

Sociological and Rational Voting Outline for Recitation

A. Key Terms (5 Minutes):

Utility – measure of benefits. Can be specified in any way, in Downs it is only selfish and only regards politics.

Postmaterialism

Materialism

Cross-cutting cleavages

Decline of Class

Sociological Voting

Issue Voting

Anthony Downs

Spatial Models

Directional Voting

Proximal Voting

Others?

B. Rational Voting (20 Minutes):

Go over the “take home points” of Proximity and Directional Voting. Did they get Downs? Some notes about the model that may be worth checking if they understood.

- a. Go over Handout (See last 2 pgs – I would just print both one 1 sheet).
- b. Rationality of means not ends. Maximizing output for a given input or minimizing input for a given output. A) always makes a decision, b) can rank preferences, c) transitivity, d) chooses highest pref, e) would do the same again. Also, given new info, can update to achieve higher utility. For Downs, he considers a shortened utility function for the agent (seeks to min distance between party and agent’s ideal point – irrational is when the political behavior does not help attain political goals efficiently)
- c. Info is costly, lack of it can lead to errors, which is different from irrationality. What does the rational agent do in an irrational world? Think about distribution of types, form a best response (cognitive hierarchy models)
- d. Re-election goal - parties seek to max pol support. Yet they don’t seek to entrench themselves or change rules of game (this is obviously somewhat contradictory when we think about firms seeking to monopolize the mkt)
- e. State is diff than market because of its power to coerce. View of state as benevolent social welfare maximizer, or self-maximizer?
- f. Self interest axiom of all agents (further restriction on utility function)
- g. Politicians – seek income, prestige, power. Don’t seek to carry out policies. Policies used to win elections, not vice versa. Social welfare is a byproduct (like firm seeks profits and in doing so pleases consumer).
- h. Voters estimate expected performances of the two parties, pick the one that yields the highest utility. Voters can use info from the incumbent to make the estimation. This calculation is unique to each individual. Voters don’t care about policies per se, but their utility.

C. Sociological Voting (20 minutes):

- **Discussion questions:**

1. Like Class, some would argue that males and females have different life experiences, and that this would cause differences in political preferences.
 - a. Do you agree with this statement? Why would you find support for a gender gap in some situations and others not?
 - b. Is there a causal argument about Sex that does not exist for Ethnicity? i.e. do known biological/social differences between Sexes cause different policy preferences?
 - i. External/internal defense issues – physical strength yields diff priorities, esp in war
 - ii. Health care – pregnancy has spillover effect to society, state corrects the “market distortion”
 - iii. Social Security for elderly – females outlive males by 5 yrs
 - iv. Childcare/education – females traditionally play a more active role in childcare activities
 - c. Why is gender not a politically salient cleavage in the way that class is/has been? Think about “objective” versus “subjective” group membership, and the role of shared experiences as opposed to using groups as a reference point.

This might be fun for them, but probably off topic of the lecture and readings more: - Although I bet they'd have a lot to say about it.

2. How has technological innovation changed the nature of sociological voting?
 - a. How might have social groups cued group members on political issues in our grandparents' time?
 - b. TV and national news homogenized cues from the media or political elites.
 - c. Internet created nuanced sources of information for niche groups, yielding more heterogeneous cues.

D. Contrast 2 Types of Voting (if any time left, or let them take home):

If you were a Sociological Voter, how would you (or your family) vote? Do you belong to multiple social groups, and are they cross-cutting or coinciding for vote choice? If you were a Rational Voter, would it be a different choice? Are the 2 types of voting mutually exclusive?

Rational Voting

A utility, or happiness, equation can be made up of any number of components, unique to each individual. For example:

$$Utility = b_1 * after\ tax\ income + b_2 * number\ of\ sunny\ days + b_3 * attractiveness\ of\ president + b_4 * friend's\ happiness$$

the 'b's are simply different weights attached to these items. Downs restricts his model to a utility function that has a) political items and b) self-interested items in it. This is in order to simplify the model because we don't need the other components to talk politics.

$$Utility = b_1 * after\ tax\ income + b_3 * attractiveness\ of\ president$$

Suppose we have two parties, this is my utility equation above, and $b_1 = b_3$ (so I place equal weights or importance on my after tax income and the attractiveness of the president). I think about my expected utility from different candidates, who offer me these utility amounts:

	Democrats	Republicans	Libertarians
My after tax income Utility	(5)	6	(10)
Attractiveness of candidate Utility	(9)	2	(5)
Total Utility	(14)	8	(15)

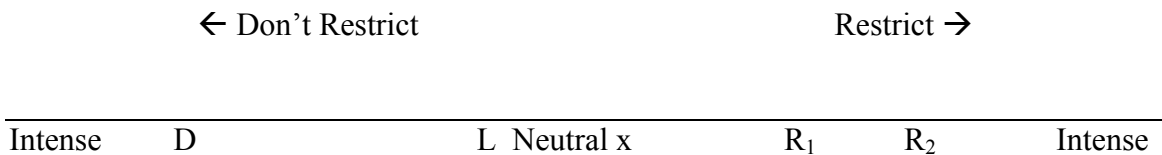
I pick the Libertarians because my total utility is the highest. I get the best "package deal." Since the Republicans are the incumbents, I know for sure what my expected utility is. I make a personal conjecture about the values for the other candidates. Note that this type of calculation is done somewhat subconsciously in real life.

Imagine there is only one issue in the election: abortion rights. D and R are where I have located the parties' policy platforms on the line below from less to more restrictions on abortion, and x is where I would locate my ideal policy. According to Downs, I would vote for the Democrats, because their offering is *closer* to my ideal policy (*Proximity Voting*). The line is divided up by different policies.

Less restrictions L D 0 x R More restrictions

For Rabinowitz and MacDonald’s *Directional Voting*, imagine that instead our line is divided up such that anyone located left of the Neutral has a policy “don’t restrict” and to the right “restrict.” The *distance* from the Neutral to the person is the *intensity* of feeling toward this issue, not different policies. So below, both the Libertarian and the Democrat have the same policy “don’t restrict,” but the Democrat feels very strongly about the issue, whereas the Libertarian does not. In the Directional Voting theory, I get negative utility from any candidate that is not on my side of the Neutral, i.e. is not in agreement with me. I get positive utility from any candidate on my side, in agreement with me. The more intense I feel about the issue, the more utility I get from having a candidate on my side. The more intense a candidate on my side feels about the issue, the more utility I get as well.

Below in the example, I would only vote for a Republican, because they give me positive utility since we are in agreement. In fact, the more intense the Republican feels about the issue, the more utility I get from them. So I like R_2 better than R_1 . Note that, even though I am not very intense on this issue, and the Libertarian isn’t either, I do not vote for her because she is not in agreement with me on the issue.



$$Utility = (candidate\ Location - Neutral)(My\ location - Neutral)$$

PARTIES AND PARTY SYSTEMS

I. Key Terms (5 min)

Ask them if they have any questions regarding the following terms:

- Party (see Josh's definition)
- Elite/Cadre Parties (Duverger)
- Mass Parties (Duverger)
- Catch-All Parties (Kirchheimer)
- Single-Issue Parties
- Party System
- Single-Party System (Blondel, Mair)
- Two-Party System (Blondel, Mair)
- Multi-Party System (Blondel, Mair)
- Open vs. Closed Party System (Mair)
- Societal Cleavages (Lipset & Rokkan)

If they don't specifically ask about the terms "single-party system," "two-party system," "multi-party system," and "open vs. closed party system," ask them to define these terms before we begin the lecture on the effects of different types of party systems. (They will need to understand these terms to make sense of the lecture.)

II. Political Parties (10 Minutes)

1. Review functions of Political Parties

--What key functions do political parties play in a democratic regime?

--To what extent do you think that political parties in the US do a good job of performing these functions?

2. throw questions on different Organizational Types of Political Parties

--Our readings for this week identified a number of different organizational types of political parties: elite/cadre parties, mass parties, catch-all, etc. What are these different types of political parties? How do they differ from one another?

--During the post-WWII period, the advanced industrial democracies have shifted (to a greater or lesser extent) away from the mass party model and toward the catch-all party model. Is this development good or bad for democracy in these countries, and why?

III. Party Systems (15 minutes)

1. The Origins of Party Systems

--The readings and lectures present four distinctive different views about what shapes the nature of a given country's party system. What are these different perspectives?

Societal Cleavages

Economic development (Kitschelt)

Rational Choice (Aldrich)

Electoral Rules

--The Lipset and Rokkan reading for this week was particularly dense and may have been hard to follow, so let's focus for a while on that argument in particular.

--What are the two types of “revolutions” in Western Europe discussed in this reading?

National Revolution

- Subject vs. dominant (center vs. periphery); conflict between central nation-building culture and subject populations in peripheries
- Church vs. state (secular vs. religious)

Industrial Revolution

- Landed vs. industrial (urban vs. rural)
- Owner/Employer vs. tenants laborer

- National revolution engendered conflicts over values and cultural identities; industrial revolution engendered conflicts between economic interests.
- What four types of sociocultural cleavages developed as a result of these revolutions?

See above

--IF THEY ASK: What factors influenced how these social cleavages were translated into party systems in Western Europe?

1. traditions of decision-making
2. channels for expressing/mobilizing protest
3. costs and benefits of forming alliances in system
4. possibilities, implications and limitations of majority rule

OR

History – 3 crucial junctures:

1. Reformation (16th and 17th century): leads to 1st type of cleavage (nat'l vs supranat'l religion; national language vs. latin)
2. Democratic Revolution (1789 et al) leads to 2nd type of cleavage (issue: secular vs. religious (Roman Catholic Church) control of education)
3. Industrial Revolution: leads 3rd type of cleavage

Note: these three explain most of variation across countries

Final “revolution” is universal suffrage, which leads to 4th cleavage, and is present across all countries in form of socialist and class-based parties

Party systems “froze” with extension of franchise in 1920s.

BUT POINT TO STRESS:

- This is very contextual based theory; path dependence, about history of the country.

2) Kitschelt / party systems in new democracies

- What is the primary factor that Kitschelt think is important? (Whether or not you have a functioning market economy)
- Go through different models
 - o Highlight is that the AXIS are where the voters are located
 - Idea: parties have to locate where the voters are
 - Kind of Downsian

PROBLEM: --What, if anything, can Lipset and Rokkan's or Kitschelt's articles tell us about party systems outside Europe?

IV. Party Systems group discussion (15 minutes)

Split students into three groups: Single Party Systems, Two Party Systems, Multiparty Systems

Each group has 5 minutes to come up with an answer to each of these questions:
How Democratic, Stable, Efficient, Representative is their system?

ANSWERS:

I. Democratic

- A. One party – many argue this is not
- B. Two party
 - 1. Clear who will rule
 - 2. But are there enough choices?
- C. Multi-party
 - 1. More choices
 - 2. But can you select policies
 - a) Who will be in coalition?
 - b) What policies will they push?

II. Stability

- A. One party
 - 1. Pro: no conflict
 - 2. Con: regime stability???
 - a) May have to do with nature of opposition
 - b) If fragmented, no problem
 - c) If unified, may be unstable
- B. General Sense of two-party systems as most stable
 - 1. *Why do you think that is the case?*
 - a) Can always form government
 - b) Tends to keep out extremists
- C. *Why might multi-party be more stable?*
 - 1. Represents more viewpoints
 - 2. More continuity

III. Efficiency in producing policy

- A. Single party – not responsible, but few constraints to producing policies
- B. Two party – easier to change, as expect single-party majority governments
- C. Multi-party: more continuity, less fluctuation between extremes; potential for problems of decision-making in coalitions.

IV. Representative

- A. One party – usually not very representative
 - 1. BUT: Can be competitive at the district level.
 - a) E.g Uganda and “village-level democracy” under NRM’s “no-party system”
- B. Two party
 - 1. Kind of depends on what you think causes party systems
 - 2. If cleavages, and there is only one cleavage, then two could be very representative
 - a) Workers party
 - b) Capitalist party
 - 3. But if you think it is Downsian
 - a) Two parties move to center
 - b) Not very representative at all
- C. Multi-party
 - 1. Clearly, has the advantage of representation

**NYU – Introduction to Comparative Politics:
Outline for Recitation “Partisanship”**

1. LIST OF TERMS

Socio psychological theory
Funnel of causality
Party identification / partisanship
Socialization
Political cues/informational shortcut
Perceptual screen
Running tally
Standing decision
Normal vote (Converse)
Cognitive mobilization
Alignment, de-alignment and realignment

2. Theories of Partisanship [15 minutes]. Basically make sure that you cover the ID's and bring them into context.

(a) Michigan School? [5 minutes]

- Long-standing partisan loyalty, socio-psychological, socialization.
- Partisanship as identification as stereotype in the mind of voters
- How to find partisanship? Ask about self-definition and group attachment and not just “Which party do you feel close to?”

(b) Rational Choice? [5 minutes]

- Partisanship as an even stronger information short-cut, running tally.
- Tries to explain differences in importance of parties and partisanship over time.
Dealignment, Re-alignment

(c) Social Identification? [5 minutes]

- Relates back to Michigan School but with more focus on the group attachment part
- Party represents a certain group I feel I belong to that is why it is the party closest to me.
- More difficult to entangle with batteries of group-attachment related questions (To which group do I belong, Do I feel insulted if my group is insulted, do I feel represented by the party?).

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3. Studying Partisanship: Experiment [30-50 minutes]

(a) What do we study and why is it interesting? [optional if time permits]

- What is **partisanship**? How does it come about? How does it change? What are its effect on political attitudes and political behavior? Make reference to the three theories of partisanship.
- What is **partisan dealignment**? Get definition and relate to the idea of sociological voting. What are its consequences? Volatility, Split-ticket voting, Decline in participation. What are its causes? Different social role of parties, changes in the mass media, dissatisfaction with government performance, rise of single-issue interests and number of particularistic interest groups most importantly, the idea of “cognitive mobilization”

(d) What does Tucker/Brader look at? Do they look at Partisanship? [5 minutes]

- Is there anything left in terms of party attachment even though Russia is now a authoritarian regime? What's with partisanship in multi-party systems?
- Do Party cues affect the opinion individuals have on issues?
- Do individuals have an opinion on a certain issue if cued to their parties position?

(e) What is an Experiment? [10 minutes]

- Contrary to statistical studies in which we use already existing data, in experiments the researcher intervenes deliberately in the data generation process. That is, the researcher organizes the delivery of a “treatment” to subjects, as in an experiment in biology or medical science. (Imagine we want to try a drug on rats).
- Controlled environment: one where the only difference between treatment and control conditions is the treatment itself.
- Subjects are split between treatment and control group in order to be able to generate a clean estimate of the effect of the treatment, and thus a causal inference.
- Randomization/random assignment to treatment and control groups. The researcher makes sure that the subjects in treatment and control group have the same characteristics in order to obtain a valid comparison between the two groups.

Clarify the terms treatment, treatment group, control group. Get their thoughts on if we can have a “real” experimental situation like in natural sciences having human beings as subjects. Does being in an experiment

changes their behavior already? Is that a problem? Is it not a problem because we compare Treatment to Control group and not to non-participants?

(f) What is the set-up of Brader/Tucker's experiment? [20 minutes]. Go through the wording of treatments in detail.

- **Determining Partisanship:** Is a having a most preferred party, a party an individual would call “my party” similar to partisanship in the sense of the three theories applied in the U.S.? Are these questions similar to the question “Would you call yourself a Republican, Democrat, Independent, etc.”? Why, why not? What is different in multi-party systems in terms of survey-methodology?
- **Treatment Party Cues:** What is a single party cue treatment/ multi-party cue treatment (“Your party said...”, answer range from support to oppose for single party cues, different answers relating to the parties for multi-party cues)? What is given to the control group (A bill was proposed and reads...)? Is multi-party cues an appropriate way to study partisanship in multi-party systems? Too fuzzy? Great if we still find results? What should we control for in addition (political sophistication)?
- What did they do with subjects having no party preference (Communist Party)?
- **Selection of Issues/Bills:** What about the selection of issues? Do party cues really have some “work to do” if contentious issues broad up or does the like or dislike of a certain proposal for followers of just one party drive the whole effect? Do issues have an effect on opinion giving and opinion taking (with the party) by themselves if they are more contentious than others?

(g) What are the findings? [optional if time permits]

- Parties seem still to matter in public opinion formation.
- Party cues make subjects more likely to support a policy proposed or preferred by their party.
- Party cues make it more likely that subjects give an opinion on an issue.

(h) Are you convinced by this findings? [optional if time permits]

- **Validity:** Are we really measuring “partisanship”? Is taking a certain opinion now based on the same other factors which made the subject preferring a particular party (now and in the past)?
- Are the findings internally valid and externally valid? Why, why not?
- You might go into problems of research design, such as looking for effects in subpopulations ex post rather than ex ante.

- Key point is that research is hard and experiments, though very powerful, also have their limitations. We need to consider all the evidence, from all data and methods – the more information the better.

NYU – Introduction to Comparative Politics.

Outline for Recitation. Economic Voting & Strategic Voting.

1. LIST OF TERMS [10 minutes]

Incumbent

Retrospective voting

Prospective voting

Sociotropic voting

Pocketbook voting

Divided Government

Clarity of Responsibility

Referendum Model

Transitional Model

Individual level survey-based analysis (micro)

Aggregate Analysis (macro)

Strategic Voting

2. CONDITIONAL ECONOMIC VOTING & CLARITY OF RESPONSIBILITY [45 minutes]

The following exercise requires that students have (at least) a clear understanding of the material covered in Powell & Whitten (1993) as well as Tucker (2005).

- Split the class in 6 groups [about 4 students per group].
- Hand out the **exercise paper** and give them time to read it carefully.
- Go over the main points of the exercise
 - o Be sure that they properly identify the key differences between the institutional scenarios.
 - o Ask, again, if they want to clarify any conceptual issue.
 - o Each group has to discuss the six scenarios and write their answers down **[15 minutes]**
- After the discussion, assign each group one of the countries. They will have to present their arguments to the class. Give them a couple of minutes to refine their arguments for the country assigned. **[30 minutes in total]**

3. Strategic Voting [Rest of time, if students stay (what they usually do)]

The following exercise requires that students have an understanding of what Cox (1997) is talking about. The aim is to illustrate that it is not always a voters best response to vote for the most preferred alternative and the amount of strategic voting is a function of the institutional framework.

In this little game we vote upon three alternatives. My suggestion would be something unpolitical to avoid a leftist bias (since a lot of them seem to deem it appropriate to be a liberal in college). Let's say the university wants to make meaningful use of the tuition paid by students and invited the whole class for lunch. We vote upon which food to get and the options are Burgers, Pizza, or Sushi. What we need to bring to class is small pieces of paper, basically a ballot.

- Hand out the ballots and make them vote on the three options without any further comments.
- Make a student collect, count, and write down the results on the board.
- Hand out another set of ballots and make them vote again.
- Collect, count, and write down again.
- Now, discuss if results have changed, why people changed their voter, etc.

Finally, bring it in the context of electoral systems: Which system would allow for such an updating of information (two-rounds run-off)? If it is not a two-round election, why are there still only two real options in many plurality systems? Is there another way of information transmission used by voters (polls, campaigns, etc.)?