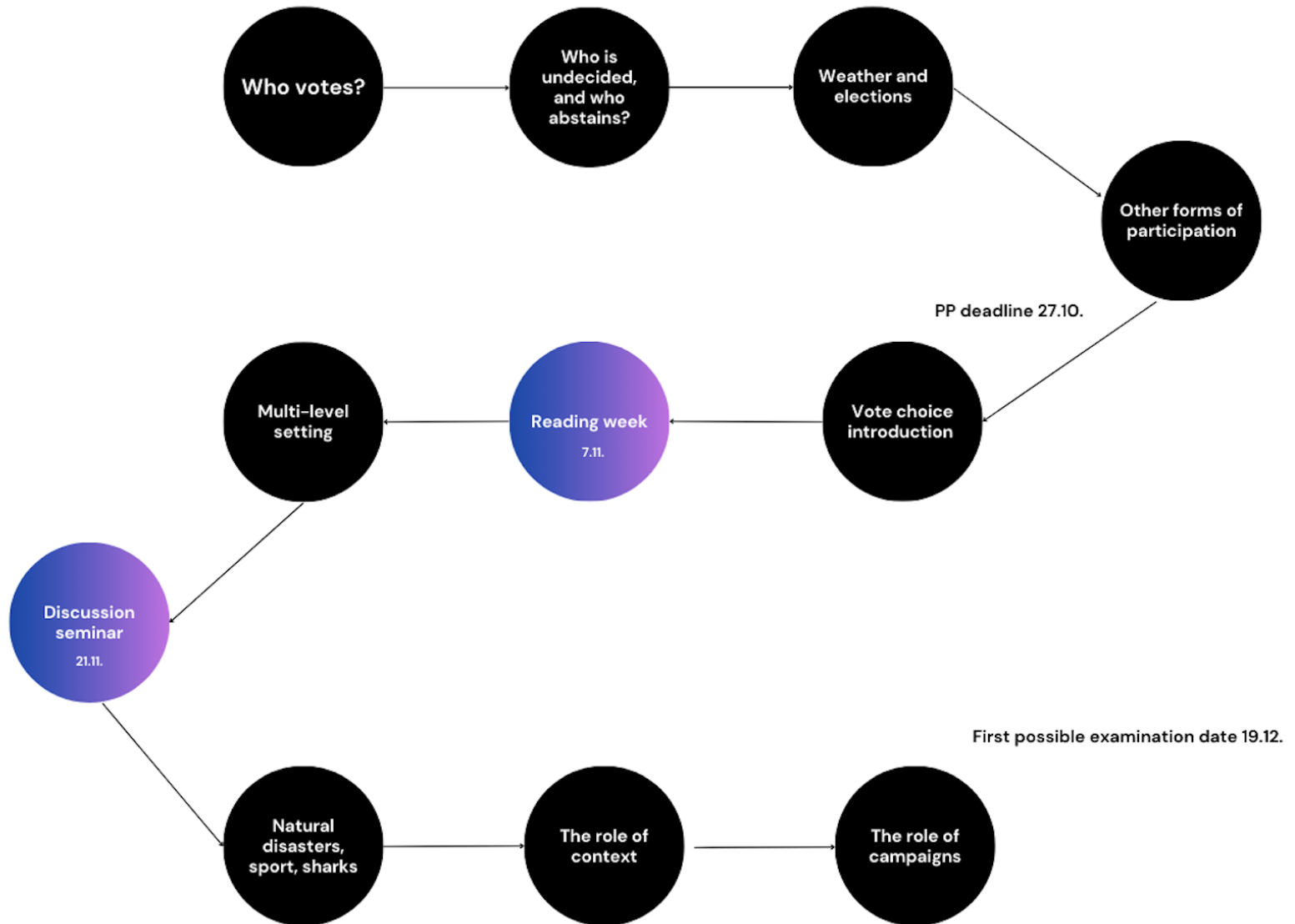


Elections and electoral behavior



M U N I
F S S

Introduction to the vote choice

Long-term factors determining voting behaviour

Jakub Jusko

Introduction

- **Definition:** Vote choice as the decision-making process in which voters select candidates or options.
- **Why it matters:** Helps predict election outcomes, understand political dynamics, and gauge democratic engagement.

Voting behaviour as the product of complex, overlapping influences—identity, social group, and rational interest—that shape, but don't fully define, how we vote. No single factor or theory can fully capture this complexity.

Why study vote choice?

- **Relevance to democratic functioning.**
- **Insights into political preferences.**
- **Implications for party strategies and voter outreach.**

- **Long term factors:**
 - Ideology
 - Party identification
 - SES and class
 - Religion and ethnicity
 - Geography
- +
Contemporary political systems factors

Theoretical foundations

- **Michigan Model:** Emphasis on party identification.
- **Columbia Model:** Sociological perspective - class, religion, and family.
- **Rational Choice Theory:** Voters as rational actors making cost-benefit decisions.

Theoretical foundations

Columbia Model – Lazarsfeld, Berelson – *The People's choice*

- Representative sample surveys – Ohio 1940
- Emphasis on social characteristics of voters
- Campaign → reinforcement of early deciders, motivation of latent predispositions of others
 - ↳ 1) class; 2) race/religion; 3) region (urban/rural)
- Cross-pressures

BUT...

Theoretical foundations

Michigan Model – Campbell et al. – *The American Voter*

- Emphasis on individual attitudes + identification with political parties
 - 1) Psychological identification with parties as with other identities
 - 2) This identification is a long-term component, and it persists through swings in voting
 - 3) Identification is important not only directly (vote choice) but also indirectly (influence on attitudes)
- Identification \neq prior voting
- Stable over time (but can change)

BUT...

P.S.: *The American Voter Revisited* (Lewis-Beck et al.)

- Members associating with the group vote in accordance with the group

Theoretical foundations

Rational Choice Theory

- Derived from political economy – several political-economic theories: Kenneth Arrow, **Anthony Downs (spatial model)**
 - 1) The party that will do best is the party that voters' the ideological space closest to where most voters are also located – assuming, that is, that voters vote for the party closest to them in the ideological space. (in the USA, UK in the ideological middle – median voter) => The role of the voters' **utility**
 - 2) Parties that are located elsewhere would always do worse.

BUT...often not working -> more a reference point
+ valence of the candidates/parties
+ information about parties and voters' ideology

Factors associated with the vote choice

Ideology

“Politics is a complex and confusing arena of modern life” (Lipman)

- Complicated world => ideologies as a tool for orientation
- “a set of beliefs or principles, especially one on which a political system, party, or organization is based” (Cambridge)
- Operational vs. symbolic ideology (Ellis and Stimson 2009)
 - O: coherent set of attitudes and beliefs
 - S: self-identification with ideological labels, such as left or right, or with groups denoted by such labels, such as liberals or conservatives
- Top-down vs. bottom-up perspective
- Unidimensional vs. multidimensional

Ideology

- **Unidimensional**

- ↳ French Revolution -> conflict between stability and progress

- ↳ Right (Conservative, keeping the system, order, individualism, capitalism, nationalism, fascism)

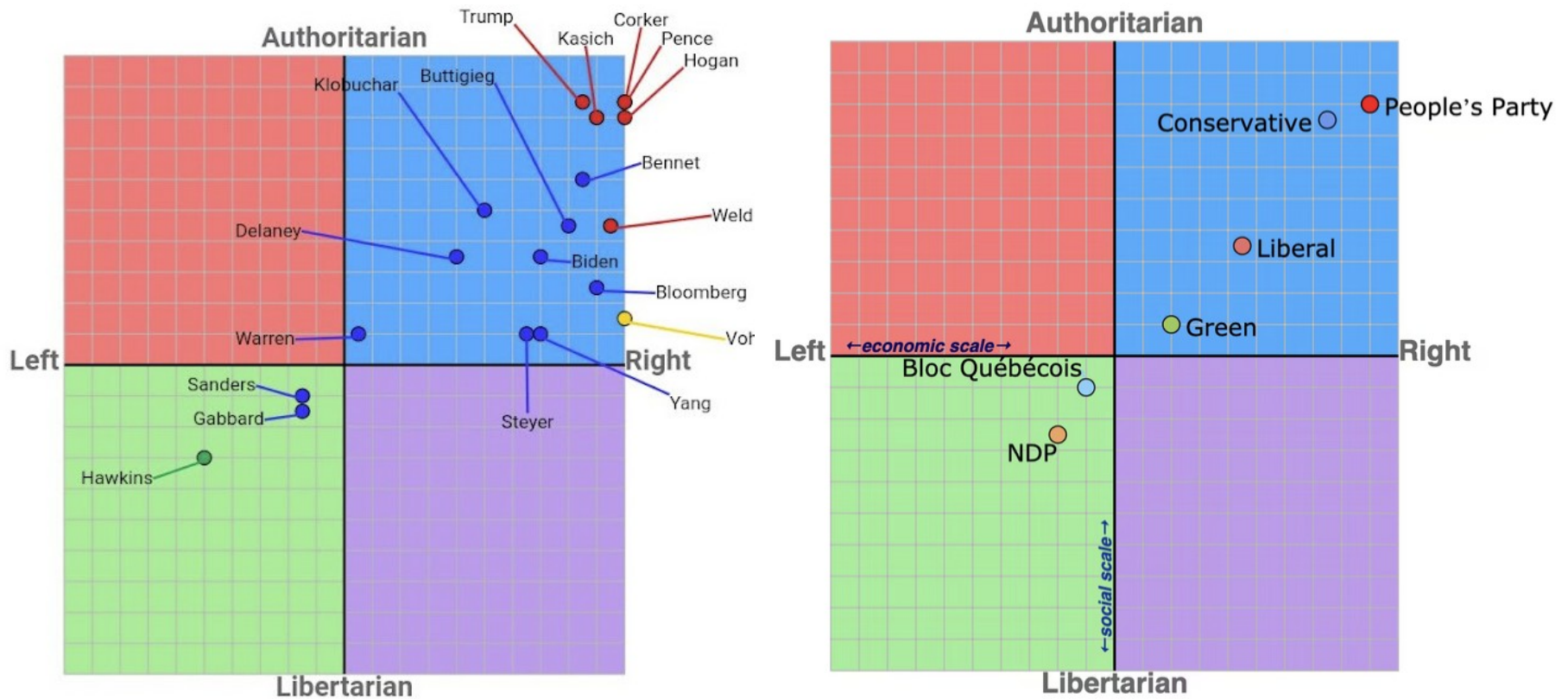
- ↳ Left (Progress, system change, equality, solidarity, protest, opposition, radical, socialism, communism)

- **Multidimensional**

- Economic

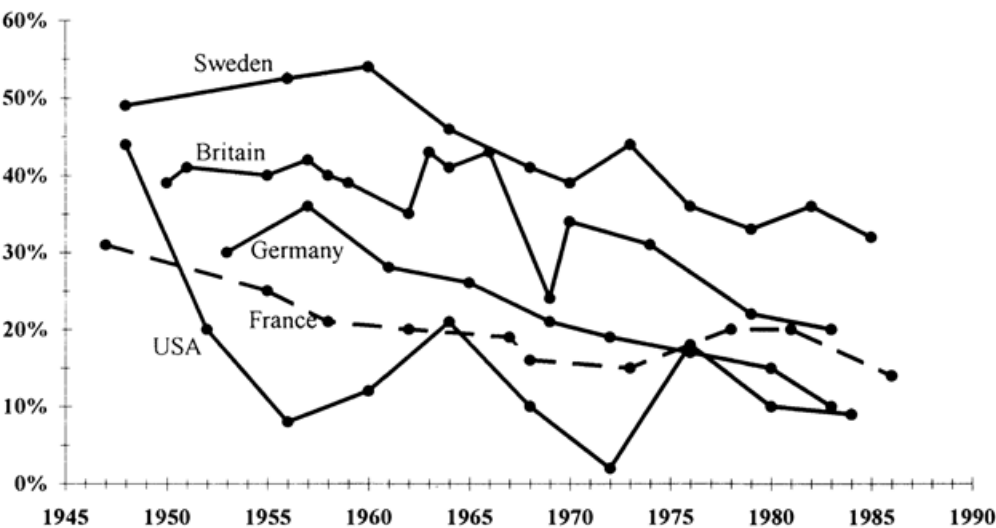
- Social, post-materialist, GAL-TAN,...

Ideology

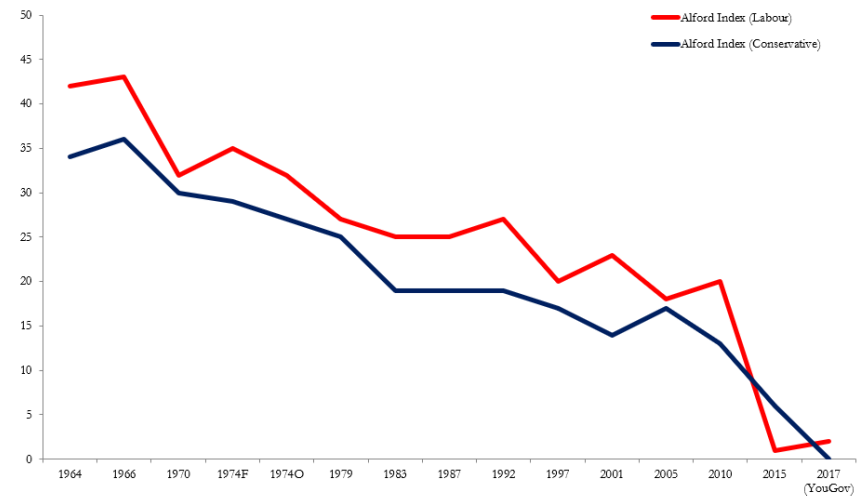


Class and socioeconomic status (SES)

- **Class** – can mean different things (occupational classifications, employment status (e.g., owner versus employee), income, education,...
- Class voting -> classical studies and the competition between working class (left-wing) and middle-class (right-wing)
- The Alford Index – the percentage of manual workers that voted for left-wing parties minus the percentage of nonmanual workers that voted for these parties



The Alford Index in Britain 1964-2017

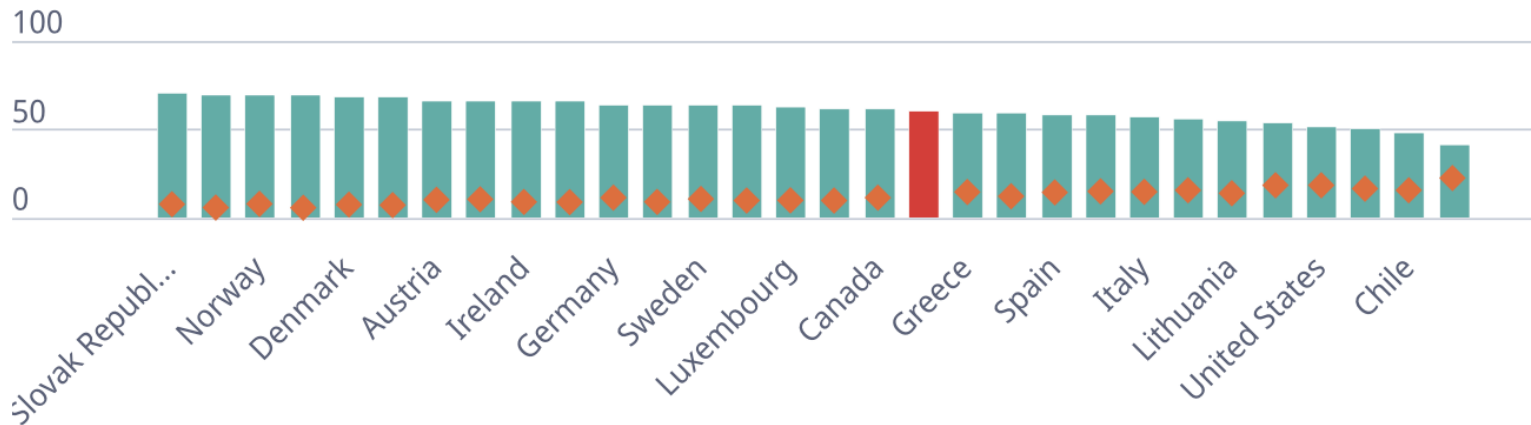


Class

The middle class

As % of the total population, by income group, 2022 or latest available year

■ Middle-income ◆ Income-poor



Note: The middle-income group is defined as people living in households with an equivalised median household income between 75% and 200% of the national median. The income-poor are those below 50% of the median. Results refer to the year 2022 or closer available year, which is 2021 for Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Israel, Korea, Netherlands, Slovenia, United Kingdom and Norway, 2020 for Germany, Italia, Lithuania and Poland, 2019 for Canada, Luxembourg, Spain and Switzerland, 2018 for Australia, France and Slovakia, 2017 for Chile, and 2016 for Czechia, Estonia, Finland and Greece.

Source: OECD calculations based on data from the Luxembourg Income Study Database.

Religion

- **Religion** similar line of argumentation than class
- Bottom-up approach – urbanisation, education, economic development changes, blurring of religious divisions
- Top-down approach – political elites determine the relevance of religion to political choice through their strategic considerations
- Religion in a general decline (80') vs. the rise of religious issues
 - ↳ However still important compared to class (Netherlands, USA, France), also newer democracies (Poland, Spain,...)
- Shift from long-term party loyalties to more fluid issue-based voting -> class (and religion) important for issue positions (not party voting per se)
- Research – from describing the decline to understanding the reasons for voting





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INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

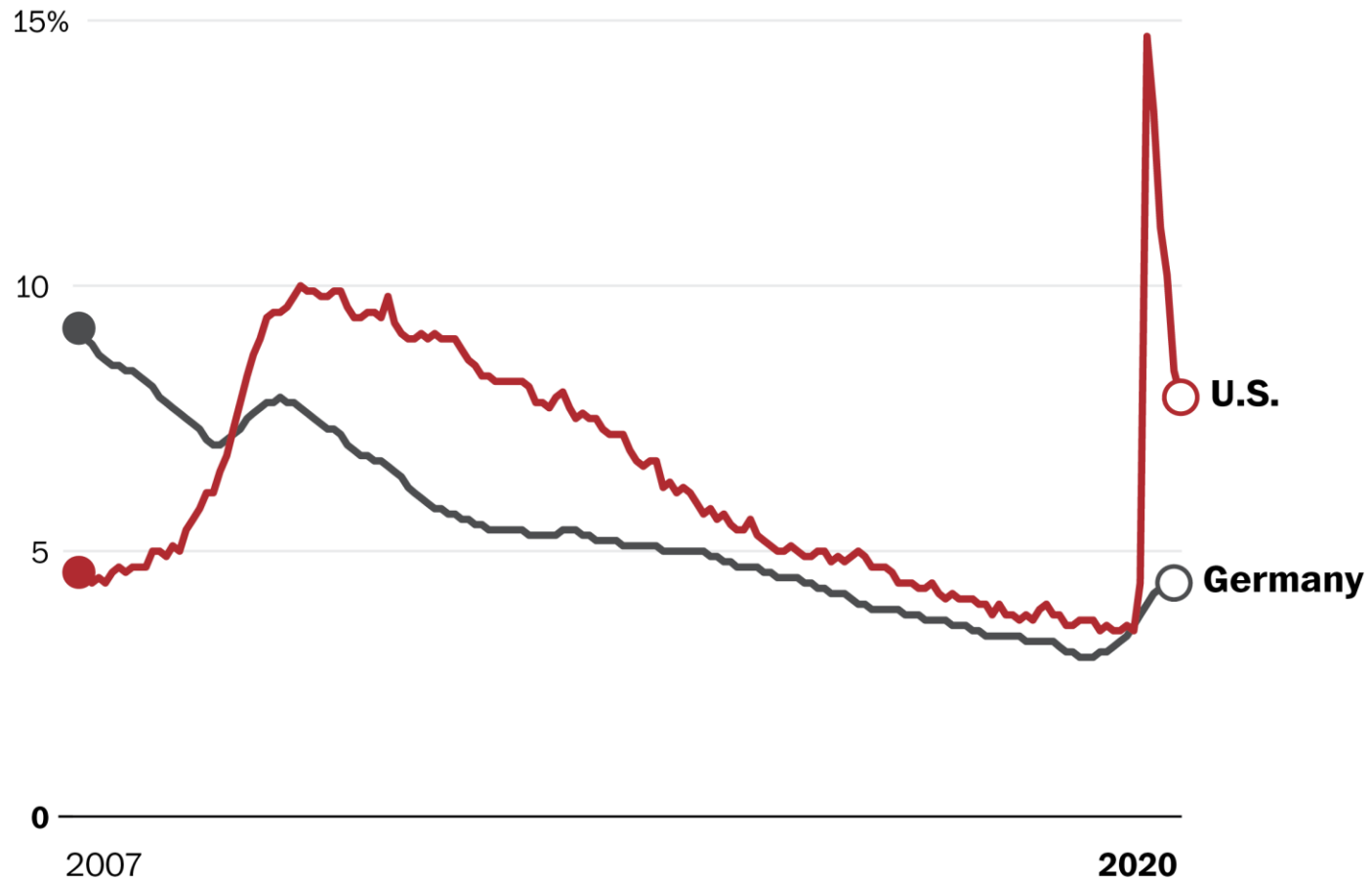
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Party identification

...as a sense of personal attachment which an individual feels towards a party (of their choice)

- Party identification helps to shape choices directly as well as indirectly - it helps to make sense of the information we receive
- Example: how party identification may help to filter economic news
- Behavioural changes: campaign activity, consistency voting, early decision
- Also: a way of locating for people in the system, associated with interest in politics and elections (and turn out)
- How it arises? Socialisation vs. habituation
- Role of geography of voter

Unemployment rates



Note: Seasonally adjusted and harmonized

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

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Contemporary political systems and new reality

The decline of party loyalty

- Role of social changes and political changes in the society

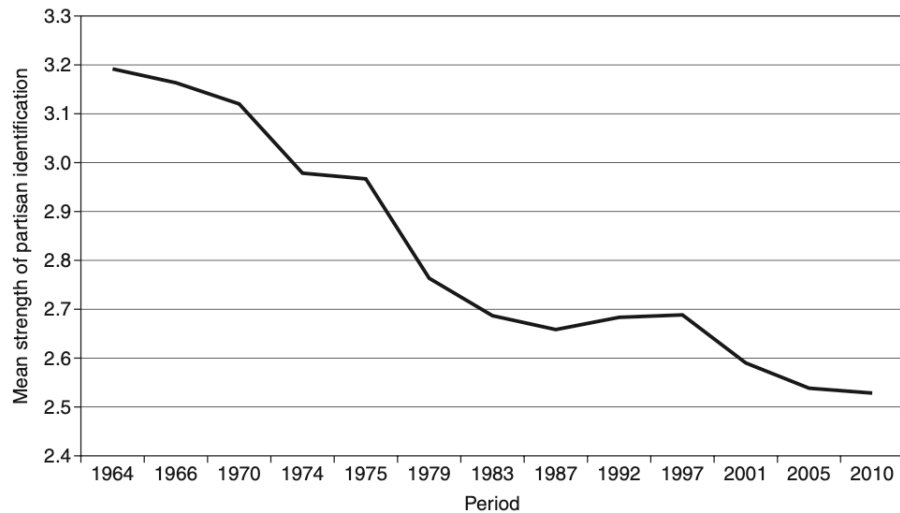


Figure 13.1 Strength of party identification in the UK, 1964–2010

Source: British Election Study, 1964–2010.

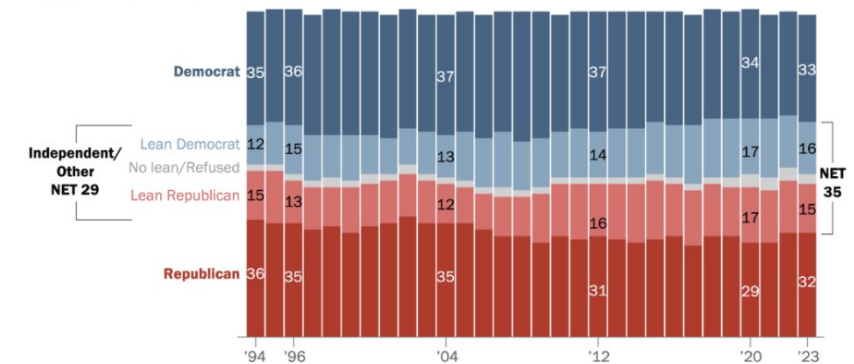
Note

Strength of party identification is measured on a 1–4 scale; where 1 = no party ID; 2 = not very strongly; 3 = fairly strongly; 4 = very strongly.

Partisans, independents and partisan leaners among U.S. voters

Partisans, independents and partisan leaners among U.S. voters

% of registered voters who are ...



Note: Based on registered voters. Telephone data adjusted for survey mode; details in Appendix A.

Source: Annual totals of Pew Research Center telephone surveys (1994–2018) and American Trends Panel annual profile online surveys (2019–2023).

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The decline of party loyalty

Examples:

- Shift toward personality-based voting in France (e.g., Macron).
- Volatile voting behaviour in post-communist countries.

Personalized politics: Evidence from the Czech and Slovak Republics



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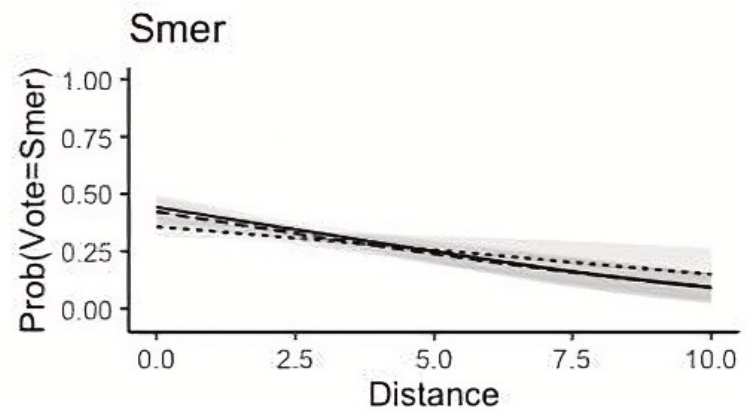
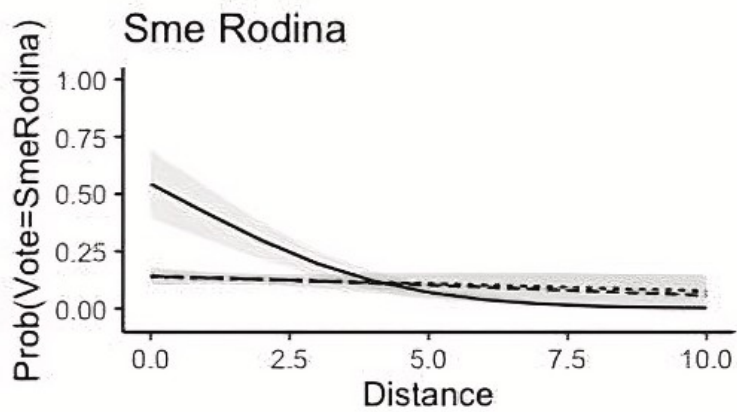
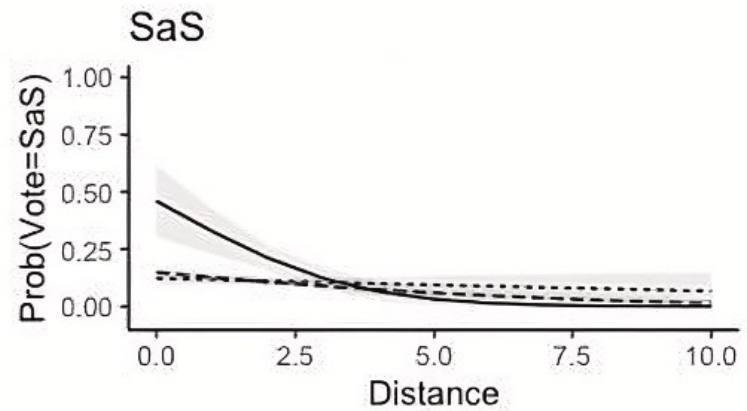
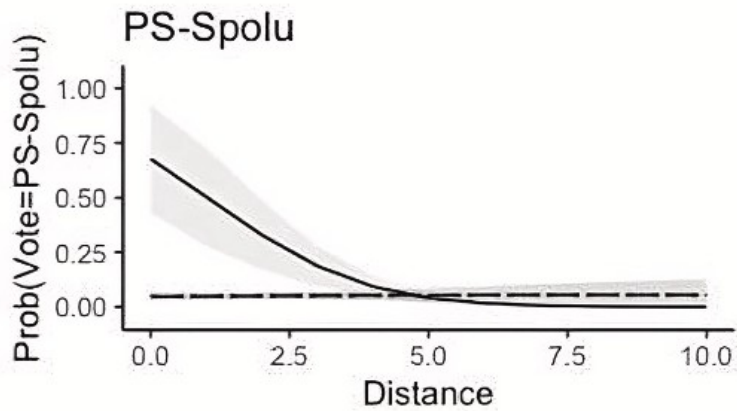
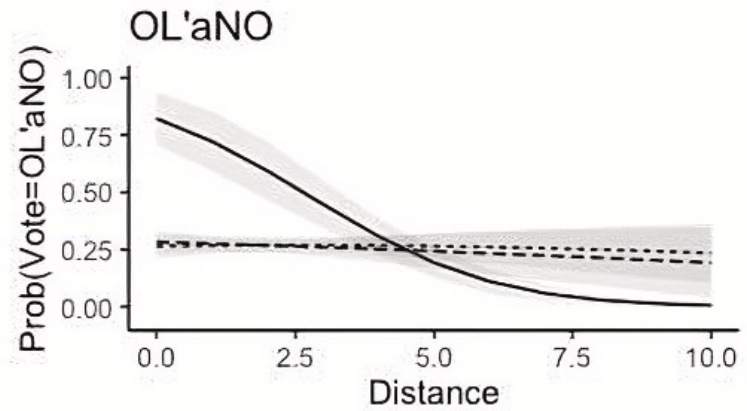
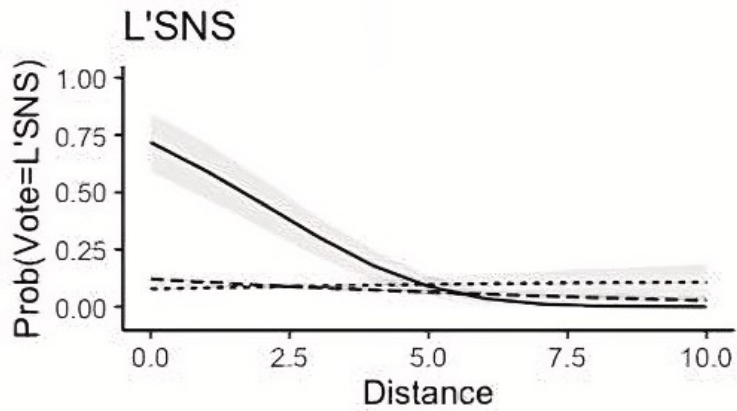
ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Political parties
Political party leaders
Ideology
Voting
Personalization
Czech Republic
Slovakia

ABSTRACT

What role do political party leaders play in individual vote choice? Recent literature argues that leaders are increasingly important for decisions at the ballot box. Moreover, scholars suggest leaders may be particularly consequential in volatile, under-institutionalized party systems, like those of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Accordingly, we investigate the extent to which leader evaluations matter for individual voting decisions, and whether these evaluations are more consequential than ideological proximities between voters and parties. We also explore whether leaders matter more for leader-centered, ideologically blurry, and populist parties. Through a comparison of the 2017 Czech and 2020 Slovak elections, we find that leader evaluations are strongly associated with voting decisions and that these evaluations tend to be more consequential than ideological proximity. We also show that leaders are more important for parties with strong “brands” – those that have most differentiated themselves from their competitors.



New socioeconomic realities

- **Impact of globalization:** How global economic shifts affect voting behaviour
- **Examples:**
 - Economic restructuring in post-industrial regions
 - Increased support for populism in economically declining regions
- Economic shocks significantly influence political attitudes and voting behaviour, with negative shocks generally increasing support for left-leaning policies and redistribution (Margalit 2019). BUT decrease trust in political institutions, potentially driving voters towards populist parties or disengagement
- Regional economic factors, such as long-term structural changes, impact of the Great Recession, and current economic conditions (regions with low, but rising immigrant shares, old industrial regions, smaller regions) -> shaping populist vote shares (Essletzbichler et al. 2018).
- Globalization as strengthening link between economic performance and voting behaviour by providing citizens with more comparative information (Park 2023).

Rise of identity politics

- The role of personal identity (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation) in vote choice.
- **Examples:**
 - Growing importance of national identity in European elections.
 - Gender and identity issues in South American elections.
- **Cognitive models** -> policy positions and social identities compete, rather than simply combine, to determine voter preferences (Jenke and Huettel 2016). *Aka internal ambivalence*
- **Endorsements** from marginalized community organizations can influence voter evaluations as much as candidate demographics (particularly for LGBT-endorsed candidates) -> process associational affect (Bell and Borelli 2023).
- Xenophobia, racial resentment and sexism, white identity influenced primary voting and potential 2020 voting intentions -> **Trump** (Buyuker et al., 2021)

Summary

- Long-term factors historically shape voting behaviour but are evolving
- Lasting role of personal ideology, class, religion, ethnicity, political identification on voting behaviour, although in different ways than it used to
- More focus on valence and issues
- Contemporary influences like identity politics and SES are reshaping voter loyalty and choices.

Activity

Do you know the voter based on their characteristics?

Turkey

- **Profile:** Mohammed, 40, a Sunni Muslim shop owner in Istanbul, Turkey
- **Long-Term Influences:** Strong religious beliefs, commitment to Islamic values, and concerns about secularization.



Spain

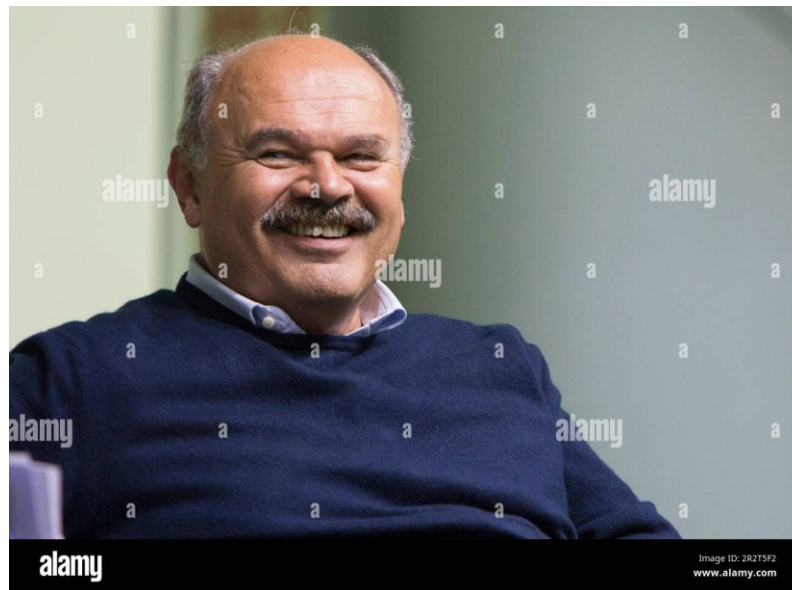
- **Profile:** Elena, 43, a farmer in rural Castilla-La Mancha, Spain
- **Long-Term Influences:** Agricultural background, reliance on EU subsidies, preference for rural development policies.



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Italy

- **Profile:** Giovanni, 61, an entrepreneur in Milan, Italy
- **Long-Term Influences:** High-income, business-focused, interested in tax reduction and economic liberalization.



Ukraine

- **Profile:** Andriy, 42, an Orthodox Christian in Lviv, Ukraine
- **Long-Term Influences:** Strong national identity, traditional values, concerns about cultural autonomy, and a pro-European outlook.



Sweden

- **Profile:** Sven, 34, an unemployed worker, in Stockholm, Sweden



Germany

- **Profile:** Lukas, 22, a university student in Munich, Germany
- **Long-Term Influences:** Climate-conscious, progressive social values, tech-savvy, concerns about environmental issues.



Germany

- **Profile:** Lukas, 22, a university student in Munich, Germany
- **Long-Term Influences:** Climate-conscious, progressive social values, tech-savvy, concerns about environmental issues.
- Lukas is enthusiastic about the Green Party's environmental policies, but he's worried about job opportunities post-graduation in a potentially slower economy due to the Greens' ambitious environmental goals. With pressure from his parents to consider job security, he's contemplating voting for the ..., which offers a more moderate approach to both job growth and climate initiatives.

USA

- **Profile:** Emma, 56, a schoolteacher in Ohio, USA
- **Long-Term Influences:** Comes from a family of lifelong Democrats, values social programs, education funding, and workers' rights.



USA

- **Profile:** Emma, 56, a schoolteacher in Ohio, USA
- **Long-Term Influences:** Comes from a family of lifelong Democrats, values social programs, education funding, and workers' rights.
- Emma's neighbourhood has experienced an uptick in crime, and she feels the Democratic Party's approach to policing doesn't address her concerns fully. Although she typically votes Democratic due to her background and social beliefs, she's now considering the ..., which takes a stronger stance on crime control and law enforcement.

Next...

How I feel after I've cast my ballot in the EU elections



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