

L2929 Week 06: Voting
Essential Readings Questions to Consider

Classes: Thursdays, 11:00 – 13:00, LT313

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 16:00 – 17:00, MC431

Essential Reading Key Questions:

1. What are the 'rejected,' 'ejected,' and 'dejected' groups of MPs that Benedetto and Hix identify, and how does their Commons voting behaviour differ from that of other MPs?
 - a) Do you think there are equivalent groups in the wider electorate and, if so, what are they? What are their equivalent incentives, and how might they respond to them being met or not met?
 - b) Benedetto and Hix note that voting rebellion in the Commons 'tended to be because of ideological differences between backbenchers and the leadership rather than because of pressures from constituency interests.' What does this imply about the responsiveness of MPs to their constituents? How might constituents best apply pressure to their MPs?
 - c) They note that spatial theory suggests that centrist MPs are most likely to rebel because they are closest to opposition positions, but the results of their analysis show that MPs further from the centre are more likely to rebel. How does this suggest that we might need to amend spatial theory?
 - d) It is also possible that MPs vote against policies simply because they disagree with them, without reference to other incentives. Can this possibility be reconciled with the findings that Benedetto and Hix present? If so, how?
2. What do you think is the mechanism for the relationship that Bolet observes between local community pubs and voting for UKIP?
 - a) How can we relate Bolet's findings to those of Gidron and Hall, whose paper we read in the week on psychological approaches to political behaviour?
 - b) What do Bolet's results imply about support for UKIP amongst wealthy people?
 - c) Do the findings have any implications for the economic and non-economic policy priorities of governments?
 - d) How can the results be reconciled, if at all, with the idea of voting as an individual act?
3. What are the four treatments that Gerber, Green and Larimer apply, and what do they find are their effects on turnout?
 - a) What is the difference between the *DI* and *DE* terms (and their probability functions) that they propose as additions to the rational calculus of voting, and which of those terms do they find to be more important?
 - b) Do you think it would be acceptable for political institutions to use social pressure to promote turnout in the way that Gerber, Green and Larimer test?
 - c) Do you think that the effects of social pressure could also extend to party choice when voting? Why?
 - If so, why would this be a good or bad thing?

Essential Readings Further Questions:

4. What other factors, beyond those covered in the above literature, do you think feature in decisions about whether to vote and who to vote for?
 - a) What do you think is the most important of those factors, if any? Why?
5. What factors do you think shape elite and mass voting behaviour? Are they the same or different and, if different, how so?
 - a) Do you think that members of the public would behave in the same way as political leaders if placed the same contexts as them?

Essential Readings for Next Week:

- Abhijit V. Banerjee, Selvan Kumar, Rohini Pande and Felix Su (2011), 'Do Informed Voters Make Better Choices? Experimental Evidence from Urban India', Unpublished Manuscript, available online: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.221.1405&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.
- Elias Dinas, 'Opening "Openness to Change": Political Events and the Increased Sensitivity of Young Adults', *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 4 (2013), pp. 868-882. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912913475874>.
- Lawrence Ezrow, Catherine De Vries, Marco Steenberger and Erica Edwards (2010), 'Mean voter representation and partisan constituency representation: Do parties respond to the mean voter position or to their supporters?', *Party Politics*, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 275-301. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068810372100>.
- Christopher Karpowitz, Tali Mendelberg and Lee Shaker (2012), 'Gender Inequality in Deliberative Participation', *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 106, No. 3, pp. 533-547. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055412000329>.

Note: the essential readings are all available via the L2929 page on Myplace.