Annotated Bibliography

Topic:

The Impact of the Economy on the American Voter

Alesina, Alberto, John Londregan and Howard Rosenthal. 1993. "A Model of the Political Economy of the United States." *The American Political Science Review* 87: 12-33.

In this article Alesina, Londregan, and Rosenthal test a model to determine whether economic growth and national elections in the United States are related. This model analyzes the behavior of voters and compares it with various economic rates of the incumbent. Those economic rates can be growth or support percentages. Their hypothesis is that voters use on-year and midterm elections evenly in order to weigh their vote. They call fluctuations in the economy "shock" (Alberto, Londregan and Rosenthal 1993). Each different shock (Alberto, Londregan and Rosenthal 1993), GNP falling, foreign debt, or the trade deficit, is labeled as a present effect or an ongoing effect. In each different category (the economy, the two political parties, institutions, voters, ect) shock (Alberto, Londregan, and Rosenthal 1993) is evaluated with different equations. The two major categories I was concerned about are the economy and the voters. With the economy, shocks tend to induce rational retrospective voting. Thus confirming conclusions gathered by other researchers. However, on voters Alesina, Londregan, and Rosenthal state that it is uncertain to form a judgment, even if the two parties are clearly labeled with each individual, to determine how they will vote economically. They confirm that each voter weighs growth equally. This article shows statistical research and equations used to finalize several theories created in the past. I can use this data to show how those researches can prove theories and incorporate into justifying others research.

Alvarez, R. Michael and Jonathan Nagler 1995. "Economic, Issues and the Perot Candidacy: Voter Choice in the 1992 Presidential Election." *American Journal of Political Science* 39: 714-744.

In this article, Nagler and Alvarez test three key issues that affected the outcome of the 1992 Ross Perot, Bill Clinton, and George H.W. Bush election. Those three issues were the economy, ideological positions, and angry voting. They take these explanations and explore which one was the most determining factor causing Clinton to win the election. They theorize that the most prevailing issue was the economy. Leading up to the election, the American public experienced a horrible four year stretch under Bush. After testing their theory with a multinomial probit analysis, they find that the economy had a much greater effect in the 1992 election rather than the previous in 1988. However, they find a very interesting twist. Voters were more likely to view the national economy rather than their own personal economic situation and that was what drove their vote for Bush, Clinton, or Perot. Not only is this evidence relatively current, it corresponds with my previous research on the effect of the economy. Nagler and Alvarez's findings will be adequate in backing up the hypothesis I form. It will show the audience that voters rely more heavily on national economic issues rather than various personal economic disadvantages.

Bloom, Howard S. and H. Douglas Price. 1975. "Voter Response to Short-Run Economic Conditions: the A symmetric Effect of Prosperity and Recession." *The American Political Science Review* 69: 1240-1254.

In the article, Bloom and Price break down another part of Kramer's theory (1971) that states, real declining income and other negative economic factors reduce the voter's choice for choosing an incumbent in the election. They cite another research team, Arcelus and Meltzer, who say that economic conditions do not affect the vote, except for inflation. Bloom and Price agree with Arcelus and Meltzer in that only certain economic conditions impact the vote. The two categories that they divide the economic impact into are short-run economics and long-run economics. They reveal that short-run economics have greater voter concern and will have negative impact on incumbent re-election. Bloom and Price state that party identification and other salient political issues will impact the vote more than long-term economic policy. The example they use is voting behavior in the 1930's. Soon after the crash in 1929, short-term economic peril caused ten percent more Democratic voters to enter in the electorate during the following year. This data will be valuable to my research in that it will show dissenting opinions concerning Kramer's theory. Instead of relying on just one theory, I can use Bloom and Price's break down theories to show how Kramer's ideas were studied, built upon, and challenged.

Carey, Sean and Matthew J. Lebo. 2006. "Election Cycles and the Economic Voter." *Political Research Quarterly* 59: 543-556.

In this article, Carey and Lebo evaluate monthly public opinion surveys and examine the results related to individuals who participated in those surveys. It is their belief that studies which use traditional methods of time series analysis are not as accurate as their method. Carey and Lebo state that economics moves political behavior, however there are four different ways that economies can push that vote. Those four ways are: sociotropic prospective, sociotropic retrospective, egocentric prospective, and egocentric retrospective. All these were developed by previous researchers. They apply all these models to their research method and to attempt to find out which one is more prominent. A unique twist is they do this in United Kingdom federal elections. They come to find that voters tend to evaluate national economic measures rather than personal ones. This again, is another theory that has appeared amongst all the others. Carey and Lebo try to link the U.K. elections being similar to the ones in the U.S. This article will not be a substantial part of my paper but it gives recent research on my topic. Also, it helps to create an argument that some of this research, past and present, can be applied to similar governments.

Happy, J.R. 1986. "Voter Sensitivity to Economic Conditions." *Comparative Politics* 19: 45-56.

In this article, Happy explores Kramer's theory that states voters' choice is determined by economic performance during the previous candidacy in national elections. However, he applies this theory to Canadian federal election and then compares and contrasts his findings with the American voter. If being similar, then Happy can conclude that Kramer's theory can be applied to other countries as well. To make his point, he must validate Canadian and American voting systems can be systematically similar. To do this, he states that the prime minister of Canada and the president of the United States both share the same visible executive control over issues. Also, he confirms that like Kramer's study of income, inflation, and unemployment, Canada has like figures that can be analyzed like the figures in the United States.   After conducting several tests, he concludes that Kramer's theory can be applied to Canada's system of federal elections. The influence of the economy drives voter's choice in determining who the next leader will be. Another similarity he finds is unemployment does not have any effect on incumbency voting. This information can be vital to my paper. Happy's research shows how Kramer's theory, if applied to similarly structured governments, can be used to explain several other voting behaviors in various countries.

Hibbing, John R. and John R. Alford. 1981. "The Electoral Impact of Economic Conditions: Who is Held Responsible?" *American Journal of Political Science* 25: 423-439.

In this article, Hibbing and Alford focus on the effect of the economy among different members of the president's party. They state that previous research has assumed that the economy just affects the incumbent president. However, they will attempt to show that all members, congressional and various political subgroups, are affected. They theorize that within local district incumbency, voters tend to evaluate their own economic performance as a way to guide their vote. After several sets of statistical formulas and data, they find that in-party incumbents are affected by fluctuations in the economy than non-incumbents. However, they find that in local districts voters still do not rely heavily on their own individual performances in order to choose their candidate. The overall findings that Hibbing and Alford are trying to relay to the audience is that voters are capable enough to realize which party is at fault for current economic conditions and which members of that party are held responsible. This article gives my paper a new opening. Not only will I apply the theories to different countries similar to the United States, I can show how members of the incumbent's party are directly affected. This will help guide my research to investigate some local elections and how local economies affect voters' choice.

Holbrook, Thomas and James C. Garand. 1996. "Homo Economus? Economic Information and Economic Voting." *Political Research Quarterly* 49: 351-375.

In this article, Holbrook and Garand question the theories of previous researchers by examining if voters really understand the perception of where the economy lies. They feel that misperceptions about can develop fallacies that were used to maintain previous theories theories. They use data acquired in the 1992 presidential election from Milwaukee County, Wisconsin. They hypothesize that they will find various distinctions among voters who actually understand different fiscal policies and can accurately judge whether the economy is on the rise or in the slumps. What Holbrook and Garand find is various types of factors play out into understanding economic policies. Those factors being: age, race, gender, class, media exposures, and socioeconomic status to name a few. They conclude that with such naivety among the population, accurate data involving the impact of the economy can just not be reached. They state that a vast majority of people living in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin could not even tell inflation rates during the 1992 election when the economy was a major concern for the candidates. This research brings about questions of past theories. If voters cannot understand the simplest forms of economics, then how can they form accurate votes for researches to base their theories on? In my paper, I will try and find different articles addressing this question.

Kim, HeeMin and Richard C. Fording 2001. "Voter Ideology, the Economy, and the International Environment in Western Democracies." *Political Behavior* 23: 53-73.

In the article, Kim and Fording examine what types of economic factors actually persuade people to turn their vote. In addition, they examine just what parts of government are affected. Finally, they analyze thirteen Western democracies to see if their conclusions are true across borders. Kim and Fording use their own theory to measure these democracies. It allows for a comparison measure across borders and significant time periods. What they find is that voter shift comes from domestic and international dilemmas. Primarily for my research I will be concerned with the domestic issues. They state that the current state of the national economy, primarily inflation, drives voters to either vote for the incumbent or find a new candidate. Along with voters judging where the economy lies, they also judge where the incumbent party stands on those political issues. In lemans terms, the voters look at not only how the economy is doing, but what stances on various policies did the incumbent party do to improve or hurt it. This article can be valuable in maintaining an argument that the national economy is what drives voters, not individual economic factors. Also, this research can prove the argument that voter choice is driven by economics in various countries, not just the United States.

Lewis-Beck, Michael S. 1988. "Economics and the American Voter: Past, Present, Future." *Political Behavior* 10: 5-21.

In this article, Lewis-Beck attempts to find out at which period of time the voter allows economics contribute to their vote. He states that V.O. Key is the leading believer that the past is when economics influences voters. He says that Key states voters view the electorate and reward or punish the incumbent on past performances in the economy. In contrast, others like Downs (1957) believe that voters use past experiences to predict future outcomes. Then others think that voters form judgments about future promises about the economy in order to choose who will get their vote. Lewis-Beck's research was conducted by individual surveys that analyzed which one of these theories was most consistent when it came to the voter's choice. What he found was that a vast majority of people evaluate past economic performances in order to form their vote. However, the research only lasted between one and two years and gather collectively instead of individually. This article opens new doors to my research. While backing several other articles I have come across, this article gives me more to look at than just the theories I have discovered. One such door could be whether or not the economic impact is greater when individual surveys are done. This will guide me in another path for my research.

Lynch, G. Patrick. 1999. "Presidential Elections and the Economy 1872 to 1996: The Times They Are A 'Changin or The Song Remains the Same?" *Political Research Quarterly* 52: 825-824.

In the article, Lynch examines George Kramer's standard that states that voters consider past economic performance because it gives some sense of the effectiveness of the incumbent and can be applied to pre-World War II elections. Lynch relays that current research has clearly shown that the condition of the economy had strongly influenced U.S. presidential elections until World War II. He sites V.O. Key (1966) and George Kramer (1971) as being pioneers of this contemporary research. However, he suspects there are two reasons why researchers tend to stray away from pre-World War II data: one, economic data from earlier periods were suspect and two, political scientists assume voters take into account the economy while voting because the government has such a huge role in maintaining it. Lynch uses data from various elections dating back to 1872. He concludes that culture and ethnicity were some determinates in these dated elections, however economic conditions were a major priority for voters in these elections. For example, he compared GNP growth and presidential re-election and found that from 1872-1946 voters have rewarded growth and stable prices. This research is pertinent to my topic because it provides a substantial basis for understanding why the economy has such a control over presidential elections both past and present.

MacKuen, Michael B, Robert S. Erikson and James A. Stimson 1992. "Peasants or Bankers? The American Electorate and the U.S. Economy." *American Political Science Review* 86: 597-611.

In this article, MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson stray farther away from the classical Key and Kramer models. They move toward the opinion that the electorate anticipates future economic promises from the candidates and rewards or punishes the upcoming president for those promises. However, they do not negate Key and Kramer; they fine tune their classical observations into two categories: peasants and bankers. Peasants judge the government by their own economic experiences and they are concerned with personal impacts created from changes in the economy. If wealth is plentiful, then they will vote to keep the current president in. However, if they are in a time of hardship then they will vote for change. In contrast to the peasant, the banker is more concerned about future investments. They will shape their vote by what the candidates promise in the future. MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson clearly do not argue that the economy does not influence the American voter; they feel that certain types of people let economic conditions influence them differently. This research will be substantial in my paper because it will give added theories on top of Key and Kramer's original theories. This will help guide the audience to more updated realistic information that can be portrayed in today's economy. With this data I will be able to form a more precise thesis and create a more in depth hypothesis.

Mitchell, David M and Keith Willett. 2006. "Local Economic Performance and Economic Outcomes." *Atlantic Economic Journal* 34: 219-233.

Mitchell and Willett analyze whether voters hold the incumbent party accountable when in state and local elections. They state it is clearly seen in national elections, but state and local elections are very different. The economic conditions that hold voters to their perceptions are county conditions. County conditions can be demographic (class, age, sex, race), economical ($ spent per year, average income per month), or any other type of political data that could encompass the whole county. The main condition is unemployment. Willett and Mitchell use logit models to conclude in state and local elections, voters turn toward the overall unemployment rates in the county rather than their own personal economic levels. They find that average weekly wages and who they are voting for is also very dispersed. This data is very beneficial to my paper. It gives me another subtopic to investigate. I can locate similar data and find out if Mitchell and Willett's data and findings have ever been disputed. If their data has been disputed, I can come up with my own analysis of voters here in York County. Also, I can show very recent data that stresses the fact that this is an ongoing, pertinent topic to today's society.

Mughan, Anthony and Dean Lacy. 1998. "Economic Performance, Job Insecurity, and Electoral Choice."

British Journal of Political Science 32: 513-533.

In this article, Mughan and Lacy question previous held theories that the solution of short-term economic performance, both sociotropic and egocentric, were the ways the economy effected the American voter. Simply defined, sociotropic evaluation comes from a voter who views short-term economic conditions in the whole. These conditions include GNP fluctuation, trade deficits/surplus, globalization, and other such related matters. On the other hand egocentric views on short-term economic conditions correspond to how well off that particular person is during the period of that particular president. For their argument, Mughan and Lacy associate a non-traditional thought (contemporary to the time) of job insecurity and also economic insecurity being a determining issue with voters. They analyze the 1996 presidential race in order to prove this hypothesis. These researchers concluded that voters have more at stake than just short-term sociotropic and egocentric judgments. Voters also use things as fear or joy to make evaluations. The researchers use the example of the "feelgood factor" (Mughan and Lacy 1998) of job security or insecurity. This feelgood factor (Mughan and Lacy 1998) will help shape the voters' attitudes toward the incumbent party. They finalize their argument revealing that President Clinton appealed to more voters' sense of job insecurity thus winning him the election. This data is pertinent to my topic because it reveals another argument in the plethora of theories that I have obtained. This research gives sufficient data about a more current election while arguing contemporary ideas about evaluating the economic voter.

Norpoth, Helmut. 1996. "Presidents and the Prospective Voter." *The Journal of Politics* 58: 776-792.

In this article, Norpoth tries to map out which method that voters use to evaluate the economy and sculpt their vote. The two main theories he tests are the retrospective voter and the prospective voter. Retrospective voting means one who sees the current state of the economy and forms their opinions. In contrast, the prospective voter is one who sees future promises of each candidate and forms their choice upon those promises. Norpoth uses a time-series analysis combining consumer surveys and presidential opinion polls from 1960-1993. What he finds is, when in presidential elections, voters always go with the retrospective view of the economy and shape their opinions on that past view. Norpoth clearly refutes earlier findings that include the "banker" (MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1992) theory which states that voters use future prospects in order to shape their vote. This information will be very substantial in making an argument. While I have "indisputable" evidence from Norpoth, I also have very well researched data by MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson. Comparing and Contrasting two major researchers in this field will prove very beneficial to my arguments. I can mold and map progression through this field showing dissenting and conversing opinions.

Peffley, Mark. 1984. “The Voter As Juror: Attributing Responsibility for Economic Conditions.” *Political Behavior* 6: 275-294.

In the article, Peffley analyzes V.O. Key’s “traditional reward-punishment theory.” This theory suggests that citizens consider past performances of the incumbent in the economy when making their selection in national campaigns. Peffley challenges this research with several other studies that he feels tell how the economy plays a role in the voting spectrum. He cites Kuklinski and West (1981) along with Fiorina (1981) who stated that economic voters are driven to future promises of the economy rather than previous results. He includes Weatherford’s (1983) argument which says that the image of an economic voter is one who uses more complex tools than other earlier studies have indicated. In other words, Peffley along with several others feel that economic voters analyze numerous issues rather than just checking if the economy is good or bad during an election. In conclusion, Peffley states examples where the economic voter would not hold the current administration accountable. The first is controlling inflation. He suspects that citizens may view this as an impossible task and it is just unfortunate for whoever is the president during these times. The second is stagflation. Again, along with inflation the public sees the president as having little control over the economy. Finally, he states that other factors such as foreign recession, OPEC, or the Federal Reserve Board can deter citizens from blaming the president in power during that time. Incorporating this into my research will be vital to creating a hypothesis. This data shows specific economic conditions where presidents can be acquitted from causing economic downturn. To narrow down my conclusions, I can compare and contrast this research to others who turn towards Key and Kramer.

Radcliff, Benjamin. 1994. “Reward without Punishment: Economic Conditions and the Vote.” *Political Research Quarterly* 47: 721-731.

In this article, Radcliff studies how the public views the president and his party when in times of economic peril or economic prosperity. He coincides with Rosenstone and states that with presidents that get engulfed into a poor economy, the incumbent party feels its loss with abstention of the vote. The absence of the vote is where the incumbent’s party feels it the most. This theory is in contrast to previous theories that state the voters reward and punish the incumbent directly by either voting or not voting for them. Radcliff’s conclusions are the administration is awarded for more of a strong economy rather than punished for a weak one. The driving force behind his research is measuring the income of individuals. Again, this goes against previous held opinions that state that it is the condition of the national economy that drives voting. He states as income levels rise, there are clear gains in voter growth and with a diminishing income there are only few losses. His final conclusion is that with a gaining economy there is a massive urge to vote by the public for the incumbent, however with a failing economy there is minimal absence of constituents from the vote. This article can be used to compare and contrast several theories about voter behavior and the economy. With various theories, I can conclude in doing research on my own theory.

Rosenston, Steven J. 1982. “Economic Adversity and Voter Turnout.” *American Journal of Political Science* 26: 25-46.

In this article, Rosenstone questions how the ability of economic conditions of single people truly affect the way they vote. He uses data from the November 1974 Current Population Survey and data from presidential and mid-term elections since 1896. He examines all types of economic conditions such as: unemployment, poverty, and declines in financial abilities. Unlike his counterparts he is examining a theory that individual economic performance is a more determining factor in influencing the voter rather than national factors. However, Rosenstone states that instead of these personal economic factors influencing how the voter chooses his candidate, they are the factors that determine whether or not people actually vote. He hypothesizes that when in times of financial distraught, the potential voter spends all their resources on holding themselves together, not on politics, economics, or voting. What he concludes is economic adversity does effect the voters. He finds direct correlation in unemployed, poor, and financially troubled peoples and the less likelihood to vote. The major portion of these persons resources is trying to survive rather than vote in elections. This research is a great subtopic for my paper. It is the only analysis I have found that examines the impact of economic factors and proves just how it affects the vote.

Rudolph, Thomas J. and J. Tobin Grant. 2002. "An Attributional Model of Economic Voting: Evidence From the 2000 Election." *Political Research Quarterly* 55: 805-823.

Rudolph and Grant test a new attributional model of voting using the 2000 presidential election. They hypothesize that in the 2000 election the incumbent party benefitted from voters believing that the economy was flourishing. However, they state that the only voters who related the economic prosperity directly to the president. In other words, the voters must have a clear vision that the president's actions lead to national economic well-being. What they found was that voters do in fact have to realize that the president and economic prosperity go hand-in-hand. Specifically, they found that in the 2000 election, Democratic nominee Al Gore benefitted from the belief that the economy had improved, however Bush benefitted from the majority of the voters not relating Gore with the cause of that economic growth. This research contrasts the reward-punishment theory that was used before. I can use this topic to help reveal new dissenting opinions. My goal was to reveal some newer theories about economics and the American voter and this article achieved that. While researching this topic, I was always confused about the 2000 election. The economy was doing well and the incumbent party did not win the election. With Rudolph and Grant's theory, this makes total sense.

Schneider, Friedrich. 1984. "Public Attitudes Toward Economic Conditions and Their Impact of Government Behavior." *Political Behavior* 6: 211-221.

In this article, Schneider explores how the impact of the economy affects voters and how the voter's choice makes government behave. This article shows how the chain regresses from the economy, to the voters, then to the government and how they behave. Schneider uses a chart that is very helpful in understanding his theory. He states that the use of policy instruments pertaining to the economy effects economic conditions. Those economic conditions affect the way voters' evaluate the government's performance. This can either be through personal performance or national economic performance. Whether voters choose to re-elect or elect a candidate will drive government to maintain previous economic policy or form new economic policy. He uses several Western democracies to prove that this theory maintains quality in various countries. Finally, Schneider arrives at three major conclusions: in representative democracies there is a steady correlation between the national economic situation and voters' behavior; governments are overall interested in perusing good economic outcomes, and lastly, a multitude of actors are portrayed in this function of political actors. What he means by the previous statement is that a large portion of people are affected: voters, incumbents, new electors, Congressional members, and bureaucracies. All these government actors depend partially on the economy to pursue their careers. This article will help me show just how the theories that have been created work. In a series of stair-steps, I can show to the audience how the theories are put into test and all the people who are affected by them.

Yantek, Thom and J. David Gopoian 1988. "Cross-Pressured Economic Voting in America: The 1984 Election." *Political Behavior* 10: 37-51.

In this article, Gopoian and Yantek evaluate the theories held that among presidential elections the voters analyze the national economic conditions over their own personal ones. They use data from the 1984 U.S. Presidential election in order to come up with their conclusions. Gopoian and Yantek confirm the previous held theory but find a remarkable trend that has been slowly developing: there is an ever growing minority of people who judge personal economic conditions over national ones. They title this group as "pocketbook" voters. Spurs in these pocketbook voters are visible with the 1980 debates between Reagan and Carter. Reagan drove the economy into the minds of the voters both nationally and personally. This pushed voters to elect Reagan believing that their own personal economic situation would get better. However, Gopoian and Yantek state that there needs to be further research and future elections to develop any kind of theory. This article will help impel some of my research. Now I can look into investigating the future research they were talking about. By taking their conclusions, I can also help support the previous theory that states that voters look toward the national economy to guide their voter rather than personal economic experiences.