Chapter 1

Introduction

Why people vote the way they do is one of the most often asked questions in political science. We ask this important question because it is both interesting and vexing. Voting behavior holds such an important place in political science, for it is seemingly the clearest avenue to test theories of democracy. Are the people of a democracy living up to the ideals of democratic theory?[1] Do citizens make reasoned and informed choices? Are our governors constrained by the actions, or potential actions, of the electorate? If the answer to any of these questions is no, we want to know why. Not only do we want to know why, we want to know what these answers mean for democratic governance. Why do voters act the way they do? In short, is democracy working? In *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960), one of the first major social-psychological examinations of vote choice to examine these questions in a systematic manner, the view of the electorate put forward is not a terribly complimentary one. The authors depict the voter as driven by a long-term, largely unthinking, attitude, namely party identification. This attitude is acquired via childhood socialization, well before the acquisition of other political information. Moreover, according to the authors, party identification is largely immune to change. It is the unmoved mover. Certainly, the authors consider forces other than party identification. The two presidential elections preceding publication of their work had a Republican candidate winning election and reelection, at a time when the Democratic Party had a decided advantage in party identification. If a Republican could win the White House, something in addition to party identification had to be influencing voting behavior. The authors argue that short-term forces could win over the votes of some portion of the electorate. Some partisans could be swayed by short-term forces, and independents, without the anchor of party identification, could more easily be swung over to one side. The swing voters are political independents

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and those who are not firmly anchored to a party. Lacking short-term forces working against them, a Democrat would win the presidency. With short-term forces on the side of a Democratic candidate for the presidency, the Democratic Party would win in a landslide.

Since the publication of *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960), many authors have taken this view to task. Many researchers have revised upward their view of the American electorate. Scholars have examined the role issues play in voting behavior (Jackson 1975; Markus and Converse 1979; Nie and Anderson 1974; Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1976; Page and Jones 1979; Repass 1971; et al.). Other researchers have focused on the role of retrospective evaluations as an explanation of vote choice. Most notably, Key (1966) and Fiorina (1981a) argue that voters reward (punish) the incumbent administration for good (bad) performance while in office. If times have been good (bad), the voter rewards (punishes) the incumbent party by voting to retain (reject) it. Chappell and Keech (1985), in a much more sophisticated version of the retrospective model, argue that voters look at the actions of government, anticipate the consequences of present government action, and vote accordingly. If the actions of the incumbent party are likely to lead to economic good (bad) times, the incumbent is rewarded (punished) at the ballot box. Note that in these arguments, the role of the opposition party is relatively modest.[2] The opposition party does not offer any vision for the future. Instead, the smart opposition party merely points out what can be perceived as the failings of the incumbent administration. The incumbent party similarly does not offer a vision for the future; instead, it points proudly to past successes.

Still, other work has attempted to build on this research by examining the effects of both retrospective and prospective evaluations on vote choice (Abramowitz 1985; Kuklinski and West 1981; Lewis-Beck 1988a; Lockerbie 1992; Miller and Wattenberg 1985). These researchers argue that voters look at the expected performance of the parties competing for office, among other factors, and vote for the one they believe is going to do the best job in the future.[3]

The focus of the research presented herein is the prospective model of voting behavior. The argument is that voters are calculating individuals who look at both of the parties, decide which one will do a better job in the future, and cast their ballots accordingly. Both the retrospective and prospective models of voting behavior, as commonly tested, hold that voters are rational utility maximizers.[4] What utility are people trying to maximize? As is commonly done, this work assumes people are trying to maximize their financial well-being.[5] Of course, Downs (1957, 36), from whom I borrow the rational actor model, argues that the basic determinant of voting behavior is the stream of benefits derived from government activity.[6] The stream of benefits is not necessarily limited to economic

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concerns. Downs, instead, includes all benefits, economic and non-economic, in his calculation of the stream of benefits. Why then the focus on economics? Quite simply, money is needed to undertake many of the activities we deem important. Like election is for politicians, financial well-being is a prerequisite for many of the goals we citizens have. Additionally, the gathering and processing of political information is costly.[7] Individuals, to overcome this cost, or difficulty, are likely to economize wherever possible. One means of reducing the costs of collecting and digesting political information is to employ information gathered for other purposes. People will be best informed on those issues that directly influence their economic well-being. Citizens will in all likelihood gather some information in their day-to-day life that might have some bearing on politics. Changes in income are readily apparent, and promises to change one's income are likely to generate greater scrutiny than are promises that do not directly influence one's livelihood.[8] Also, I would not be surprised to find that these evaluations are highly correlated with a more encompassing evaluation of which party is better.

The Retrospective and Prospective Models of Voting Behavior

Of what consequence is it which model of voting behavior (retrospective or prospective) more accurately describes the process by which voters make their decisions? Before answering this question directly, let us consider the assumptions of both models. Both the retrospective and prospective models, as typically presented, assume voters attempt to maximize their economic well-being. The retrospective model assumes a focus on only the past. Key (1966), in *The Responsible Electorate*, argues that voters look to the past because evaluations of the past are concrete. Because these retrospective evaluations are grounded in experienced reality, Key argues that it will be relatively easy for voters to take them into account when deciding which candidate to support in an election. If all is going well (poorly), the voter casts a ballot to retain (reject) the incumbent party. In short, the retrospective model is a reward/punishment theory of voting behavior; the voter does not take the challenger into account. Key (1966) argues that voters are unlikely to make use of prospections because the future is too hazy; voters do not have the wherewithal to predict the future. While Key implies that we can discern what the government bears responsibility for, he also argues that we cannot compare the two parties. If voters can accurately determine the national government's responsibility for the state of the economy, as Key argues, it does not seem to be much of a leap to argue that voters can make comparisons across parties concerning the future. Arguably, determining

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whether the government is responsible for the state of the economy and determining for what portions of the economy the government bears responsibility is more intellectually demanding than making a forecast of which party will do a better job.

The retrospective model of voting behavior is a satisficing model.[9] If the incumbent party has met (not met) the minimum standards of the voter, the voter casts a ballot to retain (reject) the incumbent party. If the voter is reasonably pleased with the past performance of the incumbent administration, the retrospective model holds that the voter will not kick the incumbent party out of office. Note that not once is the challenging party explicitly taken into account. It is not said that the voter might actually cast a ballot *for* the challenging party instead of against the governing party. Considerations of the opposition party, in the retrospective model, do not influence the voters' calculations.[10] One might quite reasonably argue that the retrospective model is not a rational choice model of voting behavior.[11] If only one option, the incumbent, is considered, a voter has far from complete information. While I would not argue that a voter needs to have complete information to be a rational voter, by that standard there has not been a rational voter nor will there ever be a rational voter. I would argue that making an evaluation of the choices, however cursory, is necessary for one to be counted a rational voter. One must, after all, process some information and there should be a connection between one's preferences and beliefs on the one hand and voting on the other.

The prospective model of voting behavior assumes that people, within the constraints of available alternatives, try to maximize their income. Instead of deciding whether the incumbent party has met some minimum standard, the prospective voter asks which party will perform better in the future. As Downs (1957, 36) states, "each citizen casts his vote for the party he believes *will* provide him with more benefits than any other" (emphasis added). In short, voters look at the available options and attempt to maximize their income by selecting the party under which they will fare best financially in the future.[12]

While the prospective model of voting behavior places higher demands on the voter, it also gives the voter more credit than the retrospective model. Instead of assuming the electorate to be myopic (backward looking), the prospective model assumes the voter to be hyperopic (forward looking).[13] The prospective model, for example, allows a voter to believe that the incumbent party has performed poorly, but the challenging party will perform more poorly than the incumbent party in the future.[14] Bratton (1994), for example, argues that the Republicans were not terribly hurt by the deficit in the presidential election of 1988. Despite the voters' displeasure over the worsening state of the deficit, she finds that many voters were not likely to think that the Democratic candidate

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would do a better job than the Republican candidate in alleviating the problem. Consequently, the voters did not punish the Republican party's presidential candidate in the general election for what the voters perceived as their poor performance on the issue of the deficit.

One question that should be addressed, though admittedly not completely answered, at this juncture is through what process do voters form expectations. This question alone could well be a book. Needless to say, what I present here will be an exceptionally short and simplified answer. Chapter 2 presents a brief empirical examination of this question. There are three primary means by which voters might form their expectations. The first is a simple extrapolative model. What has happened in the past will happen in the future. If the incumbent has performed well in the past, the incumbent will perform well in the future. If this model is appropriate, then the distinction between the retrospective and prospective models is largely meaningless. If the extrapolative model holds, retrospections will be perfect predictors of prospections.[15] The second is the adaptive expectations model, as formulated by Cagan (1956). This formulation holds that individuals use information concerning past forecasting errors to revise their expectations concerning the future. As the adaptive expectations model is usually presented, the individual uses a weighted average of the past to form expectations of the future. If, for example, one had underpredicted inflation for the last few months, one would, taking these mispredictions into account, begin to revise one's predictions upward. Translating this to the political world, if one had forecast that the incumbent would perform up to some standard and the administration repeatedly had fallen below that standard, one would revise forecasts of the incumbent's performance downward. This formulation of how individuals form expectations is intuitively pleasing, but it does not allow the voter to take new information into account. The individual making these predictions is entirely backward looking. Only past errors cause a revision of expectations.

The third formulation, the rational expectations model, holds that people take new information into account when making forecasts. The following example from Begg (1982, 25–26) illustrates this important difference between the adaptive and rational expectations model.

> Suppose that OPEC is meeting next week but that the outcome of their deliberations is a formality; everyone knows that they will announce a doubling of oil prices. Surely economists will be predicting higher inflation from the moment at which news of the oil price increase first becomes available. Yet the hypothesis of Adaptive Expectations asserts that individuals raise inflation expectations only after higher inflation has gradually fed into the past data from which they extrapolate.

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Adaptive expectations are entirely myopic. According to the adaptive expectations conception of expectation formation, individuals do not take new information that is readily available into account. Imagine the incumbent has improved one's financial position during his administration, but during the campaign for reelection, the incumbent credibly, and perhaps unwisely from an electoral perspective, proposes some programs that will dig deeply into one's wallet. If one forms expectations from what one has experienced, one will not take this new information into account when evaluating the likely future performance of the incumbent party. One would merely extrapolate from the past, correcting for any past forecasting errors, to arrive at one's expectations of the future performance of the incumbent administration. A voter would not take the campaign promise of the incumbent into account when making a forecast.[16] Under a theory of rational expectations, one would take this new information into account when calculating the expected utility under the new administration. Similarly, under an adaptive expectations model, the voter would not take the opposition party's promises into account. Assume we have a credible candidate promising to take some action with regard to the economic future. Do we expect voters to ignore this information because they have not experienced the results of this action? Imagine a candidate promises to trim the Medicare program and you depend on that program. Similarly, imagine a candidate promises to close a military base where you are employed or that is the perceived economic lifeblood of your community. Should we expect you, the voter, to ignore these promises? Would we expect one to wait until the person is elected and then act surprised when the promise is acted upon? I think not. In fact, the empirical work strongly suggests that voters have good reason to pay attention to the promises of candidates. Fishel (1985) and Royed and Borrelli (1997) find that candidate/party promises are kept.

One objection that is likely to arise at this point is whether information concerning the future is readily available to the typical voter. If this information is not readily available, if it is too costly to obtain, the typical voter might economize by just using information from the past. Minford and Peel (1983) argue that the marginal cost of obtaining such information is sufficiently low as to allow the typical individual to form an opinion about the future of the economy that is more sophisticated than a simple extrapolative or adaptive expectations model would suggest. All one needs to do, according to Minford and Peel (1983), is avail oneself of the forecasts of organizations that the media reports. The information can be picked up quite easily. One does not have to be an econometrician to be able to have a reasonably well-informed opinion of the economy. Also, keep in mind when voting one does not have to know exactly what each party will do, nor does one have to know what the

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exact results of the actions of the parties will be. All one has to do is figure out which party, if either, one thinks will be better for one's finances. This is a considerably less arduous task than attempting to ascertain the rates of inflation or unemployment, or the direction of change for either.

While in some instances the conclusions one draws about the future will be the same regardless which model of expectation formation members of the electorate employ, there are instances in which the conclusions drawn will differ. Presumably, it is more in keeping with the rational actor model to employ this new information when deciding how to vote in an upcoming election. The inferences one draws from these sets of assumptions differ substantially. Imagine that one blames the incumbent party for current bad times; the retrospective model (either extrapolative or adaptive expections) predicts a vote against the incumbent. If one believes that the incumbent party will do a better job than the opposition, the retrospective model still predicts a vote against the incumbent.[17] Remember, under the retrospective model, only one's disappointment with the past performance of the incumbent administration influences one's vote choice. In fact, the voter, according to the retrospective model, does not make an evaluation of the future. Under this set of conditions, the prospective model, however, predicts a vote for the incumbent, despite the incumbent's poor past performance. If prospective economic evaluations are important in explaining vote choice, a greater responsibility is placed on the parties. Under the retrospective model, all a challenging party has to do is convince the electorate that the incumbent party has performed poorly. Under a prospective model, the challenging party has to convince the electorate that it will, if elected, do a better job than the incumbent party in the future. Similarly, the incumbent party cannot rest upon its laurels if the economy has prospered. The incumbent party will not be retained if it cannot convince a sufficient number of voters that it will do a better job than the opposition in the future. The challenging party still has the opportunity to convince the electorate that it can do an even better job in the future. Thus, past performance is not enough.

What Have We Learned So Far?

The literature is replete with works concerning the role of economics and elections. Monroe (1979) dates the first empirical article as Barnhart's (1925) attempt to explain the rise of the Populist Party during the 1880s and 1890s in terms of drought that led to economic hardship.[18] There have been numerous studies of economic voting at the individual level, with most of that research focusing on retrospective voting. Fiorina (1978), in his analysis of presidential elections from 1956 through 1972, finds only modest support for the hypothesis that members of the electorate base their

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vote choices on retrospective evaluations. He finds even less support for his model of House elections during presidential election years and no support whatsoever in midterm elections. In fact, in the midterm races, exactly one-half of his economic variables are in the unexpected direction, and three of these are statistically significant.[19]

There is one major problem with Fiorina's (1978) analysis, a problem he freely admits. The American National Election Study retrospective personal economic items he employs are especially noisy indicators of one's opinion concerning the influence of the government on one's finances. The survey item employed by Fiorina (1978) asks respondents if in the past year their personal financial condition has improved, stayed the same, or worsened. Obviously, this question elicits responses that are not related to one's opinion of the government's impact on one's income. Having a child, getting married, receiving a large inheritance, and the like, influence one's financial status, but it is not likely that one would assign responsibility to the government for these changes. Unless one assigns responsibility to the government for all, or most, changes in one's financial well-being, it is unlikely that this indicator will accurately reflect one's opinion of governmentally induced changes in income. Lane (1962), Brody and Sniderman (1977), Feldman (1982, 1985), Kinder and Mebane (1983), and Peffley (1985) have found that most people do not attribute responsibility for all changes in financial status to the government. Instead of assigning responsibility to the government, people have what is called an "ethic of self-reliance." Changes in financial status are one's own responsibility, not some outside entity. Success or failure is due to something the individual does or does not do. If one gets fired, it is one's own fault. If one gets a big raise, it is through the dint of one's effort and ability, not a growing economy or anything else beyond one's control. Economic success and failure are thought to be the result of one's own efforts, not the result of external actors. Consequently, we should not expect a strong relationship between these simple economic items and vote choice.

Using the same questions as Fiorina (1978), Kinder and Kiewiet (1979) report that the personal retrospective economic items fail to attain significance in models of voting behavior in House elections. Their analysis shows, however, that "sociotropic," or collective evaluations of the national economy, consistently play a significant role in explaining vote choice. Similarly, Kinder and Kiewiet (1981) find that these evaluations are significant in explaining vote choice in the 1972 and 1976 presidential and House elections. Many of these "sociotropic" evaluations, like the retrospective items Fiorina (1978) employs, lack a clear political referent. An item that asks the respondent to evaluate the national economy may elicit responses unrelated to the government's management of the economy. An individual may believe the economy is performing poorly, though

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the poor performance is not a result of the government's action. Instead, the respondent may believe the incumbent administration is doing as good a job as is possible in dealing with a difficult situation. Perhaps the respondent attributes responsibility for economic hard times to a foreign cartel, big business, or big labor. Nonetheless, these items may be significantly related to vote choice if voters are of the opinion the national economy is largely, though not necessarily completely, the responsibility of the national government.[20] Even if voters view the national economy as only being partly influenced by the national government, they might well use the aggregate changes as indicators of government competence. Voters may be of the opinion that individual changes in financial well-being are the result of both the government's actions and idiosyncratic events. It is more likely that people will assign responsibility to the national government for the state of the economy than they will attribute their own well-being to the government, if both types of evaluations lack a political referent. Consequently, evaluations of the national economy are related to vote choice while individual changes in financial well-being, dominated by idiosyncratic factors, are not related to vote choice.

Other items employed by Kinder and Kiewiet (1979, 1981) have a clear political referent, such as the government's management of the economy. Of the items employed by Kinder and Kiewiet, these have the strongest and most consistent findings supporting the economic voting hypothesis.[21] Kramer (1983) argues that these items are significant because Kinder and Kiewiet do not adequately control for partisanship. If anything, Kinder and Kiewiet overcontrol for partisanship. They include party identification, as well as a feeling thermometer differential for the parties, in their vote choice equations. What more they could have done, I do not know. With these overwhelming controls for party identification, it is somewhat surprising that any of their other variables turn up as statistically significant, especially since party identification is responsive to political forces (Fiorina 1981a; Jackson 1975; Lockerbie 1989, 2002; Markus and Converse 1979).

Although the retrospective model has dominated the research examining the influence of economics on elections, there have been attempts to discern the role of prospective economic evaluations (Abramowitz 1985; Fiorina 1981a; Kuklinski and West 1981; Lewis-Beck 1988a, 1988b).[22] It is important to review these works so that we might have a better idea as to the state of the research on this matter.

Kuklinski and West (1981) argue that previous models of voting behavior have been improperly specified due to the omission of prospective economic evaluations, and for this reason, it is not surprising that little evidence of economic voting has been found at the individual level. The findings of Kuklinski and West offer mixed results. In 1978, prospective

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voting takes place in Senate but not in House elections. While they are to be commended for including the Senate as well as the House, their study is not without problems. First, they examine only one election year, thereby limiting their ability to generalize. A more important problem is the employment of survey items that do not directly reflect evaluations, either retrospective or prospective, of government performance. Just as others have done, the authors do not employ items that include a sense of attribution. They simply look at perceptions of past change and expectations of future change. People are asked if their personal financial well-being has gotten better, worse, or stayed the same over the course of the past year. Similarly, they are asked if they expect the future to bring better, worse, or the same financial times.

Fiorina (1981a), in his book *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*, attempts to include both retrospective and prospective items that do assign responsibility to the government for changes in the economy.[23] He makes use of items that ask the respondents to evaluate the government's performance in managing the problems of inflation and unemployment for his retrospective measures. The prospective items ask the respondents to state which party, if either, would be better at managing these problems. While there is an attribution of responsibility to the government for the state of economy in these questions, it would be a cleaner test of the hypothesis if these economic items were directly focused on the individual. In these years, unfortunately, there are not any prospective items that have both a sense of attribution of responsibility to the government and a focus on the individual. Fiorina does find a strong prospective bent in the electorate in presidential (1976) and House (1974 and 1976) elections. Like other studies, this one too suffers from having few election years. Our level of confidence in the generalizability of the findings is less than if more years were analyzed. Abramowitz (1985) analyzes the role of retrospective and prospective economic evaluations on voting in House midterm elections of 1974, 1978, and 1982. While he has no positive findings on this front, he does find that these economic evaluations influence presidential approval, which, in turn, influences vote choice strongly. Like many other studies, this one provides limited ability to make generalizations, and the economic items the author employs do not include a sense of attribution.

Lewis-Beck (1988a, 1988b), like some others, argues that previous economic models of voting behavior have been misspecified due to the omission of prospective economic items, and those models, such as Fiorina's (1981a), that claim to employ future oriented items asking which party would better manage the economy are not explicitly future oriented. Lewis-Beck (1988a) argues that the items Fiorina employs are in the conditional, not future, tense.[24] For example, one of Fiorina's items

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(1976, 139) is worded as follows: "Do you think the problem of inflation *would* (emphasis added) be handled better by the Democrats, by the Republicans, or about the same by both?" In his analysis of the 1984 elections, Lewis-Beck uses items that clearly direct the respondent toward the future, that is, "Now looking ahead—do you think that a year from now you (and your family there) will be better off financially, or worse off, or just about the same as now?" Lewis-Beck uses a similar item concerning five years in the future. Lewis-Beck's (1988a) findings support the hypothesis that voters cast their ballots with an eye to the future in both presidential and House elections.

While supportive of the contention that voters look to the future when voting and that the voter is capable of differentiating between distinct time frames, there are some difficulties with the strategy Lewis-Beck (1988a) employs. The prospective items Lewis-Beck uses, like many in the subfield, are without a clear political referent. One can imagine a respondent might expect a change in financial status without attributing responsibility to the government. If the government is not the agent expected to cause these changes, there is no theoretical reason to expect these prospective evaluations to influence vote choice.

Putting aside the objections in the previous paragraph, there is still one remaining problem. Let us assume, for the sake of argument, the respondents are only considering governmentally induced changes in income when making these assessments. Who should we predict a vote for if the respondent states that his financial status will improve in the next year, or next five years (during which time a second presidential election will have been held)? Lewis-Beck (1988a) argues that if the respondent expects improvement, we should predict a vote for the incumbent. In 1984, the year Lewis-Beck is examining, a respondent who believes his income is going to increase is predicted to vote for Reagan. What if this respondent believes his income will increase because of a Mondale victory? Lewis-Beck's model still predicts a vote for Reagan. Admittedly, this is not likely to be a problem in 1984, since 87 percent of those surveyed accurately predicted a Reagan victory (Lewis-Beck and Skalaban 1989). Of course, one could expect it to increase under either presidential candidate, but increase more under Mondale, further complicating matters. A close election, such as the 1960 presidential election, where less than 45 percent of those surveyed accurately forecast the outcome, might distort the analysis (Lewis-Beck and Skalaban 1989) or 2000 where 47 percent forecast a Bush victory and 51 percent forecast a Gore victory.[25] The theory might be correct, but this particular test of the hypothesis would likely fail to find supporting evidence of prospective voting.

One of the crucial assumptions I have made is that people actually do have expectations concerning the future of the economy and that these

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expectations are reasonably accurate.[26] Conover, Feldman, and Knight (1987) argue that people are not especially good at predicting changes in inflation and unemployment, and therefore prospective evaluations are necessarily flawed. Fortunately, however, the prospective model of voting behavior I examine here does not require voters to forecast the changes in direction of inflation or unemployment. All that is required is that voters anticipate which party, if either, would be better able to solve these problems or aid their personal financial situation. Conover, Feldman, and Knight (1987) also argue that because these prospective economic evaluations mention the parties' names, they are largely the result of partisan predispositions. MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson (1989), however, point out that a rational expectations economist would argue that evaluations of the parties' abilities to solve problems are actual assessments rather than political biases.[27]

Miller and Wattenberg (1985) compare retrospective policy and performance voting in the presidential elections of 1952 through 1980. Although not specifically concerned with economic voting, this article shows that members of the electorate are capable of making the distinction between retrospective and prospective evaluations. Using open-ended items in the American National Election Studies (ANES), the authors find that people spontaneously offered judgments concerning the future performance of the parties. Lewis-Beck and Skalaban (1989) demonstrate that respondents are capable of forecasting the future concerning the outcome of presidential elections. The evidence fits with expectations. Landslide elections show a higher percentage of those surveyed predicting the outcome accurately than do close elections. Linden (1990) points out that consumers tend to be better predictors of upturns and downturns in the economy than are professional forecasters. Contrary to Key's (1966) assertion that forecasts are prohibitively hazy, it appears that voters not only forecast the future, but they are good at it. MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson (1992, 606) state that "Understanding that expectations, rather than retrospections, lie at the core of political evaluations forces a new view of the political economy." This work attempts to take this new view explicitly into the area of voting behavior and economic evaluations.

Conclusion

This work will build on the economic voting literature in several ways. First, instead of looking at just a few election years, this work will look at elections from 1956 to 2000. We will be better able to discern if the model of voting behavior is generalizable across time. Are there condi-

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tions under which prospective voting is more likely? Second, and perhaps most important, when the data are available, the economic items used will both refer to the individual voter and the government's responsibility for the voter's economic condition. By using data of this nature, we can more directly test the hypothesis that voters are attempting to maximize their expected utility. When there is one item that refers to the person's financial situation without any attribution of responsibility and one item that has an attribution of responsibility to the government but is focused on the collective rather than the personal, I will make use of the latter. Third, by examining presidential, Senate, and House elections, we should be able to draw some conclusions about the nature of these various types of elections. We should also be able to make some comments on the role of separation of powers on the electoral process. Do voters respond to different stimuli in different types of elections? Fourth, by integrating models of voting behavior, we should have a more complete understanding of the role economics plays in influencing elections. Here is an outline of the chapters to follow:

Chapter 2 examines the bivariate relationship between these retrospective and prospective economic evaluations and presidential vote choice, as well as a simple economic model of presidential vote choice. Chapter 2 also presents the relationship between the retrospective and prospective economic items, so that we might assess the utility of differentiating between the two types of evaluations. Chapter 3 looks at the relationship between these economic evaluations and party identification. Chapter 4 returns to the question of vote choice. This chapter presents a more fully specified model of presidential vote choice. Alongside the retrospective and prospective economic items, the model includes several control variables, such as party identification and position on a liberal/conservative continuum. Additionally, this chapter presents a causal model of presidential vote choice. Chapter 5 largely replicates the analysis in chapter 4, with the dependent variable changed to House and then Senate vote choice, with an additional control: incumbency. Chapter 6 examines more closely the distinction between egocentric and sociotropic economic evaluations and their relevance for political decisions. Specifically, using the 1992 ANES we are able to address better what concerns voters. Are they concerned with themselves or are they concerned with the nation? Chapter 7 examines the question of whether we can forecast elections using expectations. This chapter draws in aggregate retrospective and prospective economic items, as well as various other items, to forecast presidential vote and seat change in the House and Senate. Chapter 8 brings together the findings from the earlier chapters and offers suggestions for future research.

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