

# Reviewing the Theories of Voting Behavior

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## ABSTRACT

While *Quantitative Methods on Politics* (1928) written by S. A. Rice has been rated to be worthy of pilot writings within "four landmarks in voting behavior" (P. H. Rossi), one may say that the history of researches would extend almost for a century, dating back to the statistical analyses of election results by S. F. Chapin or W. F. Ogburn.

And yet, the scientific researches, properly so called, have grown up almost from sociological researches, such as the Erie Study on the 1940 American Presidential election, and have been further promoted by psychological ones, such as the Michigan teams conducted first the survey on a nationwide scale. Added to these, the mathematical analyses of voting behavior centering around rational-choice model have recently attracted the researchers' concern.

None the less, it is not too much to say that the status quo of researches is no better than the technical refinement of research methods and the interpretation of findings. A purpose of this paper is to pursue the possibility toward theoretical competition and synthesis around the voting behavior with examining the substances of established theories critically.

For all that, it is indispensable for us to review the major theories with facing up to the increase in the nonpartisan strata of voters in order to achieve the purpose above. To be precise, another purpose is to examine the theoretical synthesis of voting behavior from the viewpoint to analyze the attitudes and behaviors of nonpartisans instead of approaching from the stability or changing model of election.

## I . Purpose and subject of the Study

Election results have a far-reaching influence on the concern and substances of voting behavior studies. It is conservative to say that an election offers a field verifying the previous findings of researches. Above all, the theories or views based on the standing decision of voting behavior cannot but review themselves when an election result changes greatly.

The 1948 American Presidential election, by way of example, ended in a winning for H. Truman, the Democratic Party candidate, but his winning was an astonishing election result against the forecast : T.E. Dewey, the Republic Party candidate, appeared to lead from the first. The immediate occasion that the staffs of the Survey Research Center

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(hereafter abbreviated as SRC) of the University of Michigan, who have given the Japanese researchers quite a few influence, got started on the studies of short-term electoral changes was this election result.

After 1980's, the Japanese researchers have come to grips with such a situation that the voting orientation, party support and political attitude have rapidly changed with the transformation of industrial society.

These tendencies show the necessity of the conversion of objects and methods of research : how much of the electoral changes are able to approach from the viewpoint of voting behavior researches. In short, such a conversion indicates the shift of concern from the stability model to the changing one with regard to election. It is clear that a series of new theoretical hypotheses are more or less the studies based on the changing model in confrontation with floating vote of the electorate. In any case, it follows from what has been said that the researches in both Japan and America are facing up to the common tasks in a meaning to conduct analysis of electoral changes.

Let us start with taking up two major approaches, i.e., one primarily sociological approach, another more psychological one, referring to voting behavior with a view to examine the analytical methods of electoral changes in the definite theoretical context. These are the currents of thought that the former is called social group theory while the latter attitudinal approach.

One more is to review the floating voter hypotheses viewed in the status quo of the contemporary Japanese elections.

## **II. Social group theory of voting behavior**

Social group theory consists of a view extrapolating the socio-economic, religious and other identification, which are provided by relating vote intentions to social characteristics of each individual, as the variables explaining the party choices. According to this theory, the individual learns the partisan predisposition conformable to the political traditions of membership or reference groups. An example of the typical trial is the index of political predisposition (hereafter abbreviated as IPP) developed by the 1940 Erie Study (P. F. Lazarsfeld, B. R. Berelson, and H. Gaudet, *The People's Choice*).

It is a device that manipulates the demographic factors as the variables articulating the social characteristics according to the theory of indices.<sup>1)</sup> That is, the IPP is formed by stratifying within each socio-economic status level for religion and residence.

According to Table 1, "A wealthy Protestant farmer got an IPP of 1, and this meant he had a strong Republican predisposition. A Catholic on the lowest SES level, living in the urban center of Erie County, was rated 7, and this meant he had a strong Democratic

predisposition."<sup>2)</sup> Well, the change of vote decisions and party choices is treated as an effect of partisan campaign on political predisposition in this theoretical context. After all, the influence of campaign on predisposition is analyzed from the viewpoint of conditional-analytic method: whether the social characteristics keep a certain partisan consistency or get into a state of cross-pressure on voting. This conception is a theoretical type called the traditional formulation of floating voter hypotheses.

Table 1. The Index of Political Predisposition (IPP)

	PROTESTANT		CATHOLIC	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
A, B.....	1	2	3	4
C+.....	2	3	4	5
C-.....	3	4	5	6
D.....	4	5	6	7

Following is the distribution of respondents in May according to this index:

Score	Frequency	
1.....	148	} Predominantly Republican Predispositions
2.....	289	
3.....	467	
4.....	319	} Predominantly Democratic Predispositions
5.....	283	
6.....	97	
7.....	47	

Source: P.F. Lazarsfeld et al., *The People's Choice*, p.174.

Social group theory makes much of the social characteristics of each individual and/or the properties of group variables than the attitudes to issues or candidates having an effect on the final voting decisions and party choices. The role that such a short-term cue as issue or candidate produces an effect on the self-reinforcement function of group is ignored in this sense. "A sociological proposition", indicate B. R. Berelson and his associates, "involves properties of group; a sociological interpretation explains findings in terms which include interactions between group members."<sup>3)</sup> Therefore, it seems reasonable to suppose that the IPP attaches great importance to distal-nonpolitical factors in the meaning of variables prior to attitudinal factors.

We summarized the findings of two classical writings on the American voting behavior, namely, the Erie Study and the Elmira Study (B. R. Berelson, P. F. Lazarsfeld, and W. N. Gaudet, *Voting*) in the following three points at another time.<sup>4)</sup> These three points seem to be helpful in attempting to sketch out the purpose and subject of this paper.

First, these two studies were successful in analyzing the voting behavior dynamically,

or rather from a viewpoint of a time series. It would be better to say that it is an achievement called the analysis of concurrent change by making use of the technique of panel survey.

Second, they made an attempt at throwing light upon the subject how the properties of social groups have an effect on voting. In other words, they took an accurate measurement of the group influence, using an index on the basis of survey data, i. e., the IPP.

Third, they brought forward the theoretical formulation about major subjects in voting behavior. In concluding, these formula are, (1) two-step flow of communication hypothesis ; (2) cross-pressure hypothesis ; (3) floating voter hypothesis. Above all, it is no exaggeration to say that two-step flow hypothesis has given the most incentive and continuous effect on communication researches thereafter due to the discovery of personal influence in mass communication processes.

The second hypothesis above : cross-pressure hypothesis was taken over from the Erie Study to the Elmira Study, too. The most important addition to be made to what we have said about major formula is floating voter hypothesis, which is a finding connected immediately with the academic point in dispute on the attitudes and behaviors of nonpartisans in contemporary elections.

Be the matter what it may, these three hypotheses have been verified thereafter and are at the core of influential paradigms as new theories in the contemporary sociology. As for the research to lay stress on the background variables of the individual shown in the IPP, however, some comments have been put later on. Much of those points out that the validity tends to suffer some deterioration, when the ranges of partisan implication shown by the IPP are scaled up in time and space. Larzarsfeld et al. knew as well that "an index of political predisposition is less valid when applied to a nation-wide sample than when applied to the residents of one county."<sup>5)</sup>

M. Janowity and W. E. Miller, as an example of those comments, point out as follows. "Even if statistically significant associations had been found, the underlying question would remain : "How much of the voting is explained by the sociological variables subsumed in the IPP?"<sup>6)</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that they do not remain in merely comments but call attention to the fact that "refinement of the variables in the IPP will increase the explanatory power of the index."<sup>7)</sup> That is, as for refinement of categories for the IPP, they suggest to introduce the change-oriented variables. To put it concretely, they propose to replace the socio-economic level with variable as a dynamic dimension involving consideration of social mobility.

So, with other factors. In brief, they suggest to replace the religious differences as a mere static dichotomy with forces requiring indices reflecting the amounts of individual conviction and religious group cohesion. Added to these factors, rural-urban differences

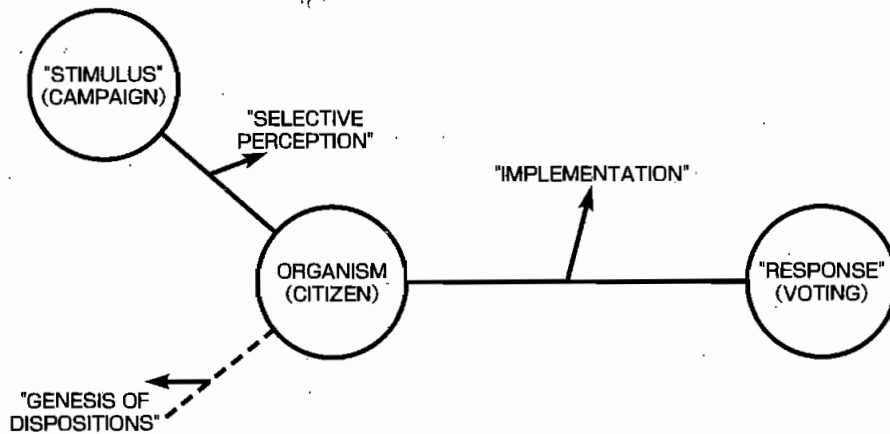
are refined in terms of length of residence, patterns of migration and rate of urbanization. At the same time, it is necessary for us to pay attention to their recognition that demographic factors are decreasing the persuasive power to explain the vote intentions from the more fundamental viewpoints. Or perhaps, it would be more accurate to say that their comments would take aim at the fact that the sociological analytical viewpoints tacitly depend on the homogeneity of demographic groups in spite of great shifts in group preference.

As described later on, the SRC-CPS (the Center for Political Studies of the University of Michigan) researchers seem to make much account of the function of attitudinal factors in voting behavior. It may be said that they pose a doubt whether the attitudinal homogeneity within demographic categories would be treated as a psychologically meaningful group phenomenon. To put it another way, "Can the relationship between demographic characteristics and political behavior be explained in terms of the similar life experiences of people of similar demographic background, or in terms of other factors which do not require the conceptualization of these broader social categories as psychological groups?"<sup>8)</sup>

Their assertion is a polemic for a kind of sociological determinism: "A person thinks, politically, as he is, socially. Social characteristics determine political preference."<sup>9)</sup> For example, "To what extent is a Catholic's vote an expression of identification with the Catholic group?"<sup>10)</sup> S. E. Asch submits a more principal question in his monograph entitled "Value and Limitation of Sociological Data." The point at issue is as follows: Lazarsfeld and his associates not only came up with "a necessary step in understanding the relations between social facts", but succeeded in summing up the statistical regularities that seem to permit increasingly close prediction of the direction or deviation of behaviors in a significant social situation as the IPP.<sup>11)</sup> After pointing out, however, that "the study of sociological uniformities" does not shed light on "the functional relations between conditions and consequences", continues he, "unless we take into account what an individual understands and feels about his situation, we do not understand the sense of the given relation in a single instance." For example, "We want to understand why a given individual did not act according to his prepared 'the index of political predisposition', why he did not act according to prediction."<sup>12)</sup>

One can safely state that he pointed out to be incapable of deciding upon the significant relations of sociological variables without psychological processes. Will the sociological model shown in the IPP, however, be neither part nor lot in the psychological implication? Berelson et al. undertake to shed light on, as illustrated by Figure 1, the second half of the arc, from the disposition of individual to his final manifest response, namely, the mechanism of implementation process.

Figure 1. Psychologist's View of the Vote



Source: B.R. Berelson et al., *Voting*, p.278.

To put it another way, they attempt to turn their concern to the dimension from attitudes to behaviors, while the psychologists concern themselves mainly with the first half of the arc than implementation process. Implementation process means "the way in which more or less vague dispositions, intentions, and interests regarding a specific subject matter may lead, finally, to the performance of a specific act like buying a car, going on a trip, or voting for a candidate."<sup>13)</sup> Judging from the above extract from *Voting* written by Berelson et al., their concern is on the point of making up for the psychological studies giving prominence to the function of disposition and selective perception from the sociological ground. One may say that their analysis is useful to make the theories of voting behavior scale up.

It is necessary for at least two requisites to be fulfilled in order to make this argument clear. One is to confirm the psychological variables necessary for the measurement of implementation process, and another is to develop the relevant way and means of measurement. It goes without saying that the former is the problem with regard to the psychological mechanism of implementation process, and the latter the technique of panel survey. Thus, the intention to illuminate the implementation process has been done from the viewpoints of both sociology and psychology. Broadly speaking, the tasks of sociological analyses summarized by three levels of primary group, organization and community are useful to make the viewpoint for explicating the implementation process spread to group contexts.

On the other hand, the introduction of psychological mechanism is effective in order to make account for the attitudinal variables capable to analyze the implementation process without making them bury in microcosmic studies. An achievement of the Elmira

Study is the point with a view of social psychology, which makes the psychological processes influencing the vote decisions joint the group theory ahead of a mere sociological determinism.

In brief, the fundamental viewpoint of sociological approaches gets hold of the attitudinal factors as dependent variables caused by the daily experiences of each individual in social relations. What is more, its principal object in view is to analyze the pattern of reactivation to predisposition as a part of interactive systems making the attitudes adjust the social environments. For reasons mentioned above, the social psychological field of vision is seen in this viewpoint. Viewed from another angle, the psychological variables have a salient significance as the important attitudinal factors in voting behavior. In a word, the psychological approaches place the focus on the analysis of short-term electoral changes.

Furthermore, in face of unexpected electoral changes, it pays attention to the function of psychological variables apart from sociological traditions making much of distal-non-political factors. It may safely be assumed that they pose an analytical method of electoral changes, which takes up these variables as the intervening factors between the general social forces and voting behavior. These variables are the partisan attitudinal factors closely related with the political situations. Therefore, they are the proximal factors to exert an effect on the vote decisions directly as well as the political factors. To put it concretely, the factors to exert an effect on the decision-making processes of voting are classified into the following two pairs in the large. One is proximal vs. distal factors, and another is political vs. nonpolitical ones.

By the way, in the meaning that the SRC-CPS researchers make much of proximal-political factors motivating the vote decisions, their approaches are contrast to the traditions of sociological studies giving priority to distal-nonpolitical factors. Conversely speaking, both sociology and psychology analyze the same object of voting behavior from an each different point of view, but both of them cannot but say to be insufficient as comprehensive researches in respect of object and method. Therefore, much still remains to be reviewed in a direction making the results of both researches connect. And yet, it may safely be assumed that the base line of voting behavior researches has been routed by these findings.

### **III. Attitudinal approach of voting behavior**

Attitudinal approach is the study to throw light upon the short-term electoral changes through analyzing "the major psychological variables ... as relevant to an individual's decision to vote and to his choice of candidate."<sup>14</sup> These factors may be divided into six

categories, (1) party identification ; (2) concern with issues ; (3) personal attachment to candidates ; (4) conformity to the group standards ; (5) sense of efficacy ; (6) sense of civic obligation to vote.

The leading members are researchers called the SRC-CPS groups of the University of Michigan. Their researches have been continuously done after 1940's, and have contributed to the progress of empirical studies with regard to elections up to date. One can safely state that they have formed a main current of the studies regarding to voting behavior. Above all, they make much account of issue orientation, candidate orientation and party identification as the major factors of vote decisions. In other words, these three factors are not only the intervening variables which discriminate voting from nonvoting but motivational factors or forces affecting the vote decisions.

To put it briefly, the combination of these three attitudinal factors constitutes the motivational patterns of voting behavior, and so those patterns exert a far-reaching influence on the political participation. And, the more the supporting direction of these three factors is consistent, the more the voting consistency tends to be maintained. On the contrary, when those factors are in the state of conflict, vote decisions would be delayed or given up, and thus the candidate choices would waver.

This theoretical assumption corresponds to the sociological cross-pressure hypothesis in the broader sense of the word. According to sociological hypothesis, one possibility is to be assumed that various electoral campaigns give rise to the sharply divided situation of social forces. Another one is that the voters might put off the vote decisions, or decrease the concern to the election because this situation brings the mental conflict on them. Cross-pressure hypothesis is a kind of theoretical guide to explain the inconsistency in these complicated processes according to vacillation model.

If so, how will this hypothesis account for the processes to find a resolution of cross-pressure? Even if it is assumed that an answer to this question is to delay the final decision, a doubt why such a decision is done is left. So, the Erie Study accounts for such a doubt in virtue of bandwagon effect. Furthermore, the staffs of the Elmira Study took up the political character of the interpersonal environments, such as family, friend and work-place for a mechanism to find a way out in the final phase. What is more, they paid attention to the heterogeneous situations than the political homogeneity of these primary groups.

They maintained, however, that the voters would behave in conformity with dominant patterns of behavior at community level in case of knotty problems. As can be seen in the following quotation : "The impact of the larger community is thus most evident among voters with discordant or disagreeing primary groups. When the voter's close association do not provide him with a single, clear political direction .... then wider associations in



the surrounding community reinforce one position over the other."<sup>15</sup>) They call these influences the breakage effect, borrowing a term from horse-racing circle. Though the point at issue that should be examined is left as to their findings, they intend to come up with a viewpoint of cross-pressure in connection with the wider social contexts cross over the framework of primary groups.

Now then, the current studies of voting behavior take up the various topics for discussion under impetus from the SRC-CPS groups. Consequently, the efforts toward the accumulation and generalization of findings have been continued up to date. It is not too far from the truth to say that the evaluation equal to a level of "normal science" named by T. Kuhn will be conferred as to the status quo of the research studies.

For all that, may it be said that the situation of current studies has given the definite paradigms of the methodology and conceptual frameworks in regard to research studies an assured status? As Berelson pointed out previously, it would be hard to say that these studies have succeeded in synthesizing the data and information, which were provided by subsequent surveys.<sup>16</sup>

And yet, it is not to be denied that the intellectual activities of the Michigan teams have paved the way for the current election studies. As for their contribution, it is worth noting that they have intended to do the integration and generalization of election studies by comparing each national electoral process. Their points of view, as described later on, are based on recognition that it is difficult to complete the theoretical formulation referring to the national processes as far as remaining in sociological researches limited in geographical scope.

#### **IV. Party identification and normal vote**

The two concepts of party identification and normal vote are the key terms to joint the voting behavior at individual level to the electoral processes at system level. Before turning to the third hypothesis, namely, floating voter hypothesis, let us now look at the important problems pertaining to the relations between the sociological and psychological variables in a new light.

The first question to be discussed is an examination about the definition of party identification. The term "party identification" can be defined as the favorable attitudes composed of identification with the policies, leaders, sense of value and the like of a specific party.

Now then, hypothesis referring to party identification, as can be seen in the following quotation, includes the four aspects, (1) People of strong party identification will adhere closely to what they see to be their party's position on issues ; (2) People of strong party

identification will see other adherents of their party as resembling themselves in opinions on issues ; (3) People of strong party identification will reject contact with sources of contrary opinion, i.e., newspapers, friends, etc. ; (4) People of strong party identification will make their decision regarding voting early in the campaign, will not waver during the campaign, and will not split their tickets.<sup>17)</sup>

What the passage makes clear at once is that party identification has extremely high salience for vote decisions. The term named "salience" contains the following meaning here. "Salience," which can be measured .... by respondents' identification of the "most important problems the government .... should try to take care of," is an indication of an *affective* link between the voter and the issue. Salience does not, however, ensure a *cognitive* link.<sup>18)</sup>

In addition to salience of party identification in the vote decisions of each individual, it is necessary to mention the reason why party identification carries great weight in relation with the electoral changes. Hereupon, we must draw to two variable pairs, namely, the decision to vote/turnout and party choice/party vote division. Well, the decision to vote and party choice are variables at individual level, and the voting of each individual is explained with the aid of these two concepts. On the other hand, turnout and party vote division are ones explaining the macrocosmic changes at system level.<sup>19)</sup>

As for the relation of two variable pairs, while the analogue variable of vote decisions at individual level is turnout at system level, i. e., the proportion of electorate who cast a ballot, the analogue one of party choice at individual level is party vote division at system level : normal vote that describes the flow of vote. Above all, party identification is not only a core factor in the psychological models of vote decisions at microcosmic level, but an important factor formulating the concept of normal vote theoretically. "While party identification seems to change slowly, but both issues and candidates are more variable factors. Whether the balance of forces .... will endure or not depends in large part on the extent to which domestic and foreign events force a reevaluation of these factors in the minds of the voters."<sup>20)</sup> In other words, party identification is a psychological concept replacing with the sociological explanation regarding the vote decisions that seems to be shown in the IPP. It would be better to say that this concept is expected an intervening role to analyze the electoral processes at macrocosmic level as well as the vote decisions of each individual.

By the way, the term "normal vote" indicates the tendency that the voting to parties expected to each group differentiates along the direction of party identification. Therefore, the meaning of "normal" indicates such a tendency that the voting would be predicted by the distribution of party identification. The attitudinal approach based on this conception supposes that the party supported by the natural majority of party identifi-

cation would win in election.

The voters do not always vote for the same party, however, even if their party identification is stable for a long term. As it is, the explanation as to the electoral processes cannot but consider that the voting direction might deviate from the distribution of party identification owing to the influence of short-term powers in election. It may be said that the concept of normal vote is an analytical instrument to measure the joint effect of both long-term and short-term forces.

It is impossible for us to ignore, however, that party identification, which pay the way for the concept of normal vote, has been recently criticized in the explanatory power and its effectiveness of analysis. Broadly speaking, the concept of party identification tends to emphasize an advantage for the psychological explanation of predisposition in more stable party systems. To put it other way round, one can safely say that it is an explanatory concept with a view to the behaviors of party identifiers having conventional identification with a specific party.

Therefore, it does not refer to the viewpoint of social change irrespective of micro-cosmic or macrocosmic level. For that matter, *Political Change in Britain* written by D. Butler and D. Stokes is worthy of note.<sup>21)</sup> Their study is an empirical research on the electoral and political systems in Britain. They put stress on illuminating the stable relations between party image and voting behavior based on the Michigan model. They bring in the factors reflective of the social classes, generations or age-cohorts and social environments in addition to the psychological variables, and point out that the cross-pressure would be promoted in terms of the complicated changes of these social forces. Their study emphasizes to be a methodological attempt to merge the attitudinal approach into the historical approach, though more self-consciously on the former than the latter. One can safely state that they made a trial of understanding the changes of both party identification and social bases "relationally" through the cross-national researches. As aforesaid, their arguing point introduced for the understanding of electoral processes, however, throws the accent on the developmental processes of partisanship, namely, political socialization than social change. It is not too much to say that their viewpoint is on a prolongation of the micro-cosmic psychological level in a broader sense.

Such a comment is substantiated plainly by A. Campbell and his associates when they say ; "The distribution of social characteristics in a population varies but slowly over a period of time. Yet crucial fluctuation in the national vote occur from election to election. Such fluctuation cannot be accounted for by independent variables which, over brief spans of time, do not vary. The attitudinal approach directed more attention to political objects of orientation, such as the candidates and issues, which do shift in the short term. It seems clear that the key to the finer dynamics of political behavior lay in the reaction

of the electorate to these changes in the political scene."<sup>22)</sup>

On the other hand, the attitudinal approach regards the dependent variables quoted above as the factors with an immediate effect on voting. As described above, these factors consist of the attitudes to party, issue and candidate.

It would be not to be denied that the SRC-CPS researchers have gone a long way to explicating the important aspects of psychological processes of voting behavior. None the less, doubt to follow around the psychological studies of voting is left. The relations between the psychological researches and sociological findings must be recalled once more again. In that respect, it would be noteworthy that the Elmira Study had made much of "social psychology of voting behavior", which throws light upon the implementation process that personality traits or disposition of the individual would be led to his final, manifest response, i. e., vote decisions, as well. What matters is rather how the social conditions influencing the vote decisions are supplemented by psychological processes, which are capable of untying the intricacy of group pressures and personal natural voting pattern based on the past experiences.

Now then, we will pay more attention to the psychological structure for theory with due regard to an element of time, as an example : the funnel of causality, such as that represented in Figure 2. The behavior of an individual stems from a multitude of prior factors, so the chain of events is visualized as funnel. So that, "the axis of the funnel is a time dimension running from the distant past, at the base of the funnel, to the present, at its apex."<sup>23)</sup> The solid diagram shown in Figure 2 is shaped funnel "because it is assumed that as time goes on there are fewer necessary conditions which must be fulfilled if the individual is to vote in a certain way." The funnel is filled with the environmental influences and the psychological factors which have combined to influence the voting. In other words, this model is a logical product to explain the convergence effect on individual's vote at the final stage by illuminating a causal chain during the campaign period.

In brief, this methodological model does not induce to the psychological processes to reducing to the domains of attitude researches in a restricted sense, but almost routes by way of discovering what is a salient attitudinal factor for vote decisions in face of cross-pressure. All of this amounts to saying that the salience of issue or candidate, to be more precise, the attitudes that influence the voting are raised by the election campaign when an issue is related with concern of the individuals or groups, or when the groups plump for a specific candidate. In fine, we may say that the above finding shows how to take in an importance of non-political factors in the study of voting behavior.

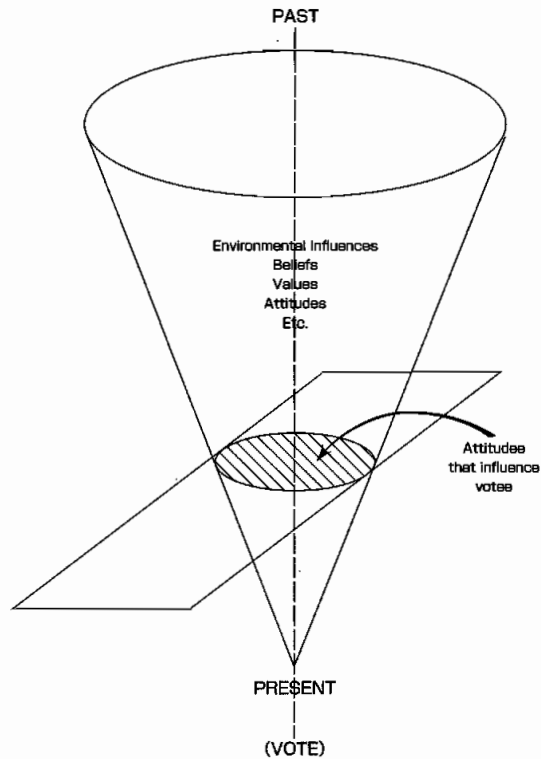
And yet, it is hardly possible that the SRC-CPS researchers do not notice the importance of these factors. So that, W. E. Miller, who is a member of the Michigan teams, prevails on standing in need of "understanding of the conditions predisposing to the develop-

ment and decay of party identification."<sup>24</sup>) The top two sketches in Figure 3 are one of models suggesting such a direction of researches. The diagram above illustrates that the causal sequence from the long-term predisposition fostered by social group memberships and other social characteristics through the campaign and attitudinal factors to the final voting choice emerges as the most important single element of the new explanatory scheme.<sup>25</sup> What is more, Miller emphasizes an importance of study connected with the interplay between group affiliations and political attitudes in order to distinguish the epiphenomenon from the essence of electoral stability and change.

In summary, these theoretical flows have reference to the critical controversies of attitudinal approach against

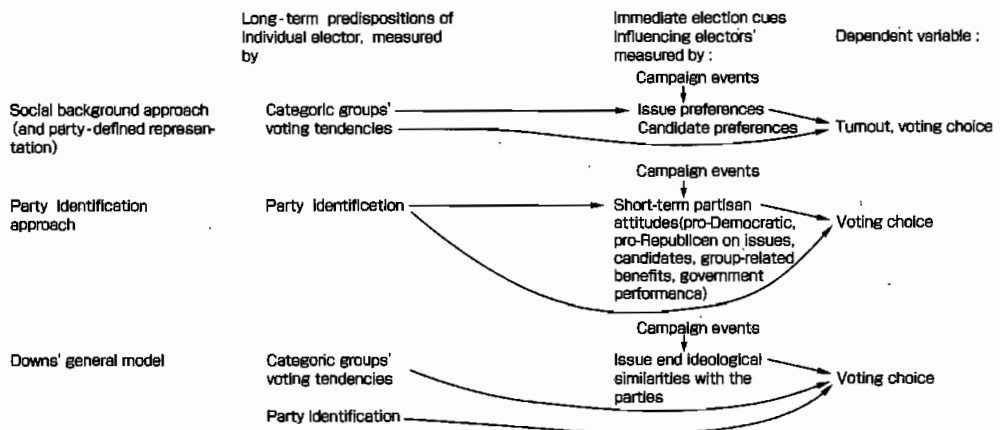
social group theory. In a word, it may be said that social group theory based on the standing decision of voting behavior is driven to reexamine when the election results change greatly. First of all, it may be said that party identification has introduced as a datum line of electoral changes while the explanatory efficacy of demographic factors has suffered some deterioration. Or rather, it would be better to say that the attitudinal approach has regarded the party identification as a core concept of psychological model because of its long-term stability. Viewed from the relation with short-term factors, namely, issue and/or candidate, one may say that party identification has been treated as a priority variable connected the short-term factors with vote decisions. Indeed, the four propositions below show the correlation of party identification with the short-term forces, (1) responsiveness of the turnout rate to the level of stimulation varies inversely with the mean strength of party identification ; (2) responsiveness of the vote division to short-term partisan forces varies inversely with the means strength of party identification ; (3) responsiveness to short-term forces varies inversely with strength of party identification ; (4) responsiveness to short-term forces varies inversely with the level of political

Figure 2. The Funnel of Causality



Source: F.P.Chisman, *Attitude Psychology and the Study of Public Opinion*, p.62.

**Figure 3. Long-term Predispositions and Immediate Election Cues in the Social Background, Party Identification and General Down's Formulations**



Source: I. Budge and D. Farlie, eds., *Voting and Party Competition: A Theoretical Critique and Synthesis Applied to Surveys from Ten Democracies*, p.120.

involvement.<sup>26)</sup>

Conversely speaking, it may well be that the electoral change occurs when issue-orientation and/or candidate-orientation deviate from party identification, or rather when these factors are ill balanced. "The probability that any given voter will be sufficiently deflected in his partisan momentum to cross party lines in a specified election varies directly as a function of strength of short-term forces toward the opposing party and varies inversely as a function of the mass of stored information about politics."<sup>27)</sup>

This new proposition is a revision of traditional floating voter hypothesis in sociology. We are ready to recognize an importance of attitudes toward the parties. We may recall here that two major currents of thought, one primarily sociological, the other more psychological in emphasis, have tread the path of knowledge until comparatively lately. After pointing out that these two approaches are "addressed to the same reality, and conflict between them is hardly a matter of contradictory findings. Rather, they are attacking the problem at different levels, and consequently in different languages", continue Campbell and his associates, "To the degree that these strengths are complementary, the advantage of each should be preserved in a broader framework of theory."<sup>28)</sup> All of this amounts to saying that the broader theoretical framework would be maintained when the ability peculiar to each discipline mutually make up for the deficiencies.

#### **IV. Toward a new floating voter hypothesis**

Let us leave aforesaid matters and turn to the review of floating voter hypothesis. The

first point to notice is that the partisanship itself shows a marked and rapid decay, which brings on the change of elections greatly, in contemporary society. To take an example, the ticket-splitting has put in appearance in American local elections early, and thus has spread to the Federal Congress elections after the later half of 1960's. Such a tendency has been promoted still more by seceding from partly identification on the voters, and increasing in Independents.

Therefore, facing up to the fact that the political change is closely connected with the changing reaction of electorate, N. H. Nie and his associates could not but write *The Changing American Voter* while reviewing *The American Voter* written by Campbell et al. elaborately. As is generally known, the affairs such as racial discrimination, civil rights movements, the Vietnam War, Watergate affairs, urban crisis and the like, which had made the political distrust diffuse, occurred in a row for 1970-80 years. These critical phenomena were the issues that seemed to swing radically the party loyalties in operation.

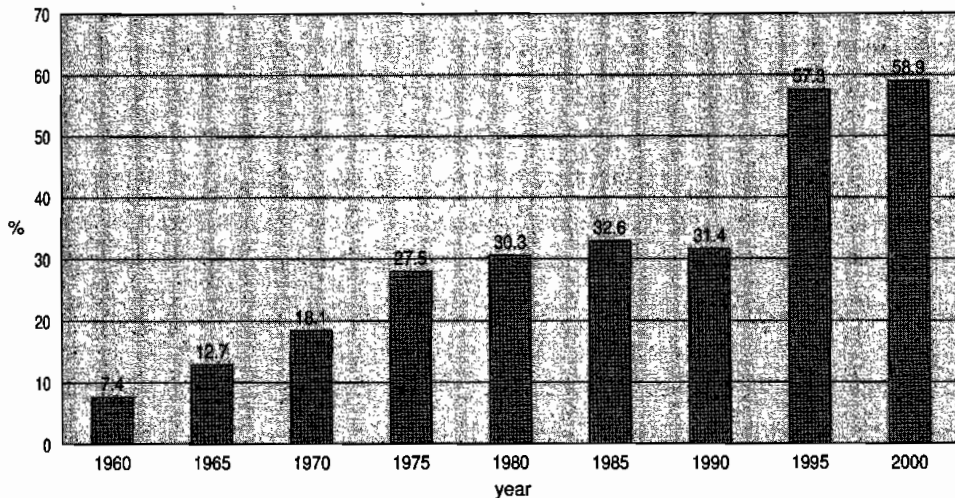
Nie and his associates found the decaying processes of partisanship in the change of the public responses with the advance of these current issues. For reasons mentioned above, it seems reasonable to conclude : the conversion of concern from the conception of group vote based on the traditional floating voter hypotheses, or a kind of balance theories analyzing the change in deviation from party identification to the issue or policy vote based on conception of political science.

It is not to be denied that the secession from party support and the increase in nonpartisan strata of voters, or the decaying tendencies of voting consistency would be recognized in contemporary Japan, too. As shown in Figure 4, for example, the increasing trend of nonpartisans is remarkable after the mid-1990's, much the same as in Western countries. It is observed clearly that they have performed a potentiality causing the decline of political system of 1955.<sup>29)</sup> If so, the conventional opinions, which consider them to be almost the same as the peripheral voters or political apathy brackets, have to make a revision.

We will summarize the main problems to take up in this section here. First, there is the problem how to measure the floating phenomena in voting behavior of the nonpartisans or Independents. It will be necessary, for example, to search for the methods to measure the turnover of relations between vote intentions and party choices as found in the successive elections in order to get the data of time series on electoral change.

Second, it will be worthy to examine how to relate the political concern with floating vote. No doubt because the degree that the electoral concern of voters is related with the transmission and reception of political information will be raised still more in contemporary advanced information society, it is important to bear in mind how to treat the distribution and storage of information referring to politics. The importance of issue vote in the

Figure 4. Increasing Trend of Nonpartisans  
(Arranged from The Jiji-Tsūshin Polls)



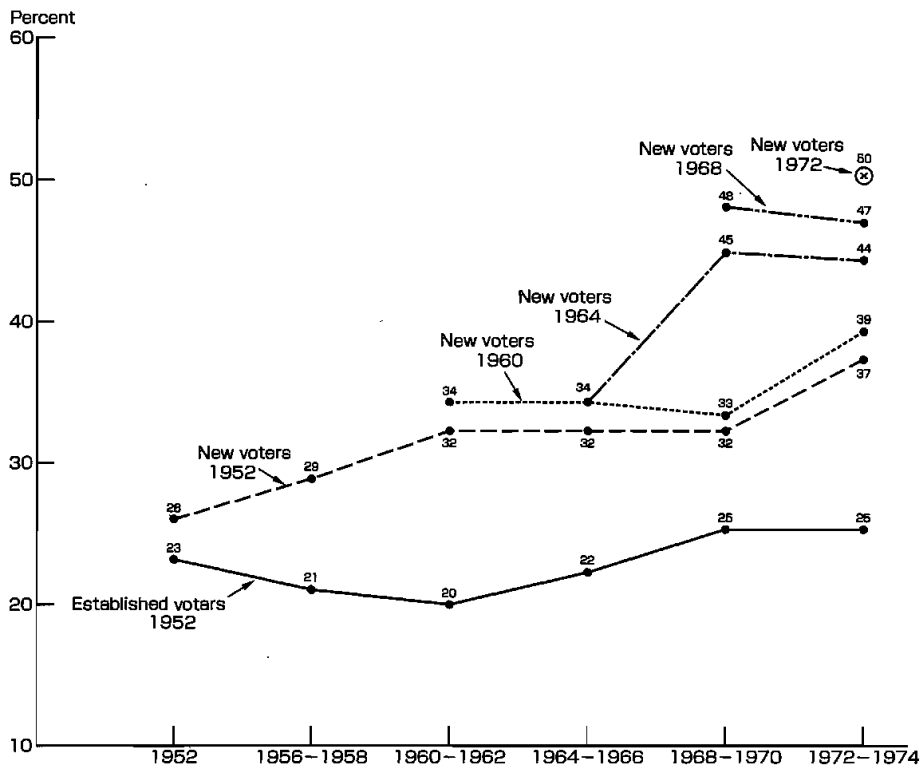
current elections cannot be overvalued because of the increase of political information closely connected with the issues. If so, can the real change of public responses be approached in terms of the studies of issue vote or policy vote as far as remaining in analysis of the correspondence of parties to issues?

Third, there is a question concerning the recruitment of nonpartisan strata. It is necessary to make the decaying sources of partisanship clear in order to answer to this question. In that respect, it is worth while examining the subject more closely with applying the cohort analysis. That is, the cohort analysis is useful to throw light upon the turnover in compositions of the nonpartisans. So far, it is as follows that the studies regarding the increase in Independents suggest, (1) whatever the elections, a ratio of Independents is higher in younger cohorts than older ones. In the Japanese electorate, the fact with the younger generations the more much the nonpartisans affirms such a tendency ; (2) the partisanship tends to become more powerful the longer people contact to party systems.

Figure 5 indicates the proportion of Independents by age cohorts across the two decades, 1952-1972. The data seek to capture the fact that the established voters of 1952 hardly respond with a rapid increase in party independence after the late 1960s. On the other hand, as to the new voters of 1952, who too have been in the electorate for a long time, the proportion of Independents grows gradually over the two decades. A similar increasing trend is found for the new voters of 1960. The more interesting cohorts are the new voters of 1964. Though they do not show a level of Independents different from the cohorts mentioned above at first, their proportion of Independents shows a sharp increase thereafter. Moreover, the 1968 and 1972 cohorts are those who enter with a remarkable



Figure 5. Proportion of Independents by age cohort, 1952-1972



Source: N.H.Nie et al., *The Changing American Voter*, p.63.

high level of independence and remain highly Independents. Nie and his associates conclude by saying that "The length of affiliation has a delaying effect on party erosion.... Much of the change in the partisan commitment of Americans appears to come from those new voters who enter the electorate in the late 1960s.... The combination of the fact that the new voters are a larger proportion of the electorate and the fact of their greater independence makes clear that these new voters contribute disproportionately to the decay of partisanship."<sup>30)</sup>

It need scarcely be said that the cohort analysis is known as a method of making an age effect (difference in development) on the increase in Independents clear. Moreover, what has to be noticed is that the decay of partisanship appears to have some connection with the generation division. Table 2 indicates that the trend to erode partisanship varies according to generations. A marked tendency to erode partisanship, for example, is seen in the generations of 1960's and after, while such a tendency is few and far between in the generations of Pre-New Deal and New Deal. It would be better to say that the generation division is a phenomenon relating the background of the times, namely, difference in

Table 2. Partisan Identification by Political Generations

	Srtong Democrat	Weak Democrat	Inde- pendent	Weak Republican	Strong Republican	(N)
Pre-New Deal						
1960	22.9%	23.1%	16.6%	16.8%	20.6%	(637)
1964	30.7	20.7	14.6	15.4	18.5	(410)
1968	26.5	25.9	16.9	13.1	17.5	(343)
1972	20.5	24.8	19.6	15.8	19.3	(419)
New Deal						
1960	20.3	25.3	26.8	13.9	13.6	(679)
1964	27.8	26.8	22.5	13.1	9.9	(497)
1968	20.2	26.2	26.4	18.0	9.3	(451)
1972	20.5	26.9	25.3	15.3	11.9	(620)
Postwar						
1960	20.9	27.3	26.9	11.2	13.7	(498)
1964	25.1	27.5	25.9	13.6	8.0	(375)
1968	23.3	25.7	31.5	13.0	6.6	(378)
1972	15.7	25.9	35.3	13.1	10.1	(567)
The 1960s						
1960	3.7	40.7	29.6	11.1	14.8	( 54)
1964	22.9	25.7	32.9	12.0	6.4	(249)
1968	11.6	24.9	43.2	14.4	5.9	(354)
1972	8.9	24.8	46.0	13.4	6.9	(642)
New voters						
1972	8.7	27.1	50.9	7.0	5.4	(391)

Source; G.M.Pomper, *Voters's Choice: Varieties of American Electoral Behavior*, p.25.

times, with the decay of partisanship. In other words, the effect of times suggests an impact of political and social situations making the partisanship erode. It follows from what has been said that the decaying tendencies of partisanship have to analyze by seizing the effect of age, generation and times overall.

Still more, we may note, in passing, that the decaying trend of partisanship will be not only the consequence of alteration of generations but will reflect the flow of the times. From this viewpoint, one may say that the study referring to the transmission of political attitudes from generation to generation, namely, political socialization is an important task.

The fourth subject is how to classify the floating voters. It is desirable to define the floating voters before moving on to the main subject. According to H. Daudt, the term "floating voters" can be defined as "those persons who do not make the same choice a two successive elections."<sup>31</sup> Now then, the increase in floating voters was already pointed out in both the Erie Study and the Elmira Study, and the SRC-CPS researchers have examined

them by the use of various pattern variables as well. To put it briefly, they can be classified into three categories : crystallizers, waverers (further divided into indecision waverers and party waverers) and party changers in the Erie Study, and may be divided into two types : changers and shifters in the Elmira Study. Or, in the series of election studies carried out by the SRC and CPS groups, they are referred to as changers, shifters or switchers. In addition, the voters called crystallisers, converts and disintegrators belong to floaters according to M. Benney known as scholar on the British elections.

Finally, instead of conclusion, we would like to refer to the reason why the floating of voting behavior has been paid attention. To be precise, two reasons are worthy of note. One is as follows : the fact that the quantitative increase in floating voters would cause the electoral changes has been recognized. Another is that the lowing trend of turnout would have some connection with the increase in nonpartisans. Since 1960's, for example, turnout has described a downward curve in the President and the Federal Congress elections in America. And thus, turnout has become an important problem of electoral researches up to date. The descending trend of electoral participation, as can be seen in the following quotation, may result from "the combined impact of two attitudinal trends: the weakening of party identification and declining beliefs about government responsiveness."<sup>32)</sup>

As for the relations of electoral participation with partisan loyalties, P.R. Abramson and J.H. Aldrich express themselves in the following words through re-analysis of data of SRC-CPS ; "the strength of partisan affiliation is strongly and positively related to turnout in each election, and this relationship has grown over time. As a result, the erosion of partisanship in the electorate can explain between 25 and 30 percent of the decline in participation in presidential elections and even more of the decline in off-year congressional elections."<sup>33)</sup> New floating voter hypotheses include the matters connected immediately with analysis of voting behavior of the nonpartisans. In any case, while the studies based on floating voter models have been pushed forward on the analyses of electoral changes steadily, the succession of research studies and the accumulation of findings have, at long last, begun to attract the Japanese researchers' attention.

There are a few words to be said on the status quo of research studies. An important addition to be made to what we have said about social group theory and attitudinal approach of voting behavior inclusive of floating voter hypothesis, is rational-choice model originated with A. Downs. His theory of voting was made public as a research that applied the knowledge of mathematical economics, especially in Chapter 3 "The Logic of Voting" of his writings, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, and attracted a good deal of researchers' attention. While the general Downs model is composed of fifteen assumptions, some of them related to Figure 3 can be mentioned only summarily here. That is, (1)

Electors' preferences remain the same whatever the movement of parties ; (2) Electors vote independently for the party whose declared programme / record on balance will most advance their own preferences ; (3) Electors judge parties' ability to advance their preferences either through direct similarity between their preferences and party programmes/records, or through indicators of policy-similarity such as ideology, judgement of trusted associates etc. ; (4) The party programme/record on which similarity is estimated is the programme/record of the party leadership team<sup>34)</sup>.

These assumptions inclusive of any assessment of policy voting are illustrated on the bottom of Figure 3. What has to be noticed is that the Downs model recognizes both long-term predisposition and short-term cues. Long-term predisposition, as we have seen, has been treated by social group theory and attitudinal approach in terms of the problems of social characteristics and/or party identification. So that, it seems reasonable to suppose that three approaches inclusive of the Downs model hold the major similarities and minor differences on the determinants of voting behavior in common.

For all that, though rational-choice model is one of fascinating approaches, it is too involved a subject to be treated here in detail. As this is far beyond the scope of this paper, we will have this topics for another time. Suffice it to say here that these three theories or models mentioned above are in a fair way to syntheses. The status quo of the studies is none the better or the worse one another. Relevant to this point is I. Budge and D. Farlie's following remark : "The coexistence of 'social group' and 'rational choice' thinking in political common sense indicates that they are probably compatible, since politicians would hardly be able to operate on the two simultaneously if they were directly opposed."<sup>35)</sup>

In addition, regarding the commonality and divergence between social group theory and attitudinal approach as the problem originated in the use of some of the same variables for explanatory rationales of voting behavior, there is a research which synthesizes both theories while doing the relations of those variables clearly. For instance, S. E. Szabo brought forward an explanatory synthesis, testing an synthetic model of candidate choice composed of twenty-six items concerning variables, such as demographic factors, party strength, intention to vote, political ideology and network, besides socio-economic status related to the social network valued in social group theory and party identification in attitudinal approach, by using the correlation (Gamma coefficients of association) and the path analyses. After pointing out that the separate lines of both theories need to be synthesized, says he, "Every individual has certain perceptions and values and every individual has interactions with others, and the two are not mutually exclusive. Selecting a particular political candidate for whom to vote is seldom a process that occurs in isolation without other individuals influencing the selection."<sup>36)</sup> His conclusion seems to show the

route to which both social and psychological factors are synthesized by using the network analysis.

It will be desired how to synthesize the theories mentioned above. Budge and Farlie's remark mentioned above suggest the possibility of the theoretical synthesis as well. Granted to it to be correct, we would like to emphasize that each possibility also is tinged with reality by setting limited to the subjects of researches ; especially focusing on investigating the causes of increase in the nonpartisans or Independents, and their behavioral traits.

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