

Electoral Behaviour in India

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Outline

- 1 Theories
- 2 How do Indians vote?
- 3 Studying voting behaviour using surveys

Quiz!

What is the single most important issue guiding people's voting choices?

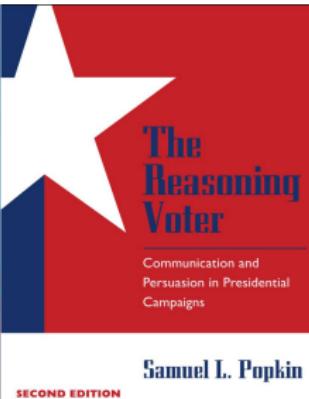
Section 1

Theories

The American Voter Revisited

Michael S. Lewis-Beck
William G. Jacoby
Duncan Snodgrass
Herbert F. Weisberg

Foreword by
Philip E. Converse



Retrospective Voting in American National Elections
MORRIS P. FIORINA



ERIC R.A.N. SMITH

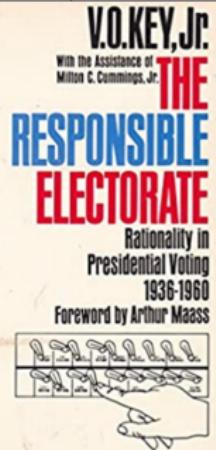
THE UNCHANGING AMERICAN VOTER



The People's Choice

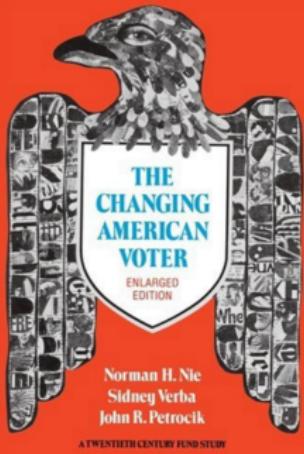
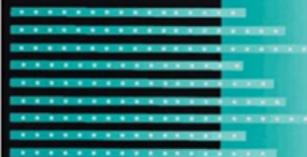
HOW THE VOTER MAKES UP HIS MIND IN A PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

Paul F Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson,
and Hazel Gaudet

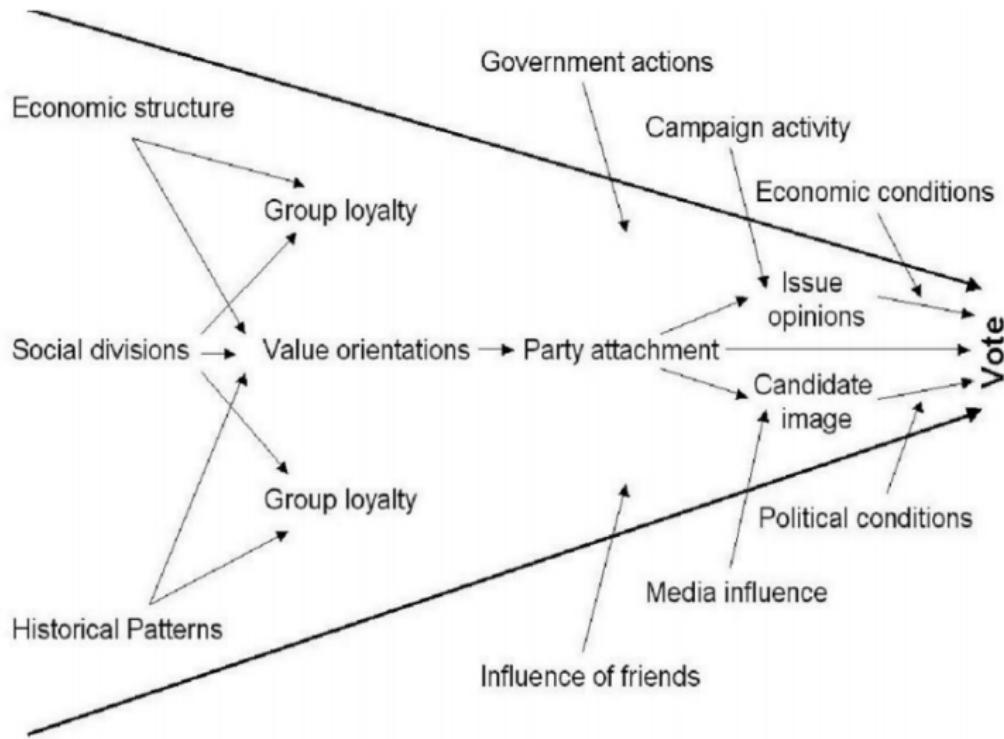


THE NEW AMERICAN VOTER

WARREN E. MILLER
J. MERRILL SHANKS



Funnel of causality



Major theories of voting behaviour

- Sociological Model: Identified with the Columbia school - focuses on influence of social factors like group affiliation (**The People's Choice; Personal Influence**).
- Psychosocial Model: Identified with the Michigan school - focuses on effect of partisanship or party identification (**The American Voter**).
- Rational Choice Model: Identified with the work by Anthony Downs (**An Economic Theory of Democracy**) and argues that voters seek to maximise the utility of their vote and parties seek to maximise electoral gains.

Section 2

How do Indians vote?

Major theories and framework

Preferences and Political accountability

- Ideology
 - Spatial model/Downsian model - preference based on ideological proximities between parties and voters.
 - Median voter theorem .
 - Ideology & Identity : Statism & Recognition - Chhibber and Verma
- Partisanship
 - People identify with certain parties and their loyalty stays intact despite political circumstances.
 - Partisan Heart and Minds - Green, Palmquist & Schickler
- Personalistic voting
- Ethnicity, caste, religion
 - In-group favoritism.
 - Ethnic voting - Chandra
 - Co-religiosity and voting behaviour : Heath et al.

- Programmatic outreach: voters reward performance on civic/economic and developmental issues.
 - Improving public goods: evidence from limited experiments across states
 - Public provisioning of private, tangible goods
- Clientelism/Patronage Politics: Quid pro quo - Political parties earn support by the distribution of public or private goods to targeted groups of voters
 - Kanchan Chandra - India as a patronage democracy -> ethnic favouritism .
 - Brokers and Dallas
 - Naya Neta's - Anirudh Krishna
 - You can't buy a vote : Meanings of money in a Mumbai election- Bjorkman
 - Electoral Handouts in Mumbai Elections -: Cost of electoral competition - Chauchard

Section 3

Studying voting behaviour using surveys

- **Why use surveys?**

- Is there utility beyond poll predictions? Use in academia, policy-making
- Extensive thematic spread
- Consistency of questions gives temporal comparability

- **Kinds of surveys**

- Pre, Post and Exit
- Clarifies issues salient to making voting decisions - short term and long term factors.
- Snapshot of group behaviour at macro level - group affiliation, groupthink, partisan sorting .

National Election Studies

- Conducted by the Lokniti-Centre for the Study of Developing Societies , NES are a series of nationally representative surveys conducted during before and after Lok Sabha elections.
- Consistent data on electoral choices available from 1996 onwards.
- High quality data gathered through a network of state representatives.
- Emphasis on random sampling, representativeness and vote integrity (through hidden ballot).

National Election Studies

Studying voting behaviour involves going beyond the question of who people vote for. Major themes in the questionnaire :

- Issue based voting
- Current events
- Public opinion on institutions
- Welfare scheme benefits and credit attribution
- Ideological and identity related questions
- Religiosity related questions
- Political participation
- Voting choice and partisan affiliation
- Leadership effect
- Demographic details
- Media exposure

- **Limitations of survey research :**

- Biases associated with questionnaire design, sampling
- Sacrifice depth for scale
- Difficult to maintain comparability across waves
- Expensive
- Data crunching not a short-cut for in depth research!

- **What does the future hold?**

- Prohibitive costs reducing/technological changes, allows for greater frequency of large scale surveys
- Survey experiments
- Longitudinal panel-based studies to understand nuanced changes in opinions

Why is it difficult to study Indian voters ?

- Conceptual limitations: diverse country, post-colonial experiment, nascent democracy
- Data paucity: lack of longitudinal data, methodological concerns
- False binary of methods : conversation between disciplines needs to move beyond simple criticism and towards greater synthesis and rigour
- Lack of trained data researchers
- Lack of open data access

Way forward for electoral studies in India

- Fill gaps in the data: Increasing ease of doing surveys allows for more data
- Indian voters not a mysterious entity! Possible to develop epistemology of Indian voters.
- Silent voters, swing voters, fluctuations, volatility - concepts developed elsewhere are even valid for the Indian context; only needs careful examination.
- Increasing media exposure, political churn and demographic changes is already producing a new Indian voter and novel political engagements.