Week 2: Issue Voting

- After we account for the effect of party identification, is there an effect of issues?

- Or, are there some people who vote based on issues, others based on party ID?

Week 2: Issue Voting

- Issue Voting: Vote for the candidate whose issue position is closer to the voter’s issue position

- Vote = PID + Issue Similarity
  ⇒ Could lead to vote inconsistent with PID
  ⇒ similar to Fiorina’s PID model, except that we want to explain voting, not PID
  ⇒ Does issue voting require more sophistication?
  ⇒ Which issue(s)?
Week 2: Issue Voting

- Party voting (Michigan model)
  ⇒ habit/ "standing decision"

- Issue voting
  ⇒ "the final result of a sophisticated decision calculus"
  ⇒ "reasoned and thoughtful attempt by voters to use policy preferences to guide their electoral decision"

Carmines/ Stimson

- Party voting = easy, Issue voting = hard is wrong!

- Sometimes, an issue “becomes so ingrained over a long period that it structures voters’ ‘gut responses’ to candidates and political parties”

- No indication of sophisticated voting
  ⇒ informed and uniformed use issue similarly

  Easy Issue
### Carmines/ Stimson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Easy&quot; Issues</th>
<th>&quot;Hard&quot; Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• symbolic</td>
<td>• often technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• about policy ends</td>
<td>• often about policy means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• have been on agenda for a long time</td>
<td>• can be new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• use by voters depends on context (whether easy issue exists)</td>
<td>• use depends on voters (whether they want to engage in issue debate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• does not require political knowledge/ experience</td>
<td>• require political knowledge/ experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### "Hard" Issue Example: Vietnam

#### "Easy" Issue Example: Desegregation

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Markus Prior  
Political Science 177a
Carmines/ Stimson

- Non-issue voters (15%)
  ⇒ only party ID ‘used’ in decision making
- Easy-issue voters (19%)
  ⇒ Desegregation and PID ‘used’ in decision making
- Hard-issue voters (24%)
  ⇒ Vietnam and PID ‘used’ in decision making
- Constrained-issue voters (42%)
  ⇒ both issues and PID ‘used’ in decision making

Is sophistication required for “easy” and “hard” issue voting?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. Some Correlates of Easy- and Hard-Issue Voting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero-Order Correlations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter Dichotomies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Easy&quot;                   &quot;Hard&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (attended college)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information (number of correct responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activism (number of participatory acts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .01  **p < .001
Carmines/ Stimson

- Party voting or Issue voting?
  ⇒ few easy issues in the 1950s
    ▪ 'The American Voter' finds mostly party voting
  ⇒ easy issue race dominates agenda
    ▪ We find more issue voting

- Classical or Revisionist PID model?
  ⇒ maybe classical, unless easy issue dominates and leads to changes in party identification?

Economic Voting

- Why is there so much research on economic voting?
  ⇒ forecasting model (aggregate models)
  ⇒ aggregate economic measures easily available and reliable
  ⇒ if aggregate relationship exists, we need individual-level explanation
  ⇒ rational choice approach emphasizes personal benefits as personal motivation
Economic Voting

- Two distinctions, four types of economic voting
  - pocketbook vs sociotropic (me vs them)
  - retrospective vs prospective (past vs future)

- Which types are most ‘rational’?

| Table 11-2: Influence on Votes for Clinton in 1996 (Clinton and Dole Voters Only) |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Independent Variable                   | Coefficient      | Statistical Error |
| Favorable retrospective evaluation of national economy | 1.40 **          | .38              |
| Favorable prospective evaluation of national economy | .79 **           | .22              |
| Favorable retrospective evaluation of personal finances | -.10             | .25              |
| Favorable prospective evaluation of personal finances | .50              | .55              |
| Support for a tax cut                   | .74              | .54              |
| Republican partisanship (7-point scale) | -2.22 **         | .11              |
| Conservative ideology (7-point scale)  | -4.25 **         | .22              |
| Gender (1 if female, 0 if male)         | .51 *            | .24              |
| Race (1 if African American, 0 otherwise) | 4.00 **          | 1.05             |
| Education (7-point scale)              | -.24             | .21              |
| Income (in $100,000)                    | -.16             | .41              |
| Age (in years/100)                     | -.56             | .74              |
| Constant                               | 4.12             | .18              |

Number of cases: 987
Economic Voting

• Which types of economic voting do we find empirically?
  ⇒ most other studies show sociotropic retrospective evaluations to matter a lot
  ⇒ little evidence of pocketbook voting
  ⇒ generally weaker support for prospective than retrospective economic voting
  ⇒ “naïve retrospective voting” (Alesina et al)

Economic Voting

• What happened in 2000?
  ⇒ ALL forecasting models predicted Gore as winner
  ⇒ Based on what we just learned about economic voting, Gore should have won:
    ▪ Incumbent party did well, more jobs, less unemployment, unprecedented economic growth
Economic Voting

- What happened in 2000?

> based on these results, Gore should have won, but...

- Couldn’t claim credit for past economic achievements during the campaign
- Lewinsky saga: Even if economy favored Gore, moral issues prevented many from voting for him
- Fiorina: “moral retrospective voting”

Table 11-3: Influences on Votes for Gore in 2000 (Gore and Bush Voters Only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favorable retrospective evaluation of national economy</td>
<td>1.00**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable retrospective evaluation of personal finances</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for a tax cut</td>
<td>-.93*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican partisanship (7-point scale)</td>
<td>-.60***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative ideology (7-point scale)</td>
<td>-.10**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (1 if female, 0 if male)</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (1 if African American, 0 otherwise)</td>
<td>1.37*</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (7-point scale)</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income (in $100,000)</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (in years/100)</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases:</td>
<td>(1,017)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Favorable retrosp. evaluations matter, but not quite as much as in 1992 and 1996

Tax cut helped Bush
Which issues?

- Why Vietnam and desegregation in the 1960s/70s?
- Why NOT the economy in 2000?
- Or, the prime example…
  Why did Bush senior lose in 1992?

Which issues?

- (Self-)Interest
- Campaign Effects
  ⇒ Issue Ownership (final week)
  ⇒ Agenda-Setting/ Priming
Agenda-Setting

“What do you think is the most important problem facing this country?”

Amount of media coverage on an issue ↔ Importance the public assigns to an issue

From Agenda-Setting...

“Media don’t tell people what to think, but what to think about.”

...to Priming

“Priming presumes that when evaluating complex political objects (...) citizens do not take into account all that they know. (...) What they do consider is what comes to mind, those bits and pieces of political memory that are accessible.”

(Iyengar and Kinder, News That Matters, 1987)
Priming

- **Step one**
  The “prime” activates knowledge.

- **Step two**
  When asked for an evaluation, the activated knowledge will have disproportional weight in that evaluation.

So... Which issues?

- Why Vietnam and desegregation in the 1960s/70s?
  ⇒ the real world

- Why NOT the economy in 2000?
  ⇒ because moral issues and personality debate dominated (media or real world?)

- Why did Bush senior lose in 1992?
  ⇒ because the Gulf War ended (real world) and the economy went into recession (media?)