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POLI 003

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Political Decision Making

There is substantial evidence that static decisions are generated by intuitions and voter's wanting to preserve their beliefs while dynamic decisions by strategic reasoning. Intuitively a voter's first choice is the candidate that most closely aligns with their political preferences however if that candidate is not available then strategic voting takes place , for instance a voter may choose a less favored candidate and attempt to influence their policy stances. Political Psychology answers the question of why people vote and who they vote for. The behavior of a voter may be influenced by institutions, cultures, and social norms (Sears, 2013). The static decision of "who should I vote for?" may be determined by a cost benefit analysis which entails the benefit of a candidate winning, the probability that individuals vote will make a difference, and the cost of the vote.

Political socialization refers to the process by which people develop their politics, attitudes, and world view mainly influenced by institutions such as the media, schools, and states. Institutions such as the media, structure of the government, and political organizations influences the decisions of a voter furthermore a voter's socioeconomic standing influences what media sources they consume, the type of government structure they hold favorable such as small or large government intervention, and what political party they are affiliated with. The dynamic decision of "should I change my vote from last time?" takes extra effort because a voter must

consider facts, determine the credibility of those facts, do a cost benefit analysis and then change their vote.

General Augusto Pinochet dictatorship from 1973 to 1990 radically changed institutions therefore influencing how people vote thenceforth. In judges beyond politics in democracy in dictatorship we learn that judges in Chile continued to endorse the authoritarian regime. The judicial institution was structured in a way that discouraged independent thinking and accepted the status quo (Hilbink, 2011). The judiciary system had a role in the elections of leftist presidents Frei Montalva 1964 election and 1970 election of Salvador Allende particularly as rapid change and social conflict emerged voters paid attention to how the judiciary resolved problems. The judiciary took a hands off approach allowing the authority of the executive to supersede. The question of who to vote for is influenced by institutions in this case the judiciaries decision to rule in the favor of president Frei who put in motion popular leftist policies may have allowed allende to be contender since the voter's had certainty that the policies they believe in would be upheld and not undermined by the judicial system.

In Chile the question of "Who should I vote for" in the 1990 election of Patricio Aylwin was influenced by the 1988 plebiscite and because of his strong human rights platform. The Chilean people under Pinochet faced human rights abuses and other atrocities therefore were influenced to vote for someone who stood against such actions. The judicial system continued to support the military and the right and this subsequently influenced who voters voted for. Aylwin's willingness to reform the judiciary system and attempting to hold those who committed human rights abuses while president influenced voters and the question of "should I change my vote from last time?". Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle succeeded in reforming the judiciary using

Aylwing's early efforts. The reforming of the judiciary led to more leftist policies and society such as official recognition of atrocities committed by the military regime under Pinochet. In March 2000 Ricardo Lagos a socialist was elected and subsequently socialist leaders had success in Chilean politics.

Sears, D. O., Huddy, L., & Levy, J. S. (2013). *The Oxford handbook of political psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hilbink, L. (2011). *Judges beyond politics in democracy and dictatorship: Lessons from Chile*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.