1. Introduction to the *Research Handbook on Political Partisanship*

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In modern electoral democracies, political partisanship – broadly defined as the relationship between citizens and parties – is fundamental in any serious effort to understand societal and political change. The reason is obvious. Political parties are at the centre stage of the democratic process, as key actors in the delegation of power from citizens to representatives. In democratic societies, parties provide linkage between citizens' wishes, governments' decisions and policy outputs. The importance of reasonably stable, strong and long-lasting bonds between citizens and parties for mobilization and representation in democratic systems cannot be overstated.

In the social sciences, concepts often outlive theories. Although subject to seven decades of fierce scrutiny and thorough revision, party identification remains the most influential concept in electoral research. Its genealogy is well known and its trajectory embodies general trends in social sciences in the 20th century. The short story is that Michigan-based scholars of elections introduced party identification in the early 1950s (Campbell et al., 1960), in part as a response to the Columbia school (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944), who applied sociological and consumer behaviour theories in their analyses of electoral behaviour. This way, social psychology was introduced into the analyses of electoral behaviour, with party identification as the centrepiece in explanatory models of party choice.

Already in the early treatments, party identification was defined as the sense of personal attachment an individual feels toward a party (Belknap and Campbell, 1952; Campbell et al., 1954): an enduring affective orientation towards political parties, analogous to orientations that citizens can develop with social groups. However, all inventions have a pre-history. Inspiration for the concept of identification can be traced back at least a few more decades (see Wängnerud, 1993), to the Vienna group and to the realm of psychoanalysis, and the works of Sigmund Freud (1922) addressing psychological mechanisms within mass movements. Freud's work was in turn heavily based on sociologist and psychologist Gustave Le Bons's (see, e.g., Le Bons, 1897) 19th century work on the psychology of the crowd and the relationship between individuals and groups. In 1909, Graham Wallas (1909: 83) stressed the significance of emotional bonds between voters and political parties: 'in the infinite stream of things . . . something is required simpler and more permanent, something which can be loved and trusted, and which can be recognized at successive elections as being the same thing that was loved and trusted before; and a party is such a thing'.

Like many other innovations in electoral research, the theoretical thinking seems to have been closely intertwined with a dire need for methodological development. To solve a practical problem of lacking data on party membership, in the late 1930s American pollsters had to come up with survey instruments that could indirectly tap closeness to or engagement with specific political parties. The operational definition of a Republican

voter was one who says he thinks of, considers or regards himself as a Republican (Buchanan, 2019; Key, 1942). The wording of these survey instruments preceded the terminology of voters identifying with parties by about a decade. An explanation as to why it took a relatively long time for the idea of party identification to become widespread is the expressive nature of the concept, which clashed with the predominant view of the voters at that time: as rational and deliberating consumers of politics, making up their minds on how to vote. Emotional attachments and affective orientations were not yet part of the story. The Michigan Four – i.e. Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes of the University of Michigan – opened up this field of inquiry. For the past seven decades, party identification has remained central to electoral research.

The *Handbook* project does not evolve around any agreed-upon theoretical definition of partisanship. On the contrary, controversies over definitions and the theoretical foundations of closely related concepts have been very apparent in the past century. The collection of contributions to this *Handbook* together provide an account of these long-standing debates, and serve as a short-cut to fathom the vast literature on partisanship. Having said that, most scholars in this *Handbook* seem to agree that political partisanship works as a broad general umbrella concept that can cover particular subconcepts such as party identification, party attachment, negative partisanship, affective partisanship, and so on.

Since the 1960s, controversies have emerged regarding practically all aspects of the original Michigan conceptualization of party identification (Campbell et al., 1960): the sources of party identification, the evolution of party identification over time, the short-term and long-term stability of party identification, whether the concept is applicable outside the United States, whether party identification is multidimensional, to what extent party identification is affected by political factors, and how to measure the emotional and cognitive components of party identification. All of these major controversies are thoroughly reviewed in this *Handbook*.

In the traditionalist view, party identification is considered as a stable trait that arises in early adolescence through political socialization in the family. Party identification is seen as exogenous predispositions, an ‘unmoved mover’ that affects attitudes and behaviour but is at the same time not affected by those variables. The turn to rational choice theory in the late 1960s, together with new empirical findings from research outside of the United States, paved the way for a revisionist view. Affective and expressive components were toned down, to the benefit of the instrumental and cognitive components of party identification. Morris Fiorina (1976) described party identification as a ‘running tally’ or continually updated evaluation, affected by political events and parties’ issue positions, but still with considerable elasticity.

One way of portraying the shift from the traditionalist to the revisionist view is that political scientists have attempted to ‘steal back’ the concept of party identification from the sociologists and psychologists who invented it, by emphasizing the many ways in which political factors – such as, for example, government performance, economic conditions, party positions, campaign agendas and enacted policies – condition the development, intensity and stability of party identification, as well as its effects on the functioning of democratic systems.

PARTISANSHIP IS A GOOD THING AND A BAD THING

In the terminology of the Michigan group, party identification ‘raises a perceptual screen through which the individual tends to see what is favourable to his partisan orientation’ (Campbell et al., 1960: 133). Influential contemporary work tends to consider strong partisan ties mainly as a threat to democracy (e.g., Achen and Bartels, 2016). Because of quite well charted social psychological mechanisms, partisans will have a tendency to resort to irrational processing of political information, including selective exposure, misperception of the realities, fact avoidance and motivated reasoning. When circumstances allow it to thrive, this tendency to partisan bias risks leading to harmful system-level polarization, and a subsequent sorting of the electorate – up to the point of tribalization – that effectively cause deadlock of the political decision process, and makes rational public discourse and crucial democratic processes break down.

However, as will be illustrated by theoretical and empirical contributions in this *Handbook*, political partisanship is best considered to be at the same time beneficial as well as detrimental to democratic citizens and democratic systems. This is an important insight. The ‘Janus face’ of emotional attachments to political parties is that they can work as helpers and blinders to individual citizens, and they can bolster or undermine processes of democratic representation and electoral accountability.

Figure 1.1 displays a simple 2x2 table that summarizes our argument that partisanship can at the same time be a good and a bad thing for citizens and political systems. At the aggregated level, the forming of strong ties between masses and elites has historically been acknowledged as a prerequisite for the rise of modern party systems (a), providing long-term linkage between parties and societal groups, that have generated political stability in terms of political alternatives and government. Strong voter–party bonds have been indispensable for the functioning of representative democracies insofar as they have led to mobilization, enthusiasm for politics, and a decent elite representation of voter interests by responsible parties (Thomassen, 2005).

At the individual level (b), for many generations of citizens in established democracies, attachment to political parties has been crucial in navigating an overwhelmingly

	Macro level	Micro level
Partisanship a good thing	(a) Mass–elite linkage Political mobilization Interest representation Political stability	(b) Heuristics Making sense of the political world Attitude formation/consistency Political literacy/civic skills
Partisanship a bad thing	(d) System polarization Overheated public discourse Misrepresentation Failure of accountability	(c) Misperception Denialism Fact avoidance Motivated reasoning

Figure 1.1 Partisanship for good and for worse

complex political world. Partisan attachments have been shown to effectively organize political thought and to facilitate the communication between elites and masses. In a mass democracy, citizens cannot be expected to develop political expertise, but rather delegate the task to trustees and representatives. It is rational for cognitive misers to develop attachments to political parties mainly because this can reduce the costs of political information processing and help to structure the formation of political attitudes into belief systems. Responsible parties provide thought-out political programmes and policy agendas with at least some durability. Enduring attachments thus offer short-cuts to party elites' worldviews and perspectives that pertain to the voters' long-term political interests. In the rosiest of portrayals, partisanship unlocks, simplifies and demystifies the political world, and makes it available to a larger number of citizens. As a direct consequence, citizens improve their civic skills and gain insights about the functioning of the democratic system.

Recently, the downside of strong partisan attachments in the electorate has been highlighted. In an era of polarization, overheated public discourse, denialism and the spread of fake news, partisanship can indeed be a predominantly bad thing for both individuals and democratic systems. On the individual level (c), the perceptual screen then becomes a blindfold that leads individuals to ignore well-grounded arguments, avoid facts, misuse information and engage in motivated reasoning. Positive feelings of belonging to a party can develop into strong negative feelings toward the out-party and its partisans, thus fostering political tribalism and non-constructive public discourse. Winning or losing – our team versus the other team or teams – overshadows the process of democratic linkage. Citizens with strong partisan attachments may end up in a situation where they wholeheartedly support policies that run directly against their own long-term political interests.

At the system level, lastly, it is easy to grasp that strong partisan attachments can pose serious threats to core mechanisms of electoral democracy; for instance, the citizens' ability to hold their elected representatives accountable at the end of an election period (d). More precisely, the perceptual biases that are often a result of strong emotional attachments to certain parties or political actors can distort evaluations of past performances or policy outcomes in such a way that the ultimate sanctioning mechanisms of citizens in an electoral system – to vote the rascals out of office – breaks down. Blind loyalty from isolated political tribes is generally bad for representative electoral democracy.

As always, assessing the net effect of partisanship on democratic citizens and systems is indeed a judgement on whether the glass is half full or half empty. Weighing the above-mentioned positive and negative effects of partisanship depends heavily on the historical and political context. We believe it is fair to say that generations of democratic citizens and established democracies have benefited from the existence of strong ties between voters and representatives. However, it remains unclear whether political partisanship will continue to bring stabilization and predictability to political systems and strengthen party–voter linkage as well in the future, as it has done historically. If, when, to what extent and how the nature of political partisanship is harmful or beneficial to citizens and democratic systems must eventually be subject to scrutiny by developing benchmarks from normative democratic theory, and engaging in the collection of rigid systematic empirical observations. This *Handbook* suggests a number of avenues for future research.

ABOUT THE *HANDBOOK*

The *Handbook* project was initiated in January 2017 when we started to send out invitations to internationally renowned scholars around the world, all with a track record of analysing political partisanship. We set out to produce a one-stop book for a broad audience of students, scholars, journalists and members of the general public: an encompassing volume that effectively introduces the readers to an almost overwhelmingly large literature dealing with aspects of political partisanship. The end result of this enterprise is a *Handbook* containing 28 chapters devoted to the conceptualization, measurement, origins and effects of partisanship. Together they represent an extensive literature review of past and contemporary research, as well as new empirical findings demonstrating the many correlates of political partisanship.

The lion's share of data sources referred to in this *Handbook* consists of surveys of individual voters conducted in all regions of the world during the past seven or eight decades. Most of the data stem from ambitious large-scale representative national election studies or general social surveys conducted by research teams in individual countries or in collaboration in large comparative projects such as the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), European Election Studies (EES) or the True European Voter (TEV). Moreover, the contributions also make use of data from short-term and long-term panel surveys, survey embedded experiments and social media sources.

THE CONTENT OF THE *HANDBOOK*

We will now briefly summarize the contents of each contribution to the *Handbook*. Immediately following this introductory chapter, in Chapter 2, the editors of this volume Sören Holmberg and Henrik Oscarsson make a comparative analysis of the evolution of party identification, particularly in the contrasting cases of the United States and Sweden, using the original Michigan conception and operationalization. While levels of partisanship (strong identifiers) have been on the rise in the United States in the past decades, the secular decline of attachments to political parties is more pronounced in Sweden than in most other established democracies. An in-depth analysis of partisanship in the Swedish case using SNES data from 1956–2018 lends massive support to political factors, rather than sociological factors, shaping the levels and stability of Swedish voters' party identification.

After that, we have organized the 26 remaining contributions to the *Research Handbook on Political Partisanship* into four parts. We begin with Part I on the theoretical definitions and normative underpinnings of political partisanship (Part I: Political Partisanship and Democracy), followed by Part II devoted to the operational definitions of partisanship that have been used historically, or more recently suggested in the literature (Part II: Measuring Political Partisanship). Then follows Part III on the origins and antecedents of partisanship, covering for example theories of political socialization, cognitive mobilization and the rise of new parties (Part III: Origins and Determinants of Political Partisanship). We conclude with Part IV, dealing with research about the direct and moderating effects of partisanship (Part IV: Political Effects of Partisanship). As will become clear as readers begin to navigate the *Handbook*, some of the chapters deal with more than one of these overarching questions.

Part I, Political Partisanship and Democracy, deals with theoretical definitions of political partisanship and their normative implications. The section starts off with Jacques Thomassen's Chapter 3, which examines the key role of parties in electoral democracy, and gives a detailed account of the intellectual roots and discourse of the Responsible Party Model. He points out that partisanship in its original Michigan conception – party identification – works against the fulfilment of many requirements in popular models of representation. Long-term loyalties and emotional ties between voters and parties have a tendency to put strong constraints on individual voters' preferences and judgements, to the extent that this may undermine the effective functioning of democracy. While weakening ties between voters and representatives is generally considered an improvement for the democratic linkage, it has also provided new challenges to the democratic system such as increasing volatility, more fluent party systems, less political stability and increasing punishment of incumbent parties.

In her critique of existing conceptualizations and measurements, Lisa Madeleine Carius-Munz (Chapter 4) departs from the two main perspectives of the essence of partisanship that exist in the literature: the 'traditional view', based on an emotional, affective attachment and a self-categorizing group belonging; and the 'revisionist view', more directed towards cognitive evaluation and judgemental response to political parties. In an effort to combine the two perspectives, Carius-Munz proposes a new typology that recognizes partisanship as a broad general concept that can harbour both emotional and rational relationships to parties. Her two-dimensional construct – with an affective axis and a cognitive axis – makes six distinct ideal types of partisans: expressive, instrumental, weak, true, ambivalent and negative. The chapter concludes with an illustrative example of how the affective and cognitive components of partisanship can be measured in the context of an election survey.

Research on electoral behaviour and political communication has been intimately linked since the classic works. Adam Shehata and Jesper Strömbäck (Chapter 5) review the literature on the relationship between partisanship and the media. They focus on how the breakthrough of social networking, the weakening of traditional news media and the rise of a new high-choice information environment affect citizens' linkage to political parties. In the past, partisanship has been analysed extensively in three different ways: as an antecedent to citizens' media use, as a powerful moderator conditioning various types of media effects, and as an outcome of media content and media exposure. Shehata and Strömbäck conclude that, in a rapidly changing media environment accompanied by technological change and new opportunity structures for both political and media actors, more research is needed especially on the role of partisanship in processes of selective attention to political information.

Russell Dalton (Chapter 6) provides an account of the 'Janus face' of partisanship, illustrating that attachments to political parties can both serve as helpers and as blinders to democratic citizens. The traditional view stresses the value of partisanship as a necessary guiding heuristics for individual citizens when they form political worldviews and preferences. In more recent literature – often inspired by new research on motivated reasoning – partisanship has been shown to offset citizen judgements in pursuit of cognitive consistency. In reality, there is a mix of both processes, and in research there is still no answer to the question of under what circumstances partisanship is a benefit or a curse for electoral politics. Dalton ends his chapter with a discussion about the role and responsibility of political elites when they provide cues to the general public.

Alexa Bankert (Chapter 7) departs from social identity theory and discusses the renewed interest for the concept of negative partisanship, that is, where the individual's identity is primarily defined by the out-group, in this case the other party or parties. Previous research has shown that negative partisanship can develop independently from positive partisanship, and can be a significant determinant of party choice in both two-party and multi-party systems. Bankert advocates the development of more precise and valid measurements of the strength and direction of partisanship. Using a new eight-item scale for partisan identity, and with data from the United States and Sweden, she shows that negative partisanship exists in both countries and can be an independent motivator of political behaviour.

Part II, *Measuring Political Partisanship*, deals with all the different ways in which scholars have tried to measure political partisanship. Some chapters report from newly conducted methodological experiments and innovative ways to provide data on citizens' partisan attachments. Leonie Huddy, Caitlin Davies and Joseph Sandor (Chapter 8) propose novel ways to measure the direction and strength/intensity component in partisanship. They begin with a comprehensive inventory of the wide variety of survey questions that are used in research, illustrating some of the difficulties of comparisons across time and space, and also the unfortunate conflation of instrumental and expressive components of the concept. Using examples from surveys conducted in the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden and the Netherlands, they advocate that partisanship direction should best be measured inclusively to include even the weakest identifiers, and that partisanship intensity is best measured by multi-item scales that get at the full range of partisan attachment.

Along the same lines, Martin Rosema and Sabrina J. Mayer (Chapter 9) start by tracing the origins and evolution of the concept of partisanship, and review the theoretical foundations for the most widely used measures. They argue that the use of multi-item scales can better capture the many different facets of partisanship. In cases where space constraints are not a concern or when a high comparability across time or across polities is not the main focus, they recommend the use of multi-item measures that show better validity and allow more in-depth analyses of partisanship. The use of multi-item scales provides scholars with an opportunity to analyse the effects of, for example, negative party identification and multiple party identification on party choice and other political outcomes.

Florence Ecorrier-Nocca and Nicolas Sauger (Chapter 10) discuss how the Internet has led to fundamental changes in the elite–mass linkage in today's democracies, a development that has immediate implications for how voter–party ties may develop and be sustained in the future. They undertake a review of contemporary research on how the Internet revolution can provide political science with new data on key components of democratic processes that involves the ties between parties and voters. For instance, analysing Internet-based communication in social media may open up new ways to map voters' and parties' ideological issue positions and to assess the levels of issue congruence. They conclude that to political science, Internet has now transformed from an object of enquiry to an object for enquiry. Sophisticated machine learning and automated content analyses of data from Internet sources are not a substitute but a complement to more traditional ways of observing preferences of actors.

Marco R. Steenbergen (Chapter 11) discusses three different conceptualizations of partisan ambivalence present in the literature, and suggests a new measurement approach

that applies also to the multi-party context. In contrast to the univalent partisan, the ambivalent partisan entertains conflicting group evaluations, is less affected by partisan cues in attitude formation, and holds more accurate perceptions of the political world. Partisan ambivalence is typically reflected in electoral preferences and behaviours such as ticket-splitting and vote-switching.

Part III of the *Handbook*, *Origins and Determinants of Political Partisanship*, deals with some of the most important antecedents of partisanship: what factors shape individual citizens' relationship with political parties and candidates. And why do some countries develop a more partisan electorate than others? First, an impressive overview of long-term trends in levels of partisanship: Eva Önnudóttir and Ólafur Harðarson (Chapter 12) analyse the evolution of party identification in 159 elections in 23 European countries, making full use of the extensive database of the True European Voter (TEV) project. They conclude that although there is a tendency to a downward trend in many European countries, there is no universal declining trend in the proportion of electorates that identify with a party. This is particularly true for the most recent decades. Simultaneous analyses of system-level and individual-level determinants of party identification show that party system size, party system polarization and the age of democracy in general have had limited impacts on the strength of party identification. Furthermore, rising education levels in the electorates seem to correspond with lower levels of partisanship. And it is the individual-level determinants such as age and education that turn out to be generally more important in the models: here, the effect of belonging to a cohort is the most influential determinant. In general, younger generations are much less likely to form a partisan bond compared with older generations. Results show that while the impact of age on party identification becomes somewhat stronger over time, education's impact on party identification weakens over time.

Martin Kroh (Chapter 13) analyses a key assumption in the classic models of partisanship: that affective ties to political parties are shaped during the formative years in childhood (early impression approach) or in early adolescence (social identity approach), mainly through the process of parent socialization, and thereafter remain stable throughout life. After a comprehensive review of previous research, Kroh use the best household panels available to study the transition of party identification from parents to offspring. His analyses lend stronger support to social identity theory than to the early impression approach, suggesting that parents' party identification has strongest influence on the party identification of their offspring during adolescence, in the age group 13–16 years.

Anders Widfeldt (Chapter 14) takes on the role of partisanship for the surging Populist Radical Right (PRR) parties in European countries over the past decades. This development was for a long time understood as part of a general process of political dealignment. Only more recently have studies demonstrated that there is also realignment, insofar as the electoral wins for PRR parties are sustained by a gradually growing number of loyal supporters who develop stable preferences, in some cases in a relatively short period of time. In the light of new findings from comparative analyses, PRR voters are better characterized as loyal devotees rather than floating protesters: Widfeldt shows that in eight of 14 studied countries, PRR parties have higher proportions of strong identifiers than other parties. Today, PRR parties do not deviate strongly from other parties when it comes to levels of partisanship among their voters.

Carlos Shenga's Chapter 15 is about the key role of political parties in making people

align to them and develop partisanship. Using data from the Afrobarometer 2014–15, he studies whether and how political parties affect partisanship in Southern Africa by analysing the impact of determinants such as socio-economy, cognitive awareness and ideological proximity on general levels of partisanship and, subsequently, the support for incumbent parties in the different country contexts. Results reveal that levels of party identification are still high in Southern Africa, with a majority of voters feeling close to a political party, and that there are consistent and strong effects of these party evaluations on party support.

Turning to the debate on the future of parties in the digital era, Rachel K. Gibson and Stephen Ward (Chapter 16) review the still undeveloped literature of the impact of the Internet on partisanship. As democratic citizens' progress further into a high-choice information environment and a society with accelerated pluralism, is partisanship likely to be strengthened or weakened? Most contemporary research on so-called 'cyber parties' does not discuss the implications of the new forms of virtual relationships for citizens' long-lasting bonds to political parties. So far, there seem to be mixed results about the effects of digital party engagement. The level of party identification, according to a study of French parties, was significantly lower among citizens who only engaged in online interaction with their party. Studies from United Kingdom show that the level of commitment and pervasiveness among online joiners of United Kingdom parties was lower than among offline members. Results suggests that the rise of social media is a way for parties to widen their base of recruitment, but at the same time it is encouraging more passive forms of party activism from individuals who tend to be more selective and sporadic in their engagement.

Elisabeth Gidengil and Neil Nevitte (Chapter 17) engage in one of the litmus tests of the original theory of party identification, assessing whether it also remains stable under extraordinary circumstances when identifiers decide to not vote for their party. Using panel data, they test empirically to what extent party identification remained stable through two large scandals: the Canadian sponsorship scandal, and the British parliamentary expenses scandal. They conclude that in these clear-cut cases of when political scandals challenge partisan ties, the empirical findings lend support to the original idea of the party identification model: a substantial number of voters have partisan ties that are independent of their current vote. Even under duress, stable partisans far outnumbered hard-core non-partisans in both countries. This evidence flies in the face of previous influential studies of the stability of partisanship and vote choice in party-dominated parliamentary systems, suggesting that the relationship is contingent on the political context.

Masahiro Yamada's treatment in Chapter 18 of the history of political partisanship in Japan since World War II is a detailed analysis of party system change, coalition-building and transformation of partisan ties. Yamada presents a rare collection of survey data on Japanese voters' ideological orientations and party support, more specifically the relationship between ideological predispositions and party choice. The chapter ends with a review of contemporary research on the role of political ideology and partisanship in Japan.

Part IV, Political Effects of Partisanship, consists of a number of contributions that illustrate how political partisanship affects the overall functionality of democratic systems around the world, such as the stability of the party systems, mobilization, engagement, involvement and turnout, trust in parties and politics, and the legitimacy of the democratic system. The contributions in Part IV also provide valuable short-cuts to the vast

literature on partisanship as a moderating factor that conditions political actors' perceptions, attitudes and behaviour. John Aldrich et al. (Chapter 19) ask whether a partisan public can serve to sustain overall democratic stability in a world with alarming trends of autocratization, and in which political leaders may be the source of the threat. Using data from longer-lasting Western democracies and newly democratized countries in Eastern Europe, they show that large proportions of the electorates still tend to develop long-standing feelings of 'closeness' to political parties, and that these attachments are a critical component for understanding who is more or less satisfied with the workings of democracy. Results suggests that slow-moving, long-standing party commitments in mass publics can improve satisfaction with how democracy works, and ultimately cushion short-term autocratic tendencies and thus provide stability to democracies.

Political participation is vital for democracies in order to stay healthy. Ian McAllister (Chapter 20) asks what role partisanship plays in shaping political participation, in both its older conventional forms (for example, turnout and party membership) and its newer unconventional forms (for example, protest and demonstrations). With an extensive review of the literature, McAllister shows that there is a complex relationship between partisanship and (many forms of) participation, both because the phenomena tend to shape each other to a great extent and because the direction of causality may be experiencing rapid changes.

Eva Anduiza and Roberto Pannico (Chapter 21) investigate the attitudinal consequences of processes of party system change during which citizens alter their partisan status, and some develop partisan ties with new emerging parties. More specifically, they study the effects of partisanship on citizens' political interest and trust. To uncover the dynamics of these processes, they analyse a nine-wave panel from Spain, a country which recently experienced profound party system change. Results show that among citizens with no prior party identification, the acquisition of partisanship had a sizeable positive effect on their level of political interest, and a dampening effect on the decline in levels of trust in political institutions.

Lie Philip Santoso (Chapter 22) analyses one of the core mechanisms of partisanship identified already in the classic Michigan studies: the perceptual screen that produces partisan bias in the early stages of an individual's information processing, especially when it concerns the evaluation of politically relevant information. Santoso asks whether there are variations in the strength and direction of the partisan screen across different party identifiers within and across contexts. In doing this, he homes in on the perhaps most thoroughly investigated determinant of voter choice in electoral research: individual voters' perceptions of the economy. Santoso starts out by identifying two mechanisms behind motivated reasoning among partisans: confirmation bias (that is, seeking out favourable information about the in-party and unfavourable information about the out-party) and disconfirmation bias (that is, failing to update prior beliefs by avoiding facts). In his analyses, Santoso focuses on the selective exposure to favourable information being the main mechanism behind the development of a partisan screen; more specifically, he departs from the Zallerian notion of individuals engaging in sampling of elite messages from the media. Combining survey data on partisanship, electoral choice and economic evaluations from the European Social Survey (ESS) and from expert codings of partisan media from the European Media Systems Survey (EMSS), Santoso shows that there is indeed a large variation in the direction and strength of partisan screen across individu-

als and contexts. Moreover, the strength of the partisan screen in evaluating the economy is moderated by the identification of partisan media (IPM): partisan screens tend to be stronger in contexts where there is more partisan media. In this way, partisan media can provide an ‘opportunity structure’ for individuals’ selective exposure.

Mark Franklin and Georg Lutz (Chapter 23) discuss the consequences of using diverging theoretical foundations of party identification and Downsian voter utilities when researchers select operational indicators for analyses of party choice. With empirical evidence from Ireland, Switzerland and from the CSES, they compare the performance of different indicators of the relationship between voters and parties – such as party affinities and choice set inclusion – and list the pros and cons of applying them in explanatory models of party choice. Findings support consideration set models’ view of party choice as a multi-step decision-making process; in this case a three-step process starting out with an evaluative stage that may for many voters lead to an intervening stage with tied preferences before the last stage of making the final party choice. In the intervening tie-breaking step, feelings of closeness to party play a critical role.

The two faces of partisanship are revisited by Spyros Kosmidis (Chapter 24) in a review of the literature on the trade-off between partisanship as a fortification of the foundations of democracy through stability and mobilization on the one hand, and partisanship as a source of perceptual bias and a threat to accountability on the other. Kosmidis reviews literature that clearly demonstrates the inability of partisans to evaluate factual information concerning the domains of economy and corruption, and suggests avenues for further research. The mobilizing and political learning effects of strong partisan ties are contrasted to the well-documented tendency among partisans to turn a blind eye to their own party’s underperformance.

Eric Guntermann (Chapter 25) takes a broader view on partisanship attitudes, analysing citizens’ full range of negative and positive attitudes towards all political parties, and its effects on satisfaction with the workings of democracy, and political opinions. Using data from the CSES, he demonstrates that in most non-United States contexts, distinct partisan attitudes are far more widespread than party identification: while only 43 per cent of respondents stated that they feel close to a party, 83 per cent provide distinct party evaluations on an 11-point dislike–like scale. Reports from survey experiments also show that citizens who do not identify with a party still follow party cues, and thus behave in ways we would expect from theories of party identification. For example, citizens become more satisfied with the working of democracy when an election result favours a party they like more over a party they like less. Based on these findings, Guntermann argues that partisanship goes beyond identification. Future analyses of the impact of partisan attitudes should not be limited to the relatively low proportions of the electorate that display an identification with a particular party. Rather, in order not to underestimate the direct and moderating effects of partisanship, scholars should take full advantage of party ratings in analyses of political behaviour.

Kimmo Grönlund (Chapter 26) assesses the influence of partisanship on the effects of rational discourse, more specifically citizen deliberation. After introducing the main strands of research on deliberative polls and deliberative mini-public experiments, he analyses data from a previous such experiment on migration in Finland to learn more about the moderating effects of partisanship on three dimensions: inclination to opinion change, knowledge gains, and active participation. Grönlund finds no support for the

expectation that partisans (party members) would be less inclined to change opinion, as all groups tended to become more liberal in their migration attitudes. Moreover, partisanship did not significantly moderate the knowledge gain among participants. Finally, according to the transcripts from small group deliberations, the level of partisanship did not affect active participation. The null findings are interpreted as indirect support for the central assumption of deliberative democracy: although partisans tend to have stronger ideological predispositions, they seem to behave in a similar manner as non-partisans in a speech situation. Results suggests that under ideal circumstances, partisanship does not dampen the general positive effects of deliberation.

In the light of trends of dealignment and changes of the relationship between voters and parties, Marc Hooghe (Chapter 27) reviews the literature on the effects of partisan loyalties on diffuse support for the political system as a whole. In contemporary political science, Hooghe argues, traditional definitions and normative underpinnings of central concepts such as trust and satisfaction with the workings of democracy are changing. This development paves the way for new inquiries and suggestions for future empirical studies. The general assumption derived from the literature is that levels of partisanship should be positively related to levels of political trust and democratic legitimacy. However, this hypothesized relationship may today be moderated by factors such as degree of polarization and fragmentation of the party system, whether a voter is on the winning or losing side of an election, or whether successful parties adhere to a populist anti-elite rhetoric.

Robert Mattes and Matthias Krönke (Chapter 28) examine the case of African countries and ask whether enduring partisan identification exists, and whether it helps people to participate in politics and organize their political thinking. In short, the answer is 'yes'. Using data from the Afrobarometer, they show that there are significant proportions of the electorates who identify with parties, in spite of the multi-ethnic composure of most African countries in which kinship, clan, language, dialect and region are prime social identities. In line with results from many established Western societies, in Africa partisans also tend to be more cognitively mobilized, more exposed to election campaigning and more likely to turn out to vote at elections than non-partisans. Comparative multivariate analyses of the direction of party identification show that ethnicity remains an important determinant, as members of the largest ethno-linguistic group are more likely to identify with the ruling party than members of other groups, also when taking other structural and democratic issues into account. The findings suggest that partisanship in Africa is a 'standing choice' rather than a fixed identity.

WITHOUT PARTIES, NO DEMOCRACY

The all-important takeaway from the chapters in this *Research Handbook on Political Partisanship* is that the importance of political parties and partisanship for the working of democracy cannot be overstated. To most political scientists, this may seem a trivial point to make. Democracy cannot function well without competition between responsible political parties that are successful in carrying out their tasks of mobilizing, involving, engaging and representing their voters. Moreover, democracy cannot function well without political parties' willingness to take long-term responsibility for aligning government policy to the majority of the people. No other actors can nor will engage in these

fundamental processes. To do this effectively, parties need working relationships with citizens. Party–voter bonds may be based on emotions or cognition, be affective or impassive in nature, be long-lasting or temporary. But without a linkage of citizens to parties, mass democracy as we have come to know it is hard to envision. This insight has implications for a more general discussion of the role of political parties in the future of representative democracy, and for the illusive divide of popular versus elite-driven democracy. The implication is that if parties fail, so will democracy.

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