of this difference is quite substantial. Figure 24.1 shows the corresponding values of this gap for each country (represented by circles). The average difference between both groups is 0.68 standard deviations (the units of the variable, as it is standardized), which is quite large. The smallest gaps are observed in Lithuania (a difference of 0.09 standard deviations), Romania (0.26), Bulgaria (0.41) and Latvia (0.45), which are the only countries in which the difference is smaller than half a standard deviation.

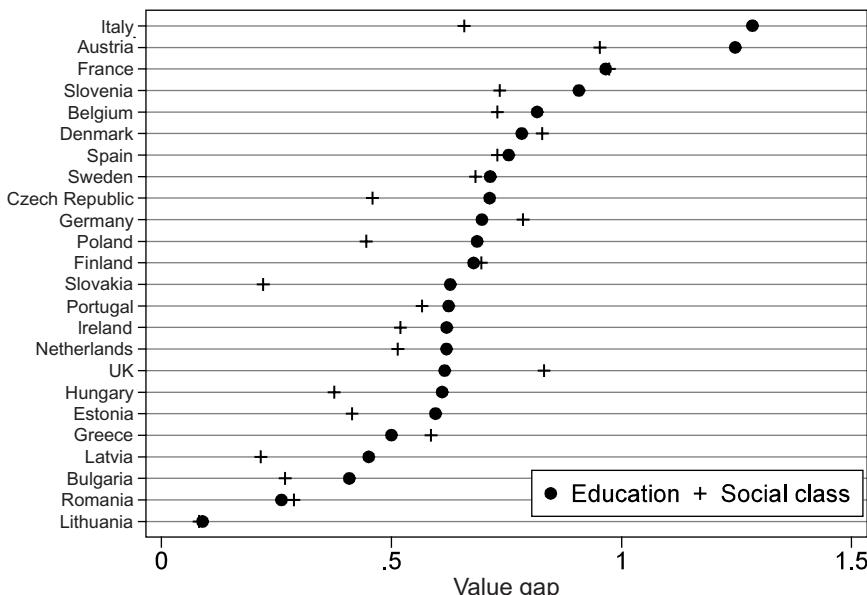


Figure 24.1 Libertarian-authoritarian value gap between education groups and social classes, by country

The difference between production workers and socio-cultural professionals is also clearly significant in most countries.¹⁰ However, the magnitude of this difference is usually smaller than that of the educational gap. The difference in the value positions of socio-cultural professionals and production workers is 0.56 standard deviations on average. Furthermore, there are only a few countries in which the social class gap is larger than the educational gap, as can also be seen in Figure 24.1. In terms of the social basis of the value cleavage, education thus seems to play a stronger role than social class. This conclusion is even clearer given that these social classes differ strongly in their average level of education. That is, part of the observed social class gap might in fact be due to a variation in the level of education.

This first analysis confirms that the new value cleavage is rooted in structural divisions, and that it is particularly strongly linked with citizens' education level. Before turning to the electoral consequences of this value divide, I briefly consider how the libertarian–authoritarian dimension relates to citizens' preferences on the left–right scale, which is the main axis of party competition, and to their position on the economic dimension. As mentioned previously, the libertarian–authoritarian divide is only likely to affect the electoral alignments durably if it cross-cuts the existing cleavages. To that end, I compute the correlation between citizens' positions on these various dimensions. The corresponding measures are computed separately for each election, and I focus here on the country averages (Figure 24.2). The horizontal axis indicates the value of the correlation between citizens' positions on the economic and libertarian–authoritarian dimensions, while the vertical axis shows the relation between the new value dimension and the left–right scale.

As far as the economic dimension is concerned, the relation is close to zero in most countries. The absolute value of the correlation coefficient is smaller than 0.1 in most cases. Its magnitude is above 0.2 in only three countries, which still represents a weak relation. Clearly, the new value dimension is largely independent from the traditional economic divide. The relation with the left–right scale is somewhat stronger, with an average absolute value of 0.17. It is also positive in most countries, which means that the relation, if there is any at all, is such that libertarian positions are associated with left-wing ideology and authoritarian values with the political right. There are exceptions to this pattern, though. In some of the East European countries the relation is negative, pointing to the reverse association. However, these relations are quite weak, and they are often significant in only some of the rounds of the ESS. Altogether, the libertarian–authoritarian value dimension is thus only weakly related to the main axis of political competition, which goes in line with the hypothesis that this represents an independent dimension of conflict.

In order to better evaluate whether this value opposition might represent a cleavage, we need to address a second central aspect. Are these value differences also reflected in patterns of voting choice? That is, do value orientations allow an explanation of which party citizens vote for? To answer this question,

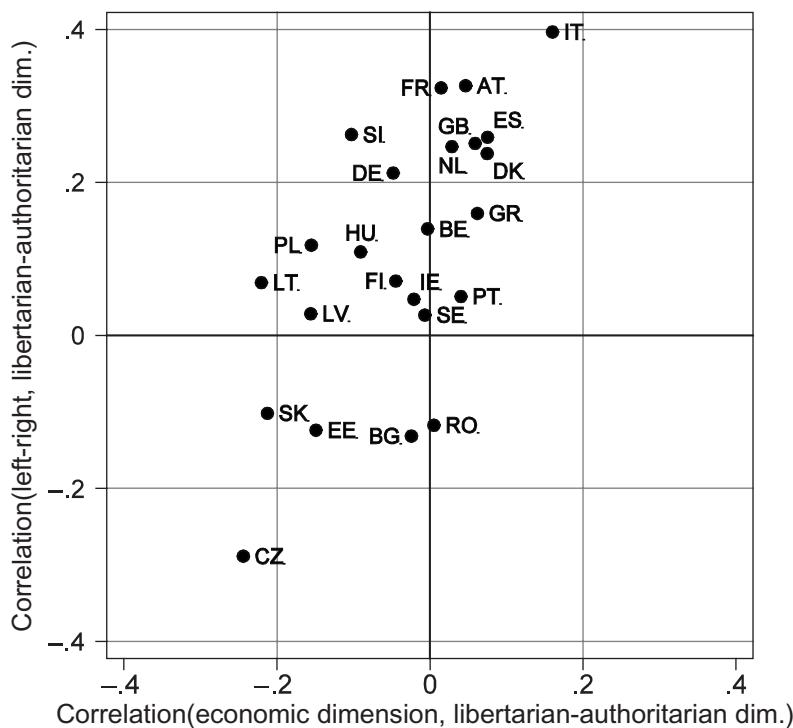


Figure 24.2 Relation between citizens' positions on the three value dimensions

I examine the relation between citizens' value orientations and the value position of the party they voted for. That is, for each value dimension, voting choice is transformed into a quantitative variable by using the parties' location on the corresponding dimension, as evaluated by experts.¹¹ Then a correlation coefficient can be computed for the relation between the value positions of voters and the positions of the party they supported. While we are mainly interested in the strength of this relation for the libertarian–authoritarian dimension, this analysis was performed for each of the three dimensions in order to offer some basis of comparison. The correlation coefficients were computed separately for each election. Figure 24.3 reports the corresponding country averages. It shows how the strength of the association on the libertarian–authoritarian value dimension relates to that of the economic dimension (left-hand panel) and to that of the left–right scale (right-hand panel). Note that the horizontal axis starts at a higher value in the right-hand panel, although the range of values displayed is identical for all three dimensions.

In terms of the average strength of the effects, the impact of the libertarian–authoritarian dimension is similar to that of the economic dimension (left-hand panel). The average correlation is equal to 0.21 for the libertarian–authoritarian dimension and to 0.18 for the economic one. We can also see that there is a

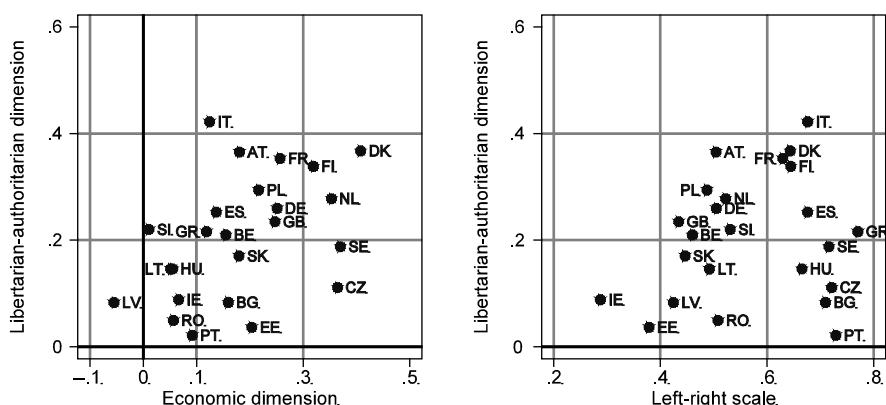


Figure 24.3 Strength of the relation between citizens' value orientations and the position of the party they voted for (Pearson correlations)

positive relation between these two effects. This means that the impact of the libertarian–authoritarian dimension and that of the economic dimension on voting choice tend to increase or decrease jointly. There are different ways to look at these results. From the point of view of the hypothesis of a new value cleavage, these results may be seen as encouraging. The new value dimension appears to be as important as the economic dimension when explaining voting choices. This supports the idea that the libertarian vs. authoritarian contrast may become an important determinant of citizens' electoral behaviour. On the other hand, the strength of the observed associations is not particularly impressive. As a further point of comparison, we can contrast these results with those of the general left–right scale (Figure 24.3, right-hand panel). The relation between citizens' and parties' left–right positions is clearly stronger, with an average correlation of 0.57. In comparison with that, the impact of the new value dimension seems quite weak. Even in the countries in which this value dimension has the largest impact, such as Denmark or Italy, the correlation between voters' and parties' positions is only about 0.40. Of course, the left–right scale corresponds to a more general ideological orientation, which integrates a number of specific issues corresponding to both traditional economic issues and New Politics issues. Due to its more general character, it is a better measure of the overall ideological position of citizens and parties. It is also more flexible. While the wording of the question is the same in all countries, it can be interpreted in different ways depending on the context, reflecting variations in the issues that most strongly structure party competition. For the libertarian–authoritarian dimension, in contrast, the number of issues that could be integrated is more limited, and the relation among the items of this common scale is, by construction, identical in all countries.

The above results show that citizens' preferences on the libertarian–authoritarian value dimension exert some impact on voting choice, though this

effect is not particularly strong. One way to interpret this is that citizens' preferences regarding the new value dimension are not central factors in the voting decision process. However, it could also be a consequence of the configuration of party positions. Even if citizens were deeply concerned about issues such as immigration or the rights of minorities, these preferences can be reflected in their voting choice only if the parties in competition take different positions on these issues and if they mobilize voters on the basis of this value dimension (Enyedi 2008). To investigate this aspect, I focus on the degree of party system polarization for each of the ideological dimensions. The level of polarization of a party system depends on both the positions of parties and their size (Dalton 2008). The polarization index is computed as the standard deviation of parties' positions on a given ideological scale, weighting the contribution of each party by its size.¹² This index is calculated for each of the three dimensions identified previously: the left-right, economic and libertarian-authoritarian dimensions. Party system polarization is just slightly larger for the new value dimension (2.0) than for left-right (1.9) or the economic dimension (1.9). This result is worth emphasizing. The analysis of the relation between values and voting choice suggested that the general left-right scale was substantially more important for explaining citizens' behaviour. However, this is not due to the fact that party positions are less clearly structured by the new value dimension. Rather, it appears that political parties differ from one another on the New Politics dimension at least as strongly as they do on the left-right scale. Figure 24.4 shows these results in more detail, by plotting the degree of polarization in the libertarian-authoritarian dimension against the polarization in the economic dimension (left-hand panel) and against left-right polarization (right-hand panel).

Most striking in this figure are the differences in the distribution of the polarization levels. While the average level of polarization is similar for all three dimensions, the variation is much larger for the libertarian-authoritarian scale than for the economic and left-right axes. That is, on the latter two dimensions

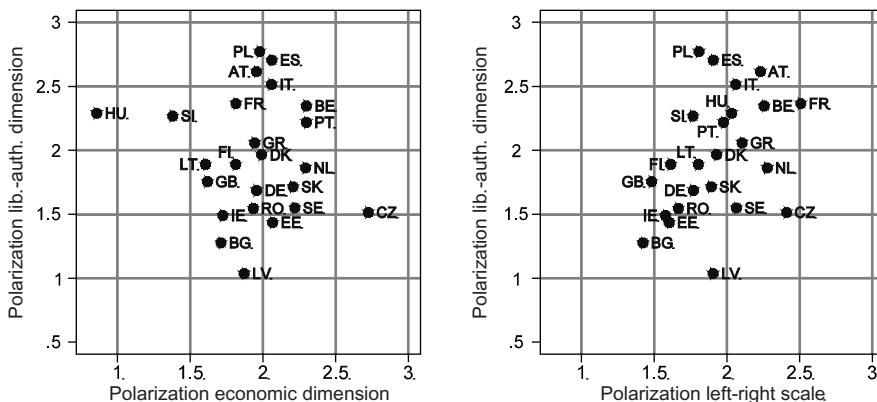


Figure 24.4 Party system polarization on the three value dimensions

the party systems of the different countries present relatively similar levels of polarization. But they differ much more strongly on the new value dimension.¹³ Could this explain why the libertarian–authoritarian dimension exerts a stronger impact on voting choice in some countries than in others? The partisan articulation of a political conflict is a central condition for the formation of a cleavage, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Thus, if parties diverge more strongly from one another on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension, it could reinforce the impact of the corresponding individual preferences on the vote. This can be tested by estimating the impact of polarization on the relation between citizens' and parties' value positions (i.e. the variable used in Figure 24.3).¹⁴ As this model, estimated at the country level, is based on a small number of observations, the results should be interpreted with caution. But they indicate a positive and significant relation between the degree of party system polarization and the impact of libertarian–authoritarian values on party choice. When the degree of polarization increases from a typical low value to a high value (i.e. average value minus or plus one standard deviation), the predicted correlation increases modestly from 0.14 to 0.27.

CONCLUSION

The concept of cleavage takes an important place in the analysis of electoral behaviour. The four traditional political conflicts identified by Lipset and Rokkan, in particular those of class and religion, have long been key elements in explaining patterns of voting choice and party system configuration. Can this concept be extended to value-based political conflicts? As we have seen in the previous sections, this was a contention made first in the literature on New Politics. Inglehart pointed to the emergence of a materialist–postmaterialist value cleavage, while later studies usually refer to a libertarian–authoritarian dimension. Although the term ‘cleavage’ is less systematically used in the latter case, the corresponding political divide is often expected to play an important role in structuring parties' and voters' behaviour and to represent a stable dimension of electoral competition. These expectations are more likely to be met if this value-based conflict also displays the additional characteristics of traditional cleavages. That is, it should be rooted in a division between social groups, and the opposing values of these groups should be articulated at the electoral level by parties.

In terms of the underlying structural divisions, the analysis of the libertarian–authoritarian cleavage in Europe has revealed strong and systematic differences between educational groups. A higher level of education is linked with a more libertarian value profile. This is in line with findings from several previous studies. Social classes also differ in their value orientations, as suggested among others by Kitschelt (1994). But this value gap appeared to be less systematic than the one linked with education. A more detailed analysis would require an

investigation of whether educational groups (or social classes) also develop a sense of common identity. Unfortunately, this goes beyond what is possible with the existing data from comparative projects. In the case of Denmark, Stubager (2013) provided evidence for the development of such a group consciousness. If this hypothesis was also confirmed in other contexts, it would provide a strong justification for viewing the libertarian–authoritarian divide as a cleavage. The development of such an identity as a group could also result from other social divisions, such as social classes, or from more heterogeneous groups, such as the ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of globalization (Kriesi et al. 2008). It is unlikely that these groups will present the same degree of closure or homogeneity as in the case of the class or religious cleavages, but it may be sufficient to reinforce and stabilize this political conflict.

Regarding the political articulation of the libertarian–authoritarian divide, several studies have shown that it represents an important factor for explaining voting choice. This is also reflected in the success of green and right-wing populist parties in a large number of European countries, which are often considered to represent the opposite poles of this value dimension. Our analysis has shown that, in most of the countries analysed, there is some relation between the positions of citizens on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension and the position of the parties they vote for. The strength of this relation is only weak or moderate, but this is also the case for economic issues, the importance of which is largely recognized. We also found that the differences between countries in the electoral relevance of the libertarian–authoritarian dimension could be explained in part by the configuration of parties in competition: the higher the level of party system polarization on this value dimension, the stronger is the impact on voting choices.

Notes

- 1 Note that Kitschelt (1994, 17) also stresses the role of education. However, he seems to consider it as an indicator for different types of occupational experiences, rather than as a driving factor behind people’s value orientations.
- 2 The countries included in the analysis are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.
- 3 The data used come from rounds 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 of the ESS (with interviews conducted in 2004, 2006, 2008, 2012 and 2014, respectively). All data is available from the website of the ESS (<http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org>).
- 4 The five education levels distinguished in the ESS are: less than lower secondary education (value 0), lower secondary education completed (1), upper secondary education completed (2), post-secondary non-tertiary education completed (3), tertiary education completed (4).
- 5 In decreasing order, the five values are: once a week or more (value 4), at least once a month (3), only on special holy days (2), less frequently (1), or never (0).
- 6 The class schema has been constructed relying on the syntax files provided by Daniel Oesch, available at <http://people.unil.ch/danieloesch/scripts/>.

- 7 See the appendix of this chapter for more details on the construction of the libertarian–authoritarian dimension.
- 8 In all three dimensions, parties were located on 11-point scales. For the general ideological dimension, experts were asked to indicate a party's 'overall ideology on a scale ranging from 0 (extreme left) to 10 (extreme right)'. The economic scale was described in the following terms: 'Parties can be classified in terms of their stance on economic issues. Parties on the economic left want government to play an active role in the economy. Parties on the economic right emphasize a reduced economic role for government: privatization, lower taxes, less regulation, less government spending, and a leaner welfare state.' Finally, the libertarian–authoritarian scale was characterized as follows: 'Parties can be classified in terms of their views on democratic freedoms and rights. "Libertarian" or "postmaterialist" parties favor expanded personal freedoms, for example, access to abortion, active euthanasia, same-sex marriage, or greater democratic participation. "Traditional" or "authoritarian" parties often reject these ideas; they value order, tradition, and stability, and believe that the government should be a firm moral authority on social and cultural issues.'
- 9 The high education group comprises citizens with a tertiary level of education (30 per cent of the sample on average). The low education group combines the lowest two categories of the education scale (lower secondary or less, 28 per cent of the sample on average).
- 10 T-tests show that the difference is significant in all countries at the 0.1% level (or at the 1% level in the case of Bulgaria and Italy, respectively at the 5% level in Romania). The only exceptions are Latvia and Lithuania, where there is no significant value gap between these social classes.
- 11 An alternative approach would be to regress citizens' ideological position on their party choice and to compute an Eta-squared coefficient. This is a strategy that has been used in several comparative analyses of the impact of values on the vote (Knutsen 1995; Thomassen 2005). With this alternative approach, however, parties' position on the corresponding value dimension are not taken into account.
- 12 The size of a party is measured as its vote share in the last national election before the year in which the corresponding expert survey was conducted. These vote shares are rescaled so that they sum to 1 for the parties for which party positions were measured. Data on vote shares and party positions come from the Chapel Hill expert surveys. The polarization indices were computed separately for each country and year. The values reported here are country averages.
- 13 As an indication of this, the interquartile range is 0.37 for both the economic and left–right dimensions, while it is equal to 0.77 for the new value dimension.
- 14 For that, I estimate a regression model in which the dependent variable is the correlation between voters' position on the libertarian–authoritarian dimension and the position of the party they voted for. The independent variable is the degree of party polarization on the same dimension. Observations are countries ($n=24$). The impact of polarization is significant at the 1% level, with a point estimate of 0.131 and a standard error of 0.041.

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APPENDIX: CONSTRUCTION OF THE LIBERTARIAN-AUTHORITARIAN DIMENSION

The cumulative file of the European Social Survey includes various indicators that can be used to construct a libertarian–authoritarian dimension. This chapter relies on eight indicators: a six-item battery of questions on immigration, a question on European integration and a question on the attitudes towards gays and lesbians. As the number of variables related to immigration is much larger, a factor analysis of these eight items would result in a scale that is dominated by the question of immigration. To avoid this problem, I first run a factor analysis of the six immigration items and then use the resulting dimension, along with the other two variables, in a second factor analysis. The corresponding factor loadings are presented in Tables 24.1 and 24.2.

Table 24.1 Factor loadings for the immigration scale

Variable	Factor loading
Allow many/few immigrants...	
...of same race/ethnic group as majority	0.78
...of different race/ethnic group from majority	0.86
...from poorer countries outside Europe	0.82
Immigration bad or good for country's economy*	0.78
Country's cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants*	0.78
Immigrants make country worse or better place to live*	0.80
Eigenvalue	3.88
N	92,905

* Direction of the original variable reversed

Table 24.2 Factor loadings for the libertarian-authoritarian dimension

Variable	Factor loading
Immigration scale	0.82
European unification go further or gone too far	-0.65
Gays and lesbians free to live life as they wish	0.60
Eigenvalue	1.46
N	88,194

The VP-Function: A Review

Mary Stegmaier, Michael S. Lewis-Beck and
Beomseob Park

INTRODUCTION

From decades of scholarship, we know that the economy matters for government support and election outcomes. Key generalizations are now possible. As the economy improves, support for the incumbent increases. When the economy declines, support decreases. Statistical models assessing the relationship between the economy and the incumbent *vote share* are referred to as ‘vote functions’. The same underlying logic that leads the public to reward or punish incumbents at the polls applies to understanding government approval or *popularity*. These ‘popularity functions’ differ from vote functions in that popularity is measured monthly or quarterly, while elections occur much less frequently. Because similar forces are at play in both types of studies, scholars refer to these studies collectively as ‘VP-Functions’.

Is the strength of the economic vote always the same across countries and over time? In recent years, a burgeoning literature has explored this question, paying special attention to how a country’s economic and political context conditions the economic vote. Through this research, we have learned that specific political and economic contexts alter the power of the economic vote in predictable ways. For example, in countries with presidential systems, where just one person can hold the highest office, voters can easily identify who is responsible for the state of the country’s affairs. In these systems, economic voting will be stronger than in countries with coalition governments comprised of multiple parties. Other political conditions we review include accountability under divided government,

assignment of responsibility in countries that belong to the European Union, and economic voting during the post-communist transitions.

More recently, attention has turned to how economic contexts condition the economic vote. Just as political institutions vary from country to country, so does the level of economic development, the extent of the welfare state, and financial and trade integration. In a time of increased globalization, where a recession in one country can spill over to key trading partners, do voters hold governments accountable for economic conditions that might be beyond their leader's control? Will voters in developing countries give the same weight to the same economic indicators as voters in advanced economies? And in states where the government provides a well-crafted safety net, does this security mute or magnify the economic vote?

These questions guide this essay. We will see that contextual effects shape the economic vote in the ways we anticipate. Certain conditions magnify the economic vote, while others dampen its effects. But, before looking at these conditions in greater detail, we first review the main aspects of the field's evolution. This will provide the necessary theoretical background to appreciate the advances in identifying and assessing how context matters in linking the economy and the vote.

THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF VP-FUNCTION RESEARCH

The foundations

The theoretical foundations for vote and popularity functions emerged a half century ago in classic works by Campbell et al. (1960), Downs (1957), and Key (1966). *The American Voter* (Campbell et al., 1960) devoted a full chapter to the survey analysis of economic evaluations and party choice. The questions they raised, including voters' time horizon, whether personal finances or the national economy mattered more, and how to measure the economy, had lasting impacts on the development of the economic voting field (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2009). Downs (1957) and Key (1966) provided the theoretical arguments for the direction of the public's gaze. Downs contended that voters would evaluate the candidates and their electoral platforms and cast their vote in support of the party based on what it promised to deliver. Key took a different perspective, arguing that voters would assess what the incumbent had accomplished and reward or punish accordingly.

The first aggregate-level vote and popularity function studies were conducted in Britain and the U.S. Goodhart and Bhansali (1970: 43) set out to develop a 'political preference function' for Great Britain. Recognizing that the number of past elections was too small for statistical analysis, they sought to understand what factors moved party popularity using monthly public opinion polls.

The dependent variable – support for the government – is a standard question that continues to be used with minor variations today: ‘If there were a General Election tomorrow, which party would you support?’ (Goodhart and Bhansali, 1970: 50). Upon testing a variety of macroeconomic measures, they found the rate of price inflation and the six-month lagged level of unemployment impact popularity. They also observed a boost in party support immediately following an election victory – the ‘honeymoon effect’, as we now call it – ‘followed by a steady but slow erosion of its popularity which in turn is reversed in the run-up to the next election’ (Goodhart and Bhansali, 1970: 85).

Following closely on the heels of Goodhart and Bhansali’s (1970) study, Kramer (1971) developed a vote-function for U.S. congressional elections covering elections from 1896 to 1964. The change in per capita real personal income had the strongest impact on the congressional vote for the incumbent president’s party. Holding other factors constant, he estimates that ‘a 10% decrease in per capita real personal income would cost the incumbent administration 4 or 5 percent of the congressional vote’ (Kramer, 1971: 141). Kramer underscores the importance of this finding, writing: ‘election outcomes are in substantial part responsive to objective changes occurring under the incumbent party; they are not “irrational”, or random, or solely the product of past loyalties and habits, or of campaign rhetoric and merchandising’ (Kramer, 1971: 140).

With these five works, the contours of the field were established. They represent studies at the individual and aggregate level, popularity functions, vote functions, and the questions about what economic evaluations and conditions matter most. They also represent studies in different institutional settings: voting behavior in U.S. presidential elections, U.S. congressional elections, and British government support. Later research more closely considers whether voters are retrospective or prospective, whether they vote according to their pocketbook or follow the national economy (Fiorina, 1981; Kiewiet, 1983; Tufte, 1978), how political events and war impact presidential approval (Mueller, 1973) and the use of VP-functions for election prediction (Fair, 1978). The publication of Lewis-Beck’s (1988) cross-national study on the major western democracies launched comparative economic voting research. It is this body of comparative work that has provided insight into how political institutions and the economic context affect the link between the economy and incumbent support.

With the focus of this essay on contemporary advances in VP-functions, we limit our discussion of the debates in the field’s evolution to the most fundamental questions: sociotropic vs. pocketbook voting; retrospective vs. prospective voting, asymmetric economic voting, and accounting for political events. For further treatment of the full range of questions in the VP-function literature, see Nannestad and Paldam (1994) and Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2013). Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2000; 2007) review the literature with a focus on country-specific results, and Stegmaier and Lewis-Beck (2013) offer an annotated bibliography of key works organized by theme.

Fundamental issues

Whether the public evaluates past performance or looks toward the future has been a matter of considerable study. Survey research typically taps into the retrospective dimension, with questions about the economy over the past year, while questions about economic expectations over the coming year capture the prospective aspect. In terms of aggregate studies, macroeconomic indicators or aggregated evaluations from surveys measure the past, whereas future economic expectations are measured as aggregated prospective assessments from surveys (Price and Sanders, 1995) or available indices of consumer sentiments (MacKuen et al., 1992). While some studies do show a prospective economic vote (Lockerbie, 2008; MacKuen et al., 1992), much work suggests that its effect is equal to or less than retrospective voting (Anderson et al., 2003; Clarke and Stewart, 1994; Lewis-Beck, 1988; Norpoth, 1996).

In addition to the time dimension, the question of pocketbook evaluations vs. national economic conditions has loomed large. Kiewiet (1983) finds that in U.S. presidential and congressional elections, pocketbook effects are minimal and dwarfed by sociotropic (national) evaluations. This finding has held in other contexts as well (Anderson, 2000), even in places such as Denmark, where it was subject to stronger theoretical challenges. Nannestad and Paldam (1997) argued that in Denmark's economic environment of cradle-to-grave social welfare provision, the pocketbook would prevail. However, Stubager et al. (2014) have found that the Danes are just like the rest of the economically developed democracies. The national economy matters most.

Another question is whether punishment operates more strongly than reward. The notion of asymmetry in the economic vote holds intuitive appeal. The media may pay more attention to negative economic news, and poor economic performance can increase the saliency of the economy relative to other issues. So, do we see more punishment than reward? Bloom and Price (1975) found that voters punish more than reward, but some later comparative research indicates that this is not how individual voters behave. Lewis-Beck (1988: 79), in his five-nation European study, found 'no evidence' that voters were 'motivated more by "bad times" than by "good times"'. But other studies have argued that voters, at least those who are risk averse, will tend more to bad news, such as a faltering economy (Soroka, 2006). In an investigation of Danish elections, Nannestad and Paldam (1997) claimed that 'worse' evaluations of the economy had a bigger impact on government popularity than 'better' evaluations. In contrast, Haller and Norpoth (1997), writing at the same time, report that news about the economy does not influence opinions about the economy. However, a current study by Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck (2014a), investigating a large cross-sectional time series of European nations, concludes that under conditions of crisis bad economic times affect incumbent support more than good economic times. In sum, the evidence on the asymmetry hypothesis remains mixed.

Economic conditions and evaluations play prominent roles in VP-functions but researchers must also account for certain political factors for correct model specification. Typically, a lagged version of the dependent variable, AR(1), is included to account for previous support levels. Scholars have identified honeymoon effects, when the newly elected government enjoys high levels of support, as well as the cost of ruling, which accounts for the steady decline in support the longer the party governs. ‘Rally round the flag’ events such as the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the U.S., and other significant events or scandals that shock government support, are included. The challenge lies in creating efficient and systematic ways to identify such events (Bytzek, 2011; Newman and Forcehimes, 2010). Often events are coded as dummy variables, taking on the value of one when the event occurs, but other authors have accounted for wartime casualties (Geys, 2010; Mueller, 1973; Sidman and Norpoth, 2012) and defense spending with more refined measures (Bankert and Norpoth, 2013; Geys, 2010).

POLITICAL CONTEXT

Clarity of responsibility

In order for the public to issue reward or punishment for economic conditions they need to identify who is responsible. In presidential systems such as that of the U.S., the president and his party are held accountable. In multiparty parliamentary systems, however, with coalitions of parties forming the government, clarity is muddled. Lewis-Beck (1986) observed that the magnitude of the economic vote is impacted by the number of parties in government. The more parties, the weaker the effect. Powell and Whitten (1993) coined the phrase ‘clarity of responsibility’ in their cross-national study which utilized a clarity index (measuring factors such as minority governments, number of parties in the government, and weak party cohesion) to more broadly test the argument. When they divide the 19 countries into those where policymaking responsibility is clear and where it is blurred, they find stark differences in the economic vote. Where responsibility is clear, ‘the effects are strong and consistent’, but, where it is blurred, ‘the effects are very weak’ (Powell and Whitten, 1993: 410).

Powell and Whitten (1993) include the presence of bicameral opposition in their index and note that divided government in the U.S. or times of cohabitation in France (when the president and prime minister are from different parties) could similarly confound the clarity of responsibility. U.S. and French election studies have further tested who is held accountable under these less clear conditions. In the U.S., Norpoth (2001) studied this question using survey data from the 1992 and 1996 presidential elections. Both elections feature divided government, but with party control of the presidency and congress switched. Norpoth finds unequivocal evidence that voters hold the president liable for economic conditions. In the case

of France, Lewis-Beck (1997) finds that who is held responsible differs depending on whether there is cohabitation or not. When the French president and prime minister are from the same party, voters reward/punish the president, but when the two are from different parties the prime minister is the target. (See Silva and Whitten, this *Handbook*, Volume 1, for further discussion of this.)

Germany presents an ideal case to test who voters target in coalition governments. In the post-unification era Germany has had a variety of coalition arrangements, including grand coalitions between the two largest parties, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Christian Democratic Party (CDU/CSU). Using *Politbarometer* election year data back to the 1980s, Debus et al. (2014) demonstrate that the party of the chancellor reaps all the reward from positive economic evaluations. The other coalition party, regardless of which party it is, does not benefit. This finding is corroborated at the aggregate level by Williams et al. (forthcoming). They relax what they term ‘the constant economic vote restriction’ by modeling party support for the parties separately, yet simultaneously. In doing so, they are able to identify which parties are impacted by economic conditions when controlling the chancellorship, when serving in the coalition, or in opposition. They find that the SPD and the CDU/CSU are the most impacted, both when serving as chancellor and when in opposition. The Free Democrats (FDP), despite its economic policy emphasis, and the Greens are unaffected by economic evaluations when in or out of government. Interestingly, and consistent with Debus et al. (2014), under grand coalitions only the chancellor’s party gets credit.

In the context of U.S. elections, research has also looked at how contests featuring an incumbent candidate differ from those that are open seat races. Norpoth (2002) looked at presidential elections with a sitting president running for re-election compared with those without from 1872 to 2000. He finds that the economy impacted vote shares for the incumbent president when he was running for re-election, but it had no impact when the incumbent was not contesting the election. Likewise, Lasley and Stegmaier (2001) test the effect of national economic conditions on senate races, looking separately at races with an incumbent and open seats. They find that declines in the national unemployment rate benefit incumbent candidates from the president’s party, but have no impact in open seat races.

Attribution of responsibility within the European Union

We have seen how the size of the economic vote depends on the domestic political context and level of clarity. The question of who is responsible can also be muddled when there are different levels of government. Of particular interest recently has been how the European Union has affected the assignment of responsibility for economic conditions in the member nations. Do voters still target their national government, or are national leaders able to effectively divert blame to EU policies and leaders?

In a comprehensive survey analysis of citizens in all 27 EU countries, Hobolt and Tilley (2014) examine the relative assignment of responsibility to the national government compared with the EU across five policy areas, including the economy. They create a ‘net EU attribution’ measure from two survey questions that ask respondents how much responsibility they attribute to the national government and the EU, both on a 0–10 scale. With regard to the economy, on average, people assign more responsibility to the national government (score of 7.2) than to the EU (score of 5.7), yielding a ‘net EU attribution’ score of -1.5 (Hobolt and Tilley, 2014: 803). Each country’s position in or out of the Eurozone affects how much responsibility citizens attribute to the EU. Those in countries that are not Eurozone members ‘attribute significantly less responsibility to the EU than citizens within the Eurozone’ (Hobolt and Tilley, 2014: 805). Additionally, the assignment of credit/blame depends on the respondent’s support of the EU. ‘For an individual who strongly supports the EU, the effect of moving from the worst to best economic outlook reduces his net responsibility score by 1.3 points’, but among Euroskeptics the economic change does not alter their net EU attribution (Hobolt and Tilley, 2014: 808–9).

In an experimental study in Britain, Hobolt et al. (2013) examine how citizens assign responsibility to the British government or the EU. They argue that, in multi-level systems, ‘people lack sufficient information to accurately judge who is responsible for policy decisions at different levels of government’ (Hobolt et al., 2013: 154). In this context, voters might be influenced by their predispositions. In general, when it comes to the economy, the British attribute more responsibility to their national government (mean of 6.83 on a 0–10 scale) than to the EU (4.59) (Hobolt et al., 2013: 164). Both people’s partisan leanings and their support for the EU color how they assign responsibility. When receiving positive economic information from the government, supporters of the governing party will credit it. With negative news, supporters of the governing party will deflect blame. Likewise, upon positive news, supporters of the EU will credit that institution and, when the news is bad, EU opponents will blame the EU. Thus, how British voters assign responsibility and reward/punish the government depends on their partisanship and views of the EU.

Other evidence that perceptions of the EU affect the economic vote comes from Southern Europe. Costa Lobo and Lewis-Beck (2012), using 2009 survey data from Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece, first establish that retrospective sociotropic evaluations impact the vote in each country. People who hold positive economic assessments are more likely to vote for the incumbent than those who report negative evaluations. Then, to establish how the economic vote is conditioned by views of the EU’s level of responsibility for economic conditions, Costa Lobo and Lewis-Beck interact an ‘EU responsible’ dummy variable with economic evaluations. The findings are clear. Among those who perceive that the EU is responsible for economic conditions, the national economic vote is diminished.

The economic crisis in Europe has heightened the public's awareness of the EU's influence on national economic conditions, as incumbent politicians have tried to shift blame for the economic recession to the EU and other international actors. This more complex political and economic environment of multi-level government, a common currency, and the economic crisis has generated much new research. We refer the reader to special issues which provide compilations of research papers devoted to these topics: 'The Economic Voter and Economic Crisis' in *Acta Politica* (Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck, 2014b); 'Economics and Elections: Effects Deep and Wide' in *Electoral Studies* (Lewis-Beck and Whitten, 2013); 'Financial Crisis, Austerity, and Electoral Politics' in the *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* (Magalhães, 2014), and 'Economic Crisis and Elections: The European Periphery' in *Electoral Studies* (Lewis-Beck et al., 2012).

Post-Communist transitions

The bulk of the VP-function literature has focused on advanced democracies. These countries, with established party systems, publics socialized in democracy, and a long enough history of elections, provide scholars with relatively stable contexts to test electoral theories. However, the democratic transitions of Central and Eastern European countries offer fertile ground to test our knowledge (see Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2008 for a review). As the countries moved from communist-style economies that guaranteed jobs for everyone to the competition of the free market, one of the most striking changes was the rapid rise in unemployment. For many in the region this change introduced a level of economic insecurity they had not experienced before. Thus, it comes as no surprise that unemployment rates strongly affected party support levels. However, should increases in unemployment lead to punishment of the incumbent party, or, in the context of initial free market reforms and nascent party systems, did voters think of unemployment as a policy issue? Works by Pacek (1994) and Fidrmuc (2000) categorized the parties according to their position on economic reforms. If voters were concerned about the increases in unemployment and the policies of pro-reform parties were unlikely to reduce the problem, then they would vote against the pro-reformers. Much evidence of this was found in the early years of the free market transitions in the region (Fidrmuc, 2000; Pacek, 1994).

Is there a point at which voters in these societies will switch from considering unemployment as a policy issue to considering it as a valence issue for which to reward or punish the incumbent? In a study of support for the left-wing Hungary Socialist Party (MSZP), Stegmaier and Lewis-Beck (2009) find that as unemployment increased in the 1990s so did support for the MSZP. This included years in which the party was in and out of government. But by the 2000s the MSZP, in government, lost support as unemployment increased. The authors conclude '[o]ver time Hungarian economic voters have moved from a policy-oriented, to an incumbency-oriented stance. In other words, they have learned' (Stegmaier and Lewis-Beck, 2009: 776).

Another study on the impact of unemployment rates, but this time in the Czech Republic, is that of Coffey (2013). In this work, she proposes a theory of pain tolerance. The idea is that voters will tolerate economic conditions up to a point, after which they will punish the incumbent. During the period of her study, 1995–2008, the unemployment rate ranged from 4.2 percent to 9.5 percent (Coffey, 2013: 434). Using rolling regression analysis, she finds that the pain threshold for unemployment is 8.8 percent. Once unemployment exceeds this level, the party of the prime minister will be punished.

As the Stegmaier and Lewis-Beck (2009) and Coffey (2013) studies demonstrate, citizens in the region appear to be learning incumbency-oriented economic voting. Other studies have also identified this. Lippényi et al. (2013) hypothesize that in Central and Eastern Europe it will take voters time to understand how the free market works and how government policies affect the economy, and to learn about the parties. Over time, as voters become more informed, they will increasingly hold the government accountable. Thus, we should see stronger effects of economic evaluations. Using 41 surveys from the region, covering 1998 to 2008, they find that both national and pocketbook evaluations affect support for the incumbent parties in the expected manner. And, as expected, the effects increased over the decade. Roberts (2008), in a cross-national study of incumbent vote, finds, like others, that unemployment matters much more than growth or inflation in explaining election results. To test for learning, he splits the sample of elections at 1998. He finds that ‘unemployment has a considerably stronger and significant effect after 1998’ compared to before (Roberts, 2008: 541). After further analysis he concludes: ‘voters do become better at punishing parties and governments for poor economic results later in the transition, though even early in the transition they are not entirely incapable of doing so’ (Roberts, 2008: 541).

The VP-function in Russia and China

We will look at Russia separately from the other post-communist countries because, although it started the transition to democracy in the 1990s, the progress has reversed over the past decade. Today it is considered a hybrid regime. Like the Central and East European countries, Russia embarked on economic liberalization reforms in the early 1990s, following a ‘shock therapy’ course that caused severe economic dislocation which, over time, reduced the public’s support for rapid economic reform and free-market values (Stegmaier and Erb, 2005). The economic pain felt by the population was reflected in the sharp drop in Yeltsin’s popularity from 81 percent (in 1991) to 8 percent by the end of his presidency in 1999 (Treisman, 2011: 590). Research at the individual and aggregate levels indicates that Yeltsin’s approval was significantly impacted by economic evaluations (Hesli and Bashkirova, 2001; Mishler and Willerton, 2003; Treisman, 2011). Survey results show that the national economy also impacted vote choice in the 1995 Russian duma elections (Colton, 1996).

Even under Putin the economy seems to impact presidential approval. While Yeltsin's approval slid south, Putin's approval from the first year of his presidency surged from 31 percent to 87 percent and remained consistently high through 2008 (Treisman, 2011: 590, 592). Treisman (2011) tests whether Yeltsin's plunging approval was the result of declining economic conditions, whereas the surge and subsequent stability of Putin's was driven by economic prosperity. Analyzing aggregated bimonthly survey data from the Russian Center for Public Opinion Research (VCIOM), he concludes that '[Y]eltsin's ignominious slide and Putin's eight years of adulation seem largely predetermined by the economic conditions each inherited' (Treisman, 2011: 607).

In a recent piece, Treisman (2014) accounts for Putin's sudden drop in popularity in 2011 (a drop from 79 percent in 2010 to 63 percent in 2011). Comparing survey responses between these two years, he observes a sharp drop in support for Putin among those who perceived both the national economy and family financial conditions as bad. In 2010, among those who believed the national economy was in 'bad' or 'very bad' condition, a surprising 51 percent answered that they supported Putin. However, one year later this had dropped to 21 percent. Similarly, among those who perceived their family's finances as 'bad' or 'very bad', Putin's approval fell from 53 percent to 34 percent.

What do we know about the economy and government approval in non-democratic regimes? This question is very difficult to test, due to the lack of reliable data from these countries. However, one such study, involving an analysis of Chinese survey data (Lewis-Beck et al., 2014), tests how respondents' sociodemographic characteristics, political attitudes, and views on performance issues affect their level of satisfaction with the central government. The authors find that, among the performance issues, those who favor greater commitment to private business ownership (economic liberalism) and those who are frustrated with the current defense posture are less satisfied with the government. However, it appears that respondents who are satisfied with the county and village governments are more satisfied with the central government. With their empirical findings, Lewis-Beck et al. (2014) conclude that VP-function can be applied to non-democratic nations such as China. However, they add the caveat that their models differ from the classic VP-function because certain explanatory variables are heavily influenced by the non-democratic political institutions in the country. Additionally, the Chinese survey offers only unconventional economic measures, which limits comparison with VP-function research elsewhere.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Economic development

We know much about economic voting in advanced democracies, but less is known about how the economy affects government support in developing democracies

(Lewis-Beck and Ratto, 2013; Stegmaier and Lewis-Beck, 2013). Do voters in low-income countries give equal weight to the same economic conditions as voters in advanced economies? Remmer (1991) addresses this question by looking at how economic conditions impacted the results of presidential elections in 21 Latin American countries. Just as one would expect in developed nations, she finds that the economic crisis decreased support for the incumbent governments. In a later study covering 39 Latin American presidential elections from 13 countries, Benton (2005) finds similar results. Latin American voters punish the incumbents after years of economic hardship.

While the Remmer (1991) and Benton (2005) studies are cross-national, aggregate-level analysis, Lewis-Beck and Ratto (2013) investigate the relationship at the individual level using surveys from 12 Latin American countries. Their dependent variable is vote intention (for or against the incumbent) and the key independent variable is the sociotropic retrospective economic evaluation. Their results show that voters reward incumbents for national economic improvements and punish for economic decline.

Singer and Carlin (2013) ask if the level of economic development in a country affects whether voters vote according to their pocketbooks or to the state of the country's economy. They argue that pocketbook voting could be widespread in the poorest countries because voters may not have the resources to cope with even small financial fluctuations. Furthermore, voters in developing countries may be mobilized by political elites or parties in the form of vote buying, patronage, and pork. In other words, poor voters are more likely to prefer private goods of stable individual financial conditions over the public goods of a strong national economy (Singer and Carlin, 2013: 733). The authors analyze Latinobarometer surveys conducted in 18 countries from 1995 to 2009. They find that, although sociotropic evaluations appear to have a greater influence than egotropic ones, the effect of egotropic voting appears to be 'more prevalent at the lowest levels of development than in other contexts' (Singer and Carlin, 2013: 740).

While the evidence indicates that Latin Americans are indeed economic voters, do voters in other developing countries incorporate the economy into their voting calculus? In a cross-national study of African countries, Bratton et al. (2012) find that, although Africans are motivated by ethnic solidarities in vote choice, economic interests appeared as the uppermost factor in African voters' minds (Bratton et al., 2012: 47). More specifically, voters considered the government's performance in handling economic management, unemployment, inflation, and income distribution and reward or punish accordingly. The authors find one deviation from conventional wisdom, however, in that Africans are prospective rather than retrospective voters.

In a truly global study of developing countries, Gelineau (2013) studies vote intention and approval using public opinion surveys from 51 countries covering Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, South and East Asia, and the Arab world. The author finds that voters in the developing world are much like citizens in the

developed world. They credit and blame incumbents according to their perceptions of economic performance. A ‘one-unit decline in economic assessments produces a drop of 5 percentage points in vote intentions’ and an eight percentage point drop in approval (Gelineau, 2013: 422). This study, with a much broader sample of countries, corroborates Lewis-Beck and Ratto’s (2013) finding that voters in low-income countries are much like those in developed nations. The economy matters as they evaluate their incumbent leaders.

The level of the welfare state

Another question in the literature is whether the level of welfare state benefits affects the economic vote. The core argument here is that in countries with expansive benefits voters are shielded from national economic cycles through a broad variety of benefits such as health care, child care, and income maintenance programs such as unemployment benefits. In an early study on this topic Pacek and Radcliff (1995) analyze how the welfare state affects the economic vote using pooled time series data for 17 countries between 1960 and 1987. They find that in countries with more generous welfare systems the economy plays a minor role in voters’ choices. However, in countries with low to moderate levels of welfare spending economic issues become more salient, especially when the economy is strong compared with when it is not faring well.

In addition to considering how the entirety of the welfare state might condition the economic vote, scholars have looked at the impact of certain types of welfare benefits. Singer (2011) examines this question across U.S. states. Specifically, he considers whether differences in Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and unemployment insurance programs across the states affect the relationship between economic conditions and support for the president’s party in state legislative elections during the 1970s and 1980s. He finds that as AFDC benefits increase the economic vote decreases (the economic vote disappears in states where real AFDC benefits are about \$775 or more per month), while unemployment benefits do not change the size of the economic vote (Singer, 2011: 490). In explaining this difference, Singer suggests that AFDC is more visible to voters because it covers more people and requires more government spending, whereas unemployment insurance programs target only the newly unemployed through short-term support (Singer, 2011: 490).

Scholars have also examined whether living in a strong welfare state shifts the nature of the economic vote from sociotropic to pocketbook. The classic work on this question comes from Nannestad and Paldam (1995; 1997). They look at economic voting in the quintessential welfare state, Denmark. Their research found that the Danes are much more oriented toward the pocketbook. In an effort to explain this finding they contend that, in welfare states, citizens hold the government responsible for the economy of the individual. In this way, they argue that ‘[i]t is rational if welfare man blames the government if it fails to shield him

against the economic consequences of whatever happened to him' (1997: 136). This finding, labeled as the 'Danish puzzle' (Stubager et al., 2014), implies that egocentric voting should manifest itself in countries with well-developed welfare systems.

Stubager et al. (2014) reconsider Nannestad and Paldam's (1995) findings. Using the same dataset, they empirically test the 'Pocketbook of the Welfare Man' argument. After incorporating a standard sociotropic item and splitting the combined structural party identification variable into its constituent parts, they find that sociotropic effects surpass egocentric effects. Thus, it appears that Danish voters, even though they live in a strong welfare state, are just like voters in other democracies.

Relative economic voting: Benchmarking

Much of the research on how the economy enters into the calculus of government support uses measures of the level or change in domestic macroeconomic conditions, or evaluations of national or household conditions. But perhaps voters engage in comparison, much like we do in everyday life. Are we keeping up with the Joneses? How is our country's economy performing relative to that of our neighbors?

In a study best known for measuring the clarity of responsibility, Powell and Whitten (1993) calculate relative macroeconomic measures. For the comparison, they use the international average levels of growth, inflation, and unemployment. Using election data from 19 advanced democracies between 1969 and 1988, their multivariate analysis shows that in countries with clearer responsibility comparative GDP growth is statistically significant in the expected direction. When the country's growth exceeds the international average, the incumbent is rewarded. Furthermore, under conditions of clearer responsibility, the effects of comparative unemployment and inflation operate in ways consistent with the priorities of parties on the left and right. They find that '[i]n the nations with clear responsibility, the left and center governments are sharply penalized by unemployment, about .6% of the vote ... for each percentage above the international average' (Powell and Whitten, 1993: 408). Furthermore, incumbent parties on the right are penalized for inflation above the international average.

Jérôme et al. (2001: 101, 110, 121) propose a 'modèle intereuropéen' of economic voting that takes into account the impact of relative economic performance between countries. In particular, they explore how citizens of two rival countries – France and Germany – weigh their different economies in arriving at a vote choice. They show, for example, that to the extent French economic growth exceeds the German growth, the ruling coalition in the French National Assembly can expect to gain votes (i.e. each percentage point increase in the GDP should yield a vote gain of about four percentage points). And, it works the other way. When German economic growth exceeds the French growth, the

government will take more votes in German Bundestag elections. However, that impact is less, suggesting reasonably, that the French are more concerned with German growth than vice versa.

Kayser and Peress (2012) expand on the argument of relative economic voting, contending that voters consider the broader international economic context as they decide whether to punish their own governments for economic contractions. If many countries are in recession, then voters might be less likely to punish their own government for an economic downturn. ‘Voters, in short, benchmark across borders’ (Kayser and Peress, 2012: 661). In their estimations, they test the effect of national growth and unemployment, the international measure (the benchmark) for these conditions, and the country’s deviation from the benchmark (subtracting the international performance from the national measure) on the incumbent vote. They find that voters ‘respond to the deviation from the international growth benchmark [and] they do not respond to the international benchmark itself’ (Kayser and Peress, 2012: 680). Further, the deviation from the benchmark has a stronger effect than the national measure. Interestingly, benchmarking occurs only with economic growth and not with unemployment. Kayser and Peress (2012) show that the media is an important mechanism for benchmarking, since it provides citizens with information about their country’s relative economic performance.

In a related argument, Hansen et al. (2014) postulate that voters assess national economic outcomes relative to those of neighboring countries and that voters reward/punish asymmetrically when they evaluate cross-national gains/losses. To test these propositions, they conducted a choice experiment using the 2011 Danish National Election Study. They include survey items asking about the relative wealth of Danes compared with Swedes because they are frequently contrasted in the media. The empirical evidence supports both hypotheses: Danes put considerable weight on how their economy performs relative to Sweden and respond significantly to being worse off rather than better off relative to Swedes. These findings lead Hansen et al. (2014) to conclude that voters rely on relative economic conditions as a yardstick for their own economy and that ‘[t]his cross-national comparison is solely driven by a strong loss aversion’.

Globalization and trade openness

In the previous sections we have considered how a country’s economic situation, relative to other countries, affects the economic vote. We now turn to globalization and the depth of a country’s integration in the world economy (Hellwig, 2014; Kayser, 2007). In the pre-globalization era domestic fiscal and monetary policy could move the economy in fairly predictable ways. Today, with increased interdependence, policymakers must also contend with the economic oscillations of their neighbors and trading partners. These external economic forces mean that countries in regional trade agreements and those with similar levels of economic

development experience greater economic synchronization, or co-movement, than in pre-globalization times (Hirata et al., 2013; Kose et al., 2012).

Does this regional economic synchronization result in the cross-national synchronization of support for parties of the left or right? Kayser (2009) addresses this question in the European context. Using semiannual Eurobarometer data, he finds that electoral support for left- or right-wing parties covaries across these countries. In particular, similar unemployment rates in the region produce similar shifts in support for parties associated with higher taxation and spending. He further identifies that the international business cycle generates the co-movement in partisan support across the region.

If politicians in highly integrated economies have less control over the direction of their nation's economic situation, has this weakened the link between the economy and the vote? Hellwig and Samuels (2007) test this question. Using data covering 560 elections from 75 countries from 1975 to 2002, they assess the relationship between incumbent vote share and the change in GDP per capita conditioned on exposure to the global economy. The findings show that increased trade and capital flows as a share of GDP reduce the positive effect of GDP on the incumbent's vote share.

In related studies, Hellwig (2007a; 2007b) examines how increased globalization affects citizens' attributions of responsibility and perceptions of policymaking capacity. Following the argument that globalization constrains politicians, Hellwig (2007a) asserts that ordinary citizens become less certain in evaluating government performance as the economy integrates into the global market. The empirical findings in Britain, Denmark, France, and the U.S. support this. When the market is more integrated, the attribution of accountability for policy outcomes becomes unclear. Therefore, volatility in government support increases. In another study, Hellwig (2007b) examines how globalization affects confidence in incumbents' policymaking capacity in France from 1985 to 2002. He finds that increased trade and capital inflows reduce public confidence in the president and increase volatility in evaluations of the president and prime minister's ability to address the problems facing the country.

With regard to public confidence in the incumbent's job performance, Duch and Stevenson (2010) further examine perceptions of political competency in dealing with economic shocks. They argue that '[r]ational voters are motivated by the desire to select the most competent candidates: voters use information about economic outcomes to assess the future competencies of competing candidates' (Duch and Stevenson, 2010: 106). The individual-level analysis from a six-nation survey shows that voters are well aware of macroeconomic variability. Moreover, voters appear to distinguish whether unexpected economic changes are related to incumbent incompetence or to an exogenous shock. Economic voting becomes strong in the former, but decreases in the latter. However, in distinguishing the cause of economic changes, Hayes et al. (2015) find that 'in countries with a long tradition of democracy, educated voters, and free media' voters are better able to

discern whether the economic change is due to domestic politics or international factors (Hayes et al., 2015: 270).

While the standard models of electoral accountability have considered the government as the sole object of the reward–punishment mechanism, Alcaniz and Hellwig (2011) suggest that voters in developing countries might perceive more actors involved in their economy. Using *Latinobarometer* data from 2002 and 2003, the authors identify three targets of blame: elected officials (public–domestic), civil society (private–domestic), and extra-national groups (public and private international actors). Based on insight from the structural dependency theory, the authors assess how trade openness, IMF involvement, and foreign debt affect the assignment of responsibility to these targets. In their central analysis, the authors find that trade openness tends to decrease government responsibility while it increases the accountability of civil society and international actors. Similarly, the longer a country has been under an IMF agreement the less the public holds the government accountable, but the more they target civil society and international actors. Foreign debt increases the responsibility of both government and international actors but decreases that of civil society. The implications of the study are in line with the above mentioned competency argument. ‘[V]oters receive signals from the global economy and are sufficiently aware of their government’s (lack) of political control as well as of their country’s ties to international structures so as to reallocate blame (and credit) accordingly’ (Alcaniz and Hellwig, 2011: 405).

ELECTION FORECASTING WITH VP-FUNCTIONS

One important extension of VP-functions that has received a good amount of media publicity in recent years is its application to election forecasting (For more relevant reading here, see the election forecasting chapters 34 and 35 in this *Handbook* by, respectively, Ford et al. and Bélanger and Trotter.). The stability and power of the economic vote, even when controlling for other political factors, enables us to not only explain the results of elections but to use these models to predict elections (for recent reviews, see Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2014; Stegmaier and Norpoth, 2013). Election forecasting models originated in the late 1970s with Fair’s (1978) model forecasting U.S. presidential elections using macroeconomic measures. Today, presidential models based on electoral theory measure the economy in a variety of ways, objectively and subjectively, and typically incorporate non-economic political factors. For example, forecasts for the 2012 presidential election included the number of terms in office and partisan polarization (Abramowitz, 2012), presidential popularity (Lewis-Beck and Tien, 2012a), the convention bump (Campbell, 2012), and military fatalities (Hibbs, 2012).

In addition to presidential election forecasting in the U.S., vote functions have been used to predict presidential elections in France (Foucault and Nadeau, 2012;

Lewis-Beck and Rice, 1992). Foucault and Nadeau (2012) use local (*département*) data on unemployment, candidate support in previous presidential elections, and partisanship, in addition to candidate popularity at the national level, to predict whether the presidential candidate of the right will win or lose in the second round. By focusing on the candidate of the right the authors address the challenge of predicting who will win the highest office in a multiparty system. In 2012, Foucault and Nadeau correctly predicted that President Sarkozy (the candidate of the right) would lose the election.

VP-functions have also been applied to predicting parliamentary elections. Such forecasting models are found in a number of European countries, including Britain (Lewis-Beck et al., 2011; Sanders, 2005; Stegmaier and Williams, 2016), Germany (Jérôme et al., 2013; Norpeth and Gschwend, 2003), and Spain (Magalhães et al., 2012). Moving past the single country approach, Lewis-Beck and Dassonneville (2015) create a synthetic forecasting model which they apply to France, Germany, and the UK. This synthetic model combines the traditional political economy model, where government approval and economic conditions are measured six months before the election, with updated vote intention polls. They find that the structural model, by itself, performs best in terms of lead and accuracy, but that incorporating vote intention polls assists in accounting for campaign effects that the structural model cannot capture. Another recent effort to forecast elections across a group of countries appears in Jérôme et al. (2015), who forecast the 15 core nations of the EU. They focus on predicting the changing political color of this core, building a model for the ‘classical right’ in ‘Euroland’. In addition, these authors explore the extent to which a leading nation – France – might buck the forecasted trend in 2015.

In addition to forecasting in much-studied democracies, theoretically driven models have been tested in countries that are less often subject to election analysis. For example, Akarca (2011) used a vote function model to predict the 2011 Turkish parliamentary elections. His model, predicting support for the incumbent Justice and Development Party (AKP), bases itself on previous AKP vote share, economic growth, inflation, the cost of ruling, and political realignments. The model estimates that the AKP would garner 44.23 percent of the vote. They actually won 46.58 percent, which is within the 95% confidence interval of the forecast. In another under-studied country, Japan, Lewis-Beck and Tien’s (2012b) forecasting model includes change in GDP and prime minister approval, as well as a unique variable, the number of days since the last election, to account for strategic election timing. These two examples of Turkey and Japan show that theoretically based forecasting models travel well, especially when modelers account for country-specific factors.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

We have shown the VP-function to be alive and well. The economy moves government support in different ways, across countries and over time, in predictable

patterns. We have demonstrated that contextual factors, political and economic, condition the economic vote. Much has been learned. But more can be. While we have given several topics considerable coverage, that does not mean we have answered everything. For example, we need to know more about economic voting in countries that are poor, in crisis, or vulnerable to benchmarking. With regard to newer areas of inquiry, several could be listed. Consider the place of the economic issue on the agenda of electoral issues: none stands ‘as highly or as consistently with vote choice’ (Lewis-Beck, 1988: 157). Why do economic issues have such enduring importance? Some contend that the economic vote has an inherent stability (Bellucci and Lewis-Beck, 2011). But that makes a hotly contested point. Is its stability inherent or, at best, only apparent?

VP-function work has almost all been on valence economic voting, where citizens hold a consensus on the desirability of a good economy. But what about the effects of positional economic issues, where there is wide disagreement over economic policy? As a case in point, take progressive taxation, an issue where a variety of opinions exist. There are just a few relevant studies, but they suggest the importance of policy-oriented economic voting (here see the founding argument made by Kiewiet (1983)). A further, little-exploited notion concerns economic voting as patrimonial – i.e. voters act to protect their assets. In a major national election study of the 2010 UK general election, these three dimensions of the economic vote – valence, position, patrimony – are shown to act independently on the British voter (Lewis-Beck et al., 2013). Comparative investigations of these dimensions in the context of growing national income inequality offer rich veins for the economic voting scholar to mine; and there are others that we leave the reader to discover.

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The Economic Vote: Ordinary vs. Extraordinary Times

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INTRODUCTION

The literature on economic voting has grown large, reaching, by our rough estimate, 600 published pieces. The economy, we have learned, plays an important role, in election after election, in democracies around the world. Voters assess it in different ways: retrospectively or prospectively, egotropically or sociotropically. These assessments push them to reward or punish the government at the ballot box. Their electoral effect is consistently statistically significant and usually substantively significant. We begin this essay by briefly covering the nature, location, and weight of this classical economic voting in ordinary times, when the electoral calendar beats to its usual rhythms. (For more depth on ordinary economic voting, see the previous chapter by Stegmaier, Lewis-Beck and Park). Thus, the stage is set for our chief concern: the impact of the economic vote in extraordinary times. Especially since 2008, an international economic crisis has plagued the democratic world. The countries of Southern Europe (Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain) are stand-out examples here. To this list, the countries of Iceland and Ireland could be added.

The expectation is that this crisis would accentuate the economic vote. However, this is not necessarily a straightforward fact, and several paper collections have devoted themselves to exploring democratic elections and the economic crisis (Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck, 2014; Lewis-Beck and Whitten, 2013; Magalhães, 2014b; Bellucci et al., 2012). The way in which the economy has an impact on the vote has moderating factors. Firstly, it will depend on the clarity of responsibility (see Silva and Whitten, this *Handbook*, Volume 1).

The fact that both in Greece and in Italy there were technocratic governments in place when elections were held makes punishing the incumbent slightly harder. In addition, for the countries that underwent a bailout, there has been an increase in the blurring of responsibility between the government and the EU for economic policy. Thirdly, the way in which the electorate is polarized also matters for the importance of short-term factors such as the economy. In these extraordinary circumstances, the economy still presses hard on voters, and forces their choices in predictable directions.

In reviewing this crisis literature, we aim to assess the weight of the economy on voters and governments, exploring whether it exercises even more control when compared with non-crisis times. We begin with major developments in the economic voting literature to frame the analysis of the case studies to follow. Then we provide an account of the economic and political context, as well as the outcomes, of elections in Southern Europe between 2009 and 2014. Subsequently, we provide an overview of what has been established with regard to economic voting in that region, before discussing the way in which economic voting performed since the onset of the crisis. For comparison, we also examine other crisis cases on the democratic periphery of Europe – Iceland and Ireland. After detailed examination of these cases, using individual-level opinion surveys, we turn to general examination of the economic vote during times of crisis, using aggregate-level national election data. We conclude with a discussion of the differences, and similarities, of economic voting in ordinary versus extraordinary times. Our overarching find can be simply stated: economic crisis intensifies economic voting at the micro-level of the individual voter and, ultimately, at the macro-level of the national election outcome.

ECONOMIC VOTING IN ORDINARY TIMES: WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

By ordinary times, we include periods when key economic and political variables have not swung too far from their average values – say, more than two standard deviations from the mean. In other words, ordinary times means ‘most of the time’ in most advanced industrial democracies. What does the economic vote look like in them? It looks pretty much as classic economic voting theory describes: citizens reward the government with their vote under a good economy, and punish it by voting for the opposition under a bad economy. This idea is old, and intuitive. It can be traced to *The American Voter* (Campbell et al., 1966, chapter 14), if not further back. But most often the starting citation is V.O. Key (1966), in his book *The Responsive Electorate*. In that tome, he argued that voters, collectively, acted like a god of reward or vengeance, casting their ballot in judgment of the government’s past actions (Key, 1966, 61). That is to say, they evaluate government performance retrospectively, before deciding. Somewhat

later, Kramer (1971) wrote that American voters ‘satisficed’, voting for the incumbent party in the White House if they were satisfied with its economic performance, otherwise not. Ten years on, Fiorina (1981) added further refinements in his extensive exploration of the American National Election Studies (ANES). He acknowledged his theoretical debt to Key, refining national retrospective voting to apply specifically to the economy, and thus the phrase ‘economic voting’ was born (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2009).

Kinder and Kiewiet (1981) and Kiewiet (1983) further unpacked the economic voting idea along the dimensions of time and target. The economic voter looked backward or forward, at the nation or at the family. That is, their evaluations were retrospective or prospective, sociotropic or egotropic (pocketbook). Their research, which drew on the ANES over a long period, showed that American voters were also economic voters who tended to be more retrospective than prospective and more sociotropic than pocketbook. Effects were consistently found, and they were statistically and substantively important. These ideas, as tested via survey research, quickly crossed the Atlantic. Lewis-Beck (1988, 34) in an effort to make them ‘more applicable to democratic systems generally’, offered the following definition of what he called *‘traditional economic voting theory’*: When voters approve (disapprove) of past economic conditions, they vote for (against) the governing party (or parties).⁷

Lewis-Beck’s (1988) research, based on two Eurobarometer waves in Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, showed these European voters to be similar to American voters in that there was little pocketbook voting but considerable sociotropic voting. He concluded that these:

evaluations have at least a moderately strong influence on individual voters in legislative elections. In general, for these Western European nations, changes in economic evaluations have more of an impact than do changes in social cleavages (such as religiosity and class), but less of an impact than Left–Right ideological identification (Lewis-Beck, 1988, 156).

He goes on to say that, while:

‘the process of economic voting is much the same in these nations ... some difference in the strength of economic voting does appear to exist ... As coalition complexity (measured by the number of parties in the ruling coalition) increases, the strength of economic voting tends to decrease ... due to diffusion of government responsibility (Lewis-Beck, 1988, 108, 159).

In a full explanation of the clarity of responsibility idea, Powell and Whitten (1993) performed a rigorous comparative analysis demonstrating that the magnitude of the economic vote intensifies as policy responsibility becomes less ambiguous.

A creative, not to say definitive, extension of these notions of economic voting and institutional context appears in Duch and Stevenson (2008), who examine 163 surveys in 18 advanced democracies. Their conclusion echoes earlier cross-national European work, offering ‘evidence in favor of the conventional wisdom.

Yes, there is economic voting in developed democracies' (Duch and Stevenson, 2008, 92). The question now at hand is to what extent this conventional wisdom was upset by the economic crisis which struck in 2008.

ECONOMIC VOTING IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES: THE 2008 CRISIS IN THE PERIPHERY OF EUROPE

The financial crisis, which had its origins in the US in 2008 with the rescue of Bear Sterns and the Lehman Brothers bankruptcy, eventually led to a European banking crisis that was accompanied by increased differentiation of countries within the Eurozone. The beginning of the Eurozone crisis took off with the nationalization of Anglo Irish in January 2009, but gathered steam with evidence of the Greek sovereign's distress in May 2010 (Mody and Sandri 2012). What was initially a banking and financial crisis quickly became a crisis of public finances, with countries that had larger public debts and underlying weaknesses in their economic indicators finding it increasingly difficult to access the financial markets. Between 2010 and 2012 Greece, Ireland, and Portugal needed to be rescued by sovereign bailout programs delivered jointly by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Commission (EC), and the European Central Bank (ECB). Even though Greece, Portugal, and Ireland were the three countries that were officially bailed out by external institutions, Spain and Italy have also had to impose severe austerity regimes, with governments having to implement unpopular economic measures.

What followed was a period of low growth for most European countries, accompanied by austerity programs to decrease the importance of servicing debt and deficits. While the nature of the external constraint was variable, all affected countries had to meet a similar challenge, namely to combine the external pressure for adjustment with domestic institutional legacies and practices embedded in wider normative frameworks. It is, however, not the case that all countries afflicted by this crisis had similar economic woes. In Ireland and Spain there were severe banking problems, whereas in Italy and Portugal the level of growth had been weak for almost a decade when the 2009/2010 financial crisis gained strength. In Greece, structural economic problems combined with state weakness to create a spiral of economic downturn from 2011 onwards.

Despite the fact that these countries neither had identical economic weaknesses nor had to face similar external constraints, the policy mix administered by incumbent governments was similar. This is due to the fact that the IMF (International Monetary Fund), along with the Eurozone authorities – i.e. the Eurogroup (Committee of the Finance Ministers of the Eurozone), the European Commission, and the European Central Bank – centrally advised or even imposed the policy mix on national governments. The austerity measures consisted of a mix of very unpopular policies such as decreases in state salaries and state

pensions, which affected an important part of the population, decreases in state social spending such as on education, health, and social security, and drastic cuts in public investments which then had a large effect in the level of economic growth.

The goal was to curb budget deficits and decrease the level of public debt in order to fulfill the criteria which had been agreed upon by the membership of the Eurozone. This external constraint placed politicians across all countries considered in a very difficult position: namely, they had to impose austerity policies to fulfill external commitments upon an electorate that naturally was suffering the pains of such policies. This was a difficult predicament for political elites and, as expected, incumbent governments suffered a heavy toll at the polls. Indeed, the year 2011 witnessed the ousting of the incumbents of all four countries of ‘core’ Southern Europe (Bosco and Verney, 2012, 130), as well as Ireland. In November of that year incumbents in both Italy and Greece were replaced by technocratic governments without recourse to elections. Greece subsequently held elections in 2012, and saw power transferred to the hands of the center-right Nea Demokratia. In Spain and Portugal both center-left socialist governments, led respectively by Zapatero and Socrates, suffered heavy defeats in 2011 and were replaced by right-wing conservative governments. Incumbent punishment seemingly became a rule across the region. Moreover, governing party losses often occurred on a scale exceeding the expected swings between governing parties alternating in power (Bosco and Verney, 2012, 145).

In the same year, Fianna Fáil, the incumbent party in Ireland, suffered the heaviest defeat in the party’s history and was relegated to third largest party in the country, placed after Fine Gael and the Labour Party (Bosco and Verney, 2012, 145). The defeats which we have just detailed seem at first glance to configure a classic example of economic voting at work. The incumbents that failed to deliver on their promises were ousted and alternative parties were put in place. However, it is necessary to review the particular ways in which the economic vote made itself felt in these special circumstances.

First of all, this crisis occurred in the context of a monetary union, and the states that were involved did not have full control of their fiscal and monetary instruments because of their entry into the Eurozone in 2001. This is effectively a different scenario to economic voting occurring in a fully sovereign state, which is what most articles measuring economic voting have been dealing with in the past. Second, the extent of perceptions of economic crisis were much more widespread than on previous occasions. This was especially the case in the countries where an external bailout had to be negotiated. In Ireland, Greece, and Portugal incumbent governments were forced to admit that they could no longer sustain their financial obligations and therefore had to negotiate a bailout. This was a loud and clear message on the state of the economy, which is as unequivocal as you can get. Thus, unlike on previous occasions, where there may have been significant differences between government and opposition party supporters on

the extent of the crisis, the perceptions of the negative developments were much more widespread.

These special circumstances make it important to revisit economic voting as it has been analyzed following these key elections in Ireland, Italy, Greece, Portugal, and Spain. Next we present a host of arguments developed using these peripheral countries as case studies of economic voting in extraordinary times. But, before we do that, we need to understand the extent to which economic voting had become established in previous studies of the countries concerned.

ECONOMIC VOTING IN THE EUROPEAN PERIPHERY: EVIDENCE SO FAR

The burgeoning literature on economic voting has limits, stretching mostly to the main democracies of North America and Western Europe. To what extent has the importance of economic issues been found to matter for elections in less commanding democracies? Are these issues a major factor in election choice there or not? This is important as a baseline in order to understand the impact these economic factors may have had since 2009. Let us first take a close look at results from Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Italy.

In Spain, electoral behavior studies have established the role of traditional loyalties and social cleavages in shaping the vote choice (Barnes et al., 1985; Gunther et al., 1986; Linz and Montero, 1986). More recent work has emphasized the importance of left-right ideology (González, 2002; Maravall and Przeworski, 2001; Torcal and Medina, 2002) and class voting (Cainzos, 2001). Important scholarly opinion denies the presence of an economic vote, claiming that economic perceptions are mere projections of the voter's left-right ideology rather than objective assessments of the real economy (Maravall and Przeworski, 2001). Other research, however, has shown that there is an economic vote in Spain (Fraile, 2005; Lewis-Beck and Lancaster, 1986). Until recently, however, all studies both for and against relied on cross-sectional surveys, which poses methodological limitations to understanding how the economy may impact an election. However, a comprehensive recent investigation includes a panel dataset which encompasses eight elections between 1982 and 2008. In that article, Fraile and Lewis-Beck (2012) offer a well-specified general logistic regression model for these Spanish elections, showing that the national economy, measured in various ways, has a strong impact on incumbent vote choice.

Contrary to what occurs in Spain, the existing studies about Portugal have concurred on the importance of economic voting. Portuguese voting is characterized by relatively weak social anchors combined with strong party identification and ideological positioning (Lobo and Lewis-Beck, 2011). In a comparative study on Southern Europe, Freire and Lobo (2005) observed that, between 1985 and 2000,

economic perceptions were more important than social class as explanatory variables of voting behavior. Yet, this study had methodological limitations in that it did not use post-election surveys, using Eurobarometer surveys instead, and voting intention rather than vote recall. More recent research has shown that, after candidate evaluation and ideology, economic perceptions were generally the most important factor in explaining voting choices in the 2002 election in Portugal (Freire, 2007). In the most comprehensive study to date, Freire and Santana Pereira (2012) consider three cross-sectional surveys and reach the conclusion that, in a dichotomous logistic regression for each year considered, sociotropic economic perceptions are significant, even while controlling for social cleavages and ideology.

In Greece the concept of economic voting is relatively understudied (Nezi, 2012). The scarce existing evidence is mixed. In one study economic perceptions are seen to have a negligible impact on voting behavior, with ideological placement the most important explanatory factor in a comprehensive model of voting behavior (Freire and Lobo, 2005). More recently, Nezi (2012) examined the importance of sociotropic economic evaluations for incumbent support in the 2004 and 2009 Greek elections. She shows that in both elections retrospective sociotropic evaluations about the economy are associated with support for the governing party even when powerful predictors of party choice (such as ideology and party identification) are included in the statistical model.

In Italy substantial change occurred from the 1990s onwards in the relation between parties and voters due to the scandal-led implosion of the existing party system and the change in electoral law, accompanied by a new party system with new patterns of competition. According to Bellucci (2012), this created a turning point, with 'valence politics showing increasing effects on voting, with the perception of party competence and retrospective evaluation of socio-tropic conditions as key determinants of vote choice' (p. 495). This assessment bases itself on Bellucci's longitudinal analysis of voting behavior in Italy in the 2001, 2006, and 2008 legislative elections. He shows that, whilst partisanship continues to be a strong anchor in Italian voting behavior, it no longer seems to be anchored in social cleavages. Instead, it is political, deriving from political stances taken up by the parties, as well as performance indicators and economic perceptions. Thus, the Italian voter is better able to hold the incumbents accountable since the seismic party shift in the 1990s. This has led to greater volatility in the relationship between electors and parties, which allows for a greater role to be played by economic variables in the vote calculus.

One of the few comparative and longitudinal studies on the importance of the economic vote in Southern Europe is provided by Lewis-Beck and Nadeau (2012). The article uses data from the European Election Study (EES) at four data-points (1988, 1994, 1999, 2004) across ten Western European nations: Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. The total $N = 44,014$ constitutes the largest comparative economic

voting survey pool yet analyzed. The hypotheses tested in the article are the following: that in each election survey economic voting matters and that economic voting will be more important where economic conditions are more difficult. The authors confirm both hypotheses. In particular, the Southern European countries exhibit economic voting to a larger degree than the other European countries in the sample. The authors explain this larger importance of economic voting as due to two factors: first, the Southern European countries have a higher prevalence of single-party governments, where clarity of responsibility is more acute than in the rest of Europe; and, second, their economies, relatively speaking, do not perform as well, and their electorates are particularly sensitive to it.

This overview of economic voting in Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain indicates that the economy matters. Successive country, as well as comparative studies, covering the last fifteen years show that, in these polities, incumbents are held accountable and that perceptions of economic performance do make a difference for the vote calculus. Going further, it has also been seen that the economic vote in Southern Europe actually mattered more than elsewhere in Europe (Lewis-Beck and Nadeau, 2012), which sets the stage for the next section of this chapter. Having established that electors in Southern Europe are more sensitive than other European voters to the economy, we can expect that the economic vote under the Eurozone crisis would be large.

BLURRING THE CLARITY OF RESPONSIBILITY: THE EU AND TECHNOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS

One of the factors that may undermine the strength of the economic vote is the degree to which the openness of the economy, and in particular the existence of a supranational monetary union, may blur clarity of responsibility. Indeed, a growing comparative literature has emphasized the impact of economic openness on the magnitude of the economic vote coefficient (Duch and Stevenson, 2010; Vowles and Xezonakis, 2009; Soroka and Wlezien, 2010; Hellwig, 2010). In a recent study we explored the importance of monetary union for the economic vote (Lobo and Lewis-Beck, 2012). We tested the hypothesis that if individuals consider that Europe is responsible for national economic policy, they will likely hold the government less responsible for retrospective economic performance and will tend to punish the government less for an economic crisis. We used the EES data fielded in 2009 for Portugal, Spain, Greece, and Italy. The findings confirm the hypothesis, namely that the degree to which the EU is perceived as responsible for the economy reduces the strength of the economic vote in each of these countries.

This hypothesis was further tested and confirmed in other articles looking at individual case studies: namely, Magalhães's (2014a) analysis of the 2011 Portuguese election, where the socialist party lost to the center-right PSD

following the bailout agreement, and Bellucci's (2014) analysis of the Italian case. Both agree that the EU's visibility in domestic politics further depressed economic voting to the extent that voters perceive the EU as responsible for national policy, and ruling parties are held less accountable for economic performance.

Another aspect that may have blurred clarity of responsibility during the crisis is the existence of technocratic governments in Greece and Italy before the 2012 and 2013 legislative elections, respectively. Berlusconi resigned in October 2011, but the demise of his government did not follow either an electoral defeat or a negative confidence vote in parliament. His government was replaced by one led by Mario Monti, a technocrat banker. According to Bellucci (2014): 'A non-partisan government in a context of an international economic crisis clearly makes it difficult for voters to rely on traditional accountability evaluations in forming their judgments, thus directly affecting the importance of valence politics as a source of voting' (p. 244). Concerning the Greek case, an article by Teperoglou and Tsatsanis (2014) tries to measure the economic impact of the crisis. As the authors show convincingly, it not only had an impact on the incumbent previous to the technocratic government, i.e. the PASOK, but also produced a voter realignment in favor of new parties at the extremes of the left-right scale and an implosion in support for the mainstream parties. It is difficult to draw comparisons with other cases, however, because the post-election survey collected did not include variables that normally measure the degree of economic voting, namely sociotropic/egotropic voting, both retrospectively and prospectively.

In addition to the issues caused by the blurring of responsibility due to the economic powers of EU supranational bodies within the Eurozone and the issue of technocratic governments, the literature has raised another issue which may mitigate economic voting, namely partisanship. The issue is one of endogeneity, namely whether economic perceptions are exogenous, or are themselves, to a partial degree, a measure of party identification. Torcal (2014) makes the case that strong partisanship would not only condition economic perceptions but also shape 'blame attribution'. According to Bellucci (2014), this indeed happened in Italy in the 2013 elections.

ECONOMIC VOTING AND THE 2008 CRISIS: A LOOK AT SPECIFIC CASES

At this point, it should be helpful to examine our extraordinary cases in more detail. For comparative purposes, in addition to our Southern European nations – Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain – we examine Iceland and Ireland. We begin with these two Northern European examples, in which the 2008 collapse of their banking systems was followed by unprecedented government losses at the next election. Both appear to be sharp examples of the electorate punishing the national government for its leading role in the country's economic disaster. In Iceland the

2009 election saw the incumbent coalition of the Independence Party (IP) and the Social Democrats suffer big losses, with the dominant IP losing fully 13 percentage points. Indeed, its support hit a new low and it lost, for the first time, its status as Iceland's largest party. According to the 2009 Icelandic National Election Study, the Haarde Government bore major responsibility for the banking failure, alongside the banks themselves (Indridason, 2014, 149). Further, relating performance evaluations to vote choice, Indridason (2014, 146) finds that the 'size of the effect suggests that economic considerations were paramount in the election'. He concludes that 'It is clear that the economic crisis shaped the outcome of the 2009 election, e.g., voters sought to hold those responsible for the crisis to account' (Indridason, 2014, 153).

In Ireland the banking collapse resulted in national cuts in salaries and services and a rise in unemployment to over 14 percent. The policy centerpiece was the IMF-led international bailout, negotiated in 2010, which the Irish parliament agreed to pay back. As a consequence, the February 2011 election gave the chief government party (*Fianna Fáil*) an historic reversal, its vote share diminishing to third largest. This defeat could readily be attributed to a classic economic vote in which 'people perceived the economy as it was, and ... they held the government responsible, and then voted accordingly' (Marsh and Mikhaylov, 2012, Table 2, 482). Fully 80 percent of the voters in the Irish National Election Survey believed the government 'responsible' for the crisis, and most of them went on to vote against it (Marsh and Mikhaylov, 2014, 162). Blame rested squarely with *Fianna Fáil* partly because that attribution was reinforced by the media framing of government wrongdoing (Marsh and Mikhaylov, 2012, 483).

Returning to Southern Europe, we begin with the pivotal Spanish case. The ruling *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE) experienced unprecedented defeat in the November 2011 election, which took place in the heat of the crisis. In that year economic growth was flat, inflation was rising, and the unemployment rate had reached almost 22 percent (see The World Economic Outlook Database, April 2012 edition, International Monetary Fund). Moreover, Spanish voters were able to perceive these deteriorating economic conditions. In fact, over the course of the PSOE's time in office, negative evaluation of the economy rose more or less steadily, with almost 90 percent saying that the economic situation was 'bad' or 'very bad' in the month of the election itself (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, Indicadores de la situación económica (www.cis.es)).

As Torcal (2014, 204) remarks, 'the evidence strongly suggests that the Socialist electoral defeat was due to changes in voters' evaluations of the Spanish economy during the same time period'. He goes on to conclude that 'our results strongly confirm this ... we have also shown how this punishment is conditioned by prior ideological attachments' (Torcal, 2014, 215). Also taking ideological differences into account, Fraile and Lewis-Beck (2014a) demonstrate, via different exogeneity tests, the enduring power of the economic vote in the 2011

contest. In their final analysis, on a pool of all nine post-election CIS surveys (1982 to 2011), they estimate the incumbent vote loss in the very bad economic year of 2011 compared, for example, with the good economic year of 2000. It amounts to a difference in the percentage incumbent vote support of 23 points. As they conclude, the ‘bad times of 2011 ... cost the incumbent dearly’ (Fraile and Lewis-Beck, 2014a: 174).

What about the economic vote in the 2011 election of Spain’s Iberian neighbor, Portugal? The stage appeared set for electoral catastrophe as far as the ruling socialist government was concerned. GDP growth was in negative territory, unemployment reached a new high of 12 percent, and government debt approached 100 percent of GDP. The *coup de grâce* was the government announcement that it could not meet its debt responsibilities and was seeking a bailout. On May 3, a month before the June election, it went on to sign such an agreement with the ‘Troika’ (the IMF, the ECB, and the EC). The electorate were aware of this economic debacle, as the 2011 post-election survey made clear, with 94 percent of the respondents declaring the economy was ‘worse’ or ‘much worse’. Moreover, 80 percent believed the government had performed ‘badly’ or ‘very badly’ (Magalhães, 2014a, 183–4). As Magalhães (2014a, 184) observes, this ‘combination of factors seemed to spell doom for the Socialist incumbent’. He goes on to conclude that the ‘2011 election did bring an important punishment for the incumbent party’, with the socialists losing over eight percentage points compared with 2009, their lowest tally in over 20 years (Magalhães, 2014a, 187).

However, Magalhães concludes that the economic situation itself had a rather limited role in meting out this punishment, for two main reasons: first, the statistically weak impact of national economic evaluations; and, second, the blurring of responsibility for economic management. With regard to the first, Magalhães (2014a, 191) reports that the relationship between national economic perception and the vote are ‘of little relevance, and even display the “wrong sign” in certain cases’. With regard to the second, he reports that some voters attribute responsibility for the crisis to international actors, so diminishing the anti-government vote. As evidence, he says retrospective national economic evaluation exercises show no statistically significant effect on the incumbent vote, once they are conditioned by the ‘EU responsibility for the economic variable’ (Magalhães, 2014a, 196). In the end, the circumstances of the bailout ‘led a considerable amount of voters to assign responsibility to other agents and forces’, and thereby ‘served to mitigate the losses the Socialists were likely to experience’ (Magalhães, 2014a, 198).

This reticence on the part of certain scholars to credit the economy with a large electoral impact during the crisis stems largely from neglecting a basic methodological problem: restricted variance. When all scores on X are the same, then X cannot explain variation in Y. If all voters, at the same point in time, hold the same opinion on the economy, then economic perception cannot really be used to explain differences in vote intention. During an economic crisis almost all voters see the economy as bad. In a single cross-sectional election survey, when close to

100 percent of the respondents say the economy is ‘worse’, that universal attitude cannot predict contemporaneous variation in vote intention.

Practically speaking, in such a circumstance the estimated correlation between that sociotropic item and the vote intention will be close to zero. (See the discussion on how variance changes in X affect estimates in Lewis-Beck and Skalaban, 1990, 164–8.) The negligible correlation does not mean a lack of economic voting, however; it just means that another research design is needed in order to uncover it. One solution is a pooled design, which Fraile and Lewis-Beck (2014a) use with the Spanish case to overcome the restricted variance problem. There was virtually no variance in opinion about the Spanish economy in 2011, making it difficult to tease out economic vote cross-sectionally. But considerable variance in economic opinion existed across a pool of nine election surveys (1982–2011). In this dynamic context, the effect of the negative assessments of the 2011 national economy, and its harsh impact on the incumbent vote, can be starkly seen.

Of all the democracies in the European periphery, none has received more attention during the crisis than Greece, whose very political economic foundations are under threat. With regard to economic voting there, relatively little has been established, in part because of data deficiencies. That has begun to change. Nezi (2012), whom we mentioned earlier, offers perhaps the first individual-level study in her examination of two elections, 2004 (with the defeat of PASOK) and 2009 (with the defeat of New Democracy, ND). By 2009, Greek debt and deficit problems had reached high levels, and Prime Minister Karamanlis called a sudden election, just a few months before the negotiated bailout with the IMF and the EU. According to Nezi’s estimation of classic economic voting models, the Greece electorate in both contests followed a standard reward–punishment strategy vis-a-vis the incumbent: ‘retrospective sociotropic evaluations about the economy are associated with support for the governing party even when powerful predictors of party choice (such as ideology and party identification) are included in the statistical model. This was true for both 2004 and 2009’ (Nezi, 2012, 504).

These classical partisan pillars were severely shaken by the time of the May 2012 parliamentary election. First, there was the problem of the caretaker incumbent government, a coalition of the two largest parties headed by a technocrat PM. This situation created difficulties of blame attribution for the sorry economic conditions. Second, there was the problem of restricted variance alluded to above. No one saw any economic hope; everyone said that the economy was worse. In that circumstance, no electoral leverage was to be had on the economy as a valence issue, in the sense of attaching the prosperity label to certain party choices. But, as Stokes (1963, 373) once said, ‘position issues lurk behind many valence issues’. In this case, that meant a turn to vote choices based on different economic policy positions. Parliament had recently voted on the bailout agreements made with the Troika. From that point, the issues in the economic debate became positional in nature, with the incumbent PASOK favoring the cuts

and reforms and left-wing parties opposing – the Communists wanting to exit from the EU and the radical left (SYRIZA) wanting to exit from the Eurozone (Gemenis and Nezi, 2012).

As Nezi and Katsanidou (2014) put it, ‘Parties did not engage in valence politics but presented alternative economic worldviews.’ In this situation, voters become policy-oriented and engaged in a second dimension of economic voting, a positional one. In a multinomial logit analysis of vote choice among eight party families, she employs as an independent variable a positional economic index (including items of taxation, reforms, and the Troika memoranda). Higher scores on the index are more pro-market and pro-memoranda, and are significantly associated with a vote preference for the incumbent PASOK. Of course, those with low scores on the index voted against the incumbent. In the end, PASOK saw its vote share fall from 44 percentage points in the 2009 election to 13 percentage points in the May 2012 contest.

Further, ‘the magnitude of the economic voting index variable across the three parties of the coalition government revealed a clear pattern of voter preferences in line with their variable involvement in the coalition … the magnitude proved to be stronger when the incumbent parties had a stronger involvement in the government coalition’ (Nezi and Katsanidou, 2014). This conclusion finds further support in the work of Teperoglou and Tsatsanis (2014, 237), who find that a:

variable measuring support for the bailout deal shows that it mattered for voters of all parties and followed the expected direction in that more positive attitudes are associated with support for PASOK and New Democracy while those who are critical are more likely to support the opposition (both left and right’).

Thus, economic voting, conceived in this way as positional, clearly appears at work in the dramatic 2012 contest, even in the midst of historic amounts of party fragmentation and near consensus (94 percent) going into the election that ‘things are getting worse in the country’ (Teperoglou and Tsatsanis, 2014, 231). The notion that economic voting can take a positional form is not unique to the Greek crisis. Fraile and Lewis-Beck (2014b) find the same phenomenon occurring during the 2011 crisis election of Spain. Voters who evaluated government economic policies quite negatively were clearly more likely to vote for the PP and against the ruling PSOE. Overall, their assessment of instruments of economic policy, coupled with criticism of the state of the economy itself, produced sizeable losses for the government.

Before leaving the Greek case, it is worth noting that a recent paper by Goulas et al. (2015) restores the more direct argument that the 2012 election was a classic example of the workings of the traditional reward–punishment model of economic voting. Using regional level data ($N = 338$) from five parliamentary elections (2000–2012), they estimate their model using the system-GMM technique, a preferred method for these sorts of data. Their evidence suggests ‘that low growth, high unemployment and tight fiscal policy lead Greek voters to

reward the opposing parties and reduce support for the party in power' (Goulas et al., 2015, 7). Interestingly, in contradiction to certain other scholars, they find that in the 2012 contest the assignment of economic responsibility is not blurred: that is, 'which party to blame ... is not a problem ... as both New Democracy and Pasok lost significant power, dropping between 2009 and 2012 more than 35 percentage points' (Goulas et al., 2015, 6). Put another way, in their view the face validity of these shifts overwhelms the critical observer.

Of our six case studies the last – Italy – could perhaps be the most perplexing, as it seems, as Italy often does, to be breaking the rules. The crisis hit the country hard, but no harder than its sister nations in Southern Europe. What made it different, on the surface at least, was its political response. On November 13, 2011 Berlusconi initiated his own resignation after having to cave to European Central Bank financial reforms. A few days later, Mario Monti was appointed the new prime minister, supported in a parliamentary vote by a grand coalition of the leading parties. His caretaker government of technocrats immediately began to implement the mandated budgetary cuts. A little over a year later, in February 2013, the grand coalition was broken up by the departure of Berlusconi's People of Freedom Party, and early elections held.

Over 86 percent of the voters, according to an Italian National Election Study survey, believed that the national economic situation had worsened (Bellucci, 2014, Table 1). The grand coalition parties experienced losses without precedent. Support for the right-wing People of Freedom Party fell to 21.3 percent (from 37.2 percent in 2008), while support for the left-wing Democratic party fell to 25.5 percent (from 33.1 percent in 2008). Moreover, the Five Star Movement, in its first national election, gained 25.1 percent, to become the second largest party. As Bellucci (2014, 244) observed, Italians 'facing the severest economic crisis in post-war times, voted against all parties that supported the outgoing technical government, and instead rewarded a new opposition – apparently a clear instance of economic voting'.

However, he has difficulty making this point analytically, for several reasons. For one, the restricted variance problem comes into play again. It is not easy to tease out the electoral effects of the universally observed economic disaster because the survey research design takes a cross-sectional form. In particular, his multivariate analysis of party choice in 2013 finds weak to contradictory effects.

As to the economic vote, the retrospective sociotropic economic evaluation (RSSE) coefficient is only statistically significant for the Democratic Party coalition, and also negatively signed, showing that a perception of a deteriorated economy is associated with a vote for the right bloc rather than for the left one ... an apparent paradoxical outcome' (Bellucci, 2014, 254–5).

In part, this paradoxical result stems from the blurred responsibility for economic policy brought on by 'the transition from Berlusconi's government to Monti's administration' (Bellucci, 2014, 244). Punishing government for a deteriorating economy by voting against it presumes, at bottom, clarity of responsibility

(Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2007). But under the caretaker government presiding over this 2013 election, party responsibility was ambiguous. To help solve this problem, Bellucci gave each main party an opportunity to pose as incumbent in his multinomial logit analysis of five party (coalition) choices. But there are other ways to construct the dependent variable. Classic economic voter coding, with its unambiguous dichotomy, should be considered: government parties (= 1), opposition (=0). For Italy in 2013, a plausible government parties coding could include Party of Freedom plus the Democratic Party. This would essentially pit the grand coalition (which, after all, installed Premier Monte) against the opposition parties. Given that both these major parties suffered historic losses, this coding has a lot to say for it.

Because ‘who governs’ is less than clear, Bellucci probes institutional as well as party differences in responsibility, and how those differences interact with economic attitudes. For example, those who ‘perceive the PoF as responsible for the crisis are 1.6 times more likely to vote for DP rather than Berlusconi’s bloc’ (Bellucci, 2014, 255). Alternatively, he interacts those who blame the EU with national economic evaluation, showing ‘a positive effect on all votes for the other parties vis-à-vis Berlusconi’s bloc’ (Bellucci, 2014, 255). This result gets us back to the (EU * Economic Evaluation) interactions we assessed earlier in the major Southern European electorates, including Italy (Lobo and Lewis-Beck, 2012). In that study, belief that the EU was relatively more important than the national government for the economy actually diminished the economic vote.

Such interaction findings are important, demonstrating that in extraordinary times national economic evaluations may be conditioned or ‘mediated by the structure of blame attribution’ (Bellucci, 2014, 260). However, we need to remember that the assignment of responsibility can also decrease (or increase) the economic vote in ordinary times as well. For example, in the 2008 United States presidential election, survey voters who saw government as more responsible for the economy than business leaders punished incumbent Bush for a bad economy (Lewis-Beck and Nadeau, 2009, 481). Or, to take another example, in a study of five national parliamentary elections in Canada the standard economic voting effect was made stronger among respondents who attributed responsibility to the government itself (Bélanger and Nadeau, 2015, 924).

Other examples could be offered. The key point is that, while the effect of economic evaluation can be mediated by responsibility, the total effect of the economic vote remains and that may be made larger, as well as smaller, by mediation. (This same point, routinely forgotten, holds for the influence of party identification on the vote. The role of responsibility attribution in mediating economic evalution and party identification is discussed further in the endnote.)¹

Our above crisis cases – Iceland, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Greece, and Italy – have been examined in a good deal of detail. Now we need to turn from these cases studies to larger, cross-country analyses that allow us to speak more broadly to how well economic voting theory generalizes.

ECONOMIC VOTING AND ECONOMIC CRISIS: TOWARD GENERAL THEORY

Thus far, we have focused on classical economic voting in ordinary and extraordinary times. The very division into these categories – ordinary and extraordinary – implies that the process is different within the two. But is it? Here we explore the limits of the classic reward–punishment model as a general theory of economic voting applicable across a set of democratic governments, a set broad in space and time. We begin at the micro-level of the individual voter, moving quickly to the macro-level of electoral outcomes, where the main prize – the reins of government – is awarded. We know, on the basis of extensive survey research, that individual voters do consider the state of the economy when they make their choice at the ballot box. This fact was hard won, but the scholarly effort was necessary in order to lay to rest a possible *ecological fallacy*: the observed links between the macro-economy and national elections were actually spurious at the level of individual voters.

These days, the main work in the economic voting field draws on public opinion polls. However, survey findings themselves, even positive ones, do not allay another inference problem, dubbed the *micrological fallacy* (Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck, 2014, 373). Like the ecological one, it is a fallacy of composition, but its opposite, namely ‘while individual voters may appear to be economic voters, all voters taken together may not reflect the changing state of the economy. Put another way, the collective vote of the national electorate might not respond to national economic conditions, despite a seemingly supportive micro foundation’ (Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck, 2014, 373). If the micrological fallacy holds, then uncovering individual economic voting ceases to be very important, since it would lack aggregate issue. Further, its very presence might explain the sometimes spotty, inconclusive results reported in the original aggregate-level studies of economics and elections that launched the economic voting wave (see, in particular, Paldam 1991). It seems timely, then, to firmly establish the macro-links between the economy and the electorate, testing whether they do conform to classical economic voting theory, especially in the context of economic crisis.

In a recent analysis and review of the aggregate relationship between economics and elections in European democracies, Bengtsson (2004, 764) decides that the ‘one overarching result from this and other studies does, however, seem to be that the fundamental economic effects ... are rather weak or non-existent’. Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck (2014, 376) directly counter this claim by testing, under multiple specifications, the impact of GDP growth on incumbent support in a large sample ($N = 359$) of Eastern and Western European national elections from 1952 to 2013 (in 31 countries). Their first hypothesis, that GDP growth has the expected relationship with incumbent vote, receives clear support: ‘Specifically, a 1 percentage increase in GDP growth yields about a

0.7 percentage point increase in incumbent support' (Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck, 2014, 382). Further, the presence of the effect withstands numerous further statistical challenges. On this evidence, the strongest yet assembled, the micrological fallacy does not have legs. This is an important reassurance, offering a firm link between the micro- and macro-levels of analyses that characterize the economic voting literature.

Even more important, for our purposes, is their second hypothesis, which asserts that during 'economic crisis, GDP growth relates more strongly to incumbent vote support' (Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck, 2014, 377). They put forward different arguments for this hypothesis, including the greater media salience of negative economic messages, the public's risk aversion to these messages, and the heightened importance voters place on the economic question during hard times (see, respectively, Soroka, 2006; Lau, 1985; Fournier et al., 2003). This hypothesis also receives support, but in an unexpected way. Surprisingly, the 2008 crisis per se fails to register a significant effect, either as a dummy variable or when interacted with GDP. In other words, 'while the incumbent governments of Europe may have been punished by the post-2008 economic crisis, that punishment has been no greater than for economic downturns occurring in other periods' (Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck, 2014, 383).

This finding leads the authors to an insight: 'Perhaps economic crisis, rather than being temporally specific, works whenever the economy takes a serious downturn' (Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck, 2014, 384). The authors go on to define 'economic crisis' as a year of negative economic growth. Then they demonstrate, in various ways, that the impact of GDP growth is greater when it is negative, rather than positive: that is, the negative growth effect 'coefficient approaches twice the magnitude of the positive' (Dassonneville and Lewis-Beck, 2014, 385). Thus, we see that, after all, economic voting in extraordinary times does differ from ordinary times: it hurts more, so punishing incumbents more. The upside of this punishment comes from holding the government more accountable and putting more pressure on them to make economic improvements.

MICRO-MACRO RESOLUTION AND THE CRISIS PARADOX

Historically, economics and elections research have proceeded along two tiers, the macro and the micro. While both tiers have their advocates, a tension has existed between them. On the one hand, critics of the macro research worry about the ecological fallacy, and not getting at how voters really think. On the other hand, critics of micro research worry about the flaws in survey measurement. The latter camp takes its inspiration from the forceful work of Kramer (1983), who contended that cross-sectional survey perceptions were hopelessly riddled with bad judgment and partisan bias; therefore, only macro data should be used. Fortunately, this micro-macro tension appears amenable to resolution

with enough good data and good measurement, at least for ordinary times. The Danish case provides the leading opportunity here, for it has extensive time series of quality-controlled macroeconomic indicators along with multiple scientific national election surveys (eight from 1987 to 2011) containing a good battery of economic items.

Lewis-Beck et al. (2013) pool these cross-sections, then estimate a series of models for the Danish national vote (incumbent parties versus opposition). The theoretical specification becomes increasingly rigorous, as do the statistical tests. In all cases it includes a sociotropic retrospective evaluation of the economy variable. In the preferred, most demanding models (Models III–VI), the sociotropic coefficient is statistically and substantively significant; further, it is stable, fluctuating within a narrow range (2.21–2.64), even including an instrumental variables estimation to overcome potential endogeneity (Lewis-Beck et al., 2013, 502). Having established the robustness of the sociotropic coefficient, they address another aspect of the ‘Kramer problem’: it remains based on subjective, individual-level survey data.

Therefore, maintaining the same model specification and database, they simply substitute the sociotropic variable for GDP growth (appending the appropriate value for each respondent, depending on the year). That variable attains statistical significance, and its marginal effect (changing from low to high GDP growth) increases the probability of an incumbent vote by 0.19. This value compares favorably to the marginal effect – 0.16 – of the same change in sociotropic retrospective evaluation (when aggregated to the national level). Thus, despite Kramer, no aggregation problem arises in moving from micro to macro levels. As the authors observe, by:

any of our measures of the economy, objective or subjective, aggregated upward or not, the final overall impact on the electoral outcome, i.e., the actual change in incumbent vote share, is roughly the same. The economic voting individual survey findings conform to the economic voting results shown in aggregate objective findings (Lewis-Beck et al., 2013, 504).

The implications of this micro–macro resolution are profound, suggesting that both levels of analysis, properly conducted, can ‘tell the same economic voting story’ (Lewis-Beck et al., 2013, 505). But that conclusion comes from Denmark, perhaps a representative case, but for ordinary times. What are the implications of this evidence for extraordinary times? First, it indicates that economic voting results from individual-level survey studies tell us something about the national-level effects. This has relevance for the findings we reported earlier, on Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain (Lewis-Beck and Nadeau, 2012). In these election surveys, the economic voting coefficient was clearly stronger in these Southern European nations than in the Northern European ones. Put another way, when economic times are bad in these Southern European countries they will punishment the government more harshly. And, indeed, this is what the aggregate results for crisis elections do show, as we have seen.

This conclusion fits within the results from the larger analysis reported, relating macroeconomics to electoral outcomes during crisis. Specifically, when a country experiences negative economic growth the incumbent will lose more votes. This is what we have seen in the Southern European countries under analysis. But the aggregate result – the greater observed loss of incumbent votes in the face of crisis – can occur even if the individual-level economic voting coefficient, as estimated in a national election survey, is not greater. Here we arrive at what we label the ‘micro–macro paradox’. That is, even if the economic voting coefficient carries the same value before and during a crisis – for example, always 2.0 – it will deliver a greater anti-incumbent impact in response to crisis.

The reason for the paradox is simple: more voters will judge the economy as ‘worse’; as that category fills up, the incumbent stands to lose more votes, even if the sanctioning mechanism of the economic vote continues to operate at the same weight. A vivid example comes from Iceland, as well-described by Indridason (2014, 146), who compares the economic vote coefficients from 2003 to that of the crisis election of 2009:

being concerned about the economy had about the same propensity to affect a voter’s decision in 2009 ... individual voters didn’t respond more vigorously to their worries about the economy – there were simply more people worried about the economy and, therefore, the economy had a bigger impact than in previous years.

In sum, a bad economy moves more citizens to hold the government accountable, and that micro-process, by itself, produces larger changes in the overall electoral outcome.

CONCLUSION

Economic voting has been much studied, at least in the industrial democracies of the world. We have learned that, reliably, voters sanction governments on the basis of national economic performance. Incumbents are punished for bad economic times and rewarded for good economic times. The impact of these sanctions has meaning substantively, as well as statistically, even to the point of bringing down ruling coalitions. But this evidence, while profound, rests mostly on democratic functioning during ordinary times. What about economic voting when times are extraordinary? This question has focused our essay, for here we know much less. Our empirical discussion centers on voting in the nations of Europe’s periphery, where the 2008 economic crisis hit hard. The democracies of Southern Europe – Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain – are our special concern, for even during ordinary times they show considerable electoral sensitivity to economic swings.

For purposes of comparison, we also examine two crisis countries in the north of the European periphery – Iceland and Ireland. In both, the banking systems collapsed and much blame was laid at the feet of the ruling parties, who suffered historic defeats

in the crisis elections of 2009 and 2011, respectively. In the south, the governing PSOE in Spain – facing rising inflation, elevated unemployment, and no growth – experienced an electoral loss without precedent in 2011. Its neighbor, Portugal, in addition to fielding poor macroeconomic indicators, had a government that could not meet its massive debt requirements. It sought bailout by the Troika and was punished with its worst defeat in more than 20 years at the hands of the 2011 electorate. Greece and Italy, as part of an attempt to deal with their mounting debt burdens, both had caretaker governments going into the 2012 and 2013 elections, respectively.

In both these contests, despite the blurring of economic responsibility, the culprit parties behind the governments were still identified by the voters and lost heavily. Two other conditions also resulted in the apparent blurring of economic responsibility in all these periphery nations: first, the role of European actors, such as the Troika, in the domestic economic policies of the nation; and, second, the fact that virtually every citizen in these crisis countries saw that the economy was in bad shape. The first condition meant that some voters punished the government less than they otherwise would have. The second condition meant that, while the economic vote was operating strongly, it was methodologically harder to detect. Thus, that detection had to take place by overtime comparison (e.g. valence comparisons of the last election to the current one) or by cross-sectional analysis of positional economic voting, whereby voters aligned with different economic policies. Regardless, in the end, the electoral power of the economic vote comes through loud and clear in these contests.

These crisis cases, which represent economic voting in extraordinary times, are fascinating. But, taken alone, they appear as outliers, and outliers are ultimately difficult to account for when considered by themselves. Therefore, we must look at the electoral impact of economic crisis generally, in a large-scale cross-national study of the democracies of Europe (Western and Eastern, and over a long period of time). We observe that crisis, defined as negative economic growth going into the election, negatively impacts incumbent vote share in a general way (regardless of year or nation). Further, this negative effect of growth, reported at the macro-level, accurately reflects the micro-processes of economic voting that election surveys reveal. As more people see the economy worsen, the more anti-incumbent votes are registered, ultimately aggregating to the negative swings in the overall electoral outcome. The crisis result, then, of greater economic impact, is not really paradoxical. It merely reflects the usual workings of valence economic voting as it operates to build the electoral outcome. In that sense, even ordinary economic voting becomes extraordinary if enough people engage in it, as they do in crisis times.

Note

1 Considerable attention has been devoted to the attribution of responsibility in economic voting. What does it mean for the integrity of the economic voting coefficient itself? Below we discuss the

'responsibility problem' in an earlier context, its meaning for the effects of party identification on the vote. We show that party identification, as well as economic perception, are subject to attribution issues that can influence their vote impact. However, this expected conditionality does not undermine their utility in voting models. Instead, it highlights their ongoing relevance for psychologically anchoring voters politically and economically. We begin with an explication of party identification, then draw out attribution parallels regarding economic perception.

Party identification means a psychological attachment to party and generally leads to a vote for that party (see Dinas, and Green and Baltes, this *Handbook*, Volume 1). But not always. The impact of party identification finds itself mediated by political attitudes – that is, evaluations of political objects. These attitudes, as they accumulate and become more consistent, push party identifiers to vote for that party. As Campbell et al. (1966, 120) observed, 'The individual's attitudes toward the elements of national politics comprise a field of forces that determines his action in an immediate sense.' *The American Voter* underlines the linkage between party identification and these attitudes – six dimensions on international issues, domestic issues, the candidates, key groups, and *parties as managers of government* [italics added] (Campbell et al., 1966, 129). Indeed, these political attitudes are the bridge joining party identification to the vote in 'the causal sequence connecting party allegiance, attitudes toward the elements of politics, and the voting act' (Campbell et al., 1966, 142).

Put another way, the total impact of party identification on the vote depends heavily on whether the causal paths from party identification to political attitudes hold up. Voters routinely assign such elements – issues, candidates, groups, governance – to the realm of politics. Parties – and other institutions such as the bureaucracy, courts, legislatures – are held responsible for sorting these elements. Parties must compete for this assignment of political responsibility, for the job of 'being in charge'. Recall that America's Founders envisioned no role at all for parties, dismissing them as troublesome 'factions'. For voters today, parties have to tell them something about the issues, the candidates, and other choices. Suppose, for example, that parties cease to distinguish themselves on the leading issues. Then that attitudinal link (parties-to-issues) would be broken and, *ceteris paribus*, the party identification–vote connection weakened.

Thus, the strength of the party–vote bond can vary as political attitudes change. These linking attitudes can get more intense, less intense, or even disappear (and new ones take their place). Of the six dimensions of political attitude offered in *The American Voter* (Campbell et al., 1966, 67), one of them – 'the performance of the parties in the conduct of government' – seems especially important. As the authors note, the parties here are 'not simply perceived by the individual: they are evaluated as well' (Campbell et al., 1966, 67). Thereby, we have a clear parallel to the economic voting literature. The voter perceives a party to be conducting affairs of government and evaluates that conduct. There are two essential steps: 1. perception of a party as governing; and 2. evaluation of that governance. In the first step the voter perceives that the party holds responsibility for governing. If that perception does not occur, then the voter would tend not to vote against that party, for its actions would be held 'blameless'. So, assignment of responsibility is a necessary condition, just as in the economic voting case, where the voter perceives that the incumbent (the government) is responsible for the economy. (This merits further empirical testing for the party identification literature, but that is another paper.)

In both cases, then, the overall effect of these psychological anchors on the vote can vary, as the attribution of responsibility varies. But we would not expect that overall effect to disappear. Instead, we would expect it to sustain itself, in terms of its statistical and substantive significance, sometimes being a bit stronger, sometimes a bit weaker. There are many empirical examples of this result, a result that has shown through with different elections, research designs, and national settings. (See a recent, diverse collection of 26 economics and elections papers that supports this conclusion (Lewis-Beck and Whitten, 2013).) One example especially relevant for the essay at hand comes from the careful just-published work on globalization by Hellwig (2015). He assesses the effects of the national economic vote when conditioned by a perception that the government is 'mostly responsible for national economic conditions' versus the notion that 'ups and downs in the world economy' are

mostly responsible (Hellwig, 2015, 77–81). His investigation of relevant survey data from ten nations finds that 'Economic retrospections generally have a strong effect if the voter deems the government responsible and a weaker impact if she accords credit or blame to ups and downs in the world economy' (Hellwig, 2015, 81).

That general finding fits with our expectations, reflected partly in our investigation of EU responsibility and the economic vote in Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain (Lobo and Lewis-Beck, 2012). The case-by-case details of his analysis are further revealing. For six of the countries (Canada, Denmark, France, Britain, The Netherlands, New Zealand), attributing more economic responsibility to the world economy weakens the probability of voting for the incumbent. But, for the four remaining countries (Australia, Germany, Sweden, the United States), attributing more economic responsibility to the world economy reveals a strengthening of the incumbent vote probability. In Sweden that positive effect stands out, with the national government much more likely to be rewarded when the world economy is held responsible. Undoubtedly, this reflects its status in the international world economy. In sum, attribution of responsibility can indeed condition the economic vote. But, as Hellwig (2015, 80) also affirms, this dependency does not negate the 'standard economic voting effect', as he calls it: 'the voter is more likely to support the incumbent if she perceives that economic conditions have improved and less likely if she thinks the economy has worsened'.

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PART VI

Candidates and Campaigns



Voter Evaluation of Candidates and Party Leaders

Diego Garzia

INTRODUCTION

With the entering of official presidential candidates in the competition, the 2014 elections to the European Parliament signalled the penetration of ‘personality politics’ (Lobo and Curtice, 2014) into the supranational political arena. Far from representing an isolated occurrence, this outcome can rather be conceived as the arrival point of a longer-standing trend in national elections across the Western world. The *personalization of politics* represents a pervasive phenomenon of modern representative democracy (McAllister, 2007; Garzia, 2011). It can be conceived as a process ignited by the changes occurred in the reciprocal relationship(s) between voters, parties and the media (Garzia, 2014: 5–9). For one thing, the widespread erosion of cleavage voting (Franklin et al., 2009) and partisan alignments (Dalton 2000) has resulted in a progressive individualization of voting behaviour involving, most notably, ‘a shift away from a style of electoral decision-making based on social group and/or party cues’ (Dalton, 1996: 346). In turn, such changes have forced parties to adapt to the shifting demands of voters and restructure their electoral profile accordingly (Mair et al., 2004). In order to extend their appeal beyond their traditional socio-ideological cleavages, class-mass parties have by and large converged on the *catch-all* typology (Kirchheimer, 1966). As a common denominator, this ideal-type is known to rely on a ‘superficial and vague ideology, and ... prominent leadership and electoral roles of the party’s top-ranked national candidates’ (Gunther and Diamond, 2003: 185). The changing structure of

mass communications in the second half of the twentieth century has further emphasized the role of individual politicians at the expense of parties, making the latter ‘more dependent in their communications with voters on the essentially visual and personality-based medium of television’ (Mughan, 2000: 129). Television-based political communication accentuates personality factors at the expense of substantive programmatic goals (Sartori, 1989). Because of its power to present images, it is easier for television to communicate political information through physical objects such as candidates and party leaders rather than through more abstract entities such as political parties, manifestos or ideologies (Hayes, 2009). In turn, such changes affect voters’ understanding of politics and informational demands, further reinforcing the personalization of political competition and the way this is portrayed by the media.

The hypothesis that ‘individual political actors have become more prominent at the expense of parties’ (Karvonen, 2010: 4) has been tested under a multitude of analytical perspectives by social scientists. Institutional analyses have focused on the democratization of party leader selection procedures (Pilet and Cross, 2014) and the personalization of electoral systems in parliamentary democracies (Renwick and Pilet, 2016). Others have stressed the growing importance of leaders in the executives as well as within their own parties’ structures as a result of the complexity of the decision-making process in contemporary democratic systems (Poguntke and Webb, 2005). Studies of modern electoral campaigns have emphasized the increased visibility of political leaders as well as their crucial role in conveying party messages to the public at large (Swanson and Mancini, 1996). When it comes to voters’ behaviour, it has been argued that they ‘tend increasingly to vote for a person and no longer for a party or a platform’ (Manin, 1997: 219). Others went even further, contending that ‘election outcomes are now, more than at any time in the past, determined by voters’ assessments of party leaders’ (Hayes and McAllister, 1997: 3). Against this view, however, research on the personalization of politics has not reached a consensus on the exact contour of leader effects on voting. Comparative electoral research has proven especially reluctant in systematically addressing the impact of candidates and party leaders on citizens’ patterns of voting behaviour across countries and time. Equally crucial aspects such as the role played by television exposure as a driver of personalization in voting behaviour and the relationship between the rise of Internet-based political communication and the personalization trend have so far been under-researched.

Against this background, the major aims of this chapter are to summarize the existing literature on candidate and leader effects in democratic elections, to point out its inherent shortcomings and to outline a comprehensive agenda for future research in this field. The chapter starts with an inventory of works dealing with the dimensionality of politicians’ traits and the cognitive mechanisms that drive voters’ appraisal of their personality. It then reviews the available works on the electoral effect of candidate evaluations on voting, focusing in turn on

candidate effects in presidential systems and party leader effects in parliamentary systems.¹ The following section deals with a number of methodological and measurement issues related to this body of research, focusing in particular on the problem of reciprocal causation between candidate evaluations and other covariates in the voting function, and the potential feedback effect from the dependent variable. The final section discusses the role played by old and new media in driving candidate and leader effects across time. The chapter then concludes with a selected inventory of open questions in the field.

MEASURING VOTER EVALUATIONS OF CANDIDATES AND PARTY LEADERS: PERSONALITY TRAITS AND THERMOMETER SCORES

When evaluating candidates and party leaders, voters can potentially rely on an extremely vast array of aspects connected in a way or another to their personality. Indeed, the early literature found more than 40 personal characteristics associated in a way or another with a politician's personality (Bass, 1981). Similarly, King (2002) moves from the consideration that 26 different attributes might have, in principle, a bearing on voting decision.

Against this theoretical background, empirical research in political cognition shows that voters actually tend to develop a mental image of politicians on the basis of a rather restricted number of characteristics. Especially important, in this respect, is the role played by *personality traits* in organizing knowledge and guiding voters' processes of candidate perception (Pierce, 1993; Funk, 1996; 1999; Caprara and Zimbardo, 2004). Traits are defined as 'a basic component of our images of other persons of all kinds' (Funk, 1996: 98). A wide body of evidence supports the idea that the traits used to evaluate politicians are limited in number and tend to load onto a few general categories. Miller and Miller's (1976) factor analysis of open-ended responses on candidate likes and dislikes in the American National Election Study (ANES) surveys finds five major dimensions corresponding to *competence*, *trust*, *reliability*, *leadership appeal* and *personal appearance*. Ten years after, Miller et al.'s (1986) longitudinal analysis of ANES data collected between 1952 and 1984 finds that a five-dimensional solution provides once again the best fit to the data, thus reinforcing the conclusion that 'people think about presidential candidates in terms of a limited number of broad categories rather than in terms of a multitude of discrete traits' (Miller et al., 1986: 528).

Later works dropped open-ended responses in favour of close-ended trait batteries.² Since 1980, the ANES series relies on a four-item battery developed by Kinder et al. (1979). This comprises perceived *competence* (subsuming qualities such as intelligent and knowledgeable), *leadership* (e.g. inspiring and providing strong leadership), *integrity* (e.g. moral and honest) and *empathy*

(e.g. compassionate and caring). However, this four-fold classification was criticized by Funk (1999) on the grounds that these dimensions ‘tend to be interrelated, prompting some to collapse them into one, two, or three categories’ (Funk, 1999: 702). While she advocates for a three-dimensional solution combining competence and leadership (see also Conover, 1981; Pancer et al., 1999), an even more simplified structure has been recently brought forward by Bittner (2011). Her study, based on an astounding collection of over 100 election studies from 19 different democracies, points to the idea that voters’ appraisal of politicians’ personality is based on just two encompassing politically relevant traits, namely *competence* and *character* (i.e. a blend of empathy and integrity).

In parallel to the trait-based framework, an overall more encompassing approach in electoral research is that based on *feeling thermometer* scores. Thermometers represent a general measure of voters’ perception of candidates and party leaders and, as such, they have become the preferred measure to be employed in national election studies over the last decades (Bittner, 2011). When it comes to their relationship with politically relevant traits, Kinder (1986) demonstrates that trait perceptions contribute in a substantially uniform manner to overall evaluations on the thermometer scale. That is, a high score on the thermometer depends on, for example, politicians’ perceived honesty as much as on their perceived competence. Yet, subsequent comparative analyses have demonstrated how, according to the different contexts, candidates’ thermometer evaluations are shaped more strongly by performance-related factors such as competence (Pancer et al., 1999) or leadership strength (Ohr and Oscarsson, 2011).

The use of thermometers in voting models has nonetheless received critiques, with Fiorina’s (1981) being the classic example. As he argues, thermometers might also be capturing factors such as retrospective judgments, party influence, issue positions and so on, leading him to conclude that ‘[n]o one knows what thermometer scores measure’ (Fiorina, 1981: 154). His theoretical critique has been somewhat tempered by a number of subsequent empirical analyses that – unlike Fiorina’s – explicitly looked at the determinants of thermometer evaluations. In her longitudinal analysis of ANES data, Funk (1999) regressed presidential candidates’ thermometer scores on trait assessments controlling for voter ideology. Besides confirming the somewhat leading role of perceived leadership in shaping thermometer evaluations, her study is noteworthy for the conclusion that traits have a strong statistical impact on thermometer scores also after the introduction of ideology in the model. Furthermore, the impact of trait assessments on the thermometer shows a progressive increase, whereas the effect of ideology declines by almost a half across the relatively short time span under analysis (i.e. 1984–1996).

Trait-based measures come with problems, too. While ‘purportedly much closer to what is in fact intended to be calculated’ (Lobo, 2014a: 366), traits do not seem to perform better than thermometers from an empirical point of view.

According to a number of studies, trait perceptions themselves are not immune from external influences such as partisan stereotypes, ideological predispositions and voting habits (Bittner, 2011). As Holian and Prysby (2014) point out, ‘perceptions of the character traits of presidential candidates are not objective, dispassionate assessment by the voters ... Voters see candidates through a lens that is tinted by their partisan and ideological leanings’ (Holian and Prysby, 2014: 140).

The original analysis presented in Table 27.1 makes use of pooled national election study data from Italy and the US – two widely different political systems in terms of system of government, electoral arrangements and size of the party system – and supports the idea that thermometers are by no means inferior to trait-based measures. Net of the ideological orientation of voters, and regardless of the partisan background of the candidate, personality traits correlate strongly and systematically with thermometer evaluations. In the US case, the highest coefficients are those related to empathy and leadership, whereas in Italy the latter is substituted by honesty – thus signalling the comparatively more important role played by competence *vis-à-vis* character in presidential systems.

Table 27.1 The impact of trait evaluations on thermometer scores: Italy (above) and the US

	Centre-left candidates	Centre-right candidates	
Leadership	1.12 (.08)***	1.06 (.08)***	1.25 (.11)***
Knowledgeable	.99 (.10)***	.71 (.10)***	.74 (.08)***
Moral	1.80 (.10)***	1.54 (.10)***	3.09 (.10)***
Cares	1.88 (.10)***	1.67 (.10)***	2.11 (.10)***
Ideology	–	−.21 (.01)***	–
Constant	1.52 (.08)***	3.18 (.13)***	.75 (.09)***
Adj. R-Squared	.47	.50	.55
N	3828	3432	4073
	Democratic candidates	Republican candidates	
Leadership	3.20 (.08)***	2.39 (.08)***	2.37 (.08)***
Knowledgeable	.77 (.09)***	.57 (.08)***	1.00 (.08)***
Moral	1.60 (.08)***	1.33 (.07)***	1.45 (.08)***
Cares	2.88 (.08)***	2.25 (.08)***	3.53 (.08)***
Party identification	–	−.40 (.01)***	–
Constant	1.00 (.05)***	3.58 (.08)***	1.10 (.05)***
Adj. R-Squared	.55	.62	.55
N	10682	10617	11238
			11172

Note: Pooled analysis of national election study from ANES (1948–2012) and ITANES (2001–2013). Cell entries are OLS regression *b* coefficients (standard error in parentheses) *** p < .001.

Dependent variable is *Leaders Thermometer Score* measured on a ten-point scale. Traits are measured on a single-unit scale. Ideology in Italy is measured as the respondent’s self-placement on the left–right scale (ten points). Party identification in the US is measured on the traditional seven-point scale.

Admittedly, the results do highlight some of the limitations inherent to thermometers as optimal measure of candidate/leader evaluations, as about half of the variance in thermometer scores is *not* explained by trait assessments. Yet, the results also speak to the limitations of traits themselves. In fact, the inclusion of partisanship/ideology in the model bears a strong effect on traits' parameter estimates without adding much to the overall explained variance, thus highlighting a strong pattern of covariance between trait perceptions and pre-existing ideological predispositions. When it comes to cross-national comparability, one should also take into account the fact that thermometers have become 'the most frequently included type of question about leaders in election studies' (Bittner, 2011: 16). From the point of view of comparative electoral research, there is thus reason to concur with Lewis-Beck et al. (2012: 135), who underscore 'the importance of using the thermometer scale in determining the impact of a candidate's image on voting'.

CANDIDATE AND PARTY LEADER EFFECTS ON VOTING: A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT

The magnitude of personality evaluations' effect on voting has been shown to vary with the political and institutional structure in which a given election is held. Presidential systems foster candidate effects insofar as the executive authority 'resides with an individual who is [directly] elected to the position ... In addition, party discipline is often weak in presidential systems, since the president's political survival does not depend on the unity of the governing party' (McAllister, 2007: 575). Indeed, the available comparative literature strongly supports the idea that presidential elections magnify such effect *vis-à-vis* parliamentary elections (Curtice and Hunjan, 2011; Tverdova, 2011; Curtice and Lisi, 2014).

The US case represents the most analysed case so far. There, candidates' personal attributes have been found to bear a distinctive impact on voting behaviour since the earliest works on the topic (Campbell et al., 1960; Stokes, 1966). According to Miller and Miller (1976: 833), 'candidate-related attributes are short-term forces that have sharply affected the individual vote decision in the national presidential elections between 1952 and 1972'. With the entrance into the 1980s, the study of candidate effects in US presidential elections flourished (Markus, 1982; Miller and Shanks, 1982; Shanks and Miller, 1990; 1991). A survey conducted by Sabato in 1988 showed that 92 per cent of Americans were in agreement with the sentence 'I always vote for the person who I think is best, regardless of what party they belong to' (quoted in Dalton and Wattenberg, 1993: 203). What matters the most, as argued by Wattenberg (1991: 158), is that American voters 'have not only increasingly said that they vote for the man rather than the party; they have actually done so with great frequency'. Recent

longitudinal analyses confirm these conclusions and highlight that, if anything, candidate characteristics are now an even more important determinant of American voters' choice than when they were first measured (Lewis-Beck et al., 2008a; Holian and Prysby, 2014).

The crucial importance of candidate evaluations in presidential systems is confirmed by the (comparatively fewer) available studies of non-US presidential systems. Among this group, the most analysed case is the French one. Pierce's (2002) analysis of the six presidential elections held between 1965 and 1995 finds two elections 'clearly influenced' as well as two elections 'possibly influenced' by candidate evaluations. Lewis-Beck et al. (2012) focus on the four elections held between 1988 and 2007 and find that candidate image has had a 'decisive influence' on French vote choice. The effect of presidential candidates' image on voting is consistent and substantial across all these elections, and the 'relative size of the coefficients associated by the thermometer scales show that leader images leads against all other vote determinants' (Lewis-Beck et al., 2012: 136). Similar conclusions are reached by comparative analyses of Latin American presidential systems. In their recent study of Comparative National Election Project (CNEP) data, Gunther et al. (2016: 171) show that in both Argentina and Mexico presidential candidate evaluations alone contribute to half of the explained variance in vote choice when added to a model already including economic assessments, party identification, left-right orientation and socio-demographic variables.

In contrast to presidential systems, parliamentary systems are supposedly based on the *responsible party government* model (Schattschneider, 1942). The legislative nature of parliamentary elections provides voters with 'a structural situation where the crucial choice is between parties rather than the personal stands and qualities of prime ministerial candidates' (Dalton et al., 2000: 51). On the basis of this interpretation it is party platforms, rather than party leaders, that drive votes (McAllister, 1996). Yet, parties do not all matter the same across parliamentary systems. As Holmberg and Oscarsson (2011: 50) argue, '[w]here parties matter less, leaders tend to matter more'. Indeed, available comparative evidence shows that leaders matter more in younger parliamentary democracies with relatively less institutionalized party systems and weaker political cleavages. Good cases in point, in this respect, are represented by Southern as well as Eastern European democracies (Holmberg and Oscarsson, 2011: 46; Gunther et al., 2016: 173).³ More complex is the case of established parliamentary democracies. For the most part, this is due to the comparatively stronger historical role of social cleavages and party identifications in these systems, as highlighted by the selected inventory of 'classic' works that follows.

In the UK, academic interest in the electoral effect of party leader evaluations dates as far back as the pioneering study by Butler and Stokes (1969). The most celebrated article by Bean and Mughan (1989) quantified the effect of personality

evaluations in British elections, showing that in 1983 leading candidates' personality traits contributed around five percentage points to the explained variance in voter choice. Similar conclusions are reached by Stewart and Clarke (1992) in their analysis of the 1987 election. Mughan (2000) concludes that in the closely fought election of 1992 voter evaluations of John Major's personality made the difference 'between the formation of a majority Conservative government and a hung Parliament' (Mughan, 2000: 114). Albeit possibly decisive for the electoral outcome, the sheer magnitude of net leader effects in these elections appears relatively small once the effect of partisanship is taken into account (Bartle and Crewe, 2002). This conclusion is echoed by early analyses of other Westminster democracies (Bean and Mughan, 1989; Bean, 1993).⁴

Not dissimilar findings would seem to stem from available analyses of the German case. There, the relative importance of individuals' party identification *vis-à-vis* their evaluations of chancellor candidates for vote choice appears, if anything, even stronger (Kaase, 1994; Pappi and Shikano, 2001; Schoen, 2007). A longitudinal analysis of German Election Study data by Brettschneider et al. (2006: 495) concludes that 'the evaluations of the candidates for chancellor play only a small role on the behavior of voters'. As in the case of the UK, the reason for such a weak effect is to be found in the dominant role of party identifications. As Brettschneider and Gabriel (2002: 153) put it, 'the influence of competing party leaders is strongly mediated by such situational factors as the strength as well as the direction of partisan affiliation'. Analyses of the Dutch case confirm the importance of political system features (i.e. the size of the party system, the practice of coalition governments and the historical importance of socio-political pillars) when it comes to the magnitude of party leader effects. In one of the first contributions to the topic, van Wijnen (2000) argued that overall evaluations of party leaders had an increased impact on Dutch voters' behaviour since 1986. Yet, once party evaluations are taken into account, the trend would seem to vanish (Aarts, 2001).

In spite of these seemingly unequivocal conclusions, it is worth pointing out that the notion of personalization does not only imply that individual politicians matter – but also that they are assumed to matter *more* through time (Karvonen, 2010). An early longitudinal analysis of election study data collected in six established European democracies between 1961 and 2001 concluded that voters' evaluations of party leaders were 'as important or unimportant now as they were when they were first measured' (Curtice and Holmberg, 2005: 250). With the turn of the century, however, an acceleration of the dealignment trend coupled with the ever more pervasive nature of the personalization of politics has led researchers to challenge these somewhat established (or conventional) conclusions. Taking into account a wider number of countries and more recent (i.e. post-2000) election studies, Holmberg and Oscarsson's (2011) comparative study eventually unfolded 'minor' upward trends in half of the countries included in their analysis. Similarly, Karvonen (2010: 106) argued that 'there are many

indications that persons have become more prominent in both electoral and executive politics in many countries'.

Table 27.2 presents the results of an analysis of national election study data from three established parliamentary democracies: Britain, Germany and The Netherlands. The data is pooled by decade in order to highlight the growing impact of leader evaluations on voting. Standardized logit estimates from a fully specified model of voting highlight leaders' virtually monotonic increase at the expense of party identification. While in the 1980s the latter dominates in each and every country under analysis, in the 2000s it maintains its primacy only in the British case – albeit with a much reduced ratio.

The results are in line with Bittner's (2011: 136) hint that 'more proportional systems and fewer parties campaigning place leaders more prominently in the vote calculus'.⁵ Indeed, leader effects appear stronger *vis-à-vis* partisanship in Germany (i.e. a proportional system with few parties) than in The Netherlands (i.e. proportional system with comparatively more parties) and the UK (i.e. a non-proportional system).

Table 27.2 Party leader effects in three parliamentary democracies, by decade

<i>Britain (BES)</i>	<i>1980s</i>	<i>1990s</i>	<i>2000s</i>
Party identification	1.38 (.03)***	1.67 (.04)***	1.47 (.03)***
Leader thermometer	.57 (.03)***	.60 (.04)***	.90 (.04)***
Pseudo-R ²	.55	.60	.56
<i>N</i>	10293	11598	13559
<i>Germany (GLES)</i>	<i>1980s</i>	<i>1990s</i>	<i>2000s</i>
Party identification	1.31 (.04)***	1.12 (.03)***	.87 (.03)***
Leader thermometer	1.24 (.06)***	1.15 (.04)***	1.23 (.05)***
Pseudo-R ²	.68	.56	.53
<i>N</i>	9899	17402	11316
<i>The Netherlands (DPES)</i>	<i>1980s</i>	<i>1990s</i>	<i>2000s</i>
Party identification	1.22 (.04)***	1.18 (.03)***	.91 (.02)***
Leader thermometer	.78 (.05)***	.61 (.04)***	1.04 (.03)***
Pseudo-R ²	.64	.54	.49
<i>N</i>	9924	14836	37003

Note: Analysis of national election study from BES (1983–2010), GLES (1983–2009) and DPES (1986–2010). The data is pooled by decade. Cell entries are standardized logistic estimates. Standard error estimates (in parentheses) are clustered robust at the individual level. *** p < .001.

Dependent variable: *Vote Choice* (dummy) on a stacked data matrix. Controls (age, gender, educational level, social class, union membership, religiousness, left-right proximity, retrospective economic assessments) and intercepts included, coefficients not shown.

Source: Garzia (2014: 47)

RECIPROCAL CAUSATION AND FEEDBACK FROM THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

In spite of the upward trend unfolded by most recent analyses, the overall sceptical response of electoral research on party leader effects on voting – as summarized in the previous section – can be possibly imputed to the theoretical and methodological framework employed in these studies, and most notably to the issues of *reciprocal causation* among predictor variables (which pertains to the relative positioning of party and leader effects in the theoretical model) and of potential *feedback from the dependent variable* (as a result of measurement shortcomings inherent to traditional election survey research).

As to the issue of reciprocal causation between party identification and leader evaluations, one notices that virtually all available works on leader effects rely on the classic social-psychological model of voting set forth over half a century ago by Campbell et al. (1960). In this model, voting is explained as a function of ‘the cumulative consequences of temporally ordered sets of factors’ (Miller and Shanks, 1996: 192). As such, the model does not allow for reciprocal causation between long-term and short-term influences. The flow of causation would rather drift unilaterally *from* long-term *to* short-term attitudes. Due to its social-psychological nature, party identification is supposed to act as the ‘unmoved mover’ (Johnston, 2006). Rooted in early socialization and based on an objective location in the social structure, party identification is conceived as a long-term, pre-political attitude that shapes both the act of voting and its more proximate influences, such as candidate evaluations. However, one notes that such an interpretation holds only as long as partisan identifications are effectively rooted in the realm of society.

A number of recent studies have brought forward the idea that processes of party transformation common to all electoral democracies have ignited a related change in the nature of their bonds with the electorate. Voters’ relationship with political parties depends largely on the types of party that are present in the party system at a given point in time (Gunther and Montero, 2001; Gunther, 2005; Lobo, 2008). Mass-based parties were characterized by a tight link with their respective social milieu. In the case of contemporary catch-all parties, however, feelings of closeness appear progressively detached from individuals’ placement in the social structure and increasingly shaped by attitudes towards more visible partisan objects (Bartle and Bellucci, 2009). Among the attitudinal drivers of partisanship, the literature has widely focused on the role played by voters’ issue preferences and performance assessments (Fiorina, 1981; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008b). Rather surprisingly, however, very few scholars have investigated the role played by candidate and party leaders in shaping voters’ attitudes towards their parties. As an exception, Page and Jones’ (1979) analysis of US presidential elections provides empirical evidence that party loyalties ‘do not

function purely as fixed determinants of the vote; those loyalties can themselves be affected by attitudes toward the current candidates' (Page and Jones, 1979: 1088). More recent longitudinal analyses of national election study data from Britain, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands show that voters' evaluation of party leaders has progressively turned into a crucial determinant of identification with their parties (Garzia, 2013a; 2013b).

The first, and possibly most notable, implication of these findings pertains to the relative place of partisanship and leader evaluations in the electoral equation. With reciprocal causation at work, a single-equation model of voting is likely to 'understate the final impact of leaders' images by misattributing to party identification ... a portion of leadership's direct effects' (Dinas, 2008: 508). Regrettably, only a few empirical analyses of leader effects on voting have implemented this conclusion in the specification of their statistical models (among the few exceptions, see Archer, 1987; Marks, 1993; Midtbø, 1997). Yet, if the endogenous status of party identification is taken into account and properly modelled within the voting equation leaders appear to matter more than they initially appeared for the way individuals vote and – more often than not – for the way elections turn out (Garzia, 2012; 2014).

Another question that appears to be largely overlooked by the available literature has to do with the potential feedback from the dependent variable. The Michigan theory of voting relies heavily on classic attitude–behaviour models, whereby behaviour is driven by core attitudes (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975; also Lupton, Enders and Jacoby, this Volume). More recent studies, however, show that individuals' behaviour can lead to changes in attitudes (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993). The classic model advanced by Campbell et al. (1960) poses that voters conform their voting behaviour to pre-existing political attitudes in order to maintain cognitive consistency. Conversely, however, one could charge voters with conforming their attitudes to past (and hence non-removable) voting behaviour in order to avoid cognitive dissonance. Such a possibility is somehow inherent to the structure of traditional electoral survey research itself. As a matter of fact, virtually all the available comparative evidence of party leader effects on the vote relies on cross-sectional data. In post-electoral surveys, respondents are asked about their vote choice weeks (and at times months) after they had cast their vote. Even assuming that vote recall is reported sincerely, such a time span may well provide respondents with sufficient time to shape their attitudes towards parties and candidates in a way that conforms more closely to their past voting behaviour. Indeed, the fact that political attitudes are measured after the election provides further grounds to believe that, if anything, cognitive feedback may actually be running from behaviour to attitudes. To address these points, Garzia and De Angelis (2016) resorted to pre-post electoral panels from Britain (2005) and Italy (2006). Modelling individuals' vote choice as a function of their pre-election attitudes (so as to control for the feedback effect proceeding from voting behaviour in the election under analysis) and controlling for the potential

Table 27.3 Party identification, leader evaluations and vote choice: pre-post estimation

	Conservatives		Labour	
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
<i>Party identification</i>				
Pre-election	–	2.91 (.07)***	–	3.29 (.06)***
Post-election	2.82 (.07)***	–	4.00 (.06)***	–
<i>Leader thermometer</i>				
Pre-election	–	4.57 (.09)***	–	3.54 (.08)***
Post-election	5.37 (.10)***	–	3.53 (.08)***	–
Pseudo-R ²	.66	.60	.60	.55
N	28426	26070	28263	25902

Note: Analysis of national election study from the BES 2015 panel study. Cell entries are unstandardized logistic estimates (standard error in parentheses) *** p < .001.

Dependent variable: *Vote Choice* (dummy) as measured in the 6th wave (post-election). Leader thermometer is measured on a ten-point scale. Partisanship is measured on a three-point scale ranging from 'not close to the party at all' to 'very close to the party'. All pre-electoral variables are measured in the 4th wave. All independent variables have been rescaled on a single unit scale to allow direct comparison. Socio-demographic controls (age, gender, educational level) and intercepts included, coefficients not shown.

effect of voting habits on pre-election attitudes, their study finds a two-fold diminution of the impact of party identification, whereas the electoral impact of leader evaluations is only slightly reduced. Most importantly, their modelling effort unfolds the effect of leaders on voting as paralleling that of party identification.

These conclusions are confirmed by an analysis of British Election Study (BES) data from the recent 2015 election. Stemming from a comparable model specification and, again, a pre-post electoral panel, the results presented in Table 27.3 clearly highlight the dominance of pre-electoral leader evaluations *vis-à-vis* partisanship in predicting the vote for both the Labour and the Conservative parties.

CANDIDATE AND LEADER EFFECTS BETWEEN TELEVISION AND THE INTERNET

A crucial mediating factor for candidate and leader effects on voting choice relates to voters' patterns of media exposure. The tight link between the rise of television and the personalization of politics has been customarily put forward in the existing scholarship on the topic (Druckman, 2003; McAllister, 2007). By calling attention to some features of the political competition while ignoring others, television news influences 'the standards by which governments, presidents, and candidates for public office are judged' (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987: 63). Apart from affecting the way in which candidates are judged, news attention

also increases their perceived importance (Miller and Krosnick, 2000). In this sense, the rise of television as the chief source of political information at the expense of newspapers has been deemed largely responsible for the growing relevance of personality evaluations in the voting calculus of citizens across the last decades. However, systematic comparative assessments of this hypothesis are largely lacking. As of today, most research in this field has consisted of single country studies, and has focused mostly on the US. In their seminal analysis of the 1980 US presidential election, McLeod et al. (1983) show that television-reliant voters were those with the highest likelihood among the general voting population to use candidate image characteristics in making their voting choices. Keeter's (1987) longitudinal analysis of ANES data from the period 1952–1980 supports McLeod et al.'s findings, and concludes that 'television has facilitated and encouraged vote choices based upon the personal qualities of candidates' (Keeter, 1987: 344). Holian and Prysby (2014) further extend the time frame of the analysis up to 2012, and again find strong effects of television exposure on patterns of personalized voting behaviour.

Contrary to the that in the US, European scholarship has been surprisingly reluctant to address this issue until very recently. Mughan's (2000) study of British elections represents the first systematic contribution, showing that increasing use of television for political information was contributing to greater leader effects. His conclusions, however, find only partial support in Rico's (2014) analysis of three Spanish elections, and no support whatsoever in Elmelund-Praestekær and Hopmann's (2012) study of preferential voting in Danish local elections. Takens et al.'s (2015) analysis of the Dutch election of 2010 provides more convincing evidence in support of the link between exposure to political information on television and personalization of voting behaviour. So far, only one study, by Gidengil (2011), tackled the issue in a comparative (albeit cross-sectional) perspective. As she concludes, 'leader effects actually seemed to be weaker for voters who had the highest levels of television exposure' (Gidengil, 2011: 154). Yet, as she admits, exposure to television 'is not really the most appropriate variable for testing whether leaders matter more to people who are regular viewers ... A more appropriate test of the hypothesis would be to focus on voters whose main source of information was television news' (Gidengil, 2011: 154). Gidengil thus critically highlights the need for the proper measurement of exposure to televised political information in further comparative analyses.⁶

Another important deficit in the personalization of politics literature lies with its generalized lack of interest in the dramatic changes occurred in the media landscape over recent years. There cannot be any doubt that the advent of the Internet has profoundly altered the way information is produced and digested by the wider public at election time. Against this background, however, there is very little received wisdom when it comes to the relationship between Internet usage and the drivers of electoral choice. The interactive possibilities offered by the Web, and in particular by social media, now allow voters to follow candidates'

activities on a daily basis. By the same token, candidates have been granted the chance to bypass the role of parties as political intermediaries and ‘personalize’ their relationship with voters through direct communication (McAllister, 2016). So far, voting research would seem to have overlooked the effect of new media on changes in voting behaviour. The few available studies on the topic suggest that voters accessing political information on the Internet tend to differ in terms of campaign attitudes and behaviour (Sudulich et al., 2015). According to Gibson and McAllister (2006: 256), ‘online election news seekers are more independently minded than other voters. They are more likely to look to policy issues to determine their vote choice.’ Internet users’ stronger propensity to vote based on issues would seem to be paralleled by a weakening impact of personality evaluation. Holian and Prysby (2014) are the first to explore the relationship between Internet usage and the attitudinal factors underlying voters’ choice. Their empirical study of 2012 ANES data shows that online news seekers are systematically less likely than are television viewers to base their voting decision on candidates’ personality assessments.⁷ As of today, this study represents the single major contribution to this field.

CONCLUSION

Nowadays, the crucial role of candidates and party leaders in the political process can hardly be contested. However, electoral research has been so far unable to reach a consensus on the actual contour of candidate effects on voting. Particularly contested is the notion that candidate and leaders have become *more* important across time, as the personalization hypothesis would imply. The evidence presented in this chapter can be viewed as a step forward in our understanding of the role of personality evaluations on voting. As it appears, the growing personalization of the electoral process and increasing rates of socio-political dealignment that characterized recent decades have actually been paralleled by larger candidate and leader effects.⁸ Nonetheless, a number of aspects would seem to cry out for more systematic empirical research.

First of all, there is a clear need to extend the analytical scope beyond established Western democracies. In this respect, the most recent works on large data projects such as CSES (Curtice and Hunjan, 2011; Holmberg and Oscarsson, 2011; Tverdova, 2011; Curtice and Lisi, 2014) and CNEP (Gunther et al., 2016) represent a highly welcome contribution. The persisting issues of reciprocal causation and feedback from the dependent variable should also be tackled with vigour. So far, the findings stemming from the few available works in this direction pertain to a fairly small number of cases. Nonetheless, these initial studies appear promising and call almost naturally for a theoretically driven longitudinal reassessment of leader effects in a larger number of countries, taking into account the increasingly endogenous status of party identification and the currently ample

longitudinal availability of election study data across established and newer democracies. As to the problem of endogeneity, panel data analyses are explicitly called for. Whereas previous scholarship on candidate and leader effects had to face the lack of appropriate data, this restriction does not seem to apply anymore insofar as good electoral panels are nowadays available in greater abundance (Bellucci et al., 2015).

Another aspect that deserves further investigation is the extent to which candidates and leaders matter to different kinds of voter. Works on the *conditionality* of leader effects (Barisone, 2009) have focused extensively on individual-level mediators. Within this framework, the role of political sophistication and ideology needs to be singled out. As to the first aspect, recent empirical analyses challenged the consolidated paradigm that sees candidate-centred voting as a mere short cut for the less informed, unsophisticated segment of voters. Actually, leader evaluations have been shown to matter more for the most politically sophisticated voters (Bittner, 2011: 104–8), and to do so increasingly across time (Garzia, 2014: 83–4). When it comes to ideology, the existing literature seems to concur in identifying right-wing voters as comparatively more likely to cast their vote on the basis of leader personalities (Lobo, 2006; 2008; van der Brug and Mughan, 2007). Further comparative research in this direction will help shed light on what types of voter are more prone to vote based on personality evaluations and what parties are most likely to benefit from patterns of personality-based voting. Such findings will directly expand on the scant literature on the topic and will link well with the growing body of works dealing with the rising electoral fortunes of right-wing populist parties across Europe (Kriesi, 2014).

Turning to the crucial relationship between candidate and leader effects and patterns of media exposure, one notes that very little is known so far on the impact of Internet-based political information. The few available studies of the US case would seem to point to a sort of reverse effect *vis-à-vis* television, in the sense that users getting most of their political information on the Internet appear to be the least affected by personalization in their voting calculus. An answer to this research question appears urgently needed in view of the foreseeable growth of the Internet as the (potentially) most important source of political information for democratic electorates in the proximate future. In answering this question, future research will also be able to address the wide range of tools through which political information is made available by the Internet. Candidates and political leaders' images are widely present – and increasingly so – on the web through personal blogs and YouTube video channels (Gibson and McAllister, 2011). If Internet is to be held accountable for changes in patterns of voting behaviour, what are the features to drive this development? On the one hand, the Internet has proven its capability of 'bringing the written word back in', as all newspapers become equally available to every Internet user (Morris, 1999). On the other hand, Web 2.0 technologies may introduce novel (and yet uncharted) dynamics by offering 'more detailed information [that] can be customized to a greater

extent' (Prior 2005: 579). The comparative assessment of – not necessarily – conflicting hypotheses will help in reaching a systematic theory, currently lacking, of Internet effects on voting behaviour.

Finally, future research should investigate more thoroughly the implications of personalization for the quality of democracy. So far, arguments about the (in)desirability of candidate-centred patterns of political competition in terms of accountability, quality of representation and effects on (dis)trust have been mostly anecdotal and rarely based on empirical evidence. In this respect, the link between the progressive personalization of politics and widespread features of contemporary democracies such as declining turnout rates and the increasingly cynical approach to political choices by large sections of electors should be at the core of future research efforts.

Notes

- 1 In this chapter, the terms *candidate* and *party leader* will be used interchangeably on the assumption that a party leader in a parliamentary system is also 'the main candidate who leads the party in an election' (Lobo, 2014a: 362).
- 2 Holian and Prysby's (2014) comparison of open- vs. close-ended trait measures supports this choice by showing that the former are a comparatively weaker predictor of vote choice. In addition, Bittner (2011) also notes that open-ended questions tend to lead to higher rates of non-response.
- 3 Interesting case studies of party leader effects in Southern European democracies include Lobo (2006) for the Portuguese case, Rico (2009) for the Spanish case and Garzia (2013c) for the Italian case. See also Costa and Silva (2015) for a cross-country comparison.
- 4 In his comparative analysis of Australia and New Zealand, Bean (1993) concludes that 'we should not lose sight of the fact that all of these leadership effects are small by comparison with more general partisan sentiments'.
- 5 Curtice and Lisi (2014) provide a partially diverging interpretation. Their analysis of CSES data from the period 1996–2002 concludes that leader evaluations are more important when 'a two-party system is in place and/or when the contest takes place with a majoritarian electoral system' (Curtice and Lisi, 2014: 81). However, they acknowledge – yet without explicitly addressing – the need to 'take into account the distinction between old and new democracies' (Curtice and Lisi, 2014: 82) within their data. The fact that Bittner (2011) takes into account only established democracies might explain the diverging conclusions reached by these two studies.
- 6 The issue of proper measurement of television exposure in survey research has recently gained momentum in American political science (see the recent exchange between Dilliplane et al., 2013; Prior, 2013; and Goldman et al., 2013).
- 7 It must be noted that Holian and Prysby (2014) also find younger and more educated voters with high levels of Internet usage to be the *least* affected by candidate evaluation. On this basis, they advance an alternative reading whereby it is not Internet usage that drives issue voting but rather the higher propensity of strong partisans and ideologues (that is, the more issue-oriented voters) to use the Internet to seek out political information.
- 8 As hypothesized by King (2002), 'the impact of leaders' personalities and other personal characteristics will be greatest when voters' emotional ties to parties are at their weakest' (King, 2002: 41). Both Holian and Prysby's (2014) longitudinal analysis of US presidential elections and Lobo's (2014b) comparative analysis of three Southern European democracies confirm the idea that personality evaluations matter more for partisans as well as late deciders and swing voters.

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Candidate Location and Vote Choice

Jocelyn Evans

INTRODUCTION

When mentioned in conjunction with voting, the word ‘distance’ is usually associated with ideological proximity, describing the extent to which voters are close to or distant from a candidate or political party in terms of their attitudes or policy positions. However, in a less prominent way, geographical distance also plays a role in voter choice through its effect as one of a number of candidate attributes which voters may include in their vote calculus.

Candidate attributes have been a consistent feature of vote explanations since the early days of psephology and political behaviour (Key, 1949; Wallas, 1908). However, in the post-war behavioural revolution and the shift in focus to the demand side of voting candidate attributes have been somewhat overlooked in favour of voter attributes and attitudes, with the role of the supply side, at least in individual-level models, often relegated to more generalised candidate perceptions and rankings. While candidates and representatives remained a topic for many qualitative studies, the formalisation of standard sets of attributes – demographics, competence, attractiveness and other traits deemed desirable in a representative – have started to be implemented formally only more recently.

The so-called personal vote (see Zittel, this Volume), where candidates are supported and engage in vote-seeking activities based upon their personal performance rather than upon party affiliation, implicitly encompasses many aspects of candidate profile in accounting for variation in support across the electorate. Other work has looked at candidate profiles in terms of gender (Cook, 1998;

Dolan, 2014), ethnicity (Citrin et al., 1990; Sigelman et al., 1995) and occupation (McDermott, 2005). Similarly, a small but compelling literature has continued to test, with remarkably stable results, the effect of physical attractiveness on vote, as Markus Klein and Ulrich Rosar show in this Volume. One other area, present in political geography for a long time but now enjoying technical and methodological advances, is that of candidate location and voter choice. Originally operationalised in aggregate models looking at vote shares by region, more recent work has factored candidate location into voter choice models to ascertain whether the relative position of the candidate to the voters influences those voters' likelihood of voting for that candidate, once more standard explanations for vote have been controlled for. Again, the results of this research have been relatively consistent, finding that, across country and election, more proximate candidates tend to perform better than more distant ones, other things being equal.

This chapter will explore the evolving method of locating candidates and factoring location into the vote equation. It will begin by examining the conceptual bases for considering that candidate location should matter. It then moves to older aggregate vote-share models, before looking at the individual-level approaches facilitated by advances in open-source GIS data and software. It then considers how the apparent role of distance can be interpreted, using examples from the voting literature to demonstrate the multi-faceted aspects of candidate distance and so-called 'localness'.¹ It concludes by proposing the types of data requirement and future analyses required to unpick further the exact relationship between location and vote.

'LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION' – WHY SHOULD IT MATTER?

Locating *voters*, rather than candidates, geographically in order to measure distance has developed in the most straightforward fashion in a more binary field of vote choice, namely turnout studies. Drawing on the notion of the cost of voting, other things being equal, voters situated closer to a polling location are hypothesised to be more likely to turn out and vote than those situated further away. A body of work on this topic has now demonstrated that this is broadly the case, with nuances by mode of transportation, availability of alternative modes of voting and stability in voting location, *inter alia* (Dyck and Gimpel, 2005; Haspel and Gibbs Knotts, 2005; McNulty et al., 2009; Bhatti, 2012). Many of the methods used here are similar to or have informed those employed in models using distance as a variable for vote choice, albeit often with a more complex polytomous dependent variable, but, unlike the turnout hypothesis, the role of distance and what its measurement may proxy is less clearly defined.

Many authors (Parker, 1982; Pattie and Johnston, 2000, *inter alia*) point to work by Cox (1969, 1971) in formalising spatial context more broadly as a driver of voting behaviour. Cox identifies three principal geographical components to

variation in voting behaviour: the social group make-up of an area; locally specific organisational memberships; and the neighbourhood effect (1971: 30; see also Hooghe, this *Handbook*, Volume 1). This final element is assumed to work through information derived from social networks at a highly localised level, and to promote voting behaviour that may well be at odds with either the social group belonging or other, higher-level locational patterns to party support. As Pattie and Johnston note, while such mechanisms were generally assumed to underpin patterns in voting, more causal exploration of how these mechanisms work was scarce (2000: 42). Previous work in the UK, for example, had often dismissed the role of neighbourhood effects, or their implied ‘inter-personal influence models’, in determining vote choice (Dunleavy, 1979; Curtice, 1995). Subsequent work on neighbourhood effects (e.g. Johnston et al., 2005) finds significant effects on voting at different territorial levels – different ‘neighbourhoods’ – for voters with similar individual characteristics.

Effects of locality also include candidate location playing a role in vote choice through the so-called ‘friends and neighbours’ vote, whereby voters are more likely to prefer candidates living in their locality from their social networks. Closer proximity of candidates is expected to increase likelihood of vote. Key’s (1949) work on Congressional primaries found evidence that candidates in their home and adjacent counties performed better than those in counties further afield. Similar ecological tests of the role of candidate location have ranged across a wide array of electoral settings, including the so-called ‘home-state advantage’ in US presidential (Garand, 1988; Lewis-Beck and Rice, 1983) and vice-presidential (Dudley and Rapoport, 1989) races, New Zealand city council elections (Johnston, 1973) and Irish legislative elections (Parker, 1982; Johnson, 1989). More recent work has considered more closely the psychological reasons for the proximity or localness of a candidate increasing the likelihood of support (Gimpel et al., 2008), building upon more generalised observations of voter information and awareness (Bowler et al., 1993). Finally, individual-level distance models have started to use choice models to look at the effect of geographical proximity of candidates to voters in the UK and in Ireland (Arzheimer and Evans, 2012, 2014; Górecki and Marsh, 2012, 2014).

To the extent that knowledge, assumed or otherwise, of a candidate or party must necessarily underpin the information in such a process, the localness of a candidate may influence voters’ knowledge, in the absence of other profile-raising features – prominence on the national political stage or active campaigning, for example. The distance of a candidate may matter, then, from an information point of view.

A second, related approach focuses on a more direct role for distance which is not necessarily reliant upon information networks. Among the many assumptions underpinning explanatory voting models, a key element is voters securing effective representation. From social structural models positing self-identifying class

or other social group representation to individualised accounts of rational voting, one link from voter to candidate or to party is the expected quality of representation, and the benefits which accrue from this. The locus of such expectation may vary – in more fundamental structural models, parties mobilise voters as opinion-leaders for specific social groups, representing these latter's best interests, just as much as individuals themselves assess each possibility's representative function – and how such representation is best achieved also varies from elite-competence trustee to 'mouthpiece' delegate. Childs and Cowley refer to 'descriptive representation', with representation desirable from individuals with the same traits as the group they represent – most commonly, women and minorities, but in this case the localness of a representative (Childs and Cowley, 2011). In an experimental setting, much lower ratings of desirable candidate attributes have been found for more distant candidates (Campbell and Cowley, 2014).

The most direct justification of distance mattering in voting choice is via the effectiveness argument. Other things being equal, a voter may expect that a candidate located closer to her will offer more effective representation than a candidate further away. This relies on causal underpinnings similar to those of the 'friends and neighbours' theory, but explicates the role of individual voter information. Of course, such an assumption requires further conditions to be convincing. We take the capacity of a candidate to offer effective representation as read. More importantly, the institutional structures of a representative system must be such that geographical location matters. At very high levels of district magnitude, or in larger regions at play in European elections, and more broadly in systems where incentives for personal vote-seeking activity are low, the expectation that a candidate's location has an effect on their representative function is much less likely than in smaller districts where candidates vie to represent a much more limited territory, or where personal vote incentives are high.

Legislators show evidence of encouraging such perceptions by providing parochial benefits where possible. At the broadest level, 'pork-barrel politics' is based on precisely this assumption, conditional upon the institutional incentives for personalised voting and representatives' opportunities to prioritise parochial over national legislation (Crisp et al., 2004). Representatives may have incentives to develop personal votes at the local level to stabilise majorities whilst working in national legislatures (Wood and Norton, 1992). The personal vote does not necessarily imply a local representative, however. Indeed, conceptually one could argue that non-local representatives have greater incentive to develop a personal vote through such tactics, lacking favourable 'friends and neighbours' conditions. Moreover, pork-barrel politics is an activity generally limited to elected representatives, rather than candidates. Vote-buying and the encouragement of 'venal voting' broadens possible incentives for vote that may be related to location, either directly through strong local ties (Nicro, 1993) or indirectly through the use of local middlemen (Finan and Schechter, 2012).

One corollary to the effectiveness of representation links the localness of a representative, as well as the level of experience in local office, to their independence in national legislatures and their own party – in analyses of roll-call votes, local candidates and office-holders will rebel against the party line more often, irrespective of electoral system type, i.e. open or closed lists (Tavits, 2009: 808). More broadly, however, closed list systems have indeed been found to decrease so-called personal vote-earning attributes (Shugart et al., 2005). Such a challenge to party unity may or may not conform with voters' expectations of their representative, and there is evidence that 'ideological discrepancy' may result in punishment at the next election (Glazer and Robbins, 1983). There is consequently a tension between the local candidate *acting* at a local level to encourage the personal vote and a candidate *present* at the local level to build voter knowledge of activity at whatever level.

OPERATIONALISING DISTANCE IN VOTING MODELS

Where a candidate lives relative to a voter is one obvious way of operationalising localness, and the one we will focus on in this section, but it is not the only indicator, and indeed may be flawed in its simplicity. First, from the friends and neighbours perspective, length of residency may moderate the effect of localness. A candidate who has only recently moved to a community where they are standing for election may not benefit the same degree as a candidate long resident in that community. Evidence from Australia suggests that length of residence influences support (Studlar and McAllister, 1996). In electoral systems such as the UK, where there is no residency requirement,² candidates may rent accommodation in the area for the purposes of campaigning and, more instrumentally, for recording a local address, and the use of candidate location would not act as a useful proxy either for common interest with a local community or for higher levels of information. Second, voters may attach value to other attributes of localness independent of candidate location. Specifically, birthplace and other links to the local community may act as a positive spur to voter choice. The difficulty of collecting data on birthplace has limited research on this aspect, but some evidence of its importance has been found, for example, in South Korea (Lee and Glasure, 1995; Shin et al., 2005), although in Estonia it had no effect (Tavits, 2010). Candidates may well present themselves as from areas other than their birthplace, depending on where they spent their early years – George W. Bush, for example, identifying with Texas – and, indeed, in more extreme cases, others may try to cast doubt on their origins, as in the case of Barack Obama.

How distance is measured might appear to be a significant consideration in the model specification. When (and if) voters think about the distance between two points, do they conceive it in terms of time to travel, driving distance, an estimate

of ‘crow flies’, or some other heuristic? Significant effort has been invested by geographers in discovering how individuals conceptualise distance, conditioned by the environment in which this measurement is made, and the relationship of perceived to true distance (see, for example, Canter and Tagg, 1975). However, in terms of empirical measures of distance, there appears to be little to choose between approaches. For example, McNulty et al. compare Euclidean distance, city-block or taxicab measures, driving distance and more complex cartographical measures invoking curved-earth adjustments (2009: 451–4). The high correlation between all such measures renders the choice arbitrary, with straight-line or city-block distance favoured due to simplicity of calculation – a conclusion reached in other applied distance research (Arzheimer and Evans, 2014).

If raw measurement does not matter, there is debate over the functional form distance takes in the models. One popular choice is to use a natural log of distance over the untransformed measure. Some studies have found that, as distance increases, so the marginal change in voter support diminishes – a classic non-linear ‘distance decay’ (Górecki and Marsh, 2012). Other studies hypothesise, and find evidence, that the distance effect may even reverse at high distances, indicating peripheral communities where candidates are not expected to be local (Gimpel et al., 2008: 239). These are similar to the non-linear effects found in the research looking at distance between voters and polling stations and likelihood of turnout (Dyck and Gimpel, 2005; Bhatti, 2012). Whilst the log transformation is conceptually well justified, other research has found that an untransformed linear distance variable works as well statistically as any power transformation (Arzheimer and Evans, 2012, 2014).³

Whatever the functional form that a continuous measure of distance may take, the psychological processing of distance may not in fact relate to geographical distance covered. In Key’s original analysis of Southern voting, he found that candidates did best in their home county, followed by neighbouring counties. Such ‘contiguity’ effects have been found in US and English subnational elections (Kjar and Laband, 2002; Arzheimer and Evans, 2014), as well as the 2015 general election (Arzheimer et al., 2015), but these vary by election level and context. For example, in the English elections, models contrasting home, contiguous (neighbouring) and non-contiguous (non-neighbouring) residences of candidates in county council electoral divisions (ED) found the significant contrast to lie between home and contiguous EDs: home ED candidates had an advantage over all others. However, in the national elections, the key contrast was between home/contiguous and non-contiguous constituencies: voters were only less likely to choose candidates much further afield. Perhaps unsurprisingly, voters in local elections behave in a manner which penalises ‘distance’ at a much lower level than they do at legislative elections.

This finding echoes the linearity issue. Whether ‘a mile is a mile’ in different spatial contexts is one issue; how voters process distance, and how distance acts upon information flows, may be dependent upon the institutional context at

play and indeed the voter in question.⁴ ‘Friends and neighbours’ voting requires a highly localised scale to be convincing. In a spatially large electoral district including multiple urban centres, direct contact or even contact at one or two removes with a candidate is much less likely than in small districts. This does not mean that localism will not exist as a voting motivation, but it will result from a different process. More fundamentally, how individual voters conceive of ‘local’ and ‘not local’ will vary within and across administrative territories. Indeed, the definition of local may itself require a much larger territorial aggregation than the electoral district. French voters may identify as ‘Breton’ or ‘Corsican’ (Cole and Evans, 2008), and support candidates who do likewise, simply on the basis of affective affinity. Perceptual or ‘vernacular’ regions (Hale, 1984) with fuzzy boundaries are more akin to how voters may characterise their local environment. Finally, we should be careful to distinguish, on the supply side, active self-identification and local support. A presidential candidate in the US or France, say, would be unlikely to use a local identification as a campaign keyword, other than to emphasise their national origins by association, even if electoral support in their birthplace or political powerbase may nonetheless be higher through ‘home-state advantage’.

WHAT (ELSE) MIGHT DISTANCE BE MEASURING?

As the function of distance and location varies by election context, so it is likely to vary by individual. There are two dimensions along which it is likely to vary: a) the importance of candidate location in the voter calculus; b) the perception of the distance once candidate location is known. At the simplest level, survey evidence suggests that voters value local candidates/representatives. As previously noted, Campbell and Cowley (2014) find in an experimental setting that one of the biggest blockers on candidate appeal is a home address many miles from their constituency. Using a different experimental design, Roy and Alcantara (2015) found increased likelihood of vote for locally involved candidates over non-locals, when these differences were identified by a fictional newspaper article read by respondents in an online voting experiment. Voters clearly identify localness as an important trait. When asked in a 2013 UK survey how important it was to them having an MP who lived in the constituency, almost 60 per cent of respondents ranked it at 8 or above on a scale of 0–10 (Figure 28.1). However, to date, we are unaware of any exploration of whether the importance of a locally based representative conditions the importance of distance in voting behaviour.

A distance measure may also be proxying for other relevant but distinct effects. For example, a reasonable expectation is that more local candidates may find it easier than a candidate based further afield to campaign and to establish their presence within a electoral territory. There is clear evidence that strong campaigning matters in convincing voters to support a candidate, and that parties

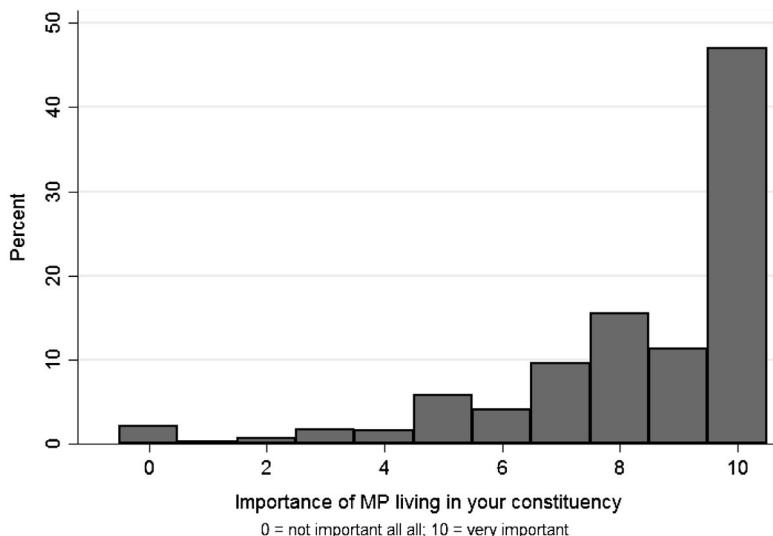


Figure 28.1 Importance of MP living in their constituency for British voters (2013)

Source: YouGov internet poll, 9-17 October 2013 (n = 10572)

target where to emphasise campaigning (Whiteley and Seyd, 2003; Pattie and Johnston, 2003). If this relationship holds, then what distance may be picking up is an information effect and/or ‘friends and neighbours’, rather than a specifically ‘quality of representation’ effect. Górecki and Marsh (2012) look at one key aspect of this, finding that candidate contact is a strong predictor of vote (something which Arzheimer et al., 2015 also confirm), but that distance remains significant as a predictor, and that the interaction between the two matters – contact is less important when distance is already small, also evidence of a ‘friends and neighbours’ effect (Górecki and Marsh, 2012: 572–3).

The ‘home-state advantage’ literature includes a standard control of state size, defined by population or proportion of the national populations, and hypothesises that the smaller the state, the more probable it is that the size of the effect is greater (Lewis-Beck and Rice, 1983: 552). Interestingly, according to this research, incumbents also enjoy a larger home-state advantage. Whilst this would be expected, equally, incumbency presents a number of other features which mean that in other contexts we would want to control for this while looking at the independent effect of localism. Incumbency gives all voters, not just ones in a candidate’s home-state, more information about a candidate. Similarly, in a single electoral district, an incumbent candidate may be more likely than first-time challengers to live there, so a control for incumbency needs to be included to rule out spurious distance effects.

A final, latent challenge to the direct role of distance is winnability. Previous literature on challengers has noted the variability in quality, measured for

example by their political experience and the financial backing available for their campaigns (Bond et al., 1985). Parties are well rehearsed in allocating scarce resources to target marginal constituencies as well as in strategically defending such constituencies as incumbents (Johnston et al., 2002). A host of campaign tactics may be employed to maximise positive information and constituency service as a means of maximising vote. Conversely, in safe seats with little or no chance of victory a party and its candidate are unlikely to devote resources in a futile attempt to mobilise a larger but losing minority.

If winning candidates locate themselves closer to a constituency in the hope of winning it, or relocate having won, and losing candidates remain more distant because the costs of relocation are high, a measure of distance would appear to be associated with candidate success, but might simply reflect the competitive structure of constituencies. Marginality is one obvious way of testing for this competitive structure. As a possible control, it is a useful measure based on previous election results although it ignores changes of candidates, possible third-party effects in the previous election that no longer pertain, or other exogenous influences that change competition in a constituency at the following election. More nuanced coding of competitive structure and party strategy is, however, probably out of reach for most empirical tests.

SOFTWARE AND DATA CONSIDERATIONS

As Kai Arzheimer notes later in this Volume, the availability of open source data, and to a lesser extent software, together with internet polling has been instrumental in unmasking location's role in voting behaviour. It is noticeable in the literature how the studies of the 1960s and 1970s, using ecological analyses of vote share, did not significantly change in their specifications for a number of years following. The focus remained on aggregated vote share in electoral territories and a simple calculation of relative decline as distance from the candidate's home location (again, usually a territory rather than a point estimate) increased. The simple measurement of adjacency of a small number of territorial aggregations does not require a calculation of distance per se, but rather a tabulation of vote share and location. Interestingly, the ground-breaking work by political geographers such as Cox and Johnston often featured rich topographical maps of nuanced voting patterns that were lacking in more generic political science approaches which put much greater store in regression modelling.

The open data 'revolution' has provided researchers with a new level of access to locational data in the form of GIS shapefiles for administrative and electoral boundaries, and databases of point locations for addresses. While individual-level analyses have been made possible by such developments, ecological analyses looking at local context, as well as at specific distance effects, have similarly been made much easier, potentially linking to a host of other geocoded data, such

as census and socio-economic variables. Non-nested territorial units and boundary changes are still a challenge for any geographical study (Norman et al., 2003) and not always easily resolvable (see, for example, Lai et al., 2010).

More precise point data based upon address allows the positioning of voters, candidates and other relevant units of observation within those territories. It must be said that there is a great deal of cross-national variation in the quality and detail of these data, however. At one end, the British researcher is spoilt by a full set of administrative boundary shape files and the enormous Royal Mail/Ordnance Survey Code-Point Open dataset which provides eastings and northings for every postcode in the country – 1.7 million in total, covering an average of around 15 properties each. Many other countries provide shapefiles of administrative districts, but do not have such a detailed and methodical postcode system in locational terms. Other national postcode systems, such as France's five-digit system, indicate only *département* and a smaller territorial space, from one village to the *arrondissement* of a major city. In a country with a rich tradition of geographical electoral research (Siegfried, 1913; Goguel, 1970; Bussi, 1998) individual-level analysis appears more out of reach for the psephologist. Given sufficiently detailed aggregation, an estimate of point location, using territorial centroid, can still be used, but this necessarily adds noise to any estimation, potentially at the expense of the signal. Street address can be used, in conjunction with the Google API or other mapping software, to identify a more precise location, but scraping such address data, should it be available, is a more time-consuming process than a simple 2D point location by postcode.

Indeed, the availability of address data, rather than its conversion into GIS-friendly data, is the current obstacle. The UK has required, until recently, that all candidate addresses be provided on the Statement of Persons Nominated prior to an election, but recently waived this requirement for individuals wishing to list only their constituency location in general elections. Local elections, for perhaps understandable reasons, still require full address information for every candidate. However, that this information is made public is an exceptional requirement in even democratic regimes. For example, German candidates for the *Bundestag* can be identified by location from where they are issued their certificate of eligibility,⁵ but there is no formal release of home address. National privacy laws will determine whether such information, if collected, is available for scrutiny.

A similar issue covers voter location. In individual-level survey data, a range of electoral administrative territory identifiers allow varying degrees of precision in location, but significant ethical considerations – even when permission has been given by respondents – are raised by highly detailed location information when combined with other demographic characteristics. To the extent that survey companies allow the use of such data, this needs to be balanced by suitable anonymisation in publicly available data and strict controls on data usage. Equally, location data do need to be available beyond the original research team for the purposes of replication.

The GIS toolbox certainly provides an enviable set of analytical approaches that can be brought to bear on voting behaviour. Even a conceptually simple notion such as contiguity would have been a burdensome task to operationalise at the individual level before its advent. Much more involved concepts such as convex hulls – the geometrical boundaries created around a set of points (Angel et al., 2010) – seem to offer a further tool that could be used to characterise artificial territories defined by sets of candidates or voters. GIS can also offer researchers a means of tapping voters' perceptions of their geographical location, and how that relates to their political behaviour. Such testing of simpler issues with the roles of distance and location in voting, in what is still a relatively under-developed area of psephology, probably continues to be a better use of GIS than more conceptually convoluted functions.

CONCLUSION

Work on precise individual voter and candidate geolocation is in its very early stages as new variables in the vote calculus. The growth and refinement of methods and data availability have, as always, been drivers in answering questions first asked decades ago but only now testable in robust fashion. We have yet to disentangle fully 'friends and neighbours' effects, information effects or individual perceptions of quality of representation, or to understand exactly how voters construe distance and localness.

Distance and other measures of localness potentially imply a more direct information effect which acts at the individual rather than network level as an assessment of likely representational quality. 'They're not from round here' may be a useful quality-assurance heuristic as well as a prejudice born of parochialism. Work to date has not generally separated out empirically these two possible drivers of localism, in part due to the difficulty of ascertaining the true motivations behind individual behaviour based upon perceptions of candidates. Nonetheless, the effects of localised patronage and clientelism in elections through vote-buying as well as expected performance has been studied in developing democracies (see, for example, Baldwin, 2013). A more complete understanding of rational and affective responses to candidate location is certainly required.

To date, disaggregating distance effects from electoral territories to individual choice models has not seen the effect of distance disappear. However, it is unlikely that one size fits all. If candidate distance matters, it can be known (from whatever source of information) – and it is inconceivable that all voters are equally informed on such variables. In line with research into cognitive mobilisation and political interest, education could be expected to form a starting point for examining whether distance matters more to those engaged with the political process. Similarly, to what extent does the importance of candidate location vary by party – for example, between 'mainstream' and 'challenger' parties? Are parties

of government more likely to see candidates elected, more affected by location than smaller, protest parties whose capacity to make a statement is unconditioned by location? While such fundamental questions about the relationship between voter choice and distance remain, a focus on simple, rigorous operationalisations of models testing these, rather than excessive use of more complex geographical tools, should remain the priority.

Lastly, national context clearly matters. The majority of research has taken place in a small number of English-speaking countries. Very little is known about neighbourhood and distance effects in other countries, which can provide differing institutional and cultural contexts within which to test their importance. A growing availability of data and analytical software suggests that such analyses of distance will not be long in coming.

Notes

- 1 This chapter distinguishes between 'localism', being the propensity of a voter to choose a local candidate, and 'localness', being the attributes of a candidate by which a voter decides how local that candidate is.
- 2 More accurately, there is no residency requirement for general elections, but residency, land ownership or job location are required at county council/unitary authority elections.
- 3 Functional form in this research was tested using fractional polynomial fit tests, which look for optimal power transformations rather than assuming a theoretical nonlinear function form ab initio.
- 4 There is some evidence that voters in smaller (i.e. urban) constituencies will be less likely to penalise non-contiguous representatives, where the distance is smaller, than those in larger, rural constituencies (Arzheimer et al., 2015).
- 5 See <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/glossar/texte/Waehlbarkeitsbescheinigung.html>.

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The Personal Vote

Thomas Zittel

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THE PERSONAL VOTE?

The personal vote is widely considered that portion of a candidate's electoral support that originates in his or her personal qualities, qualifications, activities, and record (Cain et al. 1987: 9). It thus by definition is *a non-partisan vote* rooted in individual candidates rather than in partisan ideologies and policies. Moreover, the literature on the issue needs to be kept distinct from debates on the personalization of politics (McAllister 2007). Students of the personal vote stress the elite level and the behavioral strategies of incumbent legislators to build personalized support bases among geographic constituents. In contrast, the concept of personalization points to the voter level and to the extent to which the main candidates of political parties affect vote choices. Obviously, both debates overlap and are interrelated. However, the personal vote-seeking concept is rooted in theories on legislative behavior, while the personalization concept advances from theories on voting behavior.

Originally, the literature on the personal vote focused with few exceptions on the strategic behavior of US Representatives. Among other works, it goes back to the seminal analyses of Morris Fiorina (1974, 1977). Fiorina perceived the increasing electoral margins and return rates in US House elections that he witnessed during the 1960s and 1970s to be a direct result of the strategic efforts of incumbents to focus on particularistic policies, to claim personalized credit in this regard, and to thus successfully build an incumbency advantage (see also Herrera and Yawn 1999). David Mayhew's ground-breaking book is a second

key reference in this regard. This author points to additional behavioral strategies that might explain incumbency advantages in congressional politics, such as the propensity of US Representatives to continuously advertise themselves and to take policy positions popular in their districts.

The most recent literature on the personal vote goes beyond its original case-specific roots and increasingly adopts a comparative perspective. This includes the proliferation of both theory-guided analyses on non US-American cases and genuinely comparative efforts on the issue (e.g. Heitshusen et al. 2005). This broadening in geographic scope informs and enriches the debate in three ways. First, it results in a more comprehensive picture of the distinct and multifaceted behavioral strategies related to the original concept. Second, it allows for more variance with regard to electoral system variables and as a result enhances our understanding of the electoral sources of personal vote-seeking behavior and of what kind of electoral rules inhibit or facilitate personal vote-seeking behavior. Third, it brings in cases characterized by strong parties and party government. This allows us to gauge the ways in which electoral rules interact with party factors and thus how parties might constrain but also facilitate personal vote-seeking behavior.

This chapter is designed to take stock of an increasingly comparative literature on the issue and to tie it back to original concepts and questions stemming from analyses of the US-American case, which it does in four main steps. First, it delineates the distinct and multifaceted behavioral strategies that are related to the overarching construct of the personal vote. Second, it gauges the electoral sources of personal vote-seeking behavior. Third, it explores the role of party in constraining personal vote-seeking strategies. Fourth, it identifies both gaps in the literature and promising issues for future research. In particular, this concerns the electoral and larger systemic effects of personal vote-seeking behavior.

THE FOCUS AND STYLES OF PERSONAL VOTE SEEKING

The behavioral strategies related to personal vote-seeking concerns have been characterized by a distinct focus of representation and also by distinct styles of behavior. This section first sketches the main conceptions and findings that emerge from the original case-specific literature on these issues and then ties them back to the major contributions that result from comparative research.

The original literature on the personal vote envisions legislators determined to mobilize personalized support bases to adopt territorial, and particularly local, *foci of representation*. Analytically, this is considered to be in contrast to national/partisan foci of representation. Those seeking personal votes are assumed to perceive themselves as representatives of distinct district-level geographic constituencies (see Evans, this Volume, on the importance of

localness). In contrast, those seeking partisan votes are said to perceive themselves as representatives of their parties and related ideological beliefs and policy positions.

Theoretically, local constituents and party are seen as competing principals to legislators and thus to mutually exclude themselves in cases of conflict and distinct policy choices. Empirical research on US Representatives stresses that under these circumstances legislators indeed tend to follow their geographic constituents rather than the party line (Mayhew 1974: 48). Cain et al. picture legislators as representing their districts to the national party rather than the other way round. Moreover, local and national/partisan foci are found to be rank ordered when it comes to allocating scarce resources. US Representatives are said to maximize institutional opportunities to please local constituents and to devote relatively large portions of individually available resources to this cause (Mayhew 1974).

The original case-specific literature on the issue stresses *three distinct behavioral styles* legislators might adopt to seek personal votes. These are position taking, credit claiming, and advertising (Mayhew 1974). These styles do not mutually exclude themselves, but different legislators might decide to highlight different styles (Grimmer 2013).

Position taking envisions legislators to make ‘judgmental statements’ on national policy matters that are popular among geographic constituents (Mayhew 1974). According to Mayhew, this presupposes *acting* in legislative contexts, particularly while taking roll call votes. Position taking in the context of roll call voting has been widely seen as a core ‘currency of individual accountability’ and thus has frequently been subject to analysis to gauge the level of personal vote seeking (Carey 2009). Substantial empirical evidence on the US-American case suggests that legislators tailor their voting records according to constituency preferences and that any failure to do so comes with the risk of electoral defeat (Mayhew 1974: 61; Carson et al. 2010).

Credit claiming sees legislators actively aiming to generate the belief among local constituents that he/she is personally responsible for desired policy outcomes (Mayhew 1974: 53). According to Mayhew, actively pursuing particularistic policies in legislative contexts can do this best. Fenno (1978) and Cain et al. (1987), in their seminal studies, emphasize that US Representatives are said to seek favorable committee assignments to foster the economic fortunes of their districts, to be determined to involve themselves when local economic interest are at stake, and also to be eager to use committee positions and available floor procedures (e.g. legislative amendments) to literally legislate local projects and to pursue so-called pork-barrel politics (Cain et al. 1987: 74). This particularly involves activities to secure federal funds for infrastructural developments in the district, such as construction projects or military deployments (pork). Cain et al. emphasize that US Representatives, in addition to channel federal funds to their districts, subjectively rate individual-level service provision (casework) as very important

activities for which they can claim credit, consequently allocating large portions of their staff resources to this task. However, these kinds of individual one-to-one service are clearly less effective than one-to-many constituency services designed to serve the infrastructural needs of districts.

According to Fiorina (1974, 1977), credit-claiming strategies are particularly useful and effective in building incumbency advantages in cases of politically heterogeneous and volatile districts. They might not be entirely contingent upon effective action and thus upon substantiated claims. Mayhew stresses that constituents might believe unsubstantiated claims in small and local matters, but generally effective credit claiming is said to be about combining *acts* (securing benefits that can be subscribed to individual legislators) with *communication* (publicly claiming responsibility).

Advertising strategies see legislators making themselves known among constituents ‘in such a fashion as to create a favorable image but in messages having little or no issue content’ (Mayhew 1974: 49). This strategy aims to develop the incumbent into a brand name to increase name recall and recognition. According to Mayhew, particular qualities to emphasize might be ‘experience’ or ‘sincerity’, which are valence types of quality generally viewed in positive ways. But these qualities might also enclose social characteristics such as religious or socio-economic background. Possible strategies to effectively communicate these qualities are manifold and, among others, encompass frequent direct constituency contacts, direct constituency communication via newsletters, posters, or new social media, and communication via the mass media.

For many decades, the personal vote-seeking concept hardly mattered in comparative research. Early studies that aimed to apply notions of individual accountability to European national systems found that legislators in European democracies predominantly functioned as team members and hardly deviated from their parties in roll call voting (Powell 2004; Uslaner and Zittel 2006). This was said to result from, among other factors, parliamentary government and the close connection between distinct social groups forming national coalitions of voters and distinct parties that function as their representatives. Since individual accountability could not be found in these contexts, personal vote seeking was also considered insignificant. In contrast to the US-American case, legislators in European democracies were assumed to represent the party to their districts rather than the other way round.

In contrast to this common wisdom, it was Thomassen (1994; see also Thomassen/Andeweg 2004) who suggested broadening and better differentiating the concept of individual accountability to capture particular activities designed to send signals to geographic constituents without disrupting party unity or contradicting collectivist forms of representation. The most recent comparative literature picks up on the conceptual point Thomassen made and essentially focuses on communication and advertisement strategies that fall short of taking manifest policy choices in legislative contexts while seeking personal votes.

Figure 29.1 conceptualizes most recent comparative contributions to the argument Thomassen made. It shows that the concept of personal vote seeking encloses a larger number of behavioral strategies that are wide in range and that can be mapped along two crucial dimensions. The first concerns the level of particularism that legislators might pursue in their vote-seeking behavior: legislators might focus either on position-taking strategies or on credit-claiming concerns, and might focus either on adopting those positions on national policies that are popular in their districts or on particularistic policies that allow them to claim individual credit for specific desired policy outcomes.

The second dimension concerns the type of activity that is related to personal vote-seeking concerns – to whether legislators actively aim at influencing legislative choices or whether their aim is to simply communicate and advertise distinct policy positions or particularistic policies. The closer personal vote-seeking activities move towards the ‘choice end’ of the spectrum, the more adversarial they are and the more likely to disrupt party unity. For example, taking positions to please geographic constituencies in roll calls potentially causes the most immediate threat to party unity in case of conflict between party and district. In contrast, the closer related personal vote-seeking activities move towards the ‘advertising end’ of the spectrum, the less adversarial they are and the less likely to disrupt party unity. Taking positions popular among geographic constituencies

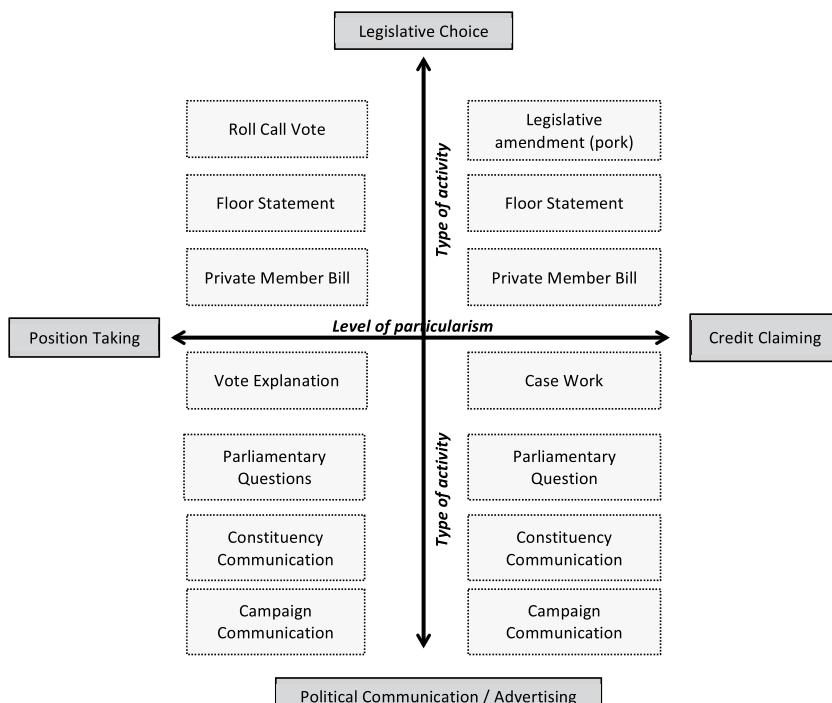


Figure 29.1 Two dimensions of personal vote seeking

in campaign speeches or via personal websites fails to directly affect legislative choices. This also allows for *waffling* and *narrowcasting*, designed to tell different things to different constituencies.

Credit-claiming styles of behavior also can be differentiated into choice-related and communication-related activities. For example, actively pursuing particularistic policies in legislative contexts via floor amendments or private member bills disrupts the ability of parties to achieve consistent and efficient policy making. In contrast, simply signaling behind-the-scenes activities to secure particularistic benefits via constituency communication or parliamentary questions allows legislators to please both their parties and their geographic constituencies.

Figure 29.1 demonstrates an important difference between the two dimensions that it maps. The second dimension, the types of personal vote-seeking activity, encloses a number of distinct formalized activities that differ with regard to arena, process, and the level of potential intra-party conflict. In contrast, the first dimension, which maps different styles of personal vote seeking, cannot be kept distinct on the basis of particular types of activities. Instead, some types of activity, such as asking parliamentary questions or communicating to constituents, can be used for both ideal typical styles of personal vote seeking, namely position taking and credit claiming.

The two dimensions depicted in Figure 29.1 can be further illustrated and clarified in light of three specific recent comparative contributions to the personal vote-seeking literature. The first contribution stresses the significance of individual-level service responsiveness in many legislatures. The second highlights the role of campaigns as means to seek personal votes outside of legislative contexts. The third demonstrates the use of position-taking and credit-claiming cues in legislative speech. The following paragraphs further elaborate on these three types of comparative analysis.

A number of rich and highly instructive country-specific observational studies on constituency services and communication unveiled the rather significant role of individual-level service responsiveness even in non US-American contexts. For example, Searing (1994) and Norton and Wood (1993) demonstrate for the British case both the importance of case work for backbench MPs and its increasing relevance across time. Müller et al. (2001) and Patzelt (1993) in similar studies go beyond the British case and show the relative importance of individual-level responsiveness and constituency communication for Austrian and German legislators (for Germany see also Zittel 2010). These studies emphasize the moderate resources British, German, and Austrian legislators provide themselves to pursue case work compared with their colleagues in US Congress. But they also stress that, within these limits, case work does matter to European legislators.

Recent survey-based studies on constituency campaigns highlight the campaign arena as a context for seeking personal votes at the margins. For example, Andeweg and Holsteyn (2011: 10) show, for the Dutch national elections in 2006, that around 25 percent of candidates subjectively pursued preference votes in

their campaigns by advertising their own person and candidacy in pronounced ways. Analyses that were conducted within the Comparative Candidate Survey (CCS) network reach similar conclusions. Significant minorities of candidates in many European contexts subjectively aim to advertise themselves in their campaigns and also adopt distinct campaign strategies to seek personal votes, such as highlighting local issues and spending large amounts of time on personalized canvassing activities to make themselves personally known (Zittel and Gschwend 2008, Zittel 2015). Studies that analyze the content of campaign speech draw similar conclusions. Campaign advertising is found to aim to provide signals to voters about legislators' individual preferences and priorities (see, for the US, Adams et al. 2004; Sulkin and Swigger 2008).

A wave of new studies on legislative speech points to related strategies among legislators aimed not only at taking positions popular among local constituents but also at claiming credit. Debus and Baeck (2014, 2016) and also Proksch and Slapin (2010, 2014) focus on parliamentary speeches to gauge the extend to which legislators take positions on the floor to signal their policy stances towards their parties and constituencies. However, since parliamentary parties orchestrate these activities they tend to underestimate the extent of personal vote seeking in legislative contexts. As an alternative, many recent studies focus on individual means to participate in legislative contexts to gauge personal vote-seeking activities at the margins. For example, Bräuninger et al. (2012) focus on the authorship of private member bills in the Belgian legislature as a means to uncover personal vote-seeking strategies (see also Solvak 2013 on the Estonian case). Unfortunately, this approach provides little evidence on whether private member bills are used to take positions or to claim credit and on whether they are really targeted to the local instead of the national level. To confront these issues, other authors focus on the content of individual-level activities such as parliamentary questions. On the basis of explicit keywords and hand-coding strategies, Martin (2011), for example, shows that Irish legislators use parliamentary questions to raise local, rather than national concerns and thus to signal attention to local constituents. Sieberer (2015) stresses the role of vote explanations as a means to signal positions to local constituents in the German Bundestag. Arter (2011: 144) shows for the Finnish case that a fair number of legislators use 'constituency specific' budget motions to propose and facilitate federal spending projects in their districts.

The literature on personal vote-seeking strategies predominantly focuses on the behaviors of incumbents rather than on their personal qualities. However, their personal characteristics are also a definitional part of the initial concept and might, for example, matter for voters. Consequently, some analyses do explore the role of valence factors that might mobilize larger segments of electorates independent of ideological orientations as a mechanism to mobilize the personal vote. The localness of incumbents has been of particular concern in this regard. Shugart et al. (2005), in their comparative analysis of six European established democracies, show that, contingent upon electoral rules, having been

born in one's district and also having gathered experiences in district level electoral offices helps winning mandates (see also Andre et al. 2014). Margit Tavits (2009), in a comparative analysis of five European democracies, shows, furthermore, that this might also hang together with other strategies of personal vote seeking in the legislative arena. Tavits finds that increasing levels of district-level political experience increases the likelihood of individualized position taking in legislative contexts. Other valence factors debated concern issues such as personal integrity or competence (Bishin et al. 2006; Mondak and Huckfeldt 2006). These, however, so far, have received little attention in the comparative literature on personal vote seeking.

Gender and race are standard factors used to gauge variance in the socio-structural backgrounds of legislators and to reflect upon different prescriptive models of political representation (Mansbridge 1999). However, with regard to personal vote seeking, either one of these personal traits is risky since electorates could potentially be divided over their desirability; in addition, related preferences could be closely related to partisan ideologies (Valdini 2012; Valdini 2013: 77). Valdini, for example, shows in her comparative analysis that 'the conditional effect of the personal vote is either neutral or negative for women's representation, depending on the level of bias against female leaders in the cultural context of the election' (Valdini 2013: 88). Fisher et al. similarly conclude for the UK that minority candidates suffer electorally from anti-immigrant sentiments among non-minority voters (Fisher et al. 2015). Consequently, socio-structurally defined candidate characteristics are not reliable instruments for personal vote-seeking concerns *per se*.

ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND THE PERSONAL VOTE

The distinct behavioral patterns discussed in the previous section are not conclusive manifestations of the personal vote-seeking phenomenon. This is said to relate not only to distinct behavioral patterns but also to distinct *motivations* aimed at cultivating a personalized support basis to secure re-election. This section thus focuses on legislators' motivations and on whether personal vote-seeking motivations can be found on both sides of the Atlantic.

Motivations are hard to access in direct ways. Therefore, early students of personal vote seeking focus on electoral rules to draw inferences about the motivations of incumbents. From this perspective, the pronounced personal vote seeking behavior of members of US-Congress directly results from the country's plurality system. This has been portrayed as a strong indicator for personal vote-seeking motivations (Mayhew 1974).

The inferences drawn regarding the behavioral effects of plurality rules are plausible since plurality rules institutionalize personalized modes of election and individual accountability *vis-à-vis* distinct geographic constituencies in visible

and traceable ways. Individual accountability potentially affects legislators in direct and indirect ways. Indirect effects result from voter demands facilitated by voters' ability to identify and trace those legislators responsible to voice their particular concerns in legislative contexts. Direct effects result from legislators' heightened abilities under plurality rules to anticipate those responsible for their electoral fortunes and to react in appropriate ways. Close inter-party competition is said to positively interact with direct effects since in these cases marginal legislators might see a special need to mobilize the crucial 2 or 3 percent of the vote needed via personal vote-seeking activities.

From a comparative perspective, judged solely on the basis of election modes, the US electoral system is by no means an exception and thus is not particularly predisposed to provide incentives for personal vote-seeking activities. In contrast, personalized modes of election are in the majority among established democracies and thus should lead us to expect wide-spread incentives for personal vote seeking. A quick snapshot summary can easily proof this point: we witness plurality voting in single member districts in the UK and in Canada; in Germany and New Zealand mixed member systems allow voters to simultaneously cast a party vote in multi-member districts and a candidate vote in single member districts; proportional flexible list systems in Austria, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and Sweden enable voters to disrupt party lists and to take choices on particular candidates; preference voting systems such as the Irish single transferrable vote (STV) or the Australian preference vote allow even voters to rank order individual candidates and thus express the intensity of their candidate preferences (Colomer 2011). Only a few established democracies, such as Portugal and Spain, deprive voters from choosing among candidates.

The wide distribution of electoral incentives to seek personal votes is further corroborated by a more recent debate in the comparative literature initiated by a path-breaking article authored by John Carey and Matthew S. Shugart (Carey and Shugart 1995). In this article the authors argue that proportional flexible list systems and preference voting systems provide increased incentives for personal vote seeking compared with plurality systems (Carey and Shugart 1995; Shugart 2005). This is said to result from *intra-party competition* that is facilitated under such electoral rules. Under flexible list and preference rules voters are allowed to choose between different candidates of one and the same party that compete in multi-member districts for candidate votes. From the legislators' perspective, this diminishes the value of party labels as vote-getting mechanisms and provides incentives to cultivate alternative vote-getting mechanisms such as personal records and qualifications. In addition, Carey/Shugart (1995) hypothesize increased incentives for personal vote seeking with increased district size.

Empirical research on the role of intra-party competition partly corroborates the assumed effects but finds few conclusive and dramatic direct effects (e.g. Heitshusen et al. 2005; Farrell and Scully 2010). André et al. (2015) and also Selb/Lutz (2015) explain this by pointing at electoral competition as a mediating

factor. According to these analyses, under flexible list systems, those most vulnerable are most likely to seek personal votes. Other authors point towards secondary electoral rules to explaining inconclusive or negative findings. According to these analyses, many flexible list systems are disguised closed list systems since threshold requirements raise significant obstacles to earning a mandate (Andeweg 2005; Müller 2005). In addition to these considerations, multi-member districts clearly raise collective action problems and might facilitate free-riding among legislators. Especially in large districts under flexible list rules, rational legislators would be best off if they are able to successfully claim credit without contributing to producing related collective benefits. This contradicts initial electoral incentives resulting from intra-party modes of competition.

Independent from recent debates on the behavioral implications of flexible list systems, in the past plurality rules in the UK and Canada also failed to result in similar forms and levels of personal vote seeking that we see in the US (Cain et al. 1984). This suggests that electoral incentives do not work in deterministic ways but rather need to be reinforced and nourished by other contextual factors.

PARTIES AND THE PERSONAL VOTE

Comparative research on the personal vote stresses party as a crucial factor that might inhibit or facilitate related activities independently from electoral rules. This argument implies a number of specific mechanisms that could function as a causal linkage between party- and individual-level behavior. These mechanisms include levels of control over ballot access and campaign resources. High levels of control over ballot access allow parties to staff legislatures either with like-minded partisans and team players or with individuals that are at least consciously aware to whom they owe their nomination to and thus of whom to please (Andeweg and Thomassen 2011). Preece (2014), in her analysis of Lithuania, supports this role of candidate nomination. Regardless of electoral rules, MPs whose future careers depend on getting renominated by central party leaders vote against the party less than those whose careers do not. Jun/Hix (2010) and Samuels (1999) reach similar conclusions regarding South Korea and Brazil.

Processes of candidate nomination are complex and differ with regard to the level of democratization and decentralization (Hazan and Rahat 2010). Autocratic and centralized nomination procedures should be most effective in constraining personal vote-seeking motivations. However, even in cases of decentralized nomination procedures that suggest to legislators to pay attention to local concerns, party policies and ideologies serve as common ground and require legislators to remain team players in national politics so as to not disrupt party unity.

Party organizations are also found to provide essential infrastructural and logistical help in campaign contexts contingent upon campaign regulation and the vitality of party organizational structures at the local level (Kreuzer 2000).

Legislators depend in their campaigns upon the help of their parties to organize campaign events and to distribute campaign materials. Parties, furthermore, might allocate campaign funds to legislators to enable them to buy media access and to produce campaign gadgets. Again, reliance on local party structures in this regard does provide an incentive to pay attention to local concerns. But, again, party policies and ideologies should serve as common ground and require legislators to remain team players in national politics and to not disrupt party unity.

Parties might not only control ballot access and campaign resources but also significantly constrain legislative behavior via legislative organization. For example, Suiter/Malley (2014) show that individual governmental ministers are able to channel particularistic spending to territorial constituencies while ordinary legislators lack these opportunities. These are left with claims made in parliamentary speeches that they had some role in final decisions. In addition, Martin (2014) shows, again for Ireland, that the cartelization of parliamentary posts in the hands of parties allows party leadership to tap into legislators' office seeking concerns and to offer mega-seats as compensation for lost opportunities to please local constituents. Concurrently, Nemoto et al. (2008) show how the Japanese LDP party affected the behaviors of dissenting legislators in a particularly controversial case of postal privatization via the allocation of posts and privileges. Especially those legislators in mid-career particularly depended upon party patronage were most likely to consent irrespective of their own policy preferences.

Clearly, the strength of parties in the electorate matters for the behaviors of legislators and party leadership. From the perspective of incumbents, personal vote-seeking strategies would not make much sense in voter markets that are staunchly partisan and homogeneous. In contrast, heterogeneous voter markets with a larger number of independent voters and/or ideologically moderate voters provide greater incentives to seek personal votes. Moreover, such markets might provide incentives for personal vote seeking not only to legislators but also to party leadership. With weakening partisanship in the electorate, parties might aim to use candidates as vote-getting cues and also as a means to tailor their messages to different segments of more complex electorates (Swindle 2002; Mair et al. 2004; Crisp et al. 2013). The increased interest of comparative research in the personal vote-seeking concept might flow not only from conceptual innovations but also from far-reaching processes of electoral dealignment and related increases in actual personal vote-seeking behavior.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES IN RESEARCH ON THE PERSONAL VOTE

The comparative study of the personal vote raises a number of issues that define future research needs and challenges and that shall be sketched and discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

One set of future research themes concerns research on the sources of personal vote-seeking behavior. The assumed motivational basis and the role of district size are of particular importance in this regard. Regarding the motivations of legislators, the personal vote-seeking literature largely rests upon a general assumption: legislators are considered to be primarily driven by vote-seeking motivations. However, this assumption is not without critics, who caution that legislators are also driven by genuine policy or office-seeking concerns as well as by biographical backgrounds or moral considerations (Searing 1994; Baumann et al. 2015). Observational and survey evidence are imperfect means to empirically unveil the motivational sources of personal vote-seeking behavior since we might lack counterfactual evidence, insight into causal mechanisms, and a proper understanding of the direction of an effect. Recent developments in experimental research on personal vote-seeking behavior offer interesting new methodological solutions to the problem but remain very first steps in this regard that need more effort and attention (Grose 2010; De Vries et al. 2015).

Regarding district size, the past emphasis on plurality systems downplays the complex and subjective ways in which legislators might define personalized constituencies. Research on subconstituencies in US-American single-member districts has already highlighted the role of district structure as well as mobilization bias in this regard. It shows that, contingent upon these factors, legislators might target either the median voter in their districts or ideologically more extreme groups of voters (Mayhew 1974: 39; Fenno 1978; Bishin 2000, 2009).

The few comparative analyses on subconstituencies that exist so far bring in the district size variable in further explaining variance in their nature. Early on, Loewenberg and Kim (1978) and Jewell and Loewenberg (1979: 494) suggested that representatives from multi-member districts tend to perceive their constituency not in territorial but rather in functional terms. The increased role of functional representation in multi-member districts is said to causally result from a reduced vote share threshold that candidates need to surpass to win a seat (Cox 1990), from increased competition for campaign funds, and also from strategic motivations to avoid costly inter-incumbency battles (Crisp and Desposato 2004). Eventually, it is also said to lead to policy specialization in legislative contexts and to distinct patterns of candidate nomination with an increased likelihood of the nomination of policy experts and group representatives in large districts (André et al. 2014). This research on subconstituencies in multi-member district is of recent origin. Since, from a comparative perspective, most candidates are elected in multi-member districts, it is of utmost importance to continue to further our understanding of the functional bases of personal vote-seeking behavior.

Regime type might count as another crucial institutional factor that constrains or facilitates personal vote-seeking concerns. However, little comparative research has been conducted on this issue. Parliamentary systems are widely considered a constraint to deviations in roll call voting compared with presidential systems (Huber 1996; Sieberer 2006). However, to what extent deviations

from party group are driven by personal vote-seeking concerns and whether other types of legislative activity similarly stress party unity in parliamentary systems remains an open issue for future research on the sources of personal vote-seeking behavior.

Another set of future research themes concerns the effects of personal vote seeking. This involves electoral effects – whether this actually makes a difference for voters – and also wider systemic effects. Regarding the electoral ramifications of personal vote seeking, Cain et al. (1987: 185) envision a multistep process. From this perspective, related activities and resource allocation choices create opportunities for contact between legislators and their constituents. As a result, increased constituency contact and communication is assumed to induce favorable evaluations. This is said to eventually lead to electoral support and incumbency advantages. The empirical evidence for this argument is so far mixed at best and appears to be contingent upon electoral and country context. Clearly, more efforts are needed in this regard.

The comparative analysis of Cain et al. (1984, 1987) on the US and the UK indicate strong support for the existence of a personal vote in the US. What they find, for example, is that, independent of key explanatory variables such as political interest and party identification, the frequency of constituency communication exerts some effect on the likelihood of name recall (respondents remember the name of a particular candidate) and name recognition (respondents recognize the name when presented with it) and that also, all else being equal, name recall and a favorable image as a good constituency representative is found to be more important in explaining vote choices than having the same party affiliation as the voter (Cain et al. 1984: 119). These findings on the US have received consistent support (Erikson 1971; Cox and Katz 1996). An optimistic estimate by Gelman and King (1990) for the US reports an incumbency advantage of six to ten percentage points. However, recent analyses emphasize a significant decline of the electoral advantage enjoyed by US Representatives to levels not seen since the 1950s. Jacobson (2015) concedes a diminished incumbency advantage in conjunction with an increase in party loyalty, straight-ticket voting, and president-centered electoral nationalization as products of the widening and increasingly coherent partisan divisions in the American electorate.

The effects of personal vote seeking on vote choices are found to be much weaker in other plurality systems, such as the UK, but are nevertheless detectable. According to Cain et al. (1984, 1987) party identification and approval rates for the incumbent government remain a crucial determinant for the vote choices of British voters. However, even in this case, incumbent visibility and reputation are found to positively and significantly affect vote choices at the margins (Cain et al. 1984: 120). Norton and Wood (1993), in light of increasing efforts of younger cohorts of MPs to seek personal votes, hypothesize an increasing share of personal votes in the electorate. Their analysis of the relative electoral advantage of these younger cohorts measured against the mean party swing tentatively

supports their argument. However, this finding is far from conclusive and has been challenged by, for example, Gaines (1998), who finds a small incumbency advantage of about 1–2 percent but no increase across time.

Research on other plurality contexts produces similar inconclusive and undramatic findings. For the German mixed system, Ade et al. (2014) and Hainmüller and Kern (2006) find an incumbency effect for the plurality tier of about 1 to 2 percentage points. However, in an effort to disaggregate this effect, Ade et al. (2014) find consistent results only for conservative candidates; SPD incumbents only benefited from their status in case of government participation of their party. In a recent analysis of the effects of personal vote seeking in campaign contexts among German constituency candidates, Gschwend and Zittel (2015) also uncover a small effect not only for incumbents but for challengers too. They show for the 2009 German federal elections that personalized constituency campaigns increase the likelihood of name recall, particularly among non-partisan voters. Furthermore, those voters that are able to recall a particular candidate are more likely to vote for this candidate irrespective of partisanship and political knowledge. In addition, according to this analysis, personal vote seeking in campaign contexts might not only marginally sway non-partisans but also better mobilize the partisan vote.

Research on the electoral effects of personal vote seeking is scarce and pessimistic for multi-member electoral systems. Marsh (2007), on the basis of survey evidence, finds that a substantial minority of Irish voters decides on the basis of candidate factors. However, Marsh concedes that direct survey questions on motives might overestimate this effect. In contrast, Ariga et al.(2015), in their analyses of pre-1993 Japan, argue against any incumbency advantage in multi-member districts and are able to support this position empirically. One of the main theoretical points of this paper is that incumbents might disappoint voters and that this might put them electorally more at risk in multi-member districts since particularistic benefits are harder to claim under these conditions and fewer votes are needed to unseat incumbents.

Personal vote seeking potentially matters beyond its electoral effects and thus is of larger systemic relevance. Analyses of the US-American case stress the negative ramifications of personal vote seeking with regard to budgetary politics and the efficiency of policy-making. This is because benefits such as public works projects are locally concentrated while costs are shifted to the public. Moreover, benefits are viewed as political favors rather than instruments for economic management and incentives for investment (Baron 1991: 193; Steinmo 1993). Comparative research tentatively supports this observation on the American case. For example, Hallerberg and Marier (2004) show for Latin American countries that increasing incentives for personal vote seeking at the electoral level increase the likelihood of higher budget deficits. Edwards and Thamés (2007), in their study on 77 democracies between 1970 and 2000, corroborate this finding for a wider selection of cases. Bagashka (2012) argues that economic reforms are

less likely under electoral rules that facilitate personal vote seeking. Crisp et al. (2010) show that in countries with electoral systems that encourage personal votes we see more negotiated exceptions in international treaties aimed at liberalizing markets.

The available evidence on the relationship between personal vote seeking and budgetary policy-making, especially in European contexts, is far from robust and in light of this most relevant questions need further consideration. Furthermore, most of the available studies focus on the electoral level rather than on the array of actual behavioral strategies that are related to personal vote-seeking concerns. We thus need to better understand which particular strategy might lead to what kind of budgetary outcome and why. Furthermore, we need to better understand the contextual constraints and opportunities in this regard. For example, centralization of the budgetary process in the executive or strong parliamentary parties are said to be especially effective at contradicting the effects of personal vote-seeking concerns and maintaining budgetary discipline amidst candidate-centered electoral rules.

According to the literature on the issue, candidate-centered electoral systems providing incentives for personal vote-seeking behavior might also have far-reaching effects on the democratic process. From this perspective, strong parties are not entirely exogenous to electoral rules and related behavioral incentives. Personal vote-seeking incentives, rather, are said to facilitate deviations in roll call voting and thus might put responsible party government at risk (Crisp, et al. 2013; Sieberer 2013; Olivella and Tavits 2014). From this perspective, parties might, on the one hand, constrain personal vote-seeking behavior independent from electoral incentives but, on the other hand, might not be entirely immune to negative effects in the long run. However, this claim so far lacks robust empirical support. Furthermore, more complex and differentiated relationships need to be modeled and tested. Among others, this concerns the question of how personal vote seeking might affect intra-party decision-making processes in parliament. Since internal meetings and procedures of parliamentary party groups are hard or impossible to uncover, this question raises a tough challenge to future efforts in personal vote-seeking research.

The previous remarks suggest that personal vote seeking raises systemic risks and thus ought to be viewed with suspicion and should be discouraged. However, this would be a premature conclusion. Independent of its risks, some students of personal vote seeking emphasize its positive effects on the input legitimacy of political systems by, for example, facilitating direct contacts between legislators and constituents, turnout, and responsiveness towards the demands of non-organized constituents (Bawn and Thies 2003; Niven 2002; Robbins 2010). Eventually, striking some balance between small-scale and large-scale politics, between personal vote seeking and partisan politics, might be the most desirable outcome. An exclusive focus on public issues and ideological battles can cause

problems for democracy since this would exclude most immediate avenues for direct citizen complaints and for raising ‘smaller’ demands (Reed 1994). In contrast, a more pronounced emphasis on personal vote seeking potentially facilitates depolitization and ineffective government (Reed 1994). Like many things in life, the larger systemic effects of the personal vote depend on whether it is dispensed in the right dose.

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Candidate Attractiveness

Markus Klein and Ulrich Rosar

INTRODUCTION

Empirical election research discovered the physical attractiveness of candidates for political offices and mandates as a research subject only very late. The two groundbreaking studies by the Ann Arbor School (Campbell et al., 1954; Campbell et al., 1960) had already drawn attention to the fundamental importance of the political candidates themselves in deciding elections. However, these two pioneering studies of social-psychological explanatory style did not yet focus on the physical attractiveness of the candidates. This is quite astonishing, as candidate orientation is described in *The Voter Decides* as a ‘response to the personal attributes of the candidates’ (Campbell et al., 1954: 136), and physical attractiveness is indisputably one of these attributes. Moreover, a category for ‘personal attractiveness’ was provided as part of an empirical analysis of the population’s perception of presidential candidates in *The Voter Decides* (Campbell et al., 1954: 52–64). However, this was not defined in more detail, and certainly not interpreted explicitly in the sense of sexual attractiveness.

Electoral research was to remain blind to the candidates’ physical appearance over the decades that followed. Candidate attractiveness and its effects were made the subject of empirical studies only in a few isolated cases (Efran and Patterson, 1974; Martin, 1978; Sigelman et al., 1986, 1987). Not until the personalisation of politics came under discussion (Wattenberg, 1991; Kaase, 1994; Lass, 1995; Brettschneider, 2002) and the gain in significance of non-political candidate attributes that had nothing to do with the political role per se was postulated around

the turn of the century did candidate attractiveness become the subject of systematic, increasingly intensive empirical election research.

The time taken for empirical election research to finally turn its attention to candidate attractiveness is all the more surprising as social psychology has a long tradition of researching the effects of physical attractiveness (see in summary Patzer, 1985, 2006; Etcoff, 2000; Hatfield and Sprecher, 1986). The empirical studies performed in this discipline have given convincing evidence of the effects of physical attractiveness on personal success in many different areas of life (Eagly et al., 1991; Feingold, 1988, 1990, 1992; Hosoda et al., 2003; Jackson et al., 1995; Langlois et al., 2000; Mazzella and Feingold, 1994). Considering this background, it should have long since become obvious that the effects of the physical attractiveness of political candidates had to be researched in more detail.

We can only speculate on the reasons why empirical election research took such a long time to turn its attention to this subject. One contributing factor may have been that the effects of a politician's physical attractiveness on his/her election success are usually seen as undesirable. It may also be that many scientists saw this as a frivolous, dubious topic. Whatever the reason, the time taken by empirical election research to begin considering candidate attractiveness ultimately had the positive consequence that it could begin building directly on the extensive social-psychological research already available on the effects of human attractiveness. With this in mind, we will start by providing an introduction to the current standing of relevant knowledge in the field of social psychology (i.e., in the next section) and then transfer the fundamental mechanisms identified there to the area of empirical election research (i.e., in the next section). Afterwards, we will present the current standing of empirical research into the effects of candidate attractiveness, with the investigation strategy used in each case serving as the systematisation criterion (i.e., in the next section). Finally, we will work out the desiderata and the attendant perspectives for future research into the field of 'candidate attractiveness'.

CORE FINDINGS OF SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL ATTRACTIVENESS RESEARCH

Social psychology sees a person's physical attractiveness as a specific facet of his or her human capital. This hypothesis has several important implications. In particular, it is assumed that beauty is not solely or even primarily in the eye of the beholder, but that there are objectifiable criteria for human attractiveness. This is the only way to justify the theoretical and empirical treatment of physical attractiveness as an ascriptive attribute of the person investigated rather than treating subjectively perceived attractiveness as an attribute of the interacting partner. Social-psychological studies have in fact proved that when evaluating a

person's physical attractiveness there is usually a very strong consensus among those performing the evaluation (see in summary the work of Henss, 1992).

This phenomenon, known as *Attractiveness Consensus*, is explained by the fact that the criteria for evaluating attractiveness are ultimately based on evolutionary biology (Grammer, 2000; Grammer et al., 2003), as a result of which they barely vary between individuals and cultures (see Cunningham et al., 1986; Cunningham et al., 1990, 1995). The fundamental statement is that a person's physical attractiveness is largely decided by his or her 'partner value'. This 'partner value' refers in turn to the person's presumed effectiveness in bearing and bringing up offspring within a mixed-sex partnership. Women are therefore primarily evaluated according to facial and bodily characteristics that indicate youth, health and ability to bear children. In contrast, men are evaluated according to characteristics that indicate health, maturity, dominance and status.

Such an assessment of attractiveness is, of course, firstly concerned with the assessment of persons of the other sex. However, it has been shown that the attributes described are also extremely significant when evaluating the attractiveness of people of one's own sex (Henss, 1992). This can probably be explained by the phenomenon of intra-sexual selection (Darwin 1982 [1871]), i.e. the competition for sexual partners of the highest possible status whose partner value becomes a central standard for comparison among one's own sex. Moreover, new research results indicate that there is no significant difference between heterosexual and homosexual persons in terms of standards of attractiveness (Kranz and Ishai, 2006; also see in this context an earlier study by Sergios and Cody, 1985).

In view of the evolutionary and biological explanation for the existence of universal standards of attractiveness just described, it is hardly surprising that empirically there is a close correlation between evaluations of a person's physical attractiveness and of their sexual attractiveness. This correlation is so close that in Henss' view (1992: 253), there would be no sense in separating the two concepts. However, if we were to draw the conclusion that physical attractiveness is relevant only when choosing partners this would be an unforgivable oversimplification. Instead, it has been shown that attractive people possess not only considerable sex appeal; according to the premise 'What is beautiful is good' (Dion et al., 1972: 285), they are also ascribed a wide range of socially desirable character attributes (see for example, Chaiken, 1979; Dermer and Thiel, 1975; Dion et al., 1972; Eagly et al., 1991; Feingold, 1992; Henss, 1998; Miller, 1970; Unger et al., 1982). This mechanism, known as the *Attractiveness Stereotype*, causes attractive persons to be seen as, for example, more persevering, more ambitious, better performers, more hard-working, more self-confident, more intelligent and competent, more socially acceptable, more social, more honest, more reliable, more creative, more empathetic and more sympathetic.

Attractive persons also capture the attention of other people. They are noticed sooner and more often and observed more intensively, and their statements and actions are remembered more clearly (Maner et al., 2003, 2007; Mulford et al.,

1998). This phenomenon, known as *Attractiveness Attention Boost*, has been shown to exist even in babies and small children, who have been found to gaze at photos of attractive people for much longer than photos of unattractive people if both are shown to them at the same time (Samuels and Ewy, 1985; Langlois et al., 1987, 1991).

During actual interactions, attractive persons may also rely on the *Attractiveness Treatment Advantage* to ensure that they receive better treatment from others than their less attractive colleagues do. They meet with greater optimism and respect and receive more help and support (Benson et al., 1976; Bian, 1997; Dabbs and Stokes, 1975; Dion and Berscheid, 1974; Hartnett et al., 1974; Hatfield and Sprecher, 1986; Langlois et al., 2000; Marwick, 1988; McCabe, 1988; Mulford et al., 1998; Ritter et al., 1991; Stephan and Langlois, 1984; Wilson and Dovidio, 1985; Wilson and Eckel, 2006). Once again, this phenomenon has been observed even in babies and young children, who are treated much better by their social environment if they are considered to be attractive (Dion and Berscheid, 1974; Ritter et al., 1991; Stephan and Langlois, 1984).

Even performance deficits and obvious misconduct have a less detrimental effect on attractive people. The *Attractiveness Glamour Effect* (Bassili, 1981; Dion et al., 1972; Grammer, 2000: 169) indicates that attractive people can expect their misconduct to be relativised in the eyes of other people. This may be because third parties are likely to attribute the misconduct to causes for which the perpetrator is not responsible. It can also happen that the misconduct is simply downplayed.

In combination, the basic mechanisms described above usually give attractive persons a clear competitive advantage over less attractive persons. Social-psychological attractiveness research has demonstrated this *Attractiveness Competition Advantage* in many different areas of life. However, there are indicators that women do not benefit from greater attractiveness in all of them. In fact, attractive women in predominantly masculine spheres of activity and areas dominated by men are actually at a disadvantage.

This so-called *Beauty-is-Beastly Effect* owes its name to a study by Heilman and Saruwatari (1979; see also the studies by Gillen, 1981; Friedman and Zebrowitz, 1992; Heilman and Stopeck, 1985; Rennenkampff, 2004; Rosar and Klein, 2009; Schubert and Curran, 2001; Sczerny, 2003; and the critical remarks by Podratz and Dipboye, 2002). It describes a complex mechanism of interaction between physical attractiveness, gender and the rationale of the activity. This is in keeping with the finding that the greater a person's attractiveness the greater the positive character attributes ascribed to him/her and the more intensively he/she will be gender-stereotyped (Friedman and Zebrowitz, 1992) as per the Attractiveness Stereotype. The more attractive a woman is, for example, the more feminine she appears to be. However, if she works in more masculine or male-dominated sectors, such as the military, management or academic research, this will have a detrimental effect on how her competence is perceived and her performance is evaluated.

TRANSFER TO THE FIELD OF EMPIRICAL ELECTION RESEARCH

If the findings of social psychology are transferred to the sphere of politics, it initially appears that candidate attractiveness influences voters by triggering the following *direct* causal mechanism. The Attractiveness Consensus means that voters initially reach very similar conclusions concerning the attractiveness of candidates standing for election. The Attractiveness Attention Boost means that voters pay attention sooner, more often and more intensively to attractive candidates, besides remembering them more clearly. As a result, these candidates and the parties they represent may simply be more visible to voters developing a candidate preference. This could be the first significant advantage. Apart from this, the Attractiveness Stereotype triggers the belief that attractive candidates are more committed and effective in political terms. This could be the second significant advantage. As a result of the Attractiveness Treatment Advantage, voters who have not made a firm decision by the day of the election may tend to vote for attractive candidates and/or their parties once they are in the polling booth. This could be the third significant advantage. It may not even necessarily be of consequence that an attractive candidate has different views on political issues to the voter himself/herself: after all, this conflict may be dissolved by the Attractiveness Glamour Effect, which causes the voter to play down the importance of the differences or find excuses for them, such as the candidate being obliged to follow his/her party's line. This could be the fourth significant advantage. As a result, the likelihood increases that attractive candidates and their parties will gain more votes on the day of the election than their less attractive competitors (Attractiveness Competition Advantage). However, this statement must be qualified by pointing out that the political arena is still dominated by men even today, which means that the existence of a Beauty-is-Beastly Effect cannot be ruled out *a priori*. Such an effect would manifest inasmuch as male candidates and their parties would benefit more significantly from great physical attractiveness than would female candidates and their parties. In extreme cases, great attractiveness in female candidates could actually worsen their chances of election victory.

Nevertheless, the *direct* effects of candidate attractiveness just described could vary significantly in their impact depending on the nature of the given election. It seems likely, for example, that the effects of the candidate's physical attractiveness are particularly strong when the political candidates are elected directly. In the case of Anglo-American style majority elections, for example, the candidate attractiveness effect is likely to be particularly strong. However, it is also said that the influence of candidate attractiveness varies systematically with the prominence of the candidates standing for election. Empirical findings from other areas of life indicate that a person's physical attractiveness is the factor primarily responsible for the first impression that other people gain of him/her. This means

that the situation is biased right from the start, but, at the same time, the person's character and actions play an increasingly significant role in the way he/she is evaluated as the social relationship develops (see for example Brunswik, 1956). The physical attractiveness of nationally known leading politicians (e.g. those running for the office of US president) is therefore likely to exert less influence on the way they are evaluated, as the public will have been familiar with them for years. Conversely, physical attractiveness could potentially be more than averagely relevant when evaluating politicians with whom voters are less familiar. These could be candidates for parliamentary mandates in local constituencies or unknown candidates who are standing for election for the first time.

However, attractiveness effects have by all means also been observed in parliamentary systems with proportional representation, not least because the front-runners of the different political parties are increasingly developing into functional equivalents of candidates for presidency in presidential systems. They are candidates for the highest office of the political executive and, as such, are the focus of media reporting and their parties' campaigns (Mughan, 2000). The way in which they personally are evaluated – and consequently also the effect of their physical attractiveness – is therefore likely to have a powerful influence on their respective party's election success.

However, the attractiveness of candidates on subordinate positions of the parties' electoral list may also affect voter behaviour. This always applies if these candidates are playing a prominent role in the electoral campaign – for example as current members of government or members of the shadow cabinet – and the voters are more likely to be able to associate them with their respective parties. Here, too, it can be assumed that the way in which these candidates are evaluated – also on the basis of their attractiveness – will affect the electoral success of their respective parties. In the case of flexible lists, it seems likely that voters are also influenced by the attractiveness of the candidates when giving their preferential votes.

However, the influence of candidate attractiveness on voter behaviour is not inevitable, and need not necessarily function by means of the direct mechanisms described above. Alternative or supplementary mediatory or presentational mechanisms may also be at work. Maurer and Schoen (2010), for example, have shown that journalists are even more susceptible to the effects of a candidate's physical appearance than voters. Although these mechanisms are not essentially different in the way they function, the result is more frequent and more positive reporting on attractive candidates and their respective parties in the media. In such cases, the voters react not to the candidate's physical attractive *per se* but rather to the more frequent and positive portrayal of attractive candidates in the media they consume. Here, too, the result is greater attention, greater remembrance, a more positive evaluation and a tendency on the part of the electorate to treat the more attractive candidates and their parties better. However, voters are in these cases only indirectly influenced by the candidate's attractiveness insofar

as they are reacting to media reporting, which is pre-selected and distorted to some degree.

If it is plausible to assume that journalistic reporting can be influenced by the physical attractiveness of the candidates standing for election, it is equally logical to assume that the actual election campaign can be influenced by the candidates' physical attractiveness. Provided all other influential factors remain constant, it initially appears that more attractive candidates received disproportionately high levels of positive feedback and were better treated by their fellow human beings in a wide variety of social contexts long before they turned to politics. As a result, they may seem more self-confident, more active, more aggressive and more convincing because – in the manner of a self-fulfilling prophecy – they are simply more convinced of their superiority and the correctness of their views than their less attractive competitors. In addition, it is highly probable that they can generate more support for their electoral campaigns both inside and outside their parties and give a better performance because they are better equipped with human and material resources. This, in turn, places them more directly in the voters' focus and causes them to be evaluated more positively.

STATE-OF-THE-ART EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

As already described, the effect of physical attractiveness of politicians is a relatively new field of research. However, the studies performed to date are unanimous in their findings that the external appearance of candidates influences their success in elections. Widely varying research strategies were chosen for these studies. The current standing of this research is described below according to the analytical strategies used in each case. This makes matters more transparent and facilitates systematic discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

Analyses based on survey data

The research strategy most commonly used in empirical election research is indisputably the analysis of representative population surveys. In these surveys, participants are asked how they voted in the election under investigation (post-election study) or how they intend to vote (pre-election study). By performing statistical analyses of this data, the voting decision can then be traced back to various theoretically relevant influential variables that also have to be collected during the course of the survey. Using such an analytical strategy, the influence of candidate attractiveness can be investigated by simply asking survey respondents to evaluate the attractiveness of the candidates in question. The effects of these attractiveness ratings on the voting decision can then be estimated using statistical methods. One such method has been used in the past, for example with reference to the candidates for chancellorship at the German parliamentary

elections in 1998 and 2002 (Klein and Ohr, 2000; Rosar and Ohr, 2005; also see Klein and Ohr, 2001, 2002). In these instances, the persons surveyed were asked whether they agreed with the statement 'He is an attractive man' with reference to candidates Helmut Kohl, Gerhard Schröder and Edmund Stoiber. Empirically, the measure of agreement to these statements showed significant effects on the voting decision, even though a large number of other influential factors was controlled statistically at the same time, including party identification.

The advantage of this procedure is that the physical attractiveness of the candidates can be relatively easily integrated into the regularly conducted representative election studies without having to make a major effort to collect data. Moreover, this method dispenses with the necessity of objectively quantifying the candidates' attractiveness in some way. Instead, the subjective ratings of the candidates' attractiveness given by those surveyed flow into the analysis. However, this last-mentioned aspect also has its disadvantages. Empirical data analyses regularly show that a political candidate's attractiveness increases with the respondent's affinity to his or her party. This is a problem since social-psychological attractiveness research has shown that the attractiveness of a person can be ascertained relatively objectively. The evaluation should therefore not be contaminated by his/her party affiliation. However, during the procedure described the participants are clearly unable to differentiate between the person and the politician. Moreover, this procedure usually involves the evaluation of many other candidate attributes (integrity, leadership skills, competence etc.) as well as physical attractiveness, as a result of which they are influenced mutually. This usually leads to a problem with high multicollinearity in the regression analyses.

Furthermore, this analytical strategy can be used meaningfully only if it can be assumed that the persons surveyed are actually familiar with the candidates and their physical appearance, as no photographs are usually shown (and frequently cannot be shown as the surveys are often conducted by phone). However, as mentioned above, if the candidate has been known to the respondents for a long time the likelihood that the respondents' evaluations will be affected by the candidate's physical attractiveness will tend to decline, as the respondents will already have extensive knowledge of the candidate's political viewpoints, political competence and political history. Finally, the analysis of survey data is limited to those candidates who actually stand for election. If, for example, we were interested in the effect of attractiveness in female candidates for the office of US president this analytical strategy could not be used until know, as no woman had ever run for this office before the presidential elections of 2016.

Analyses based on experimental studies

At first glance, experimental studies have the general advantage that presumed causal relationships can be investigated much more effectively and reliably than

via opinion polls. With regard to our study of candidate attractiveness, another specific advantage is that experimental studies can also focus on counterfactual candidate constellations. Test persons can, for example, be shown hypothetical candidates about whom they knew nothing beforehand and whose level of attractiveness can be varied systematically. If the Beauty-is-Beastly Effect is being studied, the sex of the candidate can also be systematically varied. In research terms, the technical problem associated with these experimental studies is that the attractiveness of political candidates has to be evaluated objectively. If the test persons are to be confronted with candidates of varying degrees of attractiveness, it must be established in advance which candidates would be seen as attractive and which would not. An evaluation of the candidate's attractiveness by the subjects is usually not requested in the context of experimental investigations and would not actually solve the problem either.

The procedure most commonly used in social-psychological research for determining an individual's physical attractiveness is the *Truth of Consensus Method* (Patzer, 1985: 17). This is based on the Attractiveness Consensus: that is, the premise that beauty is an objective attribute and can therefore be quantified. As a rule, the actual process consists of a group of so-called raters evaluating the attractiveness of a person on the basis of a photograph. The photograph is usually a portrait, as the face is 'that part of the body which is far and away most differentiated and reflects the individuality of a person most strongly' (Henss, 1992: 97). It has indeed been shown that there is hardly any change in the rating accorded to an individual if a full-length photo is shown rather than a portrait. Moreover, the rating given to an attractive face correlates very closely with the rating given to the whole person (see for example, Brunswik, 1956; Grammer et al., 2002; Snyder et al., 1985). Even if the evaluation is based on video sequences or observation in natural surroundings, there is no fundamental change in the rating given (Brown et al., 1999).

Attractiveness ratings are usually made on a scale consisting of several levels. According to the findings of Goldstein and Papageorge (1980), a photograph has to be observed for a period of only 150 milliseconds for the observer to be able to assess the attractiveness of the person shown. Olson and Marshuetz (2005) even showed that an observation period of 13 milliseconds is enough to enable raters to give a reasonably reliable assessment of the person's attractiveness. Afterwards, a mean value is calculated from the individual ratings. This mean value – sometimes also described as the group standard – is interpreted as the objective rating (adjusted by differences in personal taste between the raters) that reflects the 'true' attractiveness of the person rated. If enough people are rated for their attractiveness, the conformity between the scores given by the various raters can be studied empirically by means of a reliability analysis. This frequently reveals a very high degree of consensus (see for example, Klein and Rosar, 2005; Rosar, 2009; Rosar and Klein, 2009; Rosar et al., 2008; also see Henss, 1992, 1998; Patzer, 1985, 2006, 2007).

The Attractiveness Consensus is not only the most common procedure for evaluating attractiveness; the high intersubjective concurrence when evaluating attractiveness also means that a valid, reliable attractiveness rating can be obtained from a very small group of raters (see Grammer et al., 2003; Henss, 1987, 1992; Iliffe, 1960). The relevant literature generally stipulates that evaluations of attractiveness need to be based on the ratings given by only two dozen persons. Even with this small number, the average attractiveness rating is so stable that 10,000 ratings would be unlikely to yield a different result (Henss, 1992: 308). However, studies have also been performed in which evaluations of attractiveness are based solely on the scores given by half a dozen or even fewer raters (see Biddle and Hamermesh, 1998; Davis et al. 2000; Hamermesh and Parker, 2005; Stelzer et al., 1987; Zakahi et al., 1994).

One typical example of an experimental study of candidate attractiveness was performed by Budesheim and DePaola (1994). One of the questions it addresses is how the physical attractiveness of hypothetical candidates for the US Senate affects their ratings and chances of election (see also Sigelman et al., 1986, 1987; Klein and Rosar, 2007 for other examples of this type of study). During this study, 120 psychology students were randomly assigned to five test groups. The test persons in all five groups were given experimentally varied information about the political views of two hypothetical candidates for Senate. Two of the five groups were also shown portrait photographs of the two candidates, one showing an attractive man and the other showing an unattractive one. When evaluating the study, it was found that the candidate associated with the photograph of an attractive man was rated significantly higher than the candidate who was shown to be unattractive. The former was also described significantly more often as the type of person the test persons would like to have represent them in Senate.

For all the advantages of these experimental studies, they also have one serious disadvantage: as a rule, they present hypothetical candidates who were not known to the test persons beforehand. The same applies to the Budesheim and DePaola study (1994) just discussed. However, if a test person is forced to form an opinion of an unknown candidate, he has hardly any basis for doing so other than the information conveyed by the photo. It is therefore hardly surprising that experimental studies usually reveal that candidate attractiveness has a powerful effect on voter behaviour. However, the external validity of these findings – that is, how far they can be applied to actual voter behaviour – remains open to discussion.

Analyses based on actual election results

Empirical analyses based on actual election results have no issues with the external validity of their findings. The procedure generally used with this research strategy is to statistically relate the official final result of an election to the attractiveness of the candidates who stood for election. In doing so, attempts are made

to explain the percentage of votes obtained by a candidate or his/her party in terms of candidate attractiveness. In order to isolate this effect with absolute certainty, as many other theoretically relevant factors with a potential influence on the election result as possible must be monitored at the same time. The data is therefore usually analysed using multivariate models. A sufficiently large number of cases is required in order to assess these models – that is, the number of candidates included in the analysis must clearly exceed the number of explanatory variables considered in the model. A single national presidential or parliamentary election with a handful of candidates relevant to the study does not meet these requirements.

However, numerous examples with sufficient case figures exist: for example, in such cases as when in a majority vote system with a large number of constituencies the chances of the constituency candidates are to be studied empirically (Klein and Rosar, 2005; Rosar et al., 2008; Rosar and Klein, 2010; Rosar and Klein, 2015), or when several elections are held simultaneously on a lower level of a federal system and the number of candidates is consequently multiplied by the number of units on this subordinate level (Rosar et al., 2008, 2012). Finally, several elections in various countries or at various times could be combined to increase the number of cases available for statistical analysis (Klein and Rosar, 2014; Rosar, 2009).

When analysing actual election results we are once again dependent on ‘objective’ assessments of candidate attractiveness. As in the experimental studies, this is established using the ‘truth-of-consensus method’. However, as real politicians have to be evaluated, it can occur that the raters recognise the person to be rated as a politician and may even have biographical and/or political information about him/her. This information is not unlikely to have an influence on the attractiveness rating, in turn distorting the results. One way of eliminating this difficulty would be to ask the raters whether they recognise the person rated and then exclude the distorted evaluations from the analysis. Raters from outside the constituency could also be deliberately chosen to minimise these influences (Rosar et al., 2008).

In research terms, a more practical obstacle is that, unlike experimental studies with hypothetical candidates, the researcher is usually unable to show the raters photographs of the real candidates that he has made himself. Instead, photographs of a comparable appearance and quality have to be chosen from external sources. Finding photographs of this type for all candidates can be difficult, especially if past elections are being analysed, elections in several countries are being analysed simultaneously, or candidates for local rather than national elections are being evaluated. If the researcher wishes to evaluate other candidate attributes, such as education, political experience, age, marital status and others, along with physical attractiveness, this data must also be researched and integrated into the data set to be analysed. This, too, becomes more complicated if the election took place a long time ago and if foreign and/or local elections are being studied.

An initial, very simple analysis based on actual election results appeared in 1974 with the title ‘Voters Vote Beautiful’ (Efran and Patterson, 1974). This study is also the first empirical analysis of the effects of physical attractiveness of politicians known to exist. In this treatise, the authors showed that at the Canadian parliamentary elections of 1972 the percentages of votes given to each of the 79 candidates in the 21 wards in the Toronto region was clearly influenced by their physical attractiveness: on average, attractive candidates gained 21 percentage points more of the votes than unattractive candidates (Efran and Patterson, 1974: 354). The attractiveness of the candidates was evaluated by 70 high school students, who were shown the candidates’ portrait photos by slide projector during group meetings. An attractiveness score was subsequently calculated from the ratings as per the truth-of-consensus method. Candidates whose attractiveness score was at least a standard deviation above the mean value of the attractiveness scores of all candidates were described as ‘attractive’. If their attractiveness score was at least a standard deviation below this mean value, they were described as ‘unattractive’.

One problem with Efran and Patterson’s work is that the candidates from the major parties were all more attractive than the candidates from the minor parties.

Since many of the candidates in the unattractive group were members of minor parties, it is difficult to say whether this group of candidates lost votes because of their party affiliation, or their appearance, or because of both. Unfortunately, it was not possible to analyse meaningfully the effect of appearance with respect to the major party candidates alone because the variability of both appearance and obtained vote is greatly reduced when candidates are excluded on the basis of party affiliation (Efran and Patterson, 1974: 354).

The pioneering study by Efran and Patterson was unable to control other factors that may have been relevant to the election outcome, an issue that places the validity of its findings in grave doubt.

This serious deficit may explain why, despite its innovative questioning and design, the study did not initially trigger any further research into the effects of candidate attractiveness. Not until the 2000s did a whole series of relevant empirical studies appear that analysed actual election results covering a wide selection of elections, countries and electoral systems. Next, a typical procedure will be discussed using a current study as an example before giving a systematic overview of existing studies.

In a more recent treatise, Rosar and Klein (2015) analysed the influence that the physical attractiveness of the direct candidates had on the percentage of votes they received in the German parliamentary elections of 2005, 2009 and 2013. All the direct candidates of the parties represented in the German Bundestag were taken into consideration – that is, all the candidates from the 299 constituencies. This means that nearly 1,500 candidates were analysed for each of the three elections. The physical attractiveness of these candidates was evaluated using the truth-of-consensus method. For each of the three elections,

24 students paid for this task were shown the portraits of all the candidates in random order and asked to rate the attractiveness of each of them as part of an online survey. Once again, the consensus reached by the raters turned out to be very high.

When analyzing the data, the specific influential factors considered along with the candidate's physical attractiveness were his/her sex, age, any immigration background, any aristocratic title, any academic title, any membership of the Bundestag existing at the time of the election, any celebrity status and his/her party affiliation. The party affiliation absorbed the discrepancies in support given to the respective party by the electorate – that is, all party-specific factors influencing the electoral outcome in the constituency candidates' favour. Moreover, the model took account of the total number of candidates who stood for election in each ward. As this was a constituency attribute rather than a personal one, the multivariate models had to be evaluated as linear multi-level models in order to do justice to the hierarchical structure of the data.

As expected, the results for all three parliamentary elections showed that the attractiveness of the constituency candidates affected their share of the personal votes. On average, the greater the attractiveness of a local candidate the higher the percentage of votes they gained. The strength of the influence exerted by physical attractiveness fluctuated – with no recognisable pattern – from parliamentary election to parliamentary election, but was invariably substantial. If we consider the empirical range of the candidates' attractiveness ratings, the parliamentary election for 2005, for example, revealed a theoretical maximum attractiveness effect of an average 4.5 percentage points on the share of personal votes. This theoretical maximum effect for the parliamentary elections of 2009 and 2013 was calculated to be 3.2 and 3.9 percentage points respectively.

Along with the study just described, there is a whole series of further studies based on actual election results that have shown that the success of candidates and parties is significantly and substantially connected with the candidates' external appearance. These include studies not only of Germany, Finland, France, Ireland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (Banducci et al., 2008; Berggren et al., 2010; Buckley et al., 2007; Klein and Rosar, 2005; Lutz, 2009; Rosar, 2009; Rosar and Klein, 2010, 2013; Rosar et al., 2008) but also of Australia and Canada (Efran and Patterson, 1974; King and Leigh, 2007; Leigh and Susilo, 2009). The level of the political system at which the influence of candidate attractiveness was studied also varies. Along with national parliamentary elections (Berggren et al., 2010; Efran and Patterson, 1974; King and Leigh, 2007; Klein and Rosar, 2005; Lutz, 2009; Rosar and Klein, 2010) there are also studies of local (Banducci et al., 2008; Berggren et al., 2010; Buckley et al., 2007; Leigh and Susilo, 2009; Rosar et al., 2012), regional (Rosar, 2009; Rosar and Klein, 2013; Rosar et al., 2008) and supranational elections (Klein and Rosar, 2014). The respective election system varies accordingly, ranging from simple majority elections via the single transferable vote and panachage to pure proportional representation. If we

compare the empirical findings of these different studies, the relevance of candidate attractiveness to voter decisions seems astonishingly consistent in the face of varying institutional and political-cultural contexts. The empirical findings also give the impression that it makes hardly any difference whether the candidates analysed are constituency candidates, list candidates or front-runners (see for example, Banducci et al., 2008; Berggren et al., 2010; Efran and Patterson, 1974; King and Leigh, 2007; Klein and Rosar, 2005; Rosar, 2009; Rosar and Klein, 2010, 2013; Rosar et al., 2008, 2012).

DESIDERATA

The work conducted in the field of empirical election research to date has impressively shown that, irrespective of the country, electoral system or political level studied, candidate attractiveness influenced the electoral success of the candidates studied and their parties. In other words, the candidates' personal appearance invariably played a role when counting the votes at the end of an election day. When empirical election research turned its attention to investigating the effects of candidate attractiveness, it finally became possible to close a substantial and significant research gap.

As described, various techniques were used to research the effectiveness of physical attractiveness. In recent years, analyses based on actual election results have become increasingly dominant. These analyses have significant advantages in terms of external validity. However, this analytical strategy also has its disadvantages. As the attractiveness of the candidates is usually directly related to the official election results, the causal mechanisms that trigger the attractiveness effect are left completely unconsidered, not least because the microlevel of the individual voter is completely ignored. To date, little research has been conducted into the question of how far the various theoretical causal mechanisms asserted to be the microfoundation of the macrofindings are actually empirically demonstrable.

To the best of our knowledge, there is only one study of *direct* causal mechanisms outside experimental settings (Rosar and Klein, 2015). In this work, the German parliamentary elections of 2005 are used as an example to establish whether the prominence and evaluation of constituency candidates are systematically associated with their physical attractiveness. For this, Rosar and Klein conducted a multi-level analysis linking the data on the prominence and evaluation of the constituency candidates gained in a representative population survey with the attractiveness scores obtained for them using the truth-of-consensus method. Statistically and substantially significant effects were shown for both prominence and popularity; these met the theoretical expectations.

However, the two *indirect* influential paths discussed have also been inadequately researched to date. With regard to media reporting, there is at present

only one study by Maurer and Schoen (2010), which also used the German parliamentary elections of 2005 as an example. Investigations were performed in five selected constituencies to establish whether the local press reported more positively on attractive candidates than on unattractive ones. The candidates' attractiveness scores were correlated with the results of a quantitative content analysis of the reports in these newspapers during the six weeks prior to the election. It turned out that local journalists report more frequently on attractive candidates than on unattractive ones. Moreover, they depict the attractive candidates much more positively than their unattractive counterparts. Physical attractiveness seems to be more explanatory than the other influential factors investigated.

The status of research on the mechanisms that trigger the candidate attractiveness effect is therefore remarkably small, all the more so as no analysis of the question of whether attractive electoral candidates perform better in electoral campaigns has yet been published. As the positive effect of physical attractiveness in politicians has now been demonstrated in a large number of studies, the relevant empirical research should in future focus more strongly on examining the causal mechanisms that induce this effect.

In our view, more research is also needed into the Beauty-is-Beastly Effect. In view of the fact that this has been relatively unambiguously demonstrated among business managers, it is surprising that the findings for political leaders are still comparatively unclear. In the study already mentioned, Maurer and Schoen (2010) demonstrated that reports on attractive female constituency candidates appeared more frequently than reports on attractive male constituency candidates, but that the tenor of these reports was rather more negative. With regard to the evaluations, this largely conforms with the implications of the Beauty-is-Beastly Effect. However, it remains unclear whether the detrimental effect of the more negative evaluation of attractive women cancels out the positive effect of the more extensive reporting. If the Beauty-is-Beastly Effect is studied by analyses focusing on the candidates' election success, no significant Beauty-is-Beastly Effect is usually found. More empirical research is necessary in this respect, as are further theoretical considerations of peculiarities in the political arena.

Moreover, little research has yet been conducted into a number of questions raised by Efran and Patterson in their pioneering study (1974: 355f): might physical attractiveness even influence the choice of political party for which people become active? In other words, do parties have political personnel with varying degrees of attractiveness at their disposal? Does the lesser degree of social and economic success enjoyed by unattractive people cause them to vote for parties that are fundamentally in favour of change? How important is the attractiveness of politicians for the party's internal process of candidate selection? How is it weighted compared with political competence and experience? Is there any difference in the role played by attractiveness in the outcome of the party's internal candidate selection procedure in established and non-established parties, or in

major and minor ones? And finally, how does candidate attractiveness affect election turnout?

Finally, the general question must naturally be asked as to how far the empirical finding that the chances of success of political candidates and their parties are demonstrably connected with candidate attractiveness is normatively problematic. In our view, this is only the case if greater physical attractiveness does not go hand in hand with stronger performance or greater competence in dealing with the tasks associated with the political office or mandate for which the candidate is standing. It cannot be excluded *a priori* that attractive people are indeed more productive and efficient, as their attractiveness may have gained them preferential treatment in many respects throughout their lives with a correspondingly positive effect on the development of their character and competence. However, to the best of our knowledge there are no empirical studies that estimate the effect of a politician's physical attractiveness while simultaneously controlling for his (potential) performance in office. Future research efforts should also concentrate on this.

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Campaign Effects

Richard Johnston

INTRODUCTION

Electoral campaigns are critical for signals about both accountability and policy. But the research record yields very partial views of how – or whether – campaigns actually matter. Broadly, two schools can be identified. On one side, elections are driven by predictable ‘fundamental’ forces that campaigns merely activate. On the other side, campaigns are critical to the result and produce history in their own right. The fundamentalist perspective is essentially benign: more intense campaigns bring out more voters; negative claims are more truthful than positive ones; elections without campaigns would be far more random events than are elections with them. The rival view holds that campaigns are too long and too expensive and are sites for character assassination, if not outright manipulation. These fears are amplified by technological developments, including the rise of social media and ‘big data’. Can these competing claims both be true? If so, what is their relative weight, and how are those weights contingent on institutional and party-system context?

This chapter begins by reviewing ‘macro’ evidence about the course of aggregate vote intentions, with a side look at ‘meso’ evidence about electoral coalitions. This discussion mainly elaborates on the ‘fundamentalist’ model. Then follows a discussion of mechanisms by which campaigns do their work. Although this is relevant to fundamentals, it also opens the door to manipulation, through priming and framing and even through outright persuasion; the discussion reveals that enlightenment and predictability are too often conflated. Subsequently an

account is given of external sources of campaign impact: events, news and advertising. The chapter concludes with moves in opposite directions. One is toward the ‘micro’ level and involves recent advances in understanding the cognitive foundations of political choice. The other is back toward the ‘macro’ level and asks how electoral and other institutional rules and practices might shape the divergent findings. This is an attempt to lift the analysis beyond the boundaries of the US, where the bulk of the research originates. As required, methodological controversies with substantive implications are also considered. The chapter highlights evidentiary gaps, especially in relation to institutional contexts, and is as much a programme for future research as an interpretive inventory of work to date.

Throughout, the focus is on the course of vote intentions. Mobilization and turnout are considered only in relation to the vote balance. Normative considerations are entertained but, again, always in relation to the vote. Whether trends in campaigning have undermined participation or trust in democratic institutions is not the issue here.

ACTIVATION OF ‘FUNDAMENTAL’ CONSIDERATIONS

Revival of interest in campaigns dates from the mid-1980s. Although the early electoral studies by the ‘Columbia School’ (Lazarsfeld et al. 1968; Berelson et al. 1954) were designed to capture campaign dynamics, they came to be seen as evidence for their absence. Movement occurred, to be sure, but it seemed predetermined even as impact from the broadcast media was blunted. The studies were prime exhibits for what came to be called the ‘minimal effects’ model, still the dominant view in the early 1990s (Finkel 1993). Some of the lack of interest in campaigns probably stemmed from the lack of means to study them. The 1980s heralded the arrival of the means, with advances in survey and experimental methods. Widespread coverage of commercial polls conducted by telephone both shamed and provoked the research community. One response was to minimize the significance of polls by pointing to another recent development, prediction models based on quantities publicly available well in advance of the *de facto* start of a US general election campaign.

The other response was to concede the reality of campaign dynamics but ask how they could be reconciled with prediction models. The charter statement for this approach is Gelman and King (1993), who argue that movement in polls reflects real, short-run political forces. Over the course of the campaign, movements are mutually cancelling, ultimately clearing the field for ‘fundamental’ factors such as party identification, ideological position and group membership. The other fundamental is a key element in the now-ascendent prediction models covered extensively in this Volume: the economy.

In the years since, findings have emerged that are mainly consistent with the initial insight. At the highest level of aggregation the frontrunner’s margin usually narrows as election day approaches (Campbell 2008; Erikson and Wlezien

2012). The most prominent exception is the 2008 US presidential campaign. Shifts toward the values predicted by forecasting models are greater than shifts in the other direction (Holbrook 1996). The amplitude of swings diminishes over the campaign (Erikson and Wlezien 2012). Vote intentions tend to converge on forecasts (Holbrook 1996; Sides and Vavreck 2013). Evidence at a ‘meso’ level tends in the same direction. Impact from demographic factors and from issue positions commonly associated with the party system increases (Gelman and King 1993; Andersen et al. 2005; Arceneaux 2006), as does the weight of economic factors (Bartels 2006a).

Inside this conceptual landscape lurk two ambiguities. First, activation seems to have two meanings. One is as just described, that campaigns yield increases in the absolute values of coefficients on fundamentals. The other was mentioned in passing in Gelman and King (1993) and rendered more explicit in Kaplan et al. (2012). Here the pattern is ‘mean reversion’, the convergence of coefficients in the current campaign on the pattern prevailing in the long run. Often, this expectation coincides with the first: that is, with increases in coefficients’ absolute values. But if some factor carries unsustainably great weight in the early going, its value should diminish. No direct test of the possibility seems to exist in the published literature, but Kaplan et al. (2012) present an indirect test: a prediction model with coefficients derived from earlier elections becomes more powerful as the campaign advances. There is, in short, a subtle and under-explored tension among notions of campaign equilibration.

Second, the very definition of ‘fundamental’ is contested. For most scholars, the idea is simple: a fundamental is a factor that is inherently fixed for the duration of the campaign. Demographics aside, this is never entirely true in survey data and care needs to be taken to minimize flex in indicators for marker variables such as party identification (Johnston et al. 2004, Green and Baltes, this *Handbook*, Volume 1). But the point stands, and even extends to the macroeconomy. Compared with economic shifts between elections, those within campaigns are typically small.¹

An alternative view of fundamentals is proposed by Erikson and Wlezien (2012, 50): ‘fundamentals move as a random walk, whereas short-term campaign forces create a stationary series of deviations from the moving fundamentals’. To clarify what they mean and as a way of organizing thinking about elements in campaign dynamics, consider their equation 3.8 (Erikson and Wlezien 2012, 50):

$$V_t = V_{t-1}^* + \beta(V_{t-1} - V_{t-1}^*) + e_t + u_t,$$

where:

V_t^* is a moving equilibrium, a random walk;

$\beta(V_{t-1} - V_{t-1}^*)$ is a short-term stationary series around the moving equilibrium;

$\beta < 1$, such that short-term shocks are damped over subsequent iterations;²

e_t is the disturbance for short-term shocks, which decay; and

u_t is the disturbance for the moving equilibrium, which persists.

The Erikson–Wlezien focus is on process, in contrast to the other definition, which focuses on the fixity of the fundamental variable. In their setup a ‘fundamental’ is defined simply by being modelled as a random walk: at one point there may be a local equilibrium, V_t^* , a pattern that persists. Vote intentions may be moved off this position by a shock: for example, a burst of favourable media coverage. But if the media move on to another story memories will fade and intentions will revert to V_t^* at a rate governed by β . The closer β is to 1 the slower the reversion, and vice versa. A powerful new argument or a dawning realization may displace V_t^* , and after such a shock the new position will also be resistant. In itself, a random walk can pull a result anywhere: away from the value predicated on stable, pre-campaign factors; toward a wider margin, rather than a lesser one; and so on. But, Erikson and Wlezien argue, the accumulation of shocks also intensifies differences among persons, emptying out the persuadable middle.³ This reduces aggregate volatility even as it makes defection from the front runner to the trailer greater than defection in the other direction (Erikson and Wlezien 2012, 53ff). Activation of partisanship is a separate effect that also decreases the impact of external shocks (Erikson and Wlezien 2012, 55ff).⁴

The key, however, is that the moving equilibrium is itself the product of campaign induction. By themselves, fundamentals as Erikson and Wlezien see them do not guarantee predictable outcomes. Their model accounts for key dynamic features, notably diminishing amplitudes of swing and narrowing of margins, but not for the ultimate landing place. The economy is important in their argument, to be sure. Although Erikson and Wlezien allow the economy to update continuously, they also show that the economy is a better early predictor than polls are. As polls get closer to election day they increasingly absorb the economy’s enduring predictive power. So far as this is true, Erikson and Wlezien seem just to be spinning an elegant variation on the main story. But they also permit less predictable factors to disturb the random walk, with the implication that the result may be pulled away from the predicted one.

The general view is that such displacement is rare. Moreover, far from frustrating predictions based on fundamentals, a competitive campaign is a necessary condition for their very realization. The economy is a case in point. In good times the economy card will be played by the incumbent and in bad times by the challenger. An exception that proves this is rule is the 2000 US presidential election, when Al Gore turned counterfactual into reality by failing to prime the economy (Johnston et al. 2004; Bartels 2006a).⁵ From the US 2000 experience Vavreck (2009) developed rules for optimal candidate strategies. Postwar elections revealed just enough optimization failure to substantiate her argument, but not enough to disturb its general application.⁶ Empirically, the economy is regularly evoked and, when it is, it is a trump.

From a normative perspective, the story so far is mostly good news. Effort expended in campaigns is not wasted, and its main effect is to activate considerations that are relevant to policy. Even if the outcome does not conform to

the choice the electorate would make were it fully informed, an election without a campaign would depart from this ideal even more. Through all the noise and confusion, campaigns are informative (Franklin 1991; Bartels 1993; Alvarez 1997) through debates (Holbrook 1999), news (Johnston et al. 1992 or advertising (Johnston et al. 2004) – negative advertising in particular (Geer 2006). Poignantly, little of this is true in sub-presidential campaigns, where information is at a premium (Elms and Sniderman 2006; Jacobson 2013).

INSIDE VOTERS' HEADS

Not all the evidence on the record is consistent – not on first reading at least – with this optimistic perspective. It may be no accident that much of the rival evidence comes from a wave of election studies specifically designed to capture campaign dynamics. Some is negative evidence on the main claim. For instance, in a study of ten campaigns in four countries Matthews and Johnston (2010) found that the impact from economic perceptions increased only once. Their one US case, with data from the National Annenberg Election Survey, is 2000, the year Al Gore failed to pull the economic trigger. But, contrary to popular wisdom, 1992 is another such year (Bartels 2006a, Table 2), and so is 2004 (Claassen 2011, Table 1). Of seven US presidential campaigns studied by Bartels and Claassen, impact from the economic perceptions did not increase in three.

On the positive side is evidence of patterns that few observers would consider to be predictable or for amplification of factors that hardly seem fundamental. One pattern is of shifts in the relationship between issue positions and the vote. Johnston et al. (1992) argue that a major shift in issue focus took place at a critical moment in the 1988 Canadian election, a shift that compromised the prospects of the incumbent Conservatives. In particular, the Canada–US Free Trade Agreement (FTA), precursor to NAFTA, became the campaign's sole issue focus. The Conservatives fought back and ultimately carried the day, but there was no sense that its recovery was automatic – it was not part of a self-correcting stationary dynamic in Erikson and Wlezien's (2012) sense. Similar stories were told for New Zealand (Johnston 1998) and the US (Johnston et al. 2004; Bartels 2006a; Kenski et al. 2010). Some of these episodes also involved changes in opinion or perception with direct bearing on vote intention. The issues in question seem important, and these are not elections decided on mere ephemera. Although the most systematic analysis (Bartels 2006a) finds the effects in question to be modest, outcomes do not seem merely predictable.

Most of this evidence is for ‘priming’, a notion that entered the political science lexicon in the 1980s (Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Krosnick and Kinder 1990) and that descends from an older notion in the mass communication literature of ‘agenda setting’ (McCombs and Shaw 1972). In turn, it is closely related to ‘framing’, about which more below. Each notion is distinct from ‘learning’, which, as

the previous section indicates, is something that campaigns also enable. It is also distinct from ‘persuasion’, which learning may facilitate, and which is the other major pattern in these examples.

The claims for priming take us to Simon (2002), who argues that it makes sense for candidates to talk past each other, as each tries to activate a dimension on which his or her position commands majority support. Simon builds on earlier work on ‘heresthetics’ (Riker 1986) and issue ‘ownership’ (Petrocik 1996), where ownership also includes a reputation for competence in dealing with the issue (see also van der Brug, this Volume, on this). Simon combines a game theoretic basis for prediction, experiments that follow directly from theory and that also map onto the example of a California gubernatorial campaign and a cross-sectional analysis of thematic content and impact in Senatorial campaigns. Simon’s picture is one of enlightenment, in the sense that candidates’ and voters’ positions are basically fixed and that the campaign clarifies the links among the actors.⁷ The model articulates a mechanism underlying the original claim in Gelman and King (1993); the latter just see the procession of non-competing messages as ultimately cancelling each other.

Divergence is especially likely where an issue is clearly owned by one side. Also relevant are consensus issues, ‘valence’ issues as opposed to ‘position’ ones (see Green and Jennings, this Volume, for a further exploration of the valence/position opposition). On a valence issue which party is more competent is the *only* question. This takes us back to Vavreck (2009) and the economy, the ultimate valence issue – or at least the one with a repertoire that requires little rehearsal. In the US it seems to be a trump: an advantaged candidate who mentions it will win; although the non-benefiting candidate should attempt to activate a rival issue, the odds are long. If the economy is always a trump, then enlightenment and predictability go hand in hand.

But do they always? There is, after all, the negative evidence about economic emphases in Matthews and Johnston (2010). More generally, Hillygus and Shields (2008) describe the continuing ubiquity of multiple issue dimensions, conflicting considerations and ‘wedge’ issues. A majority of partisans disagree with their party on at least one major issue – especially in the cultural domain – and, among nonpartisans, issue ambivalence is ubiquitous. Increased polarization in self-described ideology has not increased coherence among specific issues. The norm among party strategists is to reach across party boundaries to expand their electoral coalitions, a pattern that is also clear in Sigelman and Buell (2004) and Sides (2006).⁸ And, when they do, defection among partisans increases.⁹

Evidence on the manipulability of issue bases is not airtight. Lenz (2009; 2012) argues that some of the evidence presented for priming is really for learning, which in turn drives self-persuasion predicated on prior partisanship. In the Canadian case described by Johnston et al. (1992, increases in the statistical relationship between FTA opinion and the vote were driven mainly by Liberal party identifiers who learned their party’s position and adjusted accordingly.

An analogous pattern holds for the seemingly strengthened link between Social Security opinion and the vote in the 2000 US result. To the extent that they reinforced the appeals of long-standing party affiliations, the apparent shifts actually brought the election result more in line with prediction from fundamentals. Lenz (2012) even undoes the claim by Gelman and King (1993) about the priming of liberal–conservative ideology. What does stand up to scrutiny is impact from ‘valence’ judgements: that is, judgements on management of the economy and on candidates’ personal characteristics.

It is not clear that this is always so. The setups in Bartels (2006a) and Claassen (2011) were designed specifically to cover the observational equivalence identified by Lenz (2009; 2012). Not only do they provide evidence for priming proper but much of the persuasion actively displaces vote intention – it is not all self-directed and reinforcing in effect. And some of this is for considerations that hardly seem to exemplify enlightenment, not at least in the domain of issues. A striking example is perceptions of candidates, notably Al Gore. Johnston et al. (2004) identified a shift in perceptions of Gore’s honesty that was engineered by Republican strategists and that initiated a distinct phase in the 2000 US campaign. The evidence for 2000 is not isolated. In the 1980–2000 sequence analysed by Bartels (2006a) candidate images are the considerations *most* susceptible to movement over the campaign. Fridkin and Kenney (2011a) amplify the claim with 2006 US Senate data and show that both news and ads move trait imputations in sensible ways and these imputations in turn map onto candidate evaluation. Johnston et al. (2004) portray the 2000 presidential sequence in the language of a random walk, so for Erikson and Wlezien (2012) this would be a shift in fundamentals. Others might label it a strategic move.

EXTERNAL FORCES

Voters may be primed, persuaded or taught. By what? Many campaigns feature debates. Many also feature intense advertising campaigns. All are news events.

Debates are occasions for the candidates to speak directly to voters but also to confront each other as they do so, and so are potentially fraught. Precisely for this reason, candidates are concerned about controlling debates’ format and timing. As a result, debates in the US typically have little effect on the horse race and any effect is swiftly neutralized (see, *inter alia*, Miller and MacKuen 1979). The contrarian conclusions of early studies are basically reaffirmed in the comprehensive analysis in Erikson and Wlezien (2012, 79ff). Debate effects in the main operate as a stationary process. Dynamics that do appear are as much the product of post-event coverage and ‘spin’ as of the event itself (Fridkin et al. 2007). Even the substantial shift engendered by the first presidential debate of 2012 (which was ultimately partly undone) was arguably a correction; before the event Barack Obama was flying higher in the polls than he should have, given

the fundamentals (Sides and Vavreck 2013, 155–61). Evidence from elsewhere is more suggestive, and Westminster systems may be especially fertile ground. The 1988 Canadian debate in English set in train the forces described in the preceding section. Its impact on the front-running Conservatives was partly neutralized but the debate was critical to the race for second place (Johnston et al. 1992; Blais and Boyer 1996). The debate in the 2010 UK election had a broadly similar impact (Pattie and Johnston 2011).

Ads enable candidates to control the message even more, as there is no immediate interference from the other side. An influential early study (Anscombe and Iyengar 1996) argued that ads activate existing dispositions and contribute to net polarization, but do not move the bottom line.¹⁰ More recent work (Shaw 1999a; Johnston et al. 2004; Ridout and Franz 2011; Sides and Vavreck 2013) suggests otherwise. Careful follow-on work has clarified that effects imputed to ads are real, not just by-products of other forms of effort (Huber and Arceneaux 2007; Kenski et al. 2010).¹¹ Although individual ads can be very persuasive, their collective impact is never massive – not in presidential elections, at least. Mostly this is because each side matches the other's effort. The discrepancies that opened up in the 2000 and 2012 US presidential campaigns were useful for establishing parameters of effect but also show that net effects are tiny – fractions of a percentage point in the two-party vote division. In 2012 this meant that Mitt Romney lost by a bit less than he would have otherwise (Sides and Vavreck 2013, Chapter 7).¹² In 2000, however, a similar impact was critical: it deprived Al Gore, the popular vote winner, of victory in the Electoral College (Johnston et al. 2004, Chapter 4).

Ad impact is also limited by its fleeting nature. According to Hill et al. (2013) the half-life of an ad is mere days and its effect is essentially gone in five days or fewer. Decay seems quicker in sub-presidential races, and even in the presidential arena there is a suggestion that the decay rate has quickened (Sides and Vavreck 2013, 219; Kenski et al. 2010, Table A1). The evidence points to a strategic dilemma. It is clear that the end of the campaign is the most critical period, and in a close race a campaign must store up resources accordingly. It helps if the money comes from the campaign itself and not from outside groups, as the latter are not eligible for the ‘lowest unit rate’ per ad, and it helps to pre-buy the advertising slot, as rates are lower and placements probably better (Sides and Vavreck 2013, 169–70).

Most controversial are negative ads. Apart from their occasional distastefulness, there is a general worry that they depress turnout. This was a central claim in Anscombe and Iyengar (1996). As a general proposition this finding does not stand up. Negative ads affect judgement on the attacker as much as on the target (Lau et al. 2007). The general distaste observed for negativity may be misleading. Fridkin and Kenney (2011b) point to moderators inside ads themselves: negative ads that are relevant to policy and that carry a civil tone have a serious effect on candidate evaluation. Mattes and Redlawsk (2014) run with this intuition and show that voters respond well to fact-based attacks. In tension with this more

optimistic view is Brader (2005), who shows that impact is contingent on emotional tone. Where enthusiastic appeals reinforce predispositions and increase polarization, appeals to fear do the opposite. As he puts it, ‘classic distinctions between persuasive and reinforcing effects of campaigns may be at least partially tethered to the emotions of voters’ (Brader 2005, 402). Brader is at pains to distinguish fear appeals from negative ones, but he may protest too much. And more recent work on negative campaigns is eye-catching. Krupnikov (2011) identifies timing as critical: once a voter commits to a candidate ads attacking that person have a demobilizing effect. Even more to the point, Blackwell (2013) argues that the ‘single-shot’ inference strategies summarized by Lau and his colleagues miss the critical dynamics. He finds that Senate races that tighten up over the campaign are especially likely to ‘go negative’, and challengers are the special beneficiaries of doing so.

Campaigns, even their advertising component, are constructs intended to drive the news and the news seems to be important to the vote. The most compelling evidence still seems to be that of Shaw (1999c), but the most striking case is the 2000 US presidential election. Johnston et al. (2004) argue that the news was important for low-information voters and had its primary effect outside the ‘battleground’, the handful of states where the contest for Electoral College votes was especially close: Gore won the news war but this helped him little where it counted. For both candidates, the news war was a race to the bottom, exactly as argued by Zaller (1999; 2001). To the extent that journalists perceive the campaign as manipulative in intent, they push back, and assert their professionalism and independence. The upshot is Zaller’s (2001, 255) ‘rule of product substitution’.

In sum, the evidence is ambiguous. The ‘enlightenment’ model, with its emphasis on the activation of fundamental considerations, is a large part of the truth. But claims about the mechanisms said to underpin it are not all borne out. The strongest demonstrations commonly mask election-specific evidence. Claims on the other side do the opposite: they focus on individual cases or present evidence cherry-picked from a larger flow of influence. Many of the priming and persuasion processes identified with survey or experimental data or with media analyses are perfectly compatible with findings of small to null aggregate effect. US presidential elections dominate the evidentiary field. As a result, claims commonly conflate psychological universals with institutional features that are distinctively American, indeed are peculiar to one among the many US arenas. The way forward requires us to separate the cognitive and motivational processes in play among voters from the contexts that moderate those universals.

COGNITIVE FOUNDATIONS

The starting point for our purposes is Zaller (1992), who proposes that citizens are moved mainly by what they can recall from memory. Critically, many

persons struggle to recall anything. In the survey context, the goad to recall too often lies in the survey question itself, and response is ‘top of the head’. To the extent this is so, citizens ‘... are blown about by whatever current of information manages to develop with greatest intensity’ (Zaller 1992, 311). The mode of cognition described here is ‘memory-based’ – something of a misnomer in that its central thrust is not the power of memory, but its weakness.¹³

Also channelling work from outside political science are Milton Lodge and his colleagues (notably Lodge et al. 1989; Lodge et al. 1995), who champion a quite different view of political cognition. For them, the ubiquitous mode was ‘online’, where memory is not so critical. Rather, persons update continuously and commonly forget why. But, given that updating is driven mainly by affect, they know what they like. The updated opinion can be moved by further shocks but is otherwise quite resilient. Both ‘online’ and ‘memory-based’ cognition may be in play, for different kinds of people or for different kinds of stimuli. The distinction corresponds directly to that drawn by Erikson and Wlezien (2012) between, respectively, random-walk dynamics (where the impact of a shock persists) and error-correcting ones (where that impact fades).

For both Zaller and Lodge, attention was naturally focused on conversion in the moment. Citizens would be temporarily moved by whatever consideration was trotted before them (memory-based) or shifted on a more enduring basis in response to a unidirectional shock (online). Studies that presupposed such unidirectionality became ubiquitous and demonstrated the power of ‘framing’, a close conceptual cousin to priming.¹⁴ But how ubiquitous are unidirectional communication streams? One of the first to suggest that the news stream typically features directionally competing streams was, ironically, Zaller (1992; 1996). Sniderman and Theriault (2004) put the matter front and centre by arguing that competing frames are common. They argue, further, that persons process the information online and choose the compatible frame.

The systematization of all this is the research programme initiated by Chong and Druckman (2007a; 2007b) on issue framing in competitive environments. The point is to understand how the two modes of cognition operate across variation in messages’ intrinsic strength, in the relative balance between sides of a question and in the dynamics of messages’ appearance. For this programme, framing is potentially a two-step process. The consideration to be evoked has to be *accessible* and – ideally – *applicable* to the question.¹⁵ The strength of a frame depends on how many of these steps it covers. A weak frame makes a consideration accessible but is not convincing on its applicability. A strong frame takes the next step and convincingly links the consideration to the policy¹⁶ (think back to Fridkin and Kenney 2011b). In competition, a strong frame will dominate a weak one. Indeed, throwing a weak frame against a strong one may backfire and induce movement in the wrong direction. Where strong meets strong, opinion tends to fall between the two (in contrast to the compatibility claim by Sniderman and Theriault 2004). Where weak meets weak, elements in the context that are

irrelevant to substance weigh in the balance: the length or number of statements and the likability or credibility of the source. Timing matters, as recency tends to dominate primacy, although more for weak messages than for strong ones (Chong and Druckman 2010). Counterframes (later frames designed specifically to counter earlier ones) readily overcome weak messages but can backfire when opposed to strong frames. These dynamics are strongly moderated by persons' cognitive styles. Just as weak frames can be assisted by intensity and source factors so can memory-based processors, who respond to irrelevant considerations but then quickly forget.

A striking observational realization of these propositions is Hill et al. (2013), mentioned above in relation to the swift decay of ad effects. As the electorate includes both kinds of processors, 'two kinds of opinion change are expected to occur: a larger amount of short-term change and a smaller increment of more durable change' (Hill et al. 2013, 522). Those available for persuasion by ads 'are likely to consist disproportionately of less motivated, memory-based evaluators' (Hill et al. 2013, 526). Consistent with this expectation, the immediate impact of ads is greatest in the lowest education group – but so is the speed of decay. Bartels (2014) enters a qualification: decay seems conditional on the partisanship of receivers. For supporters of the opposite party to the source, effects more than decay, they ultimately boomerang. For supporters of the source party, effects persist. Bartels infers that online processing plays a bigger role than Hill et al. conjecture, and that motivated reasoning is in play. This is consistent with the evidence in Just et al. (1996, 172) that 'general election ads ... stimulated argument and counterargument'.

Finally, there is the empirical ubiquity of and degree of balance in competing frames. Here too Chong and Druckman (2011) are the closest to authoritative. They study a large set of high salience issues, including some fought out in electoral campaigns. *Every* article in their study contained at least two frames and the 'effective number' of frames was 5.09 (Chong and Druckman 2011, Table 13.2).¹⁷ If multiplicity is a norm, balance is not: negative frames routinely outweigh positive ones¹⁸ and do so increasingly as the issue matures (Chong and Druckman 2011, 254). This corresponds to 'product substitution', as identified by Zaller (1999).

Although the Chong–Druckman programme clarifies many issues in the conceptual realm, translating it to the world of observational data is not straightforward, as their own observational contribution (Chong and Druckman 2011) makes abundantly clear. But the propositions should be kept in mind when considering how the body findings from mainly US observational data might transfer to other electoral contexts.

CONTEXTUAL MODERATORS

How all this travels abroad has only been hinted at so far. Multi-country comparisons are still lacking, as most edited collections comprise single-country

studies (see, for instance, Farrell and Schmitt-Beck 2002; Brady and Johnston 2006). The most pointed attempts to take the Gelman–King logic abroad (Johnston et al. 2014; Andersen et al. 2005) also have a single-country focus. The most ambitious early attempt at multi-country comparison (Arceneaux 2006) has very coarse temporal granularity. In any case, Arceneaux and Andersen et al. are not interested in contextual moderators but are concerned instead to assert the overseas relevance of the original fundamentalist model. The first true cross-national comparison that substitutes variables for country names and that maintains a consistent dependent variable is that of Jennings and Wlezien (2016).

Jennings and Wlezien focus on institutional moderators, notably presidential versus parliamentary systems, majoritarian versus proportional formulae, party- versus candidate-centrism and the effective number of parties (Laakso and Taagepera 1979). To these could be added the duration of official campaigns, the predictability of election dates, the polarization of the party system, the personalization of the choice, the overall volume of advertising and the equality of resources among the competitors. For many of these factors there is little research to report.

If the question is the predictability of outcomes from pre-campaign polls, the outstanding difference is between *presidential* and *parliamentary* regimes: parliamentary outcomes are more predictable, and only in the last week or so do presidential polls predict as efficiently as parliamentary ones (Jennings and Wlezien 2016, Figure 5). If the comparison is strictly for legislative voting, then presidential systems are more stable (Figure 6), reflecting the fact that in congressional systems the most important personal component, the choice of the chief executive, is detached from the choice of legislators.¹⁹ (The institutional comparison presupposes a mechanism – the relative weight of personal versus party considerations – that is also claimed to exhibit a trend; I return to this below.) For all this, the electorates that show the most movement within campaigns are parliamentary ones. Canada is the best-studied example (Johnston et al. 1992; Fournier et al. 2013), but recent elections in the UK have also shown remarkable dynamics (Clarke et al. 2011).

Of course, Canada and the UK are among the holdouts with the plurality formula. The *electoral formula* as such seems to be at best a weak moderator of campaign forces (Jennings and Wlezien 2016, Figure 7).²⁰ This may reflect the fact that the formula has offsetting implications: to the extent that proportional representation (PR) relies on lists, it empowers parties and presumably constrains the potential effect of other, fissiparous forces. Jennings and Wlezien do find that party-centric systems yield more rapid clarification of outcomes than candidate-centred ones and this classification strongly overlaps the electoral formula distinction. The power of the list in constraining campaign effects further depends on whether it is open or closed (Ruostetsaari and Mattila 2002).

But PR also expands the menu of choices, inasmuch as it is accompanied by a higher *effective number of parties*. The logic of fundamentals seems particularly

easy to grasp for a two-party system: choices are essentially binary, ‘sides’ are easy to identify, and repertoires are highly repetitive. Under this condition sincere voting will always be the dominant strategy for voters. This is still mostly true in other highly consolidated systems of the Anglosphere and may even hold where the electorate is somewhat fractionalized, as in Canada and (more recently) Britain, so long as two leading parties remain the sole feasible parties of government (Kedar 2005; 2012). But where governments are multi-party and the makeup of coalitions is difficult to forecast in advance, the responsibility for political outcomes can become blurred (see Silva and Whitten, this *Handbook*, Volume 1, on the clarity of responsibility) and coalition considerations might guide voting decisions (Bowler et al. 2010; Gschwend 2007). And multiplicity of parties suggests a multiplicity of issue dimensions, such that ‘heresthetic’ manipulation is possible (Riker 1986) and, with it, priming. And yet the effective number of parties seems like an ineffective moderator (Jennings and Wlezien 2016, Figure 9).

What if the plurality formula ceases to work its magic? If new parties gain a foothold the logic of the formula can turn on its head and amplify the threat, a point made long ago by Rae (1971). Johnston et al. (1992), building on pioneering efforts by Bartels (1988) and Brady and Johnston (1987), show that polls influenced voters in the 1988 Canadian campaign, facilitating strategic voting for opponents of the FTA as well as first igniting and then stifling a ‘bandwagon’ (shifts between frontrunners) in Quebec. Blais et al. (2006) and Fournier et al. (2013) extend the argument for Canada, and Johnston and Vowles (2006) consider strategic induction in the New Zealand system, with its two tiers and thresholds for representation. Once again, all of the work examines one country only.

What if time is short? One institutional element in the fundamentalist model is length of time for each side to ‘play all the cards’. US campaigns are famously long. Even if US voters do not really pay attention until Labour Day, they and the competing campaigns have more than two months to get it right. Nowhere else are campaigns so long. Stevenson and Vavreck (2000) conjecture, based on evidence in Gelman and King, that six weeks is the necessary minimum. They further conjecture that economic effects are stronger and more consistent when the campaign is six weeks or longer. Their findings are mainly suggestive and seem to apply only to parties of the left.

Moreover, their claim sits uneasily with evidence about control of election timing. Duration of a campaign is related to the predictability of the election date. Stevenson and Vavreck argue that any election date set years in advance and any election that occurs within six months of the scheduled end of an electoral cycle is deemed to exceed the six-weeks threshold, and thus should provide enough time for fundamental factors to dominate. Only when an election occurs more than six months before the cycle’s end do the authors count the exact duration of the campaign. Typically, these are instances when the incumbent government times the election to maximize its chances of retaining power. On average, outcomes from such campaigns should be less predictable than those from regularly

scheduled ones. But Jennings and Wlezien (2016, Appendix S3, Figure S3.3) find that outcomes are *more* predictable when governments get to pull the trigger. To be clear, we do not know how the Jennings–Wlezien classification maps onto the Stevenson–Vavreck one. This is obviously an area for further research.

The personal component in the vote came through as a factor distinguishing presidential campaigns from parliamentary ones. The idea also underpins claims about secular change in party systems (and possibly voter psychology). It is commonly asserted that general elections have become more personalized – some would say more ‘Americanized’. This may reflect changes in campaign technology, but it could also be the indirect product of change in other aspects of the total system. The capacity of parties to recruit volunteers has diminished. Social structures may be losing their capacity to reinforce party activity, as with declines in religious practice and labour mobilization. A representative statement of the claim is Dalton and Wattenberg (2002). The larger complex has been called ‘dealignment’, or ‘depolarization’. For campaigns in particular, one manifestation is said to be increased numbers of ‘late deciders’ – basically, people who do not make up their minds until the campaign starts (McAllister 2002). Clarke et al. (2011) deploy such arguments in their account of ‘valence voting’ in the dramatic dynamics of the 2010 UK campaign. The major premise of the argument is supported by the experimental evidence in Druckman et al. (2013), which shows that supplying cues about the US party system’s polarization overrides even strong issue frames in inducing party-line support. The fact that polarization, not its opposite, is their theme is a warning signal. Not everybody sees dealignment and its concomitant, personalization, as all that ubiquitous (for a sceptical chapter inside a work on party leaders and elections, see Holmberg and Oscarsson 2011). But a basic point stands: whether we agree or disagree with the grand theme of dealignment/personalization, the basic functional argument – its major premise – seems plausible. What we need is more facts, and more linkage to evidence from campaigns.

US elections are characterized by massive outlays on ads. This is easy to overstate, as the US is also characterized by massive volumes of voters – and of votes. Per voter, US presidential campaign expenses (which include more than advertising) seem roughly comparable to those in Canada (Center for Responsive Politics n.d.; Elections Canada 2011), and these in turn are probably rather larger than for most other countries. But the point stands, as Canada may also be an extreme case. Countries vary widely in permissiveness in terms of overall advertising on broadcast media and the number of rival channels for advertising and coverage. A critical factor may be the predominance of public broadcasting. Krewel’s (2014, 38) figures for national party spending in the 2013 German election, implying an outlay of about €1 per voter (with, possibly, a matching sum spent by local candidates and by state parties), may be more typical.

What variation in ad volumes implies for the predictability of elections is simply not clear. The standing presumption seems to be that rising ad volumes

are integral to the story of rising personalization and flux, described above. This would not be the conclusion drawn by US-based scholars focused on the empirics, however. Helpfully, the US presidential campaign presents a natural experiment on a continental scale, inasmuch as each ‘battleground’ state is a microcosm of the country as a whole.²¹ Panagopoulos (2009) finds that flux is greater in the battleground than outside, but so is structure inside the variation. The implication is that something is moving the battleground vote, and the likely suspect is advertising – or, probably, advertising in conjunction with the ‘ground war’. But absolute movement in the battleground is not great and, perhaps more to the point, is more structured than in uncompetitive states. The battleground looks more like a random walk – in Erikson–Wlezien terms, it seems to incorporate ‘fundamentals’ more efficiently – than the non-battleground does.

The key, in any case, may not be the volume of outlays, but their balance. The impact estimates in Johnston et al. (2004) or Hill et al. (2013) rely on imbalance as the data-generating tool, but imbalances in US presidential elections tend to be small and swiftly countered. We have basically no idea whether this is the norm. If theorists of cartelization (Katz and Mair 1995) are correct, parties’ access to broadcast media may commonly be unequal by design. How this interacts with overall limits on advertising is anybody’s guess.

ISSUES IN METHOD

Most of the propositions reviewed in this chapter are based on observational studies, mainly sample surveys analysed on their own or in conjunction with higher-level contextual data. In fact, campaign studies have been with us for many decades: as studies of congressional spending (Jacobson 2013). Here, of course, balance in resources is precisely *not* the issue, and research focused on presidential campaigns would benefit from dialogue with the poor cousins next door (see, for an example, the richness of the dynamics in Elms and Sniderman 2006). The design for congressional studies is commonly the traditional cross-sectional one, not always with survey data. The key is higher-level data organized by the geographical containers within which campaigns are conducted. Some of the breakthrough studies take this form (Franklin 1991; Westlye 1991). Another under-appreciated form compares behaviour by the same respondents in different arenas, *de facto* a ‘stacked’ design. For instance, Alvarez and Shankster (2006) show that the structure of political evaluation exhibited practically in the moment by California voters differs between simultaneous gubernatorial and senatorial elections.

Much of the running, however, is made by the ‘rolling cross-section’ (RCS) design, which makes the date of interview approximate a random draw from time (Johnston and Brady 2002; Brady and Johnston 2006).²² Ideally conducted, the design gives a true cross-section with high temporal granularity and, thus, great

temporal flexibility. It is open to merging with higher-level temporally (even better, as with US advertising data, spatiotemporally) ordered data. With the benefits come costs. Within the RCS's time units samples are typically small, even for the gargantuan National Annenberg Election Study, and the survey instrument will carry measurement error on top of sampling error. Given the plausible strength of campaign signals, daily samples or even pools of consecutive days will struggle to recover that signal from the noise (Zaller 2002). Even to detect movement inside survey data poses the issue of bias versus variance (Brady and Johnston 2006; Hastie and Tibshirani 1990): smoothing is necessary to detect the pattern, but the more smoothing the greater the bias.

Even in temporally ordered cross-section data, alternative processes yield observationally equivalent predictions. This is the nub of the issue identified by Lenz (2009; 2012). Whether the task is the elaborate analysis in Lenz (2012) or the stripped-down model in Bartels (2006a) and Claassen (2011), unpacking intrapersonal mechanisms requires panel data. Additionally, panels can leverage repeated measurement to gain statistical power and to permit analyses of later patterns conditional on earlier ones. The price of the panel, in addition to conditioning (on which see Bartels 2006b) and attrition, is temporal rigidity. Traditionally panels have been expensive propositions, but trends in survey mode may be changing this. Declining coverage and compliance rates, along with rising costs, are driving survey clients from the telephone, the original RCS mode, to the Internet. The logic of the Internet survey is precisely that of a panel and the critical issue is the attrition rate. Whatever the mode, the ideal design combines the temporal granularity of the RCS with the statistical and inferential leverage provided by panels.

Experimental designs are responsible for a significant fraction of the conceptual clarification and identification of processes reported in this chapter (for more on these, see Johns, this Volume). For processes inside persons' heads, the laboratory experiment is critical. The Chong–Druckman programme is a case in point. To identify impact from external interventions – for example, mobilization strategies (Green and Gerber 2008) or ads (Panagopoulos and Green 2008; Gerber et al. 2011) – the field experiment can be very powerful. Here, too, nothing comes without a cost. Laboratory experiments are cheap, get inside the black box of the voter's mind and can yield powerful effects, but that power is essentially never matched in the field. Additionally, although treatment and control can be cleanly assigned in the laboratory, the context of a lab experiment can still matter (Druckman et al. 2012). Researchers should log external events not just to be alert to potential distortion of individual trials but as a possible additional source of data. Field experiments have delivered remarkable results but are expensive, often without much yield, and may already be pushing the ethical bounds for intervention in what are, after all, exercises in democracy.

Much of this takes the stimulus field for granted, partly because we often create that field ourselves in experimental treatments or survey questions. Content

analysis of ads and news remains cumbersome and seems to be linked to survey data only occasionally. Natural language programming may lower costs, speed up data generation and permit bespoke searches. But for campaign analyses, we have hardly scratched the surface. Another initiative that may be on the verge of taking off is the use of Web samples to assess the intrinsic strength of a signal for, say, an ad. All the observational analyses reviewed in this chapter take signal strength for granted and look only at the intensity or tone of the messaging; whether the message itself is strong or weak is left out of the analysis.²³

CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding clever designs and heroic analyses, the study of campaigns is unsettled and may be at an impasse. For a particular category of election, US presidential ones, the basic propositions from the ‘fundamental’ or ‘enlightenment’ model do seem to hold. For a narrow category of propositions out of that model, the findings may hold for many or most national elections elsewhere. Certainly, the model is a useful, immediate corrective to fevered *in terrorem* claims about manipulation, indeed to any analysis hanging on Latinate abstract nouns.

But Latinate abstractions describe much that is offered in the mainstream. Even in its own terms, the fundamentalist model is weak on mechanisms. The boldest, typically ‘macro’, claims are attached to process descriptions that are pretty contentless. This is only slightly less true of work that delves into ‘meso’ processes. The debate over ‘priming’, ‘learning’ and ‘persuasion’, for instance, is carried out mainly through triangulation across observational implications. Similarly, we have only the beginnings of a theory of events, their sources and dynamics. For the latter we have classificatory schemes: some things go up or down; some stay up or stay down; others regress. Here, too, deriving and testing implications verges on heroic. But the connection of these observations and patterns to underlying cognition and motivation has only just begun. The tentative steps that have been taken so far seem very hard won. They next steps may be even harder.

Too often, proclamations of universal validity are dependent on contingent aspects of context. It was clear from the start to students of congressional elections that things are not as rosy as in the presidential arena. Variation across countries may be even greater. The truth is, however, that we do not really know. Jennings and Wlezien (2016) have finally grasped the nettle of constructing disciplined cross-national comparisons. The field as a whole should ask if their conceptual scheme can be pushed further in terms either of relevant contextual variation or, no less important, of relevant dependent variables. Meanwhile, their concentration on gross patterns should not distract us from the deviant cases.

Finally, we need to recognise that enlightenment does not equate to predictability. Gelman and King (1993) made this their hook, and we are all in their

debt for framing the question in such a compelling way. But modelling parties or candidates and voters as rational actors does not necessarily yield unique equilibria, or at least ones that can be characterized by a rule of thumb such as an economic forecast. Economic models of the vote are powerful and do travel, but not in equal comfort to all destinations. It is not hard to propagate potentially relevant institutional variation, within the US as much as between the US and abroad. But, so far, these are mostly just words. Meanwhile, the normative claim of some of the predictors that drive fundamentalist models – party identification, for example – is overstated.

Notes

- 1 The 2008 US Presidential campaign is a major exception, with the global financial crisis of late September. The crisis might be thought to account for that campaign's other unusual feature, the widening of the frontrunner's margin. Awkwardly for any such interpretation, the actual result was better predicted by forecasts based on economic conditions before the campaign than was true for any election in the preceding decade.
- 2 This is basically the same process as described by Kaplan et al. (2012), except that the latter see the whole campaign as an error-correction exercise.
- 3 This is closer to the image of rallying to sides than to mean reversion.
- 4 Erikson and Wlezien's setup is, in a way, a simplification of the classification suggested by Shaw (1999b).
- 5 Bartels (2006a) finds that 1992 was another year in which the economy was not primed, contrary to the conventional wisdom.
- 6 For some, the 2012 election seems like an anomaly, a President re-elected in bad times. This led to speculation that his strategists were wizards, his operatives were masters of social media and big data, his resources were overwhelming, or that the gods favoured him by sending Hurricane Sandy at the critical moment. What is more, Mitt Romney ran a bad campaign. In fact, prediction models favoured him, if not by much. The key was not the absolute level of economic performance but the positive changes in the level. Romney's campaign was bad in the terms set down by Vavreck (2009): he seemed to think that the economy favoured him and spent more time talking about it than was good for him. In the end, however, the result was only slightly better for Obama than forecast (Sides and Vavreck 2013).
- 7 Simon does not see this particular form of enlightenment as healthy for democracy, however, not when considered from, say, a Habermasian perspective (Habermas 1984; Chambers 1996).
- 8 Divergence rises as elections become less competitive and is generally more common in subpresidential races (Kaplan et al 2006).
- 9 The shifts are directly between parties, we must infer, as the evidence for differential mobilization as a result of tailored messages is thin (Sides and Karch 2008).
- 10 With its combination of game theory, experiments, and multivariate observational evidence (not to mention institutional affiliations) the lineage between this book and Simon (2002) seems clear.
- 11 Kenski et al. (2010) argue that radio ads were especially effective.
- 12 Although this advantage was offset by a similarly tiny advantage for Barack Obama in field offices (Sides and Vavreck 2013).
- 13 Zaller (1992) is not wholly original, nor does it claim to be. It builds on earlier work by Zaller and colleagues, not to mention work spanning a generation or more by psychologists and political scientists. The aetiology of his ideas is amply laid out in the master work and interested readers can find it there.

- 14 For an exhaustive review of such studies see Chong and Druckman (2011).
- 15 Additionally, the consideration has to be first available in memory, but on my reading the research programme focuses on the next two steps.
- 16 Although this seems to be the conceptual distinction, its practical realization involves strength ratings by subjects outside the experiment.
- 17 The 'effective number' was modelled explicitly on the indicator for the 'effective number of parties' in Laakso and Taagepera (1979).
- 18 Negativity is defined in relation to departure from the status quo.
- 19 The 'presidential' plot in their Figure 6 seems to be dominated by US data. Eyeballing their Table 1 for the number of legislative series in the presidential and semi-presidential systems suggests that the US supplies 75 percent or more of the elections and probably a rather larger share of the survey data points.
- 20 Domination by the data by US House elections is a worry for Figure 7 as well, although not as pressing as for Figure 6. By my count, the US accounts for more than 40 percent of the elections and, again, probably a larger share of the survey data points for the plurality group.
- 21 I mean this in a very loose way, as electoral strategy under the Electoral College does not produce 'as-if' randomization (Dunning 2012).
- 22 The designs for the Canadian Election Study (Johnston and Brady 2002) and National Annenberg Election Survey samples attempt to achieve both random selection from the population at large and random selection from time. It is probably not worth insisting on achieving both. Instead we should learn how to make do with designs that achieve only one of these objectives.
- 23 An exception, not about an election campaign and so not reviewed here, is Althaus and Young (2006). An example of a possible starting point for systematic cost-effective ad rating is the 2012 Vanderbilt/YouGov Ad Rating Project (<https://my.vanderbilt.edu/vanderbilyougovadratingproject/>).

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Economic Voting in a New Media Environment: Preliminary Evidence and Implications

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In this chapter we explore the implications of the new media environment for current and future research on the impact of media on economic perceptions. Although scholars have long studied mass media as a possible source of variation in people's perceptions of national economic change, recent developments in the media environment call for re-evaluating both the dominant theories and past findings. We begin by briefly sketching the origins of interest in this research question, then review what is known from past studies of media influence on economic perceptions. Next we outline changes in the media environment that suggest both a need for re-examining old findings and possible new hypotheses. Using a novel panel of Americans surveyed throughout periods of economic improvement and decline, and during both the Bush and Obama administrations, we examine some of these effects suggested by changes in the media environment and evaluate their implications for democratic accountability.

SOURCES OF VARIATION IN ECONOMIC PERCEPTIONS

The connection between economic prosperity and electoral support is a robust empirical regularity, allegedly 'one of political science's most replicated, accepted, and influential findings' (Hansford and Gomez 2015, 15) and 'virtually a social science law' (Duch 2009, 805). An impressive array of past research on economic voting broadly agrees that voters' retrospective assessments of the

national economy affect vote choice even more than assessments of their own pocketbooks (for good reviews, see Anderson 2007; Healy and Malhotra 2013; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000; Stegmaier, Lewis-Beck and Park, this Volume). That citizens can enforce democratic accountability based on a relatively easy heuristic – change in the state of the national economy – has long been considered a boon to political accountability (Fiorina 1981).

Unfortunately, a closer look is somewhat less reassuring. For example, if citizens are simply holding leaders accountable for actual economic change, then what explains the considerable cross-sectional variation in perceptions of the economy? And what explains differential perceptions of economic change over time? The national economy can be changing in only one direction at any given time, thus perceptions of the extent and direction of change should also logically be constant across all people. However, this has repeatedly been shown not to be the case (Abramson et al. 1994; Hetherington 1996; Holbrook and Garand 1996; Kiewiet 1983; Kinder and Kiewiet 1981; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Markus 1988).

So where might these perceptual variations come from? Some have suggested that they are nothing more than uninteresting measurement error (Kramer 1983), but considerable evidence points to two main sources of variation. One of these, and the focus of this chapter, is mass media coverage of the economy. Nonetheless, in order to isolate the media's impact, other sources of variation are also worth considering. In addition to media coverage, perceptions of the economy are clearly a function of partisan rationalization; citizens are simply more likely to perceive economic improvement when a president of their own party is in office and more likely to perceive economic decline when their party is out of power. Although real economic change still matters, the partisan filter matters a great deal. However, if economic perceptions were entirely rationalizations of pre-existing party preferences then they would have little explanatory power when it comes to vote choice, and such is not the case (Evans and Andersen 2006; Kramer 1983; Wlezien et al. 1997).

Some have argued that this variation represents differences in local economic conditions that are projected onto national assessments (Anscombe et al. 2014; Books and Prysby 1999; Mondak et al. 1996; Reeves and Gimpel 2012), but evidence of this has been sparse to date in part due to various measurement error issues (Healy and Malhotra 2013, 290). They might also reflect differences in the criteria various individuals use to evaluate the economy (Kinder et al. 1989). Although there is some evidence supporting these possibilities, the effects of local economies are relatively small, and much of the variation in national economic perceptions remains unexplained.¹

MEDIA AS A SOURCE OF ECONOMIC PERCEPTIONS

For a variety of reasons, mass media are a natural place for people to turn for information on national economic change. First, given that no one personally

experiences the collective effects of the economy, it would be surprising if Americans assumed that others were experiencing exactly the same economic conditions that they and their friends were. Without any alternative sources of information on national conditions, people are highly dependent upon the media for this kind of broad, aggregate-level information.

In addition, the media that Americans consume today is increasingly national in the scope of its coverage. While local news sources have dwindled in number and circulation, the availability of national news is greater than ever before. As Hopkins (2016: 224) has noted, ‘One of the most pronounced features of the recent changes has been the shift away from spatially bounded media sources like print newspapers.’ While some local news programs remain popular, as Americans move from print newspapers to online sources, and from broadcast television to cable television, ‘they are exposed to less coverage of state and local politics’. Instead, the focus of content is on national affairs.

Finally, although studies of media effects on mass opinion suggest that there is a great deal of inertia in people’s personal political opinions, and political opinions are generally quite difficult to change, their perceptions of collective-level phenomena are far easier to alter (see Mutz 1998 for a review). Because perceptions of collective economic change play such a central role in American elections, the origins of these perceptions are worthy of additional study.

Given that individuals’ perceptions of collective national economic change are significant factors in the voting calculus, and these perceptions matter above and beyond changes in the real economy, a good understanding of how the media drive such variation and how that mechanism is changing today is critical. American elections are often won or lost by very small margins, and thus even relatively small media effects on economic evaluations can have potentially large consequences. Although claims about the importance of media portrayals of the economy are commonplace, this topic has been singled out in recent reviews of the economic voting literature as one of the areas most in need of additional research (Linn et al. 2010).

Moreover, because the media themselves have changed a great deal over the last few decades, previous theories about how and why they should impact economic perceptions need to be updated. Despite the well-documented electoral importance of retrospective economic perceptions, to date very few empirical studies have focused on the role of mass media in forming retrospective evaluations in particular. At the same time, there are reasons to doubt that conclusions based on data from the 1980s and 1990s will hold. The way that people obtain economic news has changed.

ECONOMIC CONTENT OF THE MEDIA

In the past, theoretical perspectives on the impact of mass media on national economic perceptions have been anchored by two main themes. One of these

suggests that the media aid the process of accountability by informing the public at large. Statistics on all forms of national economic change are readily available via mass media. If the media simply passively relay information to their audiences then media exposure should reduce variation in perceptions of collective economic change by giving everyone roughly the same idea of what direction things are headed.

A second perspective casts the media as a source of bias or distortion in economic perceptions. Because the media coverage consumed by any given person may be skewed in a variety of ways, it is not necessarily a perfect mirror of actual economic trends. Some studies of the economic content of media have suggested systematic patterns, but to date there is no strong consensus on in what ways the media should be expected to weaken economic accountability by means of its coverage.

One genre of study within this area of research focuses on how well real world economic change translates into appropriate media coverage. Two types of distortions of economic reality have been the focus of concern thus far. Sensationalist bias refers to content biases that stem from the desire to create memorable and attention-grabbing stories.² A second form of potential bias stems from the ideological view of the news outlet. A conservative news organization may want to portray economic news in ways that compliment Republicans, whereas a liberal news outlet has a motivation to paint Democrats in a positive light. In some studies, sensationalist and ideological bias are indistinguishable based on the evidence, but they are assumed to flow from different journalistic motivations. With sensationalist bias, the distortion stems from a desire to grab audiences' attention, which typically means covering negative economic news in sensationalistic ways that journalists believe will attract citizens' attention. With ideological bias, economic news is slanted toward more positive portrayals when the president shares this ideological leaning and toward more negative news when the president is of an opposing ideology.

Findings suggest that not all economic information is created equal when it comes to garnering news attention. To date, the most widely studied form of bias is the media's tendency to over-emphasize negative economic news when the economy falters, relative to its coverage of positive news when the economy is growing. A general tendency to emphasize negativity has long been observed in news coverage (see Galician and Vestre 1987 for summary). In addition, many studies have confirmed that the media over-report negative economic news relative to positive news (Blood and Phillips 1995; Fogarty 2005; Harrington 1989; Kepplinger 2002; Nadeau et al. 1999, 2000; Sanders and Gavin 2004; Shah et al. 1999). For example, a recent study of German newspaper articles on job creation and job destruction found large differences in coverage of job gains and losses, with more than ten times as many articles on job loss as job creation, even when the German unemployment rate was falling at the time (Heinz and Swinnen 2015; see also Soroka 2006).

The media also produce more economic news coverage during times of economic downturn (Doms and Morin 2004; Goidel and Langley 1995; Lamla and Lein 2008; Shah et al. 1999). Overall, the strong consensus that negative economic news is more prevalent than positive economic news suggests a potential anti-incumbent bias to economic coverage, regardless of which party is in power.

Media content notwithstanding, psychological studies suggest that human beings are inherently more sensitive to negative information/threats than to positive stimuli (e.g. Geer 2006; Ito et al. 1998; Singh and Teoh 2000; Van der Pligt and Eiser 1980; Vonk 1996). From the perspective of evolutionary psychology, it is more critical to react to potential threats to one's immediate well-being than to potentially positive rewards. However, most studies in this vein focus on personal threats/rewards rather than threats to a collective of which one is only a small part. Moreover, this idea has not been thoroughly examined in the context of positive versus negative economic news, and previous studies are divided in demonstrating greater responsiveness to negative than positive economic news (cf. Boomgaarden et al. 2011; Soroka 2006).

Content bias stemming from the ideological leanings of the media organization received less attention in the past, in large part due to professional journalistic norms that emphasized objectivity and neutrality. Of course, journalists cannot simply make up economic statistics, but by picking more (un)favorable economic indicators, by over- or under-reporting such numbers or by attributing economic responsibility to particular partisan actors, media still have the capacity to manipulate economic perceptions for political purposes. For example, when the incumbent president shares a partisan bias with a media outlet, newspapers systematically publish fewer pieces about high unemployment. One study demonstrated that newspapers carrying Democratic editorial endorsements gave less coverage to high unemployment (and more coverage to low unemployment) under Clinton than under George W. Bush, as compared with Republican-leaning newspapers. Consistent with an ideological bias, negative economic indicators are also more frequently covered when the incumbent is an out-partisan relative to that media outlet (Anson 2015).

Others have argued that newspapers simply have a systematic bias in favor of Democrats. Based on 389 newspapers contained in the Nexis/Lexis database, top ten papers and Associate Press articles, Lott and Hassett (2014) found print media giving more positive coverage to the same economic news when Democrats were in the White House, while only Republican presidents' home state newspapers produced systematically more favorable coverage during a Republican president's term.

Notably, most of these content analyses relied solely on newspaper coverage (cf. Gavin and Sanders 1998; Goidel et al. 2010; Holbrook et al. 2011; Pruitt et al. 1988) because of the ease with which newspapers can be downloaded in machine-readable form from sources such as Lexis/Nexis, and thus can more easily be analyzed. However, in the United States both the number of American

newspapers and their readerships are dwindling. Further, relatively few American newspapers have widely recognized partisan leanings. Instead, television remains the most widely used source of economic and political news, a point we will return to later in our analyses.

EFFECTS OF MEDIA EXPOSURE ON ECONOMIC PERCEPTIONS

Unfortunately, content alone is not a safe basis on which to assume that the media are altering people's views of past economic performance. If there is any lesson that has been taught by research on media effects, it is the danger of assuming that media content automatically translates into citizens' opinions. In this chapter we are less concerned with why media coverage of the economy takes a particular shape or tone than with the consequences of that coverage. Do the media affect voters' perceptions of national economic trends? In particular, do they systematically distort citizens' perceptions of retrospective economic performance in a way that might exert an independent effect on political behavior? To the extent that retrospective perceptions are simply passive reflections of official economic statistics, or projections of an individual's partisanship, then the media are unlikely to play an influential role in shaping retrospective economic perceptions. Partisan rationalization would lead only to reinforcement of pre-existing preferences, and coverage that reflects reality should contribute to greater accountability, so neither seems particularly problematic.

Consistent with the latter perspective, De Boef and Kellstedt (2004) find evidence that the media form the 'quintessential mediator' (De Boef and Kellstedt, 2004: 640), and that economic statistics and political leaders' commentary both indirectly shape economic evaluations via the amount and tone of mass media coverage. The media make no independent contribution to economic perceptions, but they serve as an important mediator of the economy's effects on citizens by relaying accurate information about economic change.

Other studies suggest that the media have an independent influence. For example, in a study of retrospective economic evaluations in 1992, when media coverage of the economy was largely negative, Hetherington (1996) found that greater amounts of media consumption predicted more negative retrospective economic evaluations, despite official statistics that suggested otherwise. Likewise, Goidel and Langley (1995) found the overall positive versus negative tone of news coverage to be related to aggregate public evaluations of the economy over time, even after controlling for indicators of actual economic change. These examples suggest that media do more than passively relay information.

To date, most studies of media impact on economic perceptions have focused on the impact of media coverage on people's *prospective* evaluations. In other words, how does media coverage contribute to optimism or pessimism about the future economy (e.g. Boomgaarden et al. 2011; Soroka 2006)? Because the future

economy is, by definition, fundamentally unknown and unknowable, prediction based on highly available information from mass media seems quite logical. No one knows with certainty what the future holds, so projections based on the tone or amount of media coverage make a great deal of sense.

Retrospective evaluations, on the other hand, should logically be far more difficult to influence via mass media. When it comes to the immediate past, people have lived experiences as well as informal knowledge of others' experiences. As a consequence, it should be far more difficult to change people's views of the immediate past. Unfortunately, most previous studies of media influence focus on consumer sentiment and expectations about the economy's future mainly due to the greater availability of data in this arena. Because incumbent political leaders cannot and probably should not be held accountable for events that have not yet occurred, retrospective evaluations are more pertinent to issues of accountability than economic prospections.

RETROSPECTIVE ECONOMIC PERCEPTIONS IN THE NEW MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

What are the potential consequences of the contemporary 'post-broadcast' media environment for media effects on economic perceptions? We see two changes as most relevant because of their obvious ramifications for the formation of economic perceptions. First, the most striking change in American mass media in the last thirty years is the rise of partisan media content on television. Television has experienced a virtual explosion in both the number of news and public affairs programs and especially in the number of programs with openly partisan leanings. Whereas previous research treated 'the national media' as a monolithic entity, assuming that exposure to one evening news program was largely interchangeable with exposure to another, this assumption about the similarity of content across programs no longer holds. As a result, scholars can no longer assume that all people receive roughly the same information when they tune in to media coverage of the economy.

Second, there is simply more choice in the media environment than ever before. Cable has produced access to more television channels than ever before, and internet-based news sources only add to these many choices. At any given point in time this increased choice makes available politically wide-ranging views of the economy. Greater choice has two corollaries. Based on cross-national studies, more choice generally produces more exposure to like-minded political views. It means that the politically interested and involved have more sources of political information to choose from. With the click of a mouse, an endless number of sources are at one's fingertips, allowing one to potentially pick and choose interpretations of the economy that reinforce and justify one's partisan predispositions.

The lack of uniformity in what exposure to economic news now suggests about what kinds of economic perceptions are likely to be formed leads to further complications downstream. Overwhelmingly, the most common approach to studying the impact of the media on the public's economic perceptions has been to study aggregate change in media coverage and in public perceptions over time. But today, even though the national economy is still a constant, the rise of partisan media has resulted in the availability of radically different portrayals of just how much the economy has improved or declined. A person watching conservative news programs during the Obama administration might end up with a very different sense of changes in the economy over time relative to a person watching liberal news programs. Likewise, a person watching liberal news programs during the Bush administration might have a different perspective on change in the economy relative to a person watching conservative news programs.

Aggregate research designs would miss the diversity of these portrayals and their impact on the public. For example, if media coverage were, on average, accurately reflective of actual economic change, but evenly divided between extremely pro-administration and anti-administration reporting of economic news, then findings would suggest that media were promoting an accurate view of the national economy when this was not actually the case. If public perceptions faithfully reflected this media coverage, then views of the economy would be highly polarized, despite middle-of-the-road average perceptions.

In reality, of course, people's viewing habits are far less systematic than what we describe in these examples. People may consume little economic news whatsoever, or they may consume both partisan and nonpartisan news. Moreover, the number of people watching liberal news may not match the number watching conservative news, so the effects of partisan economic portrayals may not cancel one another out.

Partisan media demand a different research approach because one can no longer assume that the news coverage of the economy received by one person is the same as that received by another. Partisan media offer the possibility of greater heterogeneity in media portrayals as well as in public perceptions at any given point in time. If a given media source is biased in a systematic direction with respect to economic coverage, it may skew retrospective evaluations of the economy and discourage accountability among its viewers. Particularly if partisan media offer economic coverage with a systematically positive or negative tenor based on the party in office, then their viewers may end up with systematically skewed perceptions of economic change.

Notably, evidence of this kind of effect is more difficult to obtain. Whereas most prior research linking media coverage to economic perceptions has used aggregate measures of media coverage and aggregate public opinion data over time, studies of the impact of partisan media cannot simply assume that all people are exposed to the same content. Nor can it be assumed that all people are affected in the same direction by their extent of media exposure.

For example, people may be encouraged to view the retrospective economy in overly rosy terms as a result of exposure to partisan media that is ideologically biased toward the party of the president. Likewise, those exposed to news that is ideologically aligned with the party out of power may be encouraged to view the economy in more negative ways. For purposes of the analyses in this chapter, we call these two different kinds of media exposure Inparty Exposure, meaning that it is ideologically slanted toward the party of the president, and Outparty Exposure, meaning that the media source is biased to favor the party currently out of power.

What are the likely implications for economic voting of the rise of choice and the availability of partisan media? One possibility is that partisanship will become even more strongly predictive of economic perceptions. In other words, information will be more actively reinterpreted and recast by partisan journalists, who dispense media to a partisan public, thus producing economic perceptions that are even more closely reflective of people's initial partisanship. The implications of such a change for economic accountability would be unfortunate. Whatever signals of actual economic success or failure are present in the political environment will be less easily discerned against the backdrop of partisan coverage. To the extent that economic coverage is bent to partisan purposes, accountability will suffer.

Thus if partisan rationalization alone is not enough to render one's favored party or candidate immune from responsibility for economic decline, then partisan coverage of the economy should further convince media consumers that it is 'morning in America' and the economy is not in such bad shape after all (if one's own party is in power) or that the economy is going to hell in a handbasket (if the opposing party is in power). To the extent that pro-administration media cast the economy in an overly positive light and anti-administration media cast it in a negative light, perceptions of the economy will become indistinguishable from partisan rationalization.

While appealing in its simplicity, this prediction ignores several important aspects of American media consumption. In considering the potential impact of partisan media on economic accountability, it is important to consider precisely who watches such programs. The popular stereotype is that partisan media are watched by like-minded partisans who are constantly exposing themselves to an echo chamber, essentially reinforcing their pre-existing views. In other words, people watch partisan programs they agree with in order to be reassured of their correctness. According to this line of thought, partisan media could either have a) no effect whatsoever on economic perceptions beyond the partisan rationalization that takes place with or without like-minded media exposure, or b) an intensification effect whereby economic perceptions are even more partisan than without partisan media exposure.

However, as shown in Figure 32.1, patterns of media consumption are neither that stark in their implications nor that simple. In reality, very few people are

exposed solely to partisan news that reinforces their pre-existing views. In our surveys, this number is under 7 percent of our total sample. When broken down by party, this number includes 3 percent who are Democrats who watch only liberal news programs and 4 percent who are Republicans who watch only conservative media.³ Although these numbers may seem surprisingly low, they are largely consistent with other representative samples attempting to track the composition of Americans' media exposure (see, for example, Mitchell et al. 2014; LaCour and Vavreck 2014). Contrary to much of the hand-wringing concerning people in echo chambers, 'In America today, it is virtually impossible to live in an ideological bubble' (Mitchell et al. 2014, 1).

Although partisans are clearly more likely to watch like-minded news than news of an opposing ideology, a mixed media diet is most common. In addition to some partisan news, most partisans also watch a greater amount of neutral news programs. If they watch any like-minded partisan programming, they are also more likely to watch programs of the opposing ideology. This pattern occurs because politically interested people simply watch more political programs of all kinds. Importantly, politically neutral programs remain the most popular with American viewers, regardless of their political stripes. This means that most people who pay attention to political media should receive some news about the trajectory of the national economy.

The implications of mixed media use patterns are substantial. First and foremost, it makes the predicted effects of partisan media on economic accountability far more complex. It means that one should not necessarily expect only

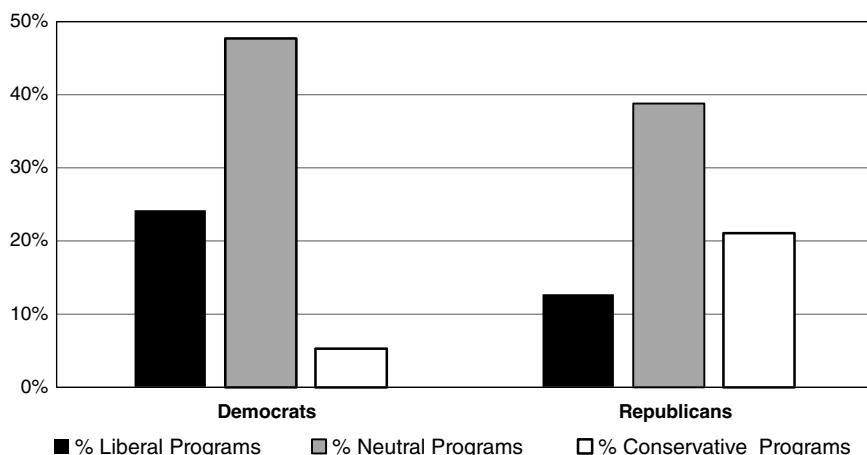


Figure 32.1 Percentage of partisan TV programs watched, by respondent partisanship

Note: Percent of all political programs watched for those present in all eight panel waves. (n = 1443). On average, Democrats watch 1.8 liberal programs, 3.3 neutral programs, and 0.4 conservative programs. Republicans watch 0.9 liberal programs, 2.3 neutral programs, and 1.6 conservative programs. Party identification is based on wave 1.

Democrats to be affected by liberal media portrayals of the economy, or only Republicans to be affected by conservative media portrayals of the economy. Moreover, because most surveys have not included repeated measures of both retrospective economic conditions and individual media use, these studies have not been able to look beyond aggregate-level time series analyses. This kind of research design made sense when exposure to one news source was more or less interchangeable with another, but in the post-broadcast era this is no longer suitable. The interesting questions surrounding media impact are no longer about how much media people consume so much as the *kind* of media to which they expose themselves.

Concerns about selective exposure to like-minded media have generated the most concern of the new media trends. Nonetheless, the most disturbing political television trend is probably not the extent of like-minded exposure; it is instead the growing portion of the American public that does not watch any news or politically informative programs whatsoever. Indeed, many believe that the most serious consequence of increased media choice is that more people have opted out of political media altogether (e.g. Prior 2007). With so many high quality dramas and other appealing options, those only tangentially interested are unlikely to choose politics. Television viewing data from the panel we use in this chapter are consistent with this hypothesis; the percentage of people who did not watch any political programs from the top 40–50 programs increased from 20 percent in 2008 to 27 percent in 2012 and to 33.8 percent in 2014. Even when we include soft news programs, talk shows that mix celebrities and politics, and programs with only minor amounts of political content,⁴ the competition from apolitical programming appears substantial.

EXAMINING OLD AND NEW MEDIA HYPOTHESES

The remainder of this chapter takes advantage of a unique opportunity to examine the effects of contemporary television programs on retrospective economic perceptions. For these purposes we use the publicly available National Annenberg Election Study panel data surrounding the 2008 primaries and general election. These data included five waves stretching from late 2007 to just before Obama's inauguration in early 2009.⁵ Panel participants were initially recruited by Knowledge Networks (now GfK Ltd) using probability sampling techniques. Those panelists without internet access were given free access in return for their participation.

In 2012 and 2014 a subset of the roughly 11,000 people who participated in all previous waves were randomly sampled using stratification by demographics in order to prevent panel attrition from systematically degrading the quality of the sample. In 2012 a group of scholars associated with the Institute for the Study of Citizens and Politics at the University of Pennsylvania pooled resources to

re-interview a subset of 2606 panelists who were present in waves four and five, shortly before and after the 2012 and 2014 elections.

Drawing on highly detailed program-level measures of television exposure, we are able to differentiate the total amount of exposure to political television programs from Inparty versus Outparty partisan programming: that is, programs that are expected to be biased toward the party of the president and programs that are biased toward the party out of power, respectively. Further, although self-report measures of media exposure are notoriously suspect, the items used in this chapter have been validated extensively for both reliability and validity (see Dilliplane et al. 2013).

Fortunately, the timespan of this panel also includes periods from two different administrations, one from each political party. The first three waves that we use occurred during the George W. Bush presidency, and the last three waves occurred during Obama's presidency.⁶ This change of administration is important because it allows us to observe how the very same individual changes his or her views of the economy as a result of partisan rationalization. When the party of the presidency changes, the incentive for partisan rationalization flips directions. Thus partisan rationalization can be analyzed independent of the impact of people's media consumption habits. By analyzing three waves of data from a Republican administration and three from a Democratic administration, we hold constant each individual's motivation for partisan rationalization within each administration and examine the impact of partisan media use on economic perceptions. This approach allows us to separate the effects of partisan news consumption from partisan rationalization.

Further, we can also differentiate the impact of real economic change – which affects all people – from media coverage without resorting to aggregate-level analyses. Notably, what some have referred to as 'media effects' are simply effects of having the media relay objective information about the economy to readers or viewers. Others reserve the term for when media have effects that go beyond reflecting the release of statistics, leading indicators and so forth. While informing the public about real economic change is obviously an important function served by the media, the implications for accountability are very different when the media deviates from serving as a passive relay.

Altogether, these unique panel data include six assessments of both retrospective personal financial change and retrospective perceptions of national economic change from the same respondents, stretching from early 2008 through December of 2014. Previous studies have stressed the importance of controlling for personal economic experience when looking at media effects (Weatherford 1983; Pomper 1993), so the availability of both personal and sociotropic measures over so many panel waves is unique.⁷ Finally, the same surveys include six waves of information on exposure to specific television programs, as well as internet usage. Combining these data provides an unprecedented opportunity to examine the influence of both old and new forms of media exposure.⁸

EFFECTS OF OLD AND NEW MEDIA ON RETROSPECTIVE ECONOMIC EVALUATIONS

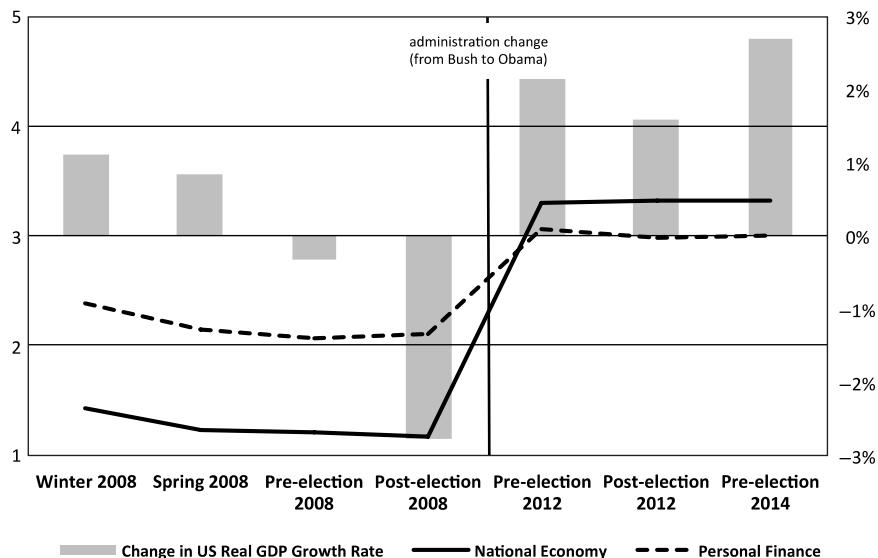
We begin by providing a descriptive account of how both personal and national retrospective evaluations changed during the period of our panel, as well as how economic indicators changed during the same period. First we examine one of the proposed effects of so-called ‘old media’ – that is, exposure to traditional, politically neutral television programs. Given that previous studies have suggested a negative bias to neutral coverage wherein more neutral program exposure leads to more negative perceptions of the economy, we anticipate a negative relationship between retrospective perceptions of the economy and neutral program exposure. Second, we look specifically at the extent to which individuals are exposed to relatively more Inparty Programs or Outparty Programs at each point in the panel. Relatively more Inparty Programs is expected to produce more positive retrospective evaluations, whereas more Outparty Programs should move perceptions in a more negative direction. Finally, our third hypothesis involves use of the internet for political news. Here we hypothesized that the increased amount of news choice among citizens online would lead them to have relatively more positive economic perceptions when their party was in power, and more relatively more negative views when their party was out of power. Throughout this preliminary examination, we take pains to sort out differences between partisan rationalization effects and effects due to actual patterns of media use.

Retrospective economic evaluations, 2008–2014

In Figure 32.2 we begin by documenting the means for panelists’ retrospective perceptions of personal and national economic conditions by wave of panel interview.⁹ High scores on this five-point scale represent more positive assessments of past economic change. The top panel in Figure 32.2 shows the retrospective evaluations of Democrats, while the lower panel shows the same data among Republicans. The broken lines refer to perceived changes in personal finances, while the solid lines reflects perceptions of collective national conditions. The ‘real’ economy is represented by the dark bars showing the Real GDP Growth Rates.

The first thing that is obvious from a glance at these figures is that the variance over time is far greater for perceptions of national conditions than for people’s assessments of their own finances. This contrast is most likely due to the fact that perceptions of national conditions are easily swayed by new information, whereas personal finances are anchored in slowly changing real world conditions. Short of winning the lottery or losing a job, personal finances seldom change very rapidly.

2A. Democrats' Retrospective Economic Perceptions



2B. Republicans' Retrospective Economic Perceptions

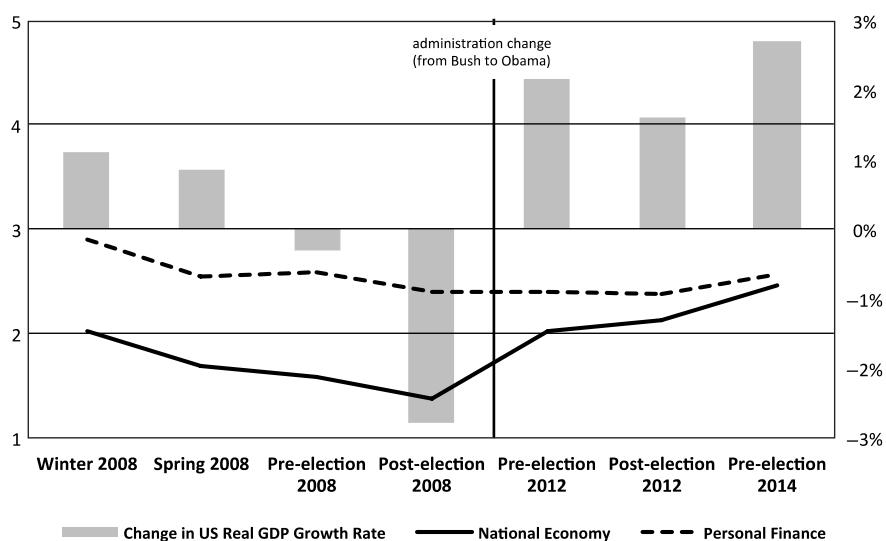


Figure 32.2 Over time economic assessments by party identification

Note: Both national and personal assessments of the economy range from 1 (a lot worse off) to 5 (a lot better off). The graphs includes respondents who were present in all eight waves. (n = 1443).

Source: U.S. Real GDP Growth Rate data are from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

In contrast, perceptions of national conditions vacillate a great deal more. Although Democratic assessments are more negative than Republican assessments during the Republican Bush administration, they both decline at roughly the same rate up until Obama is elected. At that point, there is a large surge in Democrats' positive assessments of the retrospective national economy, and only a slight improvement in Republicans' assessments. Importantly, effects of real world economic change are evident in these figures in that both Republicans' and Democrats' perceptions of national conditions became more positive as the economy began to turn around. However, the extremely large and significantly greater increase in positive national evaluations among Democrats relative to Republicans obviously suggests considerable partisan rationalization as well.

DO NEUTRAL PROGRAMS HAVE NEGATIVE EFFECTS?

If prior analyses of older, legacy media remain true of those same media today, then even economic coverage from 'neutral' television programs may carry with it a tendency to over-emphasize bad news. Problems naturally tend to make bigger headlines than things that are going well. However, given the timing of this panel, this is a particularly difficult test of this hypothesis. Given that the economy was, indeed, in very bad shape, and virtually no one remained ignorant of this fact, could television coverage really still have an added effect?

To examine this question while avoiding the complexities of mixed media diets, including neutral, inparty and outparty exposure all within the same individual, we took advantage of our large sample and the relatively greater popularity of politically neutral television programs. Figure 32.3 uses only the subsample of respondents who watch only neutral television news programs and ignores those with mixed media diets. This was the simplest possible approach given that we wanted to examine the effects of neutral programs without theorizing about how content from such programs might interact with exposure to partisan programs. In Figure 32.3 in the top panel we simply plot the extent of viewership of neutral programs relative to individuals' retrospective national economic perceptions. The means in Figure 32.3 are notably low given that economic perceptions are on a five-point scale from 1 to 5. Nonetheless, the more neutral political programs a given respondent watched, the more negative their perceptions of the economy were. Those who watched no programs at all – the blissfully ignorant – were most positive about the economy, whereas those watching five or more neutral programs were most negative in their evaluations.

Overall, this pattern is consistent with previous research suggesting that the media capitalize on negative news as a means of attracting viewers. Given that the economy was declining as well as improving during some parts of the panel, the overall pattern cannot be accounted for by the real economy alone, because all respondents were experiencing the same national economy.

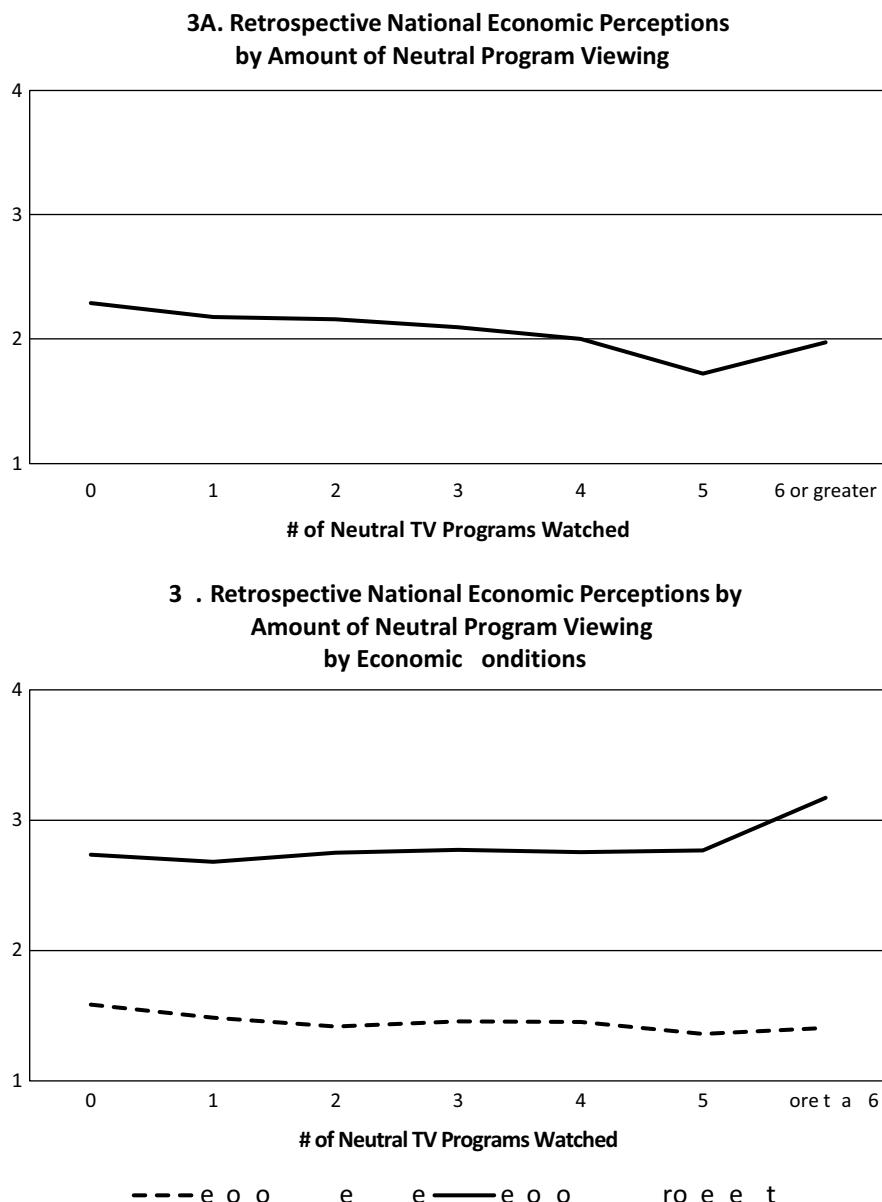


Figure 32.3 Relationship between neutral program viewership and retrospective economic perceptions

Nonetheless, it would be useful to distinguish an effect on the accuracy of economic judgments from a generally negative bias regardless of economic conditions. Thus, in the bottom panel of Figure 32.3 we separate our plot into two lines based on whether the economy experienced by panelist in the preceding year was a declining or improving one. The pattern in Figure 32.3B clearly suggests that

neutral media encourage accuracy as opposed to overall negativity. For example, when panelists were reporting their economic perceptions during times of economic improvement, the solid line in Figure 32.3B slopes slightly upward, toward more positive portrayals. Likewise, the slope of the broken line representing the relationship between perceptions of the economy and neutral news viewership shows that viewing more neutral political programs is associated with greater accuracy and thus gradually more negative perceptions. Because these data represent the same people assessing the recent economy at different points in time, it illustrates a mean difference (i.e. significantly lower evaluations) when the economy was in decline than when it was improving. Overall, this pattern suggests that what exposure to non-partisan programs generally does is promote greater accuracy. But what about partisan programming?

DO PARTISAN MEDIA INFLUENCE RETROSPECTIVE ECONOMIC EVALUATIONS?

How might one expect Inparty-supportive and Outparty-supportive media to affect economic perceptions? Because these terms already take the political party of the president into account, our basic hypothesis about the effect of Inparty-supportive media is that it should increase the favorability of perceptions of the national economy. So liberal news programs should improve perceptions of the economy when a Democratic president is in power, and conservative media consumption should improve economic perceptions when Republicans hold the presidency. Conversely, increases in Outparty media consumption (regardless of which party that happens to be at the time) should encourage more negative views of the economy. Note that our expectations do not differentiate between the impact of Inparty and Outparty media on Republicans and Democrats. Regardless of whether one is of the same or a different party, we anticipate that partisan media push economic perceptions in the same general direction.

To evaluate the impact of partisan media, we created a summary score representing the Relative Dominance of Inparty Media for each individual respondent for each time their television program diet was assessed simultaneous with asking about their retrospective economic evaluations. By taking a simple count of the number of Inparty programs watched minus the number of Outparty programs watched, we created a scale from those most likely to have negative perceptions of the retrospective national economy to those most likely to have positive perceptions. Those with a score of zero either watched equal numbers of inparty and outparty programs at the time or they watched neither. By coding media consumption as inparty versus outparty, we also avoid the need to look separately at the two different administrations.

In Figure 32.4A we plot the Relative Dominance of Inparty Media (the number of administration-supportive television programs minus the number

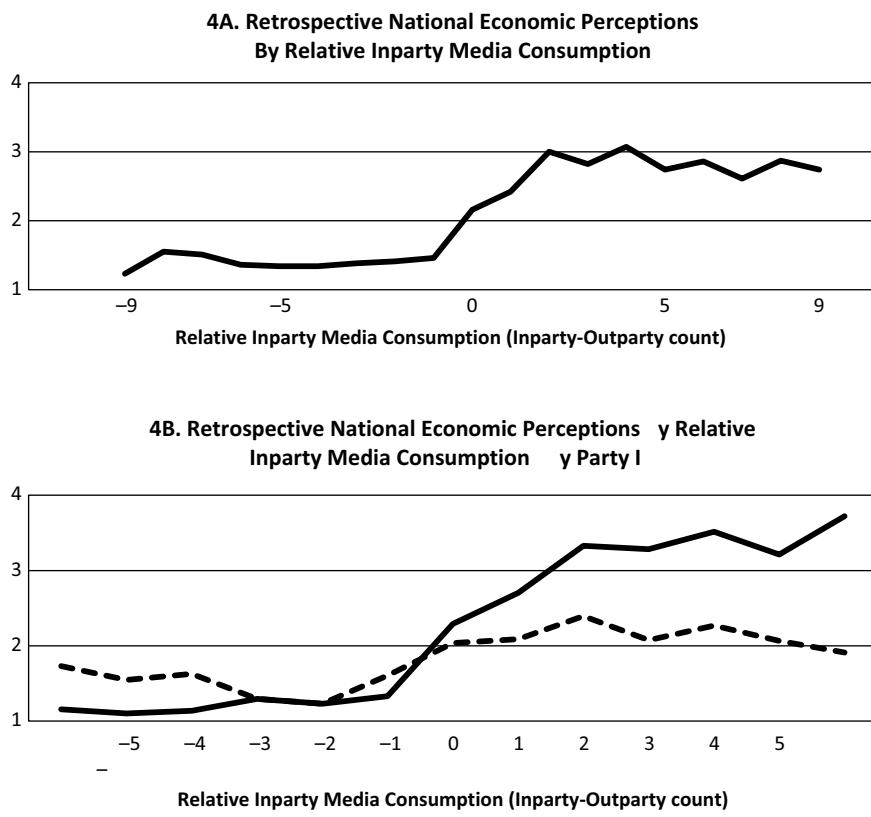


Figure 32.4 Relationship between inparty media consumption and retrospective economic perceptions

of outparty programs) for each person by the same person's Retrospective National Economic Evaluations. As shown in the top panel of Figure 32.4, the relationship is clearly positive; the more that Inparty Media dominate Outparty Media in a given person's television diet, the more positive their retrospective economic perceptions were. Interestingly, on the left-hand side of Figure 32.4A, where respondents are consuming predominantly programs favoring the outparty, the slope of the line is relatively flat, indicating that more outparty programs made perceptions only slightly more negative. As shown by the vertical axis, this may be because of a floor effect; those consuming outparty media did not have room to get any more negative in their perceptions of the economy.

As the number of programs viewed goes from predominantly outparty-favoring to predominantly inparty-favoring there is a dramatic improvement in perceptions of retrospective economic change. This advantage peaks at

the point where respondents consume roughly two to three more inparty than outparty programs, then maintains a stable advantage with more positive economic perceptions.

As shown in the bottom panel of Figure 32.4, this general pattern holds regardless of political party. For both Republican and Democratic respondents more favorable economic perceptions go hand in hand with greater relative inparty media exposure. However, during the period of time covered by this panel (2007–2014), Democrats showed a far stronger positive relationship than Republicans.

DOES INTERNET NEWS CONSUMPTION EXACERBATE LIKE-MINDED EXPOSURE?

Our last prediction concerning new forms of exposure to economic news focused on the impact of using the internet for political news. Because this time period was one in which there was a tremendous increase in the use of the internet for news it provides a good opportunity to see whether internet news consumers are able to construct more congenial information environments for themselves than non-internet users. To examine this pattern while controlling for the actual state of the economy at the time, we calculated the difference in economic evaluations between internet news users and non-users for each wave of data collection, thus cancelling out the effects of actual economic change, which can be assumed to have affected both groups. Further, we separated the sample into those sympathetic to the inparty versus the outparty, so that differences could be observed separately for these two groups. If inparty citizens use the internet to self-select congenial reports on the economy, then internet news users should demonstrate significantly more positive perceptions than non-users. Likewise, if outparty citizens use the internet to self-select congenial economic news, then outparty internet users should be significantly more negative about the economy than outparty non-users.

Outparty partisans would naturally be more negative about the economy than inparty partisans at any given point in time. Nonetheless, are outparty partisans even more negative about the economy than outparty partisans who do not use the internet because they can more easily find supportive interpretations? Likewise, are inparty partisans still more positive about the economy if they are internet news consumers than inparty non-consumers?

We are limited in our ability to test this hypothesis by relatively crude measures of internet news usage. Any respondent in the survey who could name at least one internet site they used for political news was counted as a user, and all others were considered non-users. Not surprisingly, fewer people in the early 2007–2008 waves went online for news than the same panelists in later waves. Although we do not have specifics on which kinds of internet site respondents

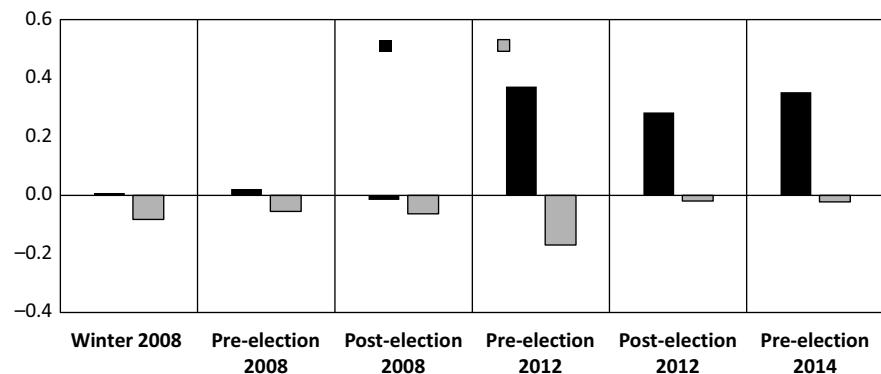


Figure 32.5 Relationship between internet news usage and retrospective economic perceptions

used, we can nonetheless hypothesize that those who go online for news have an easier time finding politically reinforcing stories about the economy that rationalize their existing preferences.

To begin, note that in Figure 32.5 outparty partisans are significantly more negative in their economic evaluations than inparty partisans across all six surveys. But what about the comparison between internet news users and non-users? Among inparty partisans, the difference between users and non-users was only significantly different and positive during the last three waves of the panel in 2012–2014. Because inparty partisans during this period were Democrats, what it shows is that online Democrats had more positive economic perceptions than offline Democrats.

Among outparty members, those using the internet for political news were significantly more negative than non-internet users in all six comparisons. Members of the party out of power at the time may be more exposed to congenial perspectives on the economy as a result of this new medium that allows greater self-selection.

Overall, these results suggest that the partisan mix present in people's media environment does, indeed, make a difference to their economic perceptions. What is new and different about contemporary media is that it incorporates more partisan content and allows people to self-select content more easily. This is not to say that people succeed in isolating themselves in like-minded echo chambers, to be sure. Nonetheless, an individual's extent of dominance of inparty media over outparty content in their media diet appears to make a difference. People may respond to the real economy, but the strength of their reactions to upturns and downturns is conditioned on their media diet as well as on their partisanship relative to the president.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC VOTING

To our knowledge, this is the first examination of the effects of the newer, more partisan and more selective American media environment on economic evaluations. Although the rise of new media sources in the United States is a well-researched and widely discussed trend, its implications for economic voting remain largely unexplored. In the past, studies of economic perceptions have treated economic news as if it were all of one cloth. Although scholars have acknowledged, based on content analyses, that coverage was not necessarily an unbiased reflection of actual economic trends, the bias reflected in mainstream coverage was assumed to reach everyone equally. Thus, whatever biases were present in coverage were also assumed to affect all people roughly equally. Under these assumptions, it mattered little from which outlets people got their economic news.

We have presented a descriptive account demonstrating that what people consume has implications for what they believe about the economy. In the future, in order to study these relationships properly, scholars will need to move beyond undifferentiated aggregates to study individuals and their unique, highly individualistic media environments. The rise of partisan political news presents the possibility that ideologically slanted coverage of the economy may skew people's economic perceptions in less subtle, more self-serving ways. Although past studies of ideological bias in reporting on the economy agreed about its occasional presence, this type of bias was deemed of little concern because, as scholars put it, 'Competition between media can eliminate the effect of ideological bias. Ideological biases cancel out in the aggregate of all stories available to readers. The truth is "in the middle"' (Alsem et al. 2008, 531).

This reassuring statement makes a number of questionable or at least as-yet undocumented assumptions about balance in exposure to economic news. First, it assumes that any skewing of economic perceptions in coverage by media supporting one party is counterbalanced by coverage supporting the other party. Although this is possibly true in terms of the aggregate of all stories available in the media environment, there is no clear basis for assuming that all stories are equally likely to be encountered. At the individual level it is clearly not true, because most citizens have media diets with a partisan imbalance in one direction or the other.

Although the overall trend in economic perceptions follows the pattern of aggregate economic statistics, it is clear that partisan rationalization is alive and well. When one goes from being an inparty to an outparty partisan, economic perceptions change considerably as a result, even after taking into account the impact of real world economic change. But exposure to partisan media and greater choices among huge amounts of online content are likely to have effects beyond that of partisan rationalization.

Based on the patterns observed in our preliminary analyses, the impact of regular exposure to one program's worth of outparty media is much stronger than the impact of exposure to one program's worth of inparty media. There are two possible ways one might view this pattern. Most obviously, this pattern could suggest that presidents essentially have the deck stacked against them when it comes to benefiting from economic growth. It is easier to drub the president for poor or less-than-expected economic growth than it is to praise him for good or better-than-expected economic performance. However, it remains for other scholars to determine if this pattern holds under varying actual economic conditions when the outparty and inparty are switched with respect to political parties.

Two additional assumptions also call the presupposition of balance into question. The conclusion of no potential harm from partisan media coverage of the economy assumes that Republicans and Democrats are equally likely to be exposed to biased media. As shown in Figure 32.1, Republicans are more exposed to partisan media than are Democrats, but they are also more evenly exposed to inparty and outparty media than are Democrats, whose media diets are more dominated by liberal coverage. Clearly this is a more complex issue than it first appears. Whether the wonders of aggregation can render partisan media a non-issue with respect to economic accountability remains to be seen.

In addition, the balance conclusion assumes that Republicans and Democrats are equally likely to have their economic perceptions influenced by partisan media coverage. Our analyses also call this assumption into question. Democrats' economic perceptions are particularly strongly influenced by inparty media, whereas Republicans' perceptions were less so. Republicans experienced higher proportions of cross-cutting exposure, while Democrats had more like-minded exposure, although they also watched more politically neutral news programs than Republicans.

Overall, one would expect the impact of new media on citizens to be a reduced ability to hold politicians accountable for economic change. The more highly partisan portrayals of the economy flowing from partisan media and the greater selectivity facilitated by the internet only exacerbate this tendency. There were already limitations on accountability due to partisan rationalization of economic perceptions; the new media environment simply poses still greater limitations.

Beyond accountability issues, another potential downside to increased diversity in reporting on economic issues is that it could further promote a sense among partisans that the direction of economic change is simply a matter of opinion, open to multiple interpretations. If the economy is no longer something that political news can largely agree upon, then citizens' perceptions of the legitimacy of election outcomes may suffer. The party on the losing side can at least make sense of a loss during an electoral downturn. But to the extent that partisans do not attribute loss to real economic downturns, the outcome is less likely to be seen as legitimate.

On the positive side, at the moment, Americans' media diets are far from homogeneously partisan. Instead, they allot the largest portion of their political viewing to old-style mainstream programs that should not be expected to skew coverage in a particular direction. Rather, they continue to promote largely accurate perceptions of economic change, unlike their partisan counterparts.

Notes

- 1 Another possibility is that they are generalizations from personal economic experience. Although assessments of change in one's personal family finances are sometimes significant predictors of sociotropic perceptions, study after study confirms that even after controlling for perceived changes in personal finances variation in sociotropic perceptions still matters to voting and presidential approval.
- 2 Mullainathan and Shleifer (2002, 2005) have dubbed this 'spin bias'; however, because this term is easily confused with ideological spin, we do not use this same term.
- 3 In these data and throughout the chapter party identification is measured using the standard ANES question sequence, and party was re-asked at each wave of data collection (though it changed very little throughout).
- 4 This statistic remains true despite the fact that our list of 58 programs includes soft news programs (e.g. *20/20*, *Good Morning America*) and programs that only occasionally discuss politics directly (e.g. *Oprah*, *Ellen*).
- 5 These data are publicly available at <http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/naes-data-sets/>
- 6 Survey dates were: Winter 2008: January 2008–March 2008 ((NAES); Spring 2008: April 2008–August 2008 (NAES); Pre-election 2008: August 2008–November 2008 (NAES); Post-election 2008: November 2008–January 2009 (NAES); Pre-election 2012: October 2012 (ISCAP); Post-election 2012: November 2012–January 2013 (ISCAP); Pre-election 2014: October 2014 (ISCAP).
- 7 Standard question wordings were used: Personal Retrospective: 'We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you and your family living here are better off, worse off, or just about the same financially as you were a year ago?' National Retrospective: 'Thinking about the economy in the country as a whole, would you say that over the past year the nation's economy has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse?' Both perceptions are coded as 1: A lot worse off, 2: A little better off, 3: Just about the same, 4: A little better off, and 5: A lot better off.
- 8 We followed Dilliplane's program coding procedure (Dilliplane 2014) to determine the partisan slant of TV news programs. Her coding procedure is available in Appendix A of her online appendix (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ajps.12046/supplinfo>).
- 9 For the sake of simplicity, the means shown below are for people who participated in all waves of the panel. However, the means formed virtually identical patterns when including all respondents from any given wave.

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Campaign Spending

Zachary Albert and Raymond La Raja

INTRODUCTION

The scholarship on campaign spending is fraught with significant normative issues associated with democratic principles and political representation. To the degree that political campaigns can spend money to influence voters, we tread into questions about the ability of those with private financial wealth or state subsidies to shape democratic outcomes. Specifically, the study of campaign spending raises questions about who influences elections and which groups in society possess the resources that translate into political power. Such questions loom large as candidates and parties in many nations spend greater sums in campaigns. It is for urgent reasons, then, that scholars attempt to understand the impact of campaign spending on political behavior.

There remains much to be done. The vast majority of research on campaign spending has focused on American politics, with limited applicability to other contexts. At the same time, the relatively mature scholarship covering politics in the US highlights the importance of understanding comparatively the implications of campaign spending for democratic performance. Specifically, these questions examine how spending affects the degree of voter engagement, knowledge, and preferences, which can indirectly indicate potential distortions in the democratic process as a result of the way elections are financed.

It follows, then, that the study of campaign spending has very practical applications for political regulation. To the degree that citizens and politicians feel that money – particularly private sources of money – distorts the political

system, calls for institutional reform become louder. And yet cutting off the supply of private money is no simple matter. Research has shown that political parties and campaigns need money to inform and mobilize voters. Providing meager public subsidies can potentially dampen political participation or encourage political parties to seek non-transparent and illegal sources of funding. For all these reasons, understanding the effects of campaign spending is essential to crafting policies that balance a range of competing goals and values, including voter mobilization and competency, freedom of speech, political equality and fairness, electoral competition, transparency, and clean government.

Given these implications, this chapter probes how political spending shapes behavior in ways that support or undermine valued democratic outcomes. Our review of the literature points to the importance of studying campaign spending in a comparative context, so that *appropriate* reforms might be enacted when needed. At the same time, a second theme emerges that highlights the difficulty of this task. That is to say, research suffers from the poor quality or complete absence of data on political spending in many democracies.

To highlight these themes, we divide the study of campaign spending into two overlapping research agendas for political behavior. The first attempts to understand how spending influences *voters*. This includes voter turnout, levels of knowledge, and vote choice, all of which shapes who wins elections. The second examines how political context conditions the impact of spending effects. We discuss studies that assess how particular attributes of electoral systems, candidate characteristics, and political events might diminish or enhance spending effects. We will then turn to key limitations of this literature: (1) a lack of comparative studies; (2) few studies on the impact of party or group spending (as contrasted with individual candidate spending); and (3) a host of methodological and data issues. Overall, we argue that the field remains under-theorized. We know that campaign spending matters in a variety of ways, but we have a weak sense of the circumstances in which it matters more or less in affecting political behavior. Finally, we will offer several suggestions for future research.

THE CAMPAIGN SPENDING LITERATURE

The most obvious characteristic of the current literature on money in elections is that it has a distinctly American focus. Table 33.1 shows the results of an online search of five related political science journals for three key terms – ‘campaign finance’, ‘campaign spending’, and ‘party finance’. These journals are far from a perfect sample, but they do represent some of the most influential repositories for articles on campaign financing. The results highlight the predominance of studies related to American politics, with 48 percent of the 420 articles singularly focused on the United States. Only 32 percent had a comparative or non-American focus, and it seems that many of these articles – especially in

Table 33.1 Results from an online search of journal articles published between 1980 and 2010 which contain one or more of the terms 'campaign finance', 'campaign spending', or 'party finance'.

Journal	Total Articles	Articles with American Focus	Articles with non-American or Comparative Focus
<i>American Journal of Political Science</i>	125	98	12
<i>American Political Science Review</i>	90	82	8
<i>Comparative Political Studies</i>	28	0	28
<i>Comparative Politics</i>	15	0	15
<i>Electoral Studies</i>	162	21	72
TOTAL:	420	201 (48%)	135 (32%)

Electoral Studies – were non-scientific ‘post-election notes’ on various nations. A residual category (not shown) includes articles that contained a key term but did not substantively engage with the topic of campaign spending. This more intense focus on American politics – and the lesser focus on campaign spending elsewhere – is a theme we will return to throughout this chapter.

The dominance of campaign spending studies in the US context may be related to several factors. First, for a variety of reasons, starting in the 1970s the American states and US government made transparency of campaign finance data a high priority, whereas other democratic nations did not. This push for greater transparency resulted in rich and readily accessible campaign finance data at both the state and national level. It is no surprise that scholars converge on topics where data exist, like the proverbial drunkard’s search for car keys under the street lamp. Second, American legislative elections, which are more candidate-centered and district-based, lend themselves more easily than do multi-party proportional representation systems to large-N studies.

Because of the predominance of American studies in the existing political finance literature, this section will provide a brief overview of the findings regarding the US system and then examine in detail the more limited work conducted from a comparative perspective. Where possible, we will draw insights from the studies in the US in order to provide ideas for studies in other nations and in broader comparative contexts.

The impact of campaign spending on voter behavior

While the broader study of campaign finance examines issues of vote buying in legislatures, the studies of campaign *spending* focus squarely on how it affects voters in elections. Scholars look primarily at the impact of spending on three dependent variables: voter turnout, voter knowledge, and vote choice. We will take each of these in turn.

Voter turnout

With regard to voter turnout, a consistent finding in American elections is that spending by candidates on advertising and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) campaigns has a mobilizing effect on voters (Caldeira et al. 1985; Gilliam 1985; Green and Krasno 1988; Cox and Munger 1989; Jackson 1997; Gerber and Green 2000a, b). In other words, increased spending has been shown to improve citizen participation. Two more recent studies support this conclusion while adding that voters' pre-existing partisan biases, candidate and district characteristics, and the ability of political parties to target their spending all impact the relationship between spending and voter turnout (Herrera et al. 2008; Hogan 2013). Both studies thus point to the importance of considering contextual factors in estimating spending effects.

Several other studies have focused on two-party/two-bloc electoral systems outside the US, reaching similar conclusions in Great Britain (Pattie and Johnston 1998) and France (Palda and Palda 1998). Very little work, however, has been done to account for variation in electoral contexts by studying non-majoritarian systems. One exception is found in the work of Rekkas (2007), who demonstrates that in Canadian multi-party elections campaign spending not only redistributes votes across parties but also induces otherwise abstaining groups of voters to participate. In European contexts, however, the relationship between campaign spending and voter turnout remains largely unknown. To be sure, we would expect spending to affect turnout positively, but the effects of political spending in Europe may be significantly influenced by public subsidies, particularly with respect to 'free' media on government-controlled broadcast stations.

While the majority of studies find a positive relationship between spending and turnout, some have argued that, under certain circumstances, spending can have a demobilizing effect. The question of whether excessive spending can send negative signals to voters remains understudied, especially outside the US. Ansolabehere et al. (1994) offer the only direct test of this phenomenon, questioning the notion that American campaigns are inherently 'stimulating'. They find that exposure to negative campaign advertising can reduce voting by 5 percent, concluding that 'exposure to attack advertising significantly weakened confidence in the responsiveness of electoral institutions and public officials. As campaigns become more negative and cynical, so does the electorate' (Ansolabehere et al. 1994:835). Semi-related evidence from Iaryczower and Mattozzi (2012) suggests that demobilizing effects may occur outside the US as well. The authors test a model that shows that increasing spending caps will eventually lead to a smaller number of parties in multi-party systems, reducing the set of alternatives available to voters and conceivably discouraging them from voting. Clearly, more comparative research is needed in order to fully understand the effects of campaign spending on voter turnout.

One final way in which spending might impact voter turnout is worth mentioning briefly. Through the practice of clientelism or 'vote buying'¹, which has been

studied in many third-world and developing countries, material goods may be traded to induce citizens to vote (or not vote) for a particular candidate. To take one example, Schaffer (2007) notes how vote buying – which does not always involve a monetary transfer – can induce recipients to vote through multiple compliance mechanisms. For more on the practice of vote buying and its potential impacts on voter turnout, see Auyero (2001), Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007), or Gonzalez-Ocantos et al. (2012).

Campaign spending, then, may impact voter turnout in multiple ways. Our understanding of these effects is largely limited to the US and, in the case of vote buying, certain developing democracies. More research on voter turnout effects is clearly needed.

Voter knowledge

Campaign spending may also improve the political knowledge of citizens. Spending in the US has been shown to have informational effects, improving voter trust, involvement, attention, and knowledge (Coleman and Manna 2000; Coleman 2001). Generally, the literature on these effects has focused on two party systems, where research has shown that campaign activities can increase voter knowledge of candidate positions and quality and, to some extent, the content of direct democracy ballot measures. Ultimately, such information gives voters a stronger capacity to hold politicians accountable, particularly in places where independent media coverage of politics is weak.

The literature on spending and assessments of candidate quality tends to rely on a rational voter paradigm, where spending may impact a rational voter's perception of the electoral prospects of a candidate. Two alternative mechanisms have been proposed to explain this effect. First, some have argued that spending on advertising can be *directly* informative about a candidate's quality or an opponent's defects. For these scholars, the content of advertising can improve voter knowledge, impact vote choice, and mobilize new supporters (Degan 2013). Others, however, have argued that any informational effects resulting from campaign spending are *indirect*. This literature engages more explicitly with advertising signaling, a concept borrowed from the field of communications. For these scholars, campaign spending on advertising in particular helps to signal to voters a high-quality 'product'. The fact that a candidate is running quality advertisements – or has interest groups willing to run them – serves as an indicator of a serious campaign and a worthy candidate (Milgrom and Roberts 1986).

Campaign spending may also improve voter knowledge of candidates' policy positions. Austen-Smith (1987), for instance, presents a game theoretic model where voters have 'noisy perceptions' of candidates' policy stances, with increased campaign spending lessening the extent of this noise. For Austen-Smith, 'it is never in the candidates' interest to be ambiguous if they can avoid it' (1987:124), and so well-funded campaigns should always have a direct, positive

informational effect on voters. Keena Lipsitz (2011) expands this theory, arguing that the informational effects of spending increase proportionally with the level of campaign competition. Competitive campaigns especially are seen as self-interested transmitters of information, often strategically targeting voting groups as the recipients of informational campaigns (Baron 1994; Schultz 2007).

One final learning effect campaign spending may have is on voter knowledge of specific policy issues and proposals (rather than a candidate's stance on these issues). This type of learning has not been studied in depth, but Burnett (2013) provides a suitable template for future research. He examines the effect of campaigns surrounding ballot measures in California on voter knowledge of the specific issues. His findings show some learning effects, but they are largely independent of spending levels. In particular, he finds that voters are unaware of policy specifics even if vast amounts of money are spent campaigning for the issue. Rather, most voters tend to know the central facts of each issue and learn something about each ballot measure *no matter the level of spending*. While Burnett does not make this connection, these findings may indicate the role that media attention plays in transmitting campaign knowledge and, perhaps, mitigating spending effects. Future research should explore this intersection.

Vote choice

While voter turnout and knowledge are crucial aspects of democratic electoral systems, the area which has received the most scholarly (and popular) attention has undoubtedly been the relationship between campaign spending and electoral success. In the end, campaigns care less about encouraging high levels of turnout or voter knowledge than they do about winning elections. What, then, is the relationship between increased spending and vote choice?

This question has been the subject of broad analysis in the United States, but the findings are still somewhat contradictory. Gary Jacobson (1978, 1980, 1985) has written extensively on the matter, showing that campaign spending is highly important for understanding *challenger* vote totals. Incumbent spending, however, is found to have a marginal impact on electoral success, probably due to the fact that incumbents face a 'saturated' market where voters and the media already know the candidate well, limiting the impact of each additional dollar spent. These initial findings sparked a lively debate over the efficacy of campaign spending for different types of candidates.² Others have found that spending is equally productive for incumbents and challengers (Green and Krasno 1988; Ansolabehere and Snyder 1996; Gerber 1998). Levitt (1994:777), however, argues that campaign spending 'has an extremely small impact on electoral outcomes, regardless of who does the spending'. These divergent findings are likely the result of methodological issues, particularly endogeneity, due to the fact that campaign spending is highly correlated with the quality of challengers. These issues will be explored further in the following sections, but for now it is

enough to note that only recently have scholars begun to more frequently deploy experimental and econometric modeling strategies to mitigate the problem of endogeneity.

Turning to studies of other nations, the literature on campaign spending and election outcomes is similarly inconsistent. Once again, we see support for the notion that spending might lead to victory on election day. Johnston (1987), for example, finds that money spent on advertising in Britain has electoral benefits. Cox and Thies (2000) examine multi-candidate elections in Japan between 1967 and 1990, finding that campaign spending is statistically related to candidate vote share. This relationship is between two and five times stronger than in the United States, perhaps indicating that campaign effects are mitigated by electoral institutions and systems. Similarly, Da Silveira and De Mello (2011) use a quasi-natural experiment in Brazilian gubernatorial elections to find a large causal effect of television advertising on election outcomes. By comparing spending and vote totals across two rounds of voting the authors are able to separate campaign advertising as a proxy for spending (which is allocated equally in second round campaigning) from candidate quality (which is typically more equal in run-off elections). In this way, they not only find significant spending effects but also present an interesting and likely fruitful methodological template for future work.

While some have found campaign spending to be a strong predictor of electoral outcomes outside the US, others have qualified or refuted this relationship altogether. For instance, in German elections spending has been shown to have a positive impact on vote share at the federal level but not in state elections, perhaps due to the fact that federal elections are perceived by citizens as more important and therefore elicit stronger voter responses to campaign spending (Fink 2012). Recent research on French legislative elections before and after campaign finance reform concluded that spending has a statistically significant but *substantively small* impact on vote totals (Francois et al. 2014). Finally, Ben-Bassat et al. (2012) argue that candidate vote totals in Israeli municipal run-off elections are not substantially affected by even large amounts of campaign spending. Maddens and Put (2013) extend this finding with a unique examination of open-list PR systems at the individual candidate level, showing that spending has no effect on the odds of winning an election irrespective of office or electoral level.

Again, the contradictory findings preclude the declaration of a convincing theory of campaign spending and vote choice. One set of findings appears to suggest that the ‘underdog’ benefits from the additional publicity of campaign spending relative to the better-known rival. Another set of findings indicate equal marginal effects for campaigners, while a third set of findings questions whether spending matters at all. It is plausible that the three sets of findings vary depending on the context. As such, the inconclusive nature of the research means the field remains ripe for new and creative research projects with particular emphasis on *comparing* findings across contexts.

The contexts that affect the impact of spending

Thus far we have focused, in broad strokes, on understanding the research about campaign spending and electoral outcomes. Inherent in many of these studies, however, is the assumption that the findings are context specific in terms of both time and place. Conclusions reached regarding US congressional spending, for instance, cannot easily be generalized to European PR systems. Institutional and electoral contexts are thus important mitigating factors of campaign spending effects. What are the most important contexts? What types of variables limit or magnify spending effects? While clear answers to these questions remain elusive, we can discern at least three important contextual factors from the existing literature: candidate characteristics, electoral level, and electoral system type.

Candidate characteristics

With regard to the particular candidate characteristics that might affect campaign spending, scholars have focused almost exclusively on the incumbent-versus-challenger dynamic. We have alluded briefly to this literature in the previous section, but its prominence in the field warrants further attention. The debate began among American scholars, when Jacobson (1978) first argued that challenger spending has a much greater impact on elections than spending by incumbents. Green and Krasno (1988) challenged this finding based on methodological grounds, concluding instead that the marginal effect of incumbent spending is substantial and, occasionally, equal to the effects of challenger spending. These authors – and many others – have continued to provide conflicting accounts of the impact incumbency status might have on American campaign spending (see, for example, Jacobson 1980 and 1985; Gerber 1998; Holbrook and Weinschenk 2014). However, while the substantive component of Jacobson's argument has taken some criticism, a general consensus – that challenger and incumbent spending should be understood differently – has remained.

This assumption has been adopted by scholars operating outside the American political arena as well. Some of this work has made explicit comparisons to the US and the so-called 'Jacobson effect'. Evans (2007), in one of the few non-US studies of single-member districts (SMDs), finds that Canadian majority party spending has an initial positive impact on votes, but that the impact diminishes much more sharply than opposition party spending. Challengers in Canada, then, may receive marginally more benefit per dollar. The literature in multi-member districts (MMDs), however, finds less support for challenger spending advantages. Perhaps the earliest effort was Cox and Thies' study of Japan (2000), where they found that challengers benefit less from campaign spending effects than do their American counterparts. Challenger spending in Brazil is also less effective relative to the US, and in fact both challengers and incumbents have been found to benefit equally from spending (Samuels 2001; Johnson 2012). Only in Irish

general elections is incumbent spending found to have considerably less of an effect than challenger spending, although this is untrue with regard to intra-party competition (Benoit and Marsh 2010).

Why might challenger spending be relatively less effective in MMDs? Johnson (2012) provides a theoretical explanation, arguing that the ‘permissiveness’ of PR systems encourages challengers who are more limited in their ability to gain electoral support, even when they spend heavily. That is to say, PR list systems are more likely to have some weak candidates contesting elections who do not benefit as much from additional spending. This theory has yet to be tested empirically, but it points to the importance of understanding spending effects in a comparative context.

Electoral level and system type

Alongside particular candidate characteristics, institutional factors such as the level of the election (local to national) and the election system type (majoritarian or PR, SMD or MMD) may crucially shape the impact of campaign spending. The previous section has already shown the unique impacts single-member versus multi-member districting might have on spending. What, then, do we know about spending at various levels and in various contexts?

In the US context, scholars have studied spending effects at different electoral levels. At the presidential level, where candidates are typically evenly matched in their spending, the focus has been largely on early nomination spending. This ‘money primary’ – the fight for early financial support – may aid candidates by signaling their credibility and quality (Hinckley and Green 1996; Smidt and Christenson 2012). Congressional races, though, have received the lion’s share of scholarly attention due to the institution’s relative size, stability, and the large amounts of available data. Most of what we ‘know’ about campaign spending in the US comes from congressional studies. Finally, some research has examined spending at the state and local levels, although the methodological opportunities offered by cross-state comparisons point to the possibility of further research in this vein. In particular, multi-state comparisons provide excellent institutional and partisan variation across similar constitutional structures. Finally, sub-national research has focused on gubernatorial (Patterson and Caldeira 1983; Brown 2013), state legislative (Hogan 2013), and mayoral (Holbrook and Weinschenk 2014) or city council elections (Gierzynski et al. 1998; Krebs 1998).

Scholars of American elections have generally done a fair job of contextualizing campaign spending within a federal system (although, again, no overarching theory of campaign spending has emerged). Outside the US context, however, most research has focused on the national level. Several exceptions stand out. First, Petithomme (2012) appears to offer the only examination of spending at the transnational level. Assessing elections for the European Union, he finds, ‘financial disengagement of mainstream party organizations’, indicating

that parties prioritize offices and spend accordingly (Petithomme 2012:150). In EU member countries parties tend to spend more on campaigns within their borders, viewing transnational spending as a less effective use of their limited resources.

When we move to the state and local levels, the literature outside the US context is sparse but promising. For instance, we have noted that Fink finds some evidence of spending effects in Germany at the federal level but none in state elections. Similarly, Maddens and Put (2013) examine ministerial and parliamentary elections, finding an ‘office effect’ whereby the prominence of the office acts as an explanatory variable in understanding spending effects. Both of these studies, by truly comparing spending in different contexts, offer excellent templates for future work that could advance cogent and generalizable theories of the impact of money in elections, including the context when it matters most.

This research agenda requires scholars to broaden their academic focus in at least two ways. First, the vast majority of scholarship conceptualizes campaign spending in terms of individual candidates and campaigns. A few key exceptions should be noted regarding campaign spending by non-candidates. Fink (2012) investigates how spending by parties might translate into larger vote shares for that party in PR systems, a model which should be applied in other contexts. Others move beyond the party to examine interest group spending on ballot measures and initiative awareness (Bowler and Donovan 1994; Burnett 2013). Finally, both Hogan (2013) and Donovan et al. (2013:129) highlight the need to understand how spending at one level influences electoral outcomes at another – the so-called ‘spillover’ effects of concurrent campaigns.

Secondly, much of the literature examined thus far has pointed to the fact that spending effects vary based on electoral system particularities. Spending effects in majoritarian systems vary from those in PR systems, and we need to spell out clearly the causal mechanisms for why this is so. An explicitly comparative approach should help illuminate the reasons for disparate findings across systems. Such research would go a long way in helping us understand the conditional effect of campaign spending on voter turnout, political knowledge, and election outcomes.

Areas of consensus

Most conclusions regarding campaign spending effects appear context specific and, lacking a comparative framework, it is hard to reach a consensus on robust theories about the impact of money in politics. So, what do scholars agree on when it comes to campaign spending effects? First, most concur that additional spending results in increased voter turnout. While the magnitude of this effect varies based on electoral and demographic factors (and certain *types* of spending may have a demobilizing effect), the majority of the literature proposes that, in

general, money can mobilize voters. In addition, a large portion of the literature argues that increased spending results in increased voter knowledge about the quality of candidates and policy positions, although the cumulative findings are not quite as robust.

While scholars do not agree on much, what they do agree on seems to have important implications for democratic campaign reforms. Specifically, when weighing positive democratic values (such as citizen participation and education) against the potential negative aspects of campaign financing (such as corruption, unsavory private influence, and inequality of access), potential reforms to the campaign finance system are not readily apparent. In fact, it becomes clear that there are important trade-offs that must be considered. Populist calls to curtail the flow of money in politics can undermine citizen participation and efficacy. For this reason, some scholarship points to reforms that maintain a robust flow of resources into politics (Coleman and Manna 2000; La Raja and Schaffner 2015) while attempting to mitigate the potentially adverse impact of private and unequal sources of money through public financing. However, specific recommendations to balance trade-offs remain elusive. As we describe in the next section, this elusiveness reflects, in part, the lack of knowledge about the relationship between campaign spending and outcomes. To be sure, regardless of the state of knowledge, reform is inherently difficult when recommended changes appear to benefit one set of political actors at the expense of others.

Questions that remain contested or unanswered

For every area of agreement in the campaign finance field, multiple areas of controversial or mixed results exist. For instance, scholars have reached contradictory conclusions regarding the relationship between campaign spending and electoral success. Some have found a strong correlation between the two, others a weak relationship, and still others no relationship at all. As the previous section highlights, ambiguous evidence makes consensus on reform efforts quite difficult. We have mentioned that these mixed results may be a function of the methodological issues that plague studies of campaign finance, and in order to reach more consistent conclusions scholars must address these problems.

The most contentious claims in the campaign finance literature, however, continue to be those about incumbent and challenger spending. Creative research design may help alleviate this problem, especially in untangling the issue of cross-causality (see, for example, the work by Da Silveira and De Mello). Short of methodological innovations, we sense that this area of research will continue to churn without coming to conclusive findings because of the inability to control for many confounding variables. For this reason, we urge a greater focus on understudied topics such as we urge a great focus on more understudied topics, such as how spending affects voter participation and knowledge (we make several suggestions below).

LIMITATIONS OF THE LITERATURE

We have already alluded to some of the limitations of the campaign finance field. Certain questions remain unanswered, many methodological problems remain unresolved, and there is a dearth of comparative research that would help explicate the conditions under which spending matters more or less. This section will attempt to more thoroughly examine these limitations so that, in concluding, we might offer suggestions for future research.

An American-centered field

A main limitation of campaign finance research is its dominant focus, until recently, on the American majoritarian electoral system. This focus has severely limited our ability to make generalizations about spending effects within and across various systems. Specifically, we know relatively little about campaign spending in proportional representation and European majoritarian systems. The few studies in PR elections have focused mainly on Brazil (Samuels 2001; Johnson 2012) and several European states (Maddens et al. 2006; Benoit and Marsh 2010; Fink 2012; Maddens and Put 2013). In fact, outside of the United States, Europe, and Brazil, campaign finance research is almost nonexistent.

Similarly, the topics studied outside the US are shaped – and limited – by the research agenda of scholars studying the US. For instance, many scholars studying non-US systems have adopted the incumbent–challenger debate, which seems less relevant in the vast majority of electoral systems. We agree with Maddens and Put (2013), who cogently describe the state of the campaign finance literature outside the US:

[Campaign spending] research used to be largely limited to majoritarian systems, particularly the US. It is only recently that researchers have turned their attention to expenditure effects in proportional systems. These studies have focused on the same questions that are central to the American research: does spending make a difference, and is the efficiency of spending higher for challengers than for incumbents? (Maddens and Put 2013:852)

The research on campaign spending, then, remains limited in its focus because of its attention to research agendas established in the US context. There is a compelling need for new questions and new approaches to the study of campaign spending.

Similarly, the scholarship to date has focused on single-country case studies. Few scholars have attempted to compare spending effects across diverse electoral systems. Instead, they have generally immersed themselves in the country- and context-specific questions we have outlined. For this reason, we have limited knowledge of how the structural characteristics of majoritarian and parliamentary systems, or single-member and multi-member districts, might differently

impact spending effects. Campaign finance structures may have important practical and normative implications for organizing and reforming electoral systems, and so scholars should seek a broader understanding of spending effects in different contexts.

A focus on candidate campaigns

The literature is similarly limited by a focus on individual candidate spending. Aside from a handful of exceptions (e.g. Johnston 1987; Bowler and Donovan 1994; Burnett 2013; Fink 2012), scholars have assumed that spending effects flow from specific campaigns and impact only the voters within that campaign's scope. This focus has been especially detrimental to our understanding of party spending. Party financing is particularly important in PR systems, where parties directly finance candidates more than in majoritarian systems and where voters typically cast votes for parties rather than candidates. Even in majoritarian systems, party spending on behalf of candidates can impact electoral outcomes. In all democracies, then, we should strive to understand the impact party spending may have on crucial electoral outcomes.³

Similarly, scholars have largely neglected interest and issue advocacy group spending, except as such outside spending relates to public policy outcomes in legislatures. Much like party spending, special interest spending can have important implications for participation, knowledge, and vote choice in candidate and ballot issue elections. This type of spending has become commonplace in the US, where the financial support of Political Action Committees (PACs) is a significant predictor of electoral victory (Desmarais et al. 2015) and where new groups, commonly called 'Super PACs', have begun to spend vast sums independent of candidates in order to influence the outcome of elections. The number of interest groups lobbying the EU has also increased sharply since the mid-1980s (Greenwood 2007), but no scholarly attention has been focused on the role these interests might play in facilitating campaign spending. This type of spending surely has implications for democratic representation and unequal access to the policymaking process. Unfortunately, special interest spending has been almost entirely black-boxed in studies of campaign finance.

Methodological and data limitations

The limitations we have described so far are generally attributable to the difficult nature of campaign spending studies. Methodological issues such as concept operationalization and model endogeneity are universal problems. However, the largest challenge to future studies is that the availability of high-quality data varies significantly from country to country. We will briefly examine each of these issues.

Designing campaign spending research

Milyo (2013) provides an excellent overview of the canonical approach to studying campaign spending. He writes that a particular ‘stylized model of campaign spending and electoral competition has been the basis for essentially all subsequent analysis’ in the field (Milyo 2013:443). This model begins with a dependent variable of theoretical interest – such as voter turnout or incumbent vote share – and typically assesses the explanatory power of a handful of common independent variables. These variables, as we have seen, include incumbent and challenger expenditures as well as one or several exogenous variables – for instance, the number of challengers, candidate party affiliation, or the nation’s economic health.

This model suffers from several problems. First, and most commonly, models of this type run the risk of omitting key explanatory variables. In the case of campaign spending, the omission of certain ‘unquantifiable’ concepts – such as candidate personality and charisma or voter attention and interest – may bias the results of these models. There have been rare attempts to operationalize candidate quality and district characteristics (see Levitt 1994; Milyo 1998; Stratmann 2009), but even these scholars must rely on imperfect proxies for these measures.

A related and much more serious problem with this model is endogeneity. In this case, endogeneity may result due to the fact that a common dependent variable – candidate vote total – is intertwined with certain explanatory variables such as total campaign contributions and expenditures. In short, candidate spending is not determined independent of vote share, as the model implies. Rather, the variables may be highly interdependent – candidates who are likely to win receive greater contributions, and therefore spend more. As Brown (2013:25) notes, ‘If a candidate is good enough to attract lots of campaign donations, that candidate would almost certainly be good enough to attract lots of votes – even in a moneyless world’. With these models, then, we must remember the old cliché – correlation does not necessarily equal causation.

Some scholars have found innovative solutions to this endogeneity problem, though they have yet to be widely adopted. One potential solution has been to include instrumental variables, but Gerber (1998) found that many of these variables have been employed inappropriately in prior research. For example, Gerber notes that Green and Krasno’s (1988) study of the US House, due to a lack of instrumental variables related to challengers, assumes that *only* incumbent spending is endogenous. He instead proposes utilizing instrumental variables that are correlated with a candidate’s ability to raise funds and are available for both challenges and incumbents, such as candidate wealth and spending in other districts in that state. A particularly innovative instrumental variable is constructed by Fieldhouse and Cutts (2009), who combine surveys of campaign actors and individual voters with campaign spending records to create an indicator of ‘campaign effort’. They then utilize this measure as a proxy for the quality of each

campaign in an analysis of party performance in Britain, thereby controlling for any endogenous impact of campaign efforts on vote totals. Other scholars might focus in a similar way on developing creative measures of candidate quality, though they should be aware of the difficulty of finding or crafting these variables (see Erikson and Palfrey 1998).

Another emerging approach – and one that is even more methodologically sound – is to rely on natural and quasi experiments. Quasi-experiments have been tried in countries with spending limits (Milligan and Rekkas, 2008), public provision of funds or advertising (Da Silveira and de Mello 2011; La Raja and Wiltse 2015), and recent campaign finance reforms (Francois et al. 2014). With quasi-experiments, the relationship between candidate quality and spending is accounted for through temporal observation before and after an exogenous shock, holding other factors constant as much as possible. A more rigorous approach is to exploit natural experiments using random assignment to assess what kinds of specific campaign activity boost turnout, including door-to-door canvassing (Gerber and Green 2000b; Green et al. 2003) or expenditures at polling stations to create a festive atmosphere (Addonizio et al. 2007). There are obviously some ethical and political challenges to intervening randomly in elections but well-conceived experiments provide great leverage in assessing the causal structure of campaign spending.

Along with the omitted variable and endogeneity biases, Milyo provides a long list of issues that have not yet been fully addressed by the campaign spending literature. We will briefly outline what we see as the most important – the need to account for cross-campaign spillover effects – but readers should refer to Milyo's article for a full list. Because elections do not occur in isolation, but rather within a highly interconnected system of campaigns, spending on one race may impact the outcome of another. This is true not only of campaigns at different electoral levels – such as the impact US presidential spending may have on a party's downticket races – but also of campaigns in different districts, especially with increasing crossover of media and advertising zones. We would add also that research should consider the impact technology such as the Internet might have on increasing the spillover effects of campaign spending.

These methodological challenges are undoubtedly difficult to address empirically, but they are not insurmountable. Working around them will require creative research designs. We provide some insight into paths that might be taken in the next section.

Measuring campaign spending

While model specification issues may explain some of the contradictory findings in the field, data limitations may be largely to blame for the case selection bias. Countries with the most accessible and reliable data on campaign receipts and expenditures are generally the areas where scholars have focused their attention.

This is especially true of the US, where scholarly research on campaign spending has flourished since campaign disclosure requirements were strengthened in 1975. Today, the US has the most detailed campaign finance databases in the world – including the Federal Election Commission’s Disclosure Portal, OpenSecrets, the Sunlight Foundation, and Maplight – likely explaining the predominance of Americanist studies in the field.⁴

Outside the US, data on campaign financing is more limited, especially in non-European countries.⁵ The poor state of country-by-country campaign spending data is largely due to variations in disclosure rules. These discrepancies can be seen in Table 33.2, which depicts the campaign finance disclosure requirements for some of the larger democracies in each region of the world. Especially outside of North America and Europe, these rules vary widely.

Indeed, an Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) report found that, of the 180 countries with political parties and elections, 88 percent require some form of financial reporting (2012). However, these reporting rules vary greatly: some nations require only political parties to report on their finances, while others require only candidates to file (see the second and third columns of Table 33.2). Slightly more than half require both parties and candidates to file reports, opening a loophole for avoidance of campaign finance regulations in the nations that do not. Similarly, not all nations require filers to report on *both* contributions and spending, limiting scholars’ ability to follow money throughout the campaign finance system.⁶ Thus, we have in most instances a very rough measure of efforts to influence elections with money.

Beyond accuracy, the availability of *any* data on campaign spending is often problematic (see columns four and six of Table 33.2). Of the nations that do have financial reporting requirements more than 25 percent do not require the data to be made public (IDEA 2012). This situation bodes poorly for the capacity of citizens to hold political actors accountable for the sources and uses of money, and certainly makes it next to impossible for scholars to study campaign spending. In addition, not all countries have separate institutions responsible for examining financial reports and investigating disclosure violations, potentially undermining the quality and accuracy of the data. Indeed, an International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) study found that, due to inadequate institutions, ‘the number of countries that lack effective oversight mechanisms is much higher’ than statistics might reveal (IFES 2009:13).

In sum, it is clear that issues with data quality and availability explain the lack of breadth and depth in research on campaign spending. The field’s examination of candidates rather than parties, the lack of comparative studies, and the focus on particular nations is, in part, a function of the data constraints. As Table 33.2 demonstrates, the countries that have received the most scholarly attention are those that have the most stringent disclosure requirements. Nevertheless, there may be hope for greater data availability in the future. Since the 2003 United Nations Convention against Corruption there has been a greater international focus

Table 33.2 Campaign finance disclosure requirements by region and country

	<i>Party reporting of campaign finances?</i>	<i>Candidate reporting of campaign finances?</i>	<i>Information in reports made public?</i>	<i>Must include donor identity?</i>	<i>Institution responsible for examining financial reports?</i>
North America					
Canada	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	EMB
Mexico	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	EMB
United States	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	EMB
Central/South America					
Brazil	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	EMB
Columbia	Yes	No	Yes	Sometimes	EMB
Venezuela	No	Yes	No	Yes	EMB
Europe					
France	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Other
Germany	Yes	No	Yes	Sometimes	Other
Ireland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	Other
Netherlands	Yes	No	Yes	Sometimes	Ministry
Spain	Yes	No	No	Yes	Auditing Agency
Sweden	Yes	No	Yes	Sometimes	Other
United Kingdom	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	EMB
Middle East					
Iraq	No	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Israel	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Auditing Agency
Jordan	Yes	No	No	Yes	Ministry
Pakistan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	EMB
Turkey	Yes	No	No	Yes	Other
Africa					
Egypt	Yes	Yes	No	Sometimes	EMB
Kenya	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	Auditing Agency
Libya	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	EMB
Morocco	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Other
South Africa	Yes	No	Yes	No	EMB
Asia					
India	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	EMB
Indonesia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	EMB
Japan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	EMB/Ministry
Philippines	No	Yes	No	Yes	EMB
Rep. of Korea	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	EMB
Russian Fed.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	EMB

Source: IDEA's (2014) *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns: A Handbook on Political Finance*. 'EMB' stands for electoral management body.

on compliance with political finance regulations, helping to shed light on those nations which have less than transparent financial reporting.⁷ Hopefully in time more detailed, accurate, and widespread data will be available on campaign spending behavior worldwide.

FUTURE RESEARCH

We have so far outlined the substantive and methodological shortcomings of research on campaign spending. In this section we propose some broad research agendas that might guide the field in the future, believing that many of these shortcomings can – and must – be addressed before we can fully understand the relationship between political money and behavior.

Expand analytical focus to diverse types and targets of spending

As we have noted, one of the key limitations of campaign spending research is its focus on a fairly homogenous set of spenders: individual legislative campaigns. However, a much more diverse group of actors – including parties and interest groups – is active in funding and directing campaign spending. For this reason, future research should seek to expand the analytic focus of the field in several ways. First, scholars should move beyond national legislatures, attempting to understand spending at the state, local, and, where applicable, executive level. While the field has branched out somewhat from its initial legislative focus, we believe that a great deal of research – particularly of a comparative nature – has yet to be attempted on state, local, and issue spending. How do spending effects differ as the size of the district changes? What effect does spending at the national level have on local political outcomes?

These questions should be approached with a variety of actors in mind. Interest group spending should be considered not only in terms of donations to candidates but as an act of signaling and campaigning in itself. Similarly, we should expand our understanding of party spending. Do parties on the political left spend money differently than those on the political right? Are oppositional parties spending in ways that differ from the party in power? And, importantly, who are these actors targeting with their spending?

Finally, we should seek to uncover the ways in which campaign spending might impact voter turnout, knowledge, and vote choice. In other words, what are the *mechanisms* by which campaign spending influences electoral behavior? What specific types of campaign activities are candidates, parties, and interest groups spending their money on, and which activities appear most effective? Experimental studies have demonstrated, for example, that door-to-door canvassing has a strong effect on turnout, particularly when the canvasser knows the

prospective voter (Gerber and Green 2000b). In contrast, the same study found little impact for telephone calls. Do different types of spending, then, have different impacts on the key outcomes we seek to understand?

To connect campaign strategies to campaign spending effects, researchers will have to move beyond the types of regression analysis and game theory modeling that have defined the field. This will likely involve more surveys and experiments, as well as previously underutilized qualitative methods such as interviews, archival research, and participant observation. A strong qualitative design would provide focused comparisons between units (local governments or nation-states) that share many political characteristics but vary on the dimension of campaign spending. It is likely that such research would expand our knowledge of the motives and modes of campaign spending in ways that quantitative research cannot. And we believe that more conclusive research in different electoral, political, and spending contexts will allow the field to move beyond strictly situational findings and towards a more comprehensive, comparative theory of campaign spending.

Examine spending in a longitudinal framework

The continued debate over challenger and incumbent spending is a prime example of the sort of path dependence that often guides research agendas. Although time marches on, many of the questions posed by scholars in the campaign finance field are rooted in static research paradigms. We must strive to adapt our research questions over time. How have changes in society impacted the types and effects of spending? This question is becoming increasingly important with the advent of new technologies such as computerized voter databases and social media advertising. As society and technology have changed, has campaign labor become less important relative to capital? Has technology changed the ways in which funds are spent? To date, there is very little research on how the funding of digital campaign strategies might change political behavior. We expect political campaigns to migrate to digital media through online advertising. Google, Facebook, and other social media firms possess unprecedented information about individual voters, which provides extraordinary opportunities for precise targeting of messages. Indeed, campaigns have already begun to use Facebook and other social media platforms to target campaign messages to voters with particular geographic and demographic attributes. This is the new frontier for political spending and we urge studies of its impact on political behavior at the individual and aggregate level.

Addressing such queries may give insight into old questions and will likely spark new, important research projects. We should also note that longitudinal studies are highly useful for understanding the impact of new campaign finance rules (or other types of reforms) on political behavior. We recommend a research design which takes advantage of quasi and natural experiments to understand patterns of behavior before and after a treatment.

Improve conceptualization of explanatory variables

The questions posed above will likely require scholars to engage with new variables to help explain spending outcomes. Generally, we should strive to expand upon the empirical model described by Milyo. Specifically, we can think of several variables that deserve more attention, although many others could be considered. First, the media environment may mitigate or enhance the effects of campaign spending. How does the ‘free advertising’ that candidates and parties receive from media organizations (often mandated by government requirements) alter models of campaign spending effects? At this point we do not have a good grasp of how political spending interacts with news media coverage of campaigns. Of course, many of these questions overlap with research in the communication field, and drawing on theories from other disciplines can greatly enhance our knowledge of spending effects.

Secondly, scholars should work to better operationalize the ‘unquantifiable’ but quite relevant personal characteristics of candidates and districts. While incumbency status is an important variable, many other individual candidate attributes may have explanatory power. How can we quantify (or qualitatively measure) candidate quality, charisma, experience, or name recognition? What impact do these attributes have on spending effects? Similarly, are the demographic characteristics of a district accurate proxies for voter engagement, interest, and attention? How do these characteristics influence spending effects? Perhaps answering these questions will require diversifying our methodological toolbox to include more qualitative practices such as open-ended surveys and interviews.

Finally, we would urge scholars to consider the impact that spillover effects might have on campaign spending. Because election cycles are highly interconnected events, campaign spending should not be viewed in isolation. Rather, researchers should consider the effect that proximate spending – by other candidates and campaigns – might have in a particular district. Longitudinally, scholars should investigate whether spending in one cycle has lasting informational and affective impacts on subsequent races. Advances in social network theory and network analysis methods might offer scholars the tools needed to account for this interdependence.

In adding new variables to our theoretical models, however, we must be cautious to avoid issues of endogeneity. As we have noted, many explanatory variables are highly correlated with one another and with dependent variables. Clever research designs can help mitigate this problem. For instance, we have cited the work of Da Silveira and De Mello several times due to its creative approach to the endogeneity problem. Future research should similarly attempt to separate highly correlated variables.

A policy-relevant approach

Returning to the themes we outlined at the beginning of this chapter, our final suggestion is to urge scholars to consider the normative implications and

policy applications of their research. Crucial democratic outcomes – including voter participation, knowledge, and vote choice – are shaped by campaign spending. Therefore, when political reformers take aim at campaign financing and spending their actions may have implications for democratic principles. Unfortunately, as of yet we have not achieved scholarly consensus on many of the most crucial campaign spending questions. Political reforms are often recommended and implemented without a reasonable understanding of cause and effect. Moreover, the law of unintended consequences holds. When political stakes are high, party activists and others have strong incentives to bypass restrictions on campaign spending in ways that could make the system less transparent and accountable. Since many democracies limit spending to achieve fairness and minimize corruption, it would be useful to understand which kind of actors benefit from such restrictions. And if such rules are put in place to improve the legitimacy of the democratic process we should learn more about whether limits on spending affects voter attitudes positively. Studies in the US context suggest that they do not (Persily and Lammie 2004; Primo and Milyo 2006).

CONCLUSION

Our purpose in this chapter was to assess the state of knowledge about campaign spending effects on political behavior, address the major limitations of the research, and point to approaches that would advance the field. Overall, we know that spending affects voter behavior but we have not been able to pinpoint the consequences of *different kinds* of spending (e.g. broadcast ads, canvassing, and Internet advertising) and the *context* in which such spending matters more or less. These are not trivial questions because they touch on overriding democratic concerns regarding voter participation and competency. Campaign spending can positively affect citizen engagement in politics. At the same time, however, political spending raises issues of legitimacy to the degree that citizens come to believe that the wealthy can ‘buy elections’ with their money. Reconciling campaign spending reforms with democratic values is an important task, and one to which political scientists can contribute greatly.

Much more work is necessary. We think the influence of campaign spending is highly conditional, but the research has far too many gaps for us to adequately understand the circumstances when it matters most. For this reason, our message is that scholarship must seek out variation in all its institutional and cultural forms. Thus, the most important advice we have to offer is that these questions should be approached with a comparative mindset. Moreover, the lack of quantitative data should not forestall good comparative analysis. Qualitative designs might allow scholars to explain the dynamics of campaign spending and its effects by using within and across case analysis.

In particular, the logics of ‘most-similar’ or ‘most-different’ case study analyses could add to our understanding of campaign spending in differing contexts (see Gerring 2007). With most-similar analyses, scholars seek cases with minimal variation across units but important differences in outcomes in order to find explanations for divergent phenomena in different democracies. For example, why do nations with largely similar public funding regimes and many other shared characteristics – such as Nicaragua and Honduras – see candidates relying on state-subsidized campaign funds at vastly different rates? This kind of analysis might help identify specific institutional or cultural differences that help explain different outcomes. On the other hand, most-different case studies might help us rule out factors as explanatory variables. If two very different campaign finance systems lead to similar outcomes in political spending then we might be able to argue that some regulations, such as public subsidies or contribution limits, really do not matter in affecting the level of campaign spending.

Both most-similar and most-different analyses will add to the robustness of findings in the United States about campaign spending in different contexts. To augment research outside US contexts scholars will have to overcome data issues, given the relative lack of transparency on political spending in most countries. And given that political parties are the unit of analysis in most PR systems, it is harder to discern the impact of such campaign spending when parties often spend money broadly (across activities, regions, candidates, etc.) or may not be transparent about how they target their funding.

Nevertheless, it is important to get this research right. Fears of corruption and undue influence may bring calls for curtailing political spending, but cutting back on political spending may have significant implications for voter efficacy, participation, and vote choice. This is where scholars need to link research to policy. Political reforms are often designed in the dark, with little appreciation of the positive aspects of spending. In the rush to prevent economic wealth from translating into political power, we could undermine the vitality of organizations, such as political parties, that do the most to mobilize and inform voters. This is where research is invaluable. Scholars can help show where money matters the most, how institutional designs might offset the unfairness of wealth, and how reformers may attenuate the worst abuses of money in politics while preserving positive aspects of political spending.

Notes

- 1 This use of the term ‘vote buying’ should not be confused with studies of interest group influence over public policy outcomes. In the context of this chapter, vote buying refers to circumstances in which campaigns or other actors exchange material goods or currency for a voters’ electoral support.
- 2 For a detailed assessment of this debate see Jacobson (2006).
- 3 Ewing (1987) does examine the corporate funding and election expenditures of the Conservative and Labour parties in Britain, though from a legal perspective. The field of political science

- would benefit from similar analyses with a focus on the *political implications* of party funding frameworks.
- 4 It should be noted, though, that the quality of data in the US has diminished due to the greater activity of non-transparent groups, which are not required to report detailed data to the US Federal Election Commission.
 - 5 See Baker and Falvey (2009) for an in-depth analysis of comparative campaign finance data.
 - 6 Not all political funds are spent on campaigns. Parties incur administrative expenses that are unrelated to elections, including efforts to develop public policies and organize internal party activities throughout the year. It is not easy conceptually to separate the party's campaign spending from other types of spending. More practically, few democracies provide clear accounting procedures to distinguish campaign spending from other types of spending.
 - 7 The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) are two important sources of international data, expertise, and advocacy.

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PART VII

Polling and Forecasting



Polls and Votes

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INTRODUCTION

Opinion polls are central to the study of electoral politics. With modern election polling dating back to the 1936 US presidential election, and proto-straw polls going back as far as the 1824 presidential election, polls have long been employed to gauge the popularity of different political competitors and, for as long as they have been available, researchers have used them to make predictions about future election results (Smith, 1990; Bean, 1948). Research on the links between opinion polls and election outcomes took off in the 1970s and early 1980s, as a cluster of (mostly) American researchers analysed these relationships, primarily in the context of US presidential elections (Mueller, 1973; Lewis-Beck and Rice, 1984; Abramowitz, 1988). The field has evolved rapidly since then, as polls have proliferated and analysis tools have grown ever more sophisticated. Opinion poll-based election analysis and forecasting is now a global enterprise, and often one with an unusually high public profile – poll analysis and election forecasts by academics and data journalists are now widely reported and discussed in election campaigns. This chapter reviews research on the relationships between opinion polls and election outcomes, and some of the election forecasting techniques built on this relationship.

In addition to providing insights into how vote intentions develop over the election cycle and the forces that ultimately drive vote choice, the relationship between polls and election outcomes may also have important political consequences. While the evidence is somewhat inconsistent (Hardmeier, 2008;

Moy and Rinke, 2012), there are strong suggestions that published vote intention polls can have direct effects on vote choices, include bandwagon effects and strategic voting (*inter alia* Mutz, 1998; McAllister and Studlar, 1991; Bartels, 1988). Published poll information may also have an indirect effect by influencing the tone of campaign media coverage (Pickup et al., 2014; Matthews et al., 2012, Holtz-Bacha and Strömbäck, 2012; Mutz, 1998), which in turn affects vote choices (Soroka et al., 2009; Box-Steffensmeier et al., 2009). Therefore, as a driver of public opinion in and of themselves, the power and accuracy of polls to predict electoral outcomes is of normative concern.

We proceed in six steps. First, we look at the relationship between opinion polls and election outcomes on the eve of an election. This is the limiting case of the polls and votes relationship, with voters' preferences measured just days or hours before they cast their ballots or, in the case of exit polls, immediately after doing so. Then we look at earlier pre-election polls, considering what it is they measure and how this varies over time. Thirdly, we turn to the more systematic examination of polls over the election cycle, and in particular the question of how, and when, polls come 'into focus' – how their predictive power increases as the election approaches. After this we consider the role of 'the fundamentals' – structural factors such as economic performance – in driving election results. We consider how these come to be reflected in polling information, and what value polls continue to add after these have been taken into account. Our fifth section examines the role of political institutions such as electoral systems and party systems in structuring the relationship between polls and election outcomes. Finally, we consider new approaches to the analysis of the polls and votes relationship enabled by the explosive growth of opinion polling data in recent years, in particular new techniques for aggregating and disaggregating polling data, the growth of locally focused polls and new techniques for presenting and updating poll results.

THE POLLS AND THE VOTE ON ELECTION DAY

Election outcomes reflect two closely related decisions that citizens make, and that pollsters try to estimate: the decision whether to vote and, among voters, the choice between candidates or parties. Three factors drive the differences between polls conducted at any point in time and the subsequent election result. First, random error is introduced by the normal variation inherent to any sampling process. Second, systematic errors, or biases, are introduced by limitations in the sampling and stratification processes, such as over- or under-representation of particular groups in poll samples, and inaccuracies in how respondents report their party preferences or likelihood to vote. Third, voters' preferences can change between the time the poll is conducted and the time they vote. Polls conducted on election day minimise the third source of change, though such change

does still occur, as we shall see. With the potential for substantive change minimised, election day polls therefore provide the best opportunity to test the accuracy of the polling process itself – how accurately do polls capture the preferences of the electorate, and what explains the biases in their estimates? This is a high stakes question for the pollsters themselves: a high profile election polling ‘miss’ can do lasting damage to the reputation of a firm, or the whole polling industry, as illustrated by the two major polling ‘misses’ in the UK, in 1992 and 2015, both of which triggered widespread media criticism and industry-wide inquiries.

How much of the difference between election day polls and outcomes is the result of late decisions? The late deciders are not a small group of people – estimates from the United States (Brox and Giammo, 2009), Britain (Clarke et al., 2004) and elsewhere (Fournier et al., 2004) suggest that anywhere from 5 to 15 per cent or more of voters make up their minds in the final days or hours before voting. The impact of such late deciders will depend on whether their choices deviate systematically from those of other voters. Evidence from US presidential elections suggests the late deciders tend to break against the front-runner: ‘leads shrink for whichever candidate is in the lead ([often] the incumbent party candidate) rather than that voters trend specifically against the incumbent party candidate’ (Erikson and Wlezien, 2012a: 84). As a result, American presidential election outcomes tend to be closer than the final polls suggest, but without a systematic partisan bias. Fournier et al. (2004), looking at Canadian elections, find that late deciders are more susceptible to campaign effects such as leaders’ debates, something also found in Britain (Pattie and Johnston, 2011). While campaigns are logically more likely to influence those who make their decisions late in the day, what these results suggest is that there is no consistent pattern to this influence across elections, instead it depends on the particular events and context of the late campaign.

The difference that remains between the election day polls and the vote after accounting for late decisions is the product of survey error. Some of this reflects sampling variation, meaning that some final polls will be more accurate than others due simply to the luck of the draw (something less fortunate companies tend to emphasise more than lucky ones). However, along with such random sampling errors there are also often systematic, and repeated, differences between final polls and election outcomes that reflect structural biases produced by different stages of the polling process. Much more attention is paid to such biases in elections when the polls ‘fail’ by predicting the wrong winner, and some of the best research and methodological innovation in polling has followed such failures (Mosteller et al., 1949; Market Research Society, 1994; Sturgis et al., 2016). However, structural biases also often occur in elections called correctly by pollsters, although these receive less attention. For example, British polls published in the final week of election campaigns over-estimated Labour support in seven out of the eight British elections held from October 1974 to 2005 (Fisher, 2015: 140), but this issue received sustained critical attention only in 1992, the

one election in this period where the bias resulted in the polls projecting the overall outcome incorrectly.

In the early decades of polling ‘final’ polls were often conducted weeks or months before election day, leading some to doubt their relevance as predictors of coming elections (Mueller, 1970). Sigelman (1979) and Brody and Sigelman (1983) demonstrated that final polls did, in fact, provide meaningful predictive information, even when published some months prior to election day. However, anticipating the later work of Erikson and Wlezien, they found that election results were typically closer than the final polls suggested, with a five percentage point difference in opinion poll share producing on average a 1.5 percentage point difference in the final vote share.

Though eve-of-election polls are more informative than polls at any prior stage of the election cycle in seemingly all electoral democracies (Jennings and Wlezien 2016), they still have an imperfect track record in predicting election outcomes. The polls famously deceived in the 1948 US presidential election, contributing to the erroneous ‘Dewey Defeats Truman’ headline printed in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. In the period since there have been regular ‘big misses’ by pollsters even in mature democracies with established polling industries – for example, in Britain in 1970, 1992 and 2015 and in Canada in 2004. Measuring the (in)accuracy of such polls is not as straightforward as it seems – an effective measure of poll accuracy should be consistent over different electoral contexts, screen out the impact of late breaking voters, and be able to detect whether the apparent bias in the polls is statistically meaningful. Martin et al. (2005) proposed a measure – ‘A’ – with such qualities, the use of which diagnosed three US elections – 1948, 1996 and 2000 – in which the late campaign polls were systematically biased.

Researchers seeking to diagnose sources of bias in pre-election polls, usually after big polling failures, have identified several possible drivers of this. Sampling methods can fail, either due to failures in the data sources used to draw up sampling frames or due to problems inherent with a methodology (Mosteller et al. 1949; Market Research Society, 1994). An example of the former occurred in Britain in 1992: Britain’s class structure changed rapidly in the 1980s, and the sampling frames pollsters used to draw up the polling targets did not keep pace with this. As a result, they collected too many respondents from the shrinking working classes and too few from the middle classes due to aiming at an outdated target – a more up-to-date sampling frame would have delivered a more accurate result in this instance.

Some problems can be inherent to a methodology: for example, the now widely used opt-in internet panels rely on the assumption that those who the polling company recruit to their panel are representative of the broader universe of voters. This assumption can fail in many ways: for example, panel volunteers will usually be more interested in politics, which may impact on their choices, and some groups with systematically different preferences may be

under-represented in the panel. One British internet panel, analysing its ‘polling miss’ in 2015, found evidence of both – the young voters they managed to recruit were systematically different to those they did not, due to higher political interest, and they systematically under-represented the over-75s, who voted in a distinctive way on polling day in 2015 (Rivers and Wells, 2015). Biases can also emerge due to postsampling techniques, such as those used to identify ‘likely voters’, which can produce an unstable sample (Erikson et al., 2004) or generate bias due to respondents’ excessively optimistic estimates of their chances of voting (Mellon and Prosser 2015). Respondents can also misreport vote intentions – one particularly notorious example being the ‘shy Tory’ phenomenon in the 1992 British election – many voters who ended up backing the governing Conservative party were apparently unwilling to admit their support during the campaign and responded ‘won’t say’ when asked their vote choice (Jowell et al., 1993).¹

Polls after votes: forecasting outcomes from exit polls

While pre-election polls measure voters’ future intentions, exit polls capture the decisions they have just made. The polls–vote relationship therefore becomes a ‘vote–vote’ relationship of sorts – between the reported vote choices of the exit poll sample and the vote choices made by the electorate overall. Exit polls are frequently employed to inform live coverage and analysis of the election result as broadcasters wait for votes to be counted, and can be used to build forecast models to anticipate results due to be declared hours later. The highest profile British election ‘forecasting’ model is the one used to predict outcomes when the polls close at 10 p.m., which then drives election night coverage until the results begin to arrive several hours later (Kuha, 2015; Firth, 2011; Curtice et al. 2011; Curtice and Firth, 2008; Brown and Payne, 1984). These models employ information from specially designed exit polls to provide an initial estimate of the likely outcome, and then update themselves on a rolling basis with new information from individual seat results as these are announced.²

POLLS AS A TIME SERIES

As we have seen, polls have an imperfect relationship with the election outcome even on election day. Random variation and biases introduced by the polling process add noise and error, while genuine shifts in voters’ choices can occur even in the final hours of the campaign. Election day polls are also of limited utility as a forecasting tool, because even if such issues can be overcome, the time horizon is simply too short for most purposes. Analysing polls further back in the election cycle, and forecasting based on these polls, offers a tougher test for theory and introduces new problems for the analyst to consider. Each step

back in time increases the opportunity for genuine change in choices. The nature of polling biases can also change as we move back in the cycle – to take one example, voters may be harder to reach, or may offer less reliable responses, when an election is far away and they aren't thinking about politics (Gelman and King, 1993; Erikson and Wlezien, 2012b). Meanwhile, the influence of random variation is ever-present, complicating the task of separating genuine movements in preferences from chance shifts in the polling sample. In the next section, we consider how the relationship between the polls and the eventual election outcome evolves over the election cycle. In this section, we focus on ways to analyse the polls themselves as a regular time series tracking voters' electoral preferences.

Opinion polls have been conducted and published at least once a month for many decades in most Western democracies. This provides a time series with many hundreds of observations ranged across multiple election cycles, particularly of government popularity. 'Popularity function' models analyse this time series to understand the dynamic structure of government support over the short, medium and long term. A major advantage of this approach is that it provides a much larger set of observations, and hence many more degrees of freedom, allowing for more fine-grained analysis and more complex models. One influential early work in this tradition analysed the dynamics of presidential approval in Gallup polls (Mueller, 1970, 1973). This early analysis identified many regularities, including steadily rising voter dissatisfaction (the 'cost of governing'), strong economic effects and links between military conflict and political popularity ('rally-round-the-flag'), which have subsequently proved robust across election cycles in the US and become central elements in models of election outcomes and election forecasts in other contexts as well.

For example, similar techniques have been used in Britain to analyse government popularity dynamics and forecast elections (Goodhart and Bhansali, 1970; Whiteley, 1979; Sanders, 1991). Sanders (1991) forecasted a Conservative government victory in the 1992 election using polling data collected a year earlier, when most pundits expected the party to lose. Sanders' model uses measures of both economic and political performance in a two-stage process. First he modelled the likely path of voters' economic expectations given interest rates and inflation levels and then he used these forecast expectations to project the likely level of party support given the expected change in economic expectations. Sanders accurately predicted that the Conservative government would recover and win a 42 per cent share of the vote and a fourth successive parliamentary majority in the coming general election. This was an impressively accurate forecast, with a long lead time. However, subsequent iterations of Sanders' model (Sanders 1996; Sanders and Kellner, 2000; Sanders, 2005), while picking the winner, did not prove so accurate in estimating vote shares, suggesting that the relationship between economic expectations and government popularity was not as strong as initially assumed.

THE POLLS AND THE VOTE OVER THE ELECTION CYCLE

There are some limitations to time series analysis of polls. First, time series can be difficult to come by. There are missing data and the poll readings we do have are not always independent. This is true even today, but especially going back in time, when pre-election polling was far less frequent. Second, the time series of polls we do have typically are laden with survey error, some sampling error but much owing to differences in polling methodologies used by different survey organizations. This error complicates diagnosis of time series patterns. (This is especially true given the missing data and dependence noted just above.) Third, even where we do have good time series and survey error is not a problem, analysis of dynamics does not reveal everything we want to know. Consider wanting to know what a poll x number of days before the election tells us about the likely result. It is difficult to determine based on analysis of one time series or even a set of time series.

An alternative approach is to examine the data not as a set of time series but as a set of cross sections, where the units are polls for different elections. For each point in time – the number of days before the election in each year – we have a different collection of polls. We then assess the relationship between the vote in the different elections and the polls at each point in time for which we have data. (We also can assess the relationship between polls at different points in time.) These analyses can be done even where we have missing data, as we can impute using interpolation or more sophisticated methods. That such imputation may introduce dependence between poll readings on successive days does not raise the complications it would for time series analysis, as the analysis is of the relationship between the polls and the vote in different election years.

This ‘timeline’ approach was pioneered in work by Wlezien and Erikson (2002) analysing US presidential elections. They showed that the relationships between the polls and the subsequent vote evolve over the cycle, gradually ‘coming into focus’ as election day approaches. (See also Erikson and Wlezien, 2012a for an extended treatment.) Subsequent work shows that much the same is true in the UK but also that there are differences in how support for different parties evolves (Wlezien et al., 2013). Very recent work has demonstrated that similar patterns hold across more than 300 elections in 45 countries with different electoral and government institutions (Jennings and Wlezien, 2016).

All of these analyses uncover an equilibrating tendency, where parties polling below their historical average tend to recover, while those above it tend to decline. Other research shows that gains or losses during the first half of a cycle tend to be reversed in the second half (Fisher, 2015). In the US, a longer election calendar with a series of big set-piece events leaves its mark on polling dynamics: events such as primary elections and party conventions are associated in a predictable way with shifts in support levels and in the predictive power of polls

(Erikson and Wlezien, 2012a). Big events to select national candidates and introduce them to voters have the power to disrupt established preference patterns and, as a result, polls in presidential systems tend to ‘come into focus’ later than in parliamentary systems, which are more party-focused (Jennings and Wlezien, 2016). How polls line up with the election outcome is thus revealing of how factors such as political institutions and the electoral calendar influence voter preferences over time.

THE POLLS, THE FUNDAMENTALS AND THE ELECTION

Analysis of the campaign timeline reveals an underlying structure in the relationship between polls and election results – polls provide some information about possible future election results even early in the cycle, and their predictive power steadily increases as the election approaches. Early on, however, predictions which rely on polls alone are highly uncertain, prompting forecasters looking to predict early in the electoral cycle to focus on ‘fundamentals’ – underlying drivers of vote choice such as the state of the economy (Tufte, 1975; Hibbs, 1987; Lewis-Beck and Rice, 1984; Erikson, 1989; for a review see Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000; Stegmaier and Lewis-Beck, 2013) or long-run historical cycles of support (Abramowitz, 1988; Norpoth, 2014) – to augment (or even replace) polling information.

This raises three interesting questions about the relationship of such ‘fundamentals’ to opinion polls. First, if future vote choices can be better predicted early in the cycle by factors such as the economy than by opinion polls, what exactly are early polls measuring? Second, how does the relationship between the polls and the fundamentals change as the election approaches? Do the polls converge on the choices predicted by the fundamentals and, if they do, how does this occur? Third, do the polls add any valuable information over and above the fundamentals, and how does the relative value of fundamentals-based and poll-based information change as the election approaches?

Measures of ‘fundamentals’ typically rely on indicators of economic performance. Academics and politicians alike have long been aware that the economy can play a central role in determining the fate of governments. This was confirmed in some of the earliest systematic analyses of opinion polling – Goodhart and Bhansali (1970) showed that British government support was strongly influenced by unemployment, while Mueller (1970, 1973) showed that poor economic performance reduced popular approval of presidents. Such analyses were soon extended to election outcomes. Ray Fair (1978, 1982) argued that GNP growth and change in unemployment in the election year were robust predictors of incumbent party performance in presidential elections. Douglas Hibbs’ influential ‘bread and peace’ model (1987, 2000, 2012) suggests that income, rather than GNP growth or unemployment, best predicted election results, as it

is rising personal income (more ‘bread’) that best captures voters’ well-being in the broadest sense.

All three of these early modellers adopted a similar approach to measuring ‘fundamentals’ – employing national-level economic performance statistics. Much of the subsequent work in this tradition has followed their lead, focusing on national economic performance measures such as GDP (or GNP), per capita income, unemployment and inflation (Abramowitz 1988; 1996; Campbell 1996; Lewis-Beck and Rice 1992; Lewis-Beck and Tien 1996), leading economic indicators (Erikson and Wlezien, 1996) and subjective economic indicators capturing voters’ perceptions of the economy (Erikson and Wlezien, 2012b). There are several reasons for the popularity of this approach. To begin with, the economic focus has a rigorous grounding in theories of voter choice and individual-level empirical research on voter behaviour. The economy looms larger than most factors for voters: their incomes, their job prospects, the value of their houses and their plans for the future all depend on the state of the economy. Economic indicators are also treated as a fundamental measure of government performance by political and media elites, featuring in news reports and election campaigns, thus encouraging voters to employ economic measures in judging their governments.

While economic fundamentals have a lot to recommend them, they also have important limitations. Economic performance models tend to assume, problematically, that the impact of economic performance is symmetrical. Individual-level research suggests that the economy has more influence on voters in recessions than in booms – voters pay close attention to the economy when times are bad but focus on other things when times are good (Singer, 2011; Soroka, 2006; Holbrook et al., 2001). Partisan screening can also limit the impact of the economy, with voters’ political loyalties driving their perception of the economic situation rather than vice versa (Wlezien, et al., 1997; Evans and Andersen, 2006; Ladner and Wlezien, 2007; Evans and Pickup, 2010; Pickup and Evans, 2013). The impact of economics is also conditioned by context, affecting incumbents more than fresh candidates and delivering greater dividends to a party with a strong economic reputation for economic management (Sanders, 2005). National-level measures of performance may also not be the most relevant to voters, who may focus more on the state of the local economy (Johnston and Pattie, 2001) or on conditions faced by people similar to themselves (Anscombe et al., 2012).

Economic performance measures have been popular despite these limitations in part because, unlike most measures of political performance, they are available over the multiple election cycles needed to specify an effective model. An alternative approach, which enables researchers to use an even longer run of data, is to focus on electoral history itself, which can be analysed as a time series to see if regular, and hence predictable, ‘cycles’ in voting behaviour emerge. This approach was pioneered by Abramowitz (1988), who observed a negative relationship between the share received by the incumbent party in presidential elections and the number of terms the party had held office: ‘the longer a party has

been in power, the more likely the public is to feel that “it’s time for a change”. Abramowitz’s argument implies a steady rise in the desire for change, but similar effects result from assuming a cumulative ‘cost of ruling’ effect, with governments becoming steadily more unpopular over time (Mueller, 1970). Such effects have been observed in many other countries (Paldam, 1986; Paldam and Skott, 1995; Green and Jennings, 2017) and can result in regular ‘cycles’, with the popularity of governing parties waning and that of opposition parties waxing over a regular cycle which usually runs, as in the United States, over an average of two to three election terms (Norpoth, 2004; Lebo and Norpoth, 2011; Norpoth and Gschwind, 2003).

Despite the success of forecasting elections with economic performance, polls add something to forecasts beyond the information available in the economy. Forecasting models that combine polling data and economic ‘fundamentals’ outperform models that relied on either set of measures in isolation (Lewis-Beck and Rice, 1984; Lewis-Beck, 1985), a finding that has been replicated in a number of US presidential election cycles (Erikson and Wlezien, 2012a) and has been validated elsewhere (Lewis-Beck and Dassonneville, 2015). As a result, the ‘ $\text{Vote} = f(\text{politics, economics})$ ’ formulation (Lewis-Beck, 2005) has become the predominant approach to forecasting elections more than a couple of months before the event. The majority of academic forecasting models on recent US presidential elections have applied this framework (Campbell, 2012, 2008, and the collection in Campbell and Garand (eds), 2000), which has also been put to work in many other contexts: Britain (Mughan, 1987; Lewis-Beck et al., 2004); France (Lewis-Beck, 1991; Jerome and Jerome-Speziari, 2004); Germany (Jerome et al., 2013); Japan (Lewis-Beck and Tien, 2012) and Canada (Belanger and Godbout, 2010). These forecasts have varied in their accuracy, but all have confirmed the core intuition that, for forecasts with a lead time of more than a few weeks, models that combine measures of political and economic performance perform better than those based on either measure in isolation. The ‘time for a change’ dynamic proposed by Abramowitz in 1992 has also held up well subsequently, correctly identifying that incumbent parties would perform worse in the 2000 and 2008 elections, after two successive terms in office (Abramowitz, 2001; 2008).³ That said, things didn’t work quite as well in 2016, at least in the popular vote.

The strong performance of forecast models based on economic and historical ‘fundamentals’ raises several puzzles. To begin with, they show that information that predicts election outcomes is not fully incorporated into voter preferences even a few months before election day. If such factors ultimately drive the decisions voters make, why is their influence not already present in the opinion polls tracking such preferences? How, and when, do the fundamentals come to be incorporated into voters’ choices? A more careful analysis of voter attention to politics helps resolve these questions. Most voters do not pay close attention to politics throughout the electoral cycle, quite rationally limiting scarce time and

attention to the period close to elections, when they must make a choice. The preferences reported to pollsters at mid-cycle are often, therefore, poorly informed and driven by idiosyncratic factors which fade once voters ‘tune in’ to the political competition. As elections approach, and campaigns heat up, voters pay more attention and gather information. Campaigns, candidates and parties play a central, if poorly understood, role in this process – though commonly understood as an effort to change voters’ minds, what most election campaigns actually do is activate latent preferences by helping provide voters with the resources they need to make an informed choice (Gelman and King, 1993; but see Erikson and Wlezien, 2012a; Matthews, 2010; Matthews and Johnston, 2010).

By analysing the relationship between fundamentals, polls and the election outcome month by month, we can see this process of voter learning in action. Wlezien and Erikson (2004) specified presidential forecast models at monthly time points, from five months out to the eve of the election. In June, five months before polling day, the model fit is lower and the forecast is driven primarily by economic fundamentals. In each successive month, the contribution of polls grows and the model fit improves. Economic fundamentals add predictive power all the way through until election day, although their impact declines in the final months: ‘the economy does not fully register with voters until election day itself’ (Wlezien and Erikson, 2004: 749). Meanwhile, the power of polls to add information over and above the economic fundamentals steadily increases as election day approaches. That is, the polls converge on the final result (also see Erikson and Wlezien, 2012a).

Election campaigns play a central role in this process. Campaigns help voters learn about the ‘fundamentals’ and offer alternative frames of reference for the decision they are making. Candidates and their campaign teams are well aware of the political importance of the economy, but they have some power to shape this impact through the messages they use to frame the electoral choice. The economy is the ‘hand [campaigns] are dealt’ (Sides and Vavreck, 2012: ch. 2) but the skill with which the cards are played can have an impact. Candidates who would be expected to win based on the economic fundamentals nearly always focus their campaigns on the economy, while their opponents often try to change the subject to something else, ideally an issue where model’ is committed to an unpopular position and they are closer to the average voter (Vavreck, 2009). This is the harder hand to play – only a third of economically disadvantaged candidates who focus on non-economic issues go on to win. However, it is a better gamble than the alternative – presidential candidates expected to lose based on economic fundamentals who nonetheless focus on the economy have always lost. This highlights both the power and the limits of campaigns – campaigns can, and sometimes do, succeed in shifting the outcome away from that predicted by the economic fundamentals, by changing the way voters frame the decision, but the odds are stacked against candidates forced to do so. Still, a one in three shot at winning is better than certain defeat.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Most of the early literature analysing polls and election outcomes focused on the national vote share for the governing party in the next election, and much subsequent work in other contexts has employed a similar framework. This poses few problems in US presidential elections, which can, with little distortion, be treated as a nationwide contest for votes between a single incumbent and a single challenger.

Yet, in most other cases, the national vote share for the main governing party is an imperfect measure of the election result. In parliamentary systems, the election outcome is driven by the balance of legislators returned to office, and hence depends on the rules which translate votes cast into seats and the nature of the party system, which is often hard to reduce to a ‘government’ vs. ‘opposition’ competition without distortion.

In ‘plurality’ electoral systems, where seats are allocated only to the first placed party in each local constituency, the relationship between national vote share and total seats is strongly contingent on the geographical distribution of votes and of seat boundaries. Researchers studying British elections have developed two approaches to model this system.

The first is to apply a fixed function to derive seat shares from vote shares. In Britain the first was the ‘Cube Law’, put forward by Kendall and Stewart in 1950⁴ – ‘the proportion of seats won by the victorious party varies as the cube of the proportion of votes cast for that party in the country as a whole’ (Kendall and Stewart, 1950: 183). This ‘cube law’ relationship is designed to capture the ‘winner takes all’ disproportionality of the plurality system, where even modest overall vote leads can be sufficient to deliver victories in most seats. The cube law model, however, assumes a pure two-party system. It was quite accurate in the 1950s, when two parties dominated the British political system, but became steadily less so as the party system fragmented (Tufte, 1975; Laakso, 1979). Forecasters have responded by abandoning the assumption of a fixed relationship between votes and seats and instead looking to estimate the appropriate votes-to-seats relationship empirically based on previous election results (Whiteley et al., 2011).

The second approach is to explicitly model the process transforming votes into seats. The election forecast then becomes a two-stage process – a first model forecasts the national vote share outcomes and a second estimates each individual seat outcome using these forecast vote shares. The simplest model for the latter is ‘uniform swing’ – applying the change in each party’s national vote share since the past election in each seat, and then allocating each seat to the resulting local winner. While this may seem a rather crude mechanical technique, it is a reasonable first approximation to the pattern of vote changes in Britain (Butler and Stokes, 1966; McLean, 1973; for an application to the US see Jackman, 2014),

and is easy to refine. Predictable regional variations in swing, or factors known to influence local outcomes, such as incumbency or the local pattern of party competition, can be incorporated as deviations from the uniform trend. Uncertainty about forecast vote shares and about the level of swing can be incorporated by specifying the swing as a distribution and by treating the local outcomes as probabilistic (Brown and Payne, 1975; Bafumi, et al., 2010; Ford et al., 2016). A notable advantage of this approach is that it enables the forecaster to make predictions for each individual seat, which may be of greater value to participants and voters in such contests than national predictions. It also has the advantage of estimating the probabilities of a range of possible outcomes, rather than producing a single point estimate.

Forecasting in fragmented party systems

Forecasters in most contexts also need to reckon with a more fragmented party system. This fragmentation can take many forms – for many years Britain's system was characterised as ‘two and a half parties’, with two large governing parties and a smaller third party which did not feature in government. Canada's party system could also be characterised this way for a long period. European systems such as Germany, France and Ireland also often feature a pair of dominant parties who take the lead role in government and opposition, along with a cluster of smaller parties. In other countries, voters are distributed more evenly over a larger and ideologically diverse spectrum of parties – in the Dutch election of 2012, eleven parties won seats, including animal rights and pensioners' parties. Such parties can usually be grouped, or group themselves, into broader governing coalitions of varying coherence and stability. The simplest solution to the fragmentation problem is to reduce it to a two-party contest between ‘government’ and ‘opposition’ coalitions. This approach has been used to model and forecast incumbent coalition performance in Norway (Arnesen, 2012); Francophone Belgium (Dassonneville and Hooghe, 2012) and France (Jerome et al., 1999) among others.

In less complex party systems, researchers can adapt the logic of incumbent performance models to reflect the local pattern of party competition more explicitly. The ‘Chancellor model’ developed by Helmut Norpoth and Thomas Gschwend since 2002 (Norpoth and Gschwend, 2003; 2010; 2013) to forecast German federal elections provide a good illustration. The model focus on support for the government and combine typical performance and structural measures with special adjustments to deal with the German context. The dependent variable is support for the current governing coalition, reflecting the fact that Germany's electoral system has always produced multi-party coalition governments. Further adjustments are made to deal with the occasions when the two largest parties (CDU/CSU and SPD), who have always been the senior government partner and the principal opposition, have governed together in ‘Grand

Coalition'. In these situations separate estimates have been produced for each coalition partner. Finally, additional adjustments are made to deal with the emergence of new parties.

Party competition in Germany's central European neighbour, Austria, poses a different problem. The 'grand coalitions' between the main governing parties of left and right that are an occasional feature of German politics are a structural feature in Austria, where the two largest parties (SPOE and OEVP) have governed together for long periods, and influence policy through corporatist institutions even when not formally in government. One recent forecast model therefore analysed the combined share for the 'Social Partnership', arguing that the Austrian electorate would hold them jointly responsible for performance. The forecasters found evidence for regular economic performance effects, with voters turning to parties outside of the 'Social Partnership' when unemployment was high, particularly when both parties were formally incorporated in a Grand Coalition (Aichholzer and Wilmann, 2014). The authors also found evidence of a sustained long-term decline in support for the Social Partnership parties, suggesting that their permanent role in government may result in a continuously growing 'cost of government' effect.

Forecasters working in younger democracies, or those where good-quality statistics have not been available for long, face another problem – data scarcity. In France, for example, there have been only nine presidential elections under the current 5th Republic rules. In the younger democracies of Southern and Eastern Europe, Latin America and elsewhere, the figure is often even lower. While some forecasters simply try their best to fit models to the limited data available (e.g. Lewis-Beck et al., 2007 for French presidential elections), others seek ways to ease the data constraint. Magalhaes et al.'s (2012) Spanish forecast adds in data points from European Parliament elections to augment the meagre haul of national elections. Another option is to disaggregate the election result, analysing governing party performance at the regional, state or local level. This, however, can often involve replacing one data constraint with another, as good-quality data on local economic or political performance is often hard to find. Disaggregated results have, however, enabled researchers to build polls-and-economics-driven forecast models in young democracies with less stable party systems, such as Lithuania (Jastramskis, 2012) and Brazil (Turgeon and Renno, 2012), and such methods offer a new direction for research in more established democracies too, as the quality and availability of local data improves.

POLLS AND VOTES IN A DATA-RICH ERA

For much of its development, data scarcity has been an important constraint on poll analysis and forecasting. In the past decade or so, explosive growth in the quantity and quality of data available to researchers has eased the data

constraints, while the growth in computing power and the quality of statistical software has opened up new analytic techniques. The result has been a proliferation of new approaches to forecasting, including methods such as ‘citizen forecasting’, political betting and prediction markets, and social media analysis, which are considered elsewhere in this volume. Comparisons of polls and prediction markets suggest that the latter can add useful forecasting information, particularly in contexts and periods when polling is sparse or absent (Erikson and Wlezien, 2012c), though Erikson and Wlezien (2008b) have found that, with appropriate modelling, accurate forecasts can be derived from polls alone, at least in the US context. New approaches to poll-driven forecasting have also emerged to utilise the rich new data environment. We consider three: data aggregation, data disaggregation and real time analysis and visualisation.

Aggregating data

The information content of polls can also be improved by aggregating information from different sources and dates in a poll aggregation model. Pooling in this fashion can produce more stable and accurate estimates of current public opinion, which can help make for better forecasts. The simplest form of poll aggregation is to average the polls produced over a specific temporal period – for example, over a week. This provides an estimate of vote intention that has far less variance due to random error than do the individual polls. However, this does not account for a number of problems. Individual polling houses have systematic errors due to the methodological choices each polling firm makes, known as ‘house effects’. A simple averaging procedure also does not generate an estimate of the random error in the aggregated polls, and does not account for the possibility that the industry as a whole has a systematic error (known as a statistical bias, or just bias). It does not account for the fact that in a given week some pollsters may have released a poll while others may not have. This last issue, combined with the problem of house effects, is that there may appear to be movement from one week to the next, purely as a consequence of which pollsters were in the field.

Modern poll aggregation attempts to address each of these issues. Current methods developed out of two advances that occurred in the late 1990s. In order to examine the dynamics of public opinion during election campaigns, Erikson and Wlezien (Erikson and Wlezien 1999; Wlezien and Erikson 2002; Wlezien 2003) aggregated polls from different polling houses throughout the campaign. To control for house effects, they modelled the poll results as a function of the day of the campaign and the polling firm that created the poll. This accounted for house effects in the aggregation. Around the same time, Green et al. (1999) proposed applying a filtering algorithm, developed in the 1950s, to the poll results from a single polling house in order to filter out the random error in these polls, model the underlying true public opinion and produce accurate estimates of the remaining error.

This filter is the Kalman filter and the statistical model used to apply the filter is known as a state-space model (Commandeur and Koopman, 2007).

With these two advancements in place, Jackman (2005) proposed a Bayesian state-space model that combined the strengths of both. Combining polls from multiple polling houses, Jackman's approach used the state-space model to filter out random error, while at the same time including controls for house effects. This minimised random error, controlled for house effects and accounting for different pollsters being in the field on different dates. Jackman went one step further and included the election result, after the fact, as if it were a poll that contained near zero random error from a pollster with no house effect. This 'anchoring to the election result' resolved the final problem that the industry as a whole might have systematic bias. It also allowed researchers, post hoc, to estimate the degree of bias in the industry and individual house effects (Pickup et al., 2011; Pickup and Johnston 2007, 2008; Jackman 2005). However, of course, this was a post hoc solution and could not be applied for the purposes of forecasting.

When applying the state-space approach to forecasting, Jackman and others have made a range of assumptions about the nature of the industry bias (Fisher et al., 2011; Ford et al., 2016) in order to account for it, such as assuming bias is the same as in the last election or assuming there is no bias. However, this remains one of the largest challenges in aggregating polls in order to forecast electoral outcomes.⁵

Disaggregated data and forecasts

Greater data availability and more powerful statistical tools also enable analysts to disaggregate, moving the focus of analysis and forecasting from the national level to the local level. This increases the number of past data points available for analysis and increases the number of outcomes to predict, subjecting forecast models to more rigorous performance tests. Disaggregation also often brings forecast models more closely into line with the outcomes they predict. Most elections are not contests for votes at the national level, but instead competitions which operate to greater or lesser degrees at lower levels of aggregation: as we saw in 2016, victories in states decide American presidential election results, while victories in constituencies determine the composition of the British House of Commons. Even when this is not the case, as in the Dutch or Danish national list proportional representation systems, the parties' support in polls and elections will vary geographically in response to differences in social structure, economic performance, regional identity and so on. Disaggregated models can better reflect such complexity.

In the United States, the growing availability of state level polling and economic data has enabled researchers to move from examining the election as a single national contest to modelling the contest as it is actually undertaken – fifty winner takes all state-level competitions.⁶ Klarner (2008) employed state-level

income growth and measures of the state partisan context alongside traditional national-level measures of economic performance, presidential approval and terms in office to model and forecast outcomes state by state in all three sets of US federal elections – presidency, senate and house of representatives. Berry and Bickers (2012) employed a larger set of state-level economic measures available since 1980, interacted with state-level political incumbency, to forecast the 2012 presidential election at the state level.

Both of these approaches employed state-level economic measures but largely neglected state-level polling. Such polling is now plentiful in the United States, with over a thousand state-level polls published in each of the two most recent presidential election cycles. Linzer (2013) employed a dynamic Bayesian model, combining the information in such polls with a national baseline performance model to generate dynamically updated forecasts for each state. This model performed well in 2012, but did not do so well in 2016.

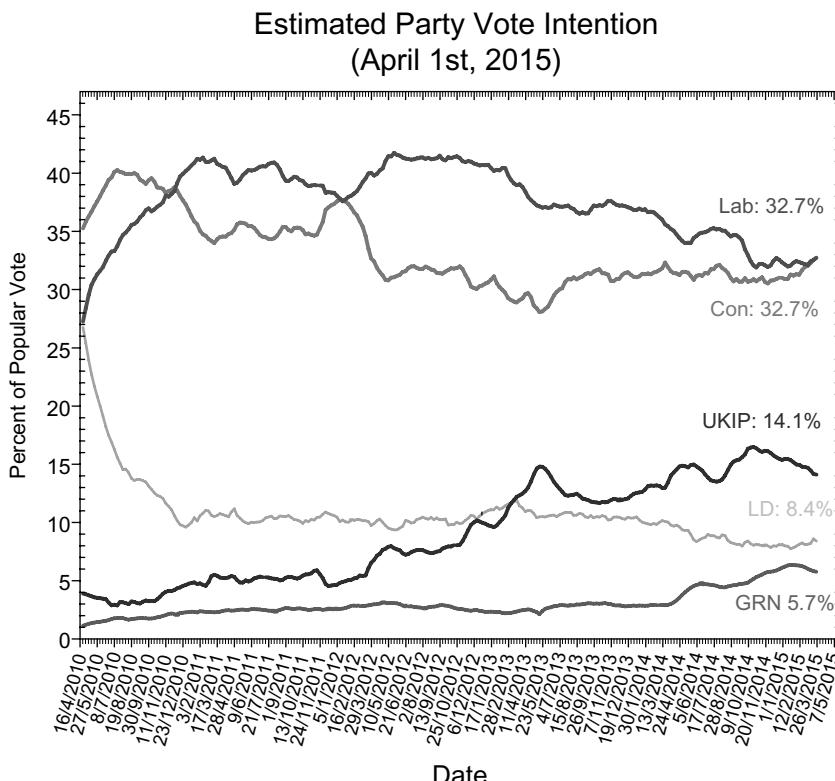
The dramatic increase in national-level polling in many countries can also be exploited to produce disaggregated models in contexts where polls are either rare or entirely absent at lower levels of aggregation. With a large enough set of national polls, and details on the location of respondents, modellers can disaggregate the national data to produce estimates of the state of play in local contests. Hanretty et al. (2016) used such methods to produce dynamically updated forecasts for each of the 650 seats contested in the 2015 British general election. Like Linzer, they employed a dynamic Bayesian approach, augmenting a national structural forecast with constituency specific information derived from both disaggregated subsamples in very large national polling datasets and constituency-specific polls. The combination of dynamic information from multiple sources, at multiple levels, enabled Hanretty et al. to make full use of the rich and frequent polling in the British election campaign, while also incorporating longer-run historical analysis of polls and outcomes to anchor their estimates.

Real-time polling analysis and visualisation

The sharp increase in the quantity of polling and the rise of powerful new software tools for analysing, presenting and disseminating poll analysis has in recent election cycles driven a new phenomenon: electoral websites devoted to real-time analysis and visualisation of polling data and election forecasts. This approach was first popularised by Pollster.com, which provided interactive graphical displays of aggregate polling trends in a variety of American election contests (Blumenthal, 2014), and was propelled into the mainstream political consciousness by fivethirtyeight.com, a website founded by Nate Silver whose mix of poll-driven visualisations, analysis and live-updated forecasts attracted a large readership in the 2008 presidential campaign. By the 2012 and 2014 US election cycles there were a variety of sites providing real-time analysis and visualisation of polling data, often employing political scientists to construct

dynamically updated models, including dedicated academic sites such as Drew Linzer's votamatic.com and Sam Wang's Princeton Election Consortium; collaborations between academics and major media outlets such as the *Washington Post* and the *Huffington Post* (Gillin, 2013; Blumenthal, 2014); and independent analysis by statistically trained 'data journalists' (Silver, 2014). A similar range of sites emerged in Britain during the run-up to the 2015 election campaign, including standalone academic websites (electionforecast.co.uk; pollob.ca); collaborations between academics and national media outlets (Hanretty, 2015; Ford et al., 2015); and dedicated media polling analysis sites (<http://www.theguardian.com/data>). Visualisations can take many forms, such as a rolling poll-of-polls, like the Polling Observatory estimates for the 2010–15 election cycle in the UK shown in Figure 34.1, or maps of seat-level forecasts of election outcomes.

These dedicated poll analysis websites have been very successful, and look set to become a regular feature of election coverage in most large and well-polled democracies. Such sites bring new opportunities and risks for academic polling analysts. They provide an opportunity to disseminate sophisticated polling analysis and election forecasts to a much wider audience, and to contribute to



ongoing analysis and coverage of election campaigns. This higher profile brings new challenges, as, when media coverage and even decisions by competitors are influenced by such analysis, researchers can move from being observers to participants in election campaigns and, as a result, attract new forms of public and media scrutiny, which can be quite different from the critical attention of academic colleagues. The consumers of poll analysis websites often have much less awareness of the limitations of polling and forecasting and the high levels of uncertainty involved in such enterprises. Successful forecasts are excessively praised for skill and failed forecasts excessively criticised for incompetence, ignoring the roles of random chance and systematic error in the underlying data driving the forecasts. An important task for analysts involved in these new high-profile polling analysis sites is to educate non-specialist readers on the nature of probability and the uncertainty inherent in any statistical forecast.

CONCLUSION

Polling is now a global enterprise and a central part of the political process in most countries, influencing everything from policy to electoral strategy. As instruments for measuring and quantifying public opinion, polls have become a key means for voters to make their views known to politicians and hold them to account. Poor polls can end a leader's career or lead to a wholesale shift in a party's offer to the electorate. Understanding what it is polls measure, how accurate they are, how they change and how they relate to election results is therefore an exercise of more than academic importance. Such research can help to improve the democratic processes that polling informs.

Our review has shown how research into polls and votes has taught us much about how, and when, voters make their choices, and what influences the choices they make. As polling has grown in frequency, scope and profile, so has the research that analyses it. Thanks to decades of accumulated data and research, we now have a nuanced understanding of how voters' preferences 'come into focus' over the course of an electoral cycle, and the role played by factors such as the economy, candidate popularity and political campaigns in bringing such outcomes about. Modern polling researchers work with a wealth of frequently updated data, enabling them to conduct analysis over shorter time scales or smaller areas. The rise of sophisticated data analysis tools and websites has provided impressive tools for poll researchers to visualise and disseminate their findings well beyond the academy. As polls have become more prominent, so have poll analysts.

The growing role of polling and poll analysis places great weight on the accuracy of the polls themselves and on how they are understood. The publication and analysis of polling helps shape the media coverage of election campaigns (Matthews et al., 2012), the strategies employed by the parties, the contributions of party activists (Henshel and Johnston, 1987) and, ultimately, the election result itself (Mutz, 1998;

Bartels, 1988). This presents some important opportunities and risks to poll analysts. Sophisticated and disinterested academic analysis of the meaning and context of opinion polls can be an important contribution to electoral debate. When polling goes wrong polling researchers can help to elucidate why, and offer suggestions for reform, as happened in the US in 1948 and in Britain in 1992 and 2015. Just as polls have helped researchers to understand the complex dynamic process linking voters and parties, so academics can help to ensure that well-conducted and accurately reported polling makes the most effective contribution to that process.

Notes

- 1 An alternative interpretation of this phenomenon would be 'reluctant' rather than 'shy' voters, while the former decide to conceal their preferences, the latter are simply reluctant to support a party or candidate, but eventually decide to do so. The latter – in the form of 'reluctant Trump' Republicans – may have been a factor in the 2016 US election. However, it is very difficult to distinguish these two motivations in practice.
- 2 Before the collection of exit polls, statisticians focused on projecting the overall result from early results, looking to identify and correct for variations in voter behaviour between seats (Brown and Payne, 1975).
- 3 However, the Abramowitz model's predictions were not very much different from those of other models which did not include the 'time for a change' term. This was not true in 2016, when the time for a change model forecasted that Trump would win the popular vote and other models predicted a Clinton victory.
- 4 Although they popularised this relationship, they attributed its origins to an earlier analyst — James Parker Smith — who put it forward in expert witness testimony to a Royal Commission on electoral systems in 1909.
- 5 One cannot simply anchor to the 'best' survey house in the previous election, as survey houses come and go and even more frequently they change their methodologies. Indeed, methodologies change even during the course of particular election cycles.
- 6 Two states — Maine and Nebraska — do not award their support on a winner takes all basis, another wrinkle which recent disaggregated forecasts have incorporated, with some modellers successfully predicting Obama's victory in Nebraska's second congressional district in 2008, providing him with one extra Electoral College vote in a state where his opponent won by a large margin.

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Econometric Approaches to Forecasting

Éric Bélanger and David Trotter

We are all interested in the future, for that is where you and I are going to spend the rest of our lives. (Criswell, movie *Plan 9 from Outer Space*, 1959)

INTRODUCTION

In our daily lives we are surrounded by forecasts. Is it going to rain today? How will the local sports team perform in tonight's game? Which movie is more likely to win the Oscar this year? How will we enjoy today's meal at the restaurant? How bad is the flu virus going to be this season? These are but a small sample of the predictions which we hear around us, or which we can make ourselves, during a given day. The reason we spend our time thinking about the future is because of the uncertainty associated with it, and the simple fact that it can be fun to guess about a number of things or events that are soon to happen.

However, for electoral behaviour specialists there is also the issue of other people's expectations regarding them. Because of their specific expertise, these specialists are generally thought to possess some kind of crystal ball in which election outcomes can be seen *in advance* and *with clarity*. But elections specialists are, first and foremost, *scientists*. That means that the workings of their 'crystal ball' cannot rest on mere intuitions or gut feelings; these workings need to be made out of a scientific method. While it is true that 'as cocktail party conversationalists, most political scientists need all the help they can get' (Mayer 2014: 331), when it comes to offering a prediction about the outcome of a given

election the best forecasting tools that an electoral behaviour specialist can rely on are models that can be tested following a rigorous and transparent methodology. Such scientific forecasting models are precisely the focus of this section of the handbook, with the current chapter concentrating on forecast models of the econometric type.

Electoral forecasting has a long tradition. Because each new election campaign brings with it the theoretical possibility of a change in government, and hence a change in the political course of a nation, these democratic contests are among the political events that generate the most curiosity and speculation across society. Pre-scientific election forecasting has tended to rest on popular sayings that, although based on more or less systematic observation, are not the product of a causal mechanism. For instance, it has often been heard that Republican success in the United States is associated with American League victories in the World Series or with bad Beaujolais (Lewis-Beck and Rice 1992: 3). Yet another approach is the reliance on bellwethers, which gets us closer to an actual causal association (Bean 1948). A well-known example is the early twentieth century's claim that 'As Maine goes, so goes the nation', which comes from the observation that local votes in the state of Maine have tended to go hand-in-hand with national votes at times of presidential elections between 1860 and 1932. In more recent elections, the state of Ohio has similarly come to be considered as a predictor of national electoral outcomes. The bellwether state is thus taken as a kind of representative sample of the whole nation in terms of its electoral preferences.

As good as these approaches may be at predicting election outcomes, they do not improve very much over the simple toss of a coin. The eventual development of more scientific forecasting approaches has thus been an important advance in this field. Scientific election forecasting significantly reduces uncertainty (although it does not eliminate it, of course). Over time, several different scientific approaches have been explored (for comprehensive reviews, see Lewis-Beck and Tien 2011; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2014; Stegmaier and Norpoth 2013). A first one makes use of vote intention polls to predict the likely winner of the next election (see Ford et al., this Volume). A second approach examines the extent to which voters themselves are able to accurately forecast the outcome of an upcoming election, for example by directly asking them about their expectations with the use of survey questions (see Murr, this Volume). Yet another approach relies on political betting markets (see Graefe, this Volume). An even more recent method is to look at what social media content during an election campaign can tell us about its eventual outcome (see Ceron, Curini and Iacus, this Volume).

In this chapter we present at length a fifth scientific approach to electoral forecasting, one that is based on the use of econometric models. These models, also known as structural or historical models, offer forecasts based on an explanation of election outcomes that is generally laid out in political economy form. Typically, they use well-researched theories of electoral behaviour to identify a

limited number of explanatory factors that, when measured some time in advance of an election, can allow one to anticipate its outcome with a reasonable degree of accuracy. These factors usually include the approval of the sitting government as well as the state of the macro economy – variables that are often referred to as the ‘fundamentals’ (see Erikson and Wlezien 2012). Econometric forecasts are made possible mainly because the relationship between vote (or seat) shares and these various fundamental variables can be estimated statistically with the use of the classic linear regression technique (Lewis-Beck and Lewis-Beck 2015). Below, we explain these notions more fully and illustrate them with reference to past election forecasting works.

ECONOMETRIC MODELS IN FOCUS

Since the early 1980s, econometric models of election forecasting have provided equations based on government or economic performance, many combining both, resulting in some prediction of government support in an upcoming election. Most of these statistical forecasting models provide a non-complicated examination of vote choice in a future election, using linear regression techniques and easily obtainable variables to determine that future election’s outcome. Below, we present some of the earliest econometric models, which paved the way to new and improved models to forecast, primarily, presidential elections in the United States. However, the art of forecasting continues to grow, and has found a place in other countries as well, including the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Canada.

The origins of econometric forecasting: U.S. models

Fair (1978) provides one of the earliest statistical models for forecasting U.S. presidential elections. His model, a time-series analysis, had two primary goals. First, he sought to create ‘a model of voting behavior that is general enough to incorporate what appear to be most of the theories of voting behavior in recent literature and that allows one to test in a systematic way one theory against the others’ (Fair 1978: 159). The second goal of his research was to determine if economic conditions had an impact on vote choice. Firmly rooted in Downs’ (1957) economic voting theory, Fair (1978) measures a voter’s future utility if either a Democratic or Republican candidate is elected, using gross national product (GNP), the impact of incumbency, and a time trend independent variable. Another characteristic of Fair’s (1978) model is that it does not use public opinion polling, which gives him considerably more cases to test, though he does acknowledge that there are limitations, as data prior to 1916 cannot be included in his estimation, resulting in only 16 total cases when originally tested. Nonetheless, he did find that the growth rate in GDP in the two years prior to the

election provided a good indication as to whether the incumbent party would perform well in the upcoming election. Despite this model performing well, the most recent elections at the time of publication (1972 and 1976) were not predicted as accurately. Since this original model, Fair (1982, 1988, 1992) has provided revisions to improve model accuracy, which still focuses on economic conditions for forecasting and continues not to use presidential popularity variables.¹ When predicting the outcome of the 1980 presidential election, Hibbs (1982) also concludes that the economy mattered most, as poor economic performance resulted in Ronald Reagan's victory over incumbent president Jimmy Carter, instead of the American electorate making a major ideological shift to the right of the political spectrum. Using personal income as an independent variable, Hibbs (1982) finds that income played more of a role in Reagan's win than other, more ideological factors.

While Fair (1978) and Hibbs (1982) look at economics as a driving force in voting behaviour as well as forecasting elections (on this and other aspects of the so-called 'VP-function' approach which roots much econometric forecasting, see Stegmaier, Lewis-Beck and Park, this Volume), do non-economic factors, such as presidential popularity, play a role as well? Mueller (1973) stated that presidential popularity, measured by Gallup polls, is not likely to be a very good indicator as to the electoral success in a presidential re-election bid because the last popularity polls were usually conducted months before the presidential election. Sigelman (1979) rejected this view, and argued that there was indeed a relation between electoral success and presidential approval ratings, even with the time lag between polling and the election. When testing the last presidential popularity poll to the eventual election results, Sigelman (1979) found that presidential popularity can be used as a forecasting tool, as it accurately predicted if a president would win re-election between 1940 and 1976. Brody and Sigelman (1983) revised Sigelman's (1979) previous model to include elections when an incumbent was not seeking re-election, arguing that an incumbent president's popularity will carry over to the nominee of the president's party. The transformation of the popularity variable, as well as including the elections where incumbents were not seeking re-election, actually improved the model and provided an accurate forecast of all past presidential elections between 1940 and 1980.

With the Fair (1978) and Hibbs (1982) models providing an economic forecasting instrument, while Sigelman (1979) and Brody and Sigelman (1983) provide a presidential popularity rating forecasting tool, Lewis-Beck and Rice (1984) sought to see if these two components, working together, could also be used as a forecasting model for U.S. presidential elections. Their economic-popularity model sought to forecast the winners of presidential elections six months before the actual event, using measurements of presidential popularity available in Gallup's presidential job handling question during the month of May, as well as change in real per capita income in the second quarter of that particular election year. Using these two variables, Lewis-Beck and Rice (1984) not only provide a

forecasting model that can predict presidential elections well ahead of Election Day but are also able to further examine the way in which voters behave, finding that ‘if GNP is declining, ostensibly satisfied voters increasingly turn their votes to the opposition candidate, who might do a better job with the economy’ (Lewis-Beck and Rice 1984: 17). However, even though the model correctly predicted seven of the prior nine elections, the authors warn that the testing of the model to establish accuracy was conducted in an ex-post manner, and that it relies on past indicators to predict future results, further warning that strong third party challengers, war, and dire economic conditions could drastically alter the results of the forecasting model. In spite of its relative accuracy, this economic-popularity model has been revised a number of times since 1984 to deal with the ever-changing dynamic of presidential electoral politics; however, presidential popularity and GNP still form the basis of the model’s theory (Lewis-Beck and Rice 1992; Lewis-Beck 1995; Lewis-Beck and Tien 1996, 2004).

Abramowitz (1988) observed that Lewis-Beck and Rice’s (1984) model, which produced an unadjusted R-squared of .82, performed with a higher degree of accuracy than either the Hibbs (1982) or Brody and Sigelman (1983) models. As a result, he builds upon the economic-popularity model by introducing one more predictor variable, which is the passage of time. Abramowitz (1988) argues that the elections are essentially referendums on the economy, as well as on the incumbent president, but adds that the length of time that the incumbent party has been in the White House also has an impact. In this referendum format, he suggests that voters either ‘want more of the same’ or feel that ‘it’s time for a change’ (Abramowitz 1988: 843), and proposes that if the incumbent party holds the presidency for eight years or more voters will seek the ‘time for a change’ option. While Abramowitz (1988) does use both popularity and economic variables, he uses them as measured closer to the election than in the Lewis-Beck and Rice (1984) model. As for the time variable, it is coded as a dummy variable, with 1 indicating whether an incumbent has controlled the White House for eight years or longer and 0 indicating fewer years as the incumbent party. When the model is run using presidential elections between 1948 and 1984, the adjusted R-squared obtained is an extremely high value of .98. The regression analysis shows that an increase of four percentage points in the incumbent president’s approval rating results in just over a one percentage point vote gain for the incumbent party. The incumbent party received the same electoral advantage for every percentage increase in real GNP as well. However, even with these advantages, incumbent parties that have held the presidency for eight years or more receive a four percentage point penalty in vote share.

While the previous models used presidential approval rating to determine popularity, Campbell and Wink (1990) take a different approach, using trial-heat polls as the primary determinant of incumbent party popularity. Using the same economic growth variable as presented in Lewis-Beck and Rice (1984), Campbell and Wink (1990) use Gallup’s poll taken in early September to determine

popularity. Campbell (2004) would later revise this model, taking into account the possibility that a non-incumbent in-party candidate may not be receiving as much credit for economic growth as would an incumbent seeking re-election.

Since Lewis-Beck and Rice (1984), Abramowitz (1988), and Campbell and Wink (1990) it has been common practice for there to be some mixture of presidential approval and economic indicators as the basis for creating forecasting models. Wlezien and Erikson (1996), along with presidential approval rating, use the Commerce Department's Index of Leading Economic Indicators measured throughout the election cycle, as 'growth in these indicators taps future economic change, which finds expression in income growth and drives approval leading up to the election' (Wlezien and Erikson 1996: 503). Holbrook's (2001) model uses presidential popularity, an aggregate measure of personal finance satisfaction, and the same time variable used by Abramowitz (1988). Norpoth (1996) uses both the inflation rate and growth in GNP as his economic variables; however, he does not use presidential approval ratings to measure presidential popularity. Instead, he argues that candidate performance in the first presidential primary serves as a strong predictor as to whether a candidate will win in the general election. Lockerbie's (2004) model combines a retrospective economic indicator, personal disposable income, with a prospective one that taps the American public's perceptions about their personal financial situation a year from now, together with a time for change variable; but he does not include popularity because he argues that it would be a redundant predictor.

While forecasting the national-level two-party popular vote has been the most widely used approach to U.S. presidential election forecasting, the 2000 contest has shown that winning the popular vote does not always lead to winning the presidency. Stressing the importance of the Electoral College, some scholars have created forecasting models that are conducted on a state level in order to produce Electoral College predictions. Unlike the previous models, which have, at most, only a handful of independent variables and observations, state-level forecasting models have many more additional variables that can be added in order to account for the electoral history of the state and region, as well as other non-political factors that might determine vote choice, such as religion. To give an example of the vastness of the amount of variables included, Holbrook (1991) uses 13 coefficients to determine state-level presidential vote choice, while Campbell (1992) uses 16. The number of variables used by Rosenstone (1983) dwarfs that of the previous two models, with a total of 74 total coefficients. While models for predicting Electoral College results do exist, they are few and far between compared to those which forecast two-party vote choice. However, recent models such as that provided by Jérôme and Jérôme-Speziari (2012) are much more parsimonious, as well as more accurate, than early Electoral College forecasting models. By creating a state-by-state political economic model, Jérôme and Jérôme-Speziari (2012) forecast how each state will vote in the 2012 election and accurately predicted every state's Electoral College results, using change

in unemployment and presidential job rating. In fact, the growing trend in U.S. presidential election forecasting is to focus on the Electoral College vote as the outcome to be predicted, and to rely on state-level data to model it (see Linzer and Lewis-Beck 2015).

While presidential election forecasting models make up the bulk of prediction models in American political science, U.S. House and Senate models have also been created to help determine the balance of power in the legislative branch. Tufte (1975) introduces the idea that midterm election votes cast in congressional races are a referendum on the current president's handling of the economy, observing that while the in-party share of the national vote in these elections decreases for the party of the presidential incumbent, the magnitude of that loss is based on presidential approval or economic performance. Abramowitz (2006) used the Gallup Poll's generic congressional polling question (net approval rating for the president and open seat advantage) to help predict the 2006 congressional races in both chambers. In the House, Abramowitz's (2006) forecasting model proved to be quite accurate, projecting 28 Democratic gains when challenger quality was added, which was very near the actual number of 31 Democratic seats gained. However, in the Senate, the model projected a gain of only two Democratic seats, when, in fact, the Democrats gained six seats. Abramowitz (2010) again used the Gallup Poll generic question model to predict the 2010 Republican wave election, projecting a gain of 43 seats for the Republicans in the House and four seats in the Senate. In both cases the model underestimated the Republican wave, with the GOP actually winning 63 House seats and six Senate seats.

As we can see, models which forecast U.S. Senate control have shown to be much less reliable. Abramowitz and Segal (1986) use per capita real disposable income, presidential popularity and party control of seats at stake to predict overall outcomes in the U.S. Senate. Their model predicted that there was an 80 percent chance of Republicans retaining control of the U.S. Senate in 1986, with the Republicans expected to lose only about one seat. However, the Republicans lost eight seats, and the Democrats took control of the Senate with a five-seat majority. Bardwell and Lewis-Beck (2004) would eventually create a state-level forecasting model for U.S. Senate races using a variety of different variables, which correctly provided an ex-post forecast of the 2002 U.S. Senate race in Maine. Klarner and Buchanan (2006) also created a U.S. Senate model which provides a state-level forecast, using 'a state's partisan composition, candidate attributes, and national partisan tide variables' (Klarner and Buchanan 2006: 850). While their model predicted that 'the Democrats have little chance of taking control of the Senate in 2006' (Klarner and Buchanan 2006: 854), Democrats did indeed regain control of the Senate, and the model misdiagnosed four of the six Democratic gains (Missouri, Montana, Ohio, and Virginia). Klarner (2008) revised this model, but still underestimated Democratic performance, predicting only 52 seats for Democrats when the party actually ended up with 57 seats. In short, U.S. Senate elections remain a challenge for forecasters.

Forecasting in political systems other than the U.S.

The literature regarding election forecasting has blossomed in the United States more than in any other country. However, econometric models of election prediction in other countries continue to be on the rise. One place, in particular, where this is the case is France. However, transferability of American forecasting models to apply to French elections has proven not to be so straightforward. Jérôme and colleagues (1999) examine the rise of the Parti Socialiste during the 1997 French legislative election, which led to their surprise victory over the coalition of the Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) and the Union pour la démocratie française (UDF). Polling conducted prior to the election predicted a RPR/UDF coalition victory. However, the Parti Socialiste won both rounds of the election. While Jérôme and colleagues (1999) do underline that the way opinion polling was conducted could be problematic, their model indicates that the economy also played a role in the eventual outcome. While similar in nature to the American models, this French legislative election forecasting model uses different variables in determining the legislative vote: past presidential vote, changes in unemployment, regional ideology, and political instability. As a result, their model was able to forecast the fall of the right using the variables tested, which allowed them to warn that ‘French election observers might do well to pay more attention to political economy models and less attention to polls’ (Jérôme et al. 1999: 173).

Lewis-Beck and colleagues (2008) used the so-called ‘Iowa Model’ to determine if it could forecast the 2007 French presidential election, and found that a basic economic-popularity model could not explain the Parti Socialiste’s defeat at the polls. The authors contend that campaign dynamics might possibly have altered the predicted outcome; however, quantifying that type of variable and integrating it into a forecast model is no easy feat (on this issue, see Lewis-Beck and Tien 2002, 2008; Bélanger and Soroka 2012). Nadeau and colleagues (2010), noting the problems presented in the forecasting of the 2007 election, proposed a multi-equation model, moving away from the single equation format, ‘where the first equation gives strict emphasis on prediction, the second equation on explanation’ (Nadeau et al. 2010: 11), which vastly improved the ex-post forecasting of the 2007 presidential election. This model, also known as the Proxy Model, is based on the notion that one of the variables measured, incumbent popularity, has a near-perfect correlation with first round presidential election outcomes in the Fifth Republic. The Proxy Model was tested again in 2012 (Nadeau et al. 2012) and correctly predicted a victory for the left, although with a quite large point estimate error which might be reduced if one uses the second-round vote as the predicted outcome (Bélanger et al. 2012). With presidential election forecasting in France on the rise, it has already shown to be somewhat more troublesome compared with its forecasting counterparts in the United States. However, the ability to forecast is improving, particularly in comparison with the 2007 presidential

election results. One promising advance in French econometric modeling is the use of data disaggregated at the departmental level, thus multiplying the number of observations by almost 100 (see Jérôme and Jérôme-Speziari 2010; Foucault and Nadeau 2012).

The creation of forecasting models for parliamentary elections in the United Kingdom has also experienced some recent growth. Mughan (1987) was the first to offer an econometric model to predict U.K. election vote shares, but it wasn't until the work of Lewis-Beck and colleagues (2004), who combined inflation rate, public approval of government, and the number of terms in office, that further advances in forecasting were made in that country. That said, as with the French examples above, simply transferring American models to the British system does not always yield accurate results. For instance, the Lewis-Beck et al. (2004) vote function overestimates Labour Party support, although the addition of a 'closeness' variable, with the theory being that more people would turn out for an election if it is perceived to be close, helped improve the model's performance in most cases (Bélanger et al. 2005). Lebo and Norpoth's (2007, 2011) forecasting model relies on the prime minister's approval as the sole predictor of the incumbent vote. While this model did predict a hung parliament in 2010, their projection showed the Labour Party with a mere two-seat plurality in the House of Commons. These examples from the 2010 U.K. election illustrate the important limitation that pertains to the econometric forecasting of vote shares in Westminster-type parliamentary systems. In such systems the translation from votes to seats is not necessarily perfect, and this may lead to less precise (and sometimes wrong) predictions about which party is going to win or at least to finish first. This obstacle has led some U.K. forecasters to directly predict parliamentary seat shares rather than votes (e.g. Whiteley et al. 2011; Lebo and Norpoth 2007, 2011; Fisher et al. 2011).

While France and the United Kingdom have been the primary focus of forecasting outside of the United States, other countries continue to make strides in electoral forecasting. Forecasting in Canada started around the same time as forecasting in France. However, it has yet to receive as vigorous an examination as in other countries. Nadeau and Blais (1993) provide a simple model, where unemployment and provincial origin of party leaders could predict electoral outcomes in Canada, followed by a revision (Nadeau and Blais 1995) which places more emphasis on party leaders from the province of Quebec. Bélanger and Godbout (2010) also provide a political-economic model of Canadian election forecasting. Like Nadeau and Blais (1993, 1995) previously, unemployment is their primary economic variable; however, the political components are different, using incumbent administration satisfaction and government longevity. Despite their current limitations, these models provide a good foundation on which more cases and revisions could lead to more accurate Canadian forecasting models in the future. For Germany, Norpoth and Gschwend (2010, 2013) provide a vote function model based on three predictors: chancellor popularity, long-term

partisan balance in the German electorate, and the amount of time the current government has been in office. While this forecast model shows promise, the small number of cases available since German reunification makes it harder for the model to predict vote shares for all parties. For this reason, their model must rely on whether previous ruling parties are able to form government; if a coalition is needed, non-ruling party vote totals are important in determining which parties will actually play a part in the coalition.

Econometric forecasting is much more sporadic in the remaining countries of the world. While the literature's focus on the major Western democracies of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Canada is understandable, it has meant that the other democracies of the world have been neglected in terms of electoral forecasting work. Yet there is no reason to believe that econometric modeling of future election outcomes in these neglected democracies cannot be achieved (Lewis-Beck and Bélanger 2012). There are some important obstacles to the construction of forecasting models for these countries, not least the more limited availability of relevant data or the fact that the transition to democracy has been more recent in some cases. But these obstacles can generally be overcome one way or another, as was shown with the recent development of econometric forecast models for countries as diverse as Italy (Bellucci 2010), Spain (Magalhães et al. 2012), Belgium (Dassonneville and Hooghe 2012), Norway (Arnesen 2012), Japan (Lewis-Beck and Tien 2012a), Brazil (Turgeon and Rennó 2012), Lithuania (Jastramskis 2012), and Turkey (Toros 2011, 2012). One solution to the small N problem has been to increase the sample size by taking second-order elections (i.e. subnational and/or supranational elections) into account (e.g. Bellucci 2010). And, with more longitudinal data becoming available in the future, it will also become easier to assess the role and impact that electoral cycles may have on election forecasting (e.g. Lebo and Norpoth 2007; Bellucci 2010).

The key obstacle faced by electoral forecasters wishing to apply U.S.-type models is the fact that the latter have been developed for a two-party system. Most systems outside of the U.S. are multiparty systems. In addition, while some of these systems are majoritarian in nature (like the U.K.), many of them are consensual. The application of a U.S. forecasting template to consensual democracies is problematic due to both the great number of electoral competitors and the fact that governing power is typically shared among a coalition of parties. To reduce this complexity, forecasters have tended to focus on the outgoing ruling parties' vote, thus mimicking a two-party system format. This reduction has implied a government-focused approach and thus may have led to a kind of government 'bias' in forecasting models. While in two-party systems predicting a losing ruling party equals to predicting a winning opposition, the same is not true in consensual democracies. Some efforts have recently been made to try and overcome this government bias in forecasting. For Germany, Jérôme and his

colleagues (2013) have relied on seemingly unrelated regression so as to simultaneously provide point estimates of the vote share going to each of the five main parties in recent German elections, taking into account predictor variables such as unemployment level, the size of the parties, their likelihood of entering a future coalition, and the parties' standing in vote intention polls. For France, Arzheimer and Evans (2010) have used the same seemingly unrelated regression approach to forecast multiple vote shares in French legislative elections. But the obstacle remains an important one, and is likely to be the focus of future forecasting endeavors outside of the U.S.

Aside from the development of forecast models for various countries, a number of econometric models that predict election results obtained by small political parties have also started to be constructed. For example, Bélanger and colleagues (2010) expand on British forecasting by trying to predict the vote share for non-mainstream parties, particularly the Liberal Democrats, showing that third-party success in U.K. elections largely depends on the popularity of the official opposition leader. Evans and Ivaldi's (2008, 2010, 2012) forecasting models have aimed at predicting radical right parties' votes, with a particular focus on support for the French Front National. Their predictions are obtained via the modeling of the impact of the key political issues that are seen as motivating votes for this type of party, such as unemployment, crime, and immigration.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that some of the recent econometric forecasting literature has proposed promising methodological innovations. One of them has been the development of methodologies for combining the predictions from several politico-economic structural models so as to arrive at a final forecast that diminishes the prediction error associated with any one of these models taken individually, either by calculating a simple average of the individual predictions (Graefe et al. 2015) or by using a Bayesian model averaging technique (Montgomery et al. 2015). Another innovation has been the 'synthetic model', which uses an econometric approach as its basis for forecasting an upcoming election, but which then adjusts or updates this initial forecast by incorporating vote intention polls as a correction tool, thus allowing the econometric model to become dynamic (Linzer 2013; Lewis-Beck and Dassonneville 2015; Lewis-Beck et al. 2016). Yet another alternative modeling strategy that has been proposed is dubbed 'nowcasting', and involves the periodic re-estimation of the initial model as soon as more current measures of the independent variables are available (Lewis-Beck et al. 2011; Lewis-Beck and Tien 2012b, 2014). In effect, nowcasting models act almost as polls, since they allow the issuing of updated current forecasts over time, as the election approaches – with a key difference being that the nowcast is contingent on the model's lead time. That is to say, if the model's lead is six months then the nowcast is for an election to be held six months from now. The usefulness of nowcasting is obviously greater for countries such as the U.K., where election timing is endogenously set.

ECONOMETRIC MODELS: FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

As one can see, election forecasting models of the econometric type can vary greatly in terms of the independent variables that they include (that is, their ‘predictor’ variables) and their respective methodologies. But, despite these differences, they are constructed more or less in the same way. They provide ex-ante forecasts that usually rest on a model that has previously been tested in an ex-post fashion. They strive to be as accurate as possible, but without sacrificing other characteristics such as lead time, parsimony, and reproducibility. And they can sometimes be revised, with such revisions preferably being informed by voting behavior theory. Below, we discuss each of these three considerations in turn.

Preferred estimation techniques: ex-ante and ex-post approaches

As Lewis-Beck (2005) states, forecasting models can be divided into two categories, *conditional* and *unconditional*. Models that are conditional must provide one or more independent variables that have unknown values, so these models ‘must be estimated, which increases error’ (Lewis-Beck 2005: 146). As for unconditional models, independent variable values are known, which removes the error source. While unconditional models are not forecasting models by design, as they are based on the values of known variables to test whether they correctly predicted previous elections, they do provide productive testing opportunities that can be used in forecast modeling for future elections. In the genesis of econometric forecast model building, models start off as unconditional, thus relying on ex-post forecasts to provide legitimacy for eventual ex-ante forecasting. As forecasting models become more solidified through revision, providing an ex-ante forecast becomes more common as models become more accurate.

As one may expect, the success of ex-ante forecasts varies significantly. For example, Abramowitz’s (1996) forecast of the 1996 U.S. presidential election was highly accurate, predicting that incumbent president Bill Clinton would receive approximately 55 percent of the major party vote – Clinton actually received 54.7 percent. Campbell’s (2004) trial-heat model slightly overestimated the size of George W. Bush’s 2004 re-election win, forecasting 53.8 percent of the two-party vote (Bush actually got 51.2 percent). For its part, Lockerbie’s (2004) model highly inflated the Republican victory (57.6 percent forecast), whereas Lewis-Beck and Tien’s (2004) model predicted 49.9 percent of the two-party popular vote going to incumbent Bush, which pointed towards a possible victory for Senator John Kerry.² For the 2008 presidential election, Abramowitz (2008) correctly predicted a Democratic victory. However, Campbell’s (2008) forecast was wide of the mark, predicting that there was ‘a 76% probability that Senator

McCain will receive a plurality of the national two-party vote' (Campbell 2008: 700) with 52.2 percent of the vote – McCain received only 46.3 percent.

While ex-ante predictions are usually done after forecasting models are considered to be performing well, ex-post predictions primarily fall under two main categories: model creation and finding out why previous models performed poorly in a particular election cycle. The first case is necessary, as creating a forecasting model without providing ex-post testing can be seen as purely a guess. In the second case, ex-post examination is usually conducted to provide not only an explanation as to why a particular model did not accurately forecast the election but also possible revisions to the model to improve on future forecasting.

In early U.S. forecasting literature, models usually performed well. The first presidential election that provided forecasting problems was the 1976 one, with some models predicting a victory for Republican Gerald Ford over Democratic challenger Jimmy Carter (Fair 1978; Abramowitz 1988). While this error did exist, there was very little effort to implement appropriate changes to the models. One election that did not escape the criticism, however, was the 2000 election between Democrat Al Gore and Republican George W. Bush. Most of the models predicted ex-ante a Gore victory, with many claiming a substantial win. Given this error, many of the forecasters who predicted the Gore win conducted an ex-post test and revised their models to deal with dynamics presented in the 2000 election, or to provide an alternative explanation as to why this particular election ought to be treated as an outlier. Abramowitz (2001), stating that his model was not as far off as other models, notes that Ralph Nader's showing in the race could account for the possible change in the two-party vote. Lewis-Beck and Tien (2001) look at the election as an outlier, but eventually revised their model using the errors presented with the 2000 election (Lewis-Beck and Tien 2004). Wlezien and Erikson's (2001) model predicted a Gore victory by a substantial margin, with around 55 percent of the two-party popular vote. Because of this error, Wlezien and Erikson (2004) re-evaluated their forecast, and eventually added trial-heat polling to their model, which significantly improved their forecasts for future elections (Wlezien and Erikson 2004, 2008). Holbrook's (2001) model for the 2000 presidential election was also substantially off the mark, forecasting that Gore would win around 60 percent of the two-party popular vote. His justification for this discrepancy is that voters put less emphasis on economic considerations compared with previous elections, mainly because 'Gore refused to run on the administration's economic record' (Holbrook 2001: 40). His solution to dealing with the issue was by including a variable that measures 'the tone of the news people report hearing about the economy' (Holbrook 2001: 43). Campbell's (2001) trial-heat poll model also stresses Gore's reluctance to campaign on economic performance, which resulted in trying to run a prospective campaign instead of a retrospective one. According to Campbell (2001), the fact that Gore was trying to distance himself from the scandals of the Bill Clinton administration provides a reason for the model's inaccuracy. While the 1992 and

2004 elections also led to some forecasters being off the mark, the 2000 election provides a wealth of literature examining ex-post evaluations of previous models as well as revisions to those models to help them forecast future elections better.

Model assessment

How should an econometric forecasting model of electoral outcomes be evaluated? Accuracy of the forecasts is obviously a very important characteristic of a 'good' forecasting model. But are there other important criteria to be looked at as well? With the growing popularity of econometric approaches to election forecasting, literature that discusses the criteria that determine whether a model should be assessed as a good forecasting tool has started to surface. In this subsection, we focus on what we consider to be the two main contributions on the important issue of model assessment.

To determine whether a forecasting model can be used as an appropriate tool to forecast elections Lewis-Beck (2005) provides a model evaluation which stresses four criteria: *accuracy*, *lead*, *parsimony*, and *reproducibility*. When using this assessment, the most important evaluation standard is accuracy, as a model which continuously produces incorrect results would not be a good model (Lewis-Beck 2005; Campbell 2008). To determine how good a model might be as a forecasting tool, the *R-squared* and the *Standard Error of Estimate* (SEE) provide the best goodness-of-fit measures. However, Lewis-Beck (2005) warns that while R-squared and SEE may move together, a maximum R-squared does not always mean that it will result in a lower SEE. As a result, when determining which of these standards should be used in defining a forecasting model's goodness-of-fit, a lower SEE should be preferred since 'it directly assesses estimation of Y' (Lewis-Beck 2005: 152). When using the SEE, a *confidence interval* (CI) is needed. However, using a two-tailed, 95 percent confidence interval can produce drastically different results. Using the example provided by Lewis-Beck (2005), let us assume that a regression model forecasts the incumbent vote as 46 percent in a U.K. general election. With a SEE of 3.0 and a two-tailed 95 percent confidence interval [46 +/- 2.3 (3.0)], the *interval forecast* ranges from 39 percent to 53 percent, which would produce vastly different forecasting results for the governing party. To mitigate this issue a one-tailed CI is recommended, as 'what is important is not exaggerating the margin of government victory, but rather gauging the likelihood of their defeat' (Lewis-Beck 2005: 152). Using the one-tailed CI [46 – 1.9 (3.0)], the model gives, with 95 percent certainty, that the incumbent's share would not be lower than 40 percent. As one can see, the one-tailed test raises the lower bound compared with the two-tailed test from 39 percent to 40 percent.

While accuracy is important, it is not the only criterion that is needed to determine how well the model performs as a forecasting tool. An econometric forecasting model must also have lead, which is the ability for a model to make a

forecast well before an election. According to Lewis-Beck (2005: 151), ‘the farther in advance a model produces accurate forecasts, the better’. But, even though lead is important, there are limits to lead time. On one hand, go too far out from an election and criticisms regarding the extrapolation of the model become valid. On the other hand, if a model has a short lead time, such as a few days, then little can be learned from the model and it would provide little utility as a forecasting tool. As an impressive example of long lead time, Norpeth and Bednarczuk’s (2013) first primary model correctly forecast an Obama victory over challenger Mitt Romney as early as January of 2012 – almost a full year before Election Day. Obama’s nearly uncontested Democratic primary win in New Hampshire, in comparison to Romney’s less decisive primary victory on the Republican side, sealed the forecast for a comfortable Democratic victory in November.

Along with accuracy and lead time, parsimony is also a determining factor in Lewis-Beck’s (2005) model evaluation. If a model is based on good theory, the determination as to what variables can provide strong forecasting capabilities becomes key to the model’s evaluation. The importance of variable selection in forecasting becomes even more significant as the sample size can be quite small. As Lewis-Beck (2005: 152) warns, when a small sample size is tested ‘[w]ith more than a handful of predictor variables, the degrees of freedom are quickly exhausted and forecasting becomes untenable’. While parsimony is a primary factor in keeping any forecasting model manageable, it also lends to the fourth and final criteria set out by Lewis-Beck (2005), which is the model’s reproducibility ability. Parsimonious models will usually include general variables that can be easily collected and used by other forecasters, at least for replication purposes, with minimal or no cost to those conducting the research. Models based on variables that are obscure or harder to obtain will make model reproducibility much more difficult. These obscure variables might also produce cost constraints, which further limits the ability to replicate the model (Lewis-Beck 2005).

Lewis-Beck (2005: 154) provides a quality assessment test for forecasting models, stressing the four criteria described above, expressed as follows:

$$Q = ((3A + P + R)L)/M$$

where Q = the quality of the forecasting model, A = accuracy (rated 0–2), P = parsimony (rated 0–2), R = reproducibility (rated 0–2), L = lead time (rated 0–2), and M = the highest possible score for the numerator, 20 (to allow Q a theoretical upper limit of 1). As was mentioned previously, accuracy is a necessary condition when creating a forecasting model. For that reason, accuracy in this equation is given additional stress due to its importance in assessing model quality. In addition, the lead is entered interactively to allow for variations in model lead times, with $Q=0$ if $L=0$. If a model is conducted after the election, then a lead value of ‘0’ can be given, as it no longer provides a forecast of the election.

Nearly a decade after Lewis-Beck (2005) laid out his forecast model assessment criteria, Campbell (2014) sought to revise the criteria for model assessment.

He set out five criteria, in addition to general accuracy, to determine how well a model is able to forecast, without attaching an index or a statistical test to determine the quality of the forecasting model. The first criterion listed by Campbell (2014) is model transparency, as not knowing what goes into a model has ‘about the same credibility as fortune-telling’ (Campbell 2014: 302). The way to address issues with transparency is by making the data available and the model replicable. Campbell’s (2014: 302) second criterion is in the ‘simplicity and logic of the predictors’, excluding models that have predictors which are more complex. The third criterion for Campbell’s (2014) model assessment is whether a model is stable, as well as unrevised, over a series of elections. This mitigates any issues with a model being considered a ‘one-hit wonder or frequently tweaked’ (Campbell 2014: 302). However, Lewis-Beck and Rice (1992) argue that each election can identify new data sources or new variables that could lead to meaningful model revision. The fourth factor in Campbell’s (2014) assessment is whether the main model has other closely corresponding companion models that can show the model to be robust. Finally, the fifth criterion for model assessment, according to Campbell (2014: 303), is that it be ‘consistent with existing empirical explanatory findings or, at least, not inconsistent with explanatory research’. As a result, Campbell’s approach places more emphasis on the findings than on the theory, as will be further explained in the next section.

Model revision

Even with these foregoing assessment criteria, many have criticized election forecasting for its lack of roots in theory. Some of the criticism argues that the act of forecasting is not truly theoretically based, and therefore not a true part of political science (Colomer 2007). Other criticism comes from the belief that some models are simply curve fitting, are not trying to conform to theory, or even ignore a great number of basic theories and findings about party systems and government formation (van der Eijk 2005). However, forecasting models that follow the curve-fitting logic will tend to be less stable and could require constant revision; it is therefore important to make sure that any model adjustments are based on theoretical reasoning and not inadvertent curve-fitting (Lewis-Beck and Tien 2008). As Lewis-Beck (2005) argues, theory ought to be an essential party to building a strong forecasting model, despite the limitations of this process.

That said, the role that theory plays in econometric forecast model building continues to be cause for debate. Most of the literature does agree that forecasting models should have some theory to back up their legitimacy. However, to what degree theory should play a role in forecast model creation brings varying opinions. Lewis-Beck and Tien (2008) argue that theory is a central factor when creating an econometric forecasting model. If a revision is made to a model, it is important that the initial theory stays intact and that the revision does not significantly alter the model. When Lewis-Beck and Rice (1984) introduced their first

model, presidential popularity was the primary independent variable. Over the next few decades, as new information became available, not only did the authors make revisions to the model but these revisions were also based on theoretical explanations of voting behaviour, while at the same time not taking away from the original model. Lewis-Beck and Tien's (2004) model to forecast the 2004 presidential election added a job growth variable to help with the forecast. While their new Jobs Model performed well in forecasting that particular election, the addition of jobs to the model was based on theory, even if the authors later claim it might have been based on weak theory (Lewis-Beck and Tien 2008). Therefore, the Lewis-Beck and Tien (2008) argument states that model revisions are acceptable, as long as they are theoretically driven.

For his part, Campbell (2014) provides an alternative view to Lewis-Beck and Tien (2008) regarding model revision. In Campbell's (2014) assessment, revisions to any forecasting model should be made rarely. The rationale behind this view is that if a model is constantly revised the 'consumers have a right to be a bit wary of models that are frequently "new and improved"' (Campbell 2014: 302). However, it should be noted that Campbell (2014) does state that model revision is needed from time to time, and does not discredit the concept outright. He also, in contradiction to Lewis-Beck and Tien (2008), feels that theory is not necessarily the cornerstone of building a forecasting model. But, while Campbell states that theory is not necessarily essential to model building and revision, he does indicate that models with a strong theoretical background are more 'enhanced' than non-theory based models (Campbell 2014: 303).

CONCLUSION

In a general sense, the forecasting of elections is an attempt at getting through the noise generated by the lead up to and the unfolding of an election campaign, and which is sometimes created by the political parties and the candidates themselves. The campaign efforts of these actors fulfill important learning and (re) activation functions by making voters focus on the fundamentals of party performance and leader popularity. These fundamentals are, of course, the founding blocs of forecasting. That said, these campaign efforts are numerous and may sometimes contradict each other, which can create noise (that may also be amplified by media coverage). The overall objective of scientific election forecasting is thus to try and extract the signal from the noise with the use of different methodologies. Econometric models, generally based on a political economy explanation of electoral behaviour, constitute one useful approach that can be employed towards that goal. Although they do not eliminate the uncertainty that surrounds an election's outcome, they nonetheless reduce it significantly by zeroing in on the factors that usually matter the most to the campaign debate and have the most important influence on the voting decision of citizens.

While they can do a relatively good job at giving us an idea of the most likely outcome of a given election, econometric models may now be facing a growing number of difficulties when it comes to predicting electoral outcomes. We can think of two obstacles in particular. The first has to do with the multiplicity of electorally significant political parties in many democracies. Party system fragmentation seems to have become a growing trend of late. As the number of significant parties or candidates increases, the noise introduced in the campaigns increases as well, which can degrade the underlying signal and make its extraction by election forecasters more difficult. Compound this difficulty with the already existing problem of the imperfect translation of popular votes into parliamentary seats (or Electoral College votes) and forecasters find themselves with an important challenge on their hands. The development of district-to-district, or state-to-state, econometric forecast models (e.g. Jérôme and Jérôme-Speziari 2012) may be the most promising solution here. A second obstacle involves the growing polarization of some systems, most notably the American one (Campbell 2014). As a result of high party loyalty, party identification in the United States is becoming an even stronger determinant of vote choice. According to the 2012 National Exit Poll, as many as 92 percent of those who identified as Democrats said that they voted for their party's presidential candidate, and 93 percent of Republican identifiers said they sided with the Republican candidate (Abramowitz 2014). In addition to this polarization, population diversity is creating an electorate that is increasingly identifying with the Democratic Party. As a result, election margins for the winning candidates have been reduced significantly. As Abramowitz (2014) warns, major changes to forecasting models may need to be made soon in order to adapt them to the changing American political landscape.

Notes

- 1 Gleisner (1992) provides an additional revision of Fair's (1988) model, stating that the model is 'mis-specified' (383). In addition to Fair's (1988) variables, he uses change in the Dow Jones Industrial Average, claiming that the 'inclusion of the stock price variable reduces the income impact by about one-half, eliminates any significance of trend, and increases the impact and significance of inflation' (384–5). Gleisner (1992) improves the fit of Fair's original model and is also able to provide an alternative explanation to elections that Fair (1988) previously could not, such as the 1908 election of William Howard Taft.
- 2 In this case, however, the standard error of estimate is 1.52, suggesting that either candidate could win the presidency by a very slim margin.

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Wisdom of Crowds

Andreas Murr

INTRODUCTION

The term ‘wisdom of crowds’ was popularised by Surowiecki (2004), whose book of the same title provides many examples of groups making better decisions and judgements than individuals. Its opening chapter describes Francis Galton’s visit to a Plymouth fair. At this fair Galton (1907a; 1907b) reports that the average estimate of an ox’s weight was closer to the truth than any individual estimate. Surowiecki (2004) infers from examples such as this that the ‘wisdom of crowds’ emerges under conditions of opinion diversity, independence, de-centralisation and aggregation.

Although Surowiecki (2004) does not discuss the ‘wisdom of crowds’ in election forecasting, a growing body of research has developed theory around why groups should forecast elections better than individuals and has presented evidence from several countries that indeed they do. The first study of this kind was conducted by Lewis-Beck and Skalaban (1989), who asked citizens who they thought would win the US presidency (‘individual forecasts’) and then predicted the winning candidate to be the one who most citizens said would win (‘group forecast’). This so-called ‘citizen forecasting’ approach to election forecasting predicts who wins most of the time and by how much, and is indeed among the most accurate approaches of election forecasting (Graefe 2014). The reason for the accuracy of citizen forecasting lies in Condorcet’s jury theorem, which highlights the conditions when groups outperform individuals in making the correct decision (Condorcet 1785; Murr 2011).

Below, I review and extend both the theory and evidence of citizen forecasting in five sections. The first section considers the explanation of why groups predict better than individuals and goes on to propose an explanation of why individuals should predict better than chance. The second section shows that asking citizens who wins correctly predicts most election winners in Britain and the United States. It also shows that the proportion of citizens who think that a party will win accurately predicts the party's vote share or seat number in both countries. The third section compares this type of citizen forecasting with other approaches to election forecasting, finding that it is one of the most accurate approaches. The fourth section shows that asking citizens what vote share or seat number they expect a party to win accurately predicts actual vote shares and seat numbers in Britain, New Zealand and Sweden. However, by conducting its own empirical analyses, this section also shows that there is only mixed evidence that this second type of citizen forecasting is among the most accurate approaches. A final section summarises the main results and suggests an agenda for future research on citizen forecasting.

THE THEORY OF CITIZEN FORECASTING

Why do groups forecast better than individuals?

To explain the accuracy of citizen forecasting, it is useful to distinguish between explanations of why groups of citizens predict better than individual citizens ('wisdom of crowds') and explanations of why individual citizens do better than chance in forecasting ('competence of citizens'). The distinction is important because the explanation of the 'wisdom of crowds' rests on the assumption of the 'competence of citizens'.

Murr (2011) explained the fact that groups predict better than individuals with Condorcet's jury theorem and its generalisations (Condorcet 1785). Condorcet was interested in knowing how many members a jury needs to have to ensure that when it votes by plurality rule it makes the correct decision in a criminal trial where the suspect can either be guilty or not guilty. The theorem applies to any situation where a group decides by plurality rule which of two alternatives is the correct one. Condorcet showed the conditions under which group decision-making is better than, equal to or worse than individual decision-making.

The derivation of these conditions rests on several assumptions. Condorcet assumed that there are only two alternatives, out of which one is correct and the other is incorrect ('binary choice'); that group members vote independently of one another ('independence'); that each group member has the same chance of choosing the correct alternative ('individual competence'); that each member has one vote ('equal weights'); and that the group chooses the alternative that most of its members choose ('plurality rule').

Under these assumptions, Condorcet proved that if each member chooses the correct alternative with more than 50 per cent probability then, as the group size increases to infinity, the probability of a correct group decision approaches unity ('wisdom of crowds'). Unfortunately, the reverse also holds: if each member chooses the correct alternative with less than 50 per cent probability then, as the group size increases to infinity, the probability of a correct group decision approaches zero ('folly of crowds'). Finally, if each member chooses the correct alternative with 50 per cent probability, then the group will do the same.

Although Condorcet derived these conclusions with reference to a group size approaching infinity, the key result emerges even within small groups. Figure 36.1 illustrates the 'wisdom of crowds' effect. It shows the probability of a correct forecast of two groups with individual competence of 0.6 and 0.8, respectively. In both cases, as group size increases so does group competence – the probability of a correct group forecast. With 25 members the group with individual competence of 0.6 reaches a group competence of about 0.8. In other words, the 'wisdom of crowds' emerges even in a small group. This result implies that with a small number of citizens who are just a bit better than chance in predicting who wins we will correctly forecast most elections.

Condorcet's jury theorem has been generalised to choices with more than two alternatives (List and Goodin 2001), with correlated votes (Ladha 1992) and with varying individual competence (Grofman et al. 1983). All of these generalisations make Condorcet's jury theorem useful for explaining the accuracy of citizen forecasting (for overviews see Murr 2011 and Murr 2015).

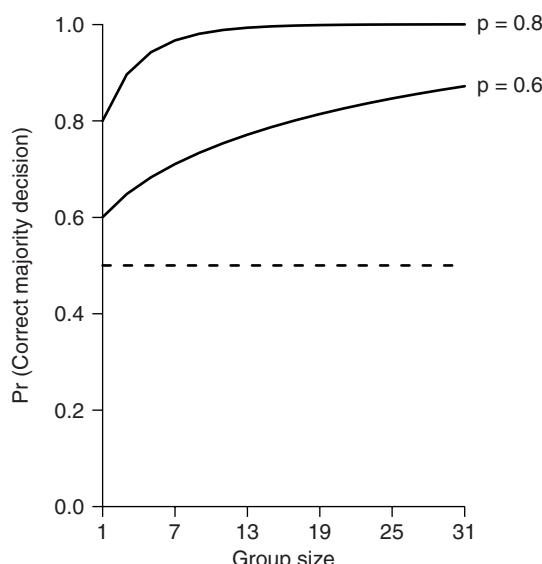


Figure 36.1 The 'wisdom of crowds' emerges even in small groups.

Why do individuals forecast better than chance?

Having mathematically proven that groups predict better than individuals when individuals predict better than chance on average, the next step is to demonstrate why individuals will do so. A simple explanation lies in the Contact Model and its extensions, developed by Uhlener and Grofman (1986). Although Uhlener and Grofman developed the model as an alternative to ‘wishful thinking’ to explain why preferences and expectations are correlated, I believe that this model also demonstrates why citizens predict better than chance on average.

Uhlener and Grofman (1986) observe that citizens have several sources of information, such as their contact network or the mass media, with which to form a forecast. Citizens learn about other voters’ political views and vote intentions by talking to them or by consuming the mass media (e.g. poll reports, columns and news stories). Although the Contact Model allows for several sources of information, I will first focus only on contact networks as a source of information to illustrate the logic of the model, and later expand the model to allow for the mass media as an additional source of information. Even though the realism of the model thereby increases, the conclusion that citizens will predict better than chance remains the same.

In its simplest form, the Contact Model says that a citizen will talk to other voters and thereby learn their political views and vote intentions. She then estimates that in the population the proportion of voters intending to vote for a party is the same as in her own sample. She forecasts that the party with the largest proportion of voting intentions will win. In other words, she forecasts that the winning party will be the one which most voters in her sample intend to vote for.

The probability that the citizen forecast will be correct depends on how representative the sample is, though it will be always better than chance. The two extreme cases are selective sampling and random sampling. If a citizen talks only to voters who share her political views (‘selective sampling’), then her forecast equals her own vote intention. As a result, citizens will be better than chance in forecasting who wins on average, though a survey of citizen forecasts presents no additional information compared with a survey of vote intentions. If a citizen randomly talks to voters (‘random sampling’) then, as the number of sampled voters increases to infinity, the probability of a correct forecast approaches unity. As a result, citizens will be much better than chance in forecasting on average. This result follows from Condorcet’s jury theorem.

As Uhlener and Grofman (1986) point out, in a two-party election between candidate A and B the number of sampled voters intending to vote for candidate B follows a Binomial distribution. We can use this distribution to calculate the probability of a correct forecast with the formula below:

$$\sum_{i=m}^k \binom{k}{i} p^i (1-p)^{k-i},$$

where p is the proportion of voters intending to vote for winning candidate B; k is the number of sampled voters; $m = (k + 1)/2$ indicates a majority; and k odd for simplicity.

Table 36.1 illustrates the Contact Model with random sampling of voters. It shows the probability of a correct forecast as a function of k , the number of sampled voters, and p , the probability that a sampled voter intends to vote for candidate B. Table 36.1 also contains the special case of perfect selective sampling, where basically $k = 1$. Again, Table 36.1 shows that aggregation pays off even with a low number of sampled voters. Consider the case where $p = 0.6$. With just one sampled voter the chance of correctly forecasting the election is 0.6, whereas with five sampled voters it is 0.68 – an increase of eight percentage points.

The two extreme cases of ‘selective sampling’ and ‘random sampling’ are unlikely to hold in practice. A case between these two extremes is more likely to happen. We know that the proportion of citizens who think that a party will win is larger than the proportion of citizens who intend to vote for it (Lewis-Beck and Skalaban 1989), so citizens are not completely selective. But we also know that citizens do not randomly talk to others – their sample is usually relatively similar to themselves in many aspects (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995). It follows that in practice citizen forecasts will result from a mixture of selective and random sampling. Asking n citizens who they think will win will be less informative than asking $n * k$ citizens how they intend to vote, with $k > 1$. But citizens will be better than chance in forecasting on average, and asking a sample of citizens who they think will win will be more informative than asking them how they intend to vote.

In its simplest form, the Contact Model considers only contact networks as a source of information. But it is more realistic that citizens consult also other sources, such as the mass media (Uhlener and Grofman 1986). The citizen forecast conditional on each source follows the same logic as above. For instance, if a citizen selects only news information confirming her vote intention, the resulting conditional forecast equals the vote intention; if she randomly samples news information, the resulting conditional forecast becomes more informative than

Table 36.1 The probability that a citizen will correctly forecast depending on p and k when she randomly contacts voters.

		p					
		0.5	0.52	0.54	0.56	0.58	0.6
k	1	0.500	0.520	0.540	0.560	0.580	0.600
	3	0.500	0.530	0.560	0.590	0.619	0.648
	5	0.500	0.537	0.575	0.611	0.647	0.683
	7	0.500	0.544	0.587	0.629	0.671	0.710
	9	0.500	0.549	0.598	0.645	0.690	0.733

Note: Based on Uhlener and Grofman (1986).

her vote intention. With two or more sources considered, the overall forecast will be a weighted average of the conditional forecasts. In the simplest case, citizens are as selective in talking to others as in consuming media, and give equal weight to both sources of information. Then allowing for an additional source of information only increases the sample size, k . But citizens could be more selective in sampling from one source than from another, and they could trust one source more than another. The most general form of the Contact Model allows for this possibility. In any event, the conclusion remains the same: on average citizens will be better than chance at forecasting who wins.

THE ACCURACY OF CITIZEN FORECASTING

Condorcet's jury theorem and the Contact Model lead us to expect that citizens can accurately forecast elections. How good are citizens at forecasting who wins? And do citizen forecasts of who wins also predict the vote share or seat number of a party? Several studies demonstrate the accuracy of citizen forecasting in the United States and Britain.

Forecasting who wins

US presidential elections

Most citizens correctly forecast who wins an election at the state level and national level in the US, and at the constituency level and national level in Britain. Turning first to the US case, in their pioneering work Lewis-Beck and Skalaban (1989) study the forecasting accuracy of citizens in predicting which candidate will win the US presidential election. They look at eight US presidential elections between 1956 and 1984 and find that 69 per cent of respondents to the ANES correctly forecasted the national election winner. In their majority, citizens correctly forecasted 75 per cent of the elections (six out of eight). In other words, moving from individual to aggregate forecast improves the accuracy from 69 to 75 per cent – a finding predicted by Condorcet's jury theorem and echoed by subsequent studies. Extending the evidence to 16 US presidential elections between 1962 to 2012, Graefe (2014) finds that 70 per cent of respondents to the ANES correctly forecasted the national election winner, and that in their majority they were right in 81 per cent of elections (13 out of 16).

Besides forecasting who wins the US presidency, citizens can also forecast which candidate will carry the state. Graefe (2014) looks at 11 US presidential elections between 1952 and 2012. He finds that 69 per cent of respondents to the ANES correctly forecasted the election winner in the state they live in. In their majority, citizens correctly forecasted 82 per cent of the states (329 out of 399). Murr (2015) extends the prediction task by allocating the state's electoral votes

to the candidate who most citizens say will win, and then by predicting that the candidate who receives more than half of the total number of electoral votes will win the presidency. He finds that this forecasting rule correctly predicts 89 per cent of the elections (eight out of nine), when data was sufficiently available to make a forecast.

British general elections

Moving on to the British case, Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2011) demonstrate the accuracy of citizens in forecasting which party will win the election. They look at 13 British general elections between 1951 and 2005. Overall, averaging across these 13 elections, they find that 60 per cent of respondents to Gallup surveys and to the British Election Study (BES) correctly forecast which party will win the election, and that in their majority respondents correctly forecast 77 per cent of prime ministers (10 out of 13).

Besides forecasting who becomes British prime minister, citizens can also forecast which party will win the constituency. Murr (2011) looks at the 2010 British general election. He finds that 69 per cent of respondents to the BES correctly forecasted the constituency winner, and that, in their majority, citizens correctly forecasted 86 per cent of constituencies (537 out of 627). Extending the evidence across seven British general elections between 1964 and 2010, Murr (2016) finds that 61 per cent of respondents to the BES correctly forecasted the constituency election winner, that in their majority citizens correctly forecasted 85 per cent of constituencies (1,806 out of 2,125), and that in their majority constituencies correctly forecast 100 per cent of prime ministers (seven out of seven). In addition, Murr (2016) presents an *ex ante* forecast of the 2015 British general election. When evaluating the forecast after the election, he finds that 57 per cent of respondents correctly forecasted the election winner in their constituency, that in their majority citizens correctly forecasted 87 per cent of constituencies (549 out of 632), and that in their majority constituencies correctly forecasted that David Cameron would become prime minister.

Forecasting vote shares and seat numbers

US presidential elections

In addition to forecasting the election winner, asking citizens who they think will win also forecasts vote and seat shares. The proportion of people who say that a party will win correlates highly with the party's vote or seat share. The reason is that lopsided races are easier to correctly forecast than close races. As the winning margin becomes smaller, the proportion of citizens correctly forecasting who wins becomes smaller too.

Turning first to the US case, Lewis-Beck and Tien (1999) were the first to study how citizen forecasts of who wins the presidency translate into popular

vote shares. They estimate a vote equation at the national level using data from eight US presidential elections between 1956 and 1984. They regress the percentage of the two-party popular presidential vote received by the incumbent candidate on the percentage of respondents to the ANES who said that the incumbent party candidate will win. They find that citizen forecasts account for about 74 per cent of the variance in popular vote, that the standard error of the estimate is 3.2 per cent, and that for each additional 10 per cent who think that the incumbent will win the predicted vote share increases by about 2.1 percentage points.

Extending the evidence by looking at 217 surveys with citizen forecasts from 1932 to 2012, Graefe (2014) estimates the same regression equation as Lewis-Beck and Tien (1999). He finds that citizen forecasts account for about 66 per cent of the variance in popular vote, that the standard error of the estimate is 2.2, and that for each additional 10 per cent who think that the incumbent will win the predicted vote share increases by about 1.7 percentage points.

In addition to estimating an in-sample vote equation using more data, Graefe (2014) also evaluates its out-of-sample predictive accuracy. He calculates forecasts by using only data that would have been available at the time of making a forecast. For instance, to estimate the vote equation for predicting the 1996 election he only uses the surveys from 1932 to 1992. For every election between 1988 and 2012 he then uses the relevant vote equation to translate all citizen forecasts available during the last 100 days before the relevant election into a vote-share forecasts. Overall, averaging across surveys and polls in the seven elections, he finds that vote equations correctly predicted the election winners 92 per cent of the time with a mean absolute error (MAE) in vote shares of 1.6 per cent.¹

Besides predicting a party's vote share at the national-level, the proportion of citizens who think that a party will win also predicts its vote share at the state level. Murr (2015) estimates vote equations at the state level using data from ten US presidential elections between 1952 and 2008. He regresses the Democratic candidate's share of the two-party vote on the difference between the proportions of respondents who say that the Democratic candidate will win and who say that the Republican candidate will win in the ANES. He finds that citizen forecasts account for about 68 per cent of the variance in popular vote, and that for each additional 10 per cent who say that the Democratic candidate will win the predicted vote share increases by about 0.75 percentage points.

Murr (2015) also evaluates the out-of-sample predictive accuracy. Like Graefe (2014), he calculates forecasts by using only data that would have been available at the time of making a forecast. For instance, to estimate the vote equation for predicting the 1984 election he uses only the surveys from 1952 to 1980 to estimate the corresponding vote equation. For every election between 1976 and 2012 he then uses the corresponding vote equation to translate the citizen forecasts before the relevant election into vote-share forecasts. Overall, averaging across all nine elections, citizen forecasts correctly predicted the election winner in

83 per cent of the states, with a MAE in vote shares of 4.5 per cent and a root mean squared error (RMSE) in vote shares of 6.6 per cent.²

British general elections

Moving on to the British case, Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2011) show that the proportion of citizens who think that a party will win the election predicts its seat share. They estimate a seat equation at the national level using data from 13 British general elections between 1951 and 2005. They regress the winning party's seat share on the percentage of respondents to Gallup surveys and the BES who said the winning party would win. They find that citizen forecasts account for about 52 per cent of the variance, and that for each additional 10 per cent who say that the winning party will win the predicted seat share increases by about 1.6 percentage points.

In addition to estimating an in-sample seat equation, Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2011) also present an ex ante forecast of the 2010 British general election. They use their estimated seat equation to translate the citizen forecasts reported in a YouGov survey a month before the 2010 election into a seat share forecast. They correctly predicted that the Conservatives would become the largest party in 2010, though they over-estimated the seat share by about 8 percentage points (forecast: 55.1 per cent vs. actual: 47.1 per cent).

In contrast to Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2011), who use citizen forecasts of the national election to predict seat shares, Murr (2011; 2016) uses citizen forecasts of the constituency election to predict seat numbers. He predicts the constituency to be won by the party who most citizens say will win; counts for each party the number of constituencies it is predicted to win; and compares the predicted with the actual seat number. Looking at the 2010 British general election, Murr (2011) finds that the MAE of citizen forecasts for five parties is about ten seats. Extending the evidence to seven British general elections between 1963 and 2010, Murr (2016) finds that the MAE is about 5.6 seats on average. Murr (2016) also presents an ex ante forecast of the parties' seat numbers for the 2015 British general election. When evaluating the forecast after the election, he finds that the MAE is about 16 seats, nearly triple its historical average. Nevertheless, relative to other forecasts it was one of the most accurate. Among the 12 forecasting models of this election collected in a Special Issue of *Electoral Studies*, his seat number forecasts for Labour and the Conservatives – the two main parties – have the highest and second-highest level of accuracy, respectively (Fisher and Lewis-Beck 2016).

Besides predicting a party's seat share or seat number at the national level, the proportion of citizens who think that a party will win also predicts its vote share at the constituency level. Murr (2011) estimates vote equations at the constituency level using data from the 2010 British general election. Separately for each of the three main parties, he regresses the party's vote share on the proportion

of respondents in the BES who said that it would win the constituency. He finds that citizen forecasts account for between 57 per cent (Liberal Democrats) and 76 per cent (Conservatives) of the variance in popular vote, and that for each additional 10 per cent who say that a party will win its predicted vote share increases by about 0.4 percentage points. Using this vote equation, Murr (2016) presents an ex ante forecast of party's constituency vote shares in the 2015 British general election. When evaluating the forecast after the election, he finds that the RMSE for the Conservatives and Labour is about 8 percentage points and for the Liberal Democrats and Others it is about 13 percentage points.

Overall, these results suggest that citizen forecast accurately predict different types of election outcomes (e.g., who wins, vote shares, seat numbers) at different administrative levels (e.g., constituency-level, national-level) in different countries (United States and Britain). The next section reviews studies that have compared the accuracy of citizen forecasting with other approaches to election forecasting. These studies agree that citizen forecasting is one of the most accurate methods for forecasting elections.

COMPARING CITIZEN FORECASTING WITH OTHER APPROACHES TO ELECTION FORECASTING

How does the accuracy of citizen forecasting compare to that of vote intention polls, prediction markets, expert surveys and quantitative models? In the first study of this kind, Lewis-Beck and Tien (1999) compare the accuracy of citizen forecasts with the final Gallup pre-election poll in US presidential elections. Using the vote equation discussed above, they calculate the MAE of the in-sample prediction and compare it with the one of the Gallup poll. Averaging across 11 US presidential elections, they find that the MAE for the Gallup pre-election poll equals 2.03 percentage points, while the one for the citizen forecasts equals 2.37. Although the prediction error is larger for citizen forecasts than for Gallup, the citizen forecasts have a lead time of about a month, whereas the Gallup pre-election polls have one of only a couple of days.

Instead of comparing the accuracy of citizen forecasts and vote intentions from different surveys at different times, Rothschild and Wolfers (2013) compare citizen forecasts and vote intentions when both were asked in the same survey and compare the accuracy of both approaches in predicting who becomes president. Based on an analysis of ANES data of 15 US presidential elections between 1952 and 2008, they find that vote intentions correctly predict the winner of the presidency in 11 elections, whereas citizen forecasts do so in 12 elections. They then compare the accuracy of both approaches in predicting who wins a state and by how much. Based on an analysis of ANES data of ten US presidential

elections between 1952 and 2008, they find that vote intentions correctly predict the winner of a state about 69 per cent of the time, whereas citizen forecasts do so about 81 per cent of the time. In addition, when predicting vote shares in a state, citizen forecasts have a lower RMSE, a lower MAE and are often closer to the actual outcome than vote intentions.

Even though citizen forecasts might perform better than vote intentions, they might perform worse than prediction markets. Wolfers and Zitzewitz (2004) argue, for instance, that ‘investors’ in prediction markets have an incentive to reveal their true belief and to gather additional information. According to this view, ‘investors’ should be more accurate than citizens. Even so, citizen forecasts also perform better than prediction markets.

Using an online sample of about 20,000 respondents from inside and outside the US, Miller et al. (2012) compare the accuracy of citizen forecasts, prediction markets (Intrade) and the poll aggregation method published by the blog ‘538’ (Nate Silver) in the 2008 US presidential election. Miller et al. (2012) asked the respondents to give a probability that Obama or McCain would win in seven randomly sampled states. Based on prospect theory, they apply a sigmoid transformation to the probability, correcting for the human tendency to overweight small probabilities and underweight large probabilities (Kahneman and Tversky 1979). As the group forecast they take the median of the transformed probabilities. Miller et al. (2012) find that all three forecasting approaches correctly predicted all but two states and that the median citizen forecast had about the same mean squared error in state vote shares as 538, but was more accurate than Intrade in seven out of nine weeks leading up to the election.

Citizen forecasts predict better than prediction markets not only at the state level but also at the national level. Based on data from the two weeks before five US presidential elections between 1988 and 2004, Holbrook (2010) compares the correlation between prediction market vote shares (Iowa Electronic Markets) and actual vote shares with the correlation between citizen forecasts (ANES) and actual vote shares. He finds that the correlation between prediction markets and actual votes shares equals .96 and between citizen forecasts and vote shares equals .99.

Finally, in a seminal study that ties all approaches together, Graefe (2014) compares the relative accuracy of citizen forecasts to polls, prediction markets, expert surveys and quantitative models. Using national-level data from the last 100 days before the seven US presidential elections between 1988 and 2012, Graefe (2014) compares the relative accuracy of the five approaches using two measures: the percentage of forecasts that correctly predict the national winner (hit rate) and the absolute difference between the predicted and actual national two-party popular vote of the incumbent party’s candidate (absolute error).

Graefe (2014) finds that citizen forecasts are better at predicting election winners and vote shares than any other approach. He first compares citizen forecasts with vote intention polls and prediction markets. The hit rate is highest for the most recent citizen forecast (92 per cent), followed by combined poll projections (88 per cent) and prediction markets (79 per cent). The MAE is lowest for citizen forecasts (1.6), followed by prediction markets (1.7) and combined poll projections (2.0). He then compares citizen forecasts with expert surveys. The hit rate is larger for citizen forecasts (100 per cent) than for the average expert forecast (70 per cent). The MAE is lower for citizen forecasts (1.2) than for the average expert forecast (1.4). Finally, he compares citizen forecasts with quantitative models. Both have a hit rate of 100 per cent, but the MAE of citizen forecast (1.5) is lower than of quantitative models (2.3). Overall, it seems fair to conclude that citizen forecasts are among the most accurate method for election forecasting.

ASKING CITIZENS TO FORECAST A PARTY'S VOTE SHARE OR SEAT NUMBER

The previous sections have demonstrated the ability of citizens to predict who wins the election, and that the proportion of citizens who say that a party will win accurately predicts its vote share and seat number. Instead of translating this proportion into vote or seat shares using a regression equation, some researchers and pollsters have asked citizens to forecast the vote share or seat number of a party.

Sjöberg (2009) compares the accuracy of vote share expectations of the public and experts with the final vote intention poll and the exit poll in the 2006 Swedish parliamentary election. Similarly, Boon (2012) compares the accuracy of vote share expectations and vote intention polls in the 2010 British general election. Both studies claim that vote share expectations accurately predict actual vote shares and that they predict better than any other approach.

Although there is strong evidence that vote share expectation surveys accurately forecast election results, the following sections cast doubt on the finding that vote share expectation surveys predict better than any other approach. By re-analysing the Swedish data, I find that the mean vote share expectation of political scientists is the best predictor of the actual vote share. By extending the comparison of vote share expectation and vote intention polls to the 2015 British general election, I find that the actual vote share was better predicted by vote intention polls than the vote share expectation poll. In addition, I also present evidence for the first time that citizens can directly forecast the seat numbers of parties in the 1999 and 2002 New Zealand parliamentary elections. But, again, I find that vote intention polls predicted more accurately than seat number expectations polls.

Re-analysing Sjöberg's (2009) data on vote share expectations in the 2006 Swedish parliamentary election

Using self-collected and publicly available data in the 2006 Swedish parliamentary election, Sjöberg (2009) compares the accuracy of several forecasting approaches.³ The self-collected data include asking members of the public, political scientists, journalists, and editors of sections on readers' letters what vote share they expect each party to win. Sjöberg (2009) chooses the median value as the predicted value. The publicly available data include two vote intention polls: the latest public opinion poll ('Temo Poll') and an exit poll. To measure forecasting accuracy, Sjöberg (2009, 9) uses 'the distribution of votes across the two blocks of socialist and non-socialist parties'. He finds that the median forecast of the public has the lowest error on this measure. He also finds that the median forecast of political scientists had a larger error than the exit poll and the Temo poll. He concludes that the public predicted better than experts and vote intention polls.

I re-analysed Sjöberg's (2009) data for three main reasons. First, Sjöberg (2009) considers only the latest poll as a predictor of vote shares, though recent research has shown the value of averaging polls over several days (e.g. Linzer 2013). Because Sjöberg (2009, Table 1) reports the mean values of parties in the 22 polls published during the campaign, these values can be included as predictors. Including them in the forecasting competition would make a success of the public in the forecasting competition more convincing.

Second, Sjöberg (2009) aggregates vote share expectations by using its median value, though research is still undecided on whether aggregation works better with median or mean values (e.g. Armstrong 2001). Because Sjöberg (2009, Table 7) reports the median values of the public, political scientists, journalists and editors, these values can be included as predictors. Including them in the forecasting competition informs the debate about whether to use mean or median values of forecasts.

Finally, Sjöberg (2009) measures forecasting accuracy as the error in party block difference. Sjöberg (2009, 9) argues that the vote share difference between socialist and non-socialist parties was '[t]he crucial aspect of the election', though standard measures of forecasting accuracy include also whether the predicted winner actually won and the MAE and the RMSE in vote shares. Again, considering these additional measures of accuracy would make a success of the public more convincing, or would help to decide which forecasting approach to use depending on the forecasting task.

Figure 36.2 shows the performance of the 11 approaches on four measures of forecasting accuracy. It demonstrates that the median value of the public is the best estimate for only the party block difference. Although it correctly predicts who wins, the median value of the public has the fifth largest MAE and the

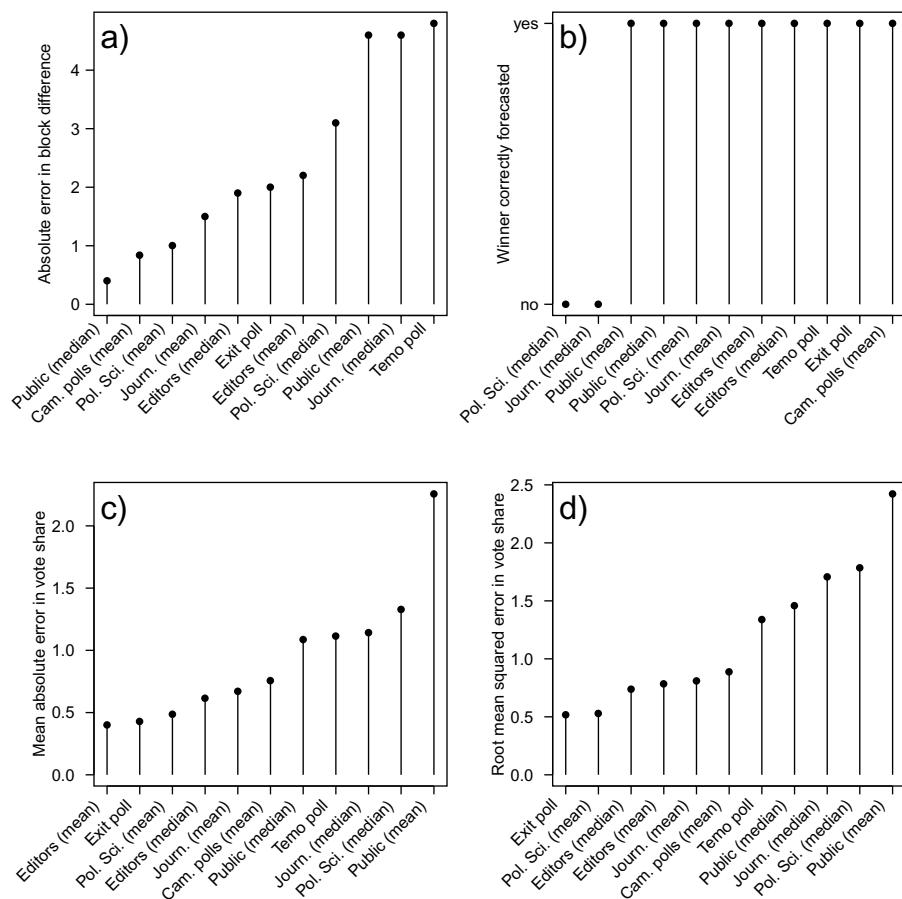


Figure 36.2 The accuracy of election forecasts by political scientist, journalists, editors, the public, and opinion polls in the 2006 Swedish Parliamentary election; the plot shows four measures of accuracy: a) the absolute error in block difference; b) whether the winning block was correctly forecasted; c) the mean absolute error in vote shares; and d) the root mean squared error in vote shares. The data come from Sjöberg (2009) who only considers a) and concludes that the public is better than experts in forecasting. In contrast, the plot considers more measures of forecasting accuracy and thereby comes to different conclusions: all measures considered, the mean forecast of political scientists is the best forecasting method.

fourth largest RMSE in vote shares. The mean value of editors has the lowest MAE, with less than 0.5, and the exit poll has the lowest RMSE, with about 0.5 – both about half the error of the public. As a result, for each continuous measure of forecasting accuracy a different approach works best. Considering all four measures of forecasting accuracy at the same time, the mean value of

political scientists performs best. It correctly predicts who wins, and it always ranks among the three best predictors on the other three measures: it predicted the block difference with an absolute error of about 1, and the vote shares of all parties with a MAE and a RMSE of about 0.5. Overall, the mean value of political scientists achieves the highest accuracy of forecasting in the 2006 Swedish parliamentary election.

To sum up, this subsection has re-analysed the data collected by Sjöberg (2009) by adding an additional forecasting approach, by considering also mean values of vote share expectations and by presenting three additional measures of forecasting accuracy. The re-analysis agrees that the median value of the public was the best predictor of the party block difference, but highlights that the median value of the public was among the worst predictors of the party's vote share as measured by the MAE and the RMSE. Looking at all four measures of forecasting accuracy at the same time, the subsection identified the mean value of political scientists as the best predictor. This finding suggests that sometimes a small group of experts forecasts better than a large group of the public, probably when the rise in forecasting competence offsets the drop in group size (Murr 2015).

Extending Boon's (2012) analysis of vote share expectations to the 2015 British general election

Using data from the 2010 British general election, Boon (2012) found that a vote share expectation poll had a lower MAE than the most accurate vote intention poll. The recent 2015 British general election provides a new case for comparing the accuracy of vote intention polls and vote share expectation surveys in forecasting vote shares.⁴

Table 36.2 shows the headline results for the final opinion polls. In addition to the traditional vote intention surveys, it also includes the headline result for one vote share expectation survey – the so-called 'Wisdom Index' collected by the polling company ICM.

How did vote share expectation surveys compare to vote intention surveys in the 2015 general election? I look at three measures of accuracy: whether the polls showed the Conservatives as the leading party, the absolute error in the Conservative lead and the MAE across all parties.

First, only three of the eight vote intention polls showed the Conservatives ahead of Labour. In contrast to most vote intention polls, the vote share expectation poll predicted a Conservative lead. Second, even those vote intention polls that showed the Conservatives ahead of Labour under-estimated the Conservative lead. At most they indicated a Conservative lead of 1 percentage point – more than 5 percentage points below the actual lead of 6.6 percentage points. In contrast, the vote share expectation poll showed a much larger Conservative lead than any other poll. Although the predicted lead of 2.6 percentage points was

Table 36.2 Accuracy of final vote intention and vote share expectation surveys in the 2015 British general election.

Pollster	Question	Method	N	Fieldwork	Vote shares					Accuracy measures		
					CON	LAB	LD	UKIP	OTHER	CON lead?	CON-LAB	MAE
YouGov	intention	online	10,307	May 4-6	34.0	34.0	10.0	12.0	10.0	FALSE	0.0	1.9
Populus	intention	online	3,917	May 5-6	33.0	33.0	10.0	14.0	11.0	FALSE	0.0	2.1
ICM	intention	telephone	2,023	May 3-6	34.0	35.0	9.0	11.0	11.0	FALSE	-1.0	2.3
Panelbase	intention	online	3,019	May 4-6	31.0	33.0	8.0	16.0	12.0	FALSE	-2.0	2.7
Survation	intention	online	4,088	May 4-6	31.0	31.0	10.0	16.0	12.0	FALSE	0.0	2.8
Opinium	intention	online	2,960	May 4-5	35.0	34.0	8.0	12.0	11.0	TRUE	1.0	1.5
ComRes	intention	telephone	2,015	May 3-5	35.0	34.0	9.0	12.0	10.0	TRUE	1.0	1.5
Ipsos MORI	intention	telephone	1,186	May 5-6	36.0	35.0	8.0	11.0	10.0	TRUE	1.0	1.5
ICM	expectation	telephone	2,023	May 3-6	34.5	31.9	14.4	9.6	9.6	TRUE	2.6	2.8
Result	—	—	—	—	37.8	31.2	8.1	12.9	10.1	TRUE	6.6	—

Note: The election results and final vote intention polls come from britishpollingcouncil.org/general-election-7-may-2015/. The final vote share expectation poll comes from icm unlimited. com/media-centre/polls/final-general-election-question-reads ". In the general election on May 7th which party do you think you will vote for?" (ICM). The vote share expectation question reads "At the last General Election in May 2010, the Conservatives won 37% share of the vote, Labour won 30% share, the Liberal Democrats 24% share and smaller parties had 10% share of the vote. Knowing this, please tell me what percentage share of the vote you think the [party name] would win if there were a General Election tomorrow?" (ICM 'Wisdom Index'). MAE stands for mean absolute error.

still below the actual lead, it was by far the most accurate prediction of the Conservative lead.

This said, when considering the final measure of accuracy – the MAE in vote shares – nearly all vote intention polls did much better than the vote share expectation poll. Considering all five party categories – Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats, UKIP and Others – the MAE of the vote share expectation poll was 2.8 percentage points, about twice the size of the two most accurate vote intention polls by ComRes and Opinium, with 1.5 percentage points.

In sum, the 2015 British general election shows mixed support for vote share expectation surveys. On the one hand, the vote share expectation survey was among the few polls that predicted a Conservative lead, and it even came closest in predicting the magnitude of the lead. On the other hand, the vote share expectation survey had the largest average error in vote shares overall. In particular, it performed poorly for the two minor parties – the Liberal Democrats and UKIP.

Everything considered, however, I think it is fair to conclude that vote share expectation surveys deserve to be more widely used in future, and that it is worthwhile to study how to improve their accuracy by changing the question wording, weighting the responses or delegating the forecasting task to the most competent respondents (Murr 2015). One emerging feature from the British and Swedish cases is that citizen forecasts are more accurate than any other approach in predicting the winning margin.

Analysing seat number expectations in the 1999 and 2002 parliamentary elections in New Zealand

From the British case, we know that we can translate the proportion of people who think that a party will win into the proportion of seats it will win (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2011). This translation requires historical data to estimate the conversion rate. What we do not know, however, is how accurate the forecast will be if we asked citizens to forecast the number of seats that a party will win. This approach would not require historical data for estimating parameters, and instead it could forecast the election right away. To the best of my knowledge, the only surveys to measure seat number expectations are the 1999 and 2002 Campaign Surveys of the New Zealand Election Study. The following will analyse their accuracy for the first time.⁵

How good are citizens at directly forecasting the number of seats a party will win?

Before the surveys asked the respondent about the expected seat number they reminded the respondent that the parliament had 120 seats in total and, if necessary, that the surveys only needed a rough estimate, so that respondents didn't have to add up the estimates to 120. After this introduction, the surveys asked the

Table 36.3 Accuracy of vote intention and seat number expectation surveys in the 1999 and 2002 New Zealand Parliamentary Elections

Party	Actual	1999				2002			
		Intentions		Expectations		Intentions		Expectations	
		Forecast	Error	Forecast	Error	Actual	Forecast	Error	Forecast
Act	9	9.1	0.1	5.4	-3.6	9	6.8	-2.2	4.0
Alliance	10	10.0	0.0	9.2	-0.8	—	—	—	—
Green	7	3.9	-3.1	1.9	-5.1	9	10.5	1.5	6.3
Labour	49	44.9	-4.1	48.2	-0.8	52	57.0	5.0	54.4
National	39	39.8	0.8	46.2	7.2	27	29.5	2.5	35.3
New Zealand First	5	6.2	1.2	5.4	0.4	13	8.8	-4.2	4.0
Other	1	6.0	5.0	0.6	-0.4	2	5.3	3.3	0.2
United Future	—	—	—	—	—	8	1.9	-6.1	0.2
MAE	—	—	2.0	—	2.6	—	—	3.5	—
									5.3

Note: The forecasts are based on the following surveys. The survey responses have been weighted to make them representative of the population. 1999: New Zealand Election Study, 1999, Campaign Survey. Weighting variable = ncwt. Intentions = 'Taking the party vote first, if an election were held today, which party would you vote for?' If 'Refused' or 'Don't know/Don't care', I take the response to the follow-up question: 'Which party do you think you would be most likely to vote for? Expectations = 'Now we'd like to ask you what you EXPECT to happen at the coming election. There will probably be 120 members and seats in the new Parliament. Do you expect [party name] to get any seats in the new Parliament?' If none, I code this as zero expected seats. If yes, I take the response to the follow-up question: 'About how many seats out of 120, do you expect [party name] to win?'; 2002: New Zealand Election Study, 2002, Campaign Survey. Weighting variable = fcamwt. Intention = 'Taking the party vote first, if an election were held today, which party would you vote for?' If 'Refused' or 'Don't know/Don't care', I take the response to the follow-up question: 'Which party do you think you would be most likely to vote for? Expectations = 'Now I'd like to ask you more about what you EXPECT to happen at the coming election. Which parties do you expect to get seats in parliament in the coming election?' If the party was expected to get seats, I code this as zero expected seats. If the party wasn't expected to get seats, I take the response to the follow-up question: 'There will probably be 120 members and seats in the new parliament, which means that to become a government on its own, a party has to get over 60 seats. How many seats out of the 120 do you expect each of the following parties to get?'. The forecasted seat number is the party's share of vote intentions multiplied by 120 (Intentions) or the party's mean expected seat number (Expectations). MAE stands for mean absolute error.

respondent whether a party would win any seats and, if she said yes, the surveys asked her in a follow-up question how many. If the respondent said the party would not win any seats, I coded the party's expected seat number as zero; if the respondent said the party would win seats, I took the response to the follow-up question as the expected seat number. For each party, the mean expected seat number equals its forecasted seat number. How close is this forecast to the actual seat number? And can it forecast who becomes prime minister?

Table 36.3 demonstrates the accuracy of citizens directly forecasting the seat number of parties in the two New Zealand general elections. It lists for each party the actual and forecasted seat numbers, as well as the resulting error, and demonstrates the predictive ability of citizens. For instance, in 1999 citizens predicted that Labour would be the largest party with 48 seats, and it actually won 49 seats. Citizens thereby correctly predicted the change in government from National to Labour. Similarly, in 2002 citizens predicted that Labour would again be the largest party with 54 seats, and it actually won 52 seats. Citizens thereby correctly predicted the stability in government.

Nevertheless, citizens sometimes made large errors. In particular, in both elections they over-estimated the seat number of National, the second-largest party. In 1999 citizens predicted that it would come second with 46 seats, though it did so with only 39 seats – the largest error in the 1999 election; in 2002 they again predicted it to come second with 35 seats, though it did so with only 27 seats – the second largest error in the 2002 election. Overall, however, citizen predicted with a MAE of 2.6 seats in 1999 and 5.3 seats in 2002. This error rate was low and allowed for an accurate forecast on average. The case of New Zealand demonstrates that citizens can directly forecast seat numbers in parliamentary elections.

Are seat number expectations more accurate predictors than vote intentions?

In addition to seat number expectations, both campaign surveys of the New Zealand Election Study also asked citizens which party they intend to vote for. The surveys thereby allow me to directly compare the forecasting accuracy of vote intentions and seat number expectations. Citizens were first asked which party they would vote for if an election were held today. If they refused or did not know the answer, a follow-up question asked them which party they would be most likely to vote for. I took the responses to these questions as the vote intention, and created a simple forecasting model.

New Zealand has a mixed-member proportional electoral system with a 5 per cent threshold. To keep it simple, however, I forecasted that the party's seat share equals its share of vote intentions. I then multiplied this forecasted seat share by 120 seats to create a seat number forecast. Although this forecasting model based on vote intentions is simple, it forecasts with high accuracy, and indeed more accurately than the seat number expectation surveys on average.

Table 36.3 shows that vote intentions forecast more accurately than seat number expectations in both elections. Like seat number expectations, vote intentions predicted that Labour would be the largest party in both 1999 and 2002. Unlike seat number expectations, however, vote intentions had an even smaller MAE in seats. When moving from seat number expectations to vote intentions the MAE drops in 1999 from 2.6 to 2.0 seats and in 2002 from 5.3 to 3.5 seats. Again, together with the Swedish and British results, these findings suggest that citizens can directly forecast vote shares or seat numbers with great accuracy, but that this form of citizen forecasting – without further refinements – is not more accurate than other traditional form of election forecasting, such as vote intention surveys.

Can we correct for systematic bias in seat number expectations to improve their accuracy?

This said, in the following I would like to suggest a simple way of refining seat number expectations to make them as accurate as vote intentions. The refinement aims to correct for systematic biases in citizen forecasts. Table 36.3 suggests that citizens systematically over- or under-estimate specific parties on average. In both elections, citizens under-estimate the seat number of Act, Green and Others and over-estimate the seat number of National. Only for Labour and New Zealand First does the direction of error change from one election to the other. The correlation of errors between 1999 and 2002 is 0.66, suggesting a strong correlation of errors from one election to another.

If this is true, then we can correct for this systematic bias by subtracting the error in the previous election from the forecast in the current election. For instance, in 1999 Act won nine seats, whereas citizens forecasted 5.4 seats – they under-estimated the seat number by 3.6 seats. To the extent that they systematically under-estimate this party, we can partly correct for it in the subsequent election by adding 3.6 seats to the forecasted four seats for Act in 2002. Indeed, the ‘corrected’ forecast of $4 + 3.6 = 7.6$ seats is closer to the actual nine seats, halving the error from $4 - 9 = -5$ seats to $7.6 - 9 = -2.4$. Repeating this exercise for every party for which a forecast was available in both 1999 and 2002 reduces the MAE from 4.9 seats to 3.1 seats.⁶ This correction brings seat number expectations on par with vote intention surveys, who have a MAE of 3.2 seats among these parties in 2002, and for which a similar pattern of over- and under-estimation does not exist.⁷

Clearly, more data is needed to check whether systematic biases persist from one election to another, to understand how to best correct for them and to evaluate how these ‘corrected’ seat number expectations compare to predictions derived from vote intention surveys. Nevertheless, the results presented here are at least suggestive that even a simple correction of forecasts can improve the accuracy of citizen forecasts of seat numbers and thereby reach at least the same level of accuracy as vote intention surveys.

Do groups predict seat numbers better than individuals?

The survey data from New Zealand also allow the central claim of the ‘wisdom of crowds’ – that group outperform individuals – to be tested. Are groups better at predicting the seat number than individuals? Neither Sjöberg (2009) nor Boon (2012) have demonstrated that groups outperform individuals. None of them compares the accuracy of the group estimate with the individual estimates. The following does so for the first time using data from the 1999 and 2002 New Zealand parliamentary elections. It finds that groups predict better than the average individual.

Table 36.3 showed that the MAE of groups was 2.6 seats in 1999 and 5.3 seats in 2002. To compare the accuracy of the groups with the individuals, I also calculated the MAE for each individual forecast, and then took its mean value in each election. This value is the average MAE in seats of individuals. It was 5.6 seats in 1999 and 8.6 seats in 2002 (no table shown). In other words, moving from individual to group forecasts decreases the MAE by about three seats in both election years, demonstrating that groups predict better than individuals.

To sum up, the case of New Zealand has demonstrated that citizens can directly forecast the number of seats that a party will win in a multi-party parliamentary election. Their average expected seat numbers correctly predicted government change in 1999 and government stability in 2002. It also forecasted the seat numbers with a low MAE of 2.6 seats in 1999 and 5.4 seats in 2002. Nevertheless, vote intention surveys forecasted with a lower MAE in seats in both elections. This finding again illustrates that asking citizens to directly forecast seat numbers might not be the most accurate forecasting approach. Nevertheless, the results also suggested that citizens were systematically over- and under-predicting the seat numbers of specific parties, which suggested a simple correction for the 2002 forecast, making them at least as accurate as vote intention surveys. Future research could explore both the extent of systematic biases in direct vote and seat share forecasts, and approaches to correcting for them. Finally, I demonstrated for the first time that groups predict seat numbers more accurately than individuals on average.

CONCLUSION

Most citizens correctly forecast who wins the election. The chance that an individual citizen correctly forecasts has been estimated to lie between 60 to 70 per cent in the British and US American studies reviewed here. This finding suggests a simple forecasting rule: make the same forecast as the majority of citizens. This forecasting rule correctly predicts nearly all elections. The chance that the majority of citizens correctly forecasts has been estimated to lie between 75 and 100 per cent in the British and US American studies reviewed here.

In other words, moving from individual forecasts to group forecasts increased the chances of a correct forecast by 6 to 39 percentage points, depending on the study. These findings suggest that groups forecast better than individuals, signifying the ‘wisdom of crowds’.

Why do groups forecast better than individuals? In essence, Condorcet’s jury theorem proves that groups are better than individuals if individuals are better than chance in forecasting. The studies reviewed here demonstrate empirically that individuals are indeed better than chance, but none offered an explanation of why this should be so. I offered such an explanation based on the Contact Model developed by Uhlener and Grofman (1986). This explanation again relied on Condorcet’s jury theorem. In its simplest form, the idea is that citizens sample the informational environment and then predict the winning candidate to be the one who is supported by the majority of sampled information. As a result, even if people are completely biased by their vote intention in what information they sample, they will be better than chance in forecasting who wins because usually the party with a majority of the votes wins the election. Because citizens are not completely biased, their forecast will be much better than chance. Indeed, many more citizens correctly forecast who wins than intend to vote for the majority party, as the British and US American studies reviewed here demonstrate.

The theory of citizen forecasting resembles, therefore, a nested set of Matryoshka dolls. Condorcet’s jury theorem explains, for instance, why British citizens are better than chance at forecasting which party will win their constituency (61 per cent), why in their majority citizens are better at forecasting constituencies than individual citizens (85 per cent) and why in their majority constituencies are better at forecasting who becomes prime minister than groups of citizens at forecasting constituencies (100 per cent). Each step of aggregation increases the forecasting accuracy compared with the previous one. Therefore, a major implication of Condorcet’s jury theorem is that increasing the number of aggregation steps will increase the forecasting accuracy.

In addition to forecasting which party wins, asking citizens who they think will win also forecasts the party’s vote or seat share. Using historical data, the British and US American studies reviewed here have found that for a ten percentage-point increase in citizen forecasts, the vote or seat share usually increases between 0.4 and 2.1 percentage points. They have also found that citizen forecasts of who wins allow forecasting of vote and seat shares with a low error. For instance, in these studies the resulting MAE of vote share forecasts ranges between 1.6 and 4.5 percentage points. The error is so low, indeed, that several US American studies have compared citizen forecasting with other approaches and have found that asking citizens who wins the election is among the most accurate, if not the most accurate, approach to election forecasting.

Instead of asking citizens who they think will win, some studies have asked citizens what vote share or seat number a party will win. When doing so, some

of the above findings stay the same, but others change. The ‘wisdom of crowds’ applies equally to asking who will win and asking what seat number a party will win. Using data from New Zealand, I have shown for the first time that groups predict parties’ seat numbers better than individuals. In addition, citizen forecasts of vote shares and seat numbers accurately predict who will govern and what vote share and seat numbers each party will receive. The reviewed and extended British and Swedish studies come to this conclusion, as does the analysis of the data from New Zealand. In contrast to the finding about citizen forecasts of who wins, however, I concluded that although citizen forecasts of vote shares or seat numbers is among the most accurate approach to election forecasting, without further refinements, such as correcting for systematic biases, it is not the most accurate one.

What should the agenda for future research be? Since the Contact Model provides one possible explanation of why citizens are better than chance in forecasting, it is important to know to what extent its other implications are supported by data. Some are tested by Uhlener and Grofman (1986), but others are not. For instance, the Contact Model implies that a citizen’s forecast is more likely to be correct the more heterogeneous and larger her contact network is. Data on the contact network of a citizen, such as the number of people with whom she talks about politics and their vote intentions, together with the citizen’s forecast of who wins in the next election could be gathered and analysed.

Another area where more research could be done is to compare the accuracy of citizen forecasts of who wins to other approaches outside of the United States. In principle, the findings from the United States should generalise to other countries, but before we conduct these studies we cannot be sure. One source of uncertainty are the studies about citizen forecasts of what vote share or seat number parties will win conducted in Britain, New Zealand and Sweden. I found that this type of citizen forecast is less accurate than other approaches. An open question is whether this finding has to do with the differences between the political systems in the United States and in Great Britain, New Zealand and Sweden, or whether it has to do with the different type of citizen forecasting used.

It could be that forecasting is much more difficult for citizens in multiparty systems than it is in a two-party system. However, we know from British studies that citizens are as good as US American citizens at forecasting who wins. We also know from the 2015 British general election that citizen forecasting was one of the most, if not the most, accurate approaches to forecasting it (Fisher and Lewis-Beck 2016; Murr 2016). It seems more likely, therefore, that asking citizens to forecast vote shares that need to sum to 100 per cent or seat numbers that need to sum to 120 is cognitively too demanding for them, introducing measurement error. We know from the Swedish case, for instance, that experts such as political scientists forecast much better than citizens. More data could be

gathered to understand which type of citizen forecasting works best for which political system, and whether and, if so, when they outperform other approaches to election forecasting.

Finally, little is known about how the accuracy of citizen forecasting relates to its lead time. British and US American studies have tested whether, as election day approaches, individuals and groups are more likely to correctly forecast who wins (Lewis-Beck and Tien 1999; Murr 2011; Murr 2015). These studies, and the others reviewed here, collected data in the three months before the election. If citizen forecasts are so accurate, maybe we can use them to forecast who wins much earlier? That is, compared to, say, vote intention surveys, how accurate are citizen forecasts one year or two or three years before the election? To the best of my knowledge there is no published research on this exciting question. In fact, as the lead time increases, so might the benefits of using citizen forecasts over other approaches.

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Notes

- 1 The mean absolute error (MAE) is defined as $\frac{1}{n} \sum_i^n |predicted_i - actual_i|$ for $i = 1, \dots, n$. It gives the same weight to positive and negative errors, and gives proportionate weight to larger errors.
- 2 The root mean squared error (RMSE) is defined as $\sqrt{\left(\frac{1}{n} \sum_i^n (predicted_i - actual_i)^2 \right)}$ for $i = 1, \dots, n$. It gives the same weight to positive and negative errors, and gives disproportionate weight to larger errors. The RMSE is, therefore, more sensitive to outliers than the MAE.
- 3 The 2006 Swedish parliamentary election was held on 17 September. The minority government ('socialist parties'), formed by the Social Democrats since 1994 and supported by the Left Party and the Greens, lost the election. The Moderate Party were able to form a majority government together with the Centre Party, Liberal People's Party and the Christian Democrats ('non-socialist parties'). It was the country's first majority government since the one of the Social Democrats between 1968 and 1970.
- 4 The 2010 British general election was held on 6 May. The majority government, formed by the Labour Party since 1997, lost the election, becoming the second largest party in terms of seats. The election resulted in the first hung parliament since the one between February and October 1974 – no party won an absolute majority. The Conservative Party became the largest party and formed a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats, who became the third-largest party. The 2015 British general election was held on 7 May. The Conservative Party won an absolute majority and formed a government alone. The Liberal Democrats lost most of their seats, becoming the fourth-largest party after the Labour Party and the Scottish National Party.

- 5 The 1999 New Zealand parliamentary election was held on 27 November. The coalition government formed by the National Party, the largest party at that time, and New Zealand First, the third-largest party, lost the election. The Labour Party won most seats and formed a minority coalition government with the Alliance, the third-largest party. The government was supported by the Greens. It was the first time the National Party was not in government since October 1990. The Alliance collapsed while in government. The collapse was one of the reason for calling an early election. The 2002 New Zealand parliamentary election was held on 27 July. The Labour Party became the largest party, though again short of an absolute majority. It formed a minority coalition government with the Progressives, the smallest party in parliament, formed by the former Alliance leader. The government was supported by United Future, the second-smallest party.
- 6 The 'corrected' forecast for 2002 is the forecast for 2002 minus the forecasting error in 1999. The forecasts are as follows: Act ($4.0 + 3.6 = 7.6$), Green ($6.3 + 5.1 = 11.5$), Labour ($54.4 + 0.8 = 55.2$), National ($35.3 - 7.2 = 28.1$), New Zealand First ($4.0 - 0.4 = 3.6$), and Other ($0.2 - 0.4 = 0.5$).
- 7 The correlation of errors between 1999 and 2002 is -0.21 , suggesting that there is no correlation. Indeed, neither adding the forecasting error in 1999 to the forecast in 2002 nor subtracting the forecasting error in 1999 from the forecast in 2002 improves the MAE.

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Political Markets

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INTRODUCTION

As long as there have been elections people have tried to predict their results and, over the past three decades, researchers have made considerable progress in developing and improving methods for how to forecast elections. For example, the accuracy of predictions based on standard vote intention polls has been improved by using statistical techniques to project their results to election day (e.g. Erikson and Wlezien, 2008; Campbell, 1996; Ford et al., this Volume). Researchers have also developed econometric models that provide long-term forecasts by using information that is available months before the election, such as the state of the economy, the popularity of the president, or the time the incumbent party has held the White House. Essentially, such models generate forecasts by comparing the situation in a particular election campaign with what has happened in historical elections. This approach allows for identifying structural factors that influence elections and thus help us to explain and understand election outcomes (Bélanger and Trotter, this Volume).

An alternative – and probably the most straightforward – way for making forecasts is to ask people to think about a situation and to predict what will happen. For example, when it comes to forecasting election results, one may simply ask people how they expect the election to turn out, and use their aggregated judgment as forecasts (Murr, this Volume). In fact, researchers have long shown that the majority of regular citizens are able to correctly predict who will win an election (Lewis-Beck and Skalaban, 1989). Of course, methods that simply reveal and

aggregate people's expectations cannot help to explain election results. However, as shown in this chapter, such methods are valuable in quickly producing forecasts that are not only easy to understand but also quite accurate.

This chapter summarizes the latest research on one popular method for aggregating people's judgment in a forecast, namely so-called prediction markets. The chapter is structured as follows. After describing the concept of judgmental forecasting, I outline the history of political prediction markets from their predecessors in sixteenth-century Italy to modern-day online markets. Then I describe important aspects of prediction market design, followed by a comparison of features of prediction markets and simple surveys. Finally, I provide evidence on the relative accuracy of prediction markets and alternative methods for forecasting elections and discuss the findings as well as implications for future research.

JUDGMENTAL FORECASTING

In contrast to quantitative forecasting methods, which use statistical methods to derive forecasts from data, judgmental forecasting methods primarily rely on people's judgment or qualitative information. Judgmental forecasting is thus valuable if available data are inadequate for quantitative analysis or if the use of qualitative information can increase the accuracy or acceptability of forecasts (Graefe et al., 2013).

The forecasting literature refers to judgmental forecasts derived in an unstructured way as 'unaided judgment'. Unaided judgment can be useful if people have good knowledge about the situation. When it comes to the outcomes of elections, there is reason to believe that people possess useful knowledge acquired by following the media campaign coverage, reading recent polling results, and talking to their peers about the election. Indeed, in surveys that ask who will win an election, 60 percent to 70 percent of respondents in the UK and US were able to correctly pick the winner. When the individual responses were combined, these so-called vote expectation surveys predicted the correct winner with a hit rate between 77 percent and 86 percent (Graefe, 2014).

In the forecasting literature, combining forecasts is a well-established means to improve accuracy (Armstrong et al., 2015). The combined forecast is usually more accurate than the typical individual forecast and often even more accurate than the most accurate individual forecast (Graefe et al., 2014b). For combinations of judgmental forecasts, this phenomenon has become widely known as 'the wisdom of crowds' (Murr, this Volume). In vote expectation surveys, the gains from combining forecasts arise from pooling the responses by, for example, simply assigning equal weights to each respondent's prediction.

An alternative means to harness the wisdom of the crowd is to utilize the price system of the market. People commonly use markets to exchange goods and to

make profits. For example, if a person knows that the price for a certain good will go down, she can make a profit by selling today and buying later at a lower price. Assume she finds a pattern that the price for a good generally decreases on Wednesdays. Then, she would sell on Tuesdays and buy on Thursdays. Through the process of trading, she then reveals her private information to the market and, as a result, the price will not go down on Wednesdays as much any more. The more people compete in looking for information or patterns that predict price movements, the more difficult it becomes to find information that is not yet incorporated in the market price. Thus, the market aggregates qualitative information and translates it into a numerical estimate (i.e. the market price).

So-called prediction (or betting) markets utilize this powerful mechanism for aggregating dispersed information not for speculation but for the purpose of making predictions. That is, prediction markets combine human judgment into a single forecast and can thus be classified as a judgmental forecasting method (Graefe et al., 2013). When applied to forecasting political events such as the outcomes of elections, the method is also known as political markets.

HISTORY OF POLITICAL MARKETS

Prediction markets are often thought of as a relatively new forecasting method. Yet, such markets have been around for at least half a millennium, as Rhode and Strumpf (2004; 2014) described in their reviews of historical betting markets.

The earliest account of political markets dates back to 1503, when betting on who will be the next pope was already considered old practice. Although Pope Gregory XIV banned betting on papal elections in 1591, such wagers have occasionally reappeared and also gained some press attention, as in the case of the conclaves over the successor to Leo XIII in 1903 and Benedict XV in 1922. In Italian city-states such as Venice and Genoa betting on the outcome of civic elections was common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In Great Britain, including its former colonies, such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, and the United States, political betting can be traced as far back as the eighteenth century. While the main focus of these markets was on election outcomes, betting also occurred on other political events, such as the outcome of no-confidence votes, the resignation of leaders, or the outcome of foreign and military missions (Rhode and Strumpf, 2014).

In the US political betting was common in the nineteenth century, where public bets on a candidate were considered a sign of support. However, the heyday of election betting was between 1884 and 1940, when large-scale markets on presidential elections were operated (Rhode and Strumpf, 2014). These markets not only provided accurate forecasts of the election outcome in an era before scientific polling (Erikson and Wlezien, 2012) but were also widely popular among

investors and journalists alike. At certain times the trading volume in these markets exceeded that in the stock exchanges on Wall Street, and major news outlets such as the *New York Times*, *Sun*, and *World* reported the betting odds as forecasts of the election outcome on a nearly daily basis. However, political markets began to disappear after 1940 for a number of reasons. First, moral concerns associated with betting on political outcomes arose; second, opinion polls became popular as an alternative method for predicting election results; and, third, other gambling opportunities, such as horse race betting, became available (Rhode and Strumpf, 2004).

Modern-day online prediction markets first appeared in 1988, when the University of Iowa launched the Iowa Electronic Markets (IEM) to predict the US presidential election of the same year (Forsythe et al., 1992). The accuracy of the market's forecasts ignited the interest of researchers in different fields. Since the mid-1990s various studies have tested the predictive validity of prediction markets in areas other than political forecasting: for example, for forecasting sports events or business figures. A second boost in prediction markets' popularity can be traced back to two events in the early 2000s. The first was the cancellation of the Policy Analysis Market in 2003, a project funded by the United States' Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA), whose goal was to improve existing intelligence institutions by predicting military and political instability around the world. Ironically, it was the decision to cancel the project – due to ethical concerns with betting on political events (e.g. terrorist attacks) – that attracted broad media coverage and thus made a broader public aware of prediction markets (Hanson, 2007). The second event was the publication of James Surowiecki's (2004) bestselling book *The Wisdom of Crowds*, in which he describes prediction markets as an efficient means to harness collective intelligence. Shortly after, prediction markets were listed on the *Gartner Hype Cycle* and soon major business consultancies saw them as an emerging trend. However, empirical studies found little evidence that prediction markets outperform alternative methods for business forecasting (Graefe, 2011), which is one of the reasons why prediction markets have not made it to regular adoption in companies (Wolfram, 2015). In comparison, prediction markets have become an established method in modern-day election forecasting, most likely due to their ability to provide more accurate predictions than vote intention polls.

MARKET DESIGN

This section describes two types of contract that are most common for forecasting political events – winner-take-all and index contracts – and discusses critical questions of market design, such as how to define the prediction event and how to motivate participation.

Contract types

Prediction markets enable participants to buy and sell contracts whose payoff depends on the outcome of a future event. Once the outcome is known, participants are paid off in exchange for the contracts they hold. The choice of a specific market type depends on what is being forecast – for example, whether the goal is to predict one-off events or continuous outcomes.

Winner-take-all contracts allow for obtaining a probability estimate of whether or not an outcome will occur. Such contracts are the most popular type of prediction market and are used to predict, for example, election winners. Imagine a contract that pays off \$1 if candidate A wins the election and \$0 otherwise. Then, a contract price of \$0.55 for ‘candidate A’ means that the market predicts that the candidate has a 55 percent chance to win the election. If a participant believes that candidate A’s chance to win is higher, say 70 percent, she would buy contracts for any price less than \$0.70. Assume she bought ten shares at a price of \$0.55 per share and candidate A eventually won the election. Then, she would have made a profit of \$4.50 ($=10 * [\$1 - \$0.55]$).

Index contracts allow for predicting numerical outcomes, such as vote-shares in an election. The payoff of index contracts is not known *a priori* but depends on the final value of the target criterion. Imagine a contract pays off \$0.01 times the final vote share received by candidate A and the contract currently trades at \$0.51 per share. This means that the market predicts candidate A to receive 51 percent of the vote. If a participant believes that candidate A’s final vote share will be higher, he would buy that contract. Assume he bought 100 shares at a price of \$0.51 per share. Furthermore, assume candidate A eventually received 48 percent of the vote and the contract thus paid off \$0.48 per share. In this case, the market participant would have lost \$3 ($=100 * [\$0.48 - \$0.51]$).

Both types of contract are implemented in the IEM’s US presidential election markets: a winner-take-all market to predict the winner of the popular vote and a vote-share market to predict the actual two-party vote shares received by the Republican and Democratic candidates.

Contract definition

Regardless of the implemented contract types, it is important to clearly define the rules for settling a contract. For instance, when it comes to US presidential elections, it has to be clear whether the winner will be judged based on the popular (as done by the IEM) or the electoral (as done by Betfair) vote.

The following example shows how poorly designed contracts may alienate market participants. In 2006 Tradesports.com offered a contract that aimed to predict whether North Korea would launch a long-range missile that leaves its airspace by July 31. When, on July 4, news that North Korean missiles dropped

in the Sea of Japan made worldwide headlines, market participants who had bet that this would happen thought they had won. There was a problem, however. The contract had specified the US Department of Defense as the official source of information for judging the event's outcome, but the DoD never published a formal statement on the missile tests. As a result, Tradesports rewarded traders who bet *against* the missile launch, a decision that frustrated those who made correct predictions (Graefe, 2008).

Another important issue when setting up a contract is whether or not participants actually possess valid information. Like any other judgmental forecasting method, prediction markets will fail if no relevant public information exists that could be aggregated. Sunstein (2006: 134–7) summarized several cases in which prediction markets failed to provide accurate forecasts, such as whether people would resign from (and be nominated to) the US Supreme Court or whether weapons of mass destruction would be found in Iraq. Vaughan Williams and Paton (2015) provided additional evidence in their analysis of betting odds from papal conclaves from 1503 to 2013. In seven of the ten conclaves for which odds were available, the markets failed to predict the next pope.

Incentive scheme

Prediction markets provide performance-based incentives and thus are expected to motivate participation and truthful information revelation. The most straightforward way is to allow participants to invest real money. However, the law in many countries prohibits such real-money markets. An alternative is to use play money and to award prizes to the best-performing participants based on rankings of, for example, their portfolio value. Research on the relative performance of play-money and real-money markets is limited and inconclusive. While one study found no differences in accuracy for sports events (Servan-Schreiber et al., 2004), two studies found real-money markets to be more accurate than play-money markets (Rosenbloom and Notz, 2006; Deimer and Poblete, 2011). One concern with play-money markets is that participants cannot lose money, which may open doors to market manipulation, which I discuss in the following section.

MARKETS VS. EXPECTATION SURVEYS

Prediction markets use the price system of the market to aggregate people's expectations regarding the outcome of a future event. Thus, the method is closely related to expectation surveys, which simply ask people to make a prediction of what will happen. This section discusses important similarities and differences between both methods, which are summarized in Table 37.1.

Table 37.1 Comparison of prediction markets and expectation surveys

	<i>Prediction Market</i>	<i>Expectation Survey</i>
Information aggregation		
Timing	Continuous	One-shot
Aggregation mechanism	Price system	Statistics (Mean)
Incentives		
Participation	Yes	No
Information seeking	Yes	No
Truthful information revelation	Yes	No
Participants		
Entry	Open	By invitation
Selection	Self-selected	Random
Sample	Non-representative	Representative
Vulnerable to manipulation	Yes	No

Information aggregation

Surveys are one-off activities that need to be triggered and that provide results at a certain point in time. Thus, they cannot aggregate information in real time and are therefore less useful in situations where new information may become available frequently or suddenly.

In comparison, prediction markets use the price mechanism of the market to aggregate information. Thereby, the market price reflects the combined expectations of all participants at any time. Since markets are continuously open for participation, they have the potential to instantly and automatically incorporate new information into the forecast.

This feature is often proclaimed as one of the method's major advantages. Snowberg et al. (2013) describe the reaction of a contract traded at Intrade to the killing of Osama bin Laden as an illustration of how fast prediction markets can incorporate new information. This contract tracked the probability that bin Laden would be captured or killed by December 31, 2011. When Keith Urbahn, former chief of staff to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, posted on his Twitter account that he heard bin Laden was killed, the market forecast rose within 25 minutes from 7 percent to nearly 99 percent; eight minutes later, the first media outlets announced the news. This mechanism may not always work as well as in this instance, however. In their analysis of betting on the 2013 papal conclave, Vaughan Williams and Paton (2015) concluded that the Betfair prediction market failed to sufficiently and quickly incorporate information that became available over the course of the conclave.

Incentives

Traditional surveys provide no incentives for participation. While some people might feel an intrinsic motivation or moral obligation to participate in surveys, many people may regard participation as a loss of time. Furthermore, surveys do not motivate participants to actively search for information or to reveal their true beliefs. As a result, respondents' expectations may be influenced by their preferences. For example, when being asked to predict who will win an election people may be inclined to name their preferred candidate. This bias, which is known as wishful thinking, is long known to be common and occurs in all types of elections, from local referenda to national elections, and across various countries; see Miller et al. (2012) for an overview of recent research on wishful thinking.

In comparison, prediction markets offer several theoretical advantages over traditional surveys, as they provide incentives for participation, information seeking, and truthful information revelation. Since market participants can win or lose money based on the accuracy of their individual predictions, they should only become active if they think that the current prediction is incorrect. For the same reasons, market participants have an incentive to actively look for information, which may help them to improve the market forecast and to reveal their true beliefs. For example, regardless of which candidate they support, participants should reveal whom they truly expect to win.

However, empirical evidence suggests that the incentives provided by prediction markets may not always be sufficient to overcome wishful thinking. Forsythe et al. (1999) analyzed trading behavior in the 1988 US presidential election vote-share market and the 1993 Canadian House of Commons Market, both operated by the IEM. They found that participants in both markets exhibited wishful thinking. In particular, participants bought more shares of their preferred candidates and sold more shares of candidates that they did not support. Rothschild and Sethi (2015) provided additional evidence in their analysis of individual trading data in Intrade's 2012 US presidential election winner market. The authors found that 94 percent of traders, who accounted for 69 percent of the total trading volume, (almost) exclusively held shares of either Obama or Romney. While the data did not provide information about which candidate a trader supported, the results provide a strong indication for the existence of wishful thinking.

Participants

Participants in prediction markets are often referred to as 'self-selected experts'. The underlying assumption is that the incentive mechanism should make sure that only people who think that they know better than the market as a whole become active. While it is technically possible to restrict participation to a certain group of people, most markets are open for anyone to participate. Not surprisingly, then, participants do not form a representative sample of the population,

as not all people are equally likely to participate in prediction markets. For example, a study on the 1988 IEM found that market participants were predominantly white, male, well educated, and belonged to middle and upper income categories. In addition, participants tended to be more Republican and less independent in their partisan leanings, and were more politically active than the general public (Forsythe et al., 1992).

The likely reason for the bias towards higher-educated participants is that many people lack the understanding of how markets work and, in particular, how to translate their expectations into a market price. One laboratory experiment asked participants how satisfied they were with participating in one of four judgmental forecasting methods: prediction markets, the Delphi method, nominal groups, and traditional face-to-face meetings. Prediction markets were rated least favorable. In particular, market participants were least satisfied with the process and rated the method highest in terms of difficulty of participation (Graefe and Armstrong, 2011). While this finding suggests that prediction markets are unsuitable for involving a representative sample of participants, more research on how people perceive participation in prediction markets would be valuable.

In comparison, expectation surveys aim to obtain responses from a random and representative sample of the population. However, the fact that response rates in traditional phone surveys have decreased below 10 percent in recent years (Kohut et al., 2012) has raised doubts about the representativeness of survey samples (Wang et al., 2015). For example, some people may not answer calls from unknown numbers and may not be reachable by phone at all. Others, who did answer the phone, may be unwilling to participate if, for example, they support unpopular parties or candidates (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). As a result, those who chose to participate may not form a representative sample.

Manipulation

In contrast to surveys, where each respondent achieves equal weight (at least in theory), the weight of an individual participant's opinion in prediction markets depends on his budget and can thus vary widely across traders. For example, Rothschild and Sethi (2015) found that in Intrade's 2012 US presidential market a single trader accounted for one quarter of the total money on Romney. The possibility for a single participant to invest large amounts of money brings along the potential to influence market prices, which is concerning with regards to market manipulation. That is, certain (groups of) participants may attempt to manipulate the market forecast in order to affect perceptions of the state of the race and thus influence the election outcome. For example, in times where prediction markets increasingly gain the media's attention, manipulators could try to increase a candidate's predicted chance of winning in order to motivate support, increase turnout, or alter voting preferences. The underlying logic is that voters may change their preferences in favor of the candidate who is most likely to win, which is

known as the so-called bandwagon effect (Simon, 1954). That said, research to date is inconclusive as to how forecasts affect turnout and voting preferences.

Early evidence on whether prediction markets are vulnerable to manipulation is mixed. While some studies showed that manipulation has not been successful historically (Rhode and Strumpf, 2004), in the laboratory (Hanson et al., 2006) or in the field (Camerer, 1998), one study reported successful manipulation attempts (Hansen et al., 2004). In their review of studies of price manipulation, Wolfers and Zitzewitz (2004) concluded that, besides a short transition phase, none of the known attacks had a noticeable influence on the prices.

However, recent evidence suggests that manipulation is a concern. Rothschild and Sethi (2015) showed that the single trader who invested large amounts of money to back Romney had a lasting effect on the contract's market price. Over the last months before the election, the price of Intrade's Obama contract was consistently between five and ten percentage points lower than the respective contract on a competing exchange. While this presumed manipulation came at a price (the trader lost close to \$7 million), the loss is negligible compared with the cost of a US presidential campaign. As Rothschild and Sethi note (2015: 24), 'a media narrative could be manipulated at a cost less than that of a primetime television commercial'.

Manipulation appears to be an even bigger concern in play-money markets, in which there is no monetary cost to manipulation, as participants cannot lose money. A market that aimed to predict the parties' vote shares in the 2013 German election provides an example. During the four months leading up to the election this market's forecast for the Alternative for Germany (AfD), a right-wing euro-skeptic party that was just founded a few months earlier, was unrealistically high. At times, the market predicted that the AfD would gain more than 25 percent of the vote, which was more than ten times the party's polling numbers. On election eve, the market predicted the AfD to receive nearly 14 percent. In comparison, the party polled on average a bit above 3 percent and the average of five other prediction markets forecast a vote share of 4.7 percent, which was exactly the party's final vote share achieved in the election. Interestingly, of the six available prediction markets, the market that predicted extraordinary high vote shares for the AfD was the only one whose forecasts were reported by a prominent news outlet. The *Handelsblatt*, a leading German business newspaper, sponsored the market and regularly reported its forecasts on their website. It thus appears likely that AfD supporters hijacked the market to create media attention and to influence public perception of the party's strength.

MARKET ACCURACY

This section reviews the relative accuracy of prediction markets for forecasting numerical election outcomes, such as the vote shares or number of seats gained by parties in an election. Data were collected for 44 elections in eight countries:

Austria (N=10), Canada (2), Germany (20), The Netherlands (1), Norway (1), Sweden (1), Switzerland (1), and the US (8). To allow for a fair comparison, I compared only forecasts that were released around the same time. When forecasts were made for different forecast horizons, I averaged across the horizons. For each method, forecast error was measured in terms of the mean absolute error (MAE). The MAE is the absolute deviation of each party's predicted and final vote share, averaged across all parties. I then calculated the relative absolute error (RAE) of the prediction market forecast compared with the forecast error of the respective benchmark method. Values below 1 mean that the prediction market provided more accurate forecasts; values above 1 mean that the benchmark method was more accurate. The benchmark methods were established methods for election forecasting, namely polls, expert judgment, expectation surveys, econometric models, and method combination.

vs. polls

The most common approach to forecast elections is to ask individual respondents for whom they intend to vote if the election were held today and then to use the aggregated response as a forecast for whom the electorate as a whole will vote. Strictly speaking such intention polls do not provide predictions but rather snapshots of public opinion at a certain time; yet, polling results are commonly interpreted as forecasts of what will happen on election day (Hillygus, 2011). Research in forecasting shows that intentions can provide valid forecasts if respondents form a representative sample of the target population, have no reason to lie, and are unlikely to change their intention over time (Graefe et al., 2013). However, these conditions may not always hold when using intention polls for forecasting elections. First, response rates in traditional phone surveys have decreased below 10 percent in recent years (Kohut et al., 2012), which undermines the assumption of random and representative samples. Second, respondents may not be willing to reveal their true intentions, or may abstain from participating in the survey in the first place if, for example, they support unpopular parties or candidates (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). Third, prior research suggests that people's vote intention often varies widely over the course of a campaign (Campbell, 1996; but see Gelman et al., 2016).

Individual polls

As a result, single polls often provide poor predictions, in particular if the election is still far away. Forecasts derived from single polls should thus be considered a weak benchmark to judge the accuracy of prediction markets. Table 37.2 shows the results of accuracy comparisons between prediction markets and

Table 37.2 Forecast accuracy of prediction markets vs. alternative methods

Benchmark		Country	No. of elections	Relative absolute error (RAE)	Market accuracy compared to benchmark	
					Higher	Lower
Intentions	Typical poll	Sum / Weighted average	43	0.89	31	11
	Germany	20	0.91	15	4	
	Austria	10	1.21	3	7	
	US	7	0.52	7	0	
	Canada	2	0.74	2	0	
	Netherlands	1	0.96	1	0	
	Norway	1	0.57	1	0	
	Sweden	1	0.90	1	0	
	Switzerland	1	0.77	1	0	
Combined polls	Sum / Weighted average	18	0.82	12	6	
	Germany	9	1.03	4	5	
	US	7	0.57	6	1	
	Canada	1	0.55	1	0	
	Sweden	1	0.94	1	0	
Combined and projected polls	US	7	0.83	4	3	
Expectations	Typical expert	Sum / Weighted average	8	0.83	4	4
	US	6	0.74	4	2	
	Germany	1	1.09	0	1	
	Canada	1	1.07	0	1	

(continued)

Combined experts		Sum / Weighted average	7	0.87	3
	US		6	0.79	2
	Germany		1	1.40	1
Expectation surveys		Sum / Weighted average	8	1.08	3
	US		7	1.06	2
	Germany		1	1.25	1
Models	Typical model	Sum / Weighted average	8	0.76	2
	US		7	0.66	1
	Germany		1	1.48	1
Combined models		Sum / Weighted average	8	0.89	4
	US		7	0.72	3
	Germany		1	2.04	1
Method combination	PollyVote	Sum / Weighted average	7	1.28	5
	US		6	1.21	4
	Germany		1	1.70	1

individual polls from a total of 43 elections conducted in Austria, Canada, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the US.

Prediction markets achieved their best performance for forecasting the US presidential elections. In each of the seven presidential elections from 1988 to 2012 the markets outperformed the polls. On average across the seven elections, the market's RAE compared with the typical poll was 0.52. That is, the error of prediction markets was 48 percent ($=1 - 0.52$) lower than the respective error of the typical poll. On average, prediction markets also outperformed polls in all other countries, except for Austria.

Across all 43 elections, prediction markets were more accurate than polls in 31 elections, whereas polls provided more accurate forecasts in 11 elections (in one German election, prediction markets and the typical poll performed similarly). On average across the eight countries, weighted by the number of elections, prediction markets reduced the error of a typical poll by 11 percent (RAE: 0.89).

Combined polls

There is often high variance in the results of polls by different survey organizations, even if these polls were conducted at around the same time. Such variance can be caused by sampling problems, non-responses, and faulty processing (Erikson and Wlezien, 1999). One way to deal with this problem and to increase the accuracy of poll-based forecasts is to combine polls that were conducted at around the same time. The reason is that the systematic (and random) errors that are associated with individual polls tend to cancel out in the aggregate (Graefe et al., 2014b). The good news is that combining has impacted how people nowadays consume polls, and online polling aggregators such as realclearpolitics.com and pollster.com have become increasingly popular (Blumenthal, 2014).

Table 37.2 shows evidence from empirical comparisons of combined polls and prediction markets. In 12 of the 18 elections for which data are available, prediction markets outperformed combined polls, whereas combined polls were more accurate in the remaining six elections, five of which were conducted in Germany. On average, the error of prediction markets was 18 percent lower than the respective error of combined polls.

Poll projections

Polls conducted by the same survey organization, and by the polling industry as a whole, can fluctuate widely across the course of a campaign. The reason is that people's response behavior, in particular in early polls, is influenced by campaign events such as conventions (Campbell et al., 1992) and debates (Benoit et al., 2003). The effects of such events on the outcome of high-visibility elections such as US presidential elections are limited, however. As the election nears, people are less influenced by the latest campaign events and have formed stable vote

intentions based on a combination of information they have learnt during the campaign, such as the state of the economy, and their basic predispositions, such as ideology and party identification (Gelman and King, 1993). Therefore, it is not until shortly before election day that polls provide accurate forecasts.

However, researchers found ways to harness early polls for forecasting by calculating poll projections, as they are termed hereafter. Poll projections take into account the historical record of polls in order to make a forecast. For example, assume that the incumbent leads the polls by 15 points in August. In analyzing historical polls conducted around the same time, along with the respective election outcomes, one can derive a formula for translating August polling figures into an estimate of the incumbent's final vote share in November. This is commonly done by regressing the incumbent's share of the vote on his polling results during certain time periods before the election. Prior research found that such poll projections are more accurate than treating raw polls as forecasts (e.g. Erikson and Wlezien, 2008; Campbell, 1996).

One can also combine both strategies (i.e. combining polls and calculating poll projections) to generate poll-based forecasts. One study first calculated rolling averages of all polls that were published in a one-week period and then used these results to calculate poll projections (Graefe, 2014). Table 37.2 compares the forecasts of such combined poll projections to prediction markets. Prediction markets were more accurate in four of the seven elections and reduced the error of combined poll projections on average by 17 percent.

vs. expectations

Expert judgment

Judgment of political insiders and experienced election observers were used to forecast elections long before the emergence of scientific polling (Kernell, 2000), and still are. The common assumption is that experts have experience in reading and interpreting polls, assessing their significance during campaigns, and estimating the effects of recent or expected events on the aggregate vote. Given their omnipresence, surprisingly little is known about the relative accuracy of experts' judgment and prediction markets.

Table 37.2 compares the accuracy of prediction markets and individual and combined expert judgment. The relative performance of markets and individual experts is mixed, in that each method provided more accurate forecasts in four of the eight elections for which data are available. However, only in the US did the prediction markets outperform individual experts. On average, the error of prediction markets was 17 percent lower than the respective error of the typical expert.

The comparison of prediction markets and combined expert judgment is limited to one German and six US elections, since only a single expert forecast was

available for the Canadian case. The results are mixed. Prediction markets outperformed combined experts in four of the six US elections and thereby reduced error by 21 percent. In comparison, the markets performed poorly in the one German election, with an error 40 percent higher than the corresponding error of combined experts. On average across both countries, prediction markets reduced the error of combined experts by 13 percent.

Expectation surveys

Rather than utilizing responses to the traditional vote intention question, direct forecasts of the election outcome can be derived from responses to the vote expectation question, which asks respondents how they expect the election to turn out (Murr, this Volume). The expectation question is usually kept simple by framing the election outcome as a selection problem. While the exact phrasing depends on the specifics of the particular electoral system, citizens are commonly asked to predict the candidate (or party) that will lead the government after the election. For example, the question in the American National Election Studies (ANES) asks respondents which candidate they expect to be elected president or who will win the election in their home state. The question in the British General Election Studies asks which party will get the most MPs or, alternatively, which party will win. The question in the German Longitudinal Election Study asks which coalition of parties will form a government.

The use of the expectation question in pre-election surveys goes back before the emergence of intention polling (Hayes, 1936) and scholars have long studied why certain people provide more accurate forecasts than others (Lewis-Beck and Skalaban, 1989; Lewis-Beck and Tien, 1999; Dolan and Holbrook, 2001). However, scholars have recently begun to study the value of vote expectation surveys as a method to forecast elections in countries such as Germany, Sweden, the UK, and the US (Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier, 2011; Murr, 2011; Murr, 2015; Rothschild and Wolfers, 2012; Graefe, 2014; Sjöberg, 2009; Graefe, 2015a). For example, one study compared the accuracy of the expectation question to polls, prediction markets, quantitative models, and expert judgment for predicting election winners and vote shares in the seven US presidential elections from 1988 to 2012. Across the last 100 days preceding each election, responses to the expectation question correctly predicted the election winner with a hit rate of 92 percent, which was more accurate than the corresponding hit rate of polls (79 percent correct), prediction markets (79 percent), expert judgment (66 percent), and quantitative models (86 percent). When predicting vote shares, expectations were again most accurate on average (Graefe, 2014). Table 37.2 shows the results of this study for the relative performance of prediction markets and expectations. With an MAE of 1.7 percentage points, the error of prediction markets was on average 6 percent higher than the respective error of expectation

surveys, even though markets outperformed expectation surveys in five of the seven elections. Another study compared the accuracy of prediction markets and expectation surveys for forecasting the 2013 German election. In this case, the error of prediction markets was 25 percent higher than the corresponding error of expectation surveys (Graefe, 2015a). Based on the weighted average across both countries, the error of prediction markets was 8 percent higher than the error of expectation surveys.

vs. quantitative models

A common theory of electoral behavior is that elections are referenda on the incumbent's performance. That is, voters are expected to reward the government for good performance and punish the incumbent party otherwise. Since the late 1970s, economists and political scientists tested this theory by developing quantitative models to predict election results. Most models are based on multiple regression analysis of two to five predictor variables, which typically capture economic conditions, the incumbent's popularity, and how long the incumbent (party) controlled the government (Bélanger and Trotter, this Volume).

The development and testing of these models has become a well-established sub-discipline of political science and the models' forecasts are regularly published about two months prior to election day in scientific journals. For example, forecasts from established models of US presidential election outcomes were published in special symposiums in *Political Methodologist* 5(2), *American Politics Research* 24(4) and *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34(1), 37(4), 41(4), 45(4), and 49(4). These models predict the correct election winner most of the time. Across the six elections from 1992 to 2012, 34 of 39 forecasts of seven well-known models correctly predicted the winner. However, the models' performance in predicting vote shares is mixed. Their mean absolute error (MAE) was three percentage points, and ranged from zero to ten points (Graefe, 2014).

As shown in Table 37.2, prediction markets outperformed both individual and combined models in forecasting the US elections for which data were available, whereas in the 2013 German election, markets provided less accurate forecasts than both benchmarks (Graefe, 2015b). On average, prediction markets reduced the error of the typical model by 24 percent and the error of the combined model forecast by 11 percent.

vs. method combination

As shown for combinations of forecasts from polls, expert judgment, and quantitative models, combining forecasts is an effective means to increase accuracy. Combining is beneficial because, first, it allows the incorporation of the different information sets included in the component forecasts. As a result, the combined

forecast includes more information. Second, if the systematic and random errors of individual forecasts are uncorrelated, they cancel out in the aggregate. Therefore, combining is particularly valuable if one combines forecasts that use different methods and draw upon different information, as the underlying forecasts are likely uncorrelated (Armstrong, 2001).

The PollyVote project demonstrates the benefits of combining forecasts across different methods for predicting election outcomes. In averaging forecasts within and across four methods (polls, prediction markets, expert judgment, and quantitative models), the PollyVote has created highly accurate forecasts for the six US presidential elections from 1992 to 2012 (Graefe et al., 2014b; Graefe et al., 2014a) as well as for the 2013 German federal election (Graefe, 2015b).

Table 37.2 shows the relative performance of the PollyVote and prediction markets. The PollyVote outperformed prediction markets in four of the six US elections and in the 2013 German election. On average, the error of prediction markets was 28 percent higher than the corresponding error of the PollyVote.

DISCUSSION

Prediction markets are an effective means to forecast elections. Evidence to date shows that markets often provide more accurate forecasts than established benchmark methods such as polls, quantitative models, and expert judgment. With data from 43 elections, the evidence is particular strong for the markets' relative accuracy compared to single polls. Markets outperform single polls in about three out of four elections, with an average error reduction of 11 percent. Most of these comparisons are based on the markets' final forecasts and the final pre-election polls from different pollsters. Thus, the comparisons focus on a time period in which polls tend to provide fairly accurate forecasts. For longer-term forecasts, the advantage of prediction markets should increase further.

However, as noted above, single polls are generally a weak benchmark to assess the accuracy of a forecasting method. When comparing the relative accuracy of markets and polls, researchers should thus consider more sophisticated poll-based forecasts, such as combined and projected polls, which Ford et al. look at in this Volume. The case of the seven US presidential elections – for which comparisons to single polls, combined polls, and combined poll projections are available over a 90-day forecast horizon – demonstrates how such approaches increase the relative accuracy of polls compared with prediction markets. Prediction markets outperformed single polls in each of the seven elections, with an average error reduction of 48 percent. Compared with combined polls, prediction markets were more accurate in six of the seven elections, with an average error reduction of 43 percent. Compared with combined and projected polls,

prediction markets were more accurate in only four of the seven elections, and the average error reduction decreased to 17 percent.

While the evidence for the relative performance of markets and polls is strong, more studies that compare the markets' accuracy to alternative forecasting methods are necessary. Due to their similarity, the logical approach would be to compare the accuracy of markets and expectation surveys. However, only two studies provide evidence, which is mixed and inconclusive. While prediction markets provided more accurate forecasts than expectation surveys in five of the eight elections for which data were available, the markets' average error across these elections was 8 percent higher than the corresponding error of expectation surveys. These results suggest that it is not necessary to aggregate information through the price system of the market. Simply asking people about their expectations and pooling the responses to generate a forecast might be enough. Future research should address whether these results hold in other elections in other countries as well as for other types of problem.

Prediction markets have the potential to continuously aggregate information once it becomes available, which can make the method particularly valuable in situation where new information is likely to arise frequently and unexpectedly. In addition, the ability to continuously incorporate information allows the use of prediction markets to assess the impact of events, although few such studies are available (e.g. Daron and Roberts, 2000; Arnesen, 2011; Vaughan Williams and Paton, 2015). Further research is necessary to assess the potential of prediction markets for event studies as well as the conditions under which markets are able to effectively aggregate new information. For example, an interesting question would be to study how the trustworthiness of a source or medium (e.g. newspapers, Twitter) influences the market's reaction to news.

One concern with prediction markets is that the forecasts are subject to manipulation. Recent experience with two markets in the US and in Germany suggests that certain (groups of) traders were successful in influencing market prices over a longer period. If the media increasingly include market forecasts in their campaign coverage, the potential gains for manipulators – and thus the threat of manipulation attempts – might increase even further. Future research should thus assess the impact of media coverage of prediction markets on the accuracy of their forecasts. Also, it is crucial to compare a market's prediction to benchmark forecasts. One way to do this is to look at forecasts from other prediction markets. In both the US and the German case the manipulated market's predictions differed substantially from those of other markets, which made it possible to spot anomalies. Another way is to compare the market predictions to forecasts from other methods. For example, the PollyVote collects and combines forecasts from different methods and thus provides a useful source for assessing whether a certain prediction should be classified as an outlier. If prediction markets are the only available forecasting method and thus cannot be compared to a benchmark,

or if the market forecasts are covered in the media, one should be cautious about potential market manipulation.

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Social Media and Elections: A Meta-Analysis of Online- Based Electoral Forecasts

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INTRODUCTION

The growing number of worldwide citizens with access to the Internet, along with the striking growth in their use of social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter, pave the way to a new potential revolution. In the new ‘Big data world’ citizens surf the web, create their own account profiles, and share information online, providing scholars with precious data concerning several areas of study (Curini 2014) that can potentially yield consequences in the real world (King 2014). In the specific macro field linking social media and elections we can distinguish so far four main streams of research.

The first one investigates the effect of Internet usage and consumption of online news to assess whether it affects political knowledge, civic engagement, support for democratic values, and political participation (Boulian 2009; Ceron 2015; Ceron and Memoli 2015; Nisbet et al. 2012; Stoycheff and Nisbet 2014; Dimitrova et al. 2014). The Internet seems to provide a ‘public sphere’ where citizens and politicians can broadcast their own political views (e.g. Papacharissi 2002). As such, several scholars have investigated the role of social media in favoring political mobilization (Bennett and Segerberg 2011) and promoting uprisings and radical collective actions (Cottle 2011; Meraz and Papacharissi 2012).

A second stream adopts a ‘political supply-side’ approach and analyzes how the Internet impacts on the content of electoral campaigning (Druckman et al. 2010; Evans et al. 2014) and the candidates’/parties’ form of political communication (Vergeer et al. 2013). Some scholars claim that e-campaigning follows different patterns when compared with traditional campaigning, while others

support the ‘normalization thesis’ of no differentiation between parties’ usage of social or traditional media (Gibson and McAllister 2014). Analogously, recent studies have started to evaluate the effectiveness of e-campaigning in terms of electoral performance (Ceron and d’Adda 2016; Gibson and McAllister 2014; Sudlich and Wall 2010).

The third (very recent) stream of research is partially related to the second one. As long as parties and candidates broadcast their political views online, it becomes possible to estimate the policy position of political actors (and citizens: Barberá 2015; Bond and Messing 2015) by analyzing the comments released on social media (Boireau 2014; Ceron 2013; Barberá et al. 2015).

In this chapter we will focus on the fourth stream of research, which is related to *social media-based electoral forecasts*. Indeed, one of the latest and most fascinating avenue of investigation concerns the idea of exploiting social media data to anticipate dynamics and predict trends in several areas, ranging from stock markets to movie success, disease outbreaks and, precisely, electoral results (Ceron et al. 2014, 2016a; Kalampokis et al. 2013; Schoen et al. 2013).

As long as millions of citizens express their partisan and/or candidate preferences online (O’Connor et al. 2010), which is what happened, for instance, during the 2012 US presidential elections, when 22 million voters publicly declared their choice on social media (Pew Research 2012), the idea of analyzing the conversations of public opinion active online in order to monitor electoral campaigns flows out naturally (Ceron et al. 2013, 2014, 2015; Gayo-Avello 2012, 2013, 2015).

The analysis of social media has proved to be, in some cases, a useful complement to survey polls and a good predictor of the electoral outcomes, though sometimes social media-based forecasts failed to predict the final results. Why does this happen? The present chapter tries to answer this question. We will review the existing literature to discuss the achievements and the limits of the different techniques adopted so far to forecast elections through social media. Then we will perform a meta-analysis of the literature to show under which conditions the social media-based electoral forecasts appear to be more accurate in predicting the outcome of the polls. We analyze 219 electoral forecasts related to 89 different elections, from the earliest attempts related to the German Federal election 2009 (Tumasjan et al. 2010) and the US 2008 elections (Gayo-Avello 2011) to the most updated forecasts of the UK 2015 parliamentary election (Burnap et al. 2015).

This dataset covers a huge number of European countries, including France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. It also includes forecasts related to other continents. For instance, we found forecasts concerning South America (Brazil, Venezuela, Paraguay, and Ecuador), North America (the United States and Canada), Asia (India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, and Singapore), Africa (Nigeria), and Australia.

Our results show that the method usually makes the difference. For example, using modern techniques of supervised aggregated sentiment analysis (SASA)

dramatically increases the accuracy of the forecast compared with other techniques of data mining, such as traditional sentiment analysis or computational approaches. Furthermore, predictions are more accurate when estimates of traditional survey polls are mixed with social media data. The analysis also reveals that, overall, analyzing social media is more useful in contexts in which some elements strengthen the link between the opinions expressed online and the actual behavior. This happens, for instance, in elections held under proportional representation or in elections with a high turnout and a huge volume of comments.

THE LITERATURE ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTORAL FORECASTS

The analysis of electoral campaign dynamics through social media data and its relationship with votes presents, *prima facie*, some clear advantages. Being cheaper and faster compared to traditional surveys, it makes possible to *nowcast* the campaign: that is, to track in real time (day-by-day or even hour-by-hour) the evolution of preferences to capture trends and any (eventual) sudden change ('momentum') in public opinion well before traditional polls respond. On top of that, some scholars claim that we can also produce a *forecast* of the final result. In contrast, others point to the drawbacks of social media-based electoral analyses, highlighting the non-representativeness of social media users compared with the whole population of voters as well as the troubles with distinguishing the 'signal' from the 'noise', in order to detect the actual meaning of the comments posted online net of humor or off-topic mentions.

Despite these warnings, several studies have attempted to predict elections through social media data and a number of them claim to have succeeded. Earlier studies relied on very simple techniques focusing on the volume of comments (e.g. mentions, number of tweets, number of likes on Facebook walls, etc.) related to parties or candidates or on their number of Facebook friends and Twitter followers. Taken alone, however, the number of mentions seems to be a rather crude way to provide an accurate forecast. Accordingly, other studies have tried to improve existing studies by applying sentiment analysis, either automated or supervised, to analyze the comments published on social media.

In the attempt to produce electoral forecasts, scholars have been analyzing a huge variety of Internet sources, ranging from blogs and social network sites such as Facebook (Barclay et al. 2015; Cameron et al. 2013; Giglietto 2012; Lindsay 2008) and Twitter (Ceron et al. 2014; Gayo-Avello 2012; Tumasjan et al. 2010), to online news (Fonseca 2011; Véronis 2007), Google search (Reilly et al. 2012; Whyte 2015) and Wikipedia page view data (Yasseri and Bright 2015), while some scholars have also tried to mix data coming from different sources (Franch 2012).

Table 38.1. A typology of methods employed to perform social media-based electoral forecast.

Main approach	Sub-approaches
Computational	Endorsement data Volume data
Sentiment Analysis (SA)	Traditional Sentiment Analysis Machine Learning
Supervised Aggregated Sentiment Analysis (SASA)	Readme <i>i</i> SA

According to the method adopted to perform a prediction, the existing studies can be classified into three main approaches, which in turn can be split into subcategories (see Table 38.1). A first approach is merely quantitative and relies on automated computational techniques to count data. A second approach pays attention to the language and tries to attach a qualitative meaning to the comments (posts, tweets) published by social media users, employing automated tools for sentiment analysis. A third method follows a similar perspective though performing supervised semi-automated sentiment analysis to catch the (aggregate) opinion expressed online.

The computational approach to social media-based electoral forecasts

Considering that the names of front-runner candidates are widely spread and people talk about and pay attention to them (becoming a friend on Facebook or follower on Twitter, for example), earlier attempts focused on computational techniques. Within this macro-group we can further distinguish between studies that count the number of Twitter followers, Facebook friends or the number of ‘likes’ received on Facebook walls (Barclay et al. 2015; Cameron et al. 2013; Giglietto 2012) and those that measure the volume of conversations (Véronis 2007) and count the number of mentions related to a party or candidate (Tumasjan et al. 2010) or the occurrence of particular hashtags (such as the party name with a plus or a minus) and selected keywords (Jungherr et al. 2012, 2014; Jungherr 2015). For instance, Tumasjan et al. (2010) disclosed the predictive power of social media and claimed to have predicted the 2009 German Federal Elections, reporting, on average, a 1.65 percent deviation between the share of Twitter mentions and the actual share of votes won by the main German parties. In Table 38.1 we have called the former sub-category ‘endorsement data’ and the latter one ‘volume data’.

While this first approach seems useful to measure the degree of public attention around each candidate (Jungherr 2014), it has been criticized in particular

because the number of mentions received by a party/candidate, *per se*, may be not informative about the degree of support retained by this party/candidate within the population of (Internet) voters. Many comments usually mention more than one candidate, for instance because the author wants to express support for his preferred candidate while attacking the rival one, and these analyses always struggle to interpret comments that mention multiple names. Focusing on the number of followers or friends can be equally misleading because this is just a measure of awareness (or short-term attention, if we consider the number of ‘likes’ or the variation in Facebook friends) and does not provide a measure of support (see Cameron et al. 2013 on this point). This happens also because Twitter users are often divided between those who follow leaders they agree with and those who also follow political figures they disagree with (see Parmelee and Bichard 2011). For instance, at the beginning of the campaign for the US 2012 presidential election Barack Obama (being the incumbent president) retained almost 17 million followers, while Mitt Romney had only 6,000. Nevertheless, the race between the two candidates was fairly close, particularly if we look at the popular vote.

Traditional sentiment analysis and machine learning applied to electoral forecasts

As long as candidates can be mentioned by voters willing to vote for them as well by those who want to criticize them, other studies have adopted techniques of sentiment analysis (SA) in order to overcome such a drawback. However, not all the automated techniques of SA are equal. For this reason, we will also distinguish between studies that adopted pre-defined ontological dictionaries/lexicon-based classifiers and those who built their own ad-hoc dictionary or tried to exploit forms of machine learning to instruct the algorithm on how to interpret such peculiar language.

For instance, to evaluate the content of tweets, O’Connor et al. (2010) relied on an existing lexicon-based dictionary composed of a list of terms labeled as positive or negative, and showed that Obama’s approval rating was correlated with the Twitter sentiment. Lindsay (2008) developed a sentiment classifier based on lexical induction and reported correlations between polls and the content of wall posts available on Facebook during the 2008 US presidential election. Other studies applied more elaborated forms of machine learning to train their sentiment classifiers (e.g. Birmingham and Smeaton 2011; Tjong Kim Sang and Bos 2012) and argued that SA performed as well as polling in predicting the results of the election (Tjong Kim Sang and Bos 2012).

As already noted, social media users are not necessarily representative of the socio-demographic traits of the electorate (Bakker and De Vreese 2011; Vaccari et al. 2013). They tend to be young and highly educated males, even though these differences appear to be lessened when we focus only on people who

express political opinions (Bakker and De Vreese 2011) or when we consider their auto-collocation on the left-right scale (Vaccari et al. 2013). Scholars have therefore suggested that demographic bias should also be taken into account in order to improve results (Gayo-Avello 2011, 2013): for example, some studies have tried to correct the forecast by considering the socio-demographic features of users or other external types of information to apply some forms of weighting (Choy et al. 2011, 2012; Lampos et al. 2013; Shi et al. 2012). Similarly, other studies adopted a more statistical approach by mixing data from Twitter or multiple social media (Franch 2012) with the estimates of traditional opinion polls in order to enhance the accuracy of the estimates (Beauchamp 2014; Franch 2012; Tsakalidis et al. 2015), a method that is deemed particularly promising (see Gayo-Avello 2015).

The main criticism to which the analyses that make use of traditional SA or machine learning are subjected (Gayo-Avello 2012; Jungherr et al. 2012; Metaxas et al. 2011) concerns the fact that they are not well suited to handle humor, double meanings, and sarcasm, and therefore may not accurately catch the actual meaning of the opinions expressed. In addition, automated/unsupervised SA approach cannot address the risk of a spamming effect due to the presence of noise and misleading information. Further, counting the number of positive and negative terms in a sentence may lead to paradoxical effects (think about this sentence from a movie review: ‘*a great cast, good visual effects, the actors give their best, the script was promising, but this movie sucks*’). Finally, these techniques are affected by a statistical weakness: they individually classify each post, assigning it to a given category, and then they aggregate the result to produce an overall measure of the phenomenon under study. As we will discuss below, however, this could produce a relevant bias in the accuracy of the final estimation.

Electoral forecasts through supervised aggregated sentiment analysis

To cope with the above mentioned issues, recent developments in quantitative text analyses try to *integrate* quantitative large-n data with the accuracy of in-depth analyses. In particular, to overcome the limits of unsupervised techniques of individual classification, scholars have proposed methods that perform supervised aggregated sentiment analysis (SASA), allowing a better evaluation of the content of the opinions expressed online (Hopkins and King 2010; Grimmer and Stewart 2013).

The SASA method is based on a two-stage process (Ceron et al. 2013). In the first step human coders read and codify a subsample of the documents. This subsample, with no particular statistical property, represents a *training set* that will be used by the second step of the algorithm to classify all the unread documents (the *test set*). At the second stage, the aggregated statistical estimation of the SASA algorithms extends such accuracy to the whole population of posts,

allowing one to properly obtain the opinions expressed on social networks. The SASA approach, first introduced by Hopkins and King (2010), aims to solve two different problems that affect the previous discussed methods of sentiment analysis when applied to social media content.

First, users on social media use natural language, which evolves continuously and varies depending on the person who is actually writing (male, female, young, older, officer, journalist, etc.) and the particular topic (soccer, politics, music, etc.). In addition, metaphoric or ironic sentences, as well as jargon, contractions, and neologisms, are used in different and new ways every time. This fact places all unsupervised methods based on ontological dictionaries or statistical methods based on NLP models (natural language processing) under stress when it comes to accurately capturing sentiment. For these reasons, supervised human coding of a training set is a cornerstone of the SASA methodology.¹ Human coding, in fact, allows the reduction of the net misclassification errors, as human coders are indeed more effective than ontological dictionaries in recognizing the specificity of the language and in interpreting both the texts and the authors' attitudes.²

Second, contrary to texts such as parliamentary speeches, which adopt a given vocabulary, most of the time the analysis of social media is made via web (or Twitter/Facebook/forum) crawling based on some keyword. No matter how the data cleaning is performed (and usually this is done using, again, unsupervised methods), data still contain lot of *noise* (i.e. text which make use of sentences or words which sound similar but are unrelated to the topic of interest) or *off-topic* texts (on this point, see also Stukal 2014). Even if one creates a training set using supervised human coding (i.e. without classification error), the resulting statistical classifier will predict a sentiment for the texts in the test set that is, with high probability, a sentiment that falls in the off-topic category even when this is not the case. As a result, the aggregation of these individual predicted classifications produces biased estimates of the aggregated distribution as well as estimates with large variability. The estimation method of the SASA approach estimates directly the aggregated distribution without the need to use individual classification of the texts in the test set. Notice that, in social science as well as in electoral studies, what matters in forecasting attempts is the aggregated distribution of opinion or share of votes rather than the individual opinion or vote behavior.

Furthermore, going beyond the concept of positive/negative sentiment, the SASA method can be used to catch the unsolicited 'voting intentions' freely expressed online in favor of a candidate/party. For example, this could be done by assessing whether at least one of the following three conditions is satisfied (see Ceron et al. 2015): a) the post includes an explicit statement related to the willingness to vote for a candidate/party; b) the post includes a statement in favor of a candidate/party together with a message or a hashtag connected to the electoral campaign of that candidate/party; or c) the post includes a negative

statement opposing a candidate/party together with a message or a hashtag connected to the electoral campaign of a rival candidate/party.³

With respect to SASA, we can distinguish between ReadMe, which was originally proposed by Hopkins and King (2010), and *iSA*, a more recent technique which improves the ability of the standard ReadMe approach in discerning between noise and signal by reducing the variability of the estimates (see Ceron et al. 2016b). Indeed, while ReadMe is a bagging method which consists in replicating many times the same analysis by sampling on the stems/words, *iSA* solves directly the problem in one iteration, therefore reducing the variability and stability of the estimates of the aggregated distribution. Further, by a dimensionality reduction approach, *iSA* allows for the treatment of high dimensional problems in which the outcome variable has many entries (i.e. the number of categories/opinions can be large compared with ReadMe). As a byproduct of this flexibility, with *iSA* it is also possible to perform cross-tabulation over large data when the same texts in the corpus are hand-coded along multiple dimensions.

Despite its strengths, SASA is not exempt from limits. The most important one is that, while SA and traditional machine learning are intended to estimate the individual opinion of any single comment (though at the expense of a lower level of accuracy, as already noted), SASA only makes an estimation on the distribution of opinions in the aggregate. As such, it is not possible to predict the opinion of a particular social media user. For the same reason, it is not possible to use information on the individual traits of users to apply some forms of weighting to balance the online population in order to approximate a representative sample of the whole population of voters.

The present overview of the existing studies highlights the existence of a variety of techniques that are very different from each other. We have described pros and cons of each of them, showing that none is perfect. At the same time, it is still possible (and useful) to evaluate what techniques are more suitable than others to make accurate electoral forecasts, thereby decreasing the error of the prediction. For this purpose we will perform a meta analysis of existing studies. The next section is devoted to describing data collection and discussing the results.

META-ANALYSIS: WHAT AFFECTS THE MEAN ABSOLUTE ERROR?

To improve the robustness of our meta-analysis and to decrease potential sources of bias we tried to maximize the number of predictions considered in the analysis. To this end, we gathered information on several forecasts based on web data that have been published in academic journals or that have been presented at academic conferences. We have also considered those works that are publicly available online and that can be easily found through a Google search using the words ‘social media/ Twitter’, ‘election’ and ‘forecast/prediction’ as queries.

Scholars have highlighted that works published in academic journals can be subjected to a publication bias: the likelihood of being published seems higher when the paper presents significant results. This implies that scholars would try to submit papers more often when their prediction is successful (refraining from submitting when it is not), and that these papers might have higher acceptance rates. As such, we could observe an inflated number of papers showing positive results (i.e. correct predictions) beyond the actual predictive skills of social media. This bias need not be very problematic thanks to a number of scholars who have supported the alternative argument, trying to provide evidence against the predictive power of social media (e.g. Gayo-Avello 2011, 2012; Jungherr et al. 2012). Nevertheless, to limit this potential selection bias we have decided to also take into account academic works that have not been published as well as non-academic works that might be less subject to such concern. For the same reasons, when a study displays several similar predictions we consider only those that are carried out in a substantially different way (different method, different computation of similar methods, markedly different range of dates, etc.). By doing this we manage to get rid of data whose only purpose is to show the robustness of positive (or negative) results. Analogously, we have excluded ‘trivial predictions’⁴ that might accidentally arise from scholars’ bias. Following the same logic, we have also performed personal computation on available data when the authors did not provide their own measure of accuracy.⁵

Finally, it has been argued that many forecasts are not actually forecasts because they consist of post-hoc analyses (Gayo-Avello 2013). Once again, the fact that data have often been published only after the election may bias the results of our meta-analysis. This further highlights the need to pay attention to predictions made ex-ante, and to consider non-academic and unpublished works. In our data we report a reasonably large number of (academic and non-academic) predictions that were publicly available before the end of the election; these account for 25 percent of the total number of forecasts.

Overall, we collected and analyzed 219 electoral forecasts related to 89 different elections held between 2008 and 2015 in 22 countries, covering all the five continents: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, France, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, The Netherlands, Nigeria, Paraguay, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, UK, USA, and Venezuela.

Beyond parliamentary and presidential elections, we also included party primaries held to select leaders and candidates (in France, Italy, and the USA), local elections (e.g. Alberta, Andalusia, Catalunya, Lombardia, and Sicilia as well as Milan, London and so on), the 2014 European elections, and the Scottish independence referendum. The large variety of contexts within our dataset is an added value that helps to better investigate the strength and limits of the different methods and to assess which factors can increase (or decrease) their reliability.⁶

To meta-analyze existing studies we need to rely on a measure of accuracy. For this purpose we select the Mean Absolute Error (MAE) of the prediction as

the dependent variable. The MAE is measured as the absolute difference between the actual results and the forecast and is averaged over the number of parties/candidates considered in the analysis. Although the MAE has some limitations (Beauchamp 2014), it has long been used to assess the accuracy of social media-based forecasts (e.g. Tumasjan et al. 2010).

For each forecast, we took into account the MAE provided by the authors of the study and whenever such information was missing (though measurable) we directly computed the MAE on available data. Within our sample the average value of MAE is 7.63, with a considerable variance given that its standard deviation is 6.84. That is, some predictions based on social media appear to be much better (or much worse) than other ones.

Independent variables

Our main independent variable is the method adopted to forecast the election. In line with the literature review, we propose two baseline models in which we operationalized such variables in two different ways in order not only to measure the differences between the more general streams of analysis (main approaches) but also to distinguish the effect of each specific method (sub-approach) falling within each macro-category (see Table 38.1).

Accordingly, in Model 1 we first assess whether Sentiment Analysis improves the forecasts based on a merely *computational approach* (our reference category). In this case, the variable *SA* takes the value 1 when the analysis is based on automated techniques of sentiment analysis or machine learning; conversely, the variable *SASA* takes the value 1 when the forecast is made through supervised aggregated sentiment analysis (*iSA* or *ReadMe*). To further differentiate within each main approach, in Model 2 we take into account all the sub-approaches displayed in Table 38.1. We consider *Endorsement data* (i.e. computation of likes, followers, and friends) as the reference category and we test which of the remaining five sub-approaches (i.e. the counting of mentions of the party/candidate as captured by the variable *Volume data*; *Traditional SA* that makes use of ontological and pre-defined dictionaries; *Machine learning*, i.e. sentiment analysis made through machine learning or building an ad-hoc dictionary; *ReadMe* and *iSA*) improves on it.

Given that we are analyzing different elections across political systems, we also want to control for a set of potentially confounding factors to exclude any possible bias. First, the variable *Internet users* accounts for the share of Internet users across time and space, measured using World Bank data.⁷ This allows us to control for the pervasiveness of Internet usage in each country. As the share of citizens that has access to the Internet grows, we would expect to observe a lower gap between predictions based on social media and actual results. Under this condition, in fact, the socio-demographic traits of social media users should tend to better approximate those of the whole population of voters, thereby increasing the predictive power of the social media analysis.

In addition, we consider the role of political institutions by distinguishing the effect of different electoral systems. When elections are held in single-member plurality districts (and in majority electoral systems to a lower extent), voters may have an incentive to behave strategically: they can hide their sincere preferences and vote for a candidate that has a significant chance of becoming elected (Cox 1997). Conversely, the incentive to behave strategically is lower under proportional representation; hence, the opinions expressed online could be more consistent with the actual behavior at the polls, and this can positively affect the accuracy of social media estimates. We consider this aspect through the variable *Electoral system*, which takes the value of 0 for plurality, 1 for majority, and 2 for proportional representation.

We also distinguish elections in which voters have to select a monocratic position (i.e. the president, a party leader, or the mayor) rather than voting for a party list or for a potential member of the national parliament, to assess the possible existence of a ‘personalization effect’ (Mughan 2000) in the electoral campaigning on the accurateness of social media predictions. Accordingly, the variable *Personal vote* takes a value of 1 when voters have to select a single politician running for a monocratic position, and it takes a value of 0 otherwise.

In Model 3 we include additional variables to test the impact of other particular features of the forecasting techniques adopted. The dummy variable *By user* controls whether considering only one post per user (rather than considering all the posts published by a single user irrespective of their number) has an impact on the MAE. Counting the number of ‘users’ rather than the whole number of posts refers to the idea that each user has only one vote, so it does not matter how many comments he/she publishes. According to this normalization, a user is considered to favor one candidate if he/she mentions (or likes, etc.) that candidate more often than other candidates (Tjong Kim Sang and Bos 2012). The variable *Weight* takes the value of 1 whenever any form of weighting has been applied to social media data in order to make the population of users closer to the whole population of voters and to enhance the accuracy of the forecast (Choy et al. 2011, 2012; Shi et al. 2012); similarly, the variable *Polls* controls whether weighting social media data according to the estimates of traditional survey polls has an effect (Franch 2012; Tsakalidis et al. 2015). Fourth, the variables *Academic* and *Ex-ante* control respectively whether the MAE is higher or lower for academic papers compared with non-academic works, and for studies published before or after the end of the election.

Finally, in Model 4, taking the cue from the existing literature (Ceron et al. 2014), we include an interaction term between the *Number of posts* (in millions) considered in the analysis (which is a proxy for the volume of information available) and the rate of *Turnout*, to assess whether the effect of having additional information about citizens’ preferences is conditional on the likelihood that citizens will actually cast their vote. In fact, we would expect that additional information on the citizens’ preferences decreases the error only when the turnout rate

is high; conversely, when voters abstain at a higher rate, having more information about their (declared) voting choice would be misleading as the declared attitude might not coincide with the actual behavior, with a negative effect on the accuracy of the prediction.

Because the average error is divided by the number of parties/candidates, this value can artificially lower the MAE and, therefore, we want to control for this aspect by measuring the *Number of candidates* considered in the prediction and including this variable in each model.

Results

The dependent variable MAE is a proportion whose values are bounded by 0 and 1. The assumptions required by the ordinary least-squares regression might not hold under this condition due to heteroskedasticity and non-normality in the distribution of errors. Moreover, the predicted values might fall outside the unit interval (Wooldridge 2002). To address this concern, data have been analyzed by means of a fractional logit (Papke and Wooldridge 1996). A fractional logit estimation models directly for the conditional mean of the fractional response through a logistic form that allows the predicted values to be kept in the unit interval. Given that we have repeated observations within the same election, we report robust standard errors clustered by election to avoid possible problems from non-independent observations or non-constant variances. Table 38.2 displays the results.

**Table 38.2. Determinants of the accuracy of social media predictions:
Fractional Logit of the electoral forecast MAE (Mean Absolute Error)**

	(I)	(II)	(III)	(IV)
TECHNIQUE				
SASA	-0.612** (0.199)		-0.580*** (0.178)	-0.978*** (0.239)
iSA		-1.551** (0.500)		
ReadMe			-0.817* (0.360)	
SA	-0.146 (0.140)		-0.088 (0.128)	-0.114 (0.173)
Machine learning		-0.279 (0.275)		
Traditional SA			-0.542 (0.355)	
Volume data			-0.364 (0.320)	

(Continued)

Table 38.2. Continued

	(I)	(II)	(III)	(IV)
ELECTION				
<i>Internet users</i>	0.006 (0.004)	0.006 (0.004)	0.005 (0.005)	0.009 (0.007)
<i>Electoral system</i>	-0.344* (0.171)	-0.339* (0.155)	-0.210* (0.107)	-0.318** (0.139)
<i>Personal vote</i>	-0.283 (0.175)	-0.240 (0.183)	-0.371** (0.175)	-0.281 (0.243)
<i>Turnout</i>				0.001 (0.008)
PREDICTION				
<i>By user</i>		-0.166 (0.142)	0.116 (0.170)	
<i>Weight</i>		-0.203 (0.174)	-0.300 (0.194)	
<i>Polls</i>		-1.225** (0.402)	-0.802** (0.407)	
<i>Academic</i>		0.080 (0.213)	-0.211 (0.267)	
<i>Ex ante</i>		-0.211 (0.230)	-0.129 (0.279)	
<i>Number of posts</i>			0.362** (0.147)	
<i>Number of posts X Turnout</i>			-0.007** (0.003)	
<i>Number of candidates</i>	-0.061 (0.072)	-0.058 (0.063)	-0.122*** (0.027)	-0.122** (0.037)
Constant	-2.227*** (0.450)	-1.916*** (0.433)	-1.963*** (0.511)	-1.990*** (0.822)
N	216	216	211	151
BIC	-1112.816	-1096.929	-1055.919	-680.096

Note: Standard errors clustered by election in parentheses * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001.

The results confirm that the method adopted to analyze the online comments markedly affects the accuracy of social media-based electoral forecasts. From Model 1 we observe that, all else being equal, the SASA method decreases the MAE by 3.7 points if compared with forecasts based on a mere computational approach and by 2.6 points if compared with other SA techniques, which are not more effective than computational methods in improving the accuracy of the prediction.⁸ In Model 2, once again, the two SASA techniques are the only ones that improve on the performance of the reference category (*Endorsement data*). While SASA is overall more accurate than any other method, when we further

distinguish between the two we notice that *iSA* appears to perform better than *ReadMe* and further decreases the MAE by 2.7 points.

With respect to the other attributes of the predictions, we do not find any significant effect related to *Weight* and *By user* (this latter point is in line with the results of other studies, e.g. Di Grazia et al. 2013; Tjong Kim Sang and Bos 2012). The only improvement comes from mixing social media data with the estimates of traditional survey polls (variable *Polls*), which proves to be very useful and decreases the MAE by 5.2 points. Surprisingly, whether the prediction comes from the Academic realm or not, or whether it was made ex-ante/ex-post does not seem to matter in terms of accuracy, suggesting that these two elements, once the impact of the other variables is discounted, are not significant sources of bias, contrary to what we might expect.

With respect to the attributes of the election, the only significant effect consistent through the different models seems related to the *Electoral system*, while the country's share of *Internet users* and the *Personal vote* are not relevant (apart from Model 3, where *Personal vote* is significant and negative). When elections are held under PR, the MAE decreases by 2.6 points compared with plurality. In line with our expectations, when voters have poor incentives to cast a strategic vote, the consistency between their opinion expressed online and their actual voting behavior grows.⁹

Similarly, the interaction between *Number of posts* and *Turnout* points to the same conclusion (see Model 4 and Figure 38.1, where we report the marginal impact on MAE of a one-unit increase in the *Number of posts* – i.e. an increase

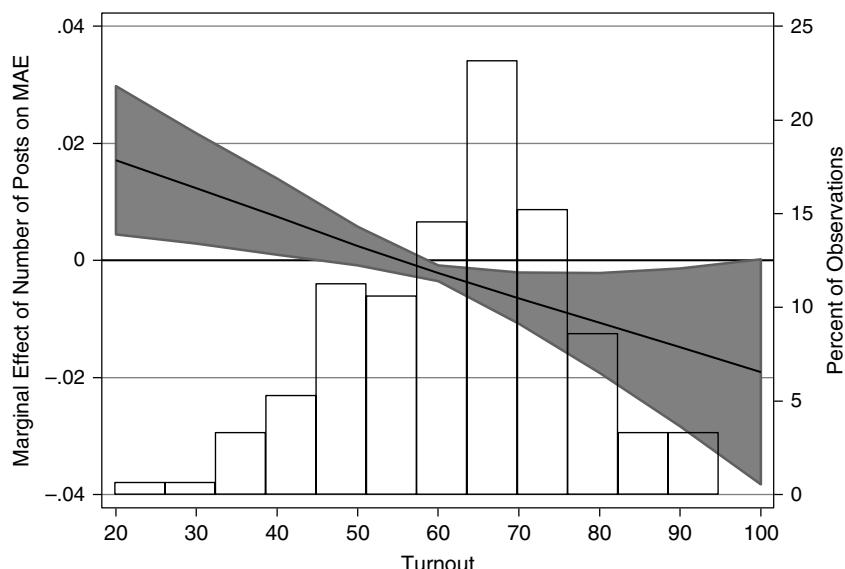


Figure 38.1 Marginal effect of number of posts on MAE at different levels of turnout (with 95% confidence interval)

by 1 million – as *Turnout* changes its value throughout its range): having more information on citizens' preferences decreases the error, though only when the turnout rate is sufficiently high – that is, when we can expect to observe an actual behavior that is consistent with the declared. The higher the turnout, the higher the positive effects of analyzing a larger number of posts. On the contrary, when turnout is low and voters tend to abstain at a higher rate they are more likely to express themselves on Twitter rather than to cast a real vote. Here, having more information about their (declared) voting choice negatively affects the accuracy of the forecast. This result strengthens the general idea that the predictive power of social media is enhanced when the relationship between what happens online and offline becomes tightened.

Finally, the *Number of candidates* reduces the MAE (as expected). If it is true that, in case of random guessing, predicting the winner of an election is harder when there are more candidates, we must consider that the MAE could be lower because the total error (numerator) is divided by a larger denominator (more candidates).

CONCLUSION

In the present chapter we performed a review and a meta-analysis of existing studies, trying to evaluate the predictive power of social media analysis with respect to electoral results. Do social media analyses manage to forecast electoral results? Taking into account 219 predictions related to 89 different elections held between 2008 and 2015, we observed that the MAE of social media-based prediction is on average higher than 7. Note that survey polls in the same subset of elections produced a MAE slightly lower than 2 (our estimation on publicly available surveys). Compared with surveys, the predictive power of social media appears therefore rather poor, even though some particular techniques are (more) promising and others are already able to provide predictions as accurate as those of survey polls.

In sum, the analysis of social media has proved to be, in some cases, a useful complement to survey polls and a good predictor of the electoral outcomes, while in other cases they failed to predict the final results. The actual question that we should ask ourselves, then, is when social media analysis is able to provide accurate forecast and when not.

Consider first the method employed to analyze social media matters. Supervised aggregated sentiment analysis markedly decreases the error, compared with merely computational techniques or traditional SA. The error is 3.7 points lower than computational approaches and 2.6 points lower than other SA techniques. More in detail, *iSA* appears to outperform *ReadMe* (the error decreases by 2.7 points), producing an average MAE of 2.66, which is comparable to that of survey polls.

Predictions are also more accurate when social media data are mixed with the estimates of traditional survey polls. This result is particularly interesting because it stresses the need to integrate these two sources of data in order to get a more comprehensive knowledge of citizens' preferences. The present study also seems able to downplay some widely discussed issues in the literature. First, we proved that cleaning the data to take into account only a single comment per user seems unnecessary, as this does not systematically decrease the error. Second, our analysis also shows that, due to the difficulties in sampling an (unknown) online population, employing pioneering forms of weighting might not be (at least for now) a solution. These results, along with the achievements made by SASA, underpin a theoretical framework that goes in a different direction from the idea of building a representative sample of online population in order to carry out analysis at the individual level. On the contrary, the 'online crowds' could be more useful to anticipate trends (and outcomes) when considered in the aggregate, as this can provide the best description of the balance of power between different parties/candidates.

Although strongly relevant, the method through which extracting information from social media data is not the only factor affecting the accuracy of the prediction. The electoral system matters too. When the elections are held under proportional representation, social media forecasts are remarkably more precise. This effect is due to the lower incentive to cast a strategic vote. Because every vote counts in proportional electoral systems, citizens are freer to behave according to their sincere preferences. As a consequence, we observe a higher congruence between opinions expressed online and actual voting behaviors. Conversely, when there is an incentive to behave strategically at the polls, the analysis of the opinions expressed online becomes less relevant because voters may express their sincere preference online while casting a strategic vote at the polls. This suggests that when some elements prompt the coherence between online opinions and offline behavior, the accuracy of social media based predictions is heightened. The fact that the error is lower in elections with a high turnout and a huge volume of comments, though it is higher when such huge debate is not followed by a large turnout, points in the same direction.

Summing up, the present study contributes to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of social media forecast, showing some paths that are worth walking in order to improve the accuracy of the estimates. By taking into account some of these suggestions, future research could provide new and useful insights that can be combined with traditional survey data in order to enhance our understanding of the attitudes and trends in public opinion (on this point see Ceron et al. 2017).

For example, alongside the more traditional thermostat of public opinion based on surveys, it would be interesting to develop several 'policy mood' indicators in different countries able to monitor in real time not only electoral preferences,

as discussed in this chapter, but also the evolution of online public opinion on different topics. Recent studies started to go in this direction and measured, for instance, the degree of anti-American attitudes among Arabs (Jamal et al. 2015), the support for the European Union (De Wilde et al. 2014), and the degree of nationalism in China (Cairns and Carlson 2016). These studies can be carried further in order to monitor the evolution of political views of citizens (Sylwester and Purver 2015), putting them in relation with the position of parties or single politicians (Ecker 2015).

To conclude, the research on social media is worth pursuing as long as it can become one of the new frontier of electoral nowcasting and forecasting.

Notes

- 1 Just to report a few examples: the hand-coding stage allows the isolation of ironic viral phenomena such as the one that occurred in the 2012 primary election of the Italian centre-left coalition, whereby a group called *Marxists for Tabacci* wrote fake statements to support (ironically) one of the candidates (the moderate Tabacci) (Ceron et al. 2016a). The hand-coding can also allow an evaluation of when voters explicitly express the intention to behave strategically, declaring that they will vote in favor of one of the main candidates while signaling their true preferences for a minor candidate. Consider, for instance, the following examples related to the Italian 2013 election and the US 2012 presidential election: 'My heart beats for Vendola but I will vote for Bersani' and 'I lean 90% with libertarians but I think I'll vote for Obama' (Ceron et al. 2016a).
- 2 In addition, human coding is better suited to identifying the (ever-present) problem of spamming in social communication as well as tagging off-topic texts. This is, of course, important given that spamming and unrelated content can have an impact on the accuracy of the final result.
- 3 Note that condition c) allows one to reduce the arbitrariness in the 'supervised' stage of the analysis. Consider the US presidential 2012 campaign. If a tweet states 'do not vote for Romney', this does not necessarily imply that the person who wrote that post will then vote for Obama rather than abstaining or voting for a third candidate. Conversely, a tweet stating 'do not vote for Romney, #fourmoreyears' should be counted as a vote in favor of Obama given that #fourmoreyears has been one of most widely used hashtags in the Obama's electoral campaign.
- 4 For instance, some scholars provided peculiar computations on their data and reported nonsensical predictions in which the votes share of some parties was even negative.
- 5 Just to give an idea, some scholars presented their prediction (and the related error) based on a technique of sentiment analysis, but from the same source it was also possible to determine the error of other techniques (e.g. computation of mentions).
- 6 Note that our substantive findings hold even when we focus strictly on data provided in the literature (see Ceron et al. 2016a) and when excluding peculiar observations (e.g. the Scottish referendum which is, strictly speaking, not an election).
- 7 <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.P2>
- 8 More in detail, according to the estimates of Model 1 the predicted MAE of a mere computational approach is, all else being equal, 8.5 (95% c.i.: 7.1 – 9.9); the predicted MAE of other SA techniques is 7.4 (95% c.i.: 5.8 – 9.1); the predicted MAE of SASA is 4.8 (95% c.e. 3.2 – 6.5).
- 9 Considering that when the election is non-competitive there may be little reason to talk about it (Di Grazia et al. 2013), we also tested the impact of the competitiveness of the election, measured as the margin between the first two parties/candidates or with the effective number of parties/candidates. However, we did not find any effect on the accuracy of the prediction. Data available upon request.

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PART VIII

Methods



Experiments

Robert Johns

When a research literature evolves to a point where ... observational studies ... generate contested causal claims and when potential problems such as two-way causation and omitted variable bias plague the statistical analysis of observational data, experiments can offer an effective method for adjudicating disputes (Druckman et al., 2006: 633).

Such conditions have for some time applied in the study of voting. Admittedly, things have moved far beyond the old routine: find a variable of interest; regress vote choice or turnout on that variable while controlling for whatever the dataset offers; and blithely infer that the coefficient for that variable represents a causal effect. The application of sophisticated estimation techniques to longitudinal data have allowed for much more confident causal inference about, for example, the habitual nature of turnout (Denny and Doyle, 2009) or the relationship between newspaper readership and party preference (Brandenburg and van Egmond, 2012). But researchers still bump up against limits on what observational data – which are still what most of us use, most of the time – can tell us about cause and effect in electoral behaviour.

This is where experiments are supposed to step in. And step in they have. Druckman et al. (2006, 2011) chart the growth in experimental work across political science but acknowledge that much of that research has been in the field of electoral politics. In an earlier review, McDermott notes the ‘predominance of voting behaviour as a primary concern of experimental work’ (2002a: 44). The point here is not that experiments cannot or should not be applied across the discipline. It is simply that electoral researchers were among the earliest and most enthusiastic in reaching for this method.

With all this research to review, there is no space here for a detailed discussion of the experimental method. There is no need, either, since that job has already been done admirably for political scientists by McDermott (2002b) and Morton and Williams (2010). It is enough here to note the two key features of experimental research. The first is deliberate *manipulation* of key causal variables (this active intervention or treatment being what distinguishes experimental data from more ‘passive’ observational data). The second is the *isolation* of these causal variables, via random assignment and control conditions, such that any observed effect can be attributed to the treatment and not to some other confounding variable. In other words, *ceteris paribus* is not an assumption but a defining characteristic of experimental research. These two features distinguished Gosnell’s (1927) pioneering study of the effect of ‘get out the vote’ (GOTV) mailings on electoral turnout: the mail-outs were the treatment, and their effect was gauged by comparing turnout in the treatment streets and in a matched control group of streets. The same two features unite the numerous studies cited in this chapter, all aimed (if sometimes indirectly) at explaining vote choice or turnout.

So, when those assessing the potential contribution of experiments have acknowledged that the method is no panacea, and may not be so well suited to the study of certain political phenomena (Druckman et al., 2006; McDermott, 2002a), electoral researchers could be forgiven for thinking ‘don’t worry: they don’t mean us’. In fact, however, our core electoral dependent variables – vote choice in particular – have some unwelcome features from the perspective of experimental researchers. I begin this chapter by describing these features and where they leave experimentalists. Then I look at vote choice and turnout in turn, in each case reviewing and assessing the key strands of experimental research. The chapter concludes with some thoughts about how to expand the causal repertoire of experimental psephology.

EXPERIMENTS AND VOTING BEHAVIOUR: MADE FOR EACH OTHER?

This book is about electoral behaviour: vote choice and turnout. These dependent variables are not typical of those explored by social science experimenters. For one thing, they are discrete events, not ongoing attitudes of the type often investigated by social psychologists. For another, they are infrequent events, not like the everyday acts – recycling, charitable giving, expressing opinions on social media – often explored by behavioural scientists. A diligent minority votes every year or two; many people vote only every four or five years. Elections are also held at fixed or at least known times, and as a result widely heralded and publicised. In a world in which campaigning for the next election begins the day after polling day, there is no window in which experimenters can apply treatments to a subject pool unaware of an upcoming election. Finally, there isn’t really

anything else like voting in an election or referendum. (Even if reality TV shows also hold public votes, these lack the same trappings and symbolism.) It is therefore hard to simulate elections experimentally without the hypothetical nature of the exercise being obvious to all concerned. Furthermore, for many voters, elections are exercises of precious democratic rights and no simulation can come close in meaning and importance.

That last point, about the critical democratic function of elections, highlights two additional complications with vote choice. First, the secret ballot makes it an unobservable behaviour. The only way to find out how individuals have voted is to ask them: a costly and far from error-free procedure. Second, a treatment intended to influence vote choice in a real election would amount to an attempt to fix that election. So the experimental method is simply not applicable in the field except under severely restrictive conditions.

The few exceptions help to illustrate those conditions. One way of avoiding the charge of manipulation is to add an experimental component into some intervention that would have been happening anyway. For example, Bailey et al. (2014) report a randomized controlled trial fielded within a liberal campaign group's 2008 mail and phone canvassing of 56,000 'persuadable Obama' voters in Wisconsin. In a rather different kind of design, Gerber et al. (2011) persuaded the team campaigning for Rick Perry's 2006 re-election as governor of Texas to randomize across time the allocation of \$2m worth of TV ads. They then used a longitudinal survey to trace the ads' effects on support for Perry. Assuming that the campaigners ended up spending the same amount that they were planning to anyway, any effect of these experiments on vote shares should have been minimal. But it is noteworthy that the Perry campaign ruled out experimental work in the two most important Texan media markets, Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth, just in case of unintended and unwelcome consequences.

Where researchers have run their own field experiments investigating vote choice, their treatments have had to be neutral or, at least, even-handed. Wantchekon (2003) reports on a study in Benin in which the parties 'generously adapted the campaign messages that they intended to run in some villages' (p.409) so that he could contrast the effects on voting behaviour of clientelist as opposed to sociotropic public policy appeals. Given the clear expectations that clientelism would be more effective, the two types of message had to be randomized across the competing parties. Even then, permission for Wantchekon's experiment hinged on the election being an uncompetitive first-round contest in which the two leading contenders were all but certain to make the run-off. Similarly, Panagopoulos and Green (2008) randomly assigned various cities holding municipal elections in 2005 and 2006 to a control and treatment group, the latter cities being 'treated' to non-partisan radio ads which urged listeners to vote and reminded them of the names of the two candidates. Gerber et al. (2009) offered free newspaper subscriptions in the run-up to Virginia's gubernatorial

election of 2005, citizens being randomly assigned to either the liberal-leaning *Washington Post* or the more conservative *Washington Times*.

Yet even ostensibly neutral treatments can affect vote shares. The radio ads increased support for challengers by offsetting their customary disadvantage in terms of name recognition (Panagopoulos and Green, 2008: 159). And Gerber et al. (2009) find that receiving either newspaper increased support for the Democratic candidate, suggesting that it was the amount of coverage – in a midterm climate favourable to the non-incumbent Democrats – rather than the partisan slant of the newspaper that made the difference.

The ethical implications of such findings had, until recently, received little attention. That changed with the hullabaloo over an experiment fielded by Adam Bonica and colleagues during judicial races in New Hampshire, California and Montana (Willis, 2014). They were investigating the impact of reporting candidates' ideological positions on voting at these purportedly non-partisan elections. Again, then, while the treatment was balanced and informational, it carried the potential to influence voting behaviour – indeed, the experiment would have made little sense otherwise. The clear-cut aspect of this controversy – that the researchers violated Montana's electoral law by using the state seal on their flyers – is less interesting than the issue of whether the enterprise was questionable in the first place. Political scientists have mounted a robust defence of such research, pointing out first that election campaigns are a cacophony of persuasive noise in which the voice of one largely neutral experimental treatment will hardly register (Gerber, 2011: 130), and second that there is a distinction between interventions *intended* to influence an election outcome and those that do so unintentionally while addressing important research questions (Drezner, 2014). These arguments seem likely to persuade fellow researchers but not irate politicians. The latter demand not just *de jure* but also *de facto* neutrality from academic political scientists – neutrality that cannot be claimed where researchers have directional hypotheses about the impact of a treatment. It is hard not to share Michelson's (2014) fears that the Montana episode has further narrowed our scope for field experimentation at elections.

In sum, then, only those with some combination of huge budgets, friends in high places and good lawyers can contemplate experimenting on vote choice in the field. A cheaper and safer alternative is to look out for a natural experiment: that is, a case in which something akin to a randomized treatment occurs without any intervention from researchers. Loewen et al. (2014) capitalize on the fact that the opportunity for backbenchers in the Canadian lower house to propose legislation is assigned by lottery, and show that lottery winners enjoy vote shares around three points higher at the subsequent election. Examining a more traditional lottery, Peterson (2016: 33) confirms a causal effect of affluence on partisanship by showing that 'winning larger amounts ... produces a small increase in the probability an individual is later a registered Republican'.

Unfortunately, genuine experiments like these are extremely rare in political 'nature' (Sekhon and Titiunik, 2012). In describing other studies as natural

experiments, their authors really mean only that there is no obvious link between the actual basis for assignment and the dependent variable. For example, DellaVigna and Kaplan (2007) find Republican voting in 2000 to have increased by more in towns where Fox News had already entered the cable market, and Berger et al. (2008) show that those who voted in a school (rather than a church or other polling location) were more likely to support an Arizona ballot initiative to increase education spending. Even if not based on strictly natural experiments, both make compelling cases that treatment and effect are linked. Critical to that case, however, is that the authors control all likely sources of spurious association between the two. In other words, we are back in the realm of *inferring* causality (with more or less confidence). Only with random assignment can experiments *establish* causality.

EXPERIMENTS AND VOTE CHOICE

Given this shortage of natural experiments, and the need to keep interventions at a safe distance from real votes, experimenters interested in vote choice have two options. One is to retreat up the funnel of causality and to experiment on attitudes that are assumed in turn to influence voting behaviour. The second is to run hypothetical elections. Broadly, these two approaches exemplify respectively the two main traditions – survey experiments in social psychology and laboratory experiments in behavioural economics – on which experimental political science has been built (McDermott, 2002a). In this section, I review the contributions of each approach in turn to our understanding of vote choice, and assess where both still fall short.

Taking a causal step back

The logic of the first approach is clear enough. Suppose that an experiment shows that parties seen as closer to the ideological centre are seen as more economically competent. Given what we know about the economy and voting, that experiment goes a long way to establishing – and explaining – one electoral advantage of perceived moderation. Replace economic evaluations with any other variable widely assumed to drive voting behaviour, and the same logic applies.

Closest to vote choice in the funnel of causality are party or candidate preferences. Amounting to the attitudinal equivalents of voting behaviour, these have been a natural focus for experimenters kept at a distance from the real thing. In particular, they have served as the dependent variable for most of the experimental literature (reviewed by Lau et al., 2007) on the relative effectiveness of positive and negative campaigning – a literature which has delivered a more sceptical verdict about the effectiveness of negative campaigning than was available from observational data and folk wisdom.

One step back from forming a preference among two or more candidates is the formation of impressions and evaluations of those candidates, and experimentalists have scrutinized that process from various angles (see McGraw, 2011 for a review). In one strand of work, researchers have manipulated what might be called candidates' intrinsic characteristics – their race (e.g. Colleau et al., 1990), sex (e.g. Huddy and Terkildsen, 1993) or facial features (e.g. Verhulst et al., 2010) – and observed striking effects on the traits and competences ascribed to those candidates. Clearly, candidates are to some extent the helpless victims of heuristic inferences about their personality and politics. They do have some control over the images they project, though, via what they do and say. Using an approach based on vignettes – that is, short descriptions of scenarios, candidates or parties in which key information is manipulated – Bhatti et al. (2013) experimentally compare the effects of scandals in politicians' personal lives and political careers, finding that the latter do much more to corrode reputations. And Bos et al. (2013) show that a populist style of communication erodes the perceived legitimacy of a mainstream but not a radical right party leader.

Moving from people to issues, we expect vote choice to be influenced by what voters are thinking about and how they are thinking about it. In both cases, experiments have lent themselves particularly well to examining the impact of the media. When it comes to *agenda-setting*, Iyengar and Kinder's (1987) *News that Matters* has been hailed as the 'single book that has done more than any other to accentuate the advantages of experimentation' (Nelson et al., 2011: 205). And simple survey experiments can demonstrate the impact of priming, for example, Canadians to think about Barack Obama when evaluating the USA (Dragojlovic, 2011) or Americans to think about terrorism when forming a vote intention (Merolla and Zechmeister, 2009). Meanwhile, whether defined narrowly as presenting the same objective information with different phrasing, or broadly as presenting the same issue from a different angle or in a different context, *framing* is ripe for experimental investigation (see Chong and Druckman, 2007). A vivid example is Peffley and Hurwitz's (2007) discovery that framing capital punishment as a racial issue (by noting the overrepresentation of blacks among those executed) actually *increased* support for the policy among white participants.

One feature of primes and frames is that they can be very subtle – implicit or even subconscious. In their study of that Arizona ballot initiative cited earlier, Berger et al. (2008) ran an experiment in which survey-measured support for education spending was higher among respondents who, in an apparently unrelated earlier phase of data collection, had been shown school-related photos. Even more strikingly, Hassin et al. (2007) show that subliminal exposure to the Israeli flag in the week before a general election led voters on polling day to choose options more associated with national unity. Experiments have also been central to the recent flurry of research on the emotional drivers of public opinion.

Stimuli ranging from survey questions to photographs to horror films have been used to prime fear or anger or disgust, researchers standing by to check whether these primes render subjects different – usually more conservative in some way – from a control group spared such treatment (e.g. Lerner et al., 2003; Terrizzi et al., 2010).

Issue or ideological proximity is another familiar component in models of vote choice, and experiments have been used both to support and question the Downsian model. McKelvey and Ordeshook's (1990) lab experiments show that, armed with information about a candidate's endorsements and poll rating, voters can identify their nearest candidate on an ideological spectrum. So Downs's (1957) conclusions do not hinge on any assumption that voters are fully informed about party positions. However, another key premise of the Downsian model – that voters have a clear position on that spectrum – is undermined by the experiment reported by Sanders et al. (2008). They found that participants, when told that their self-placements placed them at a distance from a preferred party, often opted to reposition themselves. Where this all leaves spatial modellers is their concern; what we learn is that experiments can tease out the interplay between self- and party placements.

The final variable in this journey up the funnel of causality is party identification. (Socio-demographic characteristics such as race or social class can be primed experimentally but are for obvious reasons resistant to manipulation.) Once regarded as an 'unmoved mover', party identification has now long been seen as more open to change and hence to experimental manipulation. Gerber et al. (2010) report a field experiment in which the treatment was a reminder to 'leaners' of the need to register with that party in order to vote in its primary. This turned at least some of those leanings into partisanship. Similarly, some studies of negative campaign advertisements demonstrated their capacity to strengthen partisan loyalties in the US (Anscombe and Iyengar, 1995). Where party systems are newer, attachments are looser and perhaps more cognitive than affective. In an interesting experiment in Argentina, Lupu (2013) applied treatments that either clarified a party's platform or emphasized its alliances with other parties, and found that these respectively strengthened or weakened partisanship.

Voting has been studied hard enough and long enough to give us confidence that variables such as party loyalties, issue priorities and economic evaluations matter for vote choice. So the indirectness of this approach – experimenting on dependent variables which in turn influence vote choice – should not be mistaken for irrelevance. However, the *degree* of relevance is more questionable. If an experiment involving quite a strong prime generates only a small effect size, and that only on a dependent variable still some causal distance from vote choice, we have learned relatively little about that ultimate variable. It is this sort of reasoning that has led other experimentalists to prefer the more direct approach of simulating elections.

Hypothetical elections

Hypothetical elections are usually staged either in laboratory or in survey experiments. The first thing to say about the laboratory approach is that it refers more to a style than to a venue. The purpose-built labs that are increasingly popular in social science faculties facilitate this kind of experiment but are by no means necessary for it. The second key point is that the lab approach simulates elections only as far as the researchers are concerned. The participants – or subjects, as they are usually described in this context – hear no mention of elections, parties, turnout or anything like that and the only resemblance to voting is the act of choosing between options. So this highly stylized environment is not intended to mimic a real election; rather, it is intended to strip away all the extraneous features of that real election that would conceal the effect of a variable of interest.

Two other common features of such experiments further conceal their electoral purpose. The first is repetition. To maximize the data obtained during valuable lab time, and to enable more manipulations of electoral context, subjects will typically cast ‘votes’ in multiple (perhaps ten or even 20) rounds of elections. Second, subjects are usually paid not only for their time but according to their performance – which in this context usually means according to the outcomes of the elections in which they have voted. While such payments further reduce *mundane realism* – that is, any surface similarity between these experiments and actual elections – they may increase *experimental realism* by making subjects care about these outcomes (on the distinction between mundane and experimental realism, see McDermott, 2002b; on the use of incentives, see Dickson, 2011). Without such payments, it is argued, subjects would believe that their choices were consequence-free in a way that is not true of real voting. Incentives increase subjects’ focus, overriding their predispositions and thus giving researchers a clearer view of whether their manipulation of interest had the expected effect.

At least when incentivized thus, voters in the lab proved a good deal more competent than had been implied by observational studies reporting mass political ignorance (e.g. Zaller, 1992; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996). In particular, surveys had shown that many voters – especially but not only in the US – lacked the information about candidates’ or parties’ ideological positions that is ostensibly needed for voting along Downsian spatial lines. Yet I have already cited experiments by McKelvey and Ordeshook (1990; see also Lupia and McCubbins, 1998) showing that prior knowledge was not necessary: voters could infer these positions from a combination of opinion poll ratings, interest group endorsements and other trusted sources. In sum, provided that they ‘know enough to make good choices about whom to believe ... voters who appear to be uninformed can cast the same votes that they would have cast if they had known more’ (Aldrich and Lupia, 2011: 196).

Lab experiments are also well suited to isolating the effects of electoral rules and institutions. The electoral system, the number of candidates or parties, the presence of a threshold, the availability of coalition signals – all can be manipulated easily in the lab. One prominent *dependent* variable here is strategic voting. In an echo of McKelvey and Ordeshook's (1990) work, Reitz et al. (1998) show the usefulness of polls and campaign contributions in signalling candidate viability and hence in informing strategic voting. From a different angle, van der Straeten et al. (2010) also highlighted the critical role of information in strategic voting. They compared lab elections run under simple plurality and majority runoff electoral systems and found less strategic behaviour in the latter, not because the structural incentives are any weaker but because the computational task is more demanding.

As with lab experiments, the term ‘survey experiments’ in this context tells us not only about the venue or vehicle for these elections but also about the approach. Researchers here are aiming not to strip away but to simulate at least some of the trappings of real elections. As noted at the outset, there are limits on just how realistic such a simulation can be. Nonetheless, there is at least some attempt at mundane realism and, even in the most basic design, the dependent variable is a choice between parties or candidates that is explicitly presented as a vote.

Some experiments do not go far beyond that. For example, those studying ballot order effects (e.g. Taebel, 1975), the potential impact of photographs on ballot papers (Johns and Shephard, 2011) or the differential effects of open versus closed lists on support for minor parties (Blumenau et al., 2016) need only replicate the moment of casting a vote. Yet there is more to an election than that fleeting moment in the polling booth. Many of these experiments therefore also involve at least a crude simulation of the election campaign, defined very broadly as the period during which voters learn about the options available. The stock method here is the vignette. This is the means by which experimenters have explored the effects of, for example, candidate race (Braman and Sinno, 2009), localness (Campbell and Cowley, 2014), military background (McDermott and Panagopoulos, 2015) and misconduct (Eggers et al., n.d.).

The more convincing experiments include longer and more detailed vignettes. If respondents read little more than the one manipulated piece of information about a candidate, they have little other basis for choice and so the impact of that manipulated variable is overestimated. Extra information allows thus for a more realistic assessment of effect size. Of course, that extra information can also be randomized, both extending the scope of the experiment and allowing an assessment of the relative importance of the different factors manipulated. Thus, for example, Campbell and Cowley (2014) show not only that voters strongly prefer candidates from the local area but also that this preference clearly outweighs any small biases in terms of candidate sex, age or religion. The conjoint experimental design (Hainmueller et al., 2014) allows for estimation and

comparison of multiple manipulations within the same experiment, and without the need for implausibly large samples. Fortunately for electoral researchers, this method is based on exactly that comparison of alternatives (as opposed to rating a single attitude object) that is inherent to our dependent variable. Hainmueller et al. (2015) show that paired-profiles conjoint experiments, akin to the choice between two candidates for election, yield more externally valid estimates than do traditional vignette-based experiments. This design looks set to become the dominant method in this field.

However, no conjoint or other survey experimental design comes close to capturing the swirl of information available in a real election campaign. A more deliberate attempt to do so is the dynamic process tracing methodology deployed by Lau and Redlawsk (2006). Headlines about rival candidates scroll fairly quickly down a computer screen in front of participants, who must click on them in order to read the detailed information. The aim is to reflect both the dynamic nature of a campaign and the fact that citizens select rather than passively receiving information. This is better described as a simulation than as an experiment because that key feature, participants' ability to choose what they read, removes experimental control. If those who read a particular piece of information then vote differently, this may be due to the information or because those inclined to vote a certain way were also more likely to select that information. So this method is useful in addressing other issues – about the extent and patterns of information-seeking, and how close this takes voters to the 'correct' vote that they would have cast if fully informed – rather than the 'what drives electoral choice?' question that we have considered so far.

External validity

Even the most intricate and dynamic simulation is only a highly simplified version of the real thing. External validity is therefore a pressing issue for those fielding experiments based on hypothetical elections. In this section, I discuss four particular threats to external validity in this context. All four problems can be and have been overstated (see Mutz, 2011, ch. 8 for a discussion). Equally, however, all four – especially the fourth – need careful consideration.

In voting studies, the target population is obviously the electorate. This has made many electoral researchers sceptical of the student samples routinely used in psychology and economics. But just how much is sacrificed for the convenience of a student sample? This question received surprisingly little systematic attention from political scientists until Druckman and Kam's assertion that 'any convenience sample poses a problem only when the size of an experimental treatment depends on a characteristic on which the convenience sample has virtually no variance' (2011: 41). This logic is worth following via an example. Consider an experiment estimating the effect of exposure to media economic coverage on incumbent party evaluations (see also Mutz and Kim, this Volume, on this

topic). We might expect a student sample to overstate this effect because media coverage is more influential over the non-partisan, and students are less likely than voters as a whole to be party identifiers. And, if we estimate only a main effect of media coverage, the result will indeed be biased as described. However, as Druckman and Kam emphasize, our theory implies not only that main effect but also an interaction of exposure with partisanship. Provided that at least some of the students *are* partisan, we can obtain unbiased estimates of the theorized effects – that economic coverage shapes incumbent evaluations but less so among party identifiers.

If student samples can be robustly defended in this way, then there would seem still less to worry about when it comes to the more diverse samples obtained via Amazon Mechanical Turk (Berinsky et al., 2012) or volunteer panels such as YouGov (see Malhotra and Krosnick, 2007). While the politically engaged are markedly over-represented in the latter samples in particular, the Druckman–Kam logic still applies. The argument then becomes about whether even the politically unengaged in these volunteer samples are somehow different – and in ways likely to moderate the treatment effect – from the unengaged in the wider electorate. Druckman and Kam suggest that the burden of proof in such arguments lies with the critics (2011: 41), but experimenters too should consider whether their samples really capture the key sources of heterogeneity in treatment effects. Nonetheless, an upbeat conclusion is in order on this first external validity threat: non-representative samples have done less to undermine key experimental findings than has widely been thought.

The second threat can be illustrated by returning to the issue of monetary incentives in lab experiments. As noted, these are intended to generate a sense that, as in real elections, there are consequences to the choices made. But can making subjects financially invested in experimental elections mimic the ways in which voters are emotionally – for symbolic and partisan reasons – as well as financially invested in real elections? The answer is almost certainly ‘no’. A harder question is: does the difference matter? While advocates of experimentation have provided clear advice that mundane realism matters less than experimental realism (e.g. Morton and Williams, 2010; McDermott, 2002b), they are less forthcoming about quite how to establish the latter. Some deviations from mundane realism are doubtless irrelevant, but others may lead subjects to approach the choice task very differently from the way that they would a real voting decision. As with sampling issues, then, it is incumbent on researchers not to take experimental realism for granted. Instead they should set out how their design recreates in participants’ minds the essential meaning and structure of the electoral decision.

The third point is about priming. While this is typically thought of as being part of the manipulation, in fact all participants are induced to think about voting in a certain way by an experimental design. Take, for example, McKelvey and Ordeshook’s spatial voting experiments. These did an excellent job of showing

what *experimental subjects can do*, even without prior information on candidate locations. However, that is very different from showing what *real voters actually do*. The latter requires additional – and not especially plausible – assumptions about voters’ inclination to think spontaneously in spatial terms (rather than focusing on the many alternative bases for choice). This is not a criticism of these authors or their design – their aim was to test citizen competence. But it is an argument against any attempt to conclude from these experiments either that real votes are cast on spatial lines or that uninformed voters in real elections reach the same choices that they would have made if fully informed. Both claims overreach the external validity of an experiment that primed a certain model of candidate choice.

The phrase ‘many alternative bases for choice’ heralds the fourth and most important external validity problem facing vote choice experiments. I mentioned earlier Gerber’s defence of experimenting at real elections on the grounds that any treatment effect will be lost amid the chaos of competing campaign messages. The problem is that this applies not just to experimental treatments but potentially also to the variables involved. One example can be found in work on audience costs in international relations. According to this thesis, democratic leaders can claim credibility for their threats on the world stage because backing down would lead eventually to their removal by an unimpressed electorate. Experimental studies (e.g. Tomz, 2007) confirm that the public does indeed react negatively to leaders who threaten to escalate but then are revealed as bluffing. But these dependent variables are attitudes measured at the time of an experiment. Such studies shed little light on whether that disapproval will carry over to the ballot box.

Or take the case of media effects. There is overwhelming experimental evidence that the slant, agendas and frames of media content can shape political attitudes and partisan preferences (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). If there is embarrassingly little evidence of this media influence in real elections (Bartels, 1993), one reason is that experimentalists’ dependent variables were measured long before those votes were cast. Jerit et al. (2013) reinforce the point via an unusual experiment in which they applied the same stimuli to parallel samples using a field design (sending free newspapers and then a mail survey to randomly selected voters) and a survey experiment (inviting a sample to the lab to read equivalent material and then answer a questionnaire). Unsurprisingly, they found that the field experiment generated markedly weaker estimates of media effects, the primary reason being the unrealistically narrow gap between stimulus and outcome in the lab experiments. Further supporting evidence comes from studies showing the rapid decay of the effects of political advertising (Gerber et al., 2011; Hill et al., 2013), implying that only last-ditch persuasive messages will have anything like a full effect at the ballot box. This is not because time in itself is a great ‘healer’ of experimental effects. As Bartels (2014) shows, those effects weaken among those more receptive to

the counter-arguments that they will subsequently receive. When the electorate as a whole is more receptive to the counter-arguments than the persuasive messages, their effect can disappear altogether – as with unsuccessful Republican candidate Bob Dole's TV ads towards the end of his failing 1996 presidential campaign (Kaid, 1997). The point, once more, is that experimental treatments generate the kinds of effects that could eventually be washed away by a tide of other campaign messages.

Again, there is a danger of overstating this problem. For one thing, some experimental treatments do actually influence real votes. I have already cited the remarkable display of external validity whereby Hassin et al. (2007) show that subliminal exposure to their national flag shifted not only Israelis' opinions on the Palestinian–Israeli conflict but also their voting behaviour in the general election a week after the experiment. More importantly, the external validity of experiments does not hinge on such vivid examples in which the treatments themselves persist into an election. The claim is rather that, if, say, controlled exposure to negative economic coverage affects incumbent evaluations in the lab, then systematic such exposure in the field will do the same. The limitation of experimental work, then, is somewhat different. Significant treatment effects are commonplace. It stretches credibility to suggest that none of these generalize to real elections, yet it stretches credibility just as tightly to suggest that all of them do. So how do we know which? However carefully experimenters can and should consider external validity questions, it seems that observational data are necessary for answering that question.

Nelson et al. sum up the external validity issue: 'experiments are better attuned to investigating what *can* happen than what *will* happen' (2011: 210; emphasis in original). This implies two related conclusions about interpreting results. First, we should read more into the *form* than into the *size* of effects. If a manipulation of candidate age reveals a preference for middle-aged over younger and older contenders, it then seems unlikely that the real-world relationship between candidate age and electoral preference would take a very different (e.g. a linear positive) form – even if observational data, with confounds such as incumbency left uncontrolled, might imply just that. What is much less clear is how strong that age effect will be, given the myriad other considerations that factor into voters' assessment of a candidate but could not be incorporated into the experiment.

Second, a significant treatment effect should then be regarded as a necessary but not a sufficient condition for a factor to matter for vote choice. As Sauger et al. put it, their tactical voting experiment 'makes it possible to identify the upper bound for strategic voting possibilities. If voters in the laboratory do not strategically support candidates to change the balance in the second round in a run-off, it is difficult to believe they would engage in such behaviour in real elections' (2012: 105). Given the strength of many treatments and the stripped-down nature of many designs, it might be argued that surprising nulls are the most

telling experimental results. A corollary is that publication bias – the tendency for non-significant findings to be less often submitted or accepted – is a particularly corrosive problem here (see Druckman et al., 2011: 21). If, returning to the example above, a manipulation of candidate age has no significant effect on electoral preference (despite ample statistical power), then this conveys important information about the real electoral world. We need to know about it.

EXPERIMENTS AND TURNOUT

As noted earlier, things are different with turnout. First, there is general agreement that higher turnout is better. So there are not the same ethical problems in experimenting on actual elections: randomized treatments are aimed at boosting turnout and, if they succeed, this is assumed to be all to the good. An additional consequence is that there is more funding available from independent sources for turnout than for vote choice experiments. Second (and related), turnout behaviour is publicly observable – even at the individual level, at least where validation records are available. There is therefore scope for identifying not just whether a treatment had an effect but also on whom. All of this has enabled extensive field experimentation. The initial focus was squarely on how to boost turnout rather than – in contrast to the vote choice experiments – identifying the causes or drivers of participation. However, attention did later turn to that second objective.

Getting out the vote

Turnout was the dependent variable in what is often cited as the very first political science experiment: Harold Gosnell's (1927) investigation of the impact of GOTV letters on turnout in Chicago elections. Gosnell reported a one-percentage-point boost in turnout in the 1924 presidential election but a much healthier nine-point boost in the mayoral election experiment a year later. Subsequent such experiments had even more dramatic results, turnout sometimes being boosted by as much as twenty points (e.g. Eldersveld, 1956; Bochel and Denver, 1971; Adams and Smith, 1980). Given this success, it may be surprising that these experiments were so few and far between. Two practical reasons are worth noting: the demands of true randomization and the impurity of control groups. Bochel and Denver (1971), for instance, working with the local Labour Party in the Scottish city of Dundee, took two nearby tower blocks and arranged for one to be subject to intensive canvassing while those living in the other received just a single leaflet. This is far more administratively straightforward (if no easier on the calf muscles) than if individual households had been randomly assigned to treatment or control groups. Strictly speaking, however, only in the latter case could even the large observed gap in turnout (64 per cent in the canvassed

block compared to 54 per cent in the other) be unambiguously attributed to the treatment rather than pre-existing differences between the tower blocks. Meanwhile, the phrase ‘just a single leaflet’ highlights that, in real elections, researchers can rarely access a genuine control group. Even in a seat so safe that no other party canvassed at all, Labour still insisted on leafleting the control block, meaning that Bochel and Denver were investigating the impact of extra canvassing – not unimportant, but again not quite the purity of a true experiment.

It was Gerber and Green (2000) who took this field research to the next level. Their 1998 New Haven canvassing experiment featured a huge sample of around 30,000 registered voters, pure random assignment of individuals, variation in the method – mail, phone or door-to-door – of canvassing, and post-election validation of self-reported turnout. This landmark study triggered numerous replications and extensions, even to the point of investigating whether released criminals can be induced to vote (Gerber et al., 2015). The extensive literature is reviewed in detail by Green et al. (2013). Here there is space only to cite Michelson and Nickerson’s summary of the core findings: ‘well-conducted, door-to-door visits generally increase turnout by six to ten percentages points, volunteer telephone calls by two to five percentage points, and indirect methods such as mail generally not at all’ (2011: 230). In other words, the more expensive and time-consuming methods were the more effective. When it came to canvassing and turnout, it seemed, you got what you paid for.

No surprise, then, that social media was greeted with great excitement. Facebook and Twitter offered canvassers the possibility of direct contact but at a fraction of the usual cost – and offered experimenters the kind of sample sizes that they could only previously have dreamed of. Bond et al. (2012) report an experiment involving 60 million Facebook users on the day of the US midterms in 2010. While impersonal messages proved ineffective, a treatment exploiting the social networking potential of Facebook worked slightly better. Participants were not only urged to vote but also shown profile pictures of a random six of their Facebook friends who had already reported voting. Turnout was 0.4 points higher among those receiving this treatment. This modest effect reflects the dampening of a much stronger impact of close friends by a virtually non-existent effect of what might be called ‘Facebook acquaintances’. These results are broadly consistent with the conclusions from off-line experiments: that the personal touch matters, and is particularly effective when emphasizing voting as a norm in one’s social network (Nickerson, 2008; Fowler, 2005).

Beyond the medium of mobilization, experiments have examined other factors moderating the effectiveness of GOTV appeals. One such is timing. Echoing the findings about persuasive communications discussed in the previous section, Gerber et al. (2003) show that non-partisan mobilization is also much more effective if the message is delivered close to the election. Another is the type of election. As mentioned earlier, Gosnell (1927) found much the

larger GOTV effect at the less salient mayoral election. Fieldhouse et al. (2014) report a non-significant difference in the other direction, with treatment effects of two points in the UK's European Parliament election in 2009 but four points in the high-salience general election a year later. Then there is the related issue of what might be termed the cultural context of turnout. Most research in this field comes from the US – something of an outlier in terms of the frequency of elections and the low levels of turnout. There have now been GOTV experiments in other established democracies (e.g. Fieldhouse et al., 2014; Gerber and Yamada, 2009) and in democratizing countries (e.g. Guan and Green, 2006; Ichino and Schuendeln, 2012). Without comparative experimental studies with parallel treatments, though, it is hard to estimate the correlation between baseline turnout levels and the effectiveness of GOTV appeals. It could be that high-turnout contexts see larger effect sizes because appeals play to better-established norms, or smaller effect sizes because turnout is already approaching its ceiling and so there is less scope for impact.

Incidentally, the answer will depend partly on the apparently mundane question of whether effect sizes should be measured in terms of percentage points or percentages. Suppose that a GOTV treatment in a low-turnout contest boosts turnout to 33 per cent compared to 30 per cent in the control group. What would be the equivalent effect in a high-salience election: from 60 to 63 (a three-point increase) or from 60 to 66 points (a 10 per cent increase)? Since there is no unambiguous answer to that question, researchers should report both percentage and percentage-point changes – and to acknowledge where the difference affects comparative conclusions.

The comparison of aggregate treatment effects can only take us so far in understanding the sources and drivers of these effects. Who responds to GOTV appeals and why? We learn something about the 'why' question from manipulations of message content and design. When Gerber and Rogers (2009) report that messages anticipating high turnout work better than those anticipating low turnout, they strike a blow for norm-based and against rational choice models. More broadly, Dale and Strauss (2009) argue that GOTV communications serve as reminders rather than persuaders given that the effects seem consistent regardless of whether the message is about the closeness of the race, solidarity with one's social group or some other inducement (see also Gerber and Green, 2000; Michelson 2003). This 'noticeable reminder' theory wins indirect support from Nickerson and Rogers's (2010) experiment in which encouraging voters to form 'implementation intentions' – that is, to plan out their polling station trip – proved more effective, notably for those living alone, than standard GOTV messages.

Addressing the 'who' question required combining experiments with individual-level data (of the kind used in more traditional survey analyses of turnout). A central focus was the relationship between propensity to vote and treatment effects: that is, whether GOTV messages tend to nudge those already predisposed

to turn out or to coax the otherwise reluctant to the polling station. Arceneaux and Nickerson (2009) and Malhotra et al. (2011) show that the answer depends on the electoral context. At the big elections, habitual voters turn out anyway but GOTV appeals can persuade some of the disengaged to join them. The more common pattern, however, is that these appeals serve as useful reminders for habitual voters but are ignored by the disengaged. The disquieting upshot, highlighted by Enos et al. in a re-analysis of 24 GOTV experiments, is that ‘current mobilization strategies significantly widen disparities in participation’ (2014: 273).

This will be magnified by two types of spill-over effects: across networks, whereby delivering a mobilization message to one person makes it more likely that others in her household will vote too (Nickerson, 2008; Bhatti et al., 2014); and across time, whereby the habit-forming nature of voting means that mobilizing an individual – especially a first-time voter – also makes it more likely that he will vote in subsequent elections (Gerber et al. 2003; Coppock and Green, 2016).

Understanding turnout

This extensive (and expensive) programme of experiments serves a useful but ultimately rather narrow purpose. Knowing how to increase participation from its normal or baseline level cannot answer the big academic questions about turnout: which political and institutional factors set that baseline level, and who is in that baseline group in the first place? When it comes to answering those questions, the role of experiments is more circumscribed, for much the same reasons as with vote choice. True natural experiments are vanishingly rare and, even when researchers find something approaching one, it is usually in such idiosyncratic circumstances that the wider implications are limited. For example, when Morton et al. (2015) confirm that those who hear exit poll results before the polls close are then markedly less likely to vote, and Carman et al. (2008) show that chopping the instructions off ballot papers results in a spike in the number of spoiled papers, the lessons are for the French and Scottish electoral authorities rather than for electoral researchers.

In order to understand turnout, then, experimental researchers have again had to deal mostly with hypothetical votes or elections. Ansolabehere et al. (1994), in experiments investigating the potential demobilizing effect of negative campaigning, relied on participants’ reports of their likelihood of voting in the upcoming election (from which their treatment ads were taken). The validity of such self-reports cannot be taken for granted, however, especially at some distance from the election in question, at which point they reflect a broader orientation towards voting more than a specific behavioural intention.

Turnout has also been examined via hypothetical elections in the lab. These studies have focused mainly on the terms in the rational choice calculus of voting. Consistent with that model, Levine and Palfrey (2007) find turnout

higher when the electorate is smaller and the election is close, and Grosser and Schram (2010) show that providing poll information boosts turnout in close races but erodes turnout otherwise. Moving from the ‘p’ (probability of a pivotal vote) to the ‘B’ (benefit of preferred outcome) term, Kamm and Schram (2015) show that more party polarization – and hence larger party differentials – tends to increase turnout. Meanwhile, the importance of the ‘C’ (cost of voting) term is called into question by studies (e.g. Battaglini et al., 2008) showing that there is abstention even when voting is costless, because the uninformed delegate the electoral decision to the informed. Finally, some experimenters have gone beyond their microeconomic comfort zone to replicate the psychological pulls of group membership and altruism and to investigate how far these components of the ‘D’ term (the benefits of voting regardless of the outcome) can explain ‘excessive’ levels of turnout (e.g. Feddersen and Sandroni, 2006; Tulman, 2015).

With turnout just as with vote choice, the lab has also proved a popular venue for scrutinizing the impact of electoral systems. Schram and Sonnemans (1996) presented an experiment contradicting the consensus from observational data (e.g. Blais and Carty, 1990) that proportional representation encourages turnout. By using two experimental groups of equal sizes, however, they created a highly competitive majoritarian contest and thus stacked the deck in favour of that system. Kartal (2015) and Herrera et al. (2014) went on to confirm that the relationship between the electoral system and turnout depends on the size of the minority group(s) and on the size of any threshold.

This literature illustrates both the pros and cons of lab experimental elections. It began by questioning an established finding based on observational data and went on to show the conditions under which that finding – that PR boosts turnout – actually held. However, while a stripped-down experimental approach revealed the essential mechanics of the proportionality–turnout relationship, it created external validity problems. To simplify the derivation of hypotheses and the experimental design, these experiments included just two or three parties. Having to hold constant a variable such as number of parties, so severely endogenous to the main manipulated variable, limits the relevance of these experiments. And holding it constant at such a small number takes them even further from the reality of proportional representation elections in particular. Then there are the concerns raised earlier about experimental realism in stylized lab elections. Blais et al., whose experiments revealed no electoral system effect on turnout, speculate thus:

In our study, it was decided to present explicitly the decision to be made by participants as a decision to vote in an election. The gap between our findings and those of previous lab experiments may come partly from the different framings. Referring to elections may give more influence to social and normative considerations... (2014: 49).

If this is indeed the explanation, then the gains from stripping away those considerations come at a hefty cost in external validity.

THE FUTURE: MODERATORS, MEDIATORS AND META-ANALYSIS

According to one summary of the non-experimental study of electoral behaviour, ‘central to virtually all political behaviour research … has been the search for the single best decision algorithm with which to characterize the alignments and behaviour of an entire electorate’ (Dunleavy, 1996: 279). The ubiquitous full-sample regression equation implied that everyone decides whether and how to vote in the same way. There is a direct experimental analogy of this assumption and approach. The assumption is that everyone is affected by manipulations in the same way. Its statistical manifestation is an estimation of average treatment effects across the full sample, without interactions between treatments and probable individual-level moderators of their effects.

That assumption of causal homogeneity is no more plausible in the experimental arena than in any other. Herrmann et al. (1999) outline a cognitive–interactionist framework in which citizens’ reactions to political context are shaped and constrained by their predispositions, and it is not difficult to think of important such moderators in the electoral context. One such is political sophistication. Few studies have compared the effects of treatments on the less and more politically aware (exceptions include Kuklinski et al., 2001; Lau and Redlawsk, 2006), and hence it remains unclear whether treatments typically have more effect on those who have few other considerations bearing on a question or on those who have a more organized framework of political cognitions into which the new information can be incorporated. On the closely related question of whether providing information tends to narrow or widen the knowledge gap, what we know so far is based largely on analogies from laboratory maths tests (Boudreau, 2009; Boudreau and McCubbins, 2010).

An even more obvious moderator is partisanship. Where researchers have interacted manipulations with respondent partisanship, they often find strong moderating effects. For example, Bartels (2014) reports that the effects of exposure to an Obama campaign ad disappeared completely among Romney supporters but did not decay at all among those already pro-Obama. Bhatti et al. (2013) find that partisanship very strongly moderates voters’ willingness to punish scandal-hit politicians. These interactions are exactly what decades of electoral research would lead us to expect; what is surprising is that such interactions are not a routine feature of estimating and reporting in election experiments. Even where respondent partisanship turns out not to moderate treatment effects, as in one study of terrorist threat and perceptions of George W. Bush, those null findings are themselves noteworthy (Merolla et al., 2007: 39).

One response might be that, if an experimental design refers to a generic party or candidate, we would not expect respondents’ party allegiances to condition their response. However, this attempt to ‘clean’ partisanship from experiments

is dubious in terms of both internal and external validity. Voters are prone to infer the partisanship of a candidate or party from other information such as personality traits, issue positions and so on (Rapoport et al., 1989; Rahn, 1993). So, even if an experimenter's design ignores partisanship, this does not mean participants will do so – and their inferences about partisanship are likely to affect the key dependent variables. The external validity point is more obvious: given how strongly party allegiances influence real-world voting, and how much they dampen the effect of other variables, experimenters setting up non-partisan elections (e.g. Campbell and Cowley, 2014) will overstate the effects of their other manipulations. The experimental literature on candidate attractiveness contains several examples of effects that disappear once partisanship is included (Riggle et al., 1992; Stroud et al., 2005).

Experimenters should therefore be manipulating party or candidate affiliations in their designs and interacting these with participants' own party affiliations. This does come at a cost, in either statistical power or the extra sample size needed to maintain that power despite the extra conditions. But there is no point in conserving power only to generate less valid or less relevant estimates – and no excuse for doing so in survey experiments with large and at least quasi-representative samples. Ultimately, partisanship is too important a moderator in electoral behaviour to be considered a 'luxury' manipulation.

Turning from moderators to mediators, the starting point is to note that experiments score higher on some facets of internal validity than on others. We know that observed effects must be due to the treatment, but not how or why the treatment had those effects. And often there is more than one plausible mechanism. For example, Horiuchi et al. (2007) show that providing information to citizens makes them more likely to turn out. This may be because, in a Downsian framework, information widens or at least crystallizes party differentials. It may be because information increases citizens' sense of internal political efficacy, or their emotional engagement with the election and its outcome. Or maybe the information just helps to remind people that the election is happening. The point is that, unless experimental designers include measures of the key variables along these causal paths – that is, the likely mediators – then they shed little light on the mechanisms by which a manipulation has its effect.

Imai et al. (2011) provide sophisticated methodological guidance about how to incorporate these mediators into the design and analysis of experiments. The basic idea is nonetheless simple. To return to a study cited above, Merolla et al. (2007) investigated the impact of news clips emphasizing terrorist threat on perceptions of Bush's charisma and ultimately about whether he was responsible for the failure of US policy in Iraq. Their hypothesized mechanism is that the psychological stress of crisis leads citizens to project charisma onto a leader and, in turn, to resist criticizing or blaming that leader. The first step in measuring that mediation chain was therefore to confirm that

the mean level of concern about terror attacks was higher in the treatment than in the control group.

A meticulous design will include mediators reflecting possible causal mechanisms other than the one hypothesized. This is especially important given the likelihood of what Sher and McKenzie (2006) call ‘leakage’. This is the tendency for experimental vignettes to have unintended consequences for the dependent variable (or variables) because participants find additional cues in such treatments beyond those envisaged by the experimental designer. Pursuing the example of Merolla et al. (2007), their crisis treatment will also have conveyed messages about the salience of foreign policy issues, on which Bush enjoyed an advantage, about the extent of his administration’s spending and focus on homeland security, and about the unpredictability of adversaries such that Bush could less reasonably be held responsible for their actions. All of these imply a causal route from treatment to the observed effects that is at least somewhat different from the stress–charisma account set out by the study’s designers. The more such alternative routes that can be charted by *measuring* the relevant mediators, the stronger the causal inference possible from the design.

Of course, a meticulous design often requires more questionnaire space, time and money than is available to experimenters. This call for more moderating and mediating variables cannot be met by every researcher in every study; rather, it should be heeded by the community of experimentalists. Moreover, as an exasperated Green and co-authors (2010) point out, mediation analysis is premature and impractical until the main causal relationship has been more confidently established than is often the case in electoral experimentation. Indeed, the subfield furthest advanced in using manipulation checks and elucidating causal mechanisms is the extensive programme of GOTV experiments. (For an example building on previous work, see Panagopoulos, 2010.)

This illustrates an important point about the future for experiments in electoral behaviour. As with any field, it is where results accumulate across an extensive programme of replications, refinements and tests for moderation and mediation that the most robust conclusions will be drawn. In particular, such accumulation enables meta-analysis of results. Experiments lend themselves well to this kind of aggregation, and meta-analyses have already been reported in two areas of the heaviest experimentation: the effect of GOTV appeals (Green and Gerber, 2015) and negative advertising (Lau et al., 2007) on turnout.

It risks cliché to end with what amounts to a call for (much) more research. Yet it is worth emphasizing that, while hardly in its infancy, experimental research in electoral behaviour is still thin on the ground compared with the vast quantities of existing and ongoing survey research. And it may well be that, given the causal traction offered by experiments, we learn faster as they accumulate than we did as that mountain of survey studies grew higher.

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Multi-level Modelling of Voting Behaviour

Marcel Lubbers and Take Sipma

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we address a modelling technique that perfectly fits the macro- and micro-level questions on voting behaviour researchers have: multi-level modelling. It is a powerful statistical technique that enables us to disentangle macro-level from micro-level effects. It creates opportunities to find to what extent explanations of voting behaviour are dependent on the context, opening up ways to study across-time changes in voting behaviour, and is widely applicable to answering core questions in voting behaviour research. First, we will address the general ideas on macro- and micro-level research; and, second, we will discuss the questions raised in theories on voting behaviour that call for multi-level modelling. We then move on to elaborate briefly on the method. With examples, we provide information on random intercept models, random slope models and models to answer trend questions. As for every method, we will discuss some of the difficulties one encounters when applying it. These refer to 1) the choice for which macro-level units; 2) the number of macro-level units and 3) disentangling of effects of time and place in multi-level models.

MACRO- AND MICRO-LEVELS

Frequently in the political and social sciences questions are formulated that relate to the macro-level. That comes as no surprise since – as the name suggests – social sciences are interested in differences between societies and therefore

include characteristics of societies to understand those differences. It might seem straightforward to correlate (or even regress) macro-level characteristics to other macro-level characteristics, but that ignores the crucial process of understanding macro-level outcomes. Coleman (1994), one of the most cited social researchers owing to his foundation of social theory, argued that macro-level explanations of macro-level outcomes always operate via the micro-level. Coleman stated that macro-level factors constrain actions of individuals (micro-level). The constraints on individuals affect their (rational) actions (which is the relation at micro-level). The aggregate of the action at the individual level will cause an outcome at the macro-level. For example, economic crisis constrains individuals' income perspectives (macro–micro link). The constrained perspectives have an influence on, among other outcomes, voting behaviour (micro–micro link). The aggregate of the individual level action affects in turn macro-level outcomes, such as the formation of government: larger support for one party may result in its taking part in a government coalition. The foundations laid by Coleman summarize one of the core ideas in political and social science theory: that the context in which people live creates opportunities for and restrictions on social action. If only relations between individual-level characteristics could be studied, we would not know to what extent the context sets the constraints. Less explicit in 'Coleman's boat' – as his relation of the macro- to the micro-level is often summarized – is the relevance of understanding the extent to which the relation between constraints and actions are dependent on context (Ultee, 2015).

Questions on macro- and micro-level explanations of voting behaviour

It has become quite common in voting research to raise questions that refer to the influence of both individual-level characteristics and geographical and temporal characteristics (cross-level theorizing; Steenbergen and Jones, 2002). Add to that information of the direct environment (networks) and we can rely on the 3M approach, as emphasized in a contribution from Ultee (2015): we should collect multi-level, multi-moment and multi-actor data to study individuals in their context. Most of the theories we have seen in this Volume also guide us along that route. Economic models of voting argue that the state of the economy is crucial for understanding voting outcomes (Duch and Stevenson, 2005; Anderson, 2000). The better the performance of the economy, the better the government is evaluated and the higher the likelihood that the government will be re-elected. Research questions therefore often include the role of the context (the economy, the government), the individual (income, employment, financial expectations) and their interrelation to understand voting outcomes. Economic voting perspectives have also been applied to understanding the effect of the development of social welfare states. Questions on how extended a social welfare system is, by setting opportunities for and restrictions on inhabitants,

contribute to differences between people in their voting behaviour as well (Giger and Nelson, 2011; Anderson, 2000).

In the political science literature much emphasis is given to system-level explanation and the way that would contribute to people's voting behaviour. Norris (2005), Mudde (2007) and Arzheimer and Carter (2006) provide an overview of all kinds of institutional setting that may affect voting, and voting for which parties: the registration system to be able to vote; proportional representation versus majoritarian systems; the existence of thresholds to obtain seats in parliament. Supply side theorists of voting behaviour have stressed the importance of not so much the country-based institutional system but the relevance of political parties as actors (or the middle-term, party system variables (Arzheimer and Carter, 2006)). Parties may signal with their organization that they are good caretakers of a country, and the leader may play a role, today perhaps more so than decades ago (e.g. Garzia, 2014). Other theories centre on the policy positions and campaigning of the parties: how far are political parties apart from each other on certain topics, and which parts of their programme do they emphasize during campaigns for the elections?

These questions and the theories suggested to answer them all relate to the role of contextual-level characteristics in voting outcomes. However, they always presuppose that these macro-level conditions affect attitudes, beliefs and interests among voters and that it will affect the likelihood that a person will vote for a particular party.

To show the value and practical application of multi-level modelling, in this chapter we first work with the example of understanding public opposition to further EU unification from a theoretical utilitarian perspective (e.g. Gabel, 1998). It is anticipated that people oppose further EU unification less when they are in a non-vulnerable economic position individually (micro-level effect) and when they live in contexts where they profit more from EU membership. It can be expected that in countries that receive more than they contribute to the EU – so-called 'net recipients' – the public will be more positive to EU unification (macro-level effect). Moreover, we anticipate that people in vulnerable economic positions in countries that contribute the most to the EU ('net contributors') will oppose further unification most strongly. In this latter hypothesis we expect an individual-level explanation to vary systematically between countries. This is a cross-level hypothesis, requiring a test for cross-level interactions (the interaction between a micro-level explanation and a macro-level explanation).

A second example we apply here is derived from the theoretical framework for voting for radical right parties: ethnic competition theory (e.g. Lubbers et al., 2002). This theory assumes that (economic and cultural) competition between groups in society will affect the attitudes these groups have towards each other. Majority groups will perceive new migrants as competitors for economic resources and for dominant cultural values. During economic decline this perception would become stronger, as the scarcity of, for example, jobs increases and the competition aggravates the scarcity. This theory thus not only anticipates that individuals' vulnerable economic positions (such as being unemployed) play

a role in voting for radical right parties that take unfavourable stances against migrants but also considers how macro-level economic conditions affect people both in vulnerable *and* non-vulnerable positions.

The theoretical approaches exemplify that one of the central questions in voting behaviour is how we can investigate to what extent circumstances outside the individual affect the individual in their voting behaviour. Many voting behaviour researchers have relied on election outcome data, which provide great opportunities to show geographically where certain parties have gained the largest shares of votes, which constituencies are, for example, heartland Conservative or Labour and what kinds of ‘landslide’ take place during elections. Like many political scientists, we like to show these maps in printed and online media and to discuss the patterns of these election outcomes with our students in class. For The Netherlands, for example, one can clearly see the Dutch Bible belt in the percentage of votes for conservative confessional parties (Figure 40.1).

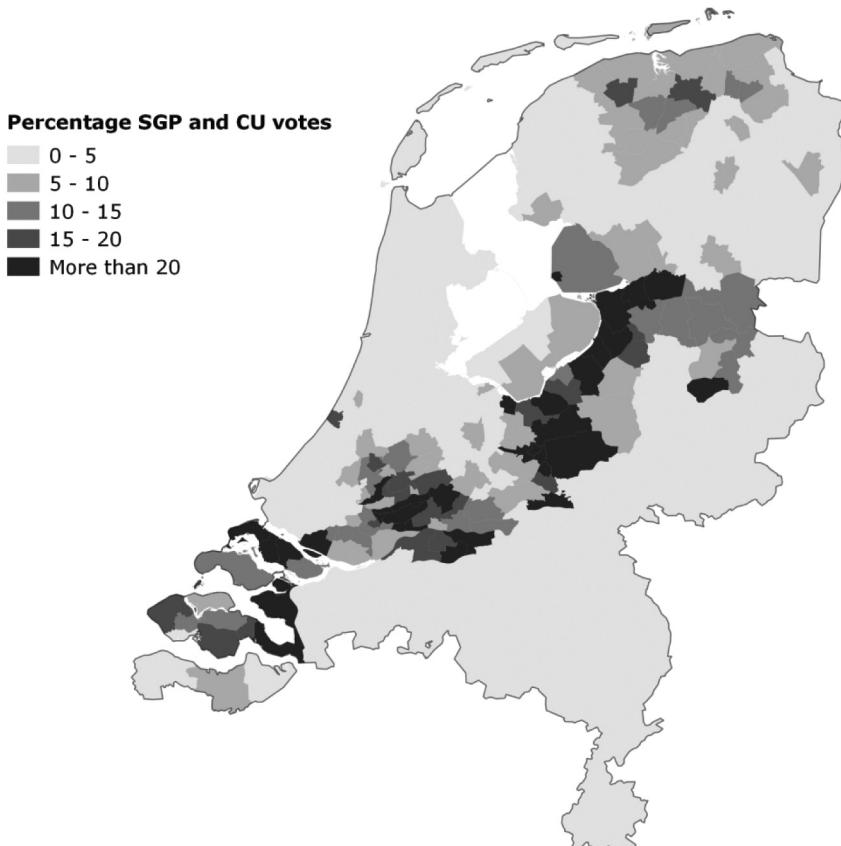


Figure 40.1 Percentage of voters for the State Reformed Party (SGP) and Christian Union (CU) in the Dutch General Elections of 2012

Source: Kiesraad; CBS

Moreover, with the election outcomes of the full population (or at least the voting population) in hands, it is interesting to relate them to other characteristics of the same region or electoral district. Many researchers have done so, showing us, for example, whether the share for populist radical right parties coincides with shares of migrants and unemployment (e.g. Knigge, 1998). Notwithstanding the attractiveness of these election outcomes, they do not inform us correctly of the influence of circumstances external to the individual on voting behaviour, since we cannot disentangle individual-level effects from macro-level effects. From these analyses we do not know whether people vote for Christian parties in Christian areas because of religious interests, or whether there is something additional in those areas that make Christians (and others) particularly prone to vote for Christian parties (a stronger likelihood that Christians vote for Christian parties, once more Christians do so).

Moreover, researchers and readers of contributions relying on macro-level analyses may make cross-level inferences leading to false conclusions (Achen and Shively, 1995). This is the case when micro-level conclusions are drawn based on macro-level relations. A well-known example is the inference drawn from a positive correlation between the level of unemployment in a region and the share of votes for the radical right. From this association it is sometimes erroneously concluded that unemployed people are more likely to vote for the radical right. In this example a conclusion on individual-level behaviour (of unemployed people) is drawn from a characteristic of the region (a high level of unemployment). Although it is perfectly possible that unemployed people vote for the radical right, it cannot be concluded from the macro-level correlation. Perhaps it was the people who feared losing their job in regions with high levels of unemployment that would vote for the radical right. It is therefore a mistaken cross-level inference – an ecological fallacy (Achen and Shively, 1995; Ultee, 2015). It becomes even clearer when we apply it to the positive correlation between the percentage of migrants in a region and the share of votes for the radical right; no-one would make the micro-level inference that migrants will be more likely to vote for the radical right. Individualistic fallacies also exist, though seem to be less common. In that case inferences at the macro-level are made based on micro-level relations. If a researcher finds that unemployed people are more likely to vote for the radical right, an individualistic fallacy would be to conclude that in regions with higher levels of unemployment the share of votes for the radical right is larger. In the absence of either macro-level or micro-level data we would choose to analyse these kinds of data as well, but researchers should be well aware of the limitations. But with data containing information on individuals and higher-level units (information on households, electoral districts, regions, countries) multi-level analysis provides the opportunity to find out whether the macro-level has an effect over the effect of individual, micro-level characteristics *and* to what extent cross-level hypotheses hold (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002).

MULTI-LEVEL MODELLING

Multi-level modelling provides the opportunity to model the influence of the context on individuals and how individuals behave differently in varying contexts: exactly what we need to answer our questions on voting behaviour when we take into account the influence from the context. It takes into account that the respondents we sample from a higher-level unit (the context) can also be affected by the characteristics of that higher-level unit. And it does so by adjusting the estimations of the standard errors of the higher-level units, since – unlike standard regression analysis – it accounts for the repeated information in social science data of the higher level (Jones et al., 1992; Snijders and Bosker, 1999). In regular regression analysis researchers used to include the context identifier which was successively replaced by characteristics of this context. Methodologists taught us that this kind of modelling underestimates the standard error of the context characteristics, since the estimation is based on the N, which is in regression analysis based on the individual level. A country-level study with 30,000 respondents and 30 countries of equal respondent number size would have a dataset that has the same country characteristic 1,000 times in the data. With this approach, a hypothesis would be supported too easily; the country level should be tested based on the 30 country cases and not on the 1,000 cases per country. The development of hierarchical modelling – as multi-level modelling is also labelled – offered a solution to this problem (for excellent overviews of the multi-level methodology and its application see Snijders and Bosker, 1999; 2012; Jones and Duncan, 1998; Hox, 2010; Gelman and Hill, 2006).

In a multi-level model one starts with the identification of the variance in an outcome at the distinguished levels. When we study voters' attitudes in electoral districts, we calculate the variance between voters in their attitudes and the variance between the electoral districts. This so-called null-model provides the intraclass coefficient that gives understanding of the extent to which the voters in electoral districts are alike. The intraclass correlation (ρ) is calculated by dividing the level 2 variance by the sum of the level 1 and level 2 variance ($\rho = \sigma^2_{u0} / (\sigma^2_{u0} + \sigma^2_e)$). An intraclass correlation close to zero means that the attitudes of voters do not vary strongly between the districts. It implies that almost all variance in attitudes is between voters, and that the role of districts is negligible. It is common in studies with regions or countries at higher level units that intraclass coefficients vary between 0.05 and 0.25. The first question we now raise is whether the variance between districts is to be attributed to compositional differences. Differences in composition between districts could explain the variance between the districts. Including in a model measures (at the individual level) of the composition is likely to (but will not necessarily) decrease the variance at the district level. In a next step, the extent to which district-level characteristics affect the variance in attitudes between the districts is tested. Then one might want to find

interpretations for the macro- (and micro-) level effects, conforming to the ideas of Coleman. Subsequently, it is common – depending on theoretical expectations – to see the extent to which the effects of voters' characteristics vary between higher-level units. The question of the extent to which an effect of a voters' characteristic is larger in one district than in another district is then answered. This provides the researcher with the random slope of a micro-level explanation of the attitudes. In a final model, one can try to explain the variance in the slope by including cross-level interactions. In such a model, the interaction (or product) between a micro-level characteristic (voters' characteristic) and a macro-level characteristic (characteristic of the district) is included.

AN EXAMPLE OF OPPOSITION TO FURTHER EU UNIFICATION

In order to study explanations for opposition to further European integration, we wanted to know to what extent education affects attitudes and whether the effect is more pronounced in countries that are higher net contributors to the EU as against those countries that are net beneficiaries. We rely on the cross-national data collection from the European Value Study 2008 (EVS, 2011). In this dataset, all 27 EU members at the time are included. This implies that we have 27 macro-level units in the analysis. We use 35,075 respondents in the analyses (respondents with no missing value on the question of whether EU unification should go further and without missing values on education). The dependent variable 'opposition to further EU unification' is measured with one item only, on a ten-point scale ranging from 1, indicating that EU unification should go further, to 10, indicating that EU unification has gone too far. Education is an ordinal scale derived from the International Standard Classification of Educational (based on one digit), ranging from 0 (pre-primary or no education) to 6 (second stage of tertiary education).

In Model 1 (Table 40.1), we estimated a random intercept model. This null-model shows that there is variance in the attitude between the EU member states, although far more variance is found at the individual level (which is quite common in multi-level research with countries or regions at the higher level). The intraclass correlation is 0.08 ($0.67 / (0.67 + 7.37)$).

In the second model (Table 40.1), education as explanatory level 1 variable is included. The findings show that education has a negative effect on opposition to EU unification: with every unit higher on education, opposition decreases by 0.19. The findings show that the variance parameters have changed marginally. The level 1 variance decreased slightly, indicating that a (small) part of variance in opposition to further EU unification is explained by level of education. Interestingly though, the variance at level 2 (country level) had not decreased, but slightly increased. This indicates that, even though education has a negative effect at the individual level, in countries with, on average, a higher education,

Table 40.1 Multi-level model explaining opposition to further EU unification in the EU member states as a function of education

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	s.e.	B	s.e.	b	s.e.
<i>Level of education (0–6)</i>			-0.19	0.01	-0.19	0.01
Mean level of education in a country (1.9–4.7) [centred on the mean]					0.70	0.36
Intercept	6.00	0.16	6.59	0.17	6.59	0.16
σ^2_{u0} – level 2 variance (countries)	0.67	0.19	0.71	0.20	0.63	0.17
σ^2_e – level 1 variance (respondents)	7.37	0.06	7.31	0.06	7.31	0.06
Number of level 2 units (countries)	27					
Number of level 1 units (respondents)	35,075					

Source: European Value Studies, 2008

opposition is larger. We can check this by including a variable that represents the average educational level in a country. In Model 3 (Table 40.1), we included the average level of education in a country. This shows what we already anticipated based on Model 2 (Table 40.1): the higher the average level of education, the larger the opposition to further EU unification in a country.

Model with macro-level effect

In the next step we included an effect at the macro-level (Table 40.2, Model 4). This shows us to what extent the variance between the countries is affected by differences between countries in EU budgetary balance. The expectation was that a more positive balance (receiving more from the EU than paying to the EU) decreases the objection to further unification. The budgetary balance (expressed as a percentage of Gross National Income) in 2008 ranges from -0.42 in the Netherlands to +2.68 in Greece (EC, 2014). We find that the effect is borderline significant, but, as anticipated, negative (-0.33): the more positive the budgetary balance, the less opposed the public is to further unification. Compared with the model with only education as explanatory variable included, the variance at the second level (the between-countries variance) has decreased to 0.62.

Random slopes

Although it has become more and more common to study the role of context in voting behaviour, it is still not very widespread to test hypotheses that formulate that the effect of a lower-level predictor varies between the units of a context.

As Steenbergen and Jones already mentioned in 2002, this is partly due to high demand for data (sufficient level 2 units are needed). However, they also stress that theories should provide specific predictions on why individual-level effects would be stronger in certain contexts than in others. The development of theories predicting micro-level explanations of voting had been quite independent of the macro-level approach of voting (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002). In the last decade, however, many theories have developed into cross-level theories, making it possible to take the opportunities of multi-level modelling a step further. A utilitarian approach suggests that people are more likely to oppose the EU once they perceive that their country profits less from the EU, and all the more when people are in an economic vulnerable position themselves (e.g. Gabel, 1998). The less well educated in the Netherlands (with the most negative budgetary balance) would differ quite substantially from the better-educated in the Netherlands, whereas this difference in education is expected to be less strong in countries with a positive budgetary balance, such as Lithuania and Greece. Therefore, the effect of 'education' is set randomly over the countries. This step should provide the researcher with evidence that there are differences between countries in the effect of education on opposition to further EU unification. Model 5 (Table 40.2)

Table 40.2 Multi-level model explaining opposition to further EU unification in the EU member states

	Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	B	s.e.	B	s.e.	B	s.e.
Level of education (0–6)[centred on the mean]	−0.19	0.01	−0.20	0.03	−0.20	0.03
Net-contributions to the EU (−0.42–2.47) [centred on the mean]	−0.33	0.17	−0.20	0.16	−0.34	0.17
Level of education *Net-contributions					0.10	0.03
Intercept	6.60	0.16	6.01	0.15	6.02	0.15
σ^2_{u0} – level 2 variance (countries)	0.62	0.17	0.63	0.20	0.61	0.17
σ^2_{u1} – random slope variance (of education)			0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01
σ^2_{u01} – Covariance (level education and random intercept)			−0.04	0.03	−0.03	0.02
σ^2_e – level 1 variance (respondents)	7.31	0.06	7.28	0.06	7.28	0.06
Number of level 2 units (countries)	27					
Number of level 1 units (respondents)	35,075					

Source: European Value Studies, 2008.

provides (some) evidence that the effect of education varies between the countries. The random slope variance of education is 0.023, with a standard error of 0.007 (rounded in the table). The covariance between the random intercept at the country level and the random effect of education is -0.038, with a standard error of 0.026. Since it is not significant we should not provide an interpretation for it, but since many researchers find this term hard to interpret we ignore that for the moment: it shows that in countries with a higher intercept, the slope is lower – in this case, more negative. We then have a situation that in countries with on average more opposition to EU unification the effect of education is more negative.

Now we have evidence for the random effect of education we can test whether the randomness is related to varying levels of the EU budgetary balance between countries. To test this, a cross-level interaction effect is included in Model 6 (Table 40.2). This interaction effect provides evidence of whether the effect of education is indeed more negative with a more negative budgetary balance. The parameter is 0.10: with a higher budgetary balance (receiving more from the EU than paying to it) the negative effect of education increases by 0.10, and thus become less negative. The effect of education on an average EU budgetary balance is estimated to be -0.20. The highest (centred) EU budgetary balance is around 2, meaning that it is estimated that the effect of education is zero ($-0.20 + 2*0.10 = 0$) in countries that receive most. In countries that contribute the most, the value on the (centred) EU budgetary balance is -1, which means that the estimated effect of education is -0.30. Our theoretical expectation that levels of education differ stronger from each other in countries that contribute financially more to the EU than they directly receive cannot be falsified.

In this example we had only one explanatory variable at the individual level. Based on theory and previous research, a researcher can, of course, expand the model. Although one could test for each and every micro-level variable the extent to which its effect is random on the country (or another identified higher) level, theory should be our guide here, in particular since the estimation of cross-level interaction is statistically demanding and all the more so in the case of limited numbers of higher-level units (Stegmueller, 2013).

An example of voting behaviour

We have showed here an example with explanations for euroscepticism. This handbook is about voting behaviour and applying multi-level models to voting behaviour is just as attractive, though a little more complicated. In voting behaviour research we mostly have as a dependent variable whether people voted for a party or not. This dichotomous answer category implies the use of logistic regression modelling. The binary assumption of the modelling makes it necessary to fix the random variance at the lowest level to 1 (Snijders and Bosker, 1999). Table 40.3 provides an example. Here we model the likelihood that people

Table 40.3 Multi-level model explaining voting for radical right parties in 21 European countries (binomial distribution assumption, 2nd order linearization and MQL estimation type)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	s.e.	B	s.e.	B	s.e.
Level of education (0–6) [centred on the mean]			-0.19	0.03	-0.19	0.03
GDP per capita [centred on the mean]					0.01	0.01
Intercept	-2.56	0.16	-2.57	0.15	-2.52	0.15
σ^2_{u0} – level 2 variance (countries)	0.37	0.14	0.35	0.12	0.29	0.12
σ^2_e – level 1 variance (respondents)	1		1		1	
Number of level 2 units (countries)	21					
Number of level 1 units (respondents)	14,305					

Source: European Value Studies, 2008.

vote for a radical right party versus another party in 21 countries based on the European Value Studies 2008 (we included only the countries with more than 25 radical right voters). The first model provides evidence for the extent to which variance between countries exists in the likelihood of voting for the radical right. The intercept is negative (-2.56), indicating that on average a small percentage of the respondents votes for the radical right in the 21 countries included. The intraclass coefficient can be calculated by setting the variance of the individual level equal to the value of π (=3.14). It is here $0.37 / (0.37 + 3.14) = 0.11$. In the second model, one individual-level predictor, level of education, is included. It shows at the individual level that a higher education is associated with a lower likelihood of voting for the radical right, a finding comparable to previous findings (e.g. Lubbers et al., 2002). In the third model, a contextual-level explanation (GDP per capita) is included. Perhaps surprisingly to the reader – but a finding often reached in research on the radical right – there is no relation between GDP per capita and the likelihood of voting for the radical right.

An example with panel data

Multi-level modelling is also a fruitful application in dealing with panel data (see, for example, Barbosa and Goldstein, 2000). In panel data, the same individuals are interviewed at several points in time and the repeated observations from an individual are dependent from one another. We would therefore argue that observations are nested within individuals and should be treated as such by applying multi-level modelling. Furthermore, multi-level modelling provides

two specific features in dealing with panel data. First, one could disentangle effects based on differences between individuals (between-person effects) and based on changes within an individual (within-person effects). Second, one could easily estimate growth curve models.

We will elaborate on these features by using an example with data from the Dutch Longitudinal Internet Studies for the Social Sciences (LISS), administered by CentERdata (Tilburg University, The Netherlands) (Scherpenzeel, 2009). These data include six annual waves from 2008 to 2013 which include, after the deletion of missing cases, 21,487 observations from 4,862 respondents. We will estimate effects of education and anti-immigration attitudes on opinion about the Party for Freedom (PVV), a Dutch populist radical right party. We expect that people with stronger anti-immigration attitudes and people with lower levels of education are more positive towards the PVV (following the premises from Ethnic Competition Theory), and that this opinion towards the PVV might have changed over the years. The dependent variable is measured with a scale from 0 to 10 in which 10 means very positive towards the PVV. Education is an ordinal scale that indicates the highest level of education that is completed, ranging from 0 (primary education) to 6 (university). Anti-immigration is a scale from 0 to 4, in which 4 means very negative towards migrants, constructed with five questionnaire items. The time-variable is the year of observation.

We will again start with an empty random intercept model. Model 1 (Table 40.4) shows that most of the variance of the dependent variables is explained at the highest level, which is supported by the rather high intraclass correlation of 0.75 ($5.65 / 5.65 + 1.86$). This is in contrast with our previous examples, in which most of the variance is attributed to the lowest level. However, this is no surprise since it is likely that the dependency of measurements is stronger within an individual than within a country.

Our next step involves explaining the variance at both the higher as well as the lower level. We will do so by estimating between-person and within-person effects. Between-person effects show whether differences between individuals influence the opinion towards the PVV at a certain moment in time, and thus explain some of the level 2 variance. Within-person effects show whether changes within an individual influence the opinion towards the PVV at a certain moment in time, and explain some of the level 1 variance. We have firstly included education. The level of education is the same at every moment of observation, and could therefore explain only differences between individuals.¹ The model shows that the higher the level of education, the less positive the opinion towards the PVV. In Model 3 we have included anti-immigration attitudes, which can both explain differences between as well as within individuals. We have firstly included the average level of anti-immigration attitudes from all waves as a between-person effect. We find that individuals with a higher average level of anti-immigration attitudes are more positive towards the PVV. However, the anti-immigration attitude of an individual might change over time. By including the deviation at a certain

Table 40.4 Multi-level model explaining between and within-person effects on the opinion towards the PVV

	<i>Model 1</i>		<i>Model 2</i>		<i>Model 3</i>	
	B	s.e.	B	s.e.	B	s.e.
<i>Between person effects</i>						
Level of education (0–6) [centered on the mean]			-0.42	0.02	-0.11	0.02
Anti-immigration attitudes					1.94	0.04
<i>Within person effects</i>						
Anti-immigration attitudes					0.27	0.03
Intercept	2.98	0.04	4.45	0.09	-1.27	0.09
σ^2_{u0} – level 2 variance (respondents)	5.65	2.38	5.29	2.30	3.37	1.84
σ^2_e – level 1 variance (observations)	1.86	1.37	1.86	1.37	1.85	1.36
Number of level 2 units (respondents)	4,862					
Number of level 1 units (observations)	21,487					

Source: LISS Data 2008–2013.

moment in time from the overall mean, we can estimate whether a stronger anti-immigration attitude of an individual in a certain point of time is associated with a more favourable opinion of the PVV on the part of that individual. Model 3 shows that individuals are more positive towards the PVV if their anti-immigration attitudes are stronger. If one included the anti-immigration attitude from the previous wave, one could even test for causality (see, for example, Berning and Schlueter, 2016). Model 3 shows that by including the anti-migration attitudes the variance between respondents (the level 2 variance) has decreased considerably (from 5.29 to 3.37), whereas the variance within respondents (between observations; the level 1 variance) hardly decreased, even though the anti-immigration attitude has a within-person effect. This implies that changes within individuals over time in their opinion on the radical right PVV is explained only to a limited extent by changes in the anti-immigration attitude, whereas differences between respondents in their opinion on the PVV is quite strongly explained by differences between respondents in their anti-immigration attitude.

Finally, one could also build growth curve models with multi-level modelling. Growth models could be used if one expects that the opinion towards the PVV has increased or decreased over the years, and that the degree of this change differs between individuals. One should start with the inclusion of a (linear) time-variable, which is in our example the year of observation. Model 1 (Table 40.5) shows that the effect of time is slightly positive: people have become more positive towards the

Table 40.5 Multi-level model explaining opinion towards the PVV over time

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	B	s.e.	B	s.e.	B	s.e.
<i>Time variables</i>						
Year of observation [2008 = 0]	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.01
<i>Between person effects</i>						
Level of education (0–6) [centered on the mean]					-0.38	0.03
<i>Growth curve</i>						
Year*education					-0.02	0.00
Intercept	2.91	0.04	2.91	0.04	2.90	0.04
σ^2_{u0} – level 2 variance (respondents)	5.65	2.38	6.40	2.53	6.10	2.47
σ^2_{u1} – random slope variance			0.07	0.27	1.64	1.28
σ^2_{u01} – Covariance (year of obeservation and random intercept)			-0.34		-0.36	
σ^2_e – level 1 variance (observations)	1.86	1.36	1.64	1.28	0.07	0.27
Number of level 2 units (respondents)	4,862					
Number of level 1 units (observations)	21,487					

Source: LISS Data 2008–2013.

PVV over the years. However, there are reasons to expect that this growth in the support for the PVV is not the same for everybody. For instance, people who were more negative, like the better educated, can be expected to have changed their opinion less, whereas those who were already more positive, like the less well educated, became even more positive. Although we found that Model 2, including a random slope of time, does not lead to a better fit, we have tested whether the growth (the effect of time) differs between educational groups by including an interaction between time and education (see Model 3). This is a cross-level interaction effect: a level 2 characteristic (education) influences the effect of a level 1 characteristic (time). The b-coefficient ($b = -.02$) shows that the higher the education, the weaker the effect of time on the opinion towards the PVV, thus the lower the growth over time.

CRITICAL QUESTIONS IN MULTI-LEVEL RESEARCH

One of the crucial questions when one aims to answer research questions on the influence of the contextual conditions is ‘what is the relevant context in the first

place?" From a methodological point of view one may choose for the definition of context as is defined in the sampling strategy. In a stratified random sample, higher-level units (e.g. municipalities) are sampled first, from which, in the next step, individuals are sampled. Individuals in these higher-level units are expected to have something in common that is due to characteristics of that higher level, expressed in the intraclass coefficient. When one deals with a sample of individuals from a set of countries, these countries are not a random sample of a larger set of countries. Still, because one anticipates that countries have specific characteristics that affect individuals above their own characteristics, it is common practice to apply multi-level modelling in these instances. In voting behaviour, electoral districts are another straightforward higher level of analysis. Electoral districts may vary simply because they have different candidate lists, which may affect why voters in one constituency are more likely to vote for certain parties than in another district. Likewise, voters in municipalities, neighbourhoods or provinces may be affected differently because they have been influenced by characteristics that are unique to the places they live. In political science research it may also be the case that respondents are, for example, members of political parties. The party organizations are then the higher level of analysis. The number of higher-level units is abundant and the choice for a level should in the first place be theoretical. Secondly, it can be a methodological issue, since certain sampling strategies define higher-level units (households, municipalities). One does not necessarily have to choose one level over the other. Multi-level modelling also makes it feasible to build a three- or even four-level model: so, for example, voters in an electoral district, in a province, in a country. Crucial for the choice is that the specification of levels is theory driven; there should be theoretical arguments as to why a specific level would have an influence on the voting behaviour (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002).

One may also think of higher levels as levels that are not hierarchically ordered but combined. In the multi-level literature the example often given is that of primary and secondary schools. Pupils attending a secondary school do not all come from the same primary school; the pupils at a primary school spread over numerous secondary schools. Pupils are nested in a cross-classification of primary and secondary schools. Such cross-classified models are not very often applied, but in voting behaviour literature one can come across these kinds of model. For example, voters who work in a city other than the one in which they live may be affected by the characteristics of both their work environment and their home environment. The voters are then cross-classified in working place and living place.

Number of higher-level units

There has also been much discussion on the number of higher-level units needed for multi-level research. Some experts in multi-level analyses advise, as a rule of thumb, at least 20 units at the higher level, but advice differs from eight to 100 units.

Stegmueller (2013) showed recently that estimates become less reliable with a lower number of units at the higher level. Many researchers deal with cross-national designs where the numbers are low. What to do then? In the case of few countries, we would opt for a presentation of results per country, or a cross-national study with a sensitivity analysis where each of the countries is dropped once. It is crucial then to be much more sensitive to descriptions of country differences and show these in, for example, graphical representations, as is suggested by Bryan and Jenkins (2013) and Van der Meer et al. (2010).

Over-time or between-higher-level explanations

Often researchers include period and cross-geographical level effects in one model. Imagine a researcher pools all the European Elections Data from the 1980s until now. One may now set period and country as higher-level units (in which it is most common to set period as a sublevel of the geographical unit). The higher-level characteristics that are included are often a combination of period and cross-geographical information (e.g. unemployment in a certain period in a certain country). The effect of such a predictor does not inform us, however, whether it explains cross-national variance or over-time variance. If we aim to explain cross-national differences or over-time changes within countries, we would need fixed effects models. We recently came across an interesting contribution that showed that between-country effects were in the opposite direction of the within-country time varying effect of the same explanatory variable. Grotenhuis et al. (2015) find that differences between countries in social security expenditures were negatively related to the level of religiosity: the higher social expenditure is in a country, the less likely a person is religious in that country. However, relying on repeated cross-sections in various countries, they find that there is no relation overall between expenditures at a certain point in time and religiosity. Analysing the over-time effects per country, they show that in most countries there is no relation; in a few there is a negative relation; and in a few there is a positive relation. The authors rightly claim that all too often hypotheses are tested based on only between-country differences and not on over-time differences within countries. A nice example of an approach including time variance is that from Arzheimer (2009), where he models both between- and within-country variance in radical right-voting with multi-level analysis. He chooses to model survey-wave by country combinations as the second level, and includes fixed country-level effects.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Multi-level research has become more often applied in voting behaviour research. It offers researchers the opportunity to study individuals in their

context and to test the macro-/micro-level links that are so often explicated in the social science theories we use. Those theories also offer expectations of why individuals would behave differently in varying circumstances. The modelling of random effect models provides interesting opportunities for testing these kinds of hypothesis. At the same time, Stegmüller (2013) showed recently that we should become more sensitive to the consequences of the estimation methods in case of few numbers at the macro-level. Moreover, he stressed that estimating random effects is statistically demanding. Theory should be guiding here, to limit oneself in the inclusion of random effects within the model. At the same time, multi-level modelling provides interesting venues to place individuals in their context and loops back to social science theory, stimulating thinking about how context affects individuals.

With the boom in collection of large-scale data – and more is probably to come in the coming years, with advancements in data collection resulting from new technologies – we have more and more access to data where we can include contexts and individuals at the same time. By means of national data collections, we can identify voters in constituencies, in municipalities and in regions, and with international data we can identify differences between countries. With longitudinal data we can study individuals in different periods. We can do so simply by estimating what the differences (or the variance) is between these regions, countries and periods in voting behaviour, but our social science theories do not only predict that differences will exist but that they are caused by, or correlated to, certain macro-level characteristics. Even more exciting research becomes possible when we theorize and test to what extent individual-level explanations vary between higher-level contexts and attempt to explain that. Multi-level approaches provide the means of operationalizing exactly such insightful empirical analyses.

Note

- 1 The highest level of education might change over the years if people finish their education between 2008 and 2013. However, in order to make this example more easy to understand, we decided to exclude the observations from respondents that have witnessed a change in their level of education. This concerned 1,639 from the total of 23,126 observations, which is 7.0%.

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Cross-National Data Sources: Opportunities and Challenges

Catherine de Vries

I never guess. It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist the facts that suit theories instead of theories to suit the facts. (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle)

THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA FOR UNDERSTANDING ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR

The study of electoral behaviour requires the collection of large sets of data. Interviewing one individual or even a handful of individuals about how they voted in a previous election does not help us very much in understanding election outcomes and the decision-making processes underlying them. The study of mass electoral behaviour requires us to understand the causes and consequences of voting decisions of an entire population. Electoral research, like other forms of public opinion and behaviour research, thus faces a major problem: how to overcome the practical and financial limitations of acquiring information about the opinions and actions of a large set of people, a population? Researchers have aimed to solve this problem by relying on random samples that allow for the extrapolation from a small subset of individuals to the larger population from which these individuals are randomly drawn. These extrapolations carry with them a degree of uncertainty which statistical theory allows us to quantify. Electoral research, ever since Paul Lazarsfeld and colleagues' pioneering study *The People's Choice* from 1944, relies on public opinion surveys to capture people's vote intentions, past behaviours and political preferences.

Although electoral survey research originated in the United States, many countries soon followed suit. To date, many advanced industrial democracies conduct national election surveys that are run by a team of researchers at every new election. Yet only a handful of countries, approximately ten in total, have been conducting national election surveys across a large time span since the 1950s and 1960s. Traditionally, these national election studies were organized on a case-study basis: that is, a group of researchers decided which survey items would best meet their research needs and included those in a questionnaire that was usually fielded after a particular election. More recently, national election surveys, such as the American, British or Dutch ones, have a core questionnaire that is complemented by election-specific question batteries which allow for over-time or even cross-national comparison. This development of harmonization of questions across time, and even across space, is of crucial importance for the study of electoral behaviour, as researchers are often interested in continuity and change in turnout or partisan choice. Establishing this continuity and change requires comparison, either over time or across countries, or both. To this end, scholars have started large-scale cross-national data collection projects, such as the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), over the last decade or so that include a large set of countries from across the globe. Participating countries include a common module of survey questions in their post-election studies, and the CSES also collects district- and country-level data. Regionally focused data collection projects such as the European Election Survey (EES), Afrobarometer or Latin America Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) also allow for cross-national comparison within continents.

The development of collecting cross-nationally comparable survey data has had an enormous impact on the field, as it has allowed electoral scholars to consider and theorize both contextual and temporal dynamics in electoral decision-making. Moreover, it has allowed researchers to assess the empirical generalizability of their findings. Yet, cross-national comparison also presents them with some key challenges. For example, concepts are not always easily transferable from one context to another. Think, for example, of partisanship, a key concept in the American context (Campbell et al. 1960) that is perhaps less relevant in European multiparty systems (Budge et al. 1976; see also Thomassen 2005).

The development from single-country to cross-national data collection and the opportunities and challenges this development poses are the subject of this chapter. It consists of three parts. The first part provides an overview of the growth in election survey research from case study to longitudinal and cross-national designs. The next part discusses the opportunities and challenges of longitudinal and cross-national data collection efforts for our understanding of electoral behaviour. Finally, the third part concludes by outlining some methodological challenges that require further research and the integration of novel forms of data collection.

ELECTION SURVEY RESEARCH: FROM CASE STUDIES TO CROSS-NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION

The beginnings of election survey research: national election studies

Paul Lazarsfeld, Paul Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, who conducted a panel survey of residents of Erie County in Ohio in the context of the 1940 presidential election campaign, can be seen as the pioneers of election survey research. Although their study *The People's Choice* (1944) is known primarily for the development of 'the two-step flow of communications' which later came to be associated with the so-called 'limited effects model' of mass media, the book details the results of multiple interviews of 2,400 carefully chosen citizens at several time-points within the election campaign to track their decision-making. In 1952 the Survey Research Center (SCR) and the Center for Political Studies of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan were the first to carry out a nation-wide probability sample. The data collection of the SCR covered all 13 presidential and midterm elections between 1952 and 1976. The use of a nation-wide probability sample allowed researchers to extrapolate their survey findings to the entire American voting population and paved the way for the examination of the attitudes and behaviours of the *American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960).

It would be more than three decades, until 1977, before one of the most influential election survey projects, the American National Election Studies (ANES), would be formally established by the National Science Foundation as a national research resource. The ANES provides a long-term funding and organizational infrastructure for the collection of election survey data in the US context and followed up on the activities of the SCR at the University of Michigan. Today, the cumulative ANES file allows researchers to track trends in American electoral behaviour and political attitudes for six decades.

Although election survey research originated in the US, a growing number of countries have since then established a programme of academically directed election studies based on national probability samples of the electorate. A variety of Western European countries, such as The Netherlands and the United Kingdom, and Canada and Israel have been conducting national election surveys for several decades now. These national election studies are planned, supervised and executed by teams of electoral researchers before and/or after the election, and are most often funded through national research councils. Traditionally, national election studies were organized on a case-study basis: that is, a group of researchers decided on the survey items that would best meet their research interests and the context of a specific election campaign. As a result, the survey items included, the question wordings or the coding used often varied dramatically not only between countries but also within them. This seriously hampered the ability

Table 41.1 Longest series of national election surveys

Country	Official name	Acronym	Years	Cumulative file	Website
Canada	Canadian National Election Study	CES	1965–2011	Only for several shorter periods	http://ces-eec.arts.ubc.ca/english-section/home/
Denmark	Danish National Election Study	DNES	1971–2011	No	http://www.valgprosjektet.dk/default.asp?l=eng
France	French Election Study	FES	1958–2012	No	ICPSR: http://www.ipss.umich.edu/icpsnweb/ICPSR/
Germany	German (Federal/longitudinal) Election Study	GFES/GLES	1949–2013	Only for shorter periods (94–02/05–09/09–13)	CEVIPOF: http://www.cevipof.com/GFES ; http://www.gesis.org/en/elections-home/german-federal-elections/
Israel	Israel National Election Study	INES	1969–2013	No	GLEs: http://gles.eu/wordpress/english/
The Netherlands	Dutch Parliamentary Election Study	DPES	1970–2012	Yes (1970–2006)	http://www.ines.tau.ac.il/
Norway	Norwegian Election Study	NES	1957–2009	No	http://www.dpes.nl/en/
Sweden	Swedish National Election Study	SNES	1956–2010	No	http://nsddata.nsd.uib.no/webview/index/en/Individdata/Andre-klassifiseringer/d.243/
United Kingdom	British Election Study	BES	1963–2010	Only for several shorter periods	Datasett-som-inngaaar-serier.d.142/ Valgundersøkelsel/fCatalog/Catalog30 http://valgorskning.pol.gu.se/english http://www.britishelectionstudy.com/
United States	American National Election Study	ANES	1948–2012	Yes	http://electionstudies.org/index.htm

of researchers to compare and contrast the behaviour and attitudes of electorates between elections.

More recently, many national election surveys entail a core questionnaire next to a battery of election-specific questions that allows for over-time comparison. This development is of crucial importance for the study of electoral behaviour, as it allows researchers to carefully examine the continuity and change in electoral decision-making while at the same time not losing sight of election-specific factors. The establishment of a core battery of questions in six European election studies, for example, has allowed researchers to establish the common attitudes and behaviours of the European voter in the second half of the twentieth century (Thomassen 2005). Another example of the successful usage of the rich and unique time-series that several national election surveys provide is Mark Franklin's study on turnout. Franklin (2004) demonstrates that, while a country's turnout history provides a powerful baseline for current turnout, changes in this baseline occur when new generations who learned to vote under specific political and institutional circumstances, at a time of lower voting age for example, replace older ones.

Table 41.1 provides an overview of some of the most important national election studies. The table is not designed as an exhaustive list of all available national election studies or as a means to provide much specific information about a single one, but rather provides an overview of the longest series of national election studies to date and provides links to their websites.

A number of logistical barriers still exist to the usage of the various national election studies in cross-national research. For example, not all national election studies provide cumulative files and for a number of studies codebooks and even questionnaires are available only in the original language and are not translated into English. In order to remedy these logistical issues, at least within the European context, the International Committee for Research into Elections and Representative Democracy (ICORE) was established at an European Consortium Political Research (ECPR) Research Session on Electoral Studies in Rimini in 1989 by the principal investigators of national election studies from nine European countries: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. Since then other countries have joined, such as Portugal. ICORE, in cooperation with the Council of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA), published an inventory of national election studies in Europe that provides documentation in English, a list of election dates for each country, an overview table containing detailed information about the election study, study descriptions and a list of relevant publications using the data sources for the 1945–1995 period (Mochmann et al. 1998). Moreover, the ICORE holdings at the EUROLAB of the GESIS-Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften in Cologne consist of more than 160 election studies with documentation from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden for the time period 1949–2002. A new initiative, the Consortium

for European Research with Election Studies (CERES), was recently launched to further coordinate activities between national election study teams in Europe.¹ CERES is aimed at supporting research into democratic governance in Europe by coordinating studies of elections, referenda and other pertinent forms of political behaviour held in European national and trans-national settings. It facilitates the coordination between national election studies by, for example, organizing meetings at the general conference of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR). Despite these efforts, it can often still be a daunting and complex task to assemble trends and construct time series from national election surveys.

The further development of election survey research: cross-national data collection

Many of the questions that spark the interest of electoral scholars require comparison not only across time but also across space. Such as: are people more likely to turn out in elections when they are voting under a proportional representation (PR) system? Or do they feel that their interests are articulated better in parliament within PR systems? Answering these questions requires cross-national comparison. The analytical purchase of comparative survey research stems from the fact that it allows researchers to examine the relationships between attributes that vary between countries, but usually not within them (such as the electoral system or system of government), and to study the effects of these country-level attributes on individual decision-making and opinion formation. While scholars of American politics may wish to understand particular aspects of a specific US presidential election, students of comparative political behaviour may not be interested in the US case per se, but rather in the theoretically relevant attributes it possesses, such as its federal nature and presidential system.

To facilitate cross-national comparison in the study of elections, researchers have started collaborative survey research projects. Electoral researchers used cross-national surveys as early as the 1950s and the 1960s, as illustrated by, for example, the five-nation study on civic culture by Almond and Verba (1963). Systematic cross-national survey projects were first launched in the 1970s in the European context, but various surveys in other regions of the world, such as the Afrobarometer, Asian Barometer and Latinobarometer, quickly followed suit. In addition, surveys such as the World Value Survey (WVS) have now extended survey research to a large set of countries across the globe beyond advanced industrial democracies. That said, most of data collection projects to date have been ‘regional’ rather than ‘global’ in nature (for useful reviews of cross-national survey projects see Heath et al. 2005; Kittilson 2007; Norris 2009).

Regional data collection

The trend of regional data collection started with the development of so-called ‘barometers’: that is, annual or biannual surveys that study people’s political

preferences and behaviour in a particular region of the world. The European Union (EU) has commissioned, funded and undertaken the most intense and longest-running program of cross-national survey research anywhere in the world through the Eurobarometer (EB) surveys.² The EB has conducted biannual surveys in all EU member states (as well as some candidate countries) since 1973. While its purpose is to chart the policy preferences of European publics and provide input for EU policy-making, the EB surveys have provided an invaluable resource for academic research in Europe. To date it covers over 30 European countries.³

Following this European trend, we have since witnessed the establishment of several other cross-national data collection projects to capture political preferences and behaviour, such as the Afrobarometer, Asian Barometer and Latinobarometer. The Afrobarometer is an African-led non-partisan survey research project mainly funded by international donors, such as the World Bank, that measures citizen attitudes on democracy and governance, the economy, civil society and other topics.⁴ It includes 36 countries, has conducted six survey rounds thus far and has sample sizes ranging from 1,200 to 2,400. The Asian Barometer Survey (ABS) is the result of the Comparative Survey of Democratization and Value Change in East Asia Project (also known as the East Asia Barometer), which was launched in 2000 and is funded by the Ministry of Education of Taiwan.⁵ It aims to capture citizens' values and attitudes toward politics, power, reform and democracy in Asia. The ABS includes 13 East Asian and five South Asian countries, has conducted three survey rounds thus far (only one round includes all 18 countries) and aims at a sample size of 1,200 per country. Finally, the Latinobarometer has surveyed individual political behaviour and opinion formation annually in 18 Latin American countries since 1995.⁶ The Latinobarometer Corporation in charge of the survey and the production and publication of the data is a non-profit NGO based in Santiago, Chile. It has completed 18 rounds and sample sizes vary between 1,000 or 1,500 respondents per country. Unlike the Afrobarometer and Asian Barometer data, that of the Latinobarometer is not readily available on the website or through data archives, but needs to be purchased (although tabular results of the survey are available through its website).

These barometer surveys serve as extremely valuable sources for capturing people's behavioural intentions or policy preferences, yet they may not always serve the interests and needs of academic researchers. Academics may wish to include different question wordings and employ specific methods of fieldwork or sampling techniques. As a result, additional regional surveys were established largely by consortia of academics. One of the most methodologically rigorous regional cross-national survey projects is the European Social Survey (ESS), initiated in 2002.⁷ The ESS especially aims to reduce the heterogeneity in survey practices across countries. This harmonization of standards is important, as it allows us to reduce the likelihood that different results between countries are driven by alterations in how the survey is conducted within each country and to

ensure that, rather, they reflect actual substantive differences. In order to harmonize survey practices the EES developed strict guidelines for consistent methods of fieldwork, including contacting and coding, and the implementation of random sampling. The guidelines call for a random sampling design of residents 15 years and older (no quota sampling), one-hour face-to-face interviews, a target response rate of 70 per cent and a minimum of 2,000 respondents per country, for example. Although each national team conducts its own fieldwork and operations, a central committee still exerts strong control over each step of the survey process. So far, six rounds have been conducted in almost 30 European countries. Although the survey includes many questions beyond the political realm, such as those relating to family values or general well-being, for example, it also taps into people's attitudes towards institutions, voting behaviour, political trust and value orientations.

Until 1999 the EB included a battery of questions about people's electoral decision-making in the European Parliamentary (EP) elections that are held in all EU member states every five years.⁸ From the 1999 EP elections up to the most recent 2014 elections the European Election Study (EES) has worked an independent project run by scholars of electoral behaviour from various EU member states. The EES is a post-election study that includes questions on participation and voting behaviour in EP and national elections, support for European integration and trust and performance evaluations of EU institutions, for example. Next to the individual-level post-election surveys, the EES includes data components such as the content analyses of party manifestos ('Euromanifestos'), elite surveys and content analyses of media news. The data are available through its website and allow for longitudinal analysis of electoral behaviour in both the European and the national context.

In the Latin American context, the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) is run by a team of academics at the University of Vanderbilt that conducts cross-national surveys in 28 Latin American countries using rigorous survey methodologies.⁹ LAPOP's AmericasBarometer includes samples of over 1,500 respondents per country that were developed using a multi-stage probabilistic design (with quotas at the household level), stratified by major regions of the country, size of municipality and urban and rural areas within municipalities. Its hosting at the University of Vanderbilt allows for the input from not only a vast network of academics but also practitioners and policymakers. Over the years, it has aimed to implement novel approaches and transparent procedures to ensure the highest quality of data collection. For example, in order to deal with the remote nature of some areas surveyed and the linguistic diversity within countries, it uses GPS tracking and electronic handheld devices and software designed to allow multilingual interviews and extensive validity checks. Moreover, it has recently included novel experiments embedded within national surveys to assess issues of ethnicity and violence or randomized block experiments as a means of programme evaluation.

Global data collection

Over the last decade, scholars have also started global data collection projects that include a large set of countries from different continents. To date only three truly global comparative survey research projects exist: the World Value Survey (WVS), the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) and the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems Project (CSES). Only the WVS undertakes an independent survey in each of its participating countries; the ISSP and CSES are collaborations between existing social surveys or national election studies respectively. The inclusion of more countries is beneficial in that it allows researchers to expand the number of cases with theoretically relevant attributes, thus making sure that relationships between country-level attributes or between country- and individual-level variables are general in nature and not regionally specific. Yet, the inclusion of a larger number of countries often comes at the price of increasing diversity in languages, political practices and methodologies. It is therefore hard to differentiate the extent to which differences between countries are driven by different translations, survey methodologies or contextual understanding of politics or by theoretical attributes of interest.

The WVS has captured the political preferences of individuals in 80 countries in the world (although the number of countries varies from round to round) from 1981 onwards.¹⁰ Each national team aims for a representative national sample of from 1,000 to 3,500 respondents. In most countries survey teams employ stratified multi-stage probability sample, but in remote areas where this proves difficult some form of quota sampling is used. The WVS fields its own survey and the core questions focus on value orientations, religious beliefs, political behaviour and opinions about political, social and economic institutions.

The ISSP formed in 1983 and drafted a common set of questions for established social surveys in Australia, Germany, the UK and the US.¹¹ It now covers 39 countries and has collected data annually, including via a core questionnaire capturing attitudes towards the economy, gender and the legal system, as well as socio-demographics. In addition, it has fielded additional questions based on specific themes in some years, including the role of government, social inequality or national identity, for example. The ISSP collects its data as a 10-minute supplement to the existing questionnaire of a national social survey. This allows the ISSP to rely on established and high-quality data collection methods within individual countries, yet it does imply a high degree of methodological pluralism regarding exactly how the data are collected. The interviews can be conducted in person, by telephone or by mail back.

For scholars of electoral behaviour the CSES survey is particularly useful. The CSES does not run its own survey; rather, participating countries include a common module of survey questions in their post-election studies.¹² The resulting data are deposited along with voting, demographic, district- and country-level variables. The studies are then merged into a single dataset for use in comparative

study and cross-level analysis which is available through the CSES website. It has currently conducted four modules, namely 1996–2001, 2001–2006, 2006–2011 and 2011–2016, and is in the process of implementing a further one. The latest module includes 55 countries, ranging from Albania and Australia to Uruguay and Yemen. The CSES data are composed of three parts. First, a common module of public opinion survey questions is included in each participant country's post-election study, which captures people's vote choices, candidate and party evaluations, current and retrospective economic evaluations, evaluations of the electoral system itself and standardized socio-demographic measures. Second, district-level data are reported for each respondent, including electoral returns, turnout and the number of candidates. Finally, country-level data report aggregate electoral returns, electoral rules and formulas and regime characteristics. This design allows researchers to conduct both cross-national as well as cross-level analyses (see Lubbers and Sipma, this Volume, on the importance of cross-level approaches in multi-level analysis).

The fact that the CSES relies on collaboration with national election surveys allows for the collection and combination of different sets of high-quality data, but does lead to starkly varying methodological practices in its participating countries. For example, the module may be administered face-to-face, by telephone or by self-completion questionnaire. Also, it does not have any rules on translation or random sampling. This is due to varying practices within national election survey teams and the fact that the CSES secretariat does not have enough resources to implement greater conformity between studies. The one crucial requirement of the project is that the fieldwork should take place immediately after the presidential or parliamentary election. This allows the project to capture the electoral decision-making processes of individuals and the effects of district- and country-level features within it as accurately as possible in a wide variety of contexts. This makes the CSES a uniquely valuable resource for the comparative study of electoral behaviour.

THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF CROSS-NATIONAL DATA COLLECTION

Opportunities of cross-national data collection

Both regionally and globally focused cross-national surveys provide researchers with an unique opportunity to capture the institutional and cultural differences between countries that affect electoral decision-making and are thus fundamental for establishing general patterns in electoral behaviour. These data collection projects provide valuable empirical tools for the systematic study of political attitudes and behaviour of people living in diverse political, economic and social contexts. In addition, they allow students of electoral politics to place single-country studies in context and examine general aspects

of electoral decision-making. As Norris (2009: 522) put it, the expanding range of cross-national survey resources is ‘one of the most dramatic recent developments, transforming the field of comparative politics during recent decades’.

The development and growth of cross-national survey projects provides four main advantages for students of electoral politics (e.g. Curtice 2007). First, it enables them to assess the empirical generalizability of their theoretical claims about the causes and consequences of political attitudes and behaviour. Second, it enables them to expand the set of contextual influences on attitudes and behaviour that can be analysed, making it possible to assess the impact of contextual attributes, such as institutional rules, that are largely time-invariant but do vary between countries. Third, it can contribute to the understanding of electoral behaviour in a single country by providing comparative yardsticks that make it possible to assess the impact of that country’s specific social, cultural, economic or political characteristics on the electoral decision-making of individuals residing in that country. Fourth and finally, the growth of different cross-national data collection projects allows electoral researchers to examine the robustness of their research findings by replicating their analyses using different independently collected data sources.

Countries’ social, cultural, economic or political characteristics, which are fundamental for comparative analyses of electoral behaviour, are at the same time their Achilles Heel. As I will outline in the next subsection, the methodological and linguistic diversity that characterizes these projects potentially threatens the validity of measurement. That being said, however, increasing the number of contextual units may benefit researchers as well. When studying the effect of the electoral system on turnout, for example (e.g. Jackman 1987; Blais and Carty 1990; Bowler, this *Handbook*, Volume 1), one always runs the risk that the results of survey conducted in a particular country with the electoral system of interest could be the result of some methodological artefact. Yet, differences in results are far less likely to be driven by artefactual differences when a large set of many countries with the same attributes is included in the analyses. The inclusion of more (diverse) countries provides some safety in numbers. Although the results of a survey in a particular country with a specific theoretical attribute of interest could be an artefact, this is less likely to be the case for many countries with the same attribute. Including more countries in a collaborative survey project may thus reduce the danger that substantive conclusions are drawn on the basis of artefactual differences. Expanding the number of countries in a collaborative survey project is a way to explore the robustness of research findings and may thus reduce the uncertainty about the substantive conclusions drawn.

The development of large-scale cross-national data sources has been particularly useful for scholars aiming to theoretically conceptualize and empirically substantiate the role of political institutions in electoral decision-making.

Studies on economic voting, for example, here defined as the degree to which citizens sanction or reward incumbents based on their handling of the economy (Lewis-Beck 1988), has demonstrated that institutional ambiguity weakens the economic vote (e.g. Powell and Whitten 1993; Whitten and Palmer 1999; Silva and Whitten, this *Handbook*, Volume 1). The degree to which power is shared among different actors and institutions, through coalition governments or bicameralism for example, camouflages the clarity of responsibility for policy-making. This lack of institutional clarity in turn hampers citizens' ability to express their discontent by voting politicians out of office due to bad economic performance or alternatively to reward them for good performance. Over the years, this argument was expanded to demonstrate that clarity of responsibility affects voters' participation more generally (Tillman 2008) and that vertical clarity, relating to shared policy-making within federations mostly, also moderates economic voting (Anderson 2006).

While the extensive literature on economic voting reviewed in this Volume already highlighted the importance of institutional features for explanations of electoral behaviour, recent scholarship delves deeper into the way in which the institutional context in which elections are fought and voters have to make up their minds influences party choice. Exemplary in this respect is the work by Kedar (2009) on policy balancing. She examines the degree to which post-electoral bargaining structures, common within many countries in Europe governed by coalitions, affects electoral decision-making. Kedar suggests that voters may endorse parties whose positions differ from their own in order to move government coalition bargaining to their favoured policy direction. The extent to which voters are not only committed to policy positions but also care about policy outcomes makes them divert from their ideal party preference and work around power-sharing institutions, such as coalitions (Anderson 2000). Next to policy balancing due to coalition governments, mainly found in parliamentary systems characterized by proportional representation, federalism also provides voters with incentives to adjust their sincere vote preference (Gaines and Crombez 2004; Kedar 2005; Kern and Hainmueller 2006). Non-simultaneous multiple elections that often characterize federal polities provide important occasions for voters interested in policy performance to adjust vote preferences between several layers of government in order to balance policy outcomes.

The role of context in electoral behaviour is a very broad subject and includes topics such as the role of the mass media in election campaigns (for an overview see Semetko 2007) and the electoral consequences of large-scale societal or political events (e.g. Healy and Malhotra 2009; Bechtel and Hainmueller 2011). While many debates are ongoing, the expansion of cross-national survey data collection in recent decades has allowed electoral researchers to better understand and examine the ways in which political institutions affect electoral decision-making.

The challenges of cross-national data collection

Cross-national surveys thus provide researchers with the unique possibility of capturing institutional and cultural differences across countries that are fundamental in establishing general patterns in electoral behaviour but at the same time may pose a threat to measurement validity. The cross-national nature of data collection presents a key challenge: namely, how to establish measurement equivalence? Measurement equivalence can be understood as the degree to which ‘under different conditions of observing and studying phenomena, measurement operations yield measures of the same attribute’ (Horn and McArdle 1992: 117). The aim of establishing measurement equivalence is therefore to ensure that observed differences between units, such as groups or countries, are not misleading. A lack of measurement equivalence poses a serious threat to the internal validity of any type of research, but especially in the case of cross-national survey research. This is partly because cross-national survey projects often rely on cooperation between existing survey teams and lack the resources to harmonize survey practices, but perhaps even more so because the meaning of constructs often varies greatly between countries. Research that involves different countries cannot simply assume a universality in meaning, but must develop strategies to establish, first, whether constructs are in fact comparable and, second, whether instruments that are useful in one context are equally so in another (Harkness et al. 2003).

Adcock and Collier (2001: 534) argue that ‘the potential difficulty that context poses for valid measurement and the related task of establishing measurement equivalence across diverse units deserve more attention in political science’. In recent years we have witnessed a growing body of work dedicated to understanding and remedying the methodological problems of cross-national data collection: for example, see Davidov (2009, 2010) for excellent examinations of the measurement equivalence of the ESS and ISSP data. Two specific problems especially received scholarly attention: how different survey techniques, such as the mode of the survey, affect the measurement of key concepts; and a lack of equivalence in the meaning of constructs due to differential item functioning.

Many cross-national survey projects, such as the ISSP or CSES, are characterized by starkly varying methodological practices across countries. A main source of differentiation within these collaborative projects is the mode through the survey is conducted, either face-to-face, by telephone or by self-completion questionnaire (mail or online). To date the research on the effects of survey mode is inconclusive. While some studies find significant mode effects (e.g. Malhotra and Krosnick 2007; Liu and Wang 2014; Gooch 2015), others suggest that the effect of survey mode is limited (e.g. Ansolabehere and Schaffner 2014; Sanders et al. 2007). For example, Liu and Wang (2014), using the ANES, find that a significant mode effect exists for political knowledge

questions. Overall, online surveys elicit more accurate answers to knowledge questions than face-to-face surveys. This, they argue, may be due to the easy access to information through the Internet. This evidence suggests that political knowledge measured through online surveys is not equivalent to that measured using face-to-face surveys. Relying on results from a survey experiment conducted in the context of the 2005 BES, Sanders and colleagues (2007), however, demonstrate that survey mode does not significantly affect the results obtained from face-to-face versus online surveys. In fact, they conclude that ‘the in-person and Internet data tell very similar stories about what matters for turnout and party preference in Britain’ (Sanders et al. 2007: 257). Given that the evidence to date is largely inconclusive, determining the effects of survey mode should be high on the research agenda of electoral scholars. It seems especially important to broaden the geographical scope of data collection, as the majority of studies to date stem from the US and UK context. What is clear, however, is that users of cross-national survey data such as the CSES or ISSP that are obtained using very different survey modes are well advised to control for this fact in their analyses.

Next to differences in measurement due to survey mode, researchers have explored the degree to which individual or groups of survey respondents may understand the ‘same’ question in vastly different ways (e.g. Brady 1985; King et al. 2004). This would constitute a threat to the internal validity of any type of survey, but may be especially severe when comparing survey answers across countries. Linguistic diversity raises a question about the extent to which the meaning of a term or a scale is comparable to its intended meaning after it has been translated to another language (Ariely and Davidov 2012). King and colleagues (2004), for example, have explored the degree of differential item functioning (DIF) in cross-national survey research. DIF here refers to the extent to which people from different countries with the same latent trait have a different probability of giving a certain response on a questionnaire. Using data from World Health Organization surveys, they find that, when controlling for relevant factors, the political efficacy of Mexican citizens is lower than that of Chinese citizens. Put differently, Mexican citizens of similar background to Chinese citizens think that they have less say in government, and the difference between the two populations is quite large. Given the nature of the Chinese system, this finding is surprising. Yet, when the authors correct for DIF, they show that, in line with their original theoretical conjectures, Mexicans do indeed have higher levels of political efficacy than the Chinese. To my knowledge no cross-national election study so far has consistently included vignette techniques as proposed by King and his colleagues to correct for the possible incomparability of survey responses. This leaves the vast majority of electoral survey research vulnerable to the long-standing criticism that the same question may be understood very differently in different countries. Implementing such vignettes in survey research that include a large set of countries is possible,

and already has been conducted in the context of the 2010 round of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) on party positioning on the left–right dimension (Bakker et al. 2014).

FURTHER CHALLENGES FOR ELECTORAL RESEARCH

Next to methodological challenges arising in the study of cross-national electoral behaviour due to measurement equivalence, researchers face additional challenges in data collection. The growing scholarly attention to problems associated with causal inference also affects the study of electoral behaviour. In the context of the study of economic voting, for example, empirical studies have shown that partisanship colours people's perceptions of the economy, since individuals who are attached to the governing parties are likely to perceive the economy more positively than individuals attached to an opposition party (Anderson et al. 2004; Evans and Andersen 2006; Ladner and Wlezien 2007; Dinas, this *Handbook*, Volume 1). Hence, the strong relationship between economic perceptions and vote choice may at least in part be due to the fact that partisanship shapes these evaluations of the economy. As Evans and Andersen note (2006: 205), 'popular incumbent parties carry with them an inbuilt bias among the electorate to perceive their economic performance in a more positive light than might otherwise be the case'. Yet, these claims have been disputed. For example, work by Lewis-Beck and his co-authors has found only weak causal links between partisanship and economic evaluations (Lewis-Beck 2006; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Stegmaier, Lewis-Beck and Park, this Volume).

This debate is very important for our understanding of how the economy affects elections and the decision-making of individuals, and surely context matters in this respect. It is arguably much easier to update economic evaluations in line with previous partisanship in systems of undivided government. In multi-party systems with broad-based coalitions partisan updating is much more laborious. To date, we often lack cross-nationally comparable data that allows us to deal with endogeneity concerns. Survey-embedded experiments (considered by Johns in more depth in this Volume) are usually conducted within the context of a particular election in a specific country and panel studies of elections are scarce and often not comparable across country contexts. It is the case that cross-national experimental research and panel studies are expensive and bring about sets of other problems, such as longevity of results or panel attrition, but they would provide extremely valuable sources of data to deal with reciprocal relationships between political preferences and measures of electoral behaviour.

Next to paying more attention to possible sources of endogeneity and devising data collection methods to do so, recent studies suggest that the measurement of

complex issues, such as people's policy preferences or behavioural intentions, is perhaps more challenging than often assumed. Many national election studies were developed in the 1960s and 1970s and since then researchers have been concerned about preserving the time series nature of data. Yet, recent experimental work suggests that some concepts are difficult to grasp using standard types of survey question. For example, the literature on economic voting suggests that retrospective economic evaluations are crucial for understanding the likelihood that an incumbent will be re-elected (Fiorina 1981; Kinder and Kiewiet 1979). Interestingly, recent experimental work by Healy and Lenz (2014) in the US suggests that, while voters might actually intend to judge presidents on cumulative growth, they instead use an end-heuristic in which they simplify retrospective assessments by substituting conditions at the end for the whole. There is a growing body of literature using (natural) experimental data demonstrating the biases in voters' retrospective assessments of incumbent performance (e.g. Healy et al. 2010; Huber et al. 2012). This raises the question of what exactly we are tapping into when we analyse people's responses to retrospective economic evaluations questions such as 'During the last few years, has the economic situation been getting better, getting worse or has it stayed the same?' Detailed work exploring the precise nature and measurement of people's economic evaluations is much needed.

Finally, in order for electoral scholars to take full advantage of the cross-national nature of survey research, data about the relevant country- or district-level attributes that matter needs to be collected. Indeed, as Curtice (2007: 905) points out, the 'measurement of the (particularly national) context within which the survey data have been collected should be an integral part of any exercise in comparative [political] opinion [or behaviour] research.' However, not many of the existing regional and global survey projects that were mentioned in the previous section provide this type of macro-level data and make it publicly accessible. A clear exception here is the CSES, which compiles both district-level and country-level data on electoral rules, electoral returns and other institutional characteristics. The EES, in some of its rounds, most particularly the 2009 one, provides data on news reporting and party positioning through content analyses of party manifestos and media news as well as elite surveys. Moreover, in the 2014 round the EES fielded a battery of survey questions on people's policy positions that were in line with the question asked in the 2014 CHES survey on party positioning, which eases the merging of these two valuable data sources. Finally, the ESS provides some social and economic data on the participating countries as well as on key events that took place in a country during the time of fieldwork. These data collection activities are crucially important and will hopefully be extended in the future to allow researchers to examine in more depth the effects of context on individual-level electoral decision-making.

CONCLUSION

Electoral research relies on the analysis of individual decision-making in a variety of contexts and studies the relationships between individual and contextual attributes. It is difficult to imagine how electoral researchers would have been able to arrive at empirically substantiated claims about continuity and change in electoral behaviour without the use of cross-national data. The regionally and globally collaborative data collection projects that have been developed over the last few decades have played a crucial role in the enhancement of scientific insights in how people make decisions at the ballot box.

At the same time, cross-national data collection provides researchers with a host of methodological challenges. Most cross-national projects to date rely on collaborations between nationally established surveys that all have particular methodological traditions. As a result, many data sources are plagued by a diversity in methods and standards that might reduce the confidence of researchers that differences between contexts are more than simply methodological artefacts, but actually reflect substantively interesting differences between country contexts. Overcoming methodological pluralism is difficult, as it requires not only harmonization of practices but also some sort of centralized control. Many projects to date simply lack the organizational capacity and resources to secure shared standards.

Next to these practical challenges, the cross-national nature of data sources makes establishing measurement equivalence even more of a challenge. Meanings might be lost in translation or scales used very differently within and across countries. Recent advancements have found ways to solve these methodological challenges by employing vignettes, for example. Yet, these have not often been employed in large-scale cross-national survey projects, the exception being the CHES survey of political party experts. Hence, the majority of electoral survey research is still vulnerable to the long-standing criticism that the same question may be understood very differently in one country versus another. In addition, recent experimental work, largely conducted in individual countries such as the US and UK, has uncovered problems arising from endogeneity and measurement of complex and multidimensional concepts. In the future these new techniques will hopefully find their way more often into national election studies and cross-national survey projects. Addressing these methodological challenges is of crucial importance, as extending the variety of countries included in our scholarly work allows researchers to fully reap the benefits associated with the comparative study of elections and electoral behaviour.

Notes

- 1 For more information see <http://apps.eui.eu/Personal/Franklin/CERES.html>
- 2 For more information see http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

- 3 Since the end of Communism until the entry of many Eastern European countries to the EU in 2004, the Center for the Study of Public Policy at the University of Strathclyde has conducted barometer series in transitional democracies in Eastern Europe. These surveys ask people, for example, to evaluate their current political and economic system as well as past and future expectations of democratic or undemocratic governance.
- 4 For more information regarding the Afrobarometer please visit its website at <http://www.afrobarometer.org/>
- 5 For more information regarding the Asian Barometer see <http://www.asianbarometer.org/>
- 6 For more information see <http://www.latinobarometro.org/latOnline.jsp>
- 7 For more information see <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>
- 8 For more information <http://eeshomepage.net/>
- 9 For more information see <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/index.php>
- 10 For more information see <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>
- 11 For more information see <http://www.issp.org/>
- 12 For more information see <http://www.cses.org/>

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Psephology and Technology, or: The Rise and Rise of the Script-Kiddie

Kai Arzheimer

INTRODUCTION

From its very beginnings, psephology has been at the forefront of methodology and has sometimes pushed its boundaries (see, for example, King, 1997 on ecological regression). Methods such as factor analysis or logistic regression, that were considered advanced in the 1990s, are now part of many MA and even BA programs. Driven by the proliferation of fresh data and the availability of ever faster computers and more advanced, yet more user-friendly software, the pace of technical progress has once more accelerated over the last decade or so. Hence, and somewhat paradoxically, this chapter cannot hope to give a definitive account of the state of the art: the moment this book ships the chapter will already be outdated. Instead, it tries to identify important trends that have emerged in the last 15 years as well as likely trajectories for future research.

More specifically, the next section discusses the general impact of the ‘open’ movements on electoral research. The third section is devoted to new(ish) statistical methods, readily implemented in open source software, that are necessitated by the availability of data – often available under comparably open models for data distribution – that are structured in new ways. The fourth section is a primer on software tools that were developed in the open source community and that are currently underused in electoral research, while the fifth section discusses the double role of the internet as both an infrastructure for and an object of electoral research. The final section summarises the main points.

OPEN SOURCE, OPEN DATA, OPEN SCIENCE

Like many other subfields in the social sciences, psephology is heavily affected by the rapid progress in computer and information technology. The two most significant developments in this respect are the open-source and open-data revolutions. *Open source* software has its roots in the free software movement of the 1980s (Lakhani and Hippel, 2003), a rebellion against increasingly more restrictive software licences that, among other things, aimed at patenting algorithms and banned the ‘reverse engineering’ of software installed on private computers. Proponents of the free software movement, on the other hand, made their software available for free (‘free as in free beer’) and gave everyone and anyone the licence to modify their programs as they saw fit (‘free as in free speech’), which required laying open the source code. The spread of the internet in the 1990s then facilitated large-scale collaboration on free software projects and gave rise to the current idea of open source software that is embodied in Raymond’s (1999) manifesto *The Cathedral and the Bazaar*, which emphasises the idea of distributed and only loosely co-ordinated teams as a strategy for quick and efficient development.

Whereas the free software movement had a certain anti-establishment bent, many of the largest and most successful open source projects, such as the Linux operating system, the Apache web server and the Firefox browser series, which collectively power much of the current internet, are happy to rely on the support of corporate backers who donate money, resources and the time of some of their staff. In other instances, large companies have even created open ‘community editions’ of their existing programs, or designed them as open source applications in the first place (Google’s Android operating system). Companies may do this to raise their profile or in order to attract the best software engineers for their commercial projects, but two other motives are more interesting: they may want to use the open source software instead of a closed-source alternative to generate and deliver their own products (e.g. tech companies relying on Linux for running their server farms), or they may offer a service that is based on the open-source software (professional support or hosted versions). Either way, corporate support for open source makes commercial sense – neatly illustrating Olson’s (1965) argument about big players rationally investing in public goods – because open source is, as Raymond suggests, a highly efficient model for organising large projects: it incorporates feedback from the user base almost instantaneously and turns the most capable and committed users into developers.

Open source is highly relevant for psephology not only because it helped to build much of the internet infrastructure and some key tools – R (Ihaka and Gentleman, 1996; Crawley, 2013), Python (Lutz, 2013) and a plethora of others – but also because it has become the template for other ‘open’ revolutions that impact on electoral research. In the broadest sense, *open data* refers to the idea

that research data, or data that could be used for research, should be as accessible as possible. As such, it is old news. In the quantitative social sciences, data archives such as the Roper Center (<http://ropercenter.cornell.edu/>) or Michigan's Survey Research Center (<https://www.sra.isr.umich.edu/>), which collect, archive, and disseminate existing data for secondary analyses, were established in the late 1940s. Patterns of co-operation and exchange between (European) archives were formalised with the formation of the Council of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA, <http://cessda.net/>) in the 1970s (Karvonen and Ryssevik, 2001: 45). In the public sector, one could argue that the practice of frequently publishing detailed information on key national statistics that was already well established in the late nineteenth century marks the beginning of open data. However, it was the key ingredients of the open source revolution – transparency, active involvement of the user base and almost zero marginal transaction costs – that in the 2000s began to transform the production and use of data in unprecedented ways. Unless access is restricted for reasons of data protection, researchers no longer have to travel to a data archive to use a given data set, and for the distribution of data physical media have been all but abolished. Governments, large-scale research projects and individual scholars are now opening up their *raw* data for download. Some agencies and some of the biggest internet companies (e.g. Google, Facebook, Twitter and Yahoo) have even created application programming interfaces (APIs, see below, 'Infrastructure') that give researchers the opportunity to access these data programmatically from a script.

The open data revolution has brought about some new problems of its own. While the body of data available for research is growing exponentially, researchers still have to know where and how to look, and the lack of a central repository and common interfaces seriously hampers progress. To be useful, data need to be stored and, even more importantly, described and licensed in standardised ways that make them accessible and retrievable in the medium-to-long term. This, in turn, requires institutions that can be trusted and that need funding. Moreover, the pressure on researchers to open up their own data is growing. Research councils now regularly make the deposition of research data and even the *open access* publication of the findings a precondition for funding. Similarly, more and more journals require that not only the data set itself but also the program code that generates the tables and graphs must be published along with the final article in some repository (see below, 'Infrastructure').¹ While such rules reinforce traditional scientific standards of honesty, transparency and reproducibility, many researchers are still anxious that they will be scooped if they are forced to reveal their data and methods at the beginning of a new project. Presumably due to the prevailing incentive structure, few social scientists currently adhere to the open source mantra of 'release early, release often'. Others, however, embrace the ideal of a (more) *open science* by posting work-in-progress on their personal homepages, opening draft chapters on social network sites for scientists or even by moving their data and manuscripts to open source development sites

such as Github, which could in theory provide an ideal environment for scientific collaboration.

DATA, STATISTICAL MODELS, AND SOFTWARE

Complex data structures and statistical models

Pure formal theory and simulation exercises aside, all electoral research rests on data: a body of systematic and usually quantified observations that can be used to test assumptions about the ways in which citizens, politicians, organised interests and the media interact and thereby affect political decisions. While early studies emphasised the importance of macro factors (Siegfried, 1913) and of clustered sampling and mixed methods (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944), the lasting influence of the *American Voter* (Campbell et al., 1960) has led many researchers to focus on micro-level data coming from nationally representative samples of mass publics for much of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

But theory suggests that credible (or at least plausible) accounts of human behaviour must encompass not just the individual (micro) but also the societal (macro) level, and ideally various ‘meso’ layers and structures in between (see Coleman, 1994 for the general line of reasoning and Miller and Shanks, 1996 for an application to election studies). The thrust of this argument eventually led to a renewed interest in contextual variables and their effects (Jennings, 2007: 35–8). From the late 1990s and early 2000s on, national election studies and comparative surveys alike began to include territorial identifier variables such as electoral district codes in their data sets. Using this information, it is possible to match data on individual respondents with government figures on the economy, migration and a whole host of other variables that can plausibly affect voting behaviour, while multi-level regression (see chapter 40) is a convenient tool for estimating the size of the alleged effects and their associated standard errors. Supplementing micro-level information with contextual variables leads to ‘nested’ data, where each level-1 unit (respondent) belongs to one (and only one) level-2 unit (electoral) district. Each level-2 unit may in turn be part of one (and only one) level-3 unit (say, a province), resulting in a tree-like structure.

Multi-level regression modelling with contextual covariates derived from official sources has become almost the *de facto* standard for analysing both large-scale comparative data sets (see chapter 41) and case studies of nations for which sub-national data are available. While the technique provides asymptotically correct standard errors and opens up a number of flexible modelling options (see below, ‘Multi-level models and structural equation models’), it is no panacea. When nations are the relevant contexts, their number is often too low for multi-level modelling (Stegmueller, 2013), and one may well ask if it makes sense at all to treat countries as if they were a random sample from a larger population

(Western and Jackman, 1994). Comparing political behaviour within subnational units across nations is more informative and often more appropriate, but suffers from specific limitations, too: even within the European Union's complex and comprehensive system for the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS, see Eurostat, 2015), subnational units that are supposed to be on the same level may differ vastly in terms of their size, population and political, social and cultural relevance.²

Moreover, the integration of government statistics as regressors into a multi-level model does not nearly exhaust the complexity of data now available for analysis. Building on earlier work by Lazarsfeld and Menzel (1961), Hox (2010) has developed a useful typology that clarifies the possibilities (see Figure 42.1). On each level, there are *global* variables, which reflect inherent properties of the objects on the respective level. They are inherent in so far as they can be constructed neither by aggregating features of lower-level objects nor by disaggregating features of higher-level contexts. Traditional (statistical) models of voting behaviour have focused on global variables at the individual level (level 1): an individual vote for the Democrats is linked to the voter in question being female, unemployed and identifying as a Democrat. A prototypical multi-level model would add the unemployment rate and the ethnic composition of the electoral district as level-2 regressors. These are *analytical* variables, which are created by aggregating global features of the lower-level units to form upper-level averages, ratios or percentages. As a corollary, these variables can enter the model simultaneously on multiple levels (see below, 'Multi-level models and structural equation models').

Other properties of the district may also be meaningful additions to the model, but they cannot be understood as an aggregation of individual-level qualities or a disaggregation of higher-level features and are hence global variables at the district level. Gender and political experience of the main candidates are cases

Figure 42.1 A typology of complex data structures

Level	1	2	3	...
Type of variable	global relational contextual	→ analytical → structural ← global relational contextual	→ analytical → structural ← global relational contextual	→ → →

→: Aggregation

←: Disaggregation

Source: Adapted from Hox (2010, p. 2)

in point. Because there is no variable at the lowest level that would correspond to them, they are strictly *contextual* for individual voters and can enter the model only once, at the upper level.

Finally, *relational* data convey information regarding the ties (e.g. the presence and intensity of face-to-face contacts) between objects on the same level. Such network data are crucial for any micro-sociological explanation of voting behaviour: obviously, a person that is the hub of a Democratic clique of friends is more likely to turn out to vote, and to vote in accordance with her peers, than someone who is socially isolated. Like global/analytical variables, network data can enter a multi-level model simultaneously on multiple levels: information on relations between individual voters within a district may be aggregated to form *structural* variables at the upper level – to, for example, compare districts with dense/sparse or homogeneous/fragmented communication networks.

Network data are extremely attractive in theory, but they introduce an additional level of complexity and require specialised statistical methods, because a tie, by definition, involves two actors (see below, ‘Networks’). In addition, the collection of relational data necessitates specific (cluster) sampling plans, because a large number of the members of a given network needs to be surveyed to assess the properties of the network itself. This, in turn, raises issues of representativeness, data confidentiality and cost-effectiveness, and goes against the dogma of the nationally representative sample.

Election surveys sometimes contain items referring to so-called *egocentric networks*: for example, they might ask the respondent how many people she talks politics with, whether these are friends, family members or just acquaintances and how often she disagrees with them. But this information will be biased by the respondent’s perceptions and provides only a fractional glimpse into the full network, as normally not even the ties among the respondent’s immediate contacts can be reliably recovered.

As a readily available alternative, students of electoral behaviour are now turning to social media, where large and mostly complete political communication networks can be sampled and observed with ease. Just how well insights from these networks generalise to offline behaviour and the voting population as a whole is a different question. Either way, statistical procedures for analysing social networks are currently in the process of becoming part of the tool kit for electoral research.

Besides multi-level and network data, the use of spatial or geo-referenced data is another emerging trend in electoral studies. A geo-reference is simply a set of coordinates that locates an object in space. Coordinates can define either a point or an area (polygon). In the most simple sense, the territorial identifiers mentioned above record that a voter is living in a given (usually large) area and hence are geo-references, too. More precise coordinates for voters (e.g. census blocks, ZIP code segments, electoral wards, street addresses or even GPS readings), however, allow researchers to locate voters within much

smaller contexts, for which census and market research data – in other words, global and analytical variables that can be integrated into a multi-level model of electoral choice – may be available. While many researchers are familiar with the idea of coarse geo-references, the availability of very fine-grained data as well as the growing awareness of spatial dependencies necessitates specialised software and models for the proper analysis of geo-referenced data (see below, ‘Geo-spatial analysis’).

Statistical techniques and software implementations

Multi-level models and structural equation models

As outlined above, students of electoral behaviour routinely collect data that, reflecting the multi-level nature of the underlying theoretical explanations, exhibit complex structures. Statistical multi-level models, which are also known as ‘mixed models’ or ‘random coefficient models’, are the most adequate means to deal with such data.

They account for the correlation of unmeasured disturbances within a given context and hence provide correct standard errors for the effects of macro-level variables. Moreover, they model context-specific disturbances in the most efficient way possible by treating them as random. This is best illustrated with an example: in a study of N voters living in K electoral districts that aims at explaining individual turnout, one could try to capture the effects of unmeasured district-level variables (say local social capital) by introducing district-specific intercepts (dummy variables). But this strategy has negative consequences for the identification of the model and becomes inefficient and impractical very quickly as the number of districts sampled grows (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002). A statistical multi-level model will replace the $K-1$ estimates for the local intercepts with a single estimate of their variation over districts (a *random intercept*), thus dramatically reducing the number of parameters.

Moreover, multi-level models also provide for a number of additional advanced modelling options. If there are good reasons to believe that the impact of an explanatory variable (say ideology, as measured by left-right self-placement) on turnout will vary considerably across the K districts, the analyst can specify a *random effect* for this variable that supplements the estimate for the average effect of ideology (the traditional point estimate) with an estimate of its variation. As the name implies, random effects are adequate if the variation in the effect of an independent variable can plausibly be treated as random.

If, on the other hand, the impact of a variable varies in a systematic fashion, this can be modelled by specifying a *cross-level interaction* between, for example, ideology (a micro-level variable) and the number of candidates standing in the district. Cross-level interactions need not be confined to variables that are as conceptually different as the two in this example. On the contrary, theory often suggests that a variable such as unemployment could in essence interact with

itself, albeit on different levels, hence entering the model thrice: as an individual feature (a global variable on the micro-level), as an analytical variable (the unemployment rate on the district-level) and as an cross-level interaction between the two. A high unemployment rate may reduce the propensity to participate in an election for *all* citizens, and individual unemployment status will normally depress turnout in an even stronger fashion. But this micro-level effect may well be confined to low-unemployment level environments, whereas individual unemployment may have no such negative impact or even increase the likelihood of voting in districts where the high unemployment rate attracts community organisers and other political entrepreneurs. Multi-level models are ideally suited for disentangling such complex causal relationships.

They can also deal with complexly structured political contexts that may have many tiers (voters within households within wards within municipalities within districts within provinces ...) and that may cross-cut and overlap instead of forming a neat, tree-like hierarchy: a voter is not just affected by the characteristics of the electoral district she is living in but has been politically socialised in completely different surroundings. While multi-level models can accommodate such complex structures, convergence will generally be slow and estimates may be unstable. As with all other aspects of modelling, analysts should therefore strive for parsimony. If there are not variables at the higher levels and if the objective is simply to reflect the multi-stage nature of the underlying sampling process, traditional survey estimators or even Huber-White standard errors that account for clustering may provide a fast and robust alternative to a fully specified multi-level model.

Having said that, multi-level models are a very flexible tool, as contexts need not be defined in spatial terms. For the analysis of panel data it often makes sense to think of individual respondents as ‘contexts’ for the interviews conducted in successive panel waves. Particularly when panel data are imbalanced or collected at irregular intervals, multi-level models can alleviate some of the problems that plague the traditional approaches to panel data.

Another statistical technique that has become indispensable for students of electoral behaviour is structural equation modelling (SEM). SEM is an extension of traditional factor analysis that lets researchers specify multi-indicator measurement models for otherwise unobservable (=latent) theoretical constructs such as political attitudes. It is attractive because it can simultaneously estimate coefficients for whole systems of equations and because it can incorporate measurement models for attitudinal variables that account for relatively unreliable indicators. If the measurement models hold, SEM can also provide unbiased estimates of the equally unobservable ‘structural’ relationships among the latent variables. Given adequate data, it is possible to map a whole system of constructs and hypotheses about their relationships onto an equivalent system of equations.

In the past, its application in election studies was somewhat limited by the fact that they required measurements on a continuous scale that were distributed

multivariate normal, whereas the key dependent variable in election studies as well as many relevant independent variables are categorical and usually distributed with considerable skew. In the 1990s, however, new estimators were developed that can accommodate non-normally distributed continuous data. In addition, generalisations of the original model allow for ordinal and nominal indicator variables and even for categorical latent variables (Jöreskog, 1990; Jöreskog, 1994; Muthén, 1979; Muthén, 2002). Moreover, multi-level models and structural equation models are closely related (Muthén, 2002; Skrondal and Rabe-Hesketh, 2004) and can be combined to form multi-level structural equation models.

Until recently, the estimation of multi-level or structural equation models required specialised (if relatively user-friendly) software: HLM or MLWin for multi-level modelling, LISREL, EQS or AMOS for SEM, and MPlus for either. This is no longer true: recent versions of Stata – currently the most popular general purpose statistical package in political science – can estimate all but the most complex multi-level and structural equation models and so greatly extend the potential user base of these techniques. SPSS, another popular package, has some multi-level capabilities and works closely with AMOS, an SEM software that SPSS Inc. acquired in 2003 before it was in turn bought by IBM in 2009.

Perhaps more importantly, there are packages available for the R programming language that provide similar features: Lme4 and Rstan for multi-level modelling, and Lavaan and Sem for SEM. While they may be slightly less capable, slower and generally more clunky than the commercial software, they are, like any other R-package and the core of the language itself, open source and freely available for almost any combination of hardware and operating system. Moreover, while they may lack professional documentation and customer service, they are supported by a global community of enthusiasts, scriptable in a fully fledged programming language with flexible data structures and tie into the ever growing eco-system of more than 6000 user-written packages for R that aim at implementing the latest developments in statistics.

Bayesian methods

Most electoral researchers were trained within a ‘frequentist’ framework of statistical reasoning that relies on the idea of a random sampling process that could be endlessly repeated under essentially identical conditions. So far, they have shown only modest interest in the (sometimes exaggerated) benefits of an alternative statistical framework: Bayesian statistics (Jackman, 2004). There are at least two causes for this inertia: the frequentist paradigm closely resembles the pattern of taking national large-scale random samples of the general population that has been the workhorse of election studies for most of the last seven decades, and in such large samples Bayesian and frequentist estimates will normally closely resemble each other.

But, whether applied researchers like it or not, the ever more popular multi-level models are Bayesian models at their core (Gelman and Hill, 2007). While many political scientists still have some reservations regarding the underlying paradigm (or might be blissfully unaware of it), Bayesian statistics keeps making inroads into electoral research. There are a number of reasons for this. First, Bayesian models can sometimes be tailored to a problem for which no off-the-shelf frequentist solution has been implemented in any statistical package. Models that aim at predicting the distribution of seats in parliament from a rolling series of published opinion surveys are a case in point. Second, Bayesian statistics may be able to provide an estimator that is better in terms of bias and efficiency than any frequentist alternative, as is the case with multi-level models and some SEMs. Third, Bayesian statistics, which for most of its existence was a rather arcane pastime because of the computational demands implied, gained practical relevance for applied researchers only with the twin advent of simulation-based methods and affordable fast processors in the late 1990s/early 2000s. Even a decade ago, getting Bayesian estimates in MLWin for a reasonably complex multi-level model could easily take an hour or more on a then-modern desktop computer, much as was the case with SEM in the 1990s.

At the moment, most Bayesian estimation still requires access to specialised software (Winbugs, Openbugs, Jags, or Stan), preferably via R. However, the implementation of Bayesian analysis in recent editions of Stata (from version 14 on) could be a game-changer in this respect.

Networks

So far, election studies have mostly missed out on the renaissance of social network analysis (SNA) in political science (for some notable exceptions see, for example, Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1987; McClurg, 2006). Although interest in *relational* or network data has grown exponentially in political science, psephology has been somewhat late to the party because relevant data are generally not available. While large societies may display the properties of a ‘small-world’ network in which everyone is related to everyone else through a relatively small number of contacts (say six), such network structures are very sparse and will rarely have an effect on political behaviour. Social embeddedness certainly plays a role for opinion formation and political behaviour, but mainstream election studies cannot hope to uncover the relevant networks. Traditional community studies as well as explorations of online communities, on the other hand, can do just that.

Although it is far from clear if and how findings gained here generalise to the electorate as a whole, statistical procedures for analysing social networks are currently in the process of becoming part of the tool kit for electoral research. Understanding these methods can present a formidable challenge.

By definition, network data break the mould of traditional data analysis, where cases correspond to the rows of the data matrix and variables to its columns.

In network applications, cases form both the rows and the columns of an (adjacency) data matrix, whose cells represent the existence, direction and possibly strength of ties between them. Recording traditional variables requires a second data matrix, specialised software and, more importantly, an adjustment of the analyst's mindset.

Once collected, data on ties between actors can be employed to calculate three broad classes of statistical measures (Knoke and Yang, 2008): indices that reflect the position of an individual within the local or global network (e.g. one's centrality), measures that refer to features of an actual or potential tie between two actors (e.g. the importance of this tie for the coherence of the network as a whole) and statistics that describe some features of the network as a whole (e.g. the degree to which it resembles the 'small-world' scenario outlined above). Often, the aim of SNA is chiefly descriptive and the analysis would end with their calculation and interpretation, but, in principle, all network measures can subsequently be employed as dependent or independent variables in a regression framework.

Relational data do not fit into the single-matrix paradigm of general statistical packages such as Stata or SPSS. Moreover, before the rise of social networking sites there was little commercial interest in SNA. Therefore, most software that is potentially useful for students of electoral behaviour is developed by academics (often as an open source project) and available free of charge or at a very modest price. Historically, UCINET, which was created in the early 1980s and has been under constant development ever since, has been a very popular choice. UCINET is grounded in the tradition of (mathematical) sociology and incorporates a multitude of procedures for manipulating and analysing relational data. However, according to its authors, many of these procedures become tediously slow in networks with more than 5000 nodes. Pajek and Pajek XXL, on the other hand, are slightly newer programs specifically geared towards large and very large networks of several million nodes. Their user interface is idiosyncratic, and the terminology used in the documentation as well as many of the procedures may be unfamiliar to social scientists, as the authors have their roots in mathematical graph theory and computer science. However, Pajek is unrivalled in terms of speed and sheer processing capacity.

UCINET, Pajek and other SNA software make it possible to perform analyses that are unfeasible with standard statistical software. However, moving one's data from a standard software suite to an external program for network analysis, then back to the general purpose package for further analysis, is a disruptive, tedious and error-prone process. The various SNA packages that exist for the R system are therefore an attractive alternative to the stand-alone SNA programs. The most generally useful are Statnet (a 'meta' package that includes many procedures from more specialised packages), and Igraph, which seems to be slightly more accessible (and is also available as a package for the Python language). In all likelihood, either package will fulfil all but the most exotic needs of psephologists.

Geo-spatial analysis

Geo-spatial analysis is a broad term that encompasses at least two distinct (if related) approaches: the use of geographical variables in ‘normal’ regression models of electoral behaviour on the one hand, and the estimation of specific statistical models that account for spatial dependencies on the other.

The first approach may simply use geo-references to merge micro data with contextual information (see above, ‘Complex data structures and statistical models’). Under more advanced scenarios, psephologists will calculate geographical variables (most often distances) from sets of geo-references. This is best illustrated by an example: for various theoretical reasons, voters should *ceteris paribus* prefer local candidates – that is, candidates that live closer to a given voter’s residence than other candidates. If candidates are obliged to have their home addresses on the ballot paper and the addresses of voters are known,³ the spatial distance between candidates and their prospective voters can be calculated (Arzheimer and Evans, 2012; Arzheimer and Evans, 2014). This variable varies across voter–candidate pairs within districts (unless voters live at the same address) and is therefore a global variable at the level of the individual voter.

Geo-spatial methods are required for (1) the translation of addresses into physical co-ordinates (a step known as *geocoding*) and (2) the calculation of various distance measures (e.g. travel time by car or public transport). Apart from the calculation of straight-line distance, which is a purely geometrical problem, the second step requires access to digital road maps, timetables, data on congestion and routing algorithms. However, once the distance has been calculated the analysis can proceed with the usual linear and non-linear regression models, which may account for nesting or clustering of the observations by imposing a structure on the variance–covariance matrix.

Various types of *spatial regression* models take this idea one step further. They correct for dependencies among the observations by taking the spatial co-ordinates of cases into account and adjusting the structure of the variance–covariance matrix accordingly. The relevance of spatial regression models for psephology is most obvious in the case of district-level aggregate analyses: whereas standard regression models assume that disturbances are identically and independently distributed, it stands to reason that neighbouring⁴ districts will be affected by similar disturbances and hence will display a pattern auto-correlation that renders standard errors dubious at best. In spatial regression, the matrix of distances between the centroids of the electoral districts can be employed to estimate this auto-correlation, which in turn can be used to derive corrected standard errors within a spatial regression model (Ward and Skrede Gleditsch, 2008). Spatial regression could be applied to individual-level data too, but it is generally easier and often also more appropriate in terms of the underlying theoretical assumptions about causal mechanisms to use a multi-level model (possibly involving

more than two levels) that accounts for nesting within political-administrative contexts.

Mapping and processing geo-referenced data traditionally required access to and training in the use of a Geographical Information System (GIS). A GIS is essentially a relational database with special capabilities for dealing with 2D and 3D coordinates. GIS software tends to be expensive, proprietary and complex. In recent years, however, government agencies and other organisations aiming at opening up their data have set up websites that hide at least some of the complexity of the underlying system. In the most simple case, users may create chloropleth maps or look up data for a single or a limited number of localities. More useful systems allow one to download pre-built or customised tables in some machine-readable format that can be merged with existing individual-level data. In very few ideal cases, there is an API that researchers can access programmatically (see below, ‘Infrastructure’).

Moreover, algorithms for collecting, storing and processing geo-referenced data are now freely available and have been implemented in a host of stand-alone programs and/or packages for the R system. GRASS (Geographic Resources Analysis Support System) is a fully featured GIS that has a wide range of applications in engineering, the natural sciences and the social sciences. GRASS runs on all major operating systems. It can be used both interactively, through its graphical user interface (GUI), and programmatically, via scripts. Its real power, however, lies in its interfaces with two popular programming languages: Python and R. Through these interfaces (Pygrass for Python and Rgrass6/7), users can on the one hand program the GRASS system and extend its capabilities; on the other, researchers who regularly run their analyses in Python or R can selectively make use of both data stored in GRASS and the nearly 2700 industry-grade functions available in the system. QGIS is a more lightweight alternative to GRASS. While it interfaces with R and Python, too, it is mostly geared towards interactive use.

In many cases, however, analysts working in R or Python will want to avoid altogether the overhead of plugging into a GIS. Much of the functionality of traditional GIS software is now available in the form of addons for these two languages. R in particular currently has more than 100 packages for loading, manipulating, analysing and mapping geo-referenced data (<https://cran.r-project.org/web/views/Spatial.html>).

TOOLS FOR SUCCESSFUL, REPRODUCIBLE RESEARCH

The previous two sections have dwelled on the rapid pace of technical progress in psephology. Somewhat paradoxically, this section suggests that, in the face of ever more complex data and software, psephologists should turn to very basic

tools, concepts and techniques that computer scientists developed decades ago: plain-text files and editors, directories (folders) and some utilities commonly used in medium-sized programming projects. As the old saying goes: in election studies, regression is progress.

Establishing a reproducible workflow

Data analysis involves a number of distinct phases (see Long, 2009, chapter 1 for a similar outline):

- 1 Data must be collected, either by the researchers themselves or by some third party, and stored electronically
- 2 These machine readable data need to be transferred to the researchers, usually via the internet
- 3 The data must be recoded or otherwise normalised, possibly after being converted to some other format first.
- 4 A number of exploratory analyses and preliminary models are run on the data, perhaps using more than one computer program
- 5 The researchers settle on a small set of final analyses and models whose results are stored
- 6 For presentation and publication, graphs and tables are produced from these results, possibly using additional software

To be reproducible by the original researchers and their peers, every step, as well as the rationale behind the decisions involved, must be documented. Realistically, that means that as much as possible of the whole process should be automated by means of scripts: short sets of instructions for a computer program. Graphical user interfaces are useful for getting to know a program, and possibly for putting the finishing touches on graphs for publication, but scripts are infinitely more powerful, efficient and reliable. When properly commented, scripts are also self-documenting, although researchers should strive to keep a separate research journal. For smaller projects, presentations and teaching, researchers may even want to pursue a ‘literate programming’ (Knuth, 1984) approach that combines code for several programs, text for publication and documentation in a single document, from which intermediate tables and graphs as well as slides and PDF documents may be produced using either the Knitr package for R or the even more general Orgmode package for Emacs (see below, section on ‘Buildtools, revision control and other open source goodies’). However, while literate programming is attractive in principle, it may not scale well to larger projects.

Most statistics packages have simple script-editing capacities built in, but, in the long term, it is more efficient to use stand-alone text editors, which offer much more powerful editing features as well as syntax highlighting, proper indentation and basic project managing capabilities. One of the most quirky and powerful of these editors is Emacs (<https://www.gnu.org/software/emacs/>), which was first released in the mid-1970s and has been under active development ever since. Despite its age, interest in Emacs has surged in recent years, and many

quantitative social scientists swear by it. Emacs can be endlessly customised and extended, which can be baffling for new users. Cameron et al. (2005) provide a useful introduction, but documentation for the many more features and extensions is best searched on the internet. Psephologists may also want to install one of the configurations aimed specifically at social scientists that can be found online.

With the right set of extensions, Emacs supports almost every scripting language known to humankind, including the command languages of statistical packages such as Julia, OpenBUGS/JAGS, R, S-Plus, Stan, Stata and SAS. At a minimum, ‘support’ means syntax highlighting, indentation and checking for balanced parentheses. Moreover, Emacs normally gives access to the respective help systems for these languages and can find documentation for related functions. It can insert boiler plate code (e.g. loops) and can execute snippets of code or whole scripts. Emacs was designed as an editor for computer programmers and so has the ability to keep track of variables and look up the definition of functions across an arbitrary number of files, making use of text tools such as Diff, Grep or Find, and version control systems such as Git (more on them below). The more complicated the toolchain becomes, the more it shines, as R, Stata, Python and many other applications can be conveniently managed from a single keyboard- and script-centric interface.

Buildtools, revision control and other open source goodies

Ideally, there should be a separate script for each of the six steps outlined above ('Establishing a reproducible workflow'). Shorter scripts are easier to maintain, and it would be inefficient to re-run the whole process only to add a horizontal line to a table. It is also vitally important that data are only ever edited in a non-destructive way: each script must save its results as a new file, keeping the data collected and transferred in steps one and two in pristine condition. It is also good research practice to keep all files belonging to a given project in a directory of their own, and to create separate sub-directories for scripts, graphs, tables and data sets (Long, 2009).

Once a project grows beyond a handful of individual scripts further automation of the process or meta-scripting becomes a necessity because the individual jobs need to be executed in a certain order. In principle, a degree of automation can be achieved within the statistical package of choice itself: both Stata and R are capable of processing scripts that in turn ‘include’ or ‘source’ other scripts. Moreover, both programs have rudimentary infrastructure for starting external programs and thus can, at least in theory, manage a tool chain. In practice, however, it is easier and less error-prone to rely on an external scripting language, such as Python or the scripting language of the operating system’s native command line interpreter (shell), to manage complex workflows.

If some of the tasks involved are time-consuming or otherwise expensive (i.e. model estimation by numerical means or metered data acquisition from the internet), psephologists should rely on ‘build tools’: software that is normally used by computer programmers to compile (‘build’) complex software from hundreds of text files via a potentially large number of intermediary files. If a single text file is edited, it is normally sufficient to recompile a small fraction of the whole project that is directly affected by this change. Build tools can identify, manage, visualise and most importantly exploit such dependencies, thereby making substantial efficiency gains possible.

On average, workflows for software project are more complex than workflows for the analysis of electoral data by several orders of magnitude, but psephologists can still benefit from learning to use build tools. This is best illustrated by an example. Consider the following simple workflow:

- 1 Download (with R, or with a specialised program such as wget) a data set (say the European Social Survey) from the internet *if the file on the web has changed*
- 2 Save a relevant subset of the data after recoding some variables
- 3 Load the subset, estimate some complex model and save the parameters to a file
- 4 Illustrate the findings by
 - Producing a number of graphs from the parameters and saving them as separate files
 - Producing a number of tables from the parameters and saving them as separate files
- 5 Generate a PDF report with the document preparation system by processing a text file that includes the graphs and tables

For an efficient and manageable workflow, each task should be performed by a single program acting on a single set of instructions (either a script or simply a number of options and arguments submitted when the program starts). Moreover, each task takes one or more inputs and leaves behind one or more outputs.⁵ The way in which these individual tasks are listed makes it very easy to recognise the dependencies among them: if a new version of the European Social Survey is published, all steps must be repeated in that exact order. If, on the other hand, the researcher decides to change the coding of the variables (step 2), the estimator employed by the model (step 3) or the look of the graphs (step 4), only the subsequent steps must be repeated. Incidentally, the latter modification would not require rebuilding the tables: if the dependencies were visualised as a tree, both tasks would appear on the same level, as they are completely independent of each other. In a computing environment with sufficient resources they could be executed in parallel, thereby further speeding up the process.

Build tools such as the venerable Make program (Mecklenburg, 2005, generally available on Unix-like systems) and its many modern successors require that the dependencies are specified in yet another textfile. While this may sound like a chore, it is usually just a matter of writing down which script generates what files (‘targets’) from which inputs. Moreover, this helps to clarify and streamline the workflow. Once this set of rules is in place, the build tool will analyse the

dependencies and execute the tasks in the required order. After this initial run, targets will be regenerated only if the scripts or inputs from which they originate change.

A final tool that psephologists should borrow from the world of software development are revision control systems. Most researchers will be (painfully) aware of the value of automated backup systems, which retain a number of old copies to avoid the situation where a good backup is replaced by a corrupted copy. Modern systems usually provide a number of hourly or daily snapshots alongside increasingly older (weekly, monthly, yearly) copies. Revision control systems take this idea of snapshots one step further by retaining a complete history of changes to each (text) file in a project directory.⁶ Modern revision control systems, such as the somewhat unfortunately named Git (Loeliger and McCullough, 2012), can track the whole state of a directory and quickly reset all files in a directory to the state in which they were yesterday evening, or show which changes were made to a specific file since Monday night. They provide tools for finding the exact point at which some changes in the way the variables were recoded stopped the model from converging or brought about a dramatic change in the estimates further down the line.

But, most importantly, using a revision control system introduces another layer of reliability and reproducibility. Modern revision control systems cannot just easily revert unwanted changes to one's project files: they can effortlessly maintain an arbitrary large number of timelines ('branches') for a project directory. This is great tool for testing code and ideas: one can easily try out a variety of operationalisations, model specifications or graphical styles in various branches, once more recording all the changes made to the files, then switch back to a more stable line of development that represents the current state of the analysis and selectively copy over anything that worked. Revision control systems are based on the assumption that each of these changes should be documented in a comment and so strongly encourage the analysts to keep a log of the rationale behind the myriad of tiny decisions they take while analysing their data and presenting their findings.

Like many other tools discussed in this chapter, revision control systems have been used by computer programmers for decades. Their modern incarnations are designed to deal with millions of lines of code spread across hundreds of files, on which large teams of developers may work concurrently. Psephologists may well think that a system such as Git (which is relatively difficult to learn but can be tamed through a number of GUIs) is ridiculously overpowered for their needs. However, experimenting with one's code and data in a safe environment where each change, each experiment, is documented and can be reverted, modified and even re-applied at any later point is ultimately much more rational, rewarding and productive than the common practice of endlessly commenting in and out lines of code or creating lots of increasingly cryptically named scripts whose exact purpose we cannot remember after a couple of weeks.

THE INTERNET AS AN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR AND AN OBJECT OF ELECTORAL STUDIES

Infrastructure

Psephology has been transformed by the availability of large-scale comparative opinion surveys such as the ISSP, the EES and the Eurobarometer series (see chapter 41). The websites of CESSDA members and other large archives are now the default option for the distribution of these data sets, allowing speedy and cost-efficient proliferation of data, whereas physical media (e.g. DVDs or CD ROMs) have been phased out, unless particularly restrictive usage rules apply.

While the archives are unrivalled when it comes to providing documentation and long-term safe storage for large numbers of data sets, preparing one's data for a release through the archive system is seen as a chore by many researchers. Thus, there has always been a tradition of more informal data-sharing in psephology with friends and close colleagues. With the advent of the web, individual researchers and small teams began to put their data sets on personal or departmental websites. However, data on such sites is often difficult to find, because there is no central catalogue, and may disappear at any moment, because it is not backed up by a professional infrastructure.

Moreover, data may be stored in any number of formats and without even minimal documentation. The open source Dataverse project (<http://dataverse.org/>) and some related initiatives aim at solving these problems by providing means for the (semi-)automatic conversion, documentation, versioning and retrieval of data. They also provide globally unique identifiers and checksums to solve the problem of data integrity. Journals, research groups and individual scholars can easily create their own repositories to facilitate re-analysis and replication. Dataverse and similar software go a long way towards making data from smaller, often self-funded projects that would otherwise be lost to the scientific community available for secondary analyses. But they still rely on a professional and sustainable IT infrastructure. At the moment, this infrastructure is provided free of charge by Harvard University and some other global players. Whether they will continue to provide this service to the community if usage of the system picks up remains to be seen.

Besides traditional data archives and more individual repositories, countless government agencies and other public institutions around the globe have set up websites where they share parts of their records and hence have become data providers. Especially at the subnational level, the main problem with these sites is fragmentation. Even if they would adhere to common standards for their website design and the presentation of their data, finding and navigating hundreds or thousands of individual sites to collect, say, data on candidates in local elections is obviously inefficient and often infeasible. Thankfully, governments around the world have woken up to the potential value of free access to their data and are

implementing open data legislation. As a result, government-sponsored regional, national or even supra-national ‘portal’ or ‘data store’ sites, which gather and distribute fine-grained data from lower levels, are becoming more prevalent. While these initiatives are often primarily aimed at policy-makers and business communities, the social sciences also benefit from the emerging consensus that government data should be open in principle. For psephologists, the growing availability of geo-referenced electoral results and other statistical data (e.g. census or landuse data) is of particular importance.

In an ideal world, websites would offer the exact data set required by a researcher in a format that can be read directly into one’s favourite statistical package. In reality, data sets are often offered in the guise of Excel sheets or textfiles that need to be imported. While this is not too problematic, such files are often created ‘on the fly’ from an underlying database according to some specifications that need to be entered manually. If the same data set (or different variants and iterations of the same data set) needs to be downloaded more than a couple of times, it may be worthwhile to do this programmatically by means of a script. Moreover, there still exist (government) websites that present the required data not as a file for download but rather as a series of formatted tables on the screen, possibly in a paginated format. In these cases, researchers should consider writing a ‘scraper’ – that is, a small program that simulates the activities of a website user and stores the results as a data set. While Python has a whole suite of libraries that make it an ideal tool for scraping tasks, some modern packages for the R system offer very similar capabilities from within the statistical package. Munzert et al. (2015) provide an excellent introduction to ‘scraping’ and ‘mining’ the internet. While they focus on R, the techniques and standards they discuss translate easily to workflows that are based on other tools.

Finally, many service providers – among them a handful of government agencies – provide ‘application programming interfaces’ (APIs) to their data. APIs bypass the traditional website altogether. They represent complex and very specific mechanisms for interacting with the underlying database of a service as a series of simple commands for high-level programming languages such as R or Python. Using these commands, scripts can directly access these services without even simulating the activities of a human user of a website. From the point of view of the person writing a script, accessing a service on the internet is no different from calling a function that is hardwired into the respective programming language.

For instance, psephologists may have a variable that contains the addresses of candidates as stated on the ballot papers (a messy combination of names and numbers, possibly with typos). To convert these to proper geographical co-ordinates they would want to make use of a ‘geocoding’ service. There are APIs for various such services (e.g. Google Maps, Bing Maps and the OpenStreetMap project), which wrap the necessary low-level instructions into a simple function call. Usage limits and possibly payment options aside, switching

from one service to another is usually just a matter of applying slightly different functions to a variable. Using yet another API, the resulting coordinates could then be mapped to census tracts, for which a host of socio-economic and demographic data are available that could provide a rough-and-ready approximation of the respective environment the candidates live in.

The internet as an object

Since its inception as a research infrastructure, the internet has been thoroughly transformed. While the usual caveats about selective access and use apply, the internet's role as a political medium is becoming more and more relevant for psephologists. Current research is very much focused on political communication as it happens on social networking platforms, with Facebook, Twitter and Instagram being the most prominent ones. Scraping these sites with simple scripts would not just violate their terms of use but is virtually impossible due to their heavy use of interactive web technology, the networked nature of communication on these sites and the sheer volume of posts. However, once more there are APIs available through which these services can be mined programmatically. While limits apply, analysts will often find the free tiers perfectly suitable for their needs. Moreover, both Twitter and Facebook have strong research departments that are open to forming partnerships with social scientists.

Research into social-networked communication on the internet is currently dominated by computer scientists and linguists, who often operate without any underlying theory of social behaviour. Psephologists interested in this field will have to learn a whole host of techniques and concepts, and will have to link these with their own substantive interests. Grimmer and Stewart (2013) provide a useful introduction to automatic content analysis, whereas Ward et al. (2011) give a *tour d'horizon* of concepts in social network theory that matter for political scientists.

Using the internet for analysing conventional media sources is less problematic in many ways. Although many publishers aim at implementing pay-walls to secure their revenue streams, many mainstream outlets still put all or at least most of their content online. Moreover, Google, Microsoft and other companies have created aggregator sites that can be accessed programmatically. Using these sources, psephologists can retrospectively track the development of a given issue during a campaign or assess the tonality of media reports on a set of candidates. In short, using the internet and a scripting language, researchers can achieve most of what would have required a host of research assistants and an extensive newspaper archive (or an expensive database subscription) only a few years ago.

The Google-supported Global Data on Events, Location and Tone (GDELT, <http://www.gdeltproject.org/>) database takes this idea one step further. GDELT, which is based on older event databases (Gerner et al., 1994), aims at automatically

extracting information on actors and events from newswire reports and making them available on a global scale. The GDELT project is somewhat controversial, because its original founders fell out and because of worries over the quality of the inferences that are drawn from the raw inputs. However, the project, which has generated enormous interest in the International Relations (IR) community, has great potential for psephology, too.

CONCLUSION

From its very beginnings, electoral research has been a beneficiary and often a driver of technological and methodological progress in the larger field of political science. In recent years, this progress has accelerated: user-friendly software, ever faster computers and, last but not least, the proliferation of data mean that yesterday's advanced methods quickly turn into today's new normal. By and large, this chapter has argued that psephologists should continue to embrace technology in general and the open source and open data revolutions in particular. As the examples in the natural sciences (e.g. biology) show, psephologists can do more, and more reliably, if they think a little bit more like software developers and make use of freely available tool chains that have been tried and tested for decades in much harsher environments.

There is, however, a flip side. Technology is a valuable tool, but it can be a distraction, too, and psephologists should never lose sight of their core competency: the ability to put singular findings into a larger context, making use of nearly a century of theory-building. The world is full of 'data scientists', who will happily and rapidly analyse electoral data just as they would analyse any other kind of data. Trying to compete with them on a purely technical level would be a hopeless endeavour. As a profession, we can stand our ground only if we can base our own analyses on profound theoretical insights.

Notes

- 1 Pre-registration, a procedure that is becoming more prevalent in the life sciences and whose adoption in political science is now being discussed (Monogan, 2015), goes one step further by demanding that researchers submit sampling plans, outlines of the intended analyses, and mock reports to a journal that are peer-reviewed before they even begin to collect new data.
- 2 NUTS-1 corresponds to the 16 powerful federal states in Germany, to clusters of provinces, states, or communities that have been grouped together for purely statistical purposes in Austria, Spain, and The Netherlands, and does not exist at all in many of the smaller countries (e.g. Croatia, Denmark, Luxembourg, or Slovenia). The lower-tier NUTS-2 level is equivalent to the federal states in Austria, the autonomous communities in Spain, the Regions in France, and the Provinces in the Netherlands, which all have their own elected assemblies. In other states, such as Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Romania, or Slovenia, NUTS-2 areas exist solely for the purpose of national planning and attracting EU funding, and citizens will be unaware of their existence. Similarly, NUTS-3 may be a district

- (Germany), a group of districts (Austria), a province (Denmark, Spain, Italy), a region (Finland), a statistical region (Slovenia), an island (Malta), or even non-existent (Cyprus, Luxembourg).
- 3 For reasons of data protection, usually only an approximate geo-reference of the respondent is recorded.
 - 4 Being neighbours is a somewhat fluid concept, as these shared influences will be stronger where districts are physically closer and less pronounced, yet still present where a pair of districts is further apart. This scenario is very different from nesting, where there are clearly delineated, fixed groups of lower-level units.
 - 5 Ideally, the number of inputs and outputs should be as low as possible (i.e. by writing one individual script for every graph that goes into the final document), but that can become very tedious and is not always feasible.
 - 6 Unless they are kept in sync with a remote repository, revision control systems operate on local files only and hence do not protect against data loss through hardware failure. Researchers still need to make sure that they back up their working files as well as their revision control repository regularly.

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Conclusion

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At various times, compliant citizens turning out to vote for one or another of the alternatives prescribed by politicians and political parties have been regarded as a sight both endearing and enduring by some observers. On other occasions, including in recent years, discontented denizens (not) voting, supporting anti-establishment candidates or parties, and/or engaging in protest actions have been viewed as a spectacle both disturbing and disorderly by various witnesses. The sight and the spectacle, their sources, distributions, and consequences, and their implications for the principles and the practices of democratic governance have been ongoing themes in electoral behavior research. Accordingly, its contributions, in terms of whether and, if so, what conclusions – facts – exist, are a timely question. This question is addressed by this chapter. It discusses some basics, some observations, and some (in)conclusions about electoral behavior research.

SOME BASICS

Perhaps prior to, and certainly in the aftermath of, World War II, the political science discipline experienced two major and closely related developments. Motivated in part, but not exclusively, by the inability of political science to explain, let alone to predict, the fall of democracy and the rise of Nazism in Germany, the behavioral approach came to advocate the use of theory and the collection of data to explain the behaviors of people as the basis of governance (see, for example, Dahl, 1961; Easton, 1953, 1969; Eulau, 1963). Closely attending this development has been the evolution of electoral behavior research.

At present, an ongoing program of electoral behavior research is well documented. Major studies have been conducted and much data have been made available to many analysts in many countries, including both established and emerging democracies. Many chapters, books, and articles have been published by professional presses, by general journals, and by specialty journals such as *Electoral Studies*, *Journal of Elections*, *Public Opinion and Parties*, *Political Behavior*, and *Political Parties*. At least four reviews of election studies and three compilations of electoral behavior research have been produced (see Franklin and Wlezien, 2002; Katz and Warshel, 2001a; Scarborough, 2000; Whiteley et al., 1992; see also Arzheimer et al., 2016; Dalton and Klingemann, 2007; Leighley, 2010).

SOME OBSERVATIONS

Given the above, some observations are in order about electoral behavior research in terms of theory, methodology, data, and opportunity. As is well known, one pioneering *theory* (theoretical framework) assembles social groups (such as class, ethnicity/race, gender), social context (such as social communication networks), and social–psychology (notably the attitude of party identification as the ‘unmoved mover’) in a ‘funnel of causality’ that affects voting behavior (Butler and Stokes, 1969; Campbell et al., 1960; Campbell et al., 1954). However, this framework did not go unchallenged. A major theoretical alternative brings together candidate and issue performance evaluations with party identification in an updated ‘running tally’ that informs electoral choice (Downs, 1957; Fiorina, 1981; Key, 1968).

One, another, both, or neither of these frameworks have been complemented by other theories or models involving electoral behaviors. Despite the institutional-behavioral divide perpetuated by various academic units and in various conference programs, how contexts and institutions affect, and are affected by, behaviors has been addressed in some models (see, for example, Dalton and Anderson, 2011; Thomassen, 2014; this *Handbook*, and Whiteley et al., 2010; see, more generally, Campbell et al., 1966; Easton, 1965; Munger, 2000). Other models focus on group, media, and related influences; on attitudinal, ideological, or opinion formation and change; on information updating; and/or on economic, issue–priority versus reward–punishment, and spatial versus valence/performance politics voting (for discussions, see, for example, Clarke et al., 1992, 2004; Dalton, 2014; this *Handbook*).

These developments have been accompanied by related ones. Advances in *methodology* include not only correlation and OLS regression analyses but also discrete choice, multi-wave panel, structural equation, time series, and other approaches to analyzing electoral behavior data. Developments in *data* involve aggregate statistics and/or local contexts in earlier research to survey data

and/or national settings in studies starting in the 1950s and the 1960s in America, Britain, and elsewhere (see, for example, Curtice, 2002; Katz and Warshel, 2001b; McGuire, 2001). Single (post-election) or two-wave (pre-post election) data collections have been enhanced by important innovations capable of capturing both short- and longer-term dynamics in people's attitudes and behaviors. These innovations include the year-long multi-wave panel design of the 1980 American National Election Study, and the rolling cross-section design for studying campaign effects in national elections in the United States and in Canada (see, for example, Johnston, 2001; Johnston and Brady, 2002). In a third design, these two innovations have been combined with monthly cross-sectional surveys having large numbers of respondents who could be further included in multi-wave panels over the life of a parliamentary government (the Continuous Monitoring Survey/CMS; see, for example, Whiteley et al., 2013: 283–5). At present, electoral behavior data collections include survey and related designs, with the former featuring cross-sectional or panel components and interviewer-conducted (face-to-face, telephone) and/or self-administered (mailback, internet) questionnaires.

Pace these theoretical/modeling, methodological, and data developments, multiple theories or models continue to vie for analytical attention in electoral behavior research. With regard to the conduct of inquiry more generally, this matter is due, in part, to rare rejection of inferior theories or models in favor of better-performing ones that can explain what the former do and more: that is, what they do not. Rare rejection occurs for reasons having to do with a-theoretical distortions, methodological errors, and data limitations. With respect to a-theoretical distortions, theoretical frameworks for empirical models should be, but often are not, commensurate (see, for example, Feyerabend, 1963; but see also Popper, 1963 and Kuhn, 1970a, 1970b). Theoretical frameworks should inform, and thereby enable the specifications of, empirical models, but may not do so. Empirical models ignore the counsel of theory as a set of logically related hypotheses in several ways. Empirical models incur breakdowns in research design when inconsistencies exist between the theoretical framework and the stated hypotheses, between the hypotheses and the data analysis, and between the analysis and the inferences drawn (e.g. dynamic theories, static hypotheses, and one-time cross-sectional data analysis). Empirical models can omit relevant hypotheses and their variables and/or neglect robust research results (e.g. public attitudes about candidates' character and competence in vote choices). Empirical models may salvage core hypotheses by introducing 'rescue hypotheses' to counter disagreeable evidence (see, for example, Lakatos, 1977). They relegate theoretically relevant hypotheses/variables to the status of analytically convenient controls (e.g. economic, political, or social attitudes). And empirical models that are cast as direct-effect single equations can, but not always do, work to privilege a preferred hypothesis whose preferred explanatory variable then guides analysis revealing that the preferred explanatory variable has significant power, and thus the inference that the preferred hypothesis cannot be rejected. In empirical modeling, the quest for a

strongly exogenous variable capable of unleashing a cascade of causality may be a search for a mythological creature in the labyrinth of endogeneity–exogeneity.

At various times, methodological practices further exhibit other errors. These include, but are not limited to, use of invalid and/or unreliable measures, conditioning on the dependent variable (e.g. election or referendum vote choice by party identification), mis-assumptions of distributional form and/or dynamic properties of the data, selection of inappropriate model fit criteria/diagnostics or modeling approaches given the theoretical framework(s) and the data collection(s), and/or selection of inappropriate data.

Such distortions, errors, and limitations must be avoided in all sciences, including electoral behavior research. To do so, several research-improving *opportunities* are available. The opportunity to (re)learn the purposes of empirical modeling (data-processes comprehension, theory testing, outcome forecasting, policy analysis); its (mis)steps (involving formulation, selection, estimation, and evaluation); and, accordingly, why and how models/theories are not often rejected and replaced, has long existed in empirical model discovery (Hendry and Doornik, 2014: chapters 1–2; see also King and Keohane, 1994). The opportunity to learn why not to use revised model estimates to make strong empirical inferences about initial theoretical hypotheses is central to the Theoretical Implications of Econometric Practice (TIEP) practice (see, for example, Clarke and McCutcheon, 2009; see also Hendry, 1980). The opportunity to learn how to specify underlying assumptions that have complex relationships, and thereby to conduct robust analyses that buttress strong implications, is provided by the Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models (EITM) program (see Granato et al., 2010, 2011).

Opportunities for committed researchers to acquire basic skills and skill updating in research design, measurement modeling, and data analysis are also available. These opportunities include periodic (re)acquaintance with research fundamentals and better use of data-analytic advances, such as confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling that provide both measurement and causal path-analytic modeling with estimates of fit and of uncertainty. These opportunities are available to academic and to non-academic students, as well as to faculty, in several forums. Instructional courses are offered by home institutions. Instructional sessions are offered by, for example, the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), the University of Essex, and the Empirical Implications of Theoretical Modeling (EITM) program. And instructional sessions, including methodology workshops, are offered by professional groups, including the Political Methodology Society.

In addition, data-collection opportunities are noteworthy. To describe, explain, and understand the institutional–behavioral nexus, and the dynamics of public attitudes and behaviors, electoral behavior research now needs a data-collection strategy that has at least four major purposes. It reaches small or especially larger

numbers of respondents, and it is versatile in terms of accommodating questionnaire refinements. It captures both expected events, such as budget speeches, elections, and election campaigns, and referenda and referendum campaigns, as well as unexpected events, including economic downturns and upturns, wars, and terrorist attacks. It permits the investigation of rival models of direct and indirect effects of both long- and shorter-term forces, propelled by expected events, by unexpected ones, and by economic performance, contextual factors, and policy delivery, on the dynamics of public attitudes and behaviors. And it produces near real-time quality datasets that can be merged with other data collections involving, for example, economic performance indicators, geographic–spatial and other contextual characteristics, and public policy delivery. These four purposes are central to the three-pronged data-collection strategy involving multi-wave and intra-campaign panels with continuous monthly surveys, as described above. And this particular strategy has been greatly enabled by a high-quality internet survey platform. Among other developments, internet survey data collection has become part of several election studies (e.g. The British Election Study (BES) 2001–2005–2010; the Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project (CCAP); the Cooperative Congressional Election Study) and it is becoming part of several national censuses (see, for example, Statistics Canada, 2016; United States Census Bureau, 2016).

There is one other opportunity that merits special mention. This opportunity puts *democracy*, *elections*, and *turnout* into electoral behavior research and thereby situates this research in the life and times of democracy. Much is known, or thought to be known, about what democracy and what elections mean to many government officials urging new constitutions with open elections in transitional regimes, observers, and theorists. And, for many, democracy is worthy of both celebration and condemnation. With respect to the latter, [d]emocracy ‘used to be a bad word. Everybody who was anybody knew that democracy in its original sense of rule by the people or government in accordance with the will of the people would be ... fatal to individual freedom and to all the graces of civilized living’ (Macpherson, 1965: 1; 1977). And, for many researchers, elite–public differences in democratic beliefs and policy preferences, as well as levels of public confidence in, (dis)satisfaction with, support for, and/or trust in democracy, its institutions, and its officials are familiar (for a review, see, for example, Dalton, 2014: chapter 12).

But, to date, little is known about what democracy and what elections mean to ‘people’, and, accordingly, whether their meanings are (in)consistent with elite, participatory, or other major theory (see, for example, Ginsberg and Stone, 1986; Held, 2006; Kornberg and Clarke, 1992). Electoral behavior research can overcome this knowledge gap by its improved use of theoretically informed and well-fitting measurement models of people’s views of democracy in terms of, for example, (in)equality, order, participation, and rights, and of elections in terms of process, mandate, and/or accountability (see Kornberg and Clarke, 1992: 63–70, 178–83).

And, although it is widely recognized that the viability of democracy and the integrity of elections depend largely on the frequency of voting, election turnout has received much less and vote choice much more attention in electoral behavior research. This puzzles. Choosing how to vote is not independent of deciding whether to vote. Turnout trends have moved downward, albeit unevenly with occasional rebounds, in many democracies (Clarke et al., 2016: 99; Dalton, 2014: 41). And forces that drive election turnout have not been ignored in political participation research, which has developed and assessed various explanations of people's engagement in electoral, communal, and protest activities (see, for example, Barnes et al., 1979; Clarke et al., 2004: ch. 7; Dalton, 2014: ch. 2–4; Verba and Nie, 1972). More society-oriented explanations tend to emphasize civic voluntarism, relative deprivation, and/or social capital, whereas more individualist explanations tend to feature cognitive mobilization, (modified) rational choice, and/or general incentives (for discussions, see Clarke et al., 2016: ch. 5; Clarke et al., 2004; 2009). The extent to which one explanation wants to tell, or several explanations want to contribute to, the story of election turnout is overdue for more theoretical and analytical attention. In today's world, with ongoing and real-time developments involving grants of voting rights and forces of democratization, and with public economic and political unrest, we cannot miss a huge opportunity to investigate the meaning of democracy, the meaning of elections, and the forces driving turnout among people in both established democracies and emerging ones.

SOME (IN)CONCLUSIONS

This chapter poses the question of what contributions – in terms of whether and, if so, then what conclusions – facts – have been produced by electoral behavior research. It attempts to answer this question by discussing some basics and some observations as the bases for some (in)conclusions about this research. These discussions suggest that electoral behavior research has not yet produced conclusions or facts that attain the status of scientific law. Relatedly, it has not fully embraced the practice of rejecting several inferior theories or models and replacing them with superior ones. But, as previous chapters in this *Handbook* and other writings acknowledge, electoral behavior research has produced many contributions and real knowledge about, for example, the contextual/institutional-behavioral nexus, campaign events, people's attitudes, beliefs and values, their party identifications, candidate/leader assessments, economic evaluations and issue attitudes, and other longer- and shorter-term forces that drive people's political choices. And, as these previous chapters and this chapter discuss, research-enhancing opportunities are available to electoral behavior research.

These contributions and opportunities should serve notice to claimants, including many but not all journalists, politicians, and other observers, that electoral

behavior research is unnecessary because they know why people do or do not vote and how they vote. Although ‘expressions of interest are not declarations of expertise’, these claims do sound a clarion call for more attention to be paid to how electoral behavior research is conducted, to what its public value is, and to what its methods of communicating to non-academics are.

As a final note, it is important to remember that in electoral behavior research, *The American Voter* (1960), *The Responsible Electorate* (1968), and *Political Change in Britain* (1969) were truly novel works at one point in time. In the fifty-plus years since then, electoral behavior research has become a healthy but still young science. And fifty-plus years is a very short interval in scientific discovery about compliant citizens and discontented denizens in the life and times of democracy.

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