

## *Original Paper*

# Define and Explain the Concept of Rationality in the Context of Voting and Political Behavior

Selin Cinar<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Political Science and International Relation, Istanbul, Türkiye

E-mail: selincinarresmi@gmail.com

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### ***Abstract***

*Voter behavior is the study of how people vote at the time of voting and what factors influence their voting behavior through political participation. According to Harrop and Miller, voting behavior is influenced by the sociological aspects of individuals or societies, such as occupational groups, origins, gender, and age, while for politicians; voting is influenced by political programs and campaigns implemented by politicians. The aim of this research paper is to investigate the rationality of voting and voter behavior in both sociological and political ways and to present the characteristics that should be present in order to vote rationally.*

### ***Keywords***

*voting behavior, politics, rationality, approaches to rational choices, strategic voting*

## **1. Introduction**

The relations between society and the state are seen in the 17th century. Here, the bourgeoisie constitutes the segment that affects the state. Separatist ideas among the people and the bourgeoisie are seen in the 17th century. Then, the relations between the state and society are seen sharply in the process extending from the Age of Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution to the present day. In this context, the first scientific studies took place in the Americas. In 1944, research was conducted at Columbia University on sustained voters. In general, voter behavior has brought a new perspective to politics. It makes inquiries into people's behavior and investigates what is happening (Eyidiker, 2018). By revealing the factors in the voting process, the results of individuals are investigated. Some factors that constitute the behavior of voters at the decision-making stage of the voting process have been examined. Then, in 1957, political economist Anthony Downs's "Rational Choice Behavior" studies appeared. "Rational Choice Behavior", which is an economic theory, constitutes a form of

decision-making in rational and economic terms. The behavior of societies in their decision-making processes is in the direction of maximizing whatever is more beneficial to their interests. In this context, individuals tend to choose and support whichever political party will provide more services in terms of economics while voting (Hartwig, 1987). On the other hand, among the factors affecting the behavior of voters are the geographical region in which they live, their ethnic origin, age, and gender, as well as the sociological factors identified by the Columbia School. From a psychological point of view, the Michigan School defines it as the historical development of political parties. On the other hand, how rational individuals can be due to the sociological and psychological factors that make up their personalities has been a matter of debate (Aldrich, 1993). Various criteria have been set for being rational. The more consistent individuals' attitudes are with their goals, the more rational they are when voting in general. The first of the factors affecting rational preferences is the voters' mindset and whether the party they will vote for is the same as their mindset (Downsian Approach), while the other factor is related to the function of political parties in solving emerging problems.

## **2. Research Methodology**

With the background of rational voting behavior in political situations and the availability of information on the review articles and book of Anthony Downs, "An Economic Theory of Democracy," Voting behavior databases are hugely included on necessary information in Anthony Down's work. For information, it is selected and organized by the book. So, qualitative approaches and secondary sources are analyzed in this research paper.

## **3. Approaches to Rational Choices**

Among the factors that make a rational voter rational, the voter must ensure continuity in the choices made by the voter. In other words, the voter should ensure continuity in the decisions he or she has made and will make in the future, so that this will show him or her as a rational voter. For this, some mathematical methods are used. Like logistic regression. This is one of the first characteristics of a rational voter. The second feature is that this consistency in the voter should not stop him or her from being rational and that he or she should be open to different ideas. Another factor is that he or she chooses the best logical outcome in decision-making (Ünal, 2016). That is the principle of instrumentality. According to Anthony Downs, there is a relationship between rational voters and consumers. This relationship means that consumers and voters choose what maximizes their utility. In other words, the principle of instrumentality is a systematic analysis that tries to understand why individuals choose a certain option among the available options and to find out the reasons for it. It is an idea that is also used in research methods and was first put forward by the German sociologist Max Weber in the 19th century. Interpretive social sciences argue that in order to understand people's choices, we need to examine the personal and environmental factors that lead them to make those choices (Anthony, 2016). It is oriented toward interpreting the social world. In interpretive social

science, individuals use common sense when they make decisions in order to understand whether those decisions are right or wrong. People always try to find plausible explanations and make decisions accordingly (Antunes, 2010).

#### **4. Consistency**

According to Baker and Walter (e.g., Fishbein & Coombs, 1974; Baker & Walter, 1975), there are two important characteristics of goods to buy for principled voting. The first is goal-directed rationality (candidates' abilities). That is, if voters exhibit subjective rationality (voting intention), that is, if voters exhibit subjective privilege within themselves, and if this passion can be objectively evaluated by voting for political candidates, Voters here make evaluations among the options based on their own values (Branton, 2003). The fact that the political parties themselves are not present here is an outward expression of the voters. The policies pursued throughout history and the services provided are important for voters to consider when making decisions. It would be wrong to look at the regular voting control of rational voters, who are characterized as rational voters, from a single point of view. We need to look at their decision-making. Because when voters cast their ballots, they are able to vote because a leader is charismatic. Without consulting the success or failure of that leader. These voters are educated, but the logic is wrong. Another factor that cannot be close to four is the voting experience of the voters, such as having the same origin or beliefs as the political party leader (Lee et al., 2016). Suppose two political parties compete in elections. One political party has the same origin as the country, and the other has a different, foreign origin. Voters may be expected to vote for a political party of the same nationality due to their voting preferences. At the same time, this voter may still vote even if he or she does not share a common goal or purpose with the party. These are behaviors towards these behaviors. However, in order to be in line with expectations of voter behavior, decision-making mechanisms need to be maintained. Motivations to exploit voters' voting psychology can lead them to vote irrationally. If the voter has no hope for the party, is undecided about its political content, and lacks political knowledge, they may think that the decision cannot be targeted and that their target decision is better made by consulting other consumers or other politically irrelevant sources. Disinformation often prevails due to misinformation.

#### **5. Instrumentalism**

In democratic societies, there are often many social groups and political parties. Within these groups of political groups, there are usually a few different political parties that have the broad support of everyone (Weingast, 1996). These different political parties, in turn, have many other smaller political parties that share the same ideological boundaries and sometimes even fall between them. At this point, the voters vote for the political party that is likely to win instead of the party with the same ideology, which they already foresee will not win. Voters who vote in instrumental terms may make strategic voting decisions. So the voting transitions of instrumental voters are in the following ways: Suppose

there is a political party that, in general, has always had low approval ratings throughout history. Instrumental voters also share the same ideas with this party. But even though instrumental voters support this party, they vote for a party that is already successful and has more to offer both to society and to their own use, which they vote for because they anticipate that the outgoing party will again come out of the elections with a low vote share. Among the voters, corporate voters are the ones who make the most accurate decisions. They are the ones who determine the choices, make predictions, and act accordingly. These voters are examples of voters who also blossom into different opinions. They do not make one-sided assessments.

## **6. Increasing the Actions' Utility**

The aim of every political party is to win the elections and get the most votes. In order to get the highest number of votes, it is logically necessary to make election promises and provide services. Here, both the political party and the voter will speak as politicians. Utilitarianism is important to voters' behavior and voting patterns. When voters evaluate political parties as their targets, they turn to the economic promises of those parties and whether there is a common goal between them and the parties—that is, their thoughts. Voting ideology is also important in social elections. In general, people vote for the political party with which they share the same opinion. On the other hand, if individuals have little political knowledge, they still tend to vote for ideological explanations. Although this ideology may vary geographically and culturally, it is still one that benefits individuals (Downs, 1957). For example, a person does not have information about the ratio of the minimum wage to national income, but he or she will vote for whichever party increases the minimum wage that he or she desires. The issues of national income and the minimum wage are, of course, a matter of course for economically developed countries. The minimum wage rate in a country with a high economic level is certainly higher than in a country with a low economic level, but if we assume that the public policy in this area is formed by political parties in both countries, the voters in both regions will vote for whichever party raises the minimum wage. Social choice theory is evident. There is collective welfare and individual welfare. People make decisions based on their expectations from the parties they vote for, their interpretation of the problem-solving dimensions of those parties, and the passage of the political party. In general, voters' expectations of political parties are fixed. For example, members of the production, raising the level of education, products of the economy, and demonstrations in public policies. In order to compare such expectations, voters use the party's track record to make predictions about whether it will be able to solve possible challenges. They vote according to which political party is better able to solve these potential challenges.

## **7. Evaluating Different Options**

For rational voters, it is not the ideas of political parties that matter, but their actions. If a political party is new to politics and is contesting elections for the first time, voters will first look at the actions of that

party. Politics already creates dynamism within itself and is open to innovation. It is possible to allow for different options in the rational voter's decision-making. They should evaluate the pre-election proposals of the political party.

### **8. Strategic Voting**

Rational voters generally vote in elections. The factor that influences their voting organizations is that the government they support may try to stay in power, and the opposing government may be victorious in the race to stay in power. According to the benefits of the party they support by voting, they vote in that way by ranking in capacity. They even want to account for the fact that their votes do not affect the winning parts of the party they support (Başarır, 2016). If the voters have no or low political knowledge, it is the love and trust they show towards the problem-solving methods of politicians or the people or organizations that fulfill the protection of the problem while making decisions while voting. For voters who make decisions based on well-known individuals or organizations, it is their leadership positions that are important, not their knowledge or problem-solving groups. This makes the voters' behavior in voting more salient. At the same time, the emotional attachment and broadening cohesion to the goals of political parties and the time period to which the parties are committed is a method used by political parties to attract the middle rather than people with right- or left-wing views. This method is used by most parties and successfully attracts most voters. If the parties have created a harmonious emotional bond against the tendency to which they are affiliated, this attracts the attention of the voter and uses the vote in this direction.

According to Anthony Downs, the main purpose of voting is to compare the government in power with the opposition party on the basis of utility, if the voter wants to see the government in power again. If the voter's opinion of the ruling party is higher than that of the opposition party, he or she decides to support the ruling party again. However, if the ruling party no longer meets the expectations of the voters and cannot produce proposals as before, and if the opposition party has improved itself and raised expectations, the voters' expectations will be in favor of supporting the opposition party this time. On the other hand, if both the ruling party and the opposition party do not provide the same benefit for the electorate and the expectation of the electorate is the same for both parties, then the electorate think about what kind of policy the electorate will follow if the party of the voting party does not exist. If he thinks that he can best direct redistribution, he will vote for the opposition party (Summary of Downs: An Economic Theory of Democracy, Adam Brown, BYU Political Science, n.d.). To do this, he looks at the past political life of the party and draws conclusions as to whether it can realize the expected goal. If it wants to continue in the same way rather than change, and if the voter's expectation is that support for iteration gives him or her more confidence, then the voter's vote for iteration becomes economic.

## 9. Conclusion

It provides explanations with statistical and experimental analyses of the target voter model that voter proposals have brought to political science. The first study on this was conducted in 1944 and has continued until today. Anthony Downs, in his book “An Economic Theory of Democracy,” describes the rational voter model in a broader and more explanatory way. In general, the qualities that should be present in preferred voters are characteristics such as conservation, instrumentalism, utilitarianism, and evaluation of different options, and these characteristics should have a certain criterion specific to them.

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