



Who Stops Voting and Why?

Party Ideology Shift and Voter Demobilisation

Trajche Panov

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of Political and Social Sciences
of the European University Institute

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European University Institute
Department of Political and Social Sciences

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Abstract

The number of citizens participating at the elections is shrinking. The crisis of participation is one of the most important problems of the contemporary democracies. Not only that, the new cohorts of voters participate less, but also the number of voters that used to vote and stop voting is increasing. The aim of this thesis is to investigate the reasons why these citizens, whom I refer to as the new non-voters, stop voting. It focuses on this specific category of voters and tends to offer theoretical explanation and empirical evidences for the reasons of these voters to stop casting the ballots.

I argue that spatial model of voting which is based on the claim that voters vote for the party which is the closest to their position on the ideological spectrum and thus every shift of the party demands vote swing of the voters and opposite has limits to explain the behaviour of the new non-voters. Based on the standard revealed preference argument and building on the exit, voice and loyalty model, I argue that instead of voters deciding to shift voting for another party once the party shifts its ideological positions, they decide to exit participation in reaction to the party's inconsistency.

The thesis shows that the number of new non-voters varies among countries. The percentage of new non-voters per countries differs from below 2 % in Netherlands to 26% in Poland. Post-communist countries, countries with majoritarian systems and non-compulsory voting have higher number of new non-voters. Testing my theoretical model on an individual level, results show evidence in support of my main hypothesis, that ideological inconsistency influences voters to stop voting. Ideology matters and the new non-voters stop voting when parties they used to vote for change their ideological positions. Additionally, younger, poorer, dissatisfied, divorced, and more educated voters with weaker party identification are more eager to become new non-voters.

An in-depth analysis on US voters using panel data confirms the findings of the large N - Analysis. Ideological inconsistency strongly influences voters' decision to stop voting. Digging deeper, testing the ideological shifts in eight different policy areas, the thesis shows that traditional topics have a very strong demobilizing power for electoral participation. Traditional values and shifts in positions on human rights have a very strong impact on the decision of voters to stop casting a ballot.

Results also show that political parties that make more dramatic changes of their ideological positions lose bigger number of their supporters. This is especially clear for parties around the center, while party families on the extremes lose less of their supporters no matter the change of their ideological positions.

This thesis contributes trilaterally to the state of art. It offers a different theoretical approach in explanation of the voters' behaviour. It focuses on a specific category of voters which has been understudied and offers empirical evidence at individual, party and country level for the new non-voters.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Introduction

After the United Kingdom General Election 1979 and electoral defeat of the incumbent Labour Government led by James Callaghan, the party went through a dramatic change that would shape its electoral success over a longer period. The party was divided among different ideological groups with inside left and social democrats within the party and serious pressure from outside left and trade unions. Michael Foot, a writer, political commentator, critic, journalist, long-term member of the Parliament and ultimately a minister, as a long-standing figure of the familiar inside left, emerged as an attractive candidate given his ability to appeal across the Party towards the concerns of the centrists as well as the social democrats. “He also possessed long-standing left-wing intellectual credentials which continued to appeal to many within the rank and file as well as to social democrats” (Crines 2010, Chavda 2007).

The charismatic Foot, who at the party race for leader had been seen as a moderate and candidate of compromise, led the party to a dramatic swing to the left (Franklin 1984) that created important consequences to the internal organization and for electoral success. As a result of this ideological change which primarily meant returning to the old inside left positions on economy and society which were abandoned by the Labour under Wilson in the 1960s, the party was faced with internal crisis. Not long after the election of Foot, at the beginning of 1981, Roy Jenkins, David Owen, William Rodgers and Shirley Williams, (the so-called "Gang of Four") who were senior members of the Labour with more moderate and right wing ideological standings left the party to form the Social Democratic Party. This split in the already divided party from inside was largely seen as the consequence of changing its ideology i.e returning of the Labour Party's to the left positions held after the WWII.

Furthermore, the 1983 Labour manifesto, strongly socialist in tone, advocated unilateral nuclear disarmament, higher personal taxation and a return to a more interventionist industrial policy. Additionally it also pledged that a “Labour government would abolish the House of Lords, nationalize banks and leave the then-European Economic Community” (Crines 2010). At the UK General Elections 1983, Labour was faced with the worst electoral result in their history winning around 28% of vote share and decrease of electoral support for

9.3%. The overall turnout went down by almost 4 %. Many of the traditional voters of Labour shifted their vote to the Social Democrats, but also a very big number decided not to vote.

In 2012, the US Senator Richard Lugar was facing the Primaries to win the Republican's nomination for another term as Senator from Indiana. Lugar was the most senior Senate member of the Republicans and the longest serving Senator in Indiana's history serving for 36 years and had been re-elected for five consecutive times. In his long term as Senator, Lugar has been considered moderate Republican with liberal views on gun control and immigration and to some extent on abortion, but still economically conservative and against Obama's health care reforms. As a significant political figure and frontrunner, his victory at the Elections 2006 was so certain that Democrats did not even contest his seat by nominating their party candidate. This allowed Lugar to win his sixth term as Senator with 87 % vote support.

At the Republican Primaries 2012, Lugar was challenged by the Tea Party movement candidate and Indiana State Treasurer Richard Mourdock. Mourdock's ideological positions were significantly more conservative with strong opposition of gun control and abortion, even where it is a result of rape. The support of the Tea Party movement, his ideological positions, as well citizens' fatigue of the old and long-serving in Indiana where Lugar was situated brought him a significant victory with around 60 % of votes at Republican's Primary and a nomination for the post of Senator in a strongly Republican Indiana.

However, Republicans and Mourdock lost the elections and, after 36 years, a Democrat was elected to substitute Lugar representing Indiana in the Senate. Even in highly contested and close elections with a significant turnout increase compared with the elections of 2006, when democrats did not participate with their candidate, Mourdock won less votes than Lugar six years ago. Mourdock's defeat has widely been seen as his failure to attract those Republicans who had made Lugar a mainstay in the Senate for nearly four decades. Most of the voters strongly supporting Lugar and Republicans decided not to cast the ballot for Senator or not to vote at all. The electoral result in Indiana was widely shaped by the strategy of the Republicans to nominate an ideologically more conservative candidate. With the nomination of Mourdock, the party has significantly changed its ideological position. This resulted in a majority of voters to vote for the Democratic candidate Donnelly who also held conservative views, but much closer to the positions of the median Indiana voter.

Mitt Romney's campaign for Republican's nominee for President of US and his campaign at the US Presidential Elections 2012 against the incumbent and Democrat contender Barack Obama show two different faces of the candidate. The former Massachusetts Governor has been perceived as a moderate Republican when governing this state. Some of the policies he introduced as a Governor include health care reform, the first of its kind in the nation, which provided near-universal health insurance access through state-level subsidies and promoting raising various fees which was criticized by his opponents in the party as tax increases. His positions regarding abortion have dramatically changed from pro-choice during his gubernatorial campaign to pro-life in his later stage. Similar patterns have been seen with gun control regulations and the foreign policy of the USA. In general, he shifted positions and emphases to better align with traditional conservatives on social issues when he decided to run for Republican Presidential Nominee for Elections 2008 and again 2012. In order to win the Republican nomination, Romney took more conservative stances than he was known for before.

His strategy to shift ideological positions depending on the electoral arena and posts he competed for caused him to be widely criticized for ideological flip-flopping and a lack of consistency. His opponents used his different positions about certain issues to question his credibility as a candidate. His ideological inconsistency was often a subject of criticism during the campaign for US Presidential Elections 2012 by President Barack Obama. With his more conservative views during the campaign he endangered the support of the independents and moderate Republicans as well.

Besides the bad economic conditions and the highest unemployment rate in the last 60 years during his term, President Obama won re-election. Mitt Romney missed the chance to take advantage of the bad circumstances for Obama losing both the popular vote and the Electoral College. The overall turnout rate decreased by more than 3 %.

Finally, parliamentary elections in Poland took place in 2005. These elections were organized after 15 years of transition and recently after the accession of the country to the European Union. Poland, similar to other post-communist countries from Central and Eastern Europe, is characterized with instable party systems, electoral volatility, unclear ideological positions and higher level of voter dissatisfaction with democracy and political parties (Rose 1995, Casal – Bertoa 2012, Tucker 2012, Kostadinova 2005). The turnout decreased by approximately 6 %, and more than 26% of voters that voted at the previous elections in 2001

did not vote at the ones in 2005. Similar patterns can be seen in other post-communist countries.

Three important phenomena can be identified from these four elections. First, a significant number of citizens who have participated at elections decide to drop out of voting. Despite their previous record of voting, these citizens stop voting at the next elections. The case of Poland tells us that this number can be as big as a quarter of the voting population. Second, political parties shift their ideological positions. Parties or candidates running on behalf of the parties change their positions. The motives for these ideological fluctuations can be different: (i) the party wants to get closer to the median voter, (ii) it aims to get closer to the party core voters, (iii) it tends to reclaim the party's old ideological positions changed by the predecessor party establishments or (iv) the party responds to the changed socio-economic circumstances in the country etc. Third, there is a pattern of voter turnout decline. The overall number of citizens who participate at elections is decreasing. Larger and larger number of voters decide not to use their democratic right to select their government and, while one group of scholars claim that this is bad for democracy and representation, others claim that when the voter turnout levels are lower, less-educated and poor citizens participate less and therefore the quality of the electoral decisions is better.

These three important social phenomena are a starting point of this thesis. The aim of the thesis is to analyse why voters do stop voting, how parties influence their decision and how does this dropping out affect the overall voter turnout. It is common knowledge that turnout is not constant over time— it rises and falls from one election to the next. Hence it is important to analyse the reasons that cause these fluctuations or more concretely how political parties and candidates as main actors on the supply side influence these phenomena. Thus an important aspect of my analysis includes the choices offered to the voters by the candidates and parties.

1.2. What's puzzling about turnout? - Citizens who stop voting and political parties

Mark Franklin in one of the most comprehensive studies on voter turnout stresses that the particular topic of voter turnout is one of the biggest political science puzzles. "Almost everything about voter turnout is puzzling, from the question of why anyone bothers to vote at all, to the question of why certain variables appear to explain voter turnout in some circumstances but not in others". (Franklin 2004). Although, as I have stressed above, the

turnout is not constant and rises and falls from elections to elections, it is a conventional wisdom that the levels of traditional electoral participation have been decreasing in the last few decades (Almond 1960, Wattenberg 2002, Franklin 2004). Political participation consists broadly of three types: representative, extra-representative, and direct participation. While there are clear evidences of growing trends of extra-representative and direct participation, the representative or the electoral participation is in decline. Numerous research studies have focused on investigating reasons for turnout decline. In the most recent study on the turnout levels in US from 1972 to 2008, Leighley and Nagler (2014) provide the most systematic analysis of voter turnout focusing on the demographic characteristics and political views of voters and non-voters in American presidential elections since 1972, and examine how electoral reforms, income inequality and the choices offered by candidates influence voter turnout. The authors conclude that there are sharp differences in policy preferences between the voters and non-voters and this shapes voter turnout in overall.

Regarding political attitudes and evaluations, citizens also demonstrate a very high level of dissatisfaction with governmental performance (Torcal and Montero 2008). The distrust in the social and political institutions in the last two decades is significantly higher than in the eighties (Norris 2005). Previous research suggests that citizens have become more negative in their evaluations of the political system in many democracies (Klingemann, 1999; Dalton, 2004; Stoker, 2006, 2006). While there is not complete agreement on the magnitude of the changes (Klingemann and Fuchs, 1995; Norris, 2011), the causes behind and consequences of the perceived changes has been debated.

On the other site, political parties which are largely understood to form the basis of democracy (Dalton & Wattenberg 2000, p. 3) and "modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of political parties" (Schattschneider, 1942, p. 1) have passed through serious losses of membership and public support. Empirically this claim of decline has been supported by several studies. Dalton (2000) shows that feelings of partisanship have declined even more severely than initially thought, and Mair and Van Biezen (2001) report that party membership has declined over time. Mair (2005) combines several indicators of involvement in parties and reports that turnout, electoral volatility, party identification, and membership have all declined over the past few decades in a number of democracies, which points to a general decline in involvement in political parties (Van Biezen, Mair, Poguntke 2009, 2011).

The “golden era” of political parties, which have come to be understood as a vital part of democratic governments, especially in Europe (Mair & Thomassen 2010; Dalton 2006) and in which, most importantly, they expressed the ideological preferences of citizens and converted them into public policy (Ezrow 2010, Pennings & Keman 2002), has finished a long time ago (Rueda 2007). Political parties have passed through a process of transformation, the old traditional social cleavages have diminished (Franklin 1992), and from mass parties (Sartori 1967) they have evolved to catch-all parties, drifting from a society oriented to a state oriented cartel party system (Katz and Mair 1995). This period was characterized by dramatic shifts in party ideologies (Rueda 2007, Kriesi 2008, Volkens and Klingeman 2001). On the left – right spectrum, this has resulted in a convergence between traditional left wing and right wing parties moving toward the political center, where the concentration of the median voter can be found. Political parties today seem to be in decline. The old ideological divisions seem to be in demise, and now political parties compete on different socio-cultural issues. While those concerned with the formation and development of cleavages have repeatedly pointed at the importance of a new socio-cultural dimension (Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008) or authoritarian-libertarian dimension (Kitschelt and McGann 1995) of party behaviour, those studying the parties’ policy agendas have paid remarkably little attention to the socio-cultural issues that over time have become increasingly salient, not only in political debates and electoral campaigns, but also in the opinions and worries of voters.

While numerous research studies have been focused on analyzing these phenomena, there is a lack of a systematic attempt of these two phenomena to be correlated and their interdependence to be tested in a comprehensive and comparative perspective. Additionally, while the vast majority of the research has been conducted to offer an explanation of the turnout decline with emphasis on the voters or non-voters or, in the case of the most sophisticated study of Leighley and Nagler (2013), the difference between the former and latter, there is a lack of research on the demobilized component of the electoral population. These citizens whom I refer as new non-voters are assimilated in the category of the non-voters assuming homogeneity between them and habitual non-voters. In this thesis I strongly argue that new non-voters significantly differ from habitual voters and habitual non-voters and the factors that have resulted in their electoral demobilization have to be investigated with a different approach.

In these terms the thesis offers a multilateral contribution to the state of art. First, although this thesis does not analyse voter turnout, it looks at the turnout phenomenon from a different perspective focusing on a specific category of voters who used to participate at elections and stopped voting at a certain electoral cycle. Second, it enriches the research on different categories of voters by offering a comprehensive analysis of the demographics, socio-economic characteristics and political interests of these new non-voters. Third, it focuses on political parties as main actors on the supply side and looks in their behaviour or, more concretely, on their ideological consistency as an explanatory factor for citizens to stop voting. Fourth, as I will show later in the next chapter, it contests the existing spatial model of voting by adding two important components that shape the behaviour of individuals (i) voters build a close relationship with the party they used to vote for, and their party identification or loyalty constrains their rational behaviour as utility maximisers on the political spectrum, (ii) when the party voters used to vote for changes its ideological standings, voters punish its behaviour by deciding to exit the voting and not to swing vote support for other party. Fifth, various methodological considerations have been taken into consideration and different data sources have been utilized in order to be offered the most comprehensive and multifaceted analysis of the new non-voters and determinants of their behaviour.

1.3. Who are the new non-voters? Demographics, political trust and party identification

Little is known about new non-voters. To my knowledge there is no research focused on investigating characteristics of these citizens and the reasons why they stop voting. This category is understudied and, as I have mentioned above, it has been assimilated amongst non-voters. Furthermore, the majority of research on voters assumes homogeneity of policy preferences of voters and non-voters. Leighley and Nagler (2014) show that this is not the case. Voters and non-voters do not prefer the same policies. Their conclusions challenge the conventional wisdom regarding differences in the preferences of the voters and non-voters and show that, contrary to the claims of Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) that is not important who votes because of the similarity of their preferences, voters significantly differ from non-voters in their preferences. But while Leighley and Nagler claim that parties and candidates focus more on preferences of the voters, it is crucial to investigate why, if candidates are focused on voters' preferences, certain citizens decide to stop voting? Is it that while emphasizing more on voters' interests they shift certain policy positions and thus they can cause a group of voters to feel unrepresented and to stop voting?

Previous research gives only limited sources and possibilities for characteristics of the new non-voters to be understood. In one of the very few works which investigates the diversity of the non-voters, Doppelt and Shearer (1999) draw upon a sample of 1,011 likely non-voters (likely because the interviews were conducted prior to the 1996 election) to identify 5 subgroups of non-voters. These groups are as follows: Doers, Unpluggeds, Irritables, Don't Knows, and Alienateds. While their research does not allow them to draw claims about the history of voting of these citizens and thus it disables them to identify a group of voters that used to vote and then did stop voting, two clusters conduct information that might be useful from perspective of new non-voters. "Of these clusters, they detail that "the Doers, the largest of the clusters, look startlingly like voters and represent the largest single segment of non-voters – nearly one third of the total and the Alienateds most closely capture the stereotypical non-voters profile but represent only 12% of all non-voters" (Hilty 2013). I argue that it is likely that new non-voters share certain characteristics of the voters since they used to be one of them and reasons for their decision to stop voting might be because of the alienation of the party they used to vote and not the party system as a whole.

While Doppelt and Shearer are quick to agree with the literature which paints non-voters to be more "alienated, less affluent, less educated, younger, and more likely to be members of minority groups than their voting counterparts," they also point out that these overall facts obscure the fact that many non-voters cannot be described as such. For these scholars, conducting the cluster analysis provided a much more accurate and nuanced picture of reported non-voters (Hilty 2013). In a different research focused on the diversity of non-voters, Ragsdale and Rusk (1993) differentiate clusters with the following labels: politically ignorant, indifferent, selectively aware, conditionally inactive, and dissatisfied. Despite the differences in the labels, this study similarly finds that the largest group of non-voters (the dissatisfied) is highly informed and engaged, opposing the traditional picture of non-voters.

In addition, Hilty (2013) analysed validated turnout data from 2008 to discover seven clusters on non-voters with different demographic and political characteristics. Although this research goes further methodologically by offering validated turnout analysis, it still does not capture precisely the difference within the groups identifying who the previous voters are, how they differ from other groups and, most importantly, why they became non-voters. This thesis aims to offer an extensive overview of the characteristics of the new non-voters after drawing a clear identification of these new non-voters. Not only that it is important these voters be

differentiated from the habitual non-voters, but they have to be distinguished from the intermittent voters. In this sense, the thesis aims to identify new non-voters and separate them from the larger group of habitual voters and additionally analyse those new non-voters who quit voting on a permanent or a long-term basis.

Identifying the most important characteristics of these citizens is of crucial importance in order to better understand their behaviour and to develop a theoretical model that will explain reasons why citizens stop voting. I am particularly interested to show the differences between these citizens on one side and habitual voters and non-voters on the other. I will look into account three sets of variables: (i) socio-demographic characteristics, (ii) political information and trust and (iii) party identification and ideology.

If the most previous research it is pointed out that non-voters are more “alienated, less affluent, less educated, younger, and more likely to be members of minority groups than their voting counterparts”; it is interesting therefore to analyse whether the new non-voters are better educated, older and belong to the majoritarian group of the population, since they have belonged to the group of voters. On the other hand, it is important to show whether and to what extent they differ from voters, and whether there are some characteristics that distinguish them and facilitate their decision to exit participation. The role of demographics is still of crucial importance when explaining voting habits and, although most of the patterns are stable, certain changes occur, as is the case with gender (Leighley and Nagler 2014).

Citizens' evaluations of the political system and its actors affect their propensity to vote (Powell 1986, Gronlund 2007). Earlier theoretical and empirical research has shown that political trust and satisfaction are often explanatory variables that influence voters' incentives to participate at elections. Political trust involves normative expectations towards political institutions and actors, whereas satisfaction may be regarded as an indicator of attitudes towards policy outputs. Therefore I consider that trust can be an important element of differentiation between new non-voters and the others. Many have stressed the decrease of political trust and satisfaction (Norris 2005, Rose 1995, Kriesi 2013) among voters and therefore it is important its effect be tested. The level of political information and knowledge on the other hand will show us the level of sophistication of new non-voters, and to what extent they are capable to understand political processes and react to them.

Party identification and ideological standings of the citizens are arguably some of the most important explanatory factors affecting the decision of a voter to vote or not at elections. From Campbell et al (1960) and their funnel model, party ID is established as one of the strongest factors that explains voting. Most recent studies (Dinas 2013) show that identification strengthens as voters get older and participate more. They become loyal to the party they support (Hirschmann 1970, Weber 2011). I look how this loyalty and attachment to the party is manifested when political parties behave in a way to make voters questioning their attachment to the party. On the other side, party ideology plays a very important role in the electoral process. I intend to show that ideology drives the behaviour of voters and influences their decision to forego voting or keep the same behaviour.

1.4. Theoretical model

After finding out who the new non-voters are, the logical consequence is the “Why?” question. Why do voters stop voting? Which factors influence voters to stop voting and which are the mechanisms that cause citizens to make this decision? Majority of the dominant theories of voting do not exactly capture the behaviour of new non-voters and thus do not offer feasible explanations for the reasons of their participation exit. The starting point I follow is based on the notion of the standard revealed preference argument according to which individual choices are the result of an optimization problem. At a general level, my work is related to the literature on revealed preferences which tries to “determine the restrictions that observed behaviour imposes on the structure of preferences, or alternatively the type of behaviour which would represent a violation of basic tenets of the theory of choice” (Degan and Merlo, 2009). More concretely, I want to understand and offer an explanation as to what stimulates voters to change their preference to cast the ballot. Why these voters violate their expected behaviour and hence oppose the already established tenets of choice. As consumers in the electoral process, their decision has to be related with the change of the offer or the product political actors offer to voters.

In this sense, I develop my argument on the Exit, Voice and Loyalty model for economic organizations developed by Hirschmann (1970) and most recently implemented on voting behaviour by Weber (2011). “The sequence of the model starts with a drop in quality of the product offered by a supplier. Due to incomplete information, the supplier does not learn immediately about this lapse but has to observe consumer behaviour. Consumers who notice the drop in quality have two options. They may switch to another supplier (“exit”) or they

may advise their supplier to address the problem (“voice”). A third, residual option is to remain inactive. Consumers’ choices among these options can be explained by a set of factors involving costs and benefits” (Weber 2011). One factor is loyalty. I modify Hirschmann’s argument claiming that one of the ways the loyalty can be manifested is by exiting the market or staying inactive. In electoral terms, this would mean that voters instead of swinging vote preference, they decide to exit voting. Voters are loyal to their parties through party identification that has been strengthening through years of electoral participation and supporting a certain political party (Dinas 2013). Voice, therefore is a more soft manifestation of reaction of the offer and behaviour of parties; being inactive (exiting voting) is the next level, while swinging vote for other party is the harshest way of punishing the party. By understanding the relationship between exit and voice, and the interplay that loyalty has with these choices, political parties can craft the means to better address their members' concerns and issues, and thereby effect improvement. Parties’ failure to understand these competing pressures can lead to a loss of their electoral support.

Voters’ loyalty to the party they used to support is much stronger than the one consumers have to their suppliers. The market principles are much less applicable for voters because the support for the party brings to a development of closer psychological attachment and identification with the party or candidates. Voting entails a choice over a set of alternatives. This choice is likely to induce rationalization. In so doing, it provides signals of group identity, which in turn strengthens people’s partisan ties (Dinas 2013). Rather, it is the act of voting for a party that, itself, bolsters partisan attachment. This act leaves a long-lasting imprint on people’s partisan outlooks. Therefore, I argue that disappointment by a party’s offering is much more likely to bring an exit from participation than to shifting vote choice.

The third element of my theoretical model is based on what I claim a limitation of the spatial model of voting. The spatial theory of voting which has been originally formulated by Downs (1957) and Black (1958) and developed by many authors including Davis, Hinich and Ordeshook (1970), Enelow and Hinich (1984) and Hinich and Munger (1994), offers a political economic theory of voting based on the rational choice of the individuals. According to this theory, voters are assumed to vote for the candidate who is closest to them in terms of issues – where issue preferences are represented as a location (voter ideal point) in n-dimensional issue space (Downs, 1957; Davis, Hinich and Ordeshook, 1970; Enelow and Hinich, 1990). Hence, simplifying the argument, this theory implies that parties should

frequently shift their positions until they find the maximum concentration of the supporters, and consequently voters should swing their vote choice simultaneously when a new party comes closer to their ideal point.

This is not the case in reality. Voters are relatively constant in their electoral support, mainly because of the attachment and ties they have built with the party. On the other side, parties have been observed by voters through their ideological positions manifested in their political platforms. As I have argued previously, the voters do not observe political parties with the same attention, they are more focused on the behaviour of the party they used to vote and therefore they are much more capable to notice its changes and move around the ideological spectrum. When a party moves, the move by its own has been seen by the voters as a sign of inconsistency, a moment of lack of reliability and relevance and furthermore it is considered as a loss of credibility (Tavits 2007). Based on the already developed attachment with the party, I argue that voters are more likely to stop voting instead of shifting its choice to the other political parties. When the party alternatives are more limited as in the two-party systems, this exit is even more emphasized. I will test these assumptions in both two-party and in plural party systems as well.

1.5. How to study the new non-voters: A multi-faceted approach

This thesis offers a multi-faceted approach in studying new non-voters. It aims to analyse these citizens and to understand the individual level characteristics, and also the consequences of the number of new non-voters per country and per party. This approach has several advantages: (i) it explains the whole picture by looking into the behaviour of the individuals but also in the consequences of that behaviour on higher levels, (ii) by studying higher levels of aggregation it aims to offer an explanation about the role of the institutional and structural factors (iii) it takes into the consideration the interdependence and hierarchical structure of the individuals, parties and countries, (iv) it uses cross-sectional and panel data in order to most accurately identify the new non-voters.

A country level analysis is utilized to show whether and to what extent there is a difference in the number of the new non-voters per country. It also proves that the problem of the participation exit is a prominent problem of the democracy and worth studying. In this sense, it gives the basis for proceeding into deeper analysis and utilization of data and methods to understand the reasons for voters to stop voting on individual level. A party level analysis

follows up as an investigation of the consequences of the different ideological strategies for the number of the voters parties lost between two cycles. Thus, from a methodological perspective, this is a complex and exhaustive task and it demands very coherent data sources. The solidity of empirical evidence I offer in the following chapters is based on several data sources.

I rely heavily on the Comparative Studies of Electoral System Datasets (CSES) Modules I, II and III as it provides the largest samples of nationally representative data collected on the population of around 50 electoral studies per module all around the world for the 1996-2011 period, which allows me to distinguish between voters, habitual non-voters and new non-voters. I strongly rely on the questions of the electoral participation and vote choice at the previous and most current first order elections. In this way I gain information about the exit of the voters and their vote choice before. Additionally, I use these datasets to construct my dependent variable for party and country level as well. The information I have on an individual level I aggregate to calculate the number of new non-voters per country or party.

The information I get from the cross-sectional comparative data from CSES does not let me conclude as to the nature of the exit. Panel Data with information about vote record of individuals in several first-order electoral cycles is required to be able to address in a most accurate way the problem of the nature and constancy of the exit. Therefore, I utilize the US as my in-depth case study. The Youth and Parents Socialization Panel, which includes a cohort panel analysis of voters during a longer time span from 1964 to 1997, is utilized. There are four waves of the data and nine presidential electoral cycles included. The participation question is based on self-reported turnout and these data allows testing and offers a coherent theoretical model that would explain the reasons why voters stop voting at the presidential elections in a two-party electoral system such as the US.

The construction of the main independent variable requires a lot of attention regarding the reliability and quality of the data. The most dominant attempt for data collection on party ideologies has been done in the Comparative Manifesto Project. This database includes 54 countries from which 25 are OECD countries, 24 are Central and Eastern European countries and 5 are other countries, of which two are EU members. Although, there are several modes of measuring party ideology or party positions, the CMP Database is most acceptable for the purposes of the project because it consists of 988 parties in 673 elections, with 3924 party programs and manifesto's, five different programmatic dimensions, and 113 programmatic

data variables (Volkens et al 2015, Comparative Manifesto Project, Manifesto Research Group Manifesto Dataset MDS2015 Data Handbook, 2015).

Other text-based measurements of the party manifestos have been conducted by Laver & Garry (2000), Laver, Benoit & Garry (2003) and Slapin and Proksch (2007). Although there are serious indications for a systematic coder error (Benoit, Laver, Mikhaylov 2009) within the CMP Database, the limitations of this database continue to be less inhibiting than the limitations presented by other methods. In the case of the US, where CMP is particularly unable to adequately capture ideological movements of the parties, I use the aggregated perceptions on ideological positions of parties on a seven-point scale from the American National Electoral Studies (ANES) Dataset.

Another important methodological problem I deal with is the problem of over-reporting, which is particularly present with the self-reported turnout. Numerous research done on the issue of reporting turnout suggests that social desirability response bias influence direct self-reports in surveys. Respondents most inclined to over report their voting are those who are highly educated, those most supportive of the regime norm of voting, and those to whom the norm of voting is most salient, the same characteristics that are related to the probability that a person actually votes (Hoolbrok 2009, Kattosh and Traugott 1981, Belli, Traugott and Beckmann 2001, Silver, Anderson and Abramson 1986). In certain occasions, self-reported voter behaviour is unreliable and thus it can significantly skew findings. The use of self-reported data would lead researchers to mistakenly classify some non-voters as voters, resulting in findings that would yield an inaccurate picture of both groups and “exaggerate the differences between the two. In aggregate level analysis, it offers a smaller number of new non-voters than the one in the reality.

1.6. Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organized in six chapters. In this introductory chapter, by providing real world examples, I have presented the problem of the increasing number of the voters who drop out of voting, before discussing what I consider a puzzle of the turnout decline and introducing my plan how to study this phenomenon. I have presented the basis of my theoretical model, the methodological concerns and offered solutions as to how my research question can be most adequately designed.

The second chapter offers an extensive discussion on the theoretical model. This chapter is divided into two parts. In Chapter 2 I present my theoretical assumptions which will be tested in the empirical chapters. I argue that spatial model of voting, which is based on the claim that voters vote for the party which is the closest to their position on the ideological spectrum, and thus every shift of the party demands a vote swing of the voters to the opposite, has limits to explain the behaviour of the new non-voters. Based on the standard revealed preference argument and building on the exit-voice loyalty model I argue that voters, instead of deciding to shift voting for other party once the party shifts its ideological positions, they decide to exit participation and in that way react to a party's inconsistency. The chapter ends with presentation of the list of control factors included in the model and a brief discussion of the theoretical and methodological ambiguities and solutions to overcome them.

A short overview of the research design and the methodology is presented in chapter 3. The chapter first discusses the theoretical and empirical uncertainties which need to be taken into account when dealing with the analysis of the new non-voters. It proceeds with discussing the datasets which are used to analyse the phenomenon. The fourth section deals with operationalisation of the variables and the methods used to test the theoretical model.

In the fourth chapter, I discuss the necessity of a different approach in studying turnout by focusing on specific categories of voters. I argue that new non-voters not only have been understudied or falsely assimilated with non-voters or intermittent voters, but focus on how study of this group of voters can have multilateral benefits. I offer empirical evidence from 70 electoral studies showing that the number of the new non-voters is negatively correlated with the turnout levels in the countries. Additionally, the number of new non-voters also significantly influences electoral outcome and turnout difference between the last two electoral cycles. I proceed with analysis of the factors that influence the number of new non-voters per country. Examining the impact of institutions, socio-economic environment and the role of party systems, I show that post-communist countries, larger countries with majoritarian system and non-compulsory voting have higher number of new non-voters.

In Chapter 5, I test the theoretical model on cross-sectional data from CSES Module II. After discussing the theoretical explanations of voters that stopped voting in a comparative perspective followed by a brief review of the literature that analyses turnout and ideological and policy inconsistency of political parties, I present the differences between the new non-voters, habitual voters and habitual non-voters regarding (i) socio-demographic

characteristics, (ii) political trust and information and (iii) party and ideological engagement. Results from statistical models using Multi Level Modeling show evidence in support of my main hypothesis that ideological inconsistency influences voters to stop voting. Ideology matters and the new non-voters stop voting when parties they used to vote for, change their ideological positions. Additionally, younger, poorer, dissatisfied, divorced, well-informed and more educated voters with weaker party identification are more eager to become new non-voters.

Chapter 6 offers an in-depth analysis on US new non-voters using panel data. This enables me to get information as to the nature of the exit and to observe the behaviour of new non-voters in a longer time series. Using the US as a case study has multiple advantages. First, the American electoral context provides the most adequate conditions for testing my theoretical model. Second, American media discourse is focused on the ideological standings of the parties and their nominees, which constitute a very important part of the campaigns. Third, the decline of voter turnout in elections in the US in the last six decades emphasizes the necessity of a different approach to analyse the reasons as to why voters stop voting. Fourth, and very importantly, the US is the most appropriate case study for methodological reasons. Complex panel data for many electoral cycles over a significantly long period of time has only been gathered in the US.

Results confirm the findings of the large N - Analysis. Ideological inconsistency strongly influences voters' decisions to stop voting. Digging in deeper, testing the ideological shifts in eight different policy areas, this thesis shows that traditional topics have a very strong demobilizing power for electoral participation. Traditional values and shifts in positions on human rights have a very strong impact on the decision of voters to stop casting a ballot. Regarding demographics and other controls, trends are similar, except for gender. Contrary to the findings from the comparative chapter, males in the US stop voting more than their female compatriots.

In Chapter 7, I analyse the influence of the number of new non-voters on the party level. I look at the reasons for the variance in the number of the new non-voters per party and how their different electoral strategies shape the number of supporters they lose. I discuss the current development of the political parties and how they influence the decline of the political participation. Furthermore, the chapter offers a theoretical explanation of the parties' electoral strategies followed by a brief review of the literature that analyses parties'

transformation and their ideological and policy inconsistency. I contribute to the debate for the importance of the ideologies in contemporary times and reasons for parties to shift their positions by looking to the internal structures, or more concretely the role of the leader and parties' roles in the governmental formation.

Results also show that political parties that make more dramatic changes of their ideological positions lose bigger number of their supporters. This is especially clear for parties around the center, while party families on the extremes lose less of their supporters no matter the change of their ideological positions. The number of the new non-voters is two percent higher among the parties in government than among parties in opposition, which indicates that voters can easily be disappointed in the party performance when the party is in power rather than in opposition.

The last chapter, Chapter 8, provides some general discussion on findings and offers explanations about the implications of this research and its theoretical and practical contributions. It proposes an analytical way and methodological suggestions for extending this research on different time period or party context in Europe or around the world. Finally, it discusses its strongest contributions and limitations as well before providing additional real world examples that confirm the main findings of the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

Understanding the new non-voters: The Theoretical Model

2.1. Introduction

New non-voters are very important category of citizens. Their number varies among countries and this pattern is directly correlated with the turnout trends in the countries. The significant number of new non-voters per country in a conservative approach, using a self-reported turnout which has been characterized with the problem of over reporting turnout (Holbroock and Krosnick 2010), is a very important finding which emphasizes the importance of these groups of citizens. Additionally, these voters who have dropped out of the electoral process can directly influence the electoral outcome when the electoral competition is close. A higher number of new non-voters also cause a turnout decline comparing with the previous electoral cycles. Many of the differences among countries can be explained by the main institutional, socio-economic and political factors that influence turnout differences between countries. Nevertheless, we do not know which determinants drive the individuals to change their decision.

The lack of research on the new non-voters causes a lack of theoretical explanation of the reasons why these voters stop voting. This chapter offers my theoretical model which will be tested in the forthcoming empirical chapters. The chapter proceeds as follows, a general discussion on the factors that influence the decline of voter participation is discussed before I proceed with a discussion on the distinction between the new non-voters and the others. The limitations of the spatial model are presented in section 2.4 which is followed with extensive debate on the relevance of the ideological inconsistency in comparison with alienation and indifference. The chapter concludes with graphical presentation of the theoretical model which summarizes the overview of the other determinants that influence voters to stop voting.

2.2. Factors that influence the decline of voter participation

Voter participation has attracted a lot of attention from voting behaviour scholars. A vast literature analyses the factors that influence low turnout in elections. Following the pioneering pieces in the field of voter turnout decline by Powell (1986) and Jackman (1986),

three major groups of factors that influence lower voting participation and a further theoretical explanation have become dominant. The institutional context (i), the socioeconomic variables (ii), party systems and electoral outcomes (iii) and rational choice theory of voting are the main approaches that voting turnout scholars use in explaining why citizens do not vote. Political parties as substantive actors in the electoral process, though however the changes of their ideological positions are not considered adequately as factors that influence the decision of voting. The following text will present some of the most influential investigations and their contribution to the solving of the puzzle of low voter turnout (Franklin 2004).

According to the rational choice theory, voting on elections is an irrational decision that voters make (Downs 1957). As one vote cannot decide the outcome of the elections, than the only rational decision made by the voter is not to participate on the elections. Nevertheless, instead of the irrationality of voting, citizens still decide to participate at elections in large numbers.

Citizens might vote out of other reasons, in order to express their will and to choose their representatives. While voting to select representatives is labeled as “instrumental”, these other motivations receive the denomination of “consumption”. Citizens could vote to fulfill a civic or moral duty (Riker & Ordeshook 1968: 28; Campbell et al. 1960: 105-10), to reap the approval or avoid the criticism of third parties, that is to say, to overcome the social disapproval brought about by their lack of participation in elections (Coleman 1990: 290-92; Mueller 1989: 363-69), or to contribute to sustain democracy (Downs 1957: 266-70; Riker & Ordeshook 1968: 28). Consequently, citizens might also attach an expressive value to the act of voting, and, for this reason, participate at higher rates than expected according to the instrumental voter model. John A. Ferejohn and Morris P. Fiorina (1974: 527-28), on the other hand, defended the substitution of the rule of maximization of expected utility for the minimization of maximum regret. In other words, citizens would vote to avoid the potential regret that they would have if they do not do it, and their preferred party loses by only one vote. Consequently, voters will decide not to vote only if they do not find any personal or social incentive, or if they are dissatisfied by the political actors – parties and candidates that participate in elections.

According to Powell, “the turnout is inhibited by its institutional context, and the main emphasis is on party-group linkages, which is the most powerful variable in his model”

(Powell 1982, 1986). He has shown that turnout is higher in countries with “nationally competitive districts” and “strong party-group linkages.” Nationally competitive districts enhance turnout because “parties and voters have equal incentive to get voters to the polls in all parts of the country” (Powell 1986, p. 21), and electoral choice is simpler when and where groups (e.g., unions, churches, professional associations) are clearly associated with specific parties (Powell 1986, p. 22). An emphasis of the institutional factors is dominant in another pioneering research of voter turnout by Jackman (1986). He put his focus on the number of parties, national competitive districts, electoral disproportionality as variables that explain the variance of the voter turnout. Jackman’s analysis does not include any socioeconomic variable and this is considered to be one of the weak aspects of the research (Blais 2005).

Teixeira (1987, 1992) has provided a significant contribution to the analysis of the reasons for low turnout and the phenomenon of political apathy. In his first work, “Why Americans Don’t Vote: Turnout Decline in the United States, 1960-1984” he “pays careful attention to demographic factors (such as age, race, and region) and includes new hypotheses that might account for the “disconnectedness” of people from the political system. In particular, he raises the possibility that the marked decline in “rootedness” in US society (as measured by the decline in people married and living with their spouses and the increase in residential mobility) could bring about less political involvement” Teixeira (1992). Yet he is also well aware of the political science findings regarding turnout and includes three important “sociopolitical” variables in his study: partisanship (strength of party identification), efficacy, and campaign newspaper reading.

Franklin (2004) claims that due to the fact that people are not eager to change their already adopted behaviour, which is also reflected in their electoral habits, the low turnout or political apathetic behaviour can be explained by the behaviour of new voters and special attention should be paid to their behaviour. He stresses that “from the age that citizens are eligible to vote for the first time, the significance of the elections in relation to their own lives, determines whether they will vote or not. The most significant factors that can influence new voters are the importance of the elections, the level of competitiveness, and the degree of executive responsiveness” Franklin (2004).

Piven and Cloward (2000) tried to answer the question of why Americans continue to have low voter turnout and whether or not politicians in fact benefit from this system. Again favouring the approach that institutional factors influence the low turnout and thus cause

political apathy, the authors assign larger importance to the factors connected with political parties. They claim that party competitiveness, party constituencies, their linkage to party elites, and voter registration requirements determine the composition of the body of voters.

Sandel and Plutzer (2005) look at another factor that could explain lower voter participation by examining family influences on voter turnout, especially focusing on the influence of divorce during adolescence on voting. Their analysis shows large effects of divorce on voter participation among white families negatively influencing the turnout levels by nearly 10 percentage points, while demonstrating that “the impact of divorce varies by racial group and can rival the impact of parents’ educational attainment, which is generally regarded as the most important non-political characteristic of one's family of origin” (Sandel and Plutzer 2005).

Investigating the electoral effect of party policy shifts, Tavits (2007) argues that whether party policy shifts are damaging or rewarding depends on whether the shift occurs in the pragmatic or principled issue domain. On pragmatic issues, voters value "getting things done." “Policy shifts in this domain signal responsiveness to the changing environment and are likely to be rewarded. Principled issues, however, concern core beliefs and values. Any policy shift in this domain is a sign of inconsistency and lack of credibility, which is likely to lead to voter withdrawal. These arguments are supported by evidence from 23 advanced democracies over a period of 40 years” (Tavits 2007).

Comparative survey data from 10 post-communist countries show that the majority of electors are demobilized, that is, they distrust parties, do not identify with a party, the modal group is a “don’t know” when asked to express a party preference, and committed partisans form only a quarter of the electorate (Rose 1995). Rose claims that “the result is that electoral support for parties is extremely volatile by comparison with election results in earlier waves of democratization”. According to him, this fact is not a immediate threat for the regime, however, “for even though most people do not believe they can influence government, even more importantly, they feel greater freedom from the state, which can not influence them as in the days of the Communist party-state” (Rose 1995).

With all the previously described approaches they indicate the following: first, that there are various factors and determinants that influence low voter participation and that the precise nature of these factors has yet to be determined. Second, political parties are already

considered as important factors that influence the low level of participation, but party ideology shifts as a variable that can potentially cause a voting demobilization is not adequately considered and its importance is underestimated. Third, there is a lack of research on the new non-voters who stopped voting. The factors that influence this non-voting and the consequences for the democracies are not taken into serious consideration.

2.3. The new non-voters and others

The new non-voters have one characteristic that essentially differentiates them from the habitual voters and habitual new non-voters. These citizens used to participate at elections, they used to vote for a political party or candidates and have built up a close relationship with the party they used to support. Hence, the main hypotheses that have been applied to non-voters do not correspond with the characteristics and behaviour of the new non-voters. The same applies when these citizens are compared with the habitual voters. These new non-voters have also an enriched habit of voting, their level of political knowledge and information should be higher in comparison with non-voters, but still they choose instead to drop out of electoral process rather than keep voting. Regarding the channels of participation (Teorell et al 2007), these citizens influence electoral processes by exiting from further participation and this is how they demonstrate their disappointment with the product's quality decline in the electoral process. Therefore the reasons for their participation exit should be searched in the actors that can influence the "products' quality". In the electoral processes these actors are political parties and candidates. Their behaviour between two elections is the determinant that caused this group of voters to change their behaviour and instead of voting to decide to stop voting.

Hence, the general approach I follow is based on a standard revealed preference argument, according to which individual choices are the result of an optimization problem. At a general level, my work is related to the literature on revealed preferences which tries to "determine the restrictions that observed behaviour imposes on the structure of preferences, or alternatively the type of behaviour which would represent a violation of basic tenets of the theory of choice" (Degan and Merlo 2009). It originated in the context of consumer theory with the work of Samuelson (1938, 1948), and was later developed by, among others, Houthakker (1950), Afriat (1967) and Varian (1982) (Degan and Merlo 2009). Their goal is to find "necessary and sufficient conditions for the observed consumer choice data to be the result of the maximization of some well-behaved utility function subject to a budget

constraint” (Degan and Merlo 2009). More concretely, I wish to understand and offer an explanation as to what stimulates voters to change their decision. Why these voters violate their expected behaviour and hence oppose the already established tenets of choice. As consumers in the electoral process, their decision has to be related with the change of the offer or the product political actors offer to voters.

Similar to Meyer (2013), who argues that parties are constrained by their respective ideologies, I build my argument as to parties’ behaviour. Meyer claims that exactly ideologies play very important role in the parties’ behaviour. Parties have strong ideological constraints that drive their behaviour. Well-informed parties differ from badly informed parties by the fact that even when they shift their ideological positions, they never leave their ideological territories. Meyer argues that ideology provides a partition of the policy space and that parties have intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to choose policy positions that conform to their ideological area.

Meyer claims that for several reasons, party leaders have intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to avoid leaving their ideological territories leapfrogging their competitors. “Yet, parties usually choose policy positions simultaneously thus implying uncertainty of the rival parties’ platform choices. Parties may therefore mistakenly cross the ideological boundaries. Once information on rival parties’ policy positions is present, parties correct for this by shifting back to their ideological territories” (Meyer 2013). This process of correcting their ideological positions is a proof of their ideological inconsistency and permanent flip-flopping of their positions. According to Meyer, answering the question of why parties adapt their policy positions, researchers usually proceed from vote-seeking and office-seeking party incentives. “Shifts in public opinion, poor electoral performance in the past, or shifts of rival parties may make parties to adapt their policy platforms” (Meyer 2013).

Just as importantly, my strategy for analyzing the new non-voters as a different category of citizens means determining the differential impact of different sorts of change on different groups of voters and therefore this produces a model that persuasively establishes the primacy of electoral competition in influencing turnout levels. Voters in general, as it has been seen with newly enfranchised individuals, are also known to rapidly become immunized against changing their minds if they support the same party at even a quite small number of consecutive elections (Butler and Stokes 1974). Therefore I claim that they are more eager to

stop voting than to shift voting to another party once they notice ideological inconsistency of the party they used to support.

Seen in this light, the drop out of participation of the new non-voters would be blamed on parties and politicians for failing to present issues of vital concern – for failing to keep their positions constant and to put emphasis on their traditional values and to find way to operationalize these values in public policies. Thus the possible consequences on the turnout levels based on the declining participation of voters who used to vote would have been blamed on the character of the election, not on the characters of those who failed to vote or their attitudes towards the regime (Franklin et al 2004).

2.4. The limitations of the spatial theory of voting and its failure to explain the behaviour of new non-voters

The spatial theory of voting which has been originally formulated by Downs (1957) and Black (1958) and developed by many authors including Davis, Hinich and Ordeshook (1970), Enelow and Hinich (1984) and Hinich and Munger (1994), offers a political economic theory of voting based on the rational choice of the individuals. According to this theory, voters are assumed to vote for the candidate who is closest to them in terms of issues – where issue preferences are represented as a location (voter ideal point) in n-dimensional issue space (Downs, 1957; Davis, Hinich and Ordeshook, 1970; Enelow and Hinich, 1990).

The formula that presents the vote choice according to the proximity spatial theory of voting is the following:

$$u_i(v_i, p_j) = - (v_i - p_j)^2 \quad (1)$$

where v is the position of voter i on the left-right ideological scale, u is his utility and p is the position of party j in a certain question on the same scale (Fazekas and Meder 2013).

According to Pratt (2013) a rational, ideological elector will vote for that candidate whose ideological position will give that elector maximum utility:

$$c_{pi} = \mathbf{argmax} \ u_{pi}(c) \quad (2)$$

Where an elector with ideological preferences p_i has a utility $u_{pi}(c_j)$ of voting for a particular candidate with ideology c_j

Spatial theory of voting supposes that “each voter has political views (i.e. their bliss point) that can be represented by a position in some common, multi-dimensional ideological (metric) space, and each candidate can also be represented by a position in the same ideological space. According to the spatial framework, in each election, each voter will cast her vote in favour of the candidate whose position is closest to her bliss point (given the positions of all the candidates in the election). If this is the case, we say that voters vote ideologically” (Degan and Merlo, 2009). The party or legislators also vote ideologically in the legislative houses and they support a policy outcome closest to their ideological positions. They also have symmetric single-peaked utility functions centered on their ideal points in the policy space (Converse, 1964). In this sense ideology which as a political concept has been thoroughly muddled by diverse uses is understood as "belief systems" ... A belief system is defined as a configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence." (Converse, 1964: 207).

A part of the proximity theory which I elaborated above, the directional theory, as a second major spatial voting theory also adopts a rational choice perspective, in the same sense that preferences over parties are assumed to be representable by a utility function. Additionally, what differentiates direction from the proximity theory is the emphasis of the direction of the ideological positions.

$$U_i(v_i, p_j) = (v_j - n) (p_j - n) \quad (3)$$

where similarly to the proximity theory, v is the position of voter i on the left-right ideological scale, u is his utility and p is the position of party j in a certain question on the same scale while n represents the ideological middle or the neutral or central point between left and right.

Even with this differentiation, both theories assume that voters possess preferred position on an issue space or on a policy option space, and they see and have knowledge or they are aware of the possible programs that parties offer them through those lenses. Parties as part of their electoral offer have expressed positions on the same issue space, and it is assumed that voters have some information about these positions. “In this general form, issue voting theories can be expressed for each political issue, and the final expected utility is given by a weighted summation, according to the salience of each issue for the voter” (Fazekas and Meder 2013).

These basic postulates of the spatial theory of voting assume that voters make their decision exclusively based on their utility maximization, which means that in reality they would swing their vote choice almost regularly in order to choose the closest party to their ideological positions. On the other side, regarding parties, according to these orthodox understandings of the spatial theory, political parties are assumed to change their positions regularly in order to attract the largest number of voters and thus to maximize the profit by winning most seats, vote or by implementing their preferred policies while being party in power. This is particularly important for minority or disadvantaged parties in order to win elections.

The spatial theory has attracted a lot of attention of voting behaviour scholars and different subgroups have been differentiated. The ones who support a Downsian logic based on a rational and centripetal minimization of distances (Blais et al. 2001), the ones who believe in a more symbolic and centrifugal dynamic that leads voters to choose a party according to the direction and the intensity of their issue preference (Macdonald et al. 1991, 1995) and the others who find mixed evidence for both explanations (Lewis & King 1999; Cho & Endersby 2003) have not yet reached a consensus about the ultimate winner between the spatial accounts of issue voting (Pardos-Prato, 2010).

The last consists of acknowledging the validity of both approaches and integrating them into a unified theory of voting that is supposed to fill the empty centre between them (Adams & Merrill 1999; Merrill & Grofman 1999). Nevertheless, all of them tend to upgrade the basic claims, and therefore to offer a more coherent theory of voting based on the importance of ideologies.

Merrill and Grofman show that voter choice in a variety of spatial models, including what are normally regarded as directional models, can be viewed as proximity decisions in which the candidate locations are replaced by shadows, where shadow locations are defined by a simple transformation, usually involving shrinking. Thus voters choose that candidate whose shadow is nearer. This approach unifies their understanding of what otherwise appear to be disparate spatial models and permits us to see relations among them.

Jessee (2009) using a novel survey design on the case of US Presidential Elections 2004, directly tested the validity of the spatial theory and its assumptions on the mechanisms that affect voters to make their decisions. The results showed that voters do have meaningful ideological positions and additionally that these ideological positions are strongly related to

policy proposals in the Congress. Jessee (2009) discovered that independents behave mostly according to the spatial theory of voting, while partisans make voting decisions that significantly differ from the unbiased assumptions of the spatial voting models. When the level of information increases, partisans show voting behaviour that converges with the unbiased postulates of the spatial models, and in this sense closer to the one of the independents. Though even when controlling for information, there is an important difference of the behaviour of partisans and the main assumptions of the spatial voting model.

Downsian theory implies that the strategy for parties in minority positions is positional manoeuvring: as a disadvantaged party moves its ideological position towards the median voter, it gains votes and gradually overcomes its minority status. But this strategy is not always feasible. Frequent changes in ideology may not be credible (and often not even perceived by voters: see Adams, Ezrow and Somer-Topcu 2011), and parties often pursue conflicting goals that prevent effective ideological maneuvering (Müller and Strøm 1999), so that the possibilities of the leadership to exploit positional strategies are limited (Grofman 2004).

These shifts and regular ideological maneuverings are not utility maximizing because at the same time voters are not perfectly rational and they do not always make their decisions based only on their goal to maximize their utilities. Additionally, this approach limits any explanation about new non-voters because these voters substantially differ from others because they have already voted and thence stopped voting. According to spatial models of voting theories, voters will rather shift their party choice than drop out of voting.

Spatial theory of voting also implies that voters do not develop any relationship with the political parties or candidates they used to support and that their vote choices are not based on certain constant affiliation with the political parties. This limits utility of the spatial theories to explain why certain voters remain voting constantly for the same party no matter whether there is another political party with the closest ideological position. Furthermore, this theory is limited to explain why certain considerably large groups of voters stop voting although there might be a political party closer to their position.

The spatial theory of voting fails to take into account the importance of the credibility of the political parties (Adams, Ezrow and Somer-Topcu 2011) and this is a very important characteristic that influences voters to stop voting. In this thesis I argue that the loss of

credibility, based exactly on this rational choice based theory of constant ideological shifting, demobilizes voters of further support for the political party at the elections.

Furthermore, the spatial theory of voting does not take into consideration the psychological bounds between political parties and individuals. The funnel model of causality (Campbell et al, 1960) has shown that the party identification is one of the strongest factors that influence vote choice and turnout (for more details see chapter III). The party identification is built up in the process of socialization and it is mostly inherited in the family. Voters predominantly tend to keep their loyalty to the party that they used to support and rarely shift their vote choice. Based on these claims that have been confirmed by numerous previous research studies (Alford 1963, Inglehart and Klingemann 1976, Bartle 1998, Bellucci 2006, Green and Hobolt 2008), party identification is an important determinant that not only drives the rationality of the voters' decisions, but furthermore it directs voters to focus more on the exact behaviour of the party they used to support and they identify with.

This is particularly important for new non-voters. Being supporters of a certain political party and having a stronger identification with it, the citizens are related to and affiliated with that party. They follow the party, have accumulated knowledge about it and they are fairly informed by the party's behaviour. Therefore when a political party shifts its ideological position, these voters are aware of party's inconsistency; their perspective on the party as credible and constant and relevant has thus been changed. But instead of swinging their vote to the other party which might be closer to their ideological position, these voters decide to punish the party by dropping out of the voting process. In this perspective, the relationship between the party for which the voter has been voting is still strong enough that it disables her of voting for others and, instead, the voter sends the message to the party by exiting the electoral process. The exit can be permanent, resulting in a decision by which the voter is not to be remobilized in the long run, or the voter can reclaim his decision after registering an increase in the party's credibility.

2.5. Abstention because of loss of credibility instead of alienation or indifference

Spatial theory of voting takes into account two different ideological phenomena under which voters abstain or might choose to abstain. Despite the fact that indifference and alienation have been notified even by Downs (1957b) in the earliest stage of the development of the spatial voting theory, only later did Hinich and Munger (1997) give comprehensive and

parsimonious definitions of both factors and the expected consequences. Under the framework of the spatial theory, citizens abstain when parties do not provide them with enough utility. “Provided that the individuals' utility calculus is defined in terms of distance, abstention occurs in the literature as two different phenomena which take into account the distance between the voter and the party, as well as the relative distance between the voter vis-a-vis the two nearest alternatives” (Rodon 2013).

If all alternatives in the election are far from the voter's ideal point, that voter is alienated and she is less likely to vote. The greater the difference between the voter's point and the nearest alternative, the less likely the individual is to vote, compared either with other voters or other elections where perceptions of the difference are smaller. On the other side, an indifferent citizen is the one who is equally distant from all or both main alternatives in the ideological spectrum. She does not view one party platform as significantly closer to her own preference than the other party platform. In spatial terms, both political alternatives are providing the same utility, so a voter does not have enough incentives to participate. A perfectly indifferent situation occurs when a citizen is located in a perfectly equidistant position with regards to the closest political alternatives.

Previous research has not been unanimous regarding the effect of these two phenomena. Furthermore, findings demonstrate that there are still many doubts regarding the effect and the circumstances under which alienation and indifference operate. Zipp (1985) in one of the first research studies on the effect of indifference and alienation found neither of the two phenomena significantly affected the overall probability to participate. Contrary to these findings, Katz (2007) argued that both indifference and alienation contributed to increase abstention in the 2002 Brazilian election, with indifference accounting for slightly more than 50% of the rate of abstention. Some other studies have shown as little as 9-point drop in turnout among indifferent persons and a 14-point drop in turnout among alienated individuals (Johnston, Matthews and Bittner, 2007).

Adams, Dow and Merrill, (2006) test the influence of the indifference and alienation on abstention and discovered that abstention due to either alienation or indifference benefitted Republican candidates, but only very modestly. “Second, Presidential elections involving attractive candidates motivate higher turnout, but only to the extent that abstention stems alienation rather than from indifference. Third, paradoxically, citizens' individual-level tendencies to abstain because of alienation are strongly affected by their evaluations of the

candidates' policies, whereas aggregate turnout rates do not depend significantly on the candidates' policy platforms" (Adams et al. 2006).

Contrary to these findings, Plane and Gershtenson (2004) claim that ideological location of the candidates indeed influences the overall level of electoral participation. Tests on midterm Senate elections confirm that alienation and indifference also influence the voting in these type of elections as numerous research studies have shown for presidential elections, and they additionally normatively claim that in order to have higher participation, there should be a candidate with centrist positions which will stimulate voting.

Recently, Peress (2010) found indifference to be more important than alienation. Additionally, Rodon (2013) demonstrates that the effects of indifference and alienation are positive, but they are relatively low, especially in the case of indifference. Moreover, he reveals that the effects of indifference and alienation, where relevant, are strongly conditioned by the polarization of the party system and the effective number of parties.

A part of the limited and often contradictory effects of these phenomena found in the previous research, abstention by indifference or alienation does not offer an explanation about the voters who have stopped voting because these two phenomena once again do not take into account the relation that the voter has with the party she used to vote and the effect of the party identification as an important determinant of voters behaviour. As I have argued previously, the voter does not observe political parties with the same attention, she is more focused on the behaviour of the party she used to vote and therefore she is much more capable of noticing its changes and moves around the ideological spectrum. When a party moves, the move itself is seen by the voters as a sign of inconsistency, a reflection of a lack of reliability and relevance, and furthermore it is considered as a loss of credibility.

While it is of great importance whether there are political parties closer to the ideal position of the voters, and this can accelerate or deny their decision to stop voting, the voters analyse the ideological arena from the perspective of the party they used to support, and therefore the ideological shift of this party brings confusion among the voters. An impression is created that the party does not stand behind its own position and does not represent a certain system of values, but instead flip flops its positions based on contemporary trends.

I argue that the voter is analyzing his psychological relations with the party he used to vote for and strongly identifies with, instead of the party system as whole or his relation with other

political parties. In this sense, the ideological moves and shifts of that party causes alienation between the voter and the party and this feeling of being alienated is more important than the possibility that the voter does not find any party close to her ideological views. Similar to indifference, the voter is focused on his party behaviour and therefore the possible equidistance between two or more parties do not play an important role for voter's behaviour. Hence, when analyzing the reasons for new non-voters to stop voting, ideological inconsistency as a reason for loss of credibility is more important determinant for the abstention than the alienation or indifference. I argue that the relationship between voters and parties they used to support is stronger than their position on the ideological spectrum.

2.6. Not only ideological inconsistency - What else matters?

The thesis theoretical approach emphasizes the importance of ideological inconsistency and its crucial role in voters' decision to stop voting at elections. Voters punish political parties when the latter shift their ideological positions and they drop out of voting. Nevertheless, building a model of dropping out of voting at the individual level whilst considering only ideology as only an explanatory factor is not an accurate enough approach. Previous research on the determinants of individual voter turnout has included more than two hundred different variables (Smets and Van Ham 2012). A meta-analysis of determinants of individual voter turnout has shown that only in the last ten years in the most influential journals of political science, numerous models have been tested and hundreds of variables offered. However, from Smets and Van Ham's findings it can be concluded that the progress in attempts to offer a unified model that would explain the variance of the individual turnout has been still limited.

I control for different factors that influence voters to stop voting. Some of them accelerate the process of dropping out of voting, the others influence on voters to keep taking part of the electoral process. Additionally, not only individual characteristics drive voters' decisions to stop voting. Voters support certain political parties, whilst their behaviour also influences them to stop or keep voting. In the end, there are significant differences among countries in the number of new non-voters and different institutional, electoral and socio-economic factors contribute to voters' decisions to stop voting. I offer a multi-level model with individual level, party and country level variables in order to understand the determinants that drive the new non-voters and stimulates them to exit participation at elections.

This approach will give an additional value in order to understand the behaviour of new non-voters and reasons why do they stop voting. As I have already mentioned and will further elaborate, there is no systematic research on new non-voters. We have a very limited knowledge about their number, their characteristics and reasons why they have stopped voting. Therefore research on new non-voters is of crucial importance, and this is therefore the main contribution of this thesis.

While I will discuss variables included in the models in further chapters when testing my hypotheses (for more, see the following chapters), I will just briefly introduce some of the approaches I take into consideration in order to better explain the reasons why voters stop voting. Starting with the baseline model offered by Nie and Verba (1972), socioeconomic status, race, age, urbanization and partisanship will also be taken into consideration as factors that influences on voters to stop voting. I argue that higher socio-economic status influence voters to keep voting no matter the changes in other factors. Citizens with better socioeconomic status tend to vote more than the ones with lower status (Nie and Verba 1972) and it is expected that they would be more reluctant to stop voting. Nevertheless, the influence of this variable is expected to be limited. Regarding race, my expectation corresponds with the majority of the findings which show that minorities and different races participate less. In this order I expect that minorities are more eager to stop voting comparing with the members of majority groups and whites. Urbanization is also a demobilizing determinant, citizens in urban areas are more eager to stop voting than citizens who live in smaller, rural environment. Gender is another very important baseline variable. Findings about the trends of this variable are not unanimous, according to some research men participate more and women less, while the newest trends (Nagler and Loughley 2014) show that women are the ones that vote more frequently. I am unable to further provide a precise explanation as to why men or women stop voting more frequently. Regarding age, my expectations are that younger voters are more eager to stop voting then older generations.

As I have also mentioned earlier, the psychological model offers an important explanation of determinants of voting and non-voting. Campbell et al. (1960) argue that the funnel model of causality is the best predictor of whether one individual will decide to vote and for which party. Hence, Party ID is the strongest factor that shapes and the decision of an individual to vote and their vote choice. According to Campbell et al, the Party ID is learnt in adulthood through parents and socialization. Every individual forms a psychological attachment to a

certain party and this affiliation shapes the development of their own attitudes for societal issues. These attitudes are adopted from the party positions and they are the result of the emotional attachment that one has with the party. Regarding new non-voters, Party ID has double importance. First, as a result of the party identification voters develop a relationship with the party they supported and they are aware of its behaviour regarding ideological changes. Secondly, as has been shown by numerous research studies, Party ID is a strong motivator of voting, and hence my expectations are that citizens with a strong Party ID are more eager to keep voting in comparison with others. Nevertheless, this is not in contrast with the importance of the Party ID for citizens to react on ideological inconsistency.

The other set of variables that will be included in the research are social embeddedness variables and political distrust. Voters who are involved in political and social events are more eager to keep voting in comparison with others. The level of political trust is also very important. Voters who have lost trust in parties and institutions are the ones that would stop voting. At the end, political knowledge as well plays a very important role. Its role is also double. Firstly, the level of political knowledge is an important indicator that voters are aware of political phenomena, they are able to understand the processes and to make accurate judgements about political actors. On the other hand, based on the research of individual level voter turnout, I expect that more knowledgeable voters would remain voters once other circumstances remain the same.

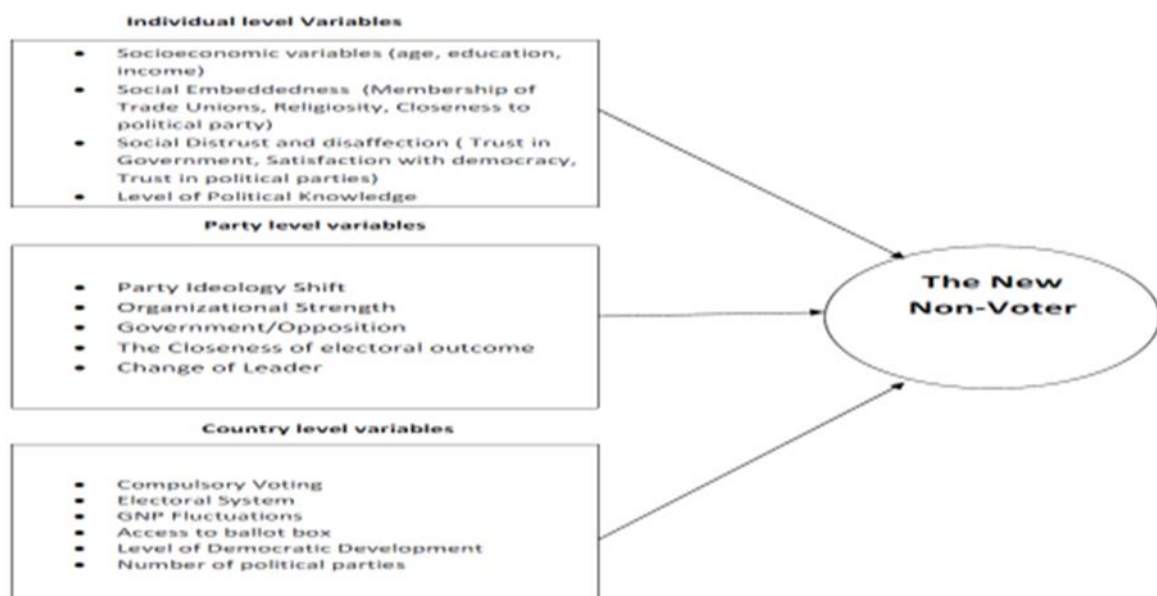
At the party level, as I have said, my attention is focused on party ideology shifts or ideological inconsistency. Enelow & Hinich (1982) investigate the way in which voters are using ideological knowledge from the past to predict expected differences in ideological positions of candidates and parties in a spatial model. In a probabilistic voting setting, authors show that previous ideological stances affect the perceptions of voters and, in turn, the optimal positions of candidates (Enelow & Hinich 1982; Enelow & Hinich 1984). Enelow & Hinich (1984) base their finding on testing different issue salience. My approach is not to concentrate on issue salience in this work in order to focus on the intuition associated with ideological shift or inconsistency of political parties. The other variables included in the model are organizational strength, leadership change, whether party belongs to the government or the opposition, and ideological distance with the closest alternative.

Regarding country level variables, in terms of types of heterogeneity, Pardos- Prato (2010) argues that it is important to note that Kedar distinguishes between party-specific

characteristics and institutional mechanisms. The both types of factors directly affect my argument. Based on a rational choice approach, Kedar argues “that voters are concerned with policy outcomes and therefore take into consideration the institutional mechanisms that convert votes into policy. More specifically, her compensational model predicts that choice will depend on how much citizens expect their votes to be watered down by mechanisms like the effective number of parliamentary parties, the district magnitude or the control over plenary agenda” (Kedar 2005a: 186; 2005b: 419). Other additional variables I include in the analysis are compulsory voting, electoral system, access to ballot box as well the general economic situation of the country and the level of democratic performance.

The theoretical model explaining why voters stop voting in comparative context looks like this:

Theoretical model:



2.7. Conclusions

This chapter offers my theoretical model which will be tested in the forthcoming empirical chapters. The lack of research on the new non-voters causes a lack of theoretical explanation of the reasons why these voters stop voting. I argue that spatial model of voting which is based on the claim that voters vote for the party which is the closest to their position on the ideological spectrum and thus every shift of the party demands vote swing of the voters and opposite has limits to explain the behaviour of the new non-voters. At a general level, my

work is related to the literature on revealed preferences which tries to “determine the restrictions that observed behaviour imposes on the structure of preferences, or alternatively the type of behaviour which would represent a violation of basic tenets of the theory of choice” (Degan and Merlo 2009).

My theoretical argument is that the voter is analyzing his psychological relations with the party he used to vote for and strongly identifies with, instead of the party system as whole or his relation with other political parties. In this sense, the ideological moves and shifts of that party causes alienation between the voter and the party and this feeling of being alienated is more important than the possibility that the voter does not find any party close to her ideological views. Similar to indifference, the voter is focused on his party behaviour and therefore the possible equidistance between two or more parties do not play an important role for voter’s behaviour.

I control for different factors that influence voters to stop voting. Some of them accelerate the process of dropping out of voting, the others influence on voters to keep taking part of the electoral process. Additionally, not only individual characteristics drive voters’ decisions to stop voting. Voters support certain political parties, whilst their behaviour also influences them to stop or keep voting. In the end, as I will discuss further in the proceeding chapters, there are significant differences among countries in the number of new non-voters and different institutional, electoral and socio-economic factors contribute to voters’ decisions to stop voting.

CHAPTER THREE

How to study New Non-Voters: Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the research design and the methodology used to study the new non-voters. The complexity of the studied phenomena demands a serious methodological considerations in order the negative effects of potential ambiguities to be minimized. The thesis accepts a multi-faceted approach analysing the phenomenon of dropping out of voting at individual -, party-, and country- level. Furthermore, in order to better understand the nature of the shift, an in-depth case study based on longitudinal data analysis is necessary to be utilised. This demands important methodological aspects to be taken into account in the process of research design in order to create an optimal environment for testing the theoretical model.

The chapter first discusses the theoretical and empirical uncertainties which need to be taken into account when dealing with the analysis of the new non-voters. It proceeds with discussing the datasets which are used to analyse the phenomenon. The fourth section deals with operationalisation of the variables. The dependent variable is discussed extensively in order to clarify the decisions for its operationalisation. The problems with the main independent variable are also presented in this section. The chapter proceeds with a brief discussion of the methods used for testing the theoretical model before concluding briefly with the overall summary of the research design and methodology of the thesis.

3.2. Brief discussion of major methodological and theoretical ambiguities

This thesis is faced with three major methodological and theoretical uncertainties that need to be clarified before empirical research is conducted. The first ambiguity is related to the definition of the new non-voters. The second one is related to the availability of data for testing the theoretical method.

A new non-voter is defined as a citizen who used to participate at elections and at one point decided to drop out of the elections process. Furthermore, this group of voters has voted and has supported a certain political party and in that way gave a legitimation of the democratic

formation of political institutions. The fact that these voters have a record of voting means that their feeling of social duty and rationality of voting has been established. Therefore the major theories which offer an explanation about differences between voters and non-voters do not capture the characteristics of the new non-voters. A different approach is required. But, before testing a new theoretical model for new non-voters, the most important question is whether these new non-voters stopped voting on a permanent or temporary basis. The dominant research conducted to date classifies the new non-voters in the category of intermittent voters. As I will have discussed further, this category captures many different sub-categories and different determinants drive their behaviour. The reasons for including all these phenomena under one concept lay in the methodological problems. In order to be able to provide a specific definition of the character of the voting exit of these voters, long-term panel data with several time points is required. There is lack of upgraded, long-term data that would offer a precise answer about the nature of the exit. Moreover, there is not any guarantee that in future the new non-voter would not decide to re-enter the electoral process.

There are two possibilities that enable testing this question. The first is the one I implement in this thesis and is based on the Youth and Parents Socialization Panel which includes a cohort panel analysis of voters during a longer time span from 1964 to 1997. There are four waves of data and nine presidential electoral cycles represented. The participation question is based on self-reported turnout and the problem of over-reporting turnout is a big concern. Nevertheless, these data allow testing and offering a coherent theoretical model that would explain the reasons why voters stop voting. The data is not upgraded and do not offer a testing of the model on the most current electoral environment. The other approach is based on the utilization of voter calls data. This data is based on validated turnout report and would help in the precise identification of the number of new non-voters, but lacks any data that enables formulating and testing a theoretical model.

Another ambiguity regarding the nature of the exit is related with the conservativeness of the operationalization of the exit. Hypothetically, in a time span of 10 electoral cycles, one voter who has voted at the previous elections and stopped voting in the next three or four cycles before restarting to vote again should also be considered as new non-voter during a certain period, and reasons for her decision should be investigated.

The methodological problems that this research faces might be one of the reasons why there is such a lack of research on these citizens. This is exactly one of the biggest challenges for

me in order to conduct research that could identify and analyse new non-voters, and in turn to offer and test a model that will explain the reasons for exiting the electoral participation. In order to offer a coherent, comparative and in-depth analysis of the new non-voters, I combine two different approaches and use two different types of data. I am using a comparative data that includes thirty-seven countries and offers a vast variety of factors that could influence on voters to stop voting. A part of the comparative approach which is based on data with only two time points, I use the USA as an in depth case, where the YPSP panel dataset is utilized in order to identify the nature of the new non-voters. This compromise enables me to deal with the problem as to the nature of the exit, but at the same time to offer a comparative, cross-sectional research study as a different terrain for testing my hypothesis for the influence of ideological inconsistency on new non-voters decision to stop voting.

The third important methodological obstacle originates in the nature of the data which is utilised to conduct the research. The thesis heavily relies on survey data. While survey data is a conventional source for investigating political behaviour phenomena, an additional obstacle for the research is the fact that the data is based on self-reported turnout. Numerous research has reported social desirability problem with self-reported turnout which results in citizens intending to over-report their participation at elections. This is particularly important for the research design of the thesis. The high percentage of reported turnout, which defers significantly than the turnout rates, decreases the number of the new non-voters which can be identified. This is particularly visible in the case of the analysis of the US new non-voters. The high percentage of reported turnout in the US Youth and Parents Socialization Panel 1984-1996 (see appendix) creates only a small number of new non-voters of above 5 % of the entire sample. In this sense the theoretical model is tested in very conservative circumstances. A positive relationship in line with the theoretical expectations, thus, would have an additional value.

3.3. Data

As a result of the multifaceted approach of analysing the phenomenon of the new non-voters, which also includes an analysis on the aggregate (party and country) level, different dataset are utilized to test the theoretical assumptions. For the purposes of this research, the database from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) Module 2 2001-2006 and Module 3 2006-2011 will be used. Due to the lack of a Comparative Panel Database for Western, Central and Eastern Europe, this database is the most applicable for the needs of this study,

due to the question within the report highlighting voting preferences during the previous elections, as well as current ones, which is vital for the operationalisation of the dependent variable. This database consists of information from thirty-eight countries' post-electoral studies, and therefore is acceptable for the purposes of testing the model. Since the purpose of this chapter is to draw general inferences about the influence of the party ideology shift on political apathy, and not to limit the observation to one particular region, the model will include all countries without any exclusion. As such, in the sample, there are countries from South America, North America, Europe, and Asia.

In order to measure which variables influence voters in the US to stop voting, the database from the Youth and Parents Socialization Panel Study Wave IV 1984-1996 is utilised. This database is most appropriate for this study because it includes a longitudinal survey of individual decisions to participate at presidential elections in the USA. On the other hand, the measurement of ideology shift is also a complicated process. There are several main alternatives for measuring the ideological shift of candidates and parties. As some of the most acceptable indicators for measuring party ideology, programmes cover a wide range of political issues and themes and therefore can be taken as a "set of key central statement of party positions" (Budge, Robertson, Hearl 1987). Nevertheless, it has been reported that the Comparative Party Manifesto (CMP) which represents the most comprehensive attempt for measurement of ideology faces serious indications of systematic coder error (see Benoit, Laver, Mikhaylov 2008). The experience has shown that the US political parties' dataset is particularly problematic because of less significance of the party manifestos. Therefore, for the main hypothesis I use the aggregated perceptions about the ideological positions of the candidates from American National Electoral Studies (ANES) Dataset for the period of 1980-1996. For measurement of the ideological positions of different issues, I am forced to return to the CMP 1980-1996 Dataset, because it is the only data that allows the measurement of the positions of eight different political issues.

Regarding the availability and quality of the data, there is another serious ambiguity that should be addressed; the quality and reliability of the data for construction of the main independent variable. The most significant attempt to collect data on party ideologies has been conducted in the Comparative Manifesto Project. This database includes 54 countries, of which 25 are OECD countries, 24 are Central and Eastern European countries and 5 are other countries, of which two are EU members. Although there are several modes of measuring

party ideology or party positions, the CMP Database is most acceptable for the purposes of the project because it consists of 988 parties in 673 elections, with 3924 party programs and manifesto's, five different programmatic dimensions, and 113 programmatic data variables (Volkens et al. (2015): The Manifesto Data Collection. Manifesto Project (MRG/CMP/MARPOR)).

Additionally, this database has other advantages, including the fact that it is based on content analyses of the electoral programs of political parties. Electoral programs are some of the most acceptable indicators for measuring party ideology, because they cover a wide range of political issues and themes, and therefore can be taken as a “set of key central statement of party positions” (Budge, Robertson, Hearl 1987). They are “authoritative statements of the party policies because they are usually confirmed by party conventions”, and thus are representing the positions of the entire party, not only the views certain factions or the leadership. The advantage that the database offers, at least for the purposes of this research, is that data is published before every election and, therefore, the changes in party positions or a party ideology shift can be studied.

Other text-based measurements of the party manifestos have been conducted by Laver & Garry (2000), Laver, Benoit & Garry (2003) and Slapin and Proksch (2007). Whilst there are serious indications of systematic coder error (Benoit, Laver, Mikhaylov 2008) within the CMP Database, the limitations of this database continue to be less inhibiting than the limitations presented by other methods. In order to deal with the problem that has been reported by Benoit, Laver and Mikhaylov, but at the same time to take an advantage of the wider comparative perspective of the CMP data, I will use this data with additional robustness checks with the corrected error-term data by Benoit and Laver. In the case of USA, where CMP is in particular unable to adequately capture ideological movements of the parties, I am using the aggregated perceptions on ideological positions of parties on a seven-point scale from the American National Electoral Studies (ANES) Dataset.

3.4. Operationalisation of the variables

3.4.1. The new non-voter variable

When operationalizing the dependent variable, Youth and Parents Socialization Panel Study Wave 1984 - 1996 is used. The “New Non-Voter” is constructed as three category variable and has values “1” for voters that used to vote but have stopped voting on a permanent basis,

“2” for habitual voters that have regularly participated at all four electoral cycles and “3” for all other categories. The data covers four electoral cycles of presidential elections starting with 1984 and finishing with 1996 US elections. Therefore, the “New Non-Voter” is coded as “1” for the voters that voted at the 1984 US presidential elections but afterwards have stopped voting. The same principle is used for voters that have voted at the elections in 1984 and 1988 but have stopped casting ballots at consecutive electoral cycles. As I said above, all other individuals that have shown permanent voting habits are in a separate category which is used as a base category in the statistical models, while permanent non-voters as well the intermittent voters are coded into one category.

3.4.2. Party ideology shift score

The party ideology shift variable will be constructed by subtracting the score for aggregated perceived values of the presidential candidates ideology on the scale from 1 (extremely liberal) to 7 (extremely conservative) from the ANES Dataset during an election from the score for the party candidate’s ideology in the previous election, when the voters voted for the candidate’s party.

$$\text{Party Ideology Shift} = \text{Party Ideology Score}(t) - \text{Party Ideology Score}(t-1)$$

t- Most recent election cycle, t-1 Previous election cycle

Every voter is matched with the ideology shift score of the party she used to vote for before stopping voting, and with the election year when the voter stopped voting. There is not an accurate difference between the candidates perceived values of the ideology and party’s values. The difference in the values between these two categories is very small and therefore choosing party or candidates’ ideological shifts does make a substantial change. On the other hand, choosing candidates ideological positions is better because of the bigger visibility of the candidates and the media exposure of their ideological standings.

When relying on CMP Dataset, the similar approach it taken. The variable for ideology shift is constructed by subtracting the score for ideology in one election cycle with the score from the previous cycle. The ideology shift variable will include all seven domains measured in the CPM Database including foreign policy such as external relations and freedom and democracy, a political dimension covered by the political system, an economic and social dimension covered by economy, welfare and quality of life, and social and cultural issues covered by the dimensions: fabric of society, and social groups. All of these domains consist

of the most important variables for determining ideology shift of political parties. Furthermore, a detailed, theoretical justification for the selection of these components is discussed below, in a subchapter where the party ideology shift variable will be explained. In general, these components express crucial political phenomena and they are the most important components in which parties and voters distinguish each other.

3.4.3. Policy shift

Besides party ideological shift, variables for eight different policy areas are constructed by subtracting the ideological scores from the manifestos of two parties. The policy areas include: economic, international and security; social welfare issues; human rights, multiculturalism; shift in traditional values; labour rights, and minority rights. From the manifestos of Democratic and Republican parties for the period of 1980 to 1996, ideological scores for every policy area are constructed and that score is subtracted from the score for the same policy in the party manifesto for the next electoral cycle.

3.4.3. Control variables

Taking into account the previous theoretical findings as well as the importance to offer a better specified model, a corpus of control variables will be included not only with a purpose of assessing the theoretical prepositions and their effects on the dependent variable, but also to control their effects when the results are evaluated. The model will include the socio-demographic variables as control variables. Age, gender, occupation, urban-rural dwelling, and income are the standard and common used socio-demographic variables that can influence the models. Apart from the utilisation of these control variables, the multilevel model also includes variables for membership in trade unions and interest in politics. The assumption surrounding the trade union membership variable is that members of these organizations usually vote for leftwing or social democratic parties, and that membership affiliation would mean that these voters would continue to vote for the party even if an ideology shift occurs.

The interest in politics variable is a control variable which gives information about the individual's level of knowledge for the party actions. The assumption is that the higher the interest in politics, the greater the chances that an individual will notice an ideological shift within the political parties. This variable indirectly controls the level of information for politics. Therefore, based on the previous assumption, interaction between political

information and party ideology shift is employed. This variable controls the chance party ideology shift to be noticed. The last control variable that will be included will address how individuals evaluate the performance of the Government overall. A negative evaluation can be one of the reasons for non-voting or a shifting preferences from the parties in power, no matter the effects of the ideology shift.

On the country level, a dummy variable for post–communist countries will be created. The purpose of this variable is to test whether there are differences between voters as a result of being citizens of post-communist countries or established democracies. Electoral system variables will also be introduced as a result of the theoretical explanations that in countries with proportional representation system the voters are more motivated to participate as a result of the more competitive elections. The change of the economic growth measured by the GDP of the countries will also be included followed by the access to the ballot for the citizens as one of the factors that can simplify the voting procedure and therefore motivate voters to participate at elections (Trechsel 2007).

3.5. Methods

The complexity of the issues demands a thorough consideration of the most appropriate methods to be used to test the theoretical model. The comparative analysis includes not only the individuals and their vote preferences, but these citizens are influenced and clustered within the political parties they used to vote for. Furthermore, the different institutional, economic and political circumstances in these countries can differently affect voters' behaviour. For the purposes of this investigation, the individual level can be defined as the way in which certain variables influence the voting behaviour of individuals. On the party level, the thesis investigates which variables influence the change of total number of votes that the party won during the elections. Additionally, this thesis will measure the influence of the ideological shift on the issue of most importance for the individual citizen as regards ones voting behaviour. Therefore, different statistical models will be used for the three different levels. The hypothesis for the influence of the ideology shift on individual level will be tested with Multi Level Modeling (Mix Effects or Hierarchical) (MLM).

When investigating the reasons why voters stop voting in the US, the most appropriate method for testing the theoretical model is multinomial logistic regression. I have chosen mlogit because the dependent variable includes more than two categories and it falls into any

one of a set of categories which cannot be ordered in any meaningful way. Also, multinomial logit enables me to better discern the differences between these categories of citizens and to show whether independent variables differently affect different categories. Taking into consideration that the ideological variables are higher (party) level variables, I am using clustered standard errors (Moulton 1990; Bertrand, Duflo, and Mullainathan 2004). This way I am avoiding the problem of mis-specification, which can lead to standard error which are seriously biased and can cause a spurious regression as a result of this mis-specification (Moulton 1990).

At party level, the main hypothesis was tested using linear regression to examine how a party ideology shift influences voters to stop voting, or whether as a result of this ideological shift the voters who have supported party during past elections will choose to abandon voting for the party in the current election.

3.6. Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to briefly discuss the research design and methodological aspects of the following empirical chapters. There are several important empirical and theoretical ambiguities which are necessary to be taken into account. The complexity of the operationalisation of the dependent variable is one of the major theoretical and methodological concerns. The important issues here are the nature of the exit and the duration of this exit. In order to deal with these issues, the research is designed to take into consideration the general aspects of the phenomenon by using a comparative multi-level individual analysis. The duration and the nature of the exit is taken into account by introducing an in-depth case study analysis on US new non-voters based on longitudinal data.

The other problems important to be addressed are related with the quality of the data. The operationalisation of the main independent variable, party ideology shift, is also a complex problem to be dealt with. The quality of the data is the important aspect that can influence the quality of the analysis. In order to outcome the possible problems, a combination of different datasets is utilized. The same approach is applied in the operationalisation and utilization of the most adequate variables and methods to test the theoretical assumptions. Having in mind, the complexity of the research question, the lack of adequate data and the problem of self-reported turnout, the research is faced with a conservative environment for testing the assumptions. The research design and methodological decisions taken are in order to enable

the best possible conditions which will result with valuable conclusions and contributions to the state of the art.

CHAPTER FOUR

The new non-voters: An empirical overview and country-level comparison

4.1. Introduction

The electoral participation of citizens is a serious problem for contemporary democracies. While this problem varies from country to country, the general trends show that the number of voters who participate at elections is shrinking compared with the level of participation in previous decades (Wattenberg 2002, Franklin, 2004, Leighley and Nagler 2014). The crisis of participation is one of the most obvious examples of the crisis of democracy (Almond et al 1960). While the majority of the voter participation literature has been concentrated on studying the general trend of lower turnout, only a very small amount of research has been focused on studying one particular category of voters – voters that have stopped casting their ballot despite their previous record of voting participation. The demobilization of the voters has taken a very important number of citizens out of the electoral processes. We know very little about these voters. A vast amount of research on voters and non-voters has been produced, but even scholars of voter demobilization research (Avey 1989, Rose 1995) do not analyse the characteristics of these new non-voters. This thesis attempts to answer exactly the following research question: Who are the new non-voters and why do they stop voting?

As I will show below, the main trends of the low voter turnout research have focused on different institutional variables or on socio-economic environment (Blais, 2006). Some other approaches have focused on explaining the decline in turnout as a result of the generational gap and enfranchisement of the young people to vote (Franklin 2004), while others choose more exotic explanations like genes (Fowler et al 2008). While the party system has been considered as an important explanatory variable, the main focus has been put on the number of parties as the main party system variable (Jackman 1987). The ideological inconsistency of the parties, and consequently the ideological instability of the party system, have not been considered as a potential explanatory factor for demotivating voters, although a significant amount of research has been focused on explaining party ideology changes (Mair 1994, Volkens and Klingeman 2001, Kriesi 2008, Gerring 2000, Tomz and van Houweling 2011). This is precisely the novelty of the approach of this thesis.

In this chapter I shall first discuss the importance of a different approach in investigating the demobilization of voters and I will show how the number of new non-voters is an important factor that can influence (i) the overall voter turnout, (ii) electoral outcome and (iii) relation between the number of new non-voter and country level turnout. In the second part of this chapter, building on the voter turnout literature at country level, I disentangle the reasons for the significant differences of the number of the new non-voters between countries. The chapter concludes with shorter summary of the most interesting findings at country level and the importance of the new non-voters in wider electoral context.

4.2. The declining level of electoral participation and the necessity of focus on a different category of citizens

A vast majority of literature has pointed out the problem with the decline of participation. As I have stressed above, Almond (1960) considers the crisis of participation as one of the six most important features of the crisis of democracy. Citizens are becoming disaffected with the political and economic processes in contemporary democracies (Torcal and Montero 2006); they are more critical about politics. (Norris 1999) and this directly affects their political participation.

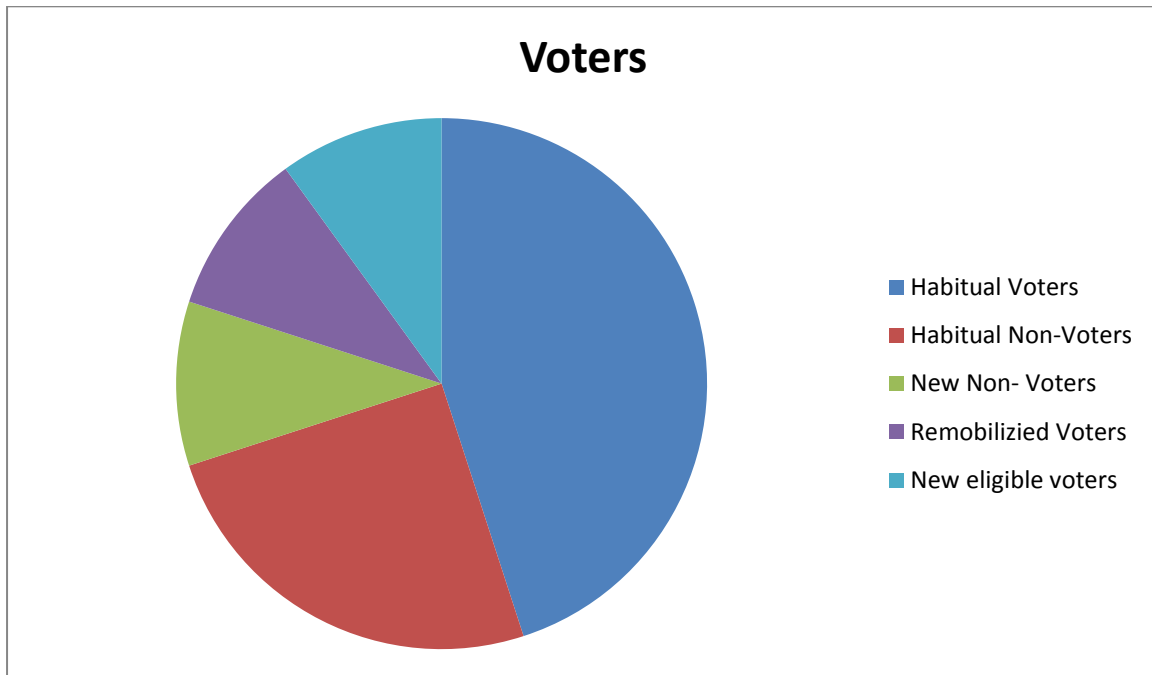
All these levels of declining satisfaction with the major democratic institutions and politicians, the observed withdrawal of people from the political process in general, and the disappearing popular component of democracy through the decline of membership of the political parties, which will be discussed further in the thesis specifically: all point to problems with democracy. Essentially, it seems that the concerns for the future of democracy are based on changes in political participation. And all three types of political participation are not equally affected by these trends of disaffection and criticism. Political participation consists broadly of three types: representative, extra-representative, and direct participation. While there are clear evidences of growing trends of extra-representative and direct participation, the representative or the electoral participation is in decline.

Much attention has been devoted to the attributes of non-voters as compared to voters and the reasons behind their lack of participation in elections. While there is much scholarship attesting to the fact that non-voters differ from voters along the key attributes studied like demographics, political participation, and political interest and knowledge, to my knowledge there is no research on the voters who stopped voting after a previous record of electoral

participation. Research has shown that voters and non-voters indeed differ in terms of relevant social characteristics and the assumption that politicians take into account voters' interests more strongly appears to be valid (Lutz and Marsh, 2007, Rosema, 2016). The majority of the literature has been focused on distinguishing among habitual voters, habitual non-voters and intermittent voters (DiCamillo 2006). The third category represents a sum of many different phenomena and it is not able to catch up all the different processes that can strongly influence the level of turnout or the electoral outcome. The voters that reentered the voting process after abstention might differ from voters that exited from casting their ballot although they used to participate at elections before. Secondly, the reasons why these voters re-mobilize or drop out are different. Thirdly, this approach does not capture whether voters demobilize on a temporary or permanent basis. Fourth, regarding vote choice, there is very little evidence whether voters vote for the same party or they swing their vote choice.

The dominant holistic approach in analysis of the voters has given a very important contribution to the research of voting. A lot of puzzles have been solved, a lot of evidence has been offered in order to explain why some voters vote, why others do not and how this influence voter turnout and vote choice. The necessity of studying different subcategories of citizens in the electoral process has also been explored, but numerous research studies have focused only on the main two categories of voters: habitual voters and habitual non-voters. Significant research has also been conducted on the new eligible voters who start voting after the disenfranchisement (Dinas 2010, Smets 2010), but there is lack of any systematic analysis of the voters who has been demobilized or remobilized in the electoral process. California Voter Foundation (CVF) has released the results of a statewide survey on the attitudes of infrequent voters and citizens eligible to vote but not registered. According to their survey, the citizens can be divided in the next categories with approximate share of around 45 % of regular voters, 25% of non- voters, and 20 percent of infrequent voters which I divide in two same categories of remobilized and new non-voters. Ten percent of the citizens are categorized as new eligible voters or the young citizens who gain the right to vote for the first time.

Figure 4.1. Classification of Voters – California Voter Foundation (2014)



Source: California Voter Foundation (CVF)

The study of the new non-voters therefore it is a very important contribution to better understanding of the electoral process. Studying this category of voters is important because they can influence overall electoral participation and this might be an explanation for the decline of the voter turnout for some elections. Additionally, in certain close electoral competitions, the number of the new non-voters can be decisive for the electoral outcome. These voters who have stopped voting can certainly decide the winner of the election process. I will discuss further these patterns using data from CSES Module II & III from the period of 2001-2011.

Studying new non-voters is important substantially and methodologically. Substantially, it will also enable us to understand who these voters are and what the reasons for them to stop voting are (i). It allows us to offer and implement a dynamic approach in analyzing the electoral process (ii) and to assist with our explaining the reasons why at some elections the number of new non-voters is higher, while at others very few voters drop out of casting their vote (iii). It assists in offering a theoretical and empirical explanation as to individual motives to stop voting (iv), but also reviews other electoral actors, primarily political parties (v) and in an analysis of how parties' behaviour influences voters to stop voting.

Methodologically this thesis differs from the previous research on demobilized voters, in that it attempts to identify these voters based on their previous voting record, to disentangle their individual characteristics and to investigate this phenomena on the country or party level, by identifying the number of voters dropping out based on their individual report whilst not using the turnout decline values or the difference of the electoral results of parties between two electoral cycles. The operationalization of the dependent variable, hence, differs from all other approaches, and this is another novelty of the approach of this thesis. Besides the fact that this approach requires a very complex data collection process, and that it faces numerous data limitations, which I shall discuss in next chapters, it is the best possible way to answer the above-mentioned questions of great importance for the better understanding the electoral process as a whole.

4.3. The new non-voters and channels of participation

According to the participation typology of Teorell, Torcal and Montero (2007, 340-343) there are two dimensions of participation: the channel of expression and the mechanism of influence. They base the mechanism of influence dimension on Hirschman's distinction between exit and voice. The exit-based mechanism of influence entails that people can opt out of a participation-scene: the authors argue that the logic is the same as for firms and consumers on a competitive market – once the quality of a product declines, customers can choose to stop buying that product. AS concerns voting, this would mean that people can choose to abstain or to vote for a different party. On the other hand, voice-based mechanisms of influence involves not so much opting out as putting in effort or participation within the participation form in order to get preferences across. While, Teorell et al (2007) (but see also Hirschman 1970; Verba et al. 1978) argue that “the voicebased mechanisms of influence are often much more manifest than exit-base mechanisms when it comes to preferences and demands, it conveys more or more specific information than exit-based mechanisms, and pressure is more exercised by the intensity of the arguments”, this is the opposite for the voters that stopped voting. These citizens influence electoral processes by exiting from further participation and this is how they demonstrate their disappointment with the product's quality decline in the electoral process. This is different than swinging vote choice: the message these voters send to political actors is stronger.

Regarding the channel of expression, Teorell, Torcal and Montero argue for one distinction: between participation that takes place with the framework of representation, and participation

through extra representative channels of expression. In this perspective, voters that stopped voting express their actions within representative channels of participation. They send their message to their elected representatives in indicating that something has caused them to drop out of voting. Furthermore, if we accept this Teorell et al distinction, the channel of influence is crucial dimension of participation for new non-voters, showing their influence by exiting the process. Channels of expression are not so crucial in explaining the behaviour of these voters who have stopped voting. While their participation through extra representative channels of expression can be still very high, their electoral non-participation is the way they influence the electoral process.

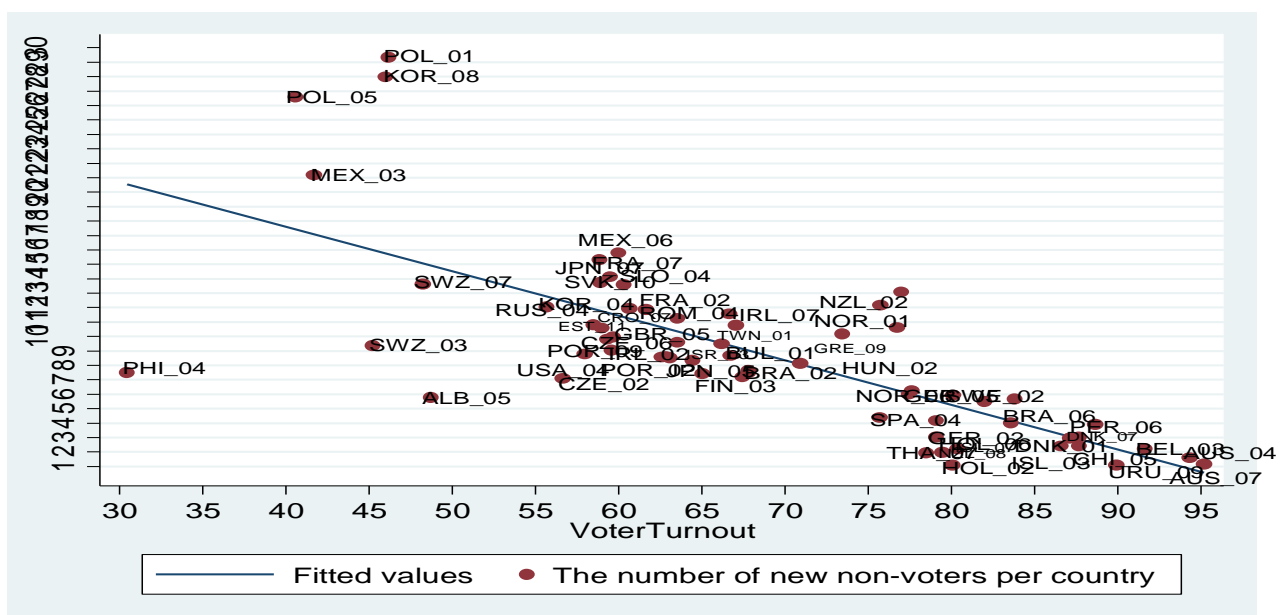
4.4. The new non-voters and overall turnout trends

Research at the aggregate level of voter turnout has shown that the number of variables which affect turnout levels is quite large (Powell 1980, 1982, 1986; Jackman 1987; Crepaz, 1990; Jackman and Miller 1995; Franklin 1996, 2002; Blais 2000; Norris 2002 Smets and Van Ham 2012). Some of these approaches have intended to provide a novel explanation of the differences in the turnout trends.

According to the scholars that emphasize the importance of the generational replacement, previous elections that stimulate high turnout leave a high turnout footprint (Franklin 2004). And this footprint is a result of the habit of voting that voters have inherited and they are practicing in the past, except for the new cohort of the enfranchised voter who may then also follow this pattern. Newly enfranchised individuals are known to be particularly less interested to participate at elections and to be significantly responsible for such changes as occur in the support for existing parties (Campbell et al. 1960; Butler and Stokes 1974; Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1978; Inglehart 1977, 1990, 1997; Rose and McAllister 1990; Franklin et al., 1992; Franklin and Ladner 1995; Miller and Shanks 1996). The findings of Franklin et al (2004) strongly emphasize the need to take account of generational replacement when investigating turnout change. They suggest that by taking into account the size of new cohorts we can measure the short-term effects of variables whose values change too frequently to have long-term consequences. Their results show that “the decline of the turnout in the previous 5 decades of the 20th century are exactly results of the legal enfranchisement of voting and changing the age eligibility of younger citizens to participate at elections which in long term cause a decline of 3 percentage points” (Franklin, Lyons, Marsh 2004).

Other research has stressed the requirements for a different, new approach to understanding the mainsprings of turnout change – and hence of turnout decline. There is some concern among politicians and commentators that the decline could be the result of increasing alienation of contemporary citizens from the political process in their countries, and at least one study purports to have established a link between disaffection and lower turnout (Teixeira, 1992). The others have focused on the baseline model (Nie, Verba and Petrocik 1978), rationale of voting (Ricker and Ordershook 1968) or the role of institutions (Piven and Cloward 1994, 2005).

Figure 4.2 The New Non-Voters and Overall Turnout rates



Source: CSES Module II & III 2001-2011

None of these approaches has taken into account the importance of the new non-voters. As I have shown previously, this category of voters has been understudied and hence the possible effect of the new non-voters on turnout trends has not been emphasized and studied previously. There is an important relation between the level of turnout and number of new non-voters per country¹ and this correlation is very high. Figure 1.3.1 which includes 68 different elections from the period of 2001 to 2011 from CSES Dataset Module II & III shows a strong linear negative relationship between the number of the new non-voters and the voter turnout. The higher the number of the new non-voters, the lower the turnout level.

¹ The number of the new non-voters is the percentage of the respondents who used to vote at the previous elections, but did not vote at the most current elections. This percentage is calculated when the number of these respondents is divided by the number of respondents included in the survey per each country

These findings strongly confirm the need of studying the new non-voters not only so as to understand their characteristics and to scrutinize the reasons why they stop voting as the primary goal of this thesis, but because they are very important in order to understand better the fluctuations or trends in the voter turnout.

The data also shows that this phenomenon is most clearly visible in the case with the post-communist countries. These countries are among the countries with the highest number of new non-voters and lowest turnout levels (I will discuss further the reasons for this later in the chapter). Except in post-communist countries, a large number of new non-voters exists in the cases of Mexican elections 2003 and South Korean elections 2006. The percentages of new non-voters are considerably higher in these countries and it are above average.

Western European countries in general have similar and considerably stable trends of voter turnout and number of new non-voters. Switzerland and United States are the only exceptions among established western democracies with lower turnout rates, but there is a difference in the number of new non-voters. In Switzerland in the elections in both 2003 and 2007 that are included in the study, the number of the new non-voters is higher than the average, while in US Presidential Elections 2004 there are 7.1 % of new non-voters or lower than the average.

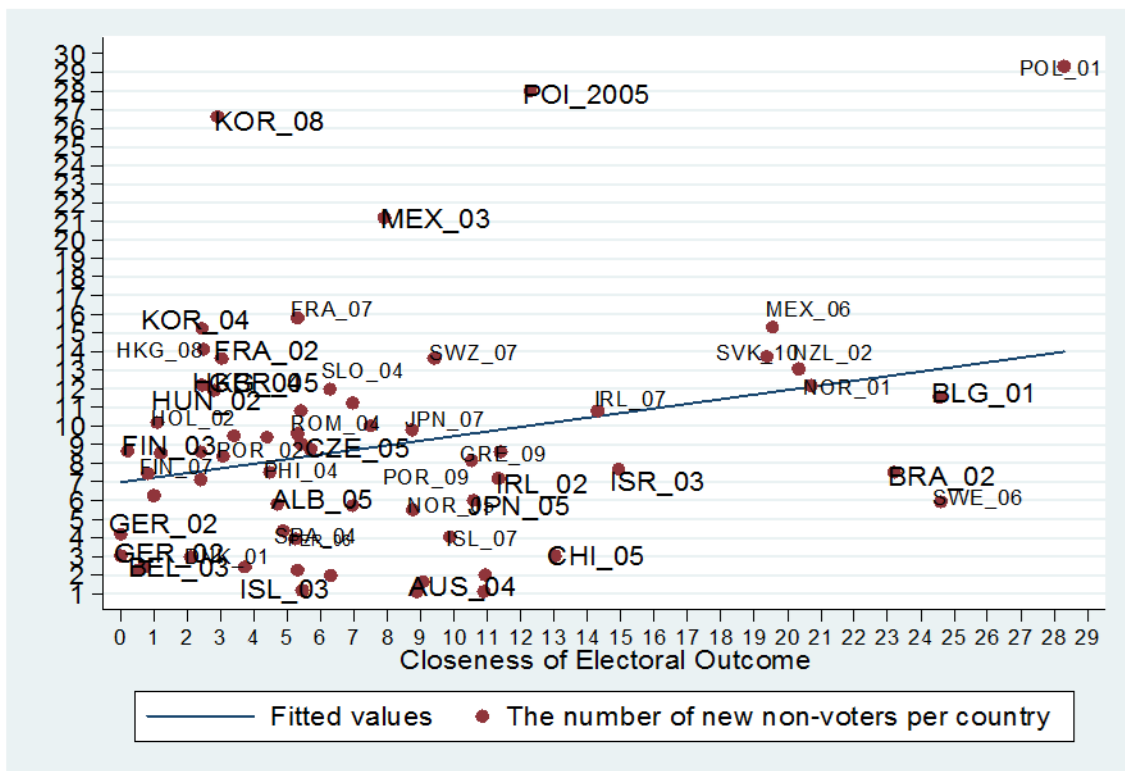
On the other site of the extreme are the countries with compulsory voting, the number of new non-voters in these countries in very low and the turnout levels are very high. In general, the majority of the countries are characterized by medium level of voter turnout which fluctuates from 55% to 65%, and a medium number of new non-voters which is around 10 percent. There is not even one single election in the data that is characterized with very high turnout and large number of new non-voters.

While there is not any confirmation so far for causality between these processes, and it is not clear which phenomenon influences the other, these data demonstrate that voters that have voted and decided to stop voting should be studied in detail. Although, the thesis does not have an ambition to analyse the turnout levels, it is clear from Figure 4.2 that these phenomena are strongly related. No previous research has focused on understanding who these voters are, what their number is and whether they directly influence the turnout levels. Nevertheless, the patterns I presented above and the ones I will present below emphasize the importance of new non-voters as a crucial component of the voting population.

4.6. The new non-voters and closeness of electoral outcome²

The other reason for the importance of the new non-voters as a different component of the electoral process is the possible effect of the number of these citizens on the electoral outcome. In a particularly close and competitive electoral environment the voters that have stopped voting can be a decisive factor that directly influences the winner of the elections. Closeness of electoral outcome has an important role in the electoral process. It also seems clear that voters respond to the salience of an election, turning out in larger numbers when the race is a close one and when it offers the opportunity for consequential departures in public policy (Franklin and Hirczy de Mino, 1998; Blais, 2000; Franklin, 2001).

Figure 4.3 The New Non-Voters and the Closeness of the Electoral Outcome



Source: CSES Module II & III 2001-2011

On the other hand, according to the rational choice theory, Riker and Ordeshook (1968), elaborating the ideas of Downs (1957), pointed out that the chances of any one vote affecting the outcome of an election for nation-wide public office were virtually zero – even in a close race. For this reason, they went on to argue, “people (unless they had quite unreasonable

² The closeness is calculated as the difference in the electoral results between the first and the second political party or coalition

expectations about the importance of their vote) could not be voting with the purpose of benefiting from the outcome” (Riker and Ordeshook 1968:28). Nevertheless, the Figure 4.3 shows some other patterns. There is a linear and positive relationship between the number of new non-voters and closeness of electoral outcome. In the majority of the cases included in the sample the number of the new non-voters is larger compared with the difference between the two closest parties or candidates. In a particular electoral environment like Greece or Italy³, or majoritarian FPTP systems as United Kingdom or USA, even a slight difference between political parties or candidates can decide which party or candidate will be in power. Additionally, as the number of new non-voters are not equally distributed between parties some of the parties lose more of their previous voters than others and this influences their electoral success.

The majority of the cases in Figure 2.3 are characterized with a medium number of new non-voters and a medium difference between two most successful parties or candidates at the elections. While in those elections that are not particularly close, even when the number of new non-voters is higher, it is hard to claim that the number of the new non-voters decides the winner; there are a very large number of cases when this claim can be easily hypothesized. The data clearly shows that voters who used to cast the ballot and then stopped participating at elections can influence the electoral process and be a decisive factor regarding the electoral winner.

Digging deeper in the data it seems that the effect of the number of new non-voters on the closeness of electoral outcome is biggest in proportional representation electoral systems with medium number of political parties. In 2003 in Belgium, aside from the small number of new non-voters, their effect on the electoral outcome could be very big taking into account only 0.5 percentage point difference between two major political parties. In Finland 2003 and 2007 the number of new non-voters is much bigger and hence the possible effect stronger, taking into account once again that differences between major parties were smaller than 1 percent. Similar cases are those of Germany, Denmark, USA etc. On the other extreme there are countries like Sweden and New Zealand, where the number of new non-voters is very small and the difference between two major parties very big. The Polish elections of 2001

³ The electoral legislature in these countries enables the party with the most votes, no matter how small or big the difference with the second most successful party, receives additional seats in the Parliament in order that a governmental stability be secured.

represent a clear extreme case with the highest percentage of new non-voters in the sample and the biggest difference between two major political parties.

Non-competitive elections cause lower turnout and possibly a higher number of new non-voters. Similar to the previous graph, at this stage of the research I do not tend to disentangle or discuss the possible endogeneity or reversed causality effect; the intentions with the graphs is to provide solely descriptive evidence from electoral data which will emphasize the importance of these new non-voters for the electoral process. These new non-voters used to participate at elections, they supported a certain political party and manifested a higher level of political consciousness. Their decision to stop voting at the next elections therefore can directly influence the power balance between parties and hence drive the electoral process.

4.7. The new non-voters and turnout differences between two electoral cycles⁴

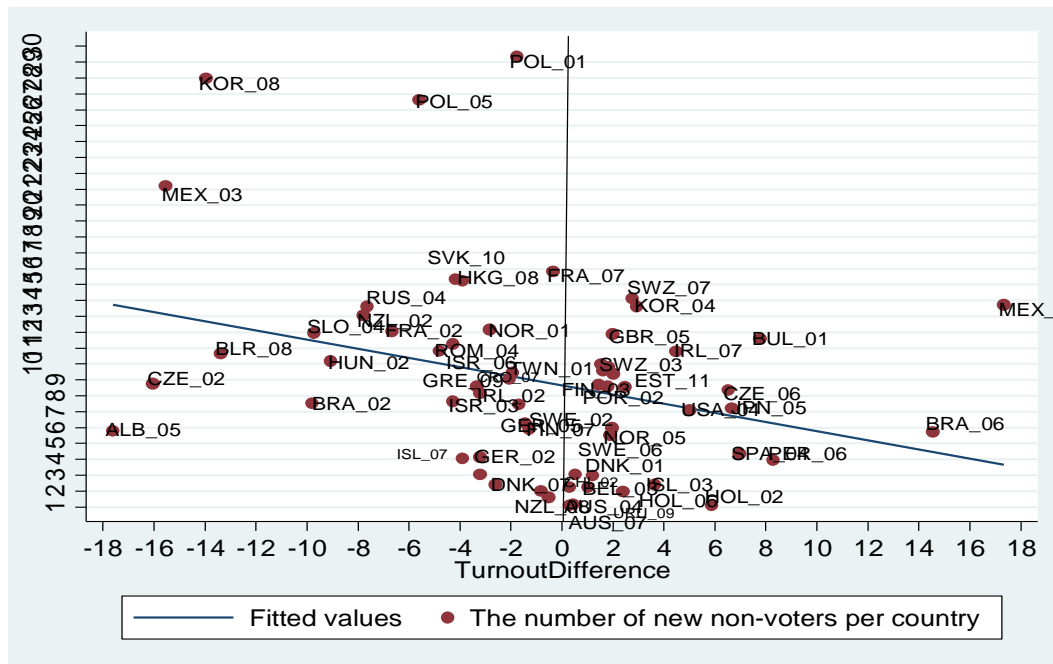
The third important reason for studying the new non-voters is their relation with the turnout differences between two electoral cycles. In the first place, turnout varies from election to election both up and down; and while it is possible to imagine secular trends in civic virtue, it is hard to imagine what would cause it to fluctuate both up and down from election to election (Franklin 2004). Numerous previous research studies have missed out on taking the new non-voters into account when investigating the reasons for turnout changes and, more concretely, the decline of the turnout. The main conclusion drawn from the previous research has been focused on insisting on institutional changes or generational evidences for the decline in spite of searching for reasons among the voters that have used to participate at previous elections.

Figure 2.4 shows that a slight majority of cases in the dataset have been faced with decline of the turnout between two elections in the period of 2001-2011. We can observe three different trends in the data: (i) Most of elections are characterized with turnout fluctuations around 10 percent or less. The fluctuations are usually smaller which means that the turnout levels are more or less stable with certain shocks that cause bigger and more dramatic changes. (ii) The countries that faced only very small changes of the turnout rates have also very small number of new non-voters. Most of the cases with small turnout fluctuations are characterized with a smaller number of new non-voters. The number of these cases in the sample is also considerably large. (iii) The data also shows that the countries with largest number of new

⁴ The turnout difference between two electoral cycles is calculated when the turnout percentage at the previous elections at time (t-1) is subtracted with the turnout percentage at the most current elections at time t

non-voters have faced decline of their electoral participation during two elections. These three trends confirm the importance of the new non-voters as a separate category of citizens worthy of further research.

Figure 4.4 The new non-voters and turnout differences between two electoral cycles



Source: CSES Module II & III 2001-2011

While it is puzzling as to what causes turnout decline, and why certain variables influence the electoral participation in certain elections and in others they do not (Franklin 2004), the figure shows a negative and significant relationship between the number of new non-voters and the turnout fluctuations between those two electoral cycles. A very high number of new non-voters that rises above 20 percent results in a turnout decline compared with the level of participation from the previous elections.

Turnout is a very complex phenomenon, and many different factors and categories influences its fluctuation. The new non-voters are only one of the demobilizing components which cause negative trends in the overall participation. Whether the turnout will be down or up, comparisons with the previous elections depend of the ability of political actors to mobilize more voters than the ones they have demobilized. This thesis, as I have stressed before, does not have as an intention to study the turnout trends and reasons for it. However, with this graph, as with the previous two, it tends only to emphasize the importance of the new non-voters in a broader electoral context. On the other hand, studying a different category of

citizens will contribute to better understand the electorate, reasons why some voters stop and the others continue to vote and last but not the least how many voters stop voting and do they differ significantly from habitual voters and non-voters.

4.8. What has driven voters to stop voting, and why are there differences between countries?

Voting is not only a process of selection of new political elites. The act of voting is a confirmation of the legitimacy of the system (Rokkan 1962), and one of the main features that determines the health of a democracy (Blais et al. 2001). Voting is the act that enables the mass inclusion of citizens in the political process. Furthermore, regardless of divided opinions (Schumpeter 1962), voting is fundamental for democracy. Therefore the relevance of the debate among political scientists about the importance of full participation at elections is never exhausted. While significant political thinkers consider full participation as a clear sign of the legitimacy of the political system and the only way of electing the best possible political elite (Lijphart 1997: 2, Tingsten 1963: 230), others claim full participation causes a lower quality of political decisions, as a poorer and less-educated majority votes and makes political decisions which can result in totalitarianism or populist regimes.

The empirical facts do not give a clear confirmation of any of these simplified and polarized claims. High turnout can also be a characteristic of democratic regimes, while low turnout is not necessarily a feature of developed countries. Many different factors influence differences in turnout between countries as well as the differences in the number of new non-voters per country.

Based on the most influential theories on differences of the turnout levels in different countries, I will offer an explanation for the differences in the number of the new non-voters per country. As it has been shown above, there is a strong linear and negative relationship between the turnout levels and number of new non-voters per country. From the pioneering works on the determinants of voter turnout by Powell (1982, 1986) and Jackman (1987) until some of the most recent research (Leighley and Nagler 2014), several sets of variables have been identified as factors that affect electoral participation. According to Powell (1982), the main variables that enhance turnout are “nationally competitive districts” and “strong party – group linkages”. “Nationally competitive districts” affect voter participation and turnout level because the incentive for political parties is to motivate voters to vote in all parts of the country, and not only in swing constituencies or states, as is the case in the US. Similarly, in

states where groups such as religious organisations, professional associations, trade unions or other different youth or women's' organizations are clearly associated and affiliated with a certain political party, the vote choice is simpler and voter turnout is higher. Powell, 1982, 22). As a consequence, the number of new non-voters will be smaller in countries with nationally competitive districts, because the incentive of these voters to stop voting is lower, regardless of changes in other circumstances. Similarly with party-group linkages, voters that are closely affiliated with some of the organizational groups are more likely to continue voting than those that do not belong to any group or union.

Jackman (1987) has strongly emphasized the impact of institutional variables. His research has identified five institutional variables that enhance turnout. According to him "nationally competitive districts", a greater number of parties, unicameralism, electoral disproportionality and compulsory voting all influence voter turnout. However, Jackman's research excludes the impact of the strong party – group linkages identified by Powell, and his analysis does not integrate the socio-economic environment as a determinant of the differences in turnout among countries (Blais 2006).

This primary research on the variables that affect turnout, especially Powell's model, differentiates three different sets of variables which take into account (i) the social and economic environment, (ii) the constitutional setting (institutions in the strict sense of the term), and (iii) party systems and election outcomes (Powell, 1982). Furthermore, according to Blais (2006), Powell's sequential model, "which includes a distant set of variables (socioeconomic), an intermediate set (institutions), and more proximate factors (party systems and election outcomes) established the basis of the research on the differences among voter turnout at country level" (Blais 2006). The most important literature on voting behaviour has followed this pioneering research by offering a comprehensive explanation of factors that influence voter participation at elections, but with contradictory findings concerning the main reasons why voters vote at all, and why they decide to stop participating in elections. The following subsections will offer a brief review of the impact of the abovementioned set of variables, including the additional explanation of the determinants of voter turnout in consolidated democracies, and more concretely, the reasons why voters stop voting in post-communist countries.

4.8.1. Institutions that influence voters to stop voting

Starting with a systematized analysis of the determinants of voter turnout differences among countries, institutional variables are the first whose impact has been emphasized. The main set of most commonly used institutional variables include compulsory voting, electoral systems, unicameralism, as well the availability of voting, vote age enfranchisement and similar variables. All these variables simultaneously also affect the number of voters that stop voting per country.

It is conventional wisdom that compulsory turnout increases turnout. The majority of prior research has shown that compulsory voting boosts turnout by around 10 to 15 percentage points (Blais & Carty 1990; Blais & Dobrzynska 1998; Franklin 1996, 2004; Blais & Aarts 2005, Blais 2006). Nevertheless, as Blais (2006) stresses in his research of systematizing and summarizing the determinants of the voter turnout among different countries, the effect of compulsory voting mainly depends upon whether it is followed by sanctions and in particular the nature of these sanctions.

The effect of compulsory voting also differs between countries. Norris (2002) shows that compulsory voting increases turnout only in “older” democracies. According to her assumptions, this might be a result of less strict enforcement of the law elsewhere or that its impact is conditional on the presence of broader norms regarding the desirability of obeying the law (Blais 2006). Additionally, Fornos et al. (2004), without controlling for the specific contribution of sanctions and their degree of enforcement, establish a four-point compulsory voting scale, which shows a strong impact of compulsory voting on turnout in Latin America, the region with the highest frequency of compulsory voting laws. On the other side, Blais et al. (2003), using a sample that includes established and consolidating countries, find that compulsory voting makes a difference only when there are sanctions.

Compulsory voting will also affect the number of new non-voters per country. The number of such voters that have stopped voting will differ among countries as a result of the existence of compulsory voting. It is expected that the number of these new non-voters will be lower in countries with compulsory voting than in countries where there is no legal obligation for voting. Additionally, in countries where there are sanctions for non-voters, the number of voters that have stopped voting will be even smaller compared to countries without sanctions. Furthermore, it is expected that the number of new non-voters will be smaller even in those countries where there is no longer compulsory voting, but where in the past there had been a

legal obligation to vote. The habit of voting of citizens in these countries is stronger compared to countries where there is no tradition of compulsory voting. While this effect is expected to be smaller, it can still drive some patterns.

The electoral system has also shown a significant effect on voter turnout variation between countries. As Blais (2006) shows “studies that have been confined to advanced democracies (Blais & Carty 1990, Jackman & Miller 1995, Franklin 1996, Radcliff & Davis 2000) as well as one study of turnout in post- communist countries (Kostadinova 2003) have confirmed that turnout is higher in proportional representation (PR) and/or larger districts, whereas research dealing with Latin America reports no association (Perez-Linan 2001, Fornos et al. 2004), and an analysis that incorporates both established and non-established democracies concludes that the electoral system has a weak effect (Blais & Dobrzynska 1998)” (Blais 2006).

The number of new non-voters per country should also be influenced by the electoral system. The expectation is that proportional representation will diminish the number of new non-voters, while countries with majoritarian electoral systems will be characterized by higher numbers of new non-voters. The expectation is that the electoral system will have a low effect on the number of these new non-voters per country.

While unicameralism is also widely considered as an important determinant of cross-country voter turnout variance, the findings are mixed and therefore somewhat confusing. As Blais (2006) summarizes, positive results are reported by Jackman (1987), Jackman & Miller (1995), and Fornos et al. (2004). On the other side, other research shows no effect (Blais & Carty (1990), Black (1991), Radcliff & Davis (2000), and Perez-Linan (2001)). “Siaroff & Merer (2002) find support for the hypothesis that “turnout is lower where there is a “relevant” directly elected president and where there are strong regional governments”. Blais & Carty (1990) and Black (1991) indicate that turnout is not higher in federal countries (Blais 2006, Cox 2015).

The impact of this variable on the variance of the number of new non-voters per country should be very limited. Given that only first order elections will be taken into consideration, this variable should not have important explanatory power for the number of voters that have stopped voting.

Various other institutional variables have been included in previous important research on voter turnout determinants. While Franklin (2004) considers voting age enfranchisement as a

main variable in explaining the variation in voter turnout over time, this variable should not influence the number of voters that have stopped voting per country unless there are some institutional changes over the period under analysis in this paper. Additionally, Franklin argues that the age of enfranchisement influences mainly new young voters who are supposed to develop their voting habit. The analysis of the reasons for voters to stop voting is not concerned with this phenomenon, since it analyses the moment when they have stopped voting and not when they first engaged in voting.

The availability of voting is a considerably important factor influencing turnout, and it is expected that it could influence the number of new non-voters per country. Systems where the voting is easily approachable should be characterized by fewer new non-voters, while countries with more conservative methods of voting should have higher numbers of new non-voters. However as Blais (2006) reports, “Norris (2002) examines the effect of specific rules (number of polling days, polling on rest day, postal voting, proxy voting, special polling booths, transfer voting, and advance voting), and she finds no significant effect, while Blais et al. (2003) created a summary scale that reflects the presence or absence of postal, advance, and proxy voting, and they find a rather strong positive association between the presence of such voting facilities and turnout” (Blais 2006).

4.8.2. How socio-economic environment determinates the variation of new non-voters per country

Blais (2006, 2015) shows that, while not to the same extent as institutional variables, socio-economic environment has also been seriously considered as an explanatory factor of the turnout variation. The most explored socio-economic variable is the economic situation in the country. The majority of research has confirmed “relatively strong support for the hypothesis that turnout is higher in economically advanced countries (Blais & Dobrzynska 1998, Norris 2002, Fornos et al. 2004). The relationship is not linear, the main difference being between the poorest countries and all others (Blais & Dobrzynska 1998)” (Blais 2006). No clear pattern has been found regarding economic downturns. While a certain number of voting behaviour scholars claim that economic downturns negatively influence turnout levels, others have shown that when the economy is faced with negative cycle, the turnout increases when there are high and low levels of welfare spending but goes down at intermediate levels (Radcliffe 1992). Previous research has shown that the most likely outcome is a “nil overall effect” (Blais 2006), and this is what has been confirmed in vast majority of studies which

include this variable (Arcelus & Meltzer 1975, Blais & Dobrzynska 1998, Blais 2000, Kostadinova 2003, Fornos et al. 2004).

Considering only the number of new non-voters per country, it is expected that economic cycles will influence the cross-country variation. While economic growth should decrease the number of the new non-voters per country, a fall in GNP per capita compared with the previous year should increase the number of non-voters. Economic downturns are expected to influence the variation of the number of voters that have stopped voting per country. Building on the economic voting theory, this paper will also test whether variation within the aggregated level of economic self-evaluation affects the number of these new non-voters. Furthermore, building on the Fiorina (1981) theory of retrospective voting, aggregated trends of the retrospective economic situation will be included in the econometric model. Additionally, the aggregated level of satisfaction with democracy will also be tested as an explanatory factor that may determine the variance of the number of new non-voters per country.

A very significant amount of previous research has investigated the influence of country size on turnout rates. Since Powell (1982) has shown that “turnout tends to be higher in smaller nations, but that the relationship is not statistically significant”, the most influential analyses thereafter have neglected this line of inquiry, especially Jackman (1987) and Franklin (1996, 2004) Blais 2006). Nevertheless, Blais and Carty (1990), Blais and Dobrzynska (1998), and Rose (2004) have indicated that the highest turnout rates are among the smallest countries (Malta, Luxemburg) and that this is a result of “stronger social networks in smaller communities and the fact that smaller countries have fewer electors per elected member, which makes it easier for candidates and parties to mobilize the vote” (Rose 2004).

4.8.3. The influence of party systems and electoral outcome on the number of new non-voters per country

Party systems and electoral outcome have been widely considered as variables that affect turnout, but analysis has mainly been focused only on two variables: the number of parties and the closeness of electoral outcome. The majority of previous research has brought contrasting findings regarding the effect of the number of political parties on voter turnout. The logical inference drawn is that turnout should rise with the number of parties because, firstly, voters have greater opportunity to choose the party they prefer, or that which is closer to their ideological or political standings; and, secondly, because there is a greater electoral

mobilization when there are more parties. However, this has not been empirically confirmed in most of the tested econometric models.

One of the reasons for this can be found in the possible negative effects of the fractionalization of party systems, which makes it more likely that a government will be formed by a coalition of parties (Jackman 1987, Blais 2006). This makes elections less decisive and leaves voters little say in electing their government (Downs 1957). While the majority of research has found a negative correlation between the number of parties and turnout, as Blais (2006) has correctly summarized, the inverse argument that coalition-government suppresses turnout has not been empirically confirmed. Therefore the relationship between the number of parties and turnout is contentious and may be highly influenced by context.

The same intuition applies to new non-voters. The number of political parties should have an important impact on their decision to keep casting their ballot or not to participate at elections. If the party closest to the voter's preferences "has betrayed" her expectations, it is more likely to expect that this voter would easily find a party that more closely represents her political attitudes or interests in a multi-party system than in a two-party system. Therefore, based on logical intuition, it is expected that the larger the number of parties, the lower the number of new non-voters. This assumption will be tested.

The same controversy surrounds the most tested electoral outcome variable. While the fact that the closeness of electoral outcome boosts turnout is one of the most firmly established findings in the electoral participation research, with a positive effect in 27 out of 32 studies (Blais, 2000, 60), the debate still exists as to whether this is applicable to every electoral system and what the magnitude of impact is. Franklin (2004) claims that closeness boosts turnout only in plurality systems, while the effect does not exist in PR systems; Blais and Dobryzinska however have found the impact of this variable to be very small. Another very important element should be the way this variable is operationalised.

The number of new non-voters should be smaller in countries where the electoral outcome is very close. Based on previous research, the expectations are that this effect should be small, but with a clear direction. On the other hand, regarding the type of electoral system (and taking into consideration that the sample of analysis includes different electoral systems), the expectations are that the closeness of the electoral outcome will generally impact the number of the new non-voters, without further analysis of the type of the system.

In general, the research of the impact of the party system on the turnout or number of new non-voters is limited and therefore does not explore all the possible explanatory solutions. As I will attempt to show later, some of the important determinants of the number of the new non-voters should be the “ideologisation of the party system” and “ideological shifting of the party systems”.

4.8.4. Established vs. consolidated democracies: Are there different patterns in the number of new non-voters per country?

The patterns of voter turnout are different between established democracies and consolidated democracies. While turnout rates in established democracies are slowly declining, the trends are generally stable. In consolidating democracies and especially post-communist countries these trends are different. Turnout in post-communist countries in the first democratic elections after the fall of communism was characterized by very high rates, in several cases close to full participation, but instantly followed by dramatic decline. The current turnout rates are lower than in the majority of established democracies excluding the USA and Switzerland. There are several theoretical explanations for this phenomenon.

The so-called ‘stakes-based’ hypothesis (Pacek, Pop-Eleches and Tucker 2009) is based on the claim that people participate when it matters more. At the beginning of a transition (i.e. when the authoritarian regime is breaking down), it matters the most because the form of the new political regime is to be decided. In contrast, once the new (democratic) regime is in place and consolidated, the stakes are no longer as high. The nature of the main political issues usually ceases to be constitutional (or constitutional-like) and the time of less mobilizing business-as-usual politics begins, which translates into lower turnout levels.

Another popular ‘disenchantment’ hypothesis (Kostadinova and Power 2007, Kostadinova 2004) considers the high initial participation rates rather as a result of generalized enthusiasm and citizens’ unrealistically boosted expectations of the new democratic regime. The subsequent voting decline is then due to a democratic disenchantment caused by the confrontation with ‘real’ democratic political life, where many of these expectations are not – and even cannot be – met.

Other theories claim that the more the democratic regime is economically inefficient and corrupt, the higher the decline in turnout. On the other hand, lower turnout is also a systematic characteristic of the democratic transition no matter the context. Nevertheless, the

general conclusion based on the abovementioned theories, is that the electorate in consolidated democracies is not as stable as in established ones. This is an important feature that shapes the expectations about the number of new non-voters in consolidating democracies. Based on the theoretical and empirical implications, it is expected that the number of new non-voters in post-communist countries will be higher in comparison with established democracies. The party systems are very volatile (Lewis 2005), the emergence of new political parties is a regular feature of these systems (Eneydi 2009) and the level of political trust in institutions is very low (Rose, 1995). On the other hand, the turnout decline rates were highest at the beginning of the democratic transition and after that the fluctuations are not so dramatic (Rose, 2003). This can also influence the number of new non-voters per country. In order to control the effect of the different patterns of democratic consolidation, a dummy variable for the post-communist countries will be constructed in the econometric model.

4.9. How many voters stop voting in different countries and why?

The number of new non-voters differs per country. Different political and social circumstances or specific electoral contexts could influence voters to stop voting. Table 4.1 shows that the mean of the new non-voters per country is 9.14 taking into account 65 different electoral studies. More than 9 percent of the voters who have participated at the previous elections stopped voting in the most recent one. This is a very important percentage of the electorate that has been demobilized between only two electoral cycles. Taking into account already elaborated problems of over-reporting and the social desirability effect (Schwartz et al 2012), this finding sounds the alarm for the importance of studying these new non-voters. On the other hand, the difference between the country with the lowest number and highest number of new non-voters is also very interesting for analysis.

Table 4.1 New Non-Voter: Summary Statistics

New Non-Voter	Obs	Mean	St. Dv.	Min	Max
	65	9.14	5.95	1.09	29.35

Source: CSES Module II & III 2001-2011

The percentage of new non-voters is only 1.09 at the elections in the Netherlands 2002, while the highest percentage of new non-voters exists in the Polish elections in 2001. While voter turnout in the Netherlands is considerably high, there has also been compulsory voting in the

past which could be one of the explanations for the high level of voting habits among the Dutch electorate. For Poland, on the other hand, as a post-communist country, it is also highly expected that the number of new non-voters be higher. Nevertheless, considering the fact that the elections have been organized in 2001, or one decade after the first founding elections after the fall of the communism, the very high number of new non-voters goes beyond the explanations of the “disenchantment” hypothesis.

Taking into consideration the post-communist background of the countries, there are very important differences between these two groups of countries. Table 4.2 shows that the average percentage of new non-voters among post-communist countries is about 4.5 percentage points higher compared with countries without a communist background.

Table 4.2 New Non-Voters in Post-Communist Countries

New Non-Voter	Obs	Mean	St. Dv.	Min	Max
Post-communist	16	12.44	6.42	5.78	29.34
Non-communist	49	8.07	5.44	1.09	27.97

Source: CSES Module II & III 2001-2011

While the average percentage of new non-voters in post-communist countries is 12.44, this percentage is 8.07 among consolidated countries and even lower than the mean. The explanations are different. Firstly, the stakes are not so high in each consecutive election during the transition and therefore voters do not see a high motivation to keep voting. On the other hand, the economic inefficiency, high level of corruption and high unemployment rates also demotivates voters to keep voting. Thirdly, the instability of the party system, high level of electoral volatility and constant emergence of new parties as well as ideological inconsistency and instable ideological definition of the parties contributes to voters feeling disaffected and to stop voting. The level of trust in politicians and institutions is lower than in consolidated democracies (Rose 1995). In the end, after the almost full participation at the first elections after the fall of communism, citizens felt disenchanting by this democratic benefit.

Compulsory voting has also been considered as an important determinant that affects voter turnout. The effect differs depending upon whether there is enforced compulsory voting with sanctions or there is no system of punishment for the ones that have not voted. While this

relationship is not always supported by the empirical findings, table 4.3 shows clear patterns. The countries with compulsory voting indeed have lower numbers of new non-voters and additionally the number of new non-voters is about 5 percent lower among countries with enforced compulsory voting than in those without.

Table 4.3 Compulsory Voting

New Non-Voter	Obs	Mean	St. Dv.	Min	Max
Enforced compulsory	5	3.98	2.68	1.16	7.5
Non-enforced compulsory	6	8.37	7.75	1.95	1.18
No compulsory voting	54	9.71	5.80	1.09	29.34

Source: CSES Module II & III 2001-2011

While the number of observations for the first two categories is considerably low, the results have shown very clear patterns of the effect of compulsory voting on the number of new non-voters. In this sense compulsory voting is a demotivating factor for voters to stop voting, regardless of other circumstances or whether parties are ideologically inconsistent or not.

Table 4.4 Size of the country

Size of the Country	New Non-Voter Per Country
Very small	3.22
Small	8.17
Medium	9.25
Large	10.37
Very large	11.21

Source: CSES Module II & III 2001-2011

While size has not been seriously considered as an important factor in explaining turnout, some scholars have reported that the larger the country the lower the turnout. Although not every study has come to the same conclusions, the results from Table 4.4 show that the size of the country gives some clear pattern about the number of new non-voters per country. The results clearly show that the larger the country, the higher the percentage of the new non-voters.

The size, nonetheless, does not play a very crucial role when explaining why voters stop voting, but the findings below in the table could also influence the other independent variables, especially taking into consideration the limited number of observations. The difference in the number of new non-voters between the very small and very large countries is 8 percent, and the relationship is very linear following the increase of the size of the countries.

The number of new non-voters differs among countries with different electoral systems. Table 4.5 shows that the percentage of non-voters is lower among countries with proportional representation in comparison with countries which have plurality electoral systems or, more concretely, “first past the post” systems. On the other hand, the number of new non-voters is lower when there is a mixed system, but slightly higher when compared with proportional representation. The number of observations for the other electoral systems does not leave a comfortable space for more broad interpretation of the numbers. Nevertheless, findings for the influence of the electoral systems once again confirm the expected direction.

Table 4.5 Type of the Electoral System

Electoral System	New Non-Voter per Country
FPTP	11.25
Single Transferable Vote	5.53
Single Non Transferable Vote	6.03
Proportional Representation	8.59
Mixed systems	10.71
Electoral College	7.10

Source: CSES Module II & III 2001-2011

These results confirm that the majoritarian electoral systems have stronger de-motivational power compared with the others. This is a consequence of the fact that not all majoritarian districts are competitive and therefore political parties are not highly motivated to strongly compete in these areas. Regarding this, the way how political parties behave in these situations is an interesting phenomenon. On the one hand, they can try to implement a completely different strategy and to change their ideological standings or to nominate a

candidate with opposite ideological standings to the formal party positions, or they may simply abandon any interest in ideological or cadre shift because they do not expect an electoral victory. Therefore, their voters can be easily demotivated to participate at elections no matter the fact that they have cast their ballot previously.

Ideology is one of the crucial mobilizing factors for political parties. Citizens choose the party they will vote for according to how close that party's ideology is to their personal beliefs (Downs 1957). Consequently, when a party changes its ideological standings, many voters will no longer feel represented by it. Voters have two choices: while certain voters may shift their votes, becoming swing or floating voters (Mayer 2008, Battaglini, Morton & Palfrey 2008, Klaasen 2007), an important number of voters may decide not to vote any more and to become new non-voters.

Table 4.6 Direction of the Ideological Shift

Direction of the Ideological Shift	New Non-Voter per Country
Left	9.80
Slightly left	8.19
Same	14.39
Slightly right	8.65
Right	3.53

Source: CSES Module II & III 2001-2011

Another very important ideological shift indicator is the direction of the shift. Additionally, this indicator can be an even stronger explanatory factor than the quantity of the shift, taking into consideration the fact that voters consider predominantly only the shift of the political party they supported at the previous elections. Therefore, the direction of the ideological shift of the party system is also dependent on the ideological standings of new non-voters. Measuring the average scores of the self-placing on the Left-Right scale in the CSES Datasets Module II & III 2001-2011, the ideological positions of new non-voters are slightly more on the right comparing with voters that kept voting who self-placed themselves closer to the center than the new non-voters. Table 4.6 shows the percentage of new non-voters is higher when the ideological shift of the party is more towards the left compared with when the ideological shift of the party system is on the right. These findings correspond with the fact that the average ideological standings of new non-voters are more to the right than those of

other voters. While from the results in Table 4.6 it can be concluded that the relation between the number of new non-voters and the direction of the shift is an inverted “U” curve, the subsamples for every category are too small for such a general conclusion, and secondly the direction of the shift does not capture the shifts of the individual parties, especially when their scores and directions are neutralizing as in this case.

4.10. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to emphasize the importance of the new non-voters in a broader electoral context. On one hand, studying a different category of citizens will contribute to better understand the electorate, reasons why some voters stop and the others continue to vote and last but not the least how many voters stop voting and do they differ significantly from habitual voters and non-voters. The contextual analysis of the relationship between the percentage of the new non-voters and (i) the overall turnout rates, (ii) the differences between turnout rates in two consecutive elections and (iii) the closeness of the electoral outcome shows that the number of the new non-voters can significantly influence the level of participation and the outcome of the elections. There is a clear strong negative correlation between the percentage of the new non-voters and the turnout levels which goes in line with my claim that this group can influence the participation levels on aggregate level.

Analysing the differences of the percentage of the new non-voters among different countries, results show that the countries that have a higher percentage of new non-voters are those with a communist past and those that do not have compulsory voting. The size of these countries is larger and the number of new non-voters is higher among countries with majoritarian electoral systems. While new non-voters are ideologically self-placed more on the right than other voters, the ideological shift of the party system to the left causes higher number of voters not to cast their ballot.

CHAPTER FIVE

Why voters stop participating at elections? – How parties influence this decision?

5.1. Introduction

A shrinking number of citizens are exercising their right to vote (Abramson and Aldrich, 1982; Cassel and Luskin, 1988; Jackman, 1987). The golden age of voter participation has long finished, but the crisis of the participation (Almond 1960) in contemporary democracies is exacerbated by even more concerning parameters. A significant number of voters have stopped voting. Citizens, instead of shifting their vote from one party to another, increasingly decide to simply stop voting altogether.

The aim of this chapter is to discover which factors influence voters to decide not to participate at elections despite their previous habit of voting. The individual, party and country level variables will be taken into consideration when explaining the reasons for voters to stop voting. Additionally, this chapter argues that political parties and their ideological inconsistency are a reason why voters feel unrepresented, disaffected and lacking in a sense of social trust. Therefore, the research will focus particularly on political parties and how their behaviour contributes to the fact that citizens stop participating in elections. An important aspect of the research is dedicated to party ideology and how a change in the ideology of the parties, measured by their manifestos and electoral programs, influences the increase in the number of the new non-voters.

While voting behaviour literature has been more deeply dedicated in investigating the factors that influence why voters do not vote and the consequences of the non-voting on the country level turnout, very few research has been focused on discovering the factors why voters that have already voted at elections, at one point decide to stop participating. Some of the main and leading approaches like Rational Choice Theory and Habitual Voter Theory fail to give an adequate explanation about the behaviour of this category of new non-voters. They differ from the habitual voters or non-voters because they used to participate at previous elections and decided not to vote in the next elections. Their behaviour has been changed as a result of certain factors that this chapter attempts to investigate. The rational choice theory of

irrationality of voting also is not able to explain why a person voted and after then stopped participating. This chapter offers a model where individual-level, party-level and country-level variables are taken into consideration as explanatory factors for shifting from voting to non-voting.

The chapter is organized in seven sections. The following section presents the puzzle and explains the author's starting position in the conceptualization, the theoretical and statistical model. The following section of the chapter offers a theoretical explanation of the voters that stopped voting followed with a brief review of the literature that analyses the turnout, and a theoretical overview of the party transformation and their ideological and policy inconsistency. In the fourth section, I will present my research question and hypotheses, before I discuss the dataset, the statistical model that is tested and its variables. The main findings of my analysis and interpretation of the results are shown in section five. The paper ends with concluding remarks on the results and a discussion of methodological aspects.

5.2. The Puzzle

The problem of low voter participation in democratic societies is very prominent. The last several decades are characterized by a decline in voter turnout. On the individual level, citizens also demonstrate a very high level of dissatisfaction with governmental performance. The distrust in the social and political institutions in the last two decades is significantly higher than in the eighties (Norris 2005).

On the party level, the decline of the political parties, as I have illustrated previously, is also very significant. The "golden era" of political parties finished a long time ago (Rueda 2007) and political parties have since suffered losses of membership and public support. Political parties have passed through a process of transformation, the old traditional social cleavages have diminished (Franklin 1992), and from mass parties (Sartori 1967) they have evolved to catch-all parties (Kirchheimer 1966), drifting from a society oriented to a state oriented cartel party system (Katz and Mair 1995). Parties on the ground as membership organizations and part of the electoral arena are diminishing in comparison with the other two faces of the parties: in public office and in the central office (Mair 1994). This period was characterized by dramatic shifts in party ideologies (Rueda 2007, Kriesi 2008, Volkens and Klingeman 2001). On the left – right spectrum, this has resulted in a convergence between traditional left wing and right wing parties moving toward the political center, where the concentration of median voters can be found.

The aim of this chapter is to discover the precise relationship between these processes. The chapter is focused on showing which factors influence voters to stop voting and which are the characteristics of the new non-voter. A large-N-country analysis that includes only two-time series will be used in this chapter. Additionally, in the following chapters findings from the large-N Analysis will be tested on in depth panel analysis of the voters that have stopped voting in the United States and also the party-level and country-level consequences of the new non-voters on the voter turnout.

This research, therefore, tries to contribute in solving the puzzle of voter turnout, by analyzing the new non-voters, their socio-demographic characteristics and their voting behaviour. The aim of the research, is to contribute in solving the “grand enchilada of puzzles in political science” (Franklin 2004), by adding specific aspects to the investigation of electoral participation.

5.3. The voters that stopped voting – Theoretical explanations of the reasons for decline of electoral participation

5.3.1. Party Ideology shifts: The importance of party ideologies in the electoral arena

Understanding the role of the ideologies for the voting decisions has been a challenge for voting participation scholars since Downs (1957) and his spatial theory of voting (Downs 1957). This model emphasizes the importance of political parties and ideological closeness with voters in explaining the voter participation and vote choice. The basic postulates on which Downs develops his theoretical model are that the distribution of voters’ preferences and the relative positions of the parties on a one-dimensional scale – explain parties’ policy shifts (Downs 1957). The optimal strategies for political parties thus become that of taking a more centrist position, as the proportion of median voters is the highest in the electorate.

This initial research, which has been a matter of numerous testing in various environments, has caused a substantive debate on the role of the ideologies as determinants of electoral participation. The theoretical assumptions of abstention because of indifference and/or alienation have been confirmed and challenged through the last decades, leaving us with contested conclusions. As I have shown in chapter 2, there are certain limitations of the spatial model of voting which are not taken into consideration by Downs and this limits the explanatory capacity of the theory. For instance, as Adams (202) claims “the scholars of spatial models base their research on the assumptions that all voters have identical

perceptions of every party's policy positions", but also that "voters instantly update these perceptions—along with their party evaluations—in response to changes in the political statements issued by the party's elites" (Adams 2012). When the relationship between parties and voters is concerned, the spatial model of voting is based on the assumption that political parties completely control the perceptions voters have about their policy positions or more concretely that voters' perceptions of each party's policy position correspond exactly with the policy promises the party elites issue to the public (see, e.g., Hinich & Munger 1994, Roemer 2001).

The most important contribution of the spatial model of voting, despite numerous limitations, is the emphasis of the significant role of the party ideology positions in determining vote support and vote participation. Besides the level of ideological extremeness which determinates more rigid positions, other variables such as the salience of both policy and partisan issues in voters' utility functions, the polarization of the electorate, the size and the position of a partisan constituency, the opposition/government, the number of competing parties and the relative (small) share of independent voters also appear crucial in explaining the voter participation levels and more concretely the demobilization of the voters who have participated in the electoral processes.

Party ideology shift varies among the subjects at the political spectrum. Carroll et al (2013) shows that extremists are more ideologically rigid while moderates are more likely to consider influences that arise outside liberal-conservative conflict (Carroll et al 2013). At the same time, the effects are different for the political parties. Starting with the ideological bias of turnout, numerous research studies have shown that a lower participation hurts the leftwing parties as a result of the lower participation rates of the lower socioeconomic groups (Aguilar and Pacek, 2000; Campbell, 1960; Gallego, 2010; Ham and Smets, 2013). Nevertheless, Rodon (2015) highlights how different party strategies such as shifting ideological positions can hurt the political parties differently. By compiling a new large dataset (197 country elections in Europe), Rodon (2015) shows that centrist abstention is higher than leftist or rightist abstention. The findings of Rodon tell us that the traditional approach based on the socioeconomic context is not sufficiently efficient to understand the reasons for lower participation of citizens, but that party strategies also play a key role.

Furthermore, that the ideological shift is not costless but might affect the voters and parties differently has been shown in several cases. In her analysis of the UK, Green (2013) argues

that convergence towards the centre during Tony Blair's leadership especially affected leftwing abstention patterns. Additionally, Karreth et al. (2012) also examine the electoral consequences of moving towards the centre in Germany, Sweden and Great Britain. They find that convergence changed voting patterns. Nevertheless, their study has an important limitation in that it fails to consider abstention, which is a key factor to understand as concerns the recent losses of the catchall parties in these countries.

Lidvall and Rueda (2014) argue that center-left parties face a dilemma regarding the policies they propose and their effects on their traditional supporters or insiders. If they propose policies that benefit insiders, they may push outsiders to exit politics or support radical parties. If they propose policies that benefit outsiders, they risk losing support among insiders. In the case of Swedish politics, Lidvall and Rueda show that shifting ideological positions influences the vote shares of individual parties and electoral participation.

The intensity of the ideological shift is also important in influencing the number of voters to stop voting. Rapid and/or dramatic policy change may prompt internal divisions that damage the party (Przeworski & Sprague 1986). As Przeworski and Sprague have shown, when the ideological shift is bigger, political parties face a more dramatic electoral loss. They, nonetheless, do not offer more comprehensive evidence as to whether this is a result of the voter demobilization of the previous supporters of the party, or a result of their supporters shifting voting for other political parties.

Furthermore, the ideology shift is a result of a voting seeking strategy of the parties. As Curini (2015) highlights, "as long as partisan loyalties correlate with voters' policy positions (such that, for example, all voters who display a partisan identification for a leftist party also have a leftist position on the underlying left-right scale), then, *ceteris paribus*, vote seeking parties are motivated to offer policies in the direction of voters who are favourably disposed toward them, precisely for non-policy reasons" (Merrill and Adams 2001). If partisan salience increases above a given threshold, then vote-seeking parties should target independent voters because independents are the only bloc whose support is truly in play (Curini 2015).

The number of political parties also plays a very important that influences the levels of electoral participation and consequently the incentives to drop out of participation, but also influences the ideological shift strategies of the parties. According to Cox (1990), this is the electoral phenomenon of "squeezing". That is, when the number of parties contesting an

election increases, not all parties will move toward a centrist position because some parties will always be squeezed by others converging from either side (Curini 2015). Also the higher number of political parties increases the number of neighboring and family parties which, at the end determines different party ideology strategies (Adams and Somer-Topcu 2009b). At the same time, a higher number of political parties enable a bigger offer of policies which can influence the decision of the voters to stop voting.

The role of the political party in the government can also influence the party ideology shift. Somer, Topcu and Williams (2014) argue that opposition parties should distance themselves from the government parties to show that they are different from the incompetent government and to compete for the votes that the government is likely to lose. Using a sample of 19 advanced democracies from 1970–2007, Somer Topcu and Williams show that opposition political parties are encouraged to move their positions away from the government’s position, especially in the presence of reinforcing negative signals as to government performance. These results not only have important implications for the understanding of opposition party policy change, for the economic voting literature, and for the spatial and valence models of party competition, but also play a role in explaining the ideological inconsistency of political parties which can influence voter demobilization of their party supporters.

The spatial model of voting identifies two very important patterns: on the one hand, “there is extensive empirical evidence that political parties systematically shift their policy positions in response to the factors that scholars of spatial model of voting emphasize). On the other hand, empirical studies that analyse the consequences of parties’ policy shifts identify only weak and inconsistent evidence of voter reactions to these shifts and empirical findings that are at odds with a central assumption of the spatial model of elections, namely, that citizens perceive and react to parties’ policy shifts” (Adams 2012). I argue that this is result of the lack of focus to the voters who stopped voting and the wrong assumption about the role of the ideological shift on voter’s behaviour. This is exactly what this chapter will attempt to theoretically conceptualize and empirically test.

To sum up, an ideological convergence and constant shift of party ideologies has been a characteristic of the political parties in the previous decades (Volkens and Klingeman 2001, Kriesi 2008). According to the spatial model of voting, the ideological shifts are reactions of parties to maximize vote support and it is influenced by the number of parties, the role of the party in the government and the distribution of the median voter. At the same time, numerous

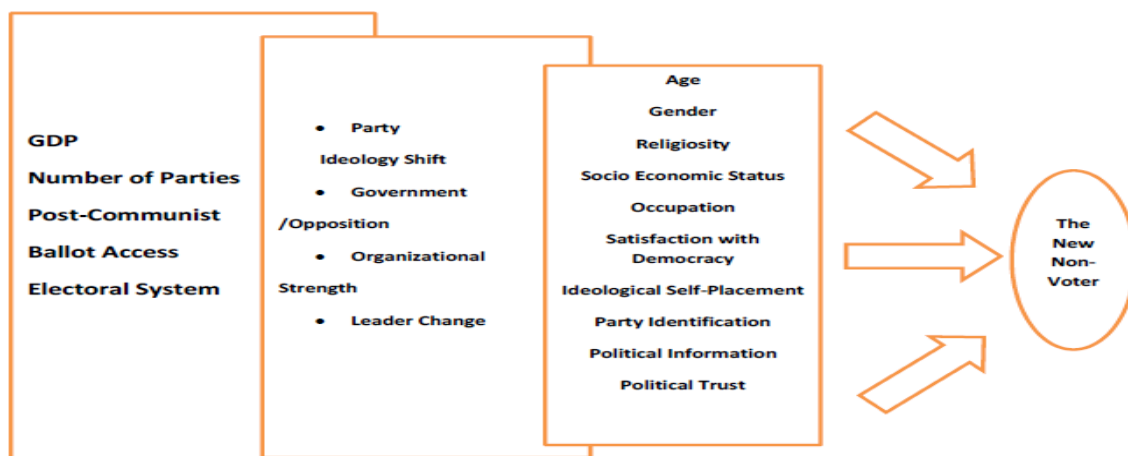
research studies show an overall decline of electoral participation, the decline of the feelings of partisanship even more severely than initially thought (Dalton 2000), and Mair and Van Biezen (2001) report that party membership has declined over time. Parties appear to lose grip on society and the weight of parties seems to be eroding (Blondel 2002). This research attempts to show that, contrary to the spatial model of voting, party ideology shift is harmful for the electoral participation and the number of new non-voters are strongly correlated with the party ideology shifts

5.4. Research question, data and methods

5.4.1. Research Question and Theoretical Model

This chapter seeks to answer the question as to which factors influence voters to stop voting. A complex multi-level model with variables on individual, party and country level, is therefore utilised to test the theoretical assumptions for the influence of party ideology shift on citizens to stop voting. I argue that the spatial model of voting which is based on the claim that voters vote for the party which is the closest to their position on the ideological spectrum, and thus every shift of the party demands a vote swing of the voters and the opposite, has its limits to explain the behaviour of the new non-voters. Based on the standard revealed preference argument and building on the exit, voice and loyalty models, I argue that voters instead of deciding to shift voting for other party once the party shifts its ideological positions, they decide to exit participation and that way to react to a party's inconsistency. Therefore, party ideology shift as a variable is particularly instrumental in order to test the theoretical model. The greater the ideological shift of the party, the higher probability that certain party supporters will abandon voting at elections, as they may begin to feel as if their interests are no longer accurately represented on the party platform. While the theoretical model takes into account the rational choice approach which holds that political parties shift

Theoretical Model 1



their ideology or programmatic position with the purpose of maximizing their profit, i.e. to increase the number of votes that the party wins during the elections, this assumption is not crucial for the model that will be tested.

Despite any utility maximizing mechanism behind the parties' decision to change their position, I argue that this party ideology shift has its price. Thus, this investigation's core position is that the shift of ideology can result in non-voting of significant number of party supporters or voters, which as a result of an ideological change within the party, can lose interest in the party and consequently cease participation in the elections. The central research question seeks to understand the effect of the shift over two time periods on the individual level pattern of voting behaviour. Therefore, individuals who reported non-participation during the last elections and voted for the party on the previous elections are used as a dependent variable.

5.4.2. Hypotheses

From the research questions the next main hypotheses can be constructed:

***H1** The ideology shift of political parties will cause supporters of the political parties that vote for the party to stop voting.*

***H1a** The effect of the ideological shift on non-voting is higher in post-communist democracies than in the established democratic regimes because of the higher level of political distrust, party system vulnerability and ideological inconsistency in these countries.*

***H1b** The younger and the less educated citizens are more influenced by the ideological shifts of their parties than the older and more educated, and therefore will stop voting more readily than the latter.*

5.4.3. Data and Operationalization of the Data

The purpose of this chapter is to measure how the party ideology shift influences the voting behaviour of individuals. It will also include an analysis on the aggregate (party and country) level. For the purposes of this research, the database from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) Module 2 2001-2006 will be used. The limitations in the operationalisation of other variables will cause a reduction of the data. Individuals who reported non-voting on the previous elections will be excluded from the sample. With the first case selection, the number of cases decreased from 64,256 to 47,888. Additionally, because the sample of countries that is included in CSES Database does not fit completely with those in the CPM Database, the next phase of case selection included elimination of all cases where the

countries, parties, or years of the survey are not compatible in both databases. After the final case selection, the sample is consisted of 18,465 cases, and 97 parties in 15 countries.

For the operationalisation of the variable of ideology shift, the author uses the Comparative Party Manifesto (CMP) Database from 1990 to 2008. The variable for ideology shift will be constructed by subtracting the score for ideology in one election cycle with the score from the previous cycle. The ideology shift variable will include all seven domains measured in the CPM Database including *foreign policy* such as external relations and freedom and democracy, a *political dimension* covered by the political system, an *economic and social dimension* covered by economy, welfare and quality of life, and *social and cultural issues* covered by the dimensions: fabric of society, and social groups. All of these domains consist of the most important variables for determining ideology shift of political parties. Furthermore, a detailed, theoretical justification for the selection of these components is discussed below, in a subchapter where the party ideology shift variable will be explained. In general, these components express crucial political phenomena and they are the most important components in which parties and voters distinguish each other.

5.4.4. Methods

For the purposes of this investigation, the individual level can be defined as the way in which certain variables influence the voting behaviour of individuals. On the party level, the thesis investigates which variables influence the change of total number of votes that the party won during the elections. Additionally, this research will measure the influence of the ideological shift on the issue of most importance for the individual citizen as regards ones voting behaviour. Therefore, different statistical models will be used for the three different levels. The hypothesis for the influence of the ideology shift on individual level will be tested with Multi Level Modeling (Mix Effects or Hierarchical) (MLM).

5.4.5. Control variables

Taking into account the previous theoretical findings as well as the important to offer a better specified model , a corpus of control variables will be included not only with a purpose of assessing the theoretical prepositions and their effects on the dependent variable, but also to control their effects when the results are evaluated. The model will include the socio-demographic variables as control variables. Age, gender, occupation, urban-rural dwelling, and income are the standard and common used socio-demographic variables that can

influence the models. Apart from the utilisation of these control variables, the multilevel model also includes variables for membership in trade unions and interest in politics. The assumption surrounding the trade union membership variable is that members of these organizations usually vote for leftwing or social democratic parties, and that membership affiliation would mean that these voters would continue to vote for the party even if an ideology shift occurs.

The interest in politics variable is a control variable which gives information about the individual's level of knowledge for the party actions. The assumption is that the higher the interest in politics, the greater the chances that an individual will notice an ideological shift within the political parties. This variable indirectly controls the level of information for politics. Therefore, based on the previous assumption, interaction between political information and party ideology shift is employed. This variable controls the chance party ideology shift to be noticed. The last control variable that will be included will address how individuals evaluate the performance of the Government overall. A negative evaluation can be one of the reasons for non-voting or a shifting preferences from the parties in power, no matter the effects of the ideology shift.

On the country level, a dummy variable for post-communist countries will be created. The purpose of this variable is to test whether there are differences between voters as a result of being citizens of post-communist countries or established democracies. Electoral system variables will also be introduced as a result of the theoretical explanations that in countries with proportional representation system the voters are more motivated to participate as a result of the more competitive elections. The change of the economic growth measured by the GDP of the countries will also be included followed by the access to the ballot for the citizens as one of the factors that can simplify the voting procedure and therefore motivate voters to participate at elections (Trechsel 2007).

5.5. Who are the New Non-Voters? What are their characteristics?

Little is known about the voters who used to participate at elections and have stopped voting. The only limited research which deals with heterogeneity of the non-voters is focused on US presidential and congressional elections (Doppelt and Shearer, 1999, Hilty 2013, Ragsdale and Rusk 1993). Even this limited amount of research is focused on non-voters without being able to clearly differentiate the citizens who used to vote and stopped voting for the habitual non-voters. For instance, Ragsdale and Rusk (1993) differentiate clusters with the following

labels: politically ignorant, indifferent, selectively aware, conditionally inactive, and dissatisfied. From the clusters it is hard to identify the voters who have been voting and stopped participating at elections and reasons for their demobilization to be tested. Therefore, a better understanding of the new non-voters is crucial, before analysing the factors that influence these citizens to stop voting. This section offers an overview of the main characteristics of the new non-voters. It attempts to identify the differences between voters and new non-voters. This will help in offering a more precise picture about the individuals who decide to shift voting with non-voting. Some of the most commonly used variables will be used to find the patterns of the new non-voters. Using CSES Module II (2001-2006), I control for gender, age, education, socio-economic status, religiosity, marital status, urban/rural, closeness to a political party and satisfaction with democracy of the new non-voters.

A descriptive and demographic screening of the new non-voters is important for several reasons. First and foremost, it is very important to identify whether there is a substantive difference between voters and new non-voters. Secondly, how significant and important this difference is and additionally whether these new non-voters differ from habitual non-voters. Thirdly, a descriptive overview of the characteristics of the new non-voters is instrumental in a better theoretical conceptualisation of the statistical model that will be tested. I argue that their characteristics are neither the same with habitual voters nor with the habitual new non-voters. The main difference between new non-voters and both abovementioned characteristics is their attachment with the political party they used to vote for.

Table 5.1 presents the tests of significance of the mean differences for habitual voters and new non-voters. The findings are very valuable in order to better understand the characteristics of the new non-voters. There is important significant difference between these two categories of citizens. The difference in the means between these two categories is statistically significant for all the variables except the place of living. The education is another variable where the difference is on the borderline of statistical significance. All the other variables show statistically and substantive difference between the habitual voters and the new non-voters.

Table 5.1 The Differences between Voters and New Non-Voters

Variables ⁵	Voters	New Non-voters	T-value	sig.
Gender (Male = 1)	0.49 (0.004)	0.44 (0.01)	2.61	***
Age	53.9 (0.43)	48.1 (1.30)	3.66	***
Education	5.93 (0.05)	5.66 (0.21)	1.28	*
Socio Economic Status	3.24 (0.02)	3.58 (0.03)	-3.68	***
Religiosity (No Religious =1)	2.31 (0.009)	2.15 (0.03)	4.30	***
Urban/Rural	2.55 (0.009)	2.58 (0.03)	-0.92	
Marriage (Married =1)	1.68 (0.009)	1.99 (0.03)	-8.97	***
Satisfaction with Democracy	2.47 (0.009)	2.67 (0.03)	-5.64	***
Government Support	2.90 (0.012)	3.01 (0.05)	-2.23	**
Party Closeness	1.66 (0.009)	1.87 (0.03)	-6.03	***
Campaign Participation	1.94 (0.004)	2.03 (0.01)	-5.31	***
N = 18463	17119	1346		

Source: CSES Module II (2001-2006) Level *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$.

The results show that females are more likely to stop voting than males. The new non-voters are on average younger for more than five years than the habitual voters and this shows clear patterns of distinction between new non-voters and voters. The new non-voters are less religious than habitual voters and they are less likely to be married. The level of satisfaction with democracy is significantly lower among the new non-voters and they feel less close to a political party. Still, a very large number of the new non-voters feel close to a political party, which shows that there has been an attachment and political identification with that certain political party. This is instrumental for my theoretical model that will be statistically tested further in the chapter.

The literature has offered very different explanations as to the factors that influence voters to taking part in the electoral process. Many researches have shown that women are less likely to vote than men (Teixeira 1984, Piven and Cloward 1987, Blais 2009). Different scholars

⁵ Education is coded from 1 to 8 with 1 being the lowest level of education. The Socio-Economic Status variable is coded: 1 – White Collar, 2 – Worker, 3 – Farmer, 4 – Self-employed. The variable Campaign Participation is coded with 1 meaning participation. The higher mean, thus means lower level of participation of the group

have stressed different factors that cause women to vote less than men. Some authors have stressed that women vote less than men as a result of the late franchise and hence still not achieved habit of voting (Franklin 2004). The others has found that the reasons for this lie in the more traditional role of the women even in the established societies and their closer attachment with the family which causes a disinterest in politics.

Table 5.2 shows the percentage of male and female voters that have stopped voting. The results are not very varying from the expected. Women are more eager to quit voting than the men. Although the percentages do not differ dramatically, the almost 9% percentage gender gap is a very interesting finding. Despite the lack of unanimity in the literature as to what causes differences in the voting patterns of the males and females, these results show that females are more eager to shift voting to non-voting.

Table 5.2 Gender and the New Non-Voters

Gender	Percentage
Female	45.54
Male	54.46
Total	100 %

Source: CSES Module II (2001-2006)

Age has been considered as one of the most important explanatory variables of the voter turnout at individual level. There are two leading competing hypotheses as to the influence of age on voting. According to one group of authors there is a linear relationship between age and voting. Younger citizens tend to vote less as a result of not achieving a habit of voting, while older people are casting the ballots most frequently. The other competing hypothesis claims that the relation between voting and age is not linear and has an inverted “U” letter shape. This actually means that the youngest and oldest categories of citizens vote less, while all other categories are participating at elections more frequently. Consequently, my assumption as to the group of the new non-voters is that younger voters should be the ones that easily decide to stop voting because they still have not achieved a habit of regular voting, in addition to the oldest categories of citizens who stop voting as a result of their age, while the groups of voters between these two categories have more regular voting history. Table 5.3 confirms these claims. Comparing the percentage of the citizens between the group of the new non-voters and regular voters, we can see the percentage of the young people among the

new non-voters is more than twice as large as that among voters, or as compared with the whole sample. This shows that younger voters more easily decide to stop voting. The same pattern can be noticed among the voters who have between 27 and 35 years. The percentage of these citizens among new non-voters is greater than 7 percent compared with the voters that have remained as voting. On the other hand, the percentage of the citizens between 51 and 65 is much bigger among the voters when compared with the new non-voters. This only confirms that the citizens that are in their middle-age period are more constant in their voting habits and are less eager to decide to stop participating at elections. The same can be said for the oldest category of the citizens. The percentage of these citizens among the new non-voters is smaller than 5 percent than amongst the regular voters. Older people are more reluctant to stop voting than the younger ones, and this could be a result of a different group of factors such as the mobility of younger categories of the citizens, or the fact that younger citizens are more sensitive to political parties' inconsistencies and policy shifts.

Table 5.3 Age and the New Non-Voter

Age	The New Non-Voters	Voters	All
Younger than 26	11.22	5.41	5.83
Between 27 and 35	20.95	13.91	14.43
Between 36 and 50	31.87	30.83	30.90
Between 51 and 65	20.06	29.64	28.94
Older than 66	15.90	20.21	19.90
Total (N=18465)	100%	100%	100%

Table 5.4 shows the education of the voters that have stopped voting. These are again interesting findings. A majority of the voters that have stopped voting belong to the groups of citizens with incomplete or a completed secondary education. Cumulatively, almost 53% of the voters that have shifted voting with non-voting have attended or graduated from secondary school. The findings are even more interesting when comparing with the voters and the whole sample.

Table 5.4 Education and the New Non-Voter

Education	The New Non-Voters	Voters	All
None	0.15	0.27	0.26
Incomplete Primary	2.01	2.05	2.05
Primary Completed	15.3	12.92	13.10
Incomplete Secondary	19.24	15.21	15.51
Completed Secondary	33.58	27.52	27.97
Post - Secondary/ Vocational	12.26	16.81	16.48
Incomplete University	2.15	2.75	2.71
Completed University	14.49	21.7	21.26
Post-Graduate Degree	0.15	0.09	0.10
Missing	0.67	0.57	0.51
Total (N= 18465)	100%	100%	100%

The number of voters that remain voting and have attended or completed secondary education is almost 43% or around 10 % less than the new non-voters with the same level of education. Also, compared with the whole sample, we can conclude that the citizens with a university degree are less likely to stop voting, as the Table 3.4 indicates, 14.5 % of voters that decided not to vote have a higher education degree in comparison with the 21.7 percent of these citizens among the voters and 21.26 % in the whole sample. These findings are interesting and in some sense are correspond with the commonly accepted claim (Tenn 2005, 2007), that the more educated vote more. In this case, from the data we can see that the more educated are less likely to stop voting than the citizens with secondary education, where there is a largest difference between the new non-voters and citizens that remain voting.

Socio-economic status is another very commonly measured factor that can influence voting. A majority of the voting behaviour research agrees that wealthier people are more likely to vote than the people that belong to the lower classes. According to this postulation, the expectation would be that wealthier people are less likely to shift voting than the people with lower socio-economic status.

Table 5.5 Socio-Economic Status and the New Non-Voter

Socio Economic Status	The New Non-Voters	Voters	All
White Collar	38.41	45.70	45.17
Worker	23.92	19.05	19.41
Farmer	2.53	2.18	2.21
Self Employed	9.58	9.84	9.82
Missing	25.55	23.23	23.39
Total	100%	100%	100%

Results from Table 5.5 confirm this assumption. Comparing the two different groups of new non-voters and the voters, we can easily conclude that workers are those who decided not to vote on the next elections while voting on the previous. The percentage of workers between new non-voters is almost 5 % bigger than among the voters or 4.5 percent in comparison with the whole sample. On the other hand, the percentage of the white-collar workers among the new non-voters is lower for 7.3 percent than among the voters or almost 6.8 percent in comparison with the whole sample. This could be a result of the fact that the white-collar workers are better educated, but also have achieved a better social status and therefore are more enthusiastic about political participation, hence they are more likely to remain voting. In contrast, blue-collar workers are less satisfied with their status in society and hence they might feel less pressure to show loyalty and to consider voting as moral and social duty. Nevertheless, important differences between the new non-voters and citizens that remain participating in elections are worthwhile analysing in the statistical models in the following chapters. There are no large differences among farmers and self-employed within different groups. However, the big percentage of the missing responses which differs around 23% among the groups can cause misinterpretation of the findings.

Employment status has also been taken into consideration among the factors can influence voters to participate at elections or stop voting. Table 5.6 shows some interesting findings. The percentage of the full-time employed citizens is for 4 points higher among the new non-voters in comparison with voters and additionally with the whole sample. Also, the percentage of unemployed citizens and students that have stopped participating at the last elections is significantly higher in comparison with voters. As would be expected, the

percentage of the retired persons that have stopped voting is lower than the percentage of the ones that remained voting, confirming the already established hypothesis as to regular participation of the pensioners at elections. The higher percentage of housewives amongst the new non-voters is an additional conformation as to the gender gap that has been detected in Table 5.2.

Table 5.6 Employment Status and the New Non-Voter

Current Employment Status	The New Non-Voters	Voters	All
Employed (Full-time)	46.51	42.51	42.80
Employed (Part-time)	9.44	9.28	9.29
Employed (less than 15 hours)	1.11	1.46	1.44
Helping family member	0.82	0.74	0.74
Unemployed	4.98	3.62	3.72
Student	3.49	1.90	2.01
Retired	17.90	19.80	19.66
Housewife	7.88	6.58	6.67
Permanently disabled	1.78	1.72	1.73
Others	1.11	1.09	1.09
Missing	4.98	11.32	10.86
Total (N=18465)	100%	100%	100%

Religiosity has also been considered as a variable that explains voting behaviour of the citizens (Teixeira 1992). The religious attachment has been considered as a strong indicator of social embeddedness, and hence the citizens who are more religious and attend religious events frequently, are more likely to vote. Again, comparing the different groups in Table 6, we can see that the difference is mainly among the extreme categories. The non-religious citizens are more likely to quit voting and in contrast, the percentage of very religious citizens is higher among the voters for almost 3 percent in comparison with the new non-voters. This leads us to the conclusion that the less religious are more likely to decide to stop participating

at elections in comparison with very religious citizens who remain faithful to their commitment to vote.

Table 5.7 Religiosity and the New Non-Voter

Religiosity	The new Non-Voters	Voters	All
Have no religious beliefs	18.53	15.20	15.43
Not very religious	17.24	15.04	15.20
Somewhat religious	20.28	20.54	15.53
Very religious	3.79	6.30	6.13
Missing	40.34	42.91	42.72
Total (N=18465)	100%	100%	100%

A part of the socio-demographic variables that influence voters to stop voting, the following tables will offer an overview of the characteristics of the new non-voters regarding their political party affiliation, participation in campaign activities or satisfaction with democracy. These political variables will give an additional explanation of the voters that have stopped voting. The starting position of this chapter is precisely that the political parties and citizens' attitudes as to the political situation are the main reasons why voters decide not to vote at the next elections despite their participation at the previous elections. Political parties as main actors in the political arena and decisive holders of the political transformation as constitutive terms of the countries' executive bodies are at the same time the most effective mobilisers and de-mobilisers of the voters. In order to earn more popular support at elections, political parties have shown high level of ideological inconsistency and constant shift of their ideological stands and policy positions.

Table 5.8 Closeness to a Political Party and the New Non-Voter

Closeness to Political Party	The New Non-Voters	Voters	All
Yes	33.95	50.48	49.28
No	62.70	46.79	47.95
Refused	1.78	1.51	1.53
Missing	1.56	1.22	1.25
Total (N=18465)	100%	100%	100%

This ideological inconsistency can be a reason for voters to feel unrepresented and stop voting. The results from Table 5.10 show that the percentage of the citizens that are close to some political party is dramatically smaller among the new non-voters than in comparison with the voters. Only 33.95 of the new on-voters are closely affiliated to certain political party and the percent of these citizens among the voters is more than 50 %. These results are important from two aspects. First, as would be expected, citizens who are close to a political party are more eager to keep voting at elections. Second, however, the number of these citizens is very large. This means that a very significant number of voters and sympathisers of a certain political party decide to stop voting despite their affiliation with that party. The reasons for this abundance of the loyalty to the party should be searched for in the party's behaviour.

Participation in the political campaigns has been considered as a very strong affiliation with a certain political party. While the voting can be seen as a social and civic duty (Riker & Ordeshook 1968: 28; Campbell et al. 1960: 105-10), a campaign volunteer suggests a very close relationship and affiliation with the citizen and the political party. Table 5.9 confirms that the citizens that have been actively involved in campaign activities are more eager to continue voting. Nevertheless, again an important number of citizens (almost 20% of the new non-voters) decide to stop voting, even though they have been taken part in the political mobilisation of others.

Table 5.9 Participation in Political Campaign and the New Non-Voter

Participation in Political Campaign	The New Non-Voters	Voters	All
Yes	19.54	25.50	25.06
No	79.79	74.16	74.57
Missing	0.67	0.35	0.37
Total (N=18465)	100%	100%	100%

Finally, the level of satisfaction with democratic processes also confirms similar pattern seen previously in the other tables. The percentage of the satisfied or fairly satisfied citizens among the new non-voters is smaller than among the voters or the whole sample. There is almost a 7% difference between the groups of new non-voters and voters. The citizens that are more satisfied with the democratic processes are also more motivated to keep voting. On

the other side, 34.4% of the citizens that are not very or not at all satisfied with the democracy decided not to vote on the next election, while there 27.72% or close to 7 % less citizens that are not satisfied with democracy among the regular voters.

Table 5.10 Satisfaction with Democracy and the New Non-Voter

Satisfaction with Democracy	The New Non-Voters	Voters	All
Very Satisfied	7.58	11.73	11.43
Fairly Satisfied	51.34	55.00	54.74
Not very satisfied	27.79	21.84	22.27
Not at all satisfied	6.61	5.88	5.93
Don't know	3.27	5.31	5.39
Refused	3.12	0.05	0.05
Missing	0.30	0.19	0.19
Total (N=18465)	100%	100%	100%

In sum: the analysis shows us there are certain substantial differences between the new non-voters and the voters. Comparing the differences between these two groups we could see, women, younger people, less educated, working class and the less religious citizens are more confident to stop voting. Nevertheless, the very large percentage of the voters that are affiliated with political parties and actively participate in political campaigns still decide to stop voting even while they have shown a certain closeness to a political party. Therefore, the following sections will give the answer of the question which factors actually influence voters that used to participate at elections to stop voting.

5.6. Main findings and interpretation of the results

Table 5.11 contains the results from the first three two-level hierarchical models including individuals nested in parties they supported at the previous elections. The models fit with the theoretical explanation and the overview of the factors that influence voters to stop participating at elections. Multilevel Logit Modeling is used on a representative sample of 18465 individuals and 98 political parties. Model 3 in the Table 5.11 includes two interactions. The first interaction is between the level of political information and party

ideology shift. The main reason for this interaction is the theoretical explanations that voters have limited knowledge about politics in general and specially about the manifesto of the

Table 5.11 Multi Level Logit Models with Two Levels of Analysis

<i>Variable</i>	Dependent variable: Did not vote while having voted last time		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Party Ideology Shift</i>	1.027**(0.09)	1.03**(0.10)	1.01(0.13)
<i>Age</i>	0.99*** (0.16)		0.99***(0.18)
<i>Gender</i>	0.95(0.87)		0.99(0.82)
<i>Education</i>	0.99(0.88)		0.99(0.91)
<i>Marriage</i>	1.12***(0.21)		1.13***(0.23)
<i>Union Membership</i>	1.01(0.96)		1.04*(0.34)
<i>Socio Economic Status</i>	1.05*** (0.22)		1.06***(0.21)
<i>Religion</i>	1.003(0.89)		1.002(0.90)
<i>Urban / Rural</i>	0.98(0.67)		0.979(0.71)
<i>Political Campaign Activities</i>	1.07**(0.21)	1.06*(0.18)	1.07**(0.22)
<i>Governmental Performance</i>	1.02(0.78)	1.02(0.79)	1.02(0.83)
<i>Satisfaction with Democracy</i>	1.08***(0.14)	1.09***(0.16)	1.08***(0.15)
<i>Party Performance Evaluation</i>	1.09***(0.22)	1.09***(0.21)	1.09(0.21)***
<i>Party Closeness</i>	1.08***(0.10)	1.08***(0.09)	1.08(0.09)***
<i>Ideological Self Placement</i>	1.004***(0.00)	1.004***(0.00)	1.003**(0.01)
<i>Number of Political Parties</i>	0.99***(0.05)	0.99***(0.07)	0.99**(0.06)
<i>Political Information</i>			1.00(0.97)
<i>PIDL Shift* Ideological SF</i>			1.00(0.87)
<i>PIDL Shift* Pol. Information</i>			1.00(0.69)
<i>Number of Observations</i>	18465	18465	18465
<i>Number of Groups</i>	98	98	98

Level * $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$. Coefficients are presented as odd ratios**

political parties. The basic assumption is that the higher the level of political information, the higher the probability that the citizens will be aware about the ideology shifts of the parties for each they voted for at the previous elections. The second interaction in the Model 3 includes Party Ideology Shift and Ideological Self placement of the voters. The ratio behind this interaction is that voters that have placed themselves on the more extreme end of the

scale of 1 to 10, and have more strong ideological preferences and, therefore, they will react on the ideological shift of the political party they supported at the elections. The voters that place themselves at the middle of the scale are more indifferent about ideologies and they are less likely to stop voting because of the ideological shift of their party. They would rather choose to vote for another party close to the center than to stop voting.

Model 1 in Table 5.11 includes a list of socioeconomic, social embeddedness, political disaffection, political and ideology variables that can influence voters to stop voting. The results from this model show some interesting patterns. First of all, the Party Ideology Shift variable is statistically significant with level of significance $p < 0.05$. The odd ratio coefficient of this variable shows that an increase of the ideology shift for one unit increases the probability of stopping to vote. This is an important and significant finding besides the low odd ratio value, especially if we take into account the ideology shift is measured on a table from -100 to 100. The Model 1 provides enough evidence for confirmation of the main hypothesis for the influence of the party ideology shift on voter's decision to abandon participation at elections. The ideological inconsistency of political parties causes voters to stop participating at the elections. These results show that instead of deciding to shift voting for another party, a certain number of voters are more eager not to cast the ballots and in that way punish the party they used to support. Results confirmed that ideological shift can cause supporters of the political party to stop casting the ballot. This implies that ideological inconsistency is not a costless strategy for the political party and every ideological shift causes voting demobilisation among its own supporters.

Age is statistically significant with level of significance $p < 0.0001$ and the odd ratio shows that when an individual is getting older he is less eager to stop participating at elections. This finding corresponds with previous academic research which indicates that the older citizens are more regular in voting. This is a result of the already established habit of voting to the older voters, and therefore a certain change of party ideology or influence of other factors is insufficient to result in their stopping voting than amongst younger ones.

Gender is statistically not significant. The gender differences have not any influence in the decision to stop voting. And while the findings regarding gender are expected, the fact that education is not statistically significant is contrary to the expectations and previous theoretical findings. The results show that education does not affect the decision of voters to stop voting. Another variable that, contrary to expectations, is statistically insignificant is

trade union membership. The theoretical expectations were that the individuals that are more socially embedded are less likely to stop participating at elections. Nevertheless, the decrease of the importance of the trade unions for the workers as a result of the decrease of their membership, but also as traditional supporters for the leftwing parties (Rueda 2007) is confirmed with the lack of influence among voters as to their decision for electoral participation.

The results from Model 1 confirm the influence of the socioeconomic status as a variable that explains the voting behaviour. This variable is statistically significant (level of significance $p < 0.001$) and the odd ratio show that this variable has an influence of greater than 5% on the decision of the voters to stop voting. Another statistically significant variable with stronger explanatory power (odd ratio = 12%) is the marriage status of the voters. Religious denomination as well the urban/rural variable are not statistically significant. These results confirm the claims for the decrease of the importance of the religion for the individuals in general and particularly in their voting behaviour.

The results show another interesting finding. The evaluation of government performance is not statistically significant, while the evaluation of the performance of the party that voters supported has statistical significance ($p < 0.001$) and odd ratio of 8 %. These findings, although not reported by the previous academic research, show that voters are more affiliated to their political parties than to the government. One of the explanations for this pattern is that voters feel the party that they supported as closer to them, and that they are more interested in evaluating their performance than of the government; this is the case as if they have not supported the party or parties that constituted the government after the elections than they do not feel close to this government and they do not have higher expectations. This goes strongly in line with the theoretical expectations of the model.

The statistical significance of party performance evaluation and ideological self-placement ($p < 0.001$) together with the party ideology shift variable are also in favour of the claims for the importance and influence of the ideologies and parties in general for the decision of the voters to stop voting. These findings show that ideology in general has to be considered as a relevant variable that explains the voting behaviour of individuals. The number of political parties is also statistically significant indicator and the coefficient is negative.

Model 2 emphasizes the so-called political variables. The socioeconomic variables are excluded in order the emphasis to be put on the political and mobilization factors as

determinants of dropping out of voting. In this way I intended to exclude the possible spurious effect of the “fundamentals” on the political variables. The results do not differ dramatically in comparison with the Model 1, but there are still certain interesting findings to be discussed. The odd ratios of almost all variables are higher in this model than in the previous except in the case of the “political campaign activity” variable and the number of political parties. The level of significance of the campaign variable is also decreased, which means that only when political variables are taken into consideration does the involvement in political campaign activities have less importance for the decision of the voters to stop voting. Under these circumstances this variable loses its importance.

The most surprising and at the same time most confusing findings can be seen in Model 3. Model 3 includes two interactions which have the aim to control the political knowledge about party ideology shift, as well as the effect of the ideological self-positioning and the shift in the ideology of party for which the voter used to vote at the previous elections. The results show that not only do neither of the two theoretically based interactions prove statistically significant, but also party ideology shift loses the level of significance after the introduction of the interaction in the model. While almost all of the variables keep similar odd ratio values and level of significance, there is change in the trade union membership variable. This variable is statistically significant with $p < 0.1$ in Model 3 and in addition the odd ratio is four times higher than in the previous two models. The “political information” variable, which was introduced as a constitutive term of one of the interactions, is not statistically significant. This is contrary to expectations, but nevertheless the explanation for this finding can be found in the limited capacity of this variable. The way this variable was coded in the CSES Dataset actually does not provide the necessary level of information that can explain the nature and the character of the level of political information among the individuals. This was the reason why the variable was not taken into consideration in the previous two models that were tested.

In order to offer a more fully specified model that explains why voters stop voting, two Multi Level Mixed Logit Models with three levels of analysis were additionally developed. The country level variables are included in these models and voters are additionally nested in their own countries' political systems. Table 2 presented these two models. As with the first table, the last model integrates the interactions that were previously theoretically elaborated.

Table 5.12 Multi-Level Mixed Logit Models with Three Levels of Analysis

Dependent variable: <i>Variable</i>	Did not vote while having voted last time	
	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Party Ideology Shift</i>	1.01*(0.16)	1.01(0.21)
<i>Age</i>	0.99***(0.18)	0.99(0.23)
<i>Gender</i>	0.99(0.76)	
<i>Education</i>	0.99(0.83)	0.99(0.84)
<i>Marriage</i>	1.12***(0.07)	1.12***(0.08)
<i>Union Membership</i>	1.02(0.78)	1.02(0.79)
<i>Socio Economic Status</i>	1.03***(0.07)	1.03**(0.08)
<i>Political Campaign Activities</i>	1.07**(0.23)	1.07**(0.24)
<i>Governmental Performance</i>	1.02(0.88)	1.02(0.89)
<i>Satisfaction with Democracy</i>	1.07***(0.14)	1.07***(0.15)
<i>Party Performance Evaluation</i>	1.14***(0.06)	1.13***(0.07)
<i>Party Closeness</i>	1.08***(0.12)	1.07***(0.14)
<i>Ideological Self Placement</i>	1.005***(0.01)	1.004***(0.01)
<i>Number of Political Parties</i>	0.99***(0.05)	0.99***(0.06)
<i>Post Communist</i>	2.54**(0.11)	2.53**(0.11)
<i>Ballot Access</i>	0.90(0.78)	1.00(0.81)
<i>Electoral System</i>	0.93(0.86)	0.89(0.88)
<i>GDP</i>	1.00(0.00)	0.968(0.00)
<i>Political Information</i>		1.04**(0.23)
<i>PIDL Shift* Ideological SF</i>		1.00(0.77)
<i>PIDL Shift* Pol. Information</i>		0.99(0.56)
<i>Number of Observations</i>	18465	18465
<i>Number of Groups</i>	98	98
<i>Number of Countries</i>	14	14

Level * $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$ Results are presented as odd ratio coefficients**

The results from Model 1 in Table 5.12 show some specific findings. The model that includes almost the same individual level variables, plus four additional country-level variables shows that the majority of the latter are not statistically significant and they do not influence the individuals in their decision to stop voting. The type of electoral system and the access to the ballot have been confirmed by the previous research as an important variable that explain electoral participation at aggregate level, but when individuals matter the effect of these variables disappear. The results also have shown that when introducing the country level analysis, the effect of the party ideology shift on the individuals to stop voting decreases statistical significance to a level $p < 0.1$. The ideological shift still plays an important role in explaining the reasons for stopping voting, but its effect decreases once the country level variables are introduced to the model.

The most interesting finding from the Model 1 in Table 5.12 is the post communist variable. Table 5.12 shows that this variable is statistically significant (level of significance $p < 0.05$), but also it has strong explanatory power in explanation why voters stop voting. The citizens of the post- communist countries (in the sample Hungary and Czech Republic) are more likely to stop voting than the citizens from established democracies. This finding is in favour of the third hypothesis and the previous research, which has shown a lower level of electoral participation in the post-communist countries as a result of the high level of distrust in political parties and the state (Rose 1995). The number of political parties is also significant in this model with the expected direction of influence. The individual level variables that were included in this model show the same patterns as in the previous analysis. Age, marriage status and socio-economic status are again statistically significant and work in the same manner as in the previous models. The political variables too retained the same level of significance and explanatory power even in this model. The evaluation as to government performance, gender and membership in a trade union are statistically insignificant in this model too.

Model 2 in Table 5.12 includes the above-explained interactions. Both interactions again are not statistically significant, but as a part of the Multi-Level Logit Model in Table 5.11, the political information variable shows statistical significance in this model. All other variables that were included in the previous models keep the same direction and their odd ratios are slightly lower than in the Model 1 in Table 5.12. The party ideology shift variable is not statistically significant in this model either. The included interaction did not help in the explanation of the factors that influence voters to stop voting and additionally hurt the

influence of the ideological shift of the parties which was shown in the first two models in Table 5.11. Once again, to a large extent this can be seen to be a result of the poorly operationalized variable in the CSES Dataset.

5.7. Conclusions

While the levels of overall electoral participation have been declining over the last several decades, the conventional approach of studying the voter turnout patterns has been proven to be inefficient. This chapter takes a componential approach, focusing on understanding the factors that determinate lack of participation of just one category of voters: the ones who used to participate at elections and stopped voting at the most current electoral cycle. Little is known about the new non-voters. Before this theoretical and empirical attempt, there was not systematical and comprehensive research that focused particularly on this category of citizens. Additionally, this chapter tests the theoretical contribution that contests the basic postulates of the spatial model of voting. The party ideology shift is put on the centre of emphasis as a demobilizing factor from voting. The interaction and the attachment with the political party caused a significant ideological shift to be found by the voter, with their dropping out rather than their shifting vote preference for another political party.

All previously theoretical approaches that have analysed voting behaviour have shown that, firstly, that there are various factors and determinants that influence low voter participation and that the precise nature of these factors has yet to be determined. Second, political parties are already considered as important factors that influence low level of participation, but party ideology shift as a variable that can potentially influence the low turnout is not adequately considered and its importance is underestimated. Third, there is a lack of research on the new non-voters who stopped voting. The chapter tests the theoretical assumptions on a large comparative sample with variables on three different levels.

The originality of this approach was precisely in that it introduced party ideology shift as a variable that influences voters to stop voting. In order to test the above elaborated theoretical model the author constructed statistical models that consist of different levels of analysis. The Multi-Level Logit Models 1 and 2 in Table 3.11 provide enough evidence for confirmation of the main hypothesis for the influence of the party ideology shift on voter's decision to abandon participation at elections. The ideological inconsistency of political parties increases the probability that the voters will stop voting instead of shifting a vote preference for another party. These results show that instead of deciding to shift voting for another party, a certain

number of voters are more eager not to cast the ballots and in that way punish the party they used to support. These findings contest the spatial model of voting directly in the fundamental theoretical basis. Elections do not function the same as the pure market mechanisms but, furthermore, as Hirschman has argued, voice and loyalty shape the exit too. The result confirmed that ideological shift can cause costs for political parties and thus that they have to be much more careful before deciding to change their ideological positioning.

Nevertheless, the influence of this variable disappears when the interactions are included in the models. The included interactions in the models did not help in the explanation of the factors that influence voters to stop voting, but additionally hurt the influence of the ideological shift of the parties which was shown in the first two models in Table 2. The majority of the country level variables are not statistically significant and they do not influence the individuals in their decision to stop voting. The type of electoral system and the access to the ballot have been confirmed by the previous research as an important variable that explain electoral participation at aggregate level, but when individuals matter the effect of these variables disappear.

The results have also shown that citizens of the post-communist countries (in the sample Hungary and Czech Republic) are more likely to stop voting than the citizens from established democracies. This finding is in favour of the third hypothesis and the previous research which has shown a lower level of electoral participation in the post-communist countries as a result of the high level of distrust in political parties and the state (Rose 1995). The number of political parties is also significant in this model with the expected direction of influence.

In sum: this chapter offered a theoretically based investigation of the variables that influence voters to stop voting at individual level. The results are for the most part in favour of the offered hypothesis. The chapter includes a comparative multi-level analysis of the theoretical model on the reasons why voters have stopped voting by adding the party ideology shift variable as an explanatory factor for the citizens to decide not to participate at elections. The theoretical assumptions have been tested in pluralistic party systems with different electoral systems and a strong ideological voter alignment. In this sense, this has been the most conservative environment for testing the theoretical assumptions. Thus, the hypothesis validation has even bigger importance. On the other hand, the statistical model included only two time points which disables us to make more profound conclusions for the nature of the

participation exit. A panel data utilised to understand the temporality and the nature of the dropping out of voting will be tested in the following chapter on the US two-party system.

APPENDIX A

Table 5.13 Summary of the Variables in the Model

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	18465	53.53	56.61	18	999
Male	18465	0.49	0.52	0	9
Education	18465	5.91	7.28	1	99
Marriage	18465	1.70	1.24	1	9
Union Member	18465	1.74	0.97	1	9
Socio Economic Status	18465	3.27	3.04	1	9
Religiosity	18465	5.15	3.39	1	9
Urban Rural	18465	2.55	1.24	1	9
Political Persuading	18465	1.77	0.60	1	9
Political Campaign Activity	18465	1.95	0.62	1	9
Government Performance	18465	2.91	1.68	1	9
Democracy Satisfaction	18465	2.48	1.26	1	9
Party Performance	18465	3.97	2.98	1	9
Party Closeness	18465	1.67	1.21	1	9
Ideological Self-Identification	18465	19.76	33.88	0	99

Source: CSES Module II 2001-2006

CHAPTER SIX

Why do American voters stop voting?

6.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to conduct an in-depth analysis, using panel data, of voters that have stopped voting in the US. A Large-N Analysis of the voters that have stopped voting has shown that party ideology shift contributes to why some voters stop participating at elections. The ideological inconsistency of political parties causes voters to feel less represented, abandoned and to lose trust in the political party that they supported. Party closeness, party performance evaluation, ideological self-placement and the number of the political parties also have a significant effect on why voters stop participating. These findings provide a very important explanation of some of the reasons why voters have stopped voting. These findings have also shown that the behaviour of political parties and the perception of citizens of said behaviour are very strong demobilizing factors for electoral participation. Whilst in the previous chapter I offered an empirical overview of the socio-economic and main political characteristics of new non-voters, the large-N analysis of two electoral cycles does not offer an explanation of the durability of the decision of voters to stop participating at elections. The previous approach does not show whether voters have stopped voting permanently or whether their decision is only temporary and based on the specific context of the specific electoral race.

Therefore, an in-depth panel data analysis of the American new non-voters from the period of 1984 to 1996 will provide additional substantive information as to new non-voters, and will put to test the main claim regarding the influence of party ideological inconsistency on the decision of voters to stop voting. Although electoral participation in US has attracted an enormous amount of attention of voting behaviour scholars, there is a lack of research on voters that have stopped voting. Consequently, party ideology and ideological and policy inconsistency has also not been investigated as reasons why voters stop voting, in a way that this chapter attempts to do.

This chapter aims to answer the question of “why have American voters stopped voting at elections and is this decision permanent or temporary?”. It will provide evidence of why

voters who used to vote have decided to stop voting. Moreover, this chapter will investigate whether these new non-voters have converted from habitual voters to habitual non-voters or their decision is intermittent and related to other factors related to a specific electoral cycle.

As I will show below, American voting behaviour scholars have focused mainly on trying to explain voter turnout decline in the US by analysing the main socio-economic factors such as the generational gap (Franklin 2004), gender gap (Norris 2008), ethnic and racial turnout differences (Citrin and Hugton 2002), campaign effects (Alvarez 1997, Popkin 1991, Gerber and Green 2000, 2005) or demobilisation factors of political parties (Avey 1989, Leighley and Nagler 2014). Yet these studies have neglected to analyse the influence of the voters that have stopped voting on the aggregate level of turnout decline. In this chapter I attempt to show that research on these new non-voters is not only necessary but that the turnout damage that they can cause by no longer voting can offer a very strong explanation as to the decline of turnout also.

Using the US as a case study has multiple advantages. First, the American electoral context provides the most adequate conditions for testing my theoretical model. Second, American media discourse is focused on the ideological standings of the parties and their nominees, which constitute a very important part of campaigns. Third, the lower levels of voter turnout in elections in the US in the past emphasises the necessity of a different approach to analyse the reasons why voters stop voting. Fourth, and very importantly, the US is the most appropriate case study for methodological reasons. Complex data for many electoral cycles over a significantly long period of time has only been gathered in US. Specifically, in order to answer my research question I am using Youth and Parents Socialisation Panel data from 1984-1997. Although this panel data does not include the most recent elections, it is still the most appropriate and longest longitudinal data that includes variables crucial for the testing of my hypotheses.

The chapter is organized in ten sections. The following section of the chapter offers a theoretical explanation of voters that stopped voting in US elections followed by a brief review of the literature on voting behaviour, and a theoretical overview of the policy transformation and ideological inconsistency of American parties. The next section presents the differences between the new non-voters and others in the US regarding (i) socio-demographic characteristics, (ii) political trust and information and (iii) party and ideological engagement. In the following sections I present my research question and hypotheses, before

I discuss the dataset, statistical model that I am testing and its variables in section five. The main findings of my analysis and interpretation of the results are shown in section nine. The chapter ends with concluding remarks on the results and a discussion of methodological issues.

6.2. Theoretical Framework: Why do Americans vote less and less? What influences Americans to stop voting?

American voters have shown less interest in participating in elections during the last five decades. The aggregate turnout in US presidential elections is among the lowest average turnout rates in general elections in established and/or populous democracies (Wattenberg 2002: 15). Although, as MacDonald and Popkin (2001) have shown, the reported turnout decline in US in the period after 1972 is a consequence of utilization of the Voting age population (VAP) as a category to calculate the levels of electoral participation, contrary to them, Paulsen demonstrates that the aggregate rates have also shown a pattern of the almost linear decline of turnout from 63.11 % at US presidential elections of 1960 to the lowest point of 49 % at the presidential election of 1996 (Paulsen 2007: 32-33). Since then, there are signs of a rebound of the electoral participation of American citizens and a higher turnout. Even though Macdonald and Popkin (2001) disentangled the myth of vanishing American voter (Patterson 2003, Teixeira, 1992) by offering calculation of the turnout rates on voting eligible population (VEP), their research still shows that reduced voter participation is caused by different factors and the lowering voting age at 18 explains only one fourth of the reduction of the participation levels (Macdonald and Popkin 2001).

Empirical and theoretical explanations of the trend of lower participation, as shown with the above-mentioned cases, are not unanimous. There are many different approaches among American voting behaviour scholars that explain why voters participate less, and why they have stopped voting. The following sections will offer an overview of the main theories and concepts that drive the decision of voters to vote and also to stop participating at electoral processes. This will offer a better explanation for the starting position of this chapter and the theoretical model about hypothesised reasons for voters to stop voting.

6.3. The main explanatory factors of voting and non-voting: Literature review

The controversies over why voters vote at elections and what causes low voter turnout are present from the very beginnings of voter behaviour research. The major voting behaviour

literature has offered a comprehensive explanation of factors that influence voter participation at elections, but with contradictory results concerning the main reasons why voters vote at all, and why they decide to stop participating at elections.

6.3.1. The psychological approach of voting behaviour

Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes in *The American Voter*, published in 1960, offer one of the most comprehensive and seminal explanations of the reasons why citizens decide to vote. Campbell et al. (1960) argue that the funnel model of causality is the best predictor of whether one individual will decide to vote and for which party. Hence, party ID is the strongest factor that shapes the decision of an individual to vote and their vote choice. According to Campbell et al, party ID is learnt in adulthood through parents and socialization. Every individual forms a psychological attachment to a certain party and this affiliation shapes the development of their own attitudes for societal issues. These attitudes are adopted from the party positions and they are the result of the emotional attachment that one has with the party. Personal attitudes are reflected in six attitudinal dimensions: the personal positions about the capacities of the (i) Democratic and (ii) Republican candidate, (iii) groups involved in politics and the questions of group interest, (iv) the issues of domestic policies, (v) issues of foreign politics and (vi) the comparative effort of two parties in managing the affairs of government. The authors show that this psychological approach predicts vote decisions with very high accuracy and is a better predictor than the self-reported intention of the party choice of a voter. Nevertheless, the theory does not explain all of the vote choice (Campbell et al, 1960: 137).

Party ID is treated as a psychological force or lens through which voters interpret political issues on each of the six dimensions. Campbell et al. note that: "Identification with a party raises a perceptual screen (i.e. selective perception) through which the individual tends to see what is favourable to his partisan orientation." Therefore, the party can be understood as a supplier of cues by which the individual may evaluate the elements of politics. Nevertheless, Campbell et al. show that a specific issue can affect the citizen's decision whether to vote or not for a given party only if three preconditions are fulfilled: (i) the citizens must be cognized, i.e. to have certain knowledge and awareness of the issue, (ii) the individual must care about the issue or the issue has to have certain importance for the individual (Campbell et al, 1960; 172) and (iii) the individual has to know the positions of the political parties and especially the position of the party that citizens are closely affiliated with. The authors argue

that the party ID of an individual is quite stable over time, but that changes in party ID are possible. These changes result from either personal forces (usually changes in the social milieu of an individual) or social forces (usually the result of experiences related to great national crises or those experiences related to progress through the lifecycle, as older voters tend to be more conservative).

Campbell et al. also find that policies and issues play a certain role in most voter decisions, and that around 12% of the electorate does not display anything resembling an ideology, and that some people when asked about their positions on specific policy issues do not have a consistent pattern of responses in terms of a liberal-conservative dimension. There are also voters that are frequently uncertain which party stands for what. These findings cast doubt on the efficacy of voting as a mechanism of democratic control of government.

6.3.2. Retrospective vs. prospective voting of American voters

Conversely, although not directly focused on studying and explaining turnout, Fiorina (1981) offers an opposite view of the reasons why voters have decided to vote and, consequently, why they stop voting. Fiorina challenges the social psychology approach, and provides a rational choice theory that explains not only why party ID is so stable but also why it changes. This builds on the work of Downs (1957), whose theory implies little or no independent role for partisanship. For Fiorina, party ID is instrumental and therefore partially endogenous.

Fiorina says that retrospective voting is based on expectations about future welfare guided by evaluations of past policy end-states. According to him, retrospective voting (as opposed to prospective voting) is important and is based on a reward-punishment theory. He claims that (i) reliance on retrospective voting vs. prospective voting could lead to differing electoral outcomes (ii) retrospective voting presumes that citizens are more concerned with policy outcomes than policy instruments, and (iii) retrospective voting presumes that public policy formation is not constrained by voters.

Fiorina's model allows party ID to change continuously because it is a result of the past evaluations of government performance incorporated with the effect of socialisation. He claims that apart from employing issue voting and examining party platforms, citizens can also base their decision to vote or not on their evaluation of how the party in power has performed, and whether the party in opposition would have performed better.

Two types of retrospective voting have been identified by Fiorina (1981): (i) simple retrospective evaluations (SRE) which are based mainly on personal finance, war, civil rights and other issues that directly affect citizens lives and how the media or some external factors frame or construct such issue, and (ii) mediated retrospective evaluations (MRE) which are mainly a result of the media and how media provides information about some events or phenomena and thus shapes the personal evaluations of citizens. SRE can also be a source of a mediated retrospective evaluation when voters form opinions on the situation of their country based on personal experiences.

The empirical tests that Fiorina conducts show some interesting patterns. Using SRE as dummy variables on a panel study on 1956, 1958 and 1960 elections show that Republican ID increases with a positive perception of the domestic and foreign situation, and evaluation of the financial situation has a smaller and less statistically significant effect. Another empirical test on the 1972, 1974 and 1976 elections has shown that MRE are in part a reflection of SRE.

6.3.3. Habitual voting

Voting in certain electoral cycles seems to be facilitated by the repetition of this behaviour in subsequent elections. Elections in this sense function in a seemingly mechanistic manner, whereby a repeated behavioural response to the same contextual stimulus gives rise to a formation of a habitual engagement (Green and Sachar 2000, see also Plutzer 2002, Gerber et al 2003; Denny and Doyle 2009). According to the habitual voting theory, the voters learn how to vote at their first election/s and after that maintain this habit for the following cycles. Therefore, a very important moment for the new cohort of voters for getting the habit of voting is the first electoral cycle (Franklin 2004). In the case of second-order elections without great importance and media coverage, the new young voters are less motivated to cast a ballot and can easily adopt this behaviour at the next electoral processes (Franklin 2004).

Gerber, Green, and Sachar (2003) in a more elaborated argumentation of the Green and Sachar (2000) thesis, demonstrate that randomized experimentation can show whether "habit" plays a causal role or whether it simply masks omitted variables. At least in the short run, voting in one election influences turnout in the next. Past voting appears to boost the probability of current voting by 47 percentage points. Their findings also contrast with

Wolfinger and Rosenstone's (1980) results that those with a postgraduate education are 26 points more likely to vote than those with a high school education or that those in their 80s are around 30 points more likely to vote than those in their 20s, as well as the large effect of habit. The results suggest the importance of considering possible long-term effects (e.g. habit) when studying the behavioural consequences of campaigns.

Nevertheless, the habitual theory of voting is unable to explain why voters that have already decided to vote at some point decide to stop participating at the next elections. Their established habit of voting is therefore contested. There are some other factors that have a stronger effect on voters and cause them to shift from voting to non-voting. This chapter attempts to offer an explanation of this phenomenon.

6.3.4. The Mobilisation/Demobilisation Theory of voting

The resource model of political participation in later years has been joined by the mobilisation model that centres around the idea that citizens are mobilised to participate in politics by parties, candidates, interest groups and new social movements (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Mobilisation/Demobilisation Theory presents an alternative empirical theory of voter turnout (Avey, 1989). Avey focuses on analysing the levels of voting participation of different segments of the voting age population. He is particularly focused on exposing the different barriers created to prevent participation and efforts to stimulate participation for different groups of voters. In this sense, Avey (1989) opposes the theory that the characteristics of non-voters, low levels of education and political apathy are the root causes of poor voter turnout among persons of low socioeconomic status (SES). The Mobilisation/Demobilisation Theory argues instead that non-voting results from the behaviour of politicians, political elites, and the political system and not from the characteristics of the poor and working class. The study suggests that voter turnout for national elections could reach an 80 per cent level if a major party focuses on these two groups. Statistical evidence is given to show why the poor and working class do not vote when neither party represents them" (Avey 1989).

Piven and Cloward (2000) have also tried to answer the question of why Americans continue to vote less frequently and whether or not politicians in fact benefit from this system. Again favouring the mobilisation/demobilisation approach that institutional factors influence low turnout and thus cause political apathy, the authors assign greater importance to the factors

connected with political parties. They claim that party competitiveness, party constituencies, their linkage to party elites, and voter registration requirements determine the composition of the body of voters.

6.3.5. The swing voting curse

Voters often selectively abstain in the same election. This phenomenon is famous as “the swing voting curse” Feddersen and Pesendorfer (1996). As Battaglini, Morton and Palfrey (2008) point out “a poorly informed voter may be better off in equilibrium to leave the decision to informed voters because her uninformed vote may go against their choice and could decide the outcome in the wrong direction. The voter, therefore, may rationally “delegate” the decision to more informed voters by abstaining even if voting is costless” Battaglini, Morton and Palfrey (2008). In a pioneering and one of the most comprehensive studies of swing voting, Feddersen and Pesendorfer (1996) show that voters choose to cast the ballot on certain electoral race while abstaining from voting on other important issues listed at the same ballot. They show that in the 1994 Illinois gubernatorial contest almost 1 million voters participated and voted to elect a governor, but abstained from the state constitutional amendment listed on the same ballot, even though the amendment was listed first. In another study, Crain, et al. (1987) report that “in the 1982 midterm elections turnout levels averaged 3% higher for the Senate contests in those states with such contests than the House races that were on the same ballot” (Crain et al 1987). Their analysis shows that in seven of the 219 races they studied, the difference in turnout was larger than the margin of victory in the House race, suggesting that voters were abstaining even in close contests. Assuming that voting is virtually costless when already in the ballot booth, this seems irrational. Additionally, Feddersen and Pesendorfer (1996) show that these large abstention rates can be explained even if the cost of voting is zero, if there is asymmetric information, thereby rationalizing such behaviour. They draw an analogy between the voters’ problem and the “winner’s curse” observed among bidders in an auction (see Kagel and Levin (2005) and Thaler (1996)).

This theory explains “some empirical facts but it remains, along with rational theories of voting more generally, highly controversial (see Feddersen (2004) for a more recent discussion). Empirical evidence has indicated both support of and against rational voter theories, especially when compared to the assumption that voters act naively and ignore strategic considerations” (Battaglini, Morton and Palfrey 2008). According to Battaglini et al

(2008) these results should be taken with a high level of caution, mainly due to the quality of field data sets which consist of insufficient information to identify all the variables that may affect voter decisions. “This is especially true for tests of rational theories of voting based on asymmetric information, such as the swing voter’s curse” (Battaglini, Morton and Palfrey 2008).

6.3.6. Socio-demographic factors that influence voting

The socio-demographic variables have been the dominant explanatory factors that shape the voting behaviour of individuals over a long period. Although contested by contemporary theories, the importance of these factors in explaining why voters vote and why they stop voting is still very significant.

Empirical evidence points to the influence of socio-demographic factors (i.e. education, income, age, see Verba et al. 1995; Lassen 2005; Solt 2008). In short, citizens who are better educated, wealthier, older, more interested in politics, and have a strong sense of civic duty, strong social networks and have voted in past elections are more likely to participate. Nevertheless, much contemporary research has shown that this relation is not as linear as often assumed. The relationship between age and participation at election is not linear but instead has the shape of an inverted “U” with youngest and oldest generations participating less. Gender is less important and continues to be a less significant factor explaining citizens’ voting habits, and the effect or the direction is mainly contradictory to the previous findings (Norris 2008, Leighley and Nagler 2012). The same pattern applies for education (Tenn 2005, 2007, Sondheimer and Green 2010).

6.3.7. How campaigns influence voters to vote and to stop voting

In *How Voters Decide*, Lau and Redlawsk attempt to present additional determinants of voting behaviour in general election presidential campaigns but also primaries and thus to unpack the “black box” of the role of campaigns in voter mobilisation and demobilisation.. As Goren (2009) stresses, Lau and Redlawsk begin with a series of sketches of various decision-making strategies that voters might follow: rational choice, early socialisation/cognitive consistency (i.e., the Michigan Model); fast and frugal decision-making; and bounded rationality/intuitive decision-making. Next, they lay out an extensive information-processing model of voter decision-making, grounded heavily in behavioural decision theory. “They utilize a novel dynamic process tracing methodology to track voter

information-processing in real time. The methodology works as follows: experimental subjects stationed at personal computers are exposed to discrete bits of campaign information that scrolls steadily across the computer screen. Subjects click on whatever information they wish to explore (e.g. party labels, economic or social philosophy, group endorsements, and so on), which opens up a new dialogue box. Since the background information continues to scroll on by, the subjects miss other potentially useful information. In this way, Lau and Redlawsk seek to mimic the dynamics of political campaigns” (Goren 2009).

In The Persuadable Voter, Hillygus and Shields also analyse the influence of political campaigns on voter behaviour. Goren (2009) identifies several important contributions to this research: “First, they show that during the 2004 presidential election an average of 26% of partisans (independent leaners excluded) hold issue positions that conflict with those embraced by their party, indicating that millions of persuadable voters reside within the electorate. Second, the more cross-pressured these partisans are, the more likely they are to defect and vote for the other party. Third, successful persuasion is a function of exposure to the campaign, campaign intensity, and direct contact. Fourth, a pair of survey experiments demonstrates that cross-pressured partisans are more likely to defect when the opposite party targets them explicitly on issues they care about. In conjunction, these findings strongly suggest that political campaigns use wedge issues to siphon off support from the opposition’s base. In short, many American voters are persuadable” (Goren 2009).

Popkin (1991) in his seminal work on political information has shown that citizens make their decisions about political events based on informational shortcuts that they get from media and during campaigns. Alvarez (1997) also shows that a tremendous amount of information about candidates, their profiles and offered policies and ideological stands are offered during electoral campaigns that are widely covered by the media. Prior (2005) using a representative opinion survey of 2,358 U.S. residents, develops a measure of citizen media content preference and analyses its influence on whether these citizens will vote or not. His analysis confirms his assumption that content preference indeed becomes a better predictor of political knowledge and turnout as media choice increases. Additionally, he shows that the exposure to different television programs influences voting behaviour. Cable television and the Internet increase gaps in knowledge and turnout between people who prefer news and people who prefer entertainment.

Regarding the attitudes of voters towards political parties, Wattenberg (2006) offers substantial input to the state of the art by showing that the nature of the relationship between voters and their perceptions regarding parties have been shaped by the raise of the prominence of the individual candidates rather than political parties. Thus, while individual candidates become more important part of the political process when deciding to vote or not to vote, the confidence in the parties has not eroded, but the voters' attitudes toward the parties are becoming neutral rather than negative (Wattenberg 2006).

6.4. What about political parties and their ideological positions?

American political parties have been widely seen as empty vessels (Katz and Colodny 1994, Whiteley 2011). The fact that only two political parties have controlled the American political space for centuries is a result, as Katz and Colodny claim, of their capabilities for adaptation. They passed through dramatic shifts and changes in their ideological positions (Katz and Colodny 1994: 23), and also as a result of the nature of the American electoral competition, they are more candidate-orientated instead of building stronger party affiliation. Consequently, American party scholars are divided as to whether the American party space has consisted of two parties, six parties (Democratic and Republican conferences/ caucuses in each house of Congress) or one hundred parties referring to the different characteristics of each state branch of Democrats and Republicans.

Whether ideologies matter and how they divide the American population, Morris Fiorina (2005) in one of the seminal works on political polarisation in US, showed that while the attitudes on the political elites have been polarised, this is not the case with the majority of Americans who remain tolerant and moderate, and the most important issues of their interest are not moral values, but leadership and security. Fiorina disentangles the myth of culture war and shows that the view of a divided America is simply false, although he admits and recognizes that political elites have shaped their ideological and policy preferences more to the extremes and shifted their positions further from each other. In contrast to Fiorina, Noel (2014) in a thorough analysis of the history of political ideologies in America highlights that conservative and liberal ideas have a long-lasting tradition in American political life even independent of the political parties. He claims that the current polarisation of the ideological spectrum in the US is a result of the fact that these opposite ideologies have captured the two dominant political parties perhaps for the first time in the history of electoral competition in US (Noel 2014).

Although the American ideological spectrum has been defined as monolithic and that “there isn't a dime's worth of difference between the two parties” (George Wallace for the 1968 campaign), the American media constantly reports about the ideological positions of the certain candidates and their ideological inconsistency. The Republican primaries for the presidential election of 2016 once again confirm the obsession of the American public with the different ideological positions of the candidates and differentiating between moderate and more socially conservative candidates.

The consistency—or lack thereof—of the position of candidates is, as Tomz and van Houweling stress, a perennial issue in political campaigns. When candidates change positions over time, competitors often expose the inconsistency and attempt to exploit it for electoral advantage (Tomz and Van Houweling 2011). Tomz and Houweling offer several examples of ideological change, such as the Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry being accused of “flip-flopping” from supporting the war in Iraq to opposing the war. Similarly, in the 2008 Republican presidential primaries, candidates attacked John McCain for embracing the very tax cuts he had opposed in 2001 and 2003, and they criticized Mitt Romney for shifting from the pro-choice position he held as Governor of Massachusetts to an anti-abortion position that was more popular among Republican voters (Tomz and van Houweling 2011).

However, the shifting of party ideological positions is a very constant characteristic of the American politics. This is a result of the candidate-oriented parties, but as said above, also a result of the constant necessity of adaptation. By offering some of the most comprehensive studies of American party ideologies, Gerring (2000) analyses and identifies the most important factors that influence shifts in party ideologies. Gerring critically discusses and offers an evaluation of the five theories that have been proposed: (i) a classical theory involving polarities between aristocracy and democracy; (ii) a cash–capitalist “investor” theory proposed by Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers; (iii) the social class theory placed on the professional agenda by Charles Beard and others; (iv) an ethnocultural theory (Paul Kleppner et al.); and (v) realignment theory. He finds all of them important and, in general, makes a credible case.

Consequently, Tomz and Houweling (2008) based on the three main theories of voting, point out three main strategies for political parties for changing their ideological positions. The first, proximity theory, assumes that citizens prefer candidates whose positions are closest to their own. The more the position of a candidate diverges from the voter, “the less satisfied the

voter will feel.” The presumed positive relationship between proximity and satisfaction, or utility, underlies the dominant framework political scientists have used in models of voting and electoral competition for more than half a century (Downs 1957; see Grofman 2004 for a review of this voluminous literature)” (Tomz and van Houweling 2008). The second theory, according to Tomz and Houweling is the discounting theory, which “posits that candidates cannot fully deliver on their promises. According to this theory, voters “discount” campaign pledges and judge each candidate based on the policies they expect the government to adopt if the candidate wins office (e.g., Adams, Bishin, and Dow 2004; Adams, Merrill, and Grofman 2005; Fiorina 1992; Grofman 1985; Kedar 2005)”. Directional theory, the third leading logic of issue voting, says that voters perceive political issues as two-sided and want candidates who take their side or “direction” (Rabinowitz and Macdonald 1989). “Directional theory offers two related hypotheses. First, citizens prefer candidates on their own side of an issue to candidates on the opposite side. Second, given a choice between candidates on their side, voters support the most intense candidate because they regard intense candidates as more reliable and more committed to their cause” (Tomz and Van Houweling 2008).

David Karol’s (2008) key theoretical contribution is the development of a typology that explains how, when and why US political parties take and change issue positions. Unlike many past studies, Karol defines parties as coalitions of groups or “a self-aware collection of individuals who share intense concerns about a particular policy area”. He claims that parties primarily cater to the preferences of groups, rather than the median voter, because groups provide resources that individuals do not, and that with time groups become entrenched in the parties’ coalitions and affect their decision-making.

As Bishin (2012) stresses, Karol’s central thesis is that position-taking is largely driven by the desire to maintain and expand a party support among groups. “In coalition maintenance, the party takes new positions or changes existing positions in order to keep a particular group, whose preferences may have changed with time, in the coalition. In coalition group incorporation, parties take positions in order to draw new groups into the coalition. Finally, in coalition expansion, parties take positions designed to appeal to the public more broadly on issues where groups may not yet exist” (Bishin 2012).

Nevertheless, very little previous research has focused on the effect of this ideological inconsistency on the aggregate voter turnout, and especially on the decision of individuals to vote or to stop voting because of this ideological shifting. Tomz and Van Houweling’s (2008,

2010) contribution in diagnosing this issue via experimental design is a noble attempt at investigating this phenomenon, but their research is mainly concentrated on the following point: firstly, on vote choice in general, but only including the decision to stop voting as one of the alternatives and, second, based on a manipulated hypothetical environment on the internet caused through experimental methods instead of real data.

This chapter, focusing on analysing why American voters have decided to stop voting after previous electoral participation, utilizes observational panel data from the period of 1984 to 1996 to investigate whether and to what extent party ideological and policy inconsistency causes voters to feel unrepresented and consequently shift from voting to non-voting.

6.5. The theoretical model

The previous section of this chapter offered an extensive overview of the main and leading theoretical concepts and models that shape the decision of voters to vote or not. As has been stated previously, the literature is not unanimous, and also different theories offer divergent and often very contradictory explanations. As a consequence of the lack of any extensive and contemporary investigations of voters that have stopped voting, this chapter offers a theoretical model that will attempt to answer the question of why Americans stop voting. The model is based on some of the previously elaborated theoretical contributions but departs from scholars who contend that voter decisions are constant and not subject to change as a result of different factors.

As it has been stressed above, this approach goes beyond the simplistic understandings of the rational choice theory of the “irrationality” of voting (Ricker and Othershook 1968), or the habitual theory of voting that voters keep and repeat as an already learnt habit of electoral participation. The voters that used to vote and have stopped neither became rational all of a sudden, and found out that it was irrational that they previously used to participate at elections, nor have lost their habit of voting. The reasons for their decision have to be found elsewhere. Building on the mobilisation/demobilisation theory, I construct a theoretical model based on the party variables but also including socio-demographic, socialisation, psychological and political context determinants that can explain why voters have stopped voting.

6.6. Research question and hypotheses

The main research question of the chapter is why voters in US have stopped voting. The chapter aims to determine the factors that influence voters to change their habit of voting and decide to stop participating at the next electoral cycle. As I have shown previously, the voting behaviour literature is not unanimous concerning the reasons for a shift to non-voting, and different approaches stress different aspects. Additionally, mutually exclusive findings exist regarding the influence of same variable in different theoretical and statistical tests. Also, there is a lack of a systematic study of voters that have stopped voting. This chapter argues that political parties are the main reasons why voters decide not to vote anymore. Special emphasis is put on party ideological inconsistency, and the fact that political parties often shift their ideological and thus policy positions. These shifts make citizens feel unrepresented, abandoned and therefore they decide not to vote at the next electoral cycles. This is even more typical with a party system dominated by only two political parties as in the case of the US.

A part of the ideological inconsistency, the direction of the ideological shift also matters. As previous research has shown the median voter is concentrated around the centre of the political ideological spectrum. Therefore shifts toward left or right from the centre can also influence voters to stop voting for the party they used to support. Parties have to choose whether to move towards the centre where the concentration of the voters is more highly concentrated or towards the poles of the spectrum and this way to focus on voters with more extreme positions. In this research, as a reference category for the directional shift I take the previous position of the party or more concretely its presidential candidate.

Additionally, I test whether and how voters' perception about differences in the ideological positions of parties also influences their decision to participate or not in the electoral process. In this way I also disentangle the issue of the perception of substantial ideological differences between parties and how this drives the voting behaviour of the citizens.

Last but not the least, as the majority of the previous literature on political knowledge has shown, voters have limited knowledge about political phenomena and consequently about ideological positions of the parties and candidates, but still based on the informational shortcuts (Popkin 1991) are able to develop a coherent judgment and make a correct decision. Additionally, the discounting theory of ideology change says that voters discount

promises and judge their candidate based on the policies they expect the government to adopt if the candidate wins office. Therefore the ideological standing for certain issues can have more influence on the voters' decision about vote choice or whether to vote or stop voting. I argue that more salient and more polarized issues which are more frequently present in the media and everyday life of the citizens such as issues that deal with rights of minorities, abortion or religion will have stronger influence on voters decision to stop voting compared with more issues on the periphery.

Hence, from the main research question, the following hypotheses will be tested:

H1 The ideological shift of political parties and candidates has a stronger influence on new non-voters than on habitual and intermittent voters.

H2 The direction of the ideological shift more strongly influences vote choice than voter's decision to stop voting.

H3 The perception of the ideological difference between parties influences voters to stop voting.

H4 Ideological shifts of the positions of the more salient issues such as traditional values and human rights are stronger demobilising factors than the ideological shift of less contentious issues such as social welfare or security issues.

6.7. Methodology, data and operationalization of the variables

6.7.1. Data

In order to measure which variables influence voters in the US to stop voting, the database from the Youth and Parents Socialization Panel Study Wave IV 1984-1996 is utilised. This database is most appropriate for this study because it includes a longitudinal survey of individual decisions to participate at presidential elections in the USA. On the other hand, the measurement of ideology shift is also a complicated process. There are several main alternatives for measuring the ideological shift of candidates and parties. As some of the most acceptable indicators for measuring party ideology, programmes cover a wide range of political issues and themes and therefore can be taken as a "set of key central statement of party positions" (Budge, Robertson, Hearl 1987). Nevertheless, it has been reported that the Comparative Party Manifesto (CMP) which represents the most comprehensive attempt for measurement of ideology faces serious indications of systematic coder error (see Benoit, Laver, Mikhaylov 2008). The experience has shown that the US political parties' dataset is

particularly problematic because of less significance of the party manifestos. Therefore, for the main hypothesis I use the aggregated perceptions about the ideological positions of the candidates from American National Electoral Studies (ANES) Dataset for the period of 1980-1996. For measurement of the ideological positions of different issues, I am forced to return to the CMP 1980-1996 Dataset, because it is the only data that allows the measurement of the positions of eight different political issues.

6.7.2. Methods

As I have pointed out in the chapter 3, this paper aims to investigate why voters stop voting, whether ideological inconsistency influences this decision, but also purposes to show whether there is a difference between new non-voters on one side and habitual voters and others groups of voters on the other side. Hence, the most appropriate method for testing the theoretical model is multinomial logistic regression. I have chosen mlogit because the dependent variable includes more than two categories and it falls into any one of a set of categories which cannot be ordered in any meaningful way. Also, multinomial logit enables me to better discern the differences between these categories of citizens and to show whether independent variables differently affect different categories. Taking into consideration that the ideological variables are higher (party) level variables, I am using clustered standard errors (Moulton 1990; Bertrand, Duflo, and Mullainathan 2004). This way I am avoiding the problem of mis-specification, which can lead to standard error which are seriously biased and can cause a spurious regression as a result of this mis-specification (Moulton 1990).

6.7.3. Variables

6.7.3.1. The new non-voter variable

As I have explained in the chapter 3, when operationalizing the dependent variable, Youth and Parents Socialization Panel Study Wave 1984 - 1996 is used. The “New Non-Voter” is constructed as three category variable and has values “1” for voters that used to vote but have stopped voting on a permanent basis, “2” for habitual voters that have regularly participated at all four electoral cycles and “3” for all other categories. The data covers four electoral cycles of presidential elections starting with 1984 and finishing with 1996 US elections. Therefore, the “New Non-Voter” is coded as “1” for the voters that voted at the 1984 US presidential elections but afterwards have stopped voting. The same principle is used for voters that have voted at the elections in 1984 and 1988 but have stopped casting ballots at

consecutive electoral cycles. As I said above, all other individuals that have shown permanent voting habits are in a separate category which is used as a base category in the statistical models, while permanent non-voters as well the intermittent voters are coded into one category.

6.7.3.2. Party ideology shift score and Policy Shift Score

The party ideology shift variable will be constructed by subtracting the score for aggregated perceived values of the presidential candidates ideology on the scale from 1 (extremely liberal) to 7 (extremely conservative) from the ANES Dataset during an election from the score for the party candidate's ideology in the previous election, when the voters voted for the candidate's party.

Besides party ideological shift, variables for eight different policy areas are constructed by subtracting the ideological scores from the manifestos of two parties. The policy areas include: economic, international and security; social welfare issues; human rights, multiculturalism; shift in traditional values; labour rights, and minority rights. From the manifestos of Democratic and Republican parties for the period of 1980 to 1996, ideological scores for every policy area are constructed and that score is subtracted from the score for the same policy in the party manifesto for the next electoral cycle.

6.7.3.4. Control variables

The model will include socio-demographic variables as control variables. Gender, occupation and income are the standard and commonly used socio-demographic variables that can influence models. Another control variable included will address the level of political trust among individuals. A negative evaluation may be one of the reasons for non-voting or shifting preferences to the parties in power, despite ideology shift.

The change in education and mobility are also considered as factors that can influence voters to stop voting. Voters that have continued with their education are more likely to show interest in politics and to follow political events and campaigns; therefore their interest to participate at elections can increase. Mobility, on the other hand, is one of the most serious obstacles for voting. Although institutional registration requirements are simplified and postal and absentee votes legally allowed (Leighley and Nagler 2014), citizens who change their address are still less likely to keep voting.

6.8. Who are the new non-voters in the US?

The characteristics of the new non-voters in the US are instrumental in order to better understand the reasons why these citizens have decided to stop voting. In the same time, the limited knowledge we have about these citizens needs to be upgraded with further investigation and hence, this section attempts to offer an overview of the most important features of the new non-voters in the US. Besides the fact that the number of the new non-voters is quite limited (for more details, see Appendix B, Table 6.11.1) and it is based on a survey data with self-reported turnout, the descriptive statistics of the new non-voters can help us better understand the main differences between the new non-voters and other citizens, mainly voters.

First and foremost, using information on electoral participation at four consecutive Presidential elections in the US in the time period of 1984 to 1996, I have identified 5.8 % of the respondents as new non-voters who have stopped participating at elections on more permanent basis. While, we cannot speculate about the nature of their participation exit in the time period before and after the analysis, the fact that they have stopped voting in three consecutive elections while participating at the elections in 1984, features them as US new non-voters. Although, absolutely small, the number of new non-voters is very significant having in mind the closeness of the electoral outcome in the United States Presidential Elections and the overall trends of turnout rates at the elections included in the analysis (for more information see Appendix C, Table 6.15).

In order to better understand the characteristics of the new non-voters, I test the differences between these citizens and others using the Youth and Parents Socialization Panel 1984-1996. The t-tests of significance of the differences between new non-voters and voters are utilized. Three groups of factors are analysed: (i) socio-demographic variables, (ii) political trust and information and (iii) party and ideological attachment. Additionally, these results will enable me to compare the findings with the comparative chapter which includes cross-national comparative sample with large number of respondents. Table 6.1 shows some very interesting patterns. While, most of the results correspond with the comparative findings, there are some interesting differences. The gender difference among the voters and new non-voters

Table 6.1 The Differences between Voters and New Non-Voters in the USA

Variables ⁶	Voters	New Non-voters	t-value	Sig
Gender (Male)	1.53 (0.01)	1.48 (0.06)	0.75	
Union Membership	3.92(0.05)	4.77(0.12)	-3.51	***
Employment Status (Working=1)	15.66 (0.52)	21.66 (3.21)	-2.56	**
Church (Religious =1)	3.62 (0.05)	4.00 (0.20)	-1.55	**
Home Ownership	1.08(0.01)	1.18(0.07)	-1.60	**
Regional Affiliation (South =1)	0.45 (0.018)	0.41 (0.07)	0.57	
Marriage (Married =1)	1.38 (0.009)	1.94 (0.23)	-3.25	**
Mobility	0.64 (0.03)	0.98(0.16)	-2.13	***
Political Trust	2.58(0.03)	2.53 (0.13)	0.33	
Political interest	1.75 (0.03)	1.82 (0.10)	-0.50	
Government Support	3.93 (0.35)	4.14 (0.135)	-2.23	**
Party Identification (Rep=1)	2.45 (0.06)	3.92 (0.35)	-5.16	***
Party ID Strength (Dem=1)	4.58 (0.10)	2.75 (0.57)	2.51	**
N = 996	942	54		

Source: Youth and Parents Socialization Panel 1984-1996 Level of significance *** 0.01, ** 0.05, *0.1

is statistically not significant in the case with the United States. While this might be a result of the smaller sample, it could also be related with the duration of the electoral participation exit. Furthermore, while in the comparative analysis, the females are the ones that drop out more in comparison with their male compatriots, the number of the new non-voters is higher among men in the United States. This goes along with the findings of Leighley and Nagler's (2014). (For more information see Appendix B, table 6.11.2). A part of the gender difference, the other very interesting findings regarding the differences between US new non-voters and other citizens include mobility, marital status, home ownership and church attendance. The citizens who have been mobile in the past, the ones who are divorced or not being married are

⁶ The Gender variable is coded 1 = Male and Two = Female, Union Membership is coded with 1 being a member of the union. Thus, smaller value of the mean means higher percentage of union members among that category of voters. Similarly with the employment status: a smaller value of the mean means higher percentage of employed citizens. The means of the variable marriage show that the percentage of married citizens is higher among voters than among new non-voters. For more clear results see Appendix.

the ones that are more probably to drop out of voting than others. The difference between new non-voters and other citizens is statistically significant. These results are going along with the theoretical expectations.

Mobility or moving houses can be a real obstacle for obtaining the right of vote. This can be a result of objective reasons, like the distance from the place of registration and the necessity for the individuals to go back to the old neighbourhood in order to cast the ballot in the polling station or a demand for additional efforts to register for postal voting and similar. The marital status has also been shown as important indicator for voting. Similarly, it plays a significant role in the citizens' decision to stop participating at elections. Home ownership as one of the indicators for better socio-economic status also plays a role in dropping out of voting. The difference in the house ownership is statistically significant with the higher number of home owners among voters and others rather than among new non-voters. Similarly, the strongly religious individuals drop out less than other citizens. Although, the difference between new non-voters and voters regarding regional affiliation is statistically not significant, the percentage of southerners among the new non-voters is bigger than among the voters that have remained voting. The differences between new non-voters and other citizens in the level of political trust and political interest are not statistically significant. These findings are particularly important because they go along with my theoretical claims that the new non-voters are not less politically interested in comparison with others. Additionally, the level of political trust is not so low that it would cause indifference or resignation for the political processes. Contrary to these assumptions, I claim that these citizens have been interested in politics and this is confirmed with their previous record of electoral participation. Their trust in politicians and in politics in general is not that low that excludes them from the political life in the country. On the other hand, as the descriptive statistics show (for more details, see Appendix I), the new non-voters are fairly interested in politics. They follow political news quite frequently which enables them to adequately evaluate political processes and the behaviour of candidates and political parties. This also goes along with my theoretical expectations which are confirmed in comparative perspective (see chapter 5). The level of governmental support, on the other hand, is lower among the US new non-voters and this difference is statistically significant.

Last, but not least the ideological self-positioning and party identification are also utilized in order to determinate the characteristics of the new non-voters. The differences between the other citizens and the US new non-voters are statistically significant. Substantially, the

findings show that while the percentage of Republicans is smaller among the new non-voters, the percentage of the new non-voters among Democrats is same with the percentage of voters. According to expectations, the independents are more likely to shift from voting to non-voting; their percentage among new non-voters is 6 percentage points higher than among voters (for more details see Appendix I, Table 6.11.9).

In sum, there are certain differences between new non-voters and voters. There are more new non-voters among men, divorced, southerners and people that follow political programs two to three times per week. When party ID matters, the number of the independents is higher among new non-voters compared with others, but the fact that still around 55% of new non-voters have stressed party affiliation is a strong indicator of the role of party behaviour as a factor contributing to why voters stop voting. Nevertheless, Democrats in the 1984 and 1988 US presidential elections were passing through a very hard period following three consecutive defeats. Hence, the motivation among Democrats to participate was higher in the 1992 and 1996 US presidential elections as a result of the closeness of electoral results and perceived opportunity to overtake power, while Republicans were facing absolutely opposite circumstances.

6.9. Main findings and interpretation of results

Table 6.2 shows the results of the statistical model with the candidates ideology shift as the main independent variable. The model also includes the controls that have been explained above. Clustered standard errors are used. Habitual voters or voters who always vote are used as a base category. The results are strongly in favour of the claim for the influence of the ideological shift on voters' decision to stop voting. Comparing the differences between new non-voters and others relative to the habitual voters, Table 6.2 shows that change of one unit of ideology dramatically increases the probability of the voter to stop voting. While the coefficients are surprising high, it should be taken into account that the ideological scale varies from 1 to 7 and that the scores for ideological shift in all the cases are smaller than 1. Also comparing the coefficients to the two different groups relative to the habitual voters, it is not only that the coefficient for the new non-voters is higher, but also that it is statistically significant. Results show that ideological shift strongly influences voters to stop voting, while their influence is neither strong nor statistically significant among the intermittent voters and habitual non-voters.

Ideological consistency matters and voters punish political parties that constantly shift their positions. The fact that ideological shift has such a strong influence on voters to relinquish voting is another confirmation that voters who already have voted and developed a certain relationship with the party they supported, are more likely to stop voting than to switch their vote to the opponent party. In the case of the US, this is even more expected because there are only two main political parties that regularly nominate candidates to participate at presidential elections. However, these results have an even higher value considering the strong influence of Ross Perot, who participated in two out of four presidential elections that are part of this analysis as a popular candidate of a third-party.

Table 6.2 Multinomial Logistic Regression: The New-Non Voter

Variables	Model 1	
	The New Non-Voter	Others
Ideology Shift	20.02*** (5.96)	1.19(2.6)
Political Information	-0.80*** (0.14)	0.38**(0.14)
Political Trust	1.27*** (0.48)	0.14 (0.12)
Mobility	0.88*** (0.12)	-0.02 (0.37)
Gender	3.19*** (0.88)	0.15 (0.23)
Income	-0.01 (0.04)	0.06(0.004)
Employment Status	0.04***(0.01)	-0.003(0.006)
Education Change	0.57***(0.18)	0.02(0.05)
Party ID	-1.01(0.85)	0.99***(0.17)
Constant	-11.15***(4.70)	-8.89***(0.70)
Pseudo R Squared	0.18	
N	850	

Base Category: The Habitual Voter, Clustered standard errors, *** 0.01, ** 0.05, *0.1

Other than candidates' ideology shifts, the results show substantial differences between two groups of comparison. Almost all of the controls are statistically significant and have the expected direction for the category of the new non-voters. Surprisingly, party identification and income are not statistically significant, but the direction of the coefficients is again expected. In the case with the intermittent voters, only party identification the strength of this identification and the level of political information are statistical significant.

Why do voters stop voting as a consequence of the ideological shift of a party? Some of the explanations lie in the fact that voters are attached to but not blind followers of a political party. While political parties shift their ideological positions to attract new voters, they easily lose some of their traditional voters. These citizens feel unrepresented, abandoned by their political party and therefore lose interest in voting at the next elections. Party ideology inconsistency is not a costless strategy for political parties and provides great risks for losing loyal voters combined with the uncertainty of attracting new ones. Furthermore, as results show, once voters decide to stop voting it is more difficult for them to get return to their earlier voting habits.

Table 6.3 Multinomial Logistic Regression: The New Non-Voter and Drection of Ideological Shift

Variables	Model 2	
	The New Non-Voter	Others
Direction of Shift	-0.11(1.1)	-0.59**(0.27)
<i>Political Information</i>	-0.39*** (0.13)	0.35**(0.13)
<i>Political Trust</i>	0.56** (0.18)	0.07 (0.11)
<i>Mobility</i>	0.40** (0.15)	-0.01 (0.31)
<i>Gender</i>	0.79 (1.02)	0.06 (0.18)
<i>Income</i>	-0.14 *** (0.02)	-0.08*** (0.02)
<i>Employment Status</i>	0.03*** (0.009)	-0.003 (0.006)
<i>Education Change</i>	0.48*** (0.06)	0.01 (0.04)
<i>Party ID</i>	0.19 (1.24)	0.95*** (0.22)
<i>Constant</i>	-5.3 (9.01)	-6.69*** (1.07)
<i>Pseudo R Squared</i>	0.11	
<i>N</i>	850	

Base Category: The Habitual Voter, Clustered standard errors, *** 0.01, ** 0.05, *0.1

Regarding the direction of the shift, results of the statistical model M2 in Table 6.3 are infavour of the hypothesis. Voters do care about the quantity of the shift, they are able to notify the change of the position of their party and this is enough information regarding their decision to punish the party by not voting for the party and not voting at all. The coefficient for the direction of the shift for new non-voters relative to habitual voters is small and negative and statistically insignificant. As we also see from the Table 6.2, the direction of the

shift plays more important role among the intermittent or swing voters. The voters who flip-flop whether will vote or not, care more about the direction of the shift and this can further influence their vote choice.

Table 6.4 Multinomial Logistic Regression: The New Non-Voter and Ideological Difference

Variables	Model 3	
	The New Non-Voter	Others
<i>Ideological Difference</i>	-0.73**(0.29)	-0.88***(0.10)
<i>Political Information</i>	-0.61*** (0.16)	-0.06(0.10)
<i>Political Trust</i>	1.04** (0.35)	0.39 ** (0.14)
<i>Mobility</i>	0.45** (0.15)	0.11 (0.38)
<i>Gender</i>	0.81 (1.6)	0.23 (0.24)
<i>Income</i>	-0.15 *** (0.03)	-0.12*** (0.01)
<i>Employment Status</i>	0.05*** (0.01)	-0.003(0.006)
<i>Education Change</i>	0.78** (0.28)	-0.02(0.09)
<i>Party ID</i>	-0.34(2.12)	0.37*(0.22)
<i>Constant</i>	-2.3 (19.01)	-0.01(1.5)
<i>Pseudo R Squared</i>	0.25	
<i>N</i>	850	

Base Category: The Habitual Voter, Clustered standard errors, *** 0.01, ** 0.05, *0.1

The way how citizens perceive ideological differences between political parties can also influence their decision to vote or to stop voting. While voters who are attached to the party will have closer identification and will have offered support in the previous electoral cycles, I claim they are more likely to keep voting and swing their vote if the ideological difference between political parties is perceived as very small and insignificant. When voters consider that there is an essential difference between the parties and candidates, the chances to swing their vote choice is smaller. Table 4.4 shows results of the multinomial logistic regression with the perception for the ideological difference as main independent variable. There is not a large difference between the coefficients for the ideological difference between new non-voters and intermittent voters. Both coefficients relative to the habitual voters are negative and statistically significant. Hence, the perception of the ideological difference between

political parties or candidates does not have a very crucial role in differentiating new non-voters from other categories of voters.

Citizens are not always aware of the ideological positions of the parties on the left-right scale. They do not read political manifestos with their full attention and frequently, but they create their opinion about party ideologies as a result of information shortcuts (Popkin, 1991). Moreover, not all citizens perceive political parties according to the left-right spectrum. They have different preferences and priorities and rather favour the political party closest to their position on a certain policy area/s or issue rather than on the entire left-right spectrum. Therefore, I will next test the effects of ideological shift on eight different policy areas or issues on voters to stop voting.

These eight policy areas represent the most important and contentious economic, political, social and international issues in American politics. Welfare State, Free Economy and Labour rights represent three important economic issues in American politics. Security is one of the most important issues related to international relations, but also domestic politics in every American presidential campaign and very often serving as a decisive factor influencing the electoral outcome. Traditional values include the question of abortion, censorship and suppression of immorality and unseemly behaviour, maintenance and stability of family and religion and are also a very contentious part of campaigns and attract a lot of attention in the media. While these values are considered strong indicators of conservatism, on the other site, party positions regarding underprivileged minority groups, multiculturalism and human rights are strongly related to politicians and citizens with liberal ideological standings.

Table 6.5 presents only the coefficients for the eight policy areas or issues. Eight different multinomial logistic regression models were tested including the same set of controls as in the previous models. There is not essential difference in the coefficients of the controls and therefore they are not reported here. The findings bring us to very interesting conclusions and recommendations for political parties. First, these results based on the American context from 1984 to 1996 show that traditional, social topics have a very strong (de)mobilising power for electoral participation. Traditional values and human rights have a very strong impact on the voter decision to stop casting a ballot. Second, the statistically insignificant results concerning shifts in positions on labour rights may be result of the fact that these topics do on the voter decision to stop casting a ballot. Second, the statistically insignificant results concerning shifts in positions on labour rights may be result of the fact that these topics do

not play such a contentious role in the American politics as they do in Europe. These issues are valance issues, they are not contentious and political candidates rarely compete on this agenda. Third, party ideology inconsistency is not only costless but it also depends very much on the type of shifts made by political parties. The data used for the American context indicates that shifts of party ideology in certain policy areas can mobilise and remobilise voters but also lead to dramatic loses of traditional voters when a shift occurs on other areas such as traditional values, human rights, and the free market and economy. Last but not least, there are significant differences in the coefficients between new non-voters and intermittent voters relative to habitual voters. These differences are more visible in the issues regarding human rights and traditional values. These areas include questions regarding abortion, rights of the underprivileged groups and religion and these are actually topics for which the vast majority of the population has a personal opinion and can easily notice the ideological standings and hence if any, the shifts of candidates and parties' positions.

Table 6.5 Multinomial Logistic Regression: The New Non-Voter and Policy Shifts

Variables	The New Non-Voter	Others
Model 4: Welfare State	-0.93*(0.48)	-0.16(0.16)
Model 5 Security Shift	-1.11(0.74)	0.37***(0.03)
Model 6 Human Rights	2.19***(0.71)	-0.097(0.06)
Model 7 Free Economy	2.80*(1.64)	1.032***(0.05)
Model 8 Traditional Values	1.71***(0.37)	-0.38**(0.18)
Model 9 Multiculturalism	-3.44***(0.55)	-0.41(0.39)
Model 10 Labour Rights	-0.060(2.4)	0.096(0.84)
Model 11 Minority Rights	0.23(0.58)	-0.74**(0.26)

Base Category: The Habitual Voter, Clustered standard errors, *** 0.01, ** 0.05, *0.1

6.10. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to scrutinize the reasons why voters stop voting by using panel data in the US. The panel data allows the opportunity to analyse why voters have stopped

voting in more than one electoral cycle. Despite the disadvantages of over-reporting turnout when using observational data, the fact that 5.79% of previously mobilized voters have stopped voting is a very important indicator that should be more seriously analysed. Moreover, the overall aggregate turnout in the period of 1984 to 1996 has declined from around 53% in 1984 to the lowest point of 49 % in 1996. This is a strong indicator of the importance of studying new non-voters and reasons why they stop voting.

New non-voters differ from other participants in the electoral cycle. Using simple frequencies for analysing the group differences, I found that there are more new non-voters among men, the divorced, southerners and people that follow political programmes on television two to three times per week. When party identification matters, the number of independents is higher among new non-voters than with others, but the fact that around 55% of new non-voters stress a party affiliation is a strong indicator for analysing party behaviour as a factor for voters to stop voting.

Theoretical and empirical explanations for the reasons why voters stop voting are not unanimous. There are many different approaches among American voting behaviour scholars that explain why voters participate less and why they have stopped voting. Building on the demobilisation theory, I argue that party ideology inconsistency is one of the main reasons why voters stop voting. While political parties shift their ideological positions in order to attract new voters, they lose part of their supporters. These citizens that used to support a certain political party may feel unrepresented and abandoned as a result of the ideological shift of said party, but instead of swinging to another party, they decide not to vote.

The empirical models that I have tested using multinomial logistic regression provide evidence in support of the hypothesis of the influence of ideological inconsistency on voters to stop voting. One unit change of the ideology of the parties and candidate voter used to vote for increases the probability for the voter to stop voting. This pattern is dramatically different among other categories of voters. Going further, testing the ideological shifts in eight different policy areas, this chapter indicates that traditional topics have a very strong (de)mobilising power for electoral participation. Traditional values and opposing values regarding underprivileged minority group rights have a very strong impact on the decision of voters to stop casting a ballot. Also, findings show that while ideology inconsistency is not costless it is a matter of party strategy. Political parties should be very careful when deciding to shift their ideological positions.

The new non-voters in this paper are studied in a particular political context. While the findings are generalisable, the possible effect of the certain electoral context characteristic for the period of study should still be seriously taken into account. This paper shows that there are substantial differences between voters who have stopped voting and other categories of citizens. This is an important finding worthy of additional research. The fact that the problem of over-reporting turnout, particularly characteristic for Youth and Parents Socialisation Panel, directly goes against the design of this research and there are still findings in favour of the theoretical claims, makes this research even more valuable. The data collection is a particularly complex process not only regarding identifying the group of the new non-voters, but also in offering the most adequate measurement of the ideological positions of the parties and candidates.

The results from this analysis give added value to the literature of voters that have stopped voting. While the majority of voting behaviour scholars have studied party ideologies, very few have focused on ideological inconsistency as a demobilizing factor for voting. Voters that have stopped voting are a very characteristic group of citizens and major theories such as rational choice theory or habitual theory of voting do not offer reasonable explanations as to why they decided to no longer participate at elections. Therefore, the major contribution of this chapter is exactly so as to combine these two important phenomena and thus contribute to solving the 'grand enchilada of puzzles' in political science by analysing why voters vote at all, and why they decide to stop participating at elections during a certain period (Franklin 2004).

APPENDIX B

6.11. Who are the new non-voters in the US – Descriptive statistics

This section offers an answer to the question as to who are the voters that stopped voting in the US during the four presidential elections from the period of 1984 to 1996. Before scrutinizing the reasons why voters stop voting, it is of a crucial importance that the main political and socio-demographic characteristics of these citizens be examined. Using Youth and Parents Socialization Panel wave IV data and running simple frequencies, I will show the differences between new non-voters in US and other citizens. Three groups of factors will be analysed: (i) socio-demographic variables, (ii) political trust and information and (iii) party and ideological attachment.

Table 6.11.1 shows the number of new non-voters in the US in the Youth and Parents Socialization Panel Data. 5.79 % of the voters that participated regularly at previous elections have decided to stop voting during the four presidential election cycles from 1984 to 1996. Numerous previous research studies show that when taking into account observational survey data, two main problems arise. The first is that when dealing with self-reported turnout, over-reporting is one of the serious problems because individuals tend to report voting for various reasons such as failing to remember or as a result of the social desirability bias (Holbrook 2009). The second reason is that individuals with stronger political interests are mainly eager to participate in surveys, especially in ones that require numerous waves and repetitions such as panel data, and these citizens usually regularly participate at elections. Nevertheless, even taking these disadvantages of the observational data that deals with self-reported turnout, the number of citizens that have stopped voting is very significant. Taking into account that in the period of the four election cycles which are subject of the analysis of this chapter, the overall turnout declined from 53.11 % in 1984 to 49.0 % in the 1996 US presidential elections; the fact that 5.79% of previously mobilized voters have stopped voting is a very important indicator that should be more seriously analysed. This also confirms the importance of studying new non-voters. When all other factors remain constant, the turnout damage as a result of new non-voters can be a strong explanatory factor for the decline of the aggregate turnout. Therefore, the further analysis of the new non-voter, their characteristics and factors that influence their decision to stop voting is very important.

Table 6.11.1 The New Non-Voter in the USA

Type of American Voters	
New Non-Voters	5.79
Others	94.21
Total	100%

6.11.1. Socio-demographic factors

When socio-demographic factors are taken into consideration, as I have stressed above, not only is there a lack of unanimity of the previous findings in the literature, they are often contradictory and opposing. Table 6.11.2 shows the gender rates among the new non-voters and voters in the sample. These findings are very interesting for several reasons. First, there is a difference among new non-voters and voters that kept voting. According to the sample, not only are women voting more, men are also more eager to stop voting in comparison with their female compatriots. Second, this is contrary to the findings from the Large N cross-country data presented in the previous chapter. While in the cross-country analysis, a gender gap of around 9% was observed and female citizens were much more eager to stop voting, the case of the US is different. Taking into consideration the fact that this might be only specific characteristics for the four election cycles, these findings correspond with most recent trends showing that women are voting more than men in the US (Leighley and Nagler 2014).

Table 6.11.2 US New Non-Voters and Gender Distribution

Gender	New Non Voters	Others
Female	48.15	52.22
Male	51.85	47.78
Total (N=933)	100%	100%

The “Southern Strategy” of the Republicans frequently used in the second half of the twentieth century has changed the political landscape in the US. “The “Solid South,” which historically was traditionally Democratic due to the Democratic Party's defence of slavery prior to the US Civil War, has become electorally realigned to the Republicans as a result of the stronger advocating of racist attitudes towards African-Americans and fears of

lawlessness among southern white voters, and appealing to fears of growing federal power in social and economic matters” (Hohenberg 1996).

Table 6.11.3 Regional Affiliation of the US New Non-Voters

Regional Affiliation	New Non-Voters	Others
South	33.01	29.63
Others	66.99	70.37
Total (N=987)	100%	100%

Nevertheless, the 1992 and 1996 US presidential elections were break points in the sense that Democrats exerted a significant effort to get back the southern states by nominating presidential and vice-presidential candidates from the region⁷. Although, there is not a big difference between new non-voters and voters regarding regional affiliation, Table 6.11.3 again shows that the percentage of southerners among the new non-voters is bigger than among the voters that have remained voting.

Marital status may be an important factor driving the voters to vote or stop voting. Previous research (see Sandell and Plutzer 2005) has shown that family plays a very important role in the voting decision of citizens and that divorce has a negative influence, depressing turnout by 10 percentage points. Table 6.11.4 presents the differences in marital status among new non-voters and regular voters. Comparing the frequencies between these two groups, the findings also show the negative impact of the divorce on the decision of voters to participate at elections. Table 6.11.4 shows that the share of divorced citizens is 13 percentage points higher among new non-voters than with the voters who regularly participate at elections. Although, the simple frequencies only show patterns, and more in-depth analysis will follow, these results confirm that people disengaged from their family life are more eager to disengage from their already established tradition of voting. While the reasons for divorced people to stop voting may vary, including, for example, changing their place of residence, the above frequencies even show the higher depressing power of divorce than found by Sandell and Plutzer (2005).

⁷ Democrats nominated Bill Clinton from Arkansas and vice-presidential candidate Al Gore from Tennessee in a possible effort to get back the support of the southern states.

Table 6.11.4 Marital Status of the US New Non-Voter

Marital Status	New Non-Voters	Others
Married	75.93	89.65
Living with partner of same sex	1.85	0.80
Divorced	20.37	7.28
Widowed	0	1.93
Separated	1.85	0.34
Total (N=987)	100%	100%

Religious affiliation has also been considered as an important factor influencing voters' participation at elections (see Verba et al 1995, Jones-Correa and Leal 2001). Verba et al. stress close affiliation with religion as a factor that influences voting in a rural environment but also among African-Americans. Table 6.11.5 shows that the percentage of very active members of church organizations is almost half the size of new non-voters than among the voters. Also, the percentage of citizens who have defined themselves as a fairly active member of church communities is smaller among the new non-voters. On the other hand, non-church members are 9 percentage points higher among the new non-voters in comparison with their percentage still engaged voters. This again confirms that religious affiliation still plays a certain role in the decision to participate in elections. Citizens' evaluations of the political system and its actors affect their propensity to vote (Powell 1986, Gronlund 2007). Earlier theoretical and empirical research has shown that political trust and satisfaction are often explanatory variables that influence turnout.

Table 6.11.5 Religious Affiliation of the US New Non-Voters

Religious Affiliation	New Non-Voters	Others
Very active member	9.62	16.95
Fairly active	15.38	20.68
Not very active	7.69	3.62
Not a member	67.31	57.84
Total (N=990)	100%	100%

6.11.2. Political Trust and Information

Political trust involves normative expectations towards political institutions and actors, whereas satisfaction may be regarded as an indicator of attitudes towards policy outputs. In the analysis of the reasons for voters to stop participating I hypothesise that political trust has an important effect. As shown in the previous chapter, trust and satisfaction with political parties and with democracy influences voters to stop voting, while political trust in the government has no significant effect. The US is a specific case because of the multilevel system of governance. Therefore, I analyse the trust in the different levels of government among the new non-voters and regular voters as well as the trust in the national government. This subsection also compares the differences among new non-voters and voters in the level of political information measured by the frequency of watching politics on television.

Table 6.11.6 demonstrates the differences in the trust in different levels of governance among the new non-voters and citizens that remained voting. Results reveal some interesting points. While trust in local government is highest among voters, around 40% of new non-voters have the highest trust in the state government. This shows that citizens who have a lower level of trust in either the highest or lowest levels of government are more likely to stop voting at presidential elections.

Table 6.11.6 The US New Non-Voters and Trust in Political Institutions

Trust in Institutions	New Non Voters	Others
National Government	20.37	16.38
State Government	40.74	22.55
Local Government	25.93	46.70
Equal	3.70	9.79
None	9.26	3.94
Other	0	0.64
Total (N=994)	100%	100%

The number of new non-voters that have trust in the national government is higher than among the voters by 4 percentage points, but the most dramatic difference appears in the support of the state and local government. There is an obvious trade-off between two groups. The difference is around 20 percentage points and another very interesting finding is that

supporters of local governments are more eager to participate at national presidential elections. This is something that was not expected in the previous research.

Table 6.11.7 The Level of Trust in the Government and US New Non-Voters

Trust in Government doing right	New Non-Voters	Others
Always	0	2.02
Most of the time	42.59	49.10
Sometimes	57.41	48.88
Total (N=995)	100%	100%

The percentage of citizens that have trust in the national government is significantly higher among voters than among the new non-voters. As table 6.11.7 shows, additionally the percentage of individuals that have no trust in the national apparatus is higher among new non-voters. These findings are to be expected and confirm the fact that less trustworthy citizens are more likely to shift from voting to non-voting. Nevertheless, the very high percentage of citizens with a higher level of trust that government does a good job among the new non-voters once again indicates that the level of the trust in the national government is not among factors that contribute to why voters stop voting.

Political information is one of the very important factors that drive the voter participation at elections. As Alvarez (1997) and Popkin (1991) find, a vast majority of citizens learn and absorb their knowledge about politics via television. Consequently, people that spend more time watching political news and shows are more interested in politics, better informed and more likely to cast a ballot. Table 6.11.8 in a certain sense supports these expectations. The percentage of the citizens that spend the most time watching political programs is dramatically lower among the new non-voters compared with voters. Accordingly, the percentage of citizens that still frequently follow political programming is very high among non-voters and almost twice as high among voters, which also indicates that people with interested in and knowledge of politics decide to stop voting. Factors why these citizens stop voting will be investigated in the remainder of the chapter.

Table 6.11.8 Frequency of watching political program among US New Non-Voters

Frequency of watching pol. program	New Non-Voters	Others
Almost every day	34.04	52.16
Two or three times per week	48.94	25.51
Three of four times per month	17.02	16.51
Few times per week	0	5.81
Total (N=995)	100%	100%

6.11.3. Party and ideological attachment

Party identification and ideological standings of the citizens are arguably some of the most important explanatory factors affecting the decision of a voter to vote or not at elections. From Campbell et al (1960) and their funnel model, party ID is established as one of the strongest factors that explains voting. On the other hand, party ideology plays a very important role in the electoral process. Therefore, this subsection offers an overview of the differences between new non-voters and others regarding their ID and ideological positions on two issues, abortion and state intervention in the economy. These two issues are taken into consideration because the ideological standings of citizens on the economy and society can most easily be discerned. Also a distinction between party ID and ideological self-placement is made because there are differences and no necessarily overlap between these two categories.

Table 6.11.9 demonstrates the differences between new non-voters and voters regarding party identification. The results show only small differences between the groups. While the percentage of Republicans is smaller among the new non-voters, the percentage of the new non-voters among Democrats is same with the percentage of voters. According to expectations, the independents are more likely to shift from voting to non-voting; their percentage among new non-voters is 6 percentage points higher than among voters. Nevertheless, the table also shows that more than 55% of new non-voters express party affiliation. This shows that despite their close ID with a certain political party, they still

decide to discontinue voting. The reasons for this decline, as this chapter hypothesises, are most likely related to party behaviour.

Table 6.11.9 Party Identification of the US New Non-Voters

Party Identification	New Non-Voters	Voters
Democrat	25.93	25.80
Independent	42.59	36.62
No Preference	0	1.59
Republican	29.63	34.29
Other	1.85	1.70
Total (N=996)	100%	100%

There is a perceivable debate among scholars as to whether party ID automatically reflects liberal-conservative self-positioning. Previous research has shown that liberal - conservative self-placement acts as mainly a surrogate for partisanship (Butler and Stokes 1969, Inglehart and Klingemann 1976, Inglehart and Sidjanski 1976, Inglehart 1979, Converse and Pierce 1986, Jagodzinski and Kuhnel 1994, Mazzoleni 2003) or in other words “the result of inherited party loyalties” (Inglehart and Sidjanski 1976: 240). However, empirical studies support the “classical view” that individual liberal - conservative self-placement basically reflects issue preferences or value orientations. In this view the liberal - conservative dimension fulfils the function of a “super issue” or an “overarching spatial dimension”, which summarizes distinct value dimensions in one continuum (Sani and Sartori 1983, Huber 1989, Van Deth and Geurts 1989; partly: Sciarini and Finger 1991, implicitly Knutsen 1995a, 1997). This view has recently received support from empirical findings of a “cognitive mobilization” (Dalton 1984, 2002), of partisan dealignment (Wattenberg 1998) and an increase of “issue voting” (Dalton 2002).

Hence, Table 6.11.10 presents the differences in the liberal - conservative self-placement among the new non-voters and voters. There are no great differences between these two groups. Nevertheless, contrary to the case with the party ID, the more conservative an individual, the more likely he or she will convert from voting to non-voting; therefore their percentage is higher among new non-voters. There is an almost equal distribution of moderate citizens among new non-voters and voters, which is contrary to the scholarly-driven

expectations that moderates are more likely to stop voting. However, this is strongly related to the ideological positions of candidates, which will be stressed in further sections.

Table 6.11.10 Ideological Self-Placement of the US New Non-Voters

Liberal – Conservative Self Placement	New Non-Voters	Others
Extremely Liberal	0	0
Liberal	7.41	7.62
Slightly Liberal	12.96	15.67
Moderate	29.63	27.53
Slightly Conservative	24.07	26.88
Conservative	25.93	20.78
Extremely Conservative	0	1.52
Total (N=973)	100%	100%

In sum, there are certain differences between new non-voters and voters. There are more new non-voters among men, divorced, southerners and people that follow political programs two to three times per week. When party ID matters, the number of the independents is higher among new non-voters compared with others, but the fact that still around 55% of new non-voters have stressed party affiliation is a strong indicator of the role of party behaviour as a factor contributing to why voters stop voting. Nevertheless, Democrats in the 1984 and 1988 US presidential elections were passing through a very hard period following three consecutive defeats. Hence, the motivation among Democrats to participate was higher in the 1992 and 1996 US presidential elections as a result of the closeness of electoral results and perceived opportunity to overtake power, while Republicans were facing absolutely opposite circumstances.

Ideological self-placement also shows some very interesting patterns worth testing in the further sections. The percentage of conservatives is higher among new non-voters than in the other category. Among liberals there are no big differences. Therefore, this thesis is concentrated on analysing the ideological and position shifts of parties, concretely presidential candidates. Conservatives are the traditional source of votes for Republicans, with Ronald Reagan widely perceived as a strong conservative and while George H. W. Bush intended to continue Reagan's policies, he also pledged a "kinder and gentler nation" in an attempt to win over more moderate voters. Conversely, Democrats, after devastating results

in the 1984 and 1988 US presidential elections, nominated Bill Clinton in the 1992 on a platform of more left wing and liberal policies.

Finally, an analysis of the differences among new non-voters and voters is a starting point into a statistical analysis of the factors that influence voters to stop voting. While simple frequencies between new non-voters and voters have enabled us to observe the differences between these categories, statistical models above will allow us to identify the factors contributing to no longer voting.

APPENDIX C

Table 6.12 Self-reported Turnout in the US Presidential Elections 1984-1996

Year	Voted	Did not Vote	Turnout	Total
1996	889	107	49.0	996
1992	844	150	55.2	994
1988	890	66	50.2	956
1984	869	63	53.3	932

Source: Youth and Parents Socialization Panel 1984-1996

Table 6.13 Summary of Variables in the US elections

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
New Non Voter	996	0.054	0.22	0	1
Left –Right Shift	952	5.30	3.34	1.02	19.31
Political Information	996	2.54	0.94	1	5
Political Trust	948	2.58	1.19	1	6
House Ownership	996	1.09	0.42	1	7
Income	921	15.24	4.28	3	23
Employment Status	996	15.98	16.77	10	70
Educational Change	996	2.90	1.99	1	5
Mobility	996	0.65	1.14	0	9
Gender	996	1.53	0.49	1	2
Party ID	861	2.52	1.80	1	7
Party ID Strength	608	4.54	2.50	1	7

Source: Youth and Parents Socialization Panel 1984-1996

APPENDIX D

Table 6.14. The New Non-Voters and Shift in the Welfare State policy

Variables	Model 4	The New Non-Voter	Others
Welfare Shift		-0.93* (0.48)	-0.16(0.16)
Political Information		0.57** (0.26)	0.15** (0.14)
Political Trust		0.32* (0.18)	0.01 (0.11)
Mobility		0.26* (0.15)	-0.18* (0.09)
Gender		-0.24 (0.43)	0.88*** (0.27)
Income		0.01 (0.05)	-0.06** (0.004)
Employment Status		0.02*** (0.01)	0.002 (0.007)
Education Change		0.00 (0.57)	0.02 (0.06)
Party ID		0.39*** (0.11)	0.07 (0.07)
Constant		-2.12 (1.79)	-1.30 (1.16)
Pseudo R Squared		0.20	
N		775	

Base Category: The Habitual Voter, Clustered standard errors, *** 0.01, ** 0.05, *0.1

Table 6.15 The New Non-Voter in the Foreign Policy and Defense areas

Variables	Model 5	The New Non-Voter	Others
Security Shift		-1.11(0.74)	0.28*** (0.08)
Political Information		0.69*** (0.23)	0.26** (0.13)
Political Trust		0.13 (0.16)	-0.09 (0.13)
Mobility		0.16 (0.14)	0.17* (0.09)
Gender		-0.06 (0.39)	0.96*** (0.27)
Income		-0.003 (0.04)	-0.06** (0.003)
Employment Status		0.07 (0.09)	-0.005 (0.007)
Education Change		0.02 (0.09)	0.02 (0.05)
Party ID		0.52*** (0.10)	0.19*** (0.07)
Constant		-7.85*** (1.62)	-3.74*** (1.13)
Pseudo R Squared		0.12	
N		775	

Base Category: The Habitual Voter, Clustered standard errors, *** 0.01, ** 0.05, *0.1

Table 6.16. The New Non-Voters and Shift in the Liberal Market policy area

Variables	Model 6	The New Non-Voter	Others
Free Market Shift		2.80*(1.64)	1.032***(0.05)
Political Information		0.81*** (0.25)	0.22 (0.14)
Political Trust		0.16 (0.17)	-0.01 (0.11)
Mobility		0.23 (0.13)	0.16 (0.10)
Gender		0.34 (0.48)	1.09*** (0.28)
Income		-0.05 (0.05)	-0.06**(0.03)
Employment Status		0.003 (0.10)	-0.003(0.007)
Education Change		0.14 (0.10)	0.05(0.06)
Party ID		0.51*** (0.11)	0.11*(0.07)
Constant		-8.63*** (1.92)	-2.96*** (1.20)
Pseudo R Squared		0.20	
N		775	

Base Category: The Habitual Voter, Clustered standard errors, *** 0.01, ** 0.05, *0.1

Table 6.17 The New Non-Voter in the Human Rights policy area

Variables	Model 7	The New Non-Voter	Others
Human Rights		2.19*** (0.71)	-0.097(0.06)
Political Information		-0.55*** (0.23)	0.21(0.13)
Political Trust		0.11 (0.16)	-0.01 (0.11)
Mobility		0.17*** (0.14)	0.17* (0.09)
Gender		-0.10 (0.37)	0.83** (0.27)
Income		-0.01 (0.04)	- 0.06(0.003)
Employment Status		0.01*** (0.08)	-0.003(0.007)
Education Change		-0.01 (0.09)	0.06(0.06)
Party ID		0.34*** (0.10)	0.08 (0.07)
Constant		-7.11*** (1.50)	-3.15*** (1.10)
Pseudo R Squared		0.12	
N		775	

Base Category: The Habitual Voter, Clustered standard errors, *** 0.01, ** 0.05, *0.1

Table 6.18 The New Non-Voters and Shift in the policy area of Multiculturalism

Variables	Model 8	The New Non-Voter	Others
Multiculturalism		-3.44*** (0.55)	-0.41(0.39)
Political Information		0.77*** (0.25)	0.27**(0.13)
Political Trust		0.26 (0.17)	0.007 (0.14)
Mobility		0.16 (0.14)	-0.16** (0.09)
Gender		-0.14 (0.42)	0.87*** (0.27)
Income		0.03 (0.04)	-0.06*(0.004)
Employment Status		0.01 (0.009)	-0.002(0.007)
Education Change		-0.05 (0.09)	0.03(0.06)
Party ID		-0.59*** (0.10)	0.17**(0.07)
Constant		-5.21***(1.26)	-2.52**(1.06)
Pseudo R Squared		0.15	
N		775	

Base Category: The Habitual Voter, Clustered standard errors, *** 0.01, ** 0.05, *0.1

Table 6.19 The New Non-Voter in the Labour rights policy areas

Variables	Model 9	The New Non-Voter	Others
Labour Rights		-0.060(2.4)	0.096(0.84)
Political Information		0.71*** (0.23)	0.26**(0.14)
Political Trust		0.10 (0.15)	-0.08 (0.11)
Mobility		0.17 (0.15)	0.18** (0.09)
Gender		-0.21 (0.37)	0.88*** (0.27)
Income		-0.01 (0.04)	0.07**(0.004)
Employment Status		0.01*** (0.01)	-0.002(0.006)
Education Change		-0.03 (0.18)	0.01(0.05)
Party ID		0.51*** (0.10)	0.15*** (0.07)
Constant		-5.68*** (1.46)	-2.57*** (1.07)
Pseudo R Squared		0.09	
N		775	

Base Category: The Habitual Voter, Clustered standard errors, *** 0.01, ** 0.05, *0.1

Table 6.20 The New Non-Voters and Shift in the Traditional Values

Variables	Model 10	The New Non-Voter	Others
Traditional Values		1.71***(0.37)	-0.38**(0.18)
Political Information		0.62*** (0.14)	0.26**(0.14)
Political Trust		0.12 (0.16)	0.14 (0.12)
Mobility		0.15 (0.14)	-0.02 (0.37)
Gender		-0.01 (0.08)	0.88*** (0.27)
Income		-0.01 (0.04)	0.06**(0.004)
Employment Status		0.04*** (0.01)	-0.003(0.006)
Education Change		-0.01(0.18)	0.02(0.05)
Party ID		0.41*** (0.10)	0.13*(0.06)
Constant		-6.59*** (1.49)	-2.84*** (1.09)
Pseudo R Squared		0.12	
N		775	

Base Category: The Habitual Voter, Clustered standard errors, *** 0.01, ** 0.05, *0.1

Table 6.21 The New Non-Voter in the Minority Rights Policy area

Variables	Model 11	The New Non-Voter	Others
Minority Rights Shift		0.23(0.58)	-0.74**(0.26)
Political Information		0.67*** (0.23)	0.38**(0.14)
Political Trust		0.09(0.48)	0.14 (0.12)
Mobility		0.88*** (0.12)	-0.02 (0.37)
Gender		-0.02 (0.88)	0.15*** (0.23)
Income		-0.01 (0.04)	0.06*** (0.004)
Employment Status		0.04**(0.01)	-0.003(0.006)
Education Change		0.57 (0.18)	0.02(0.05)
Party ID		0.48*** (0.10)	0.24*** (0.07)
Constant		-11.15*** (4.70)	-8.89*** (0.70)
Pseudo R Squared		0.12	
N		775	

Base Category: The Habitual Voter, Clustered standard errors, *** 0.01, ** 0.05, *0.1

CHAPTER SEVEN

Do parties lose some of their supporters because of ideological shifts?

7.1. Introduction

A significant number of voters decide to stop participating at the next electoral cycles despite their regular previous participation. The majority of the previous research on the voters' behaviour has shown that citizens support the political party with which they closely identify (Campbell et al, 1960). This party identification is a result of the process of socialisation, it is inherited from the parents and it becomes a habit which voters tend to repeat in the future while casting the ballots (Campbell et al, 1960). Nevertheless, this close relationship between the voters and the political party they have supported is taken for granted. The voters that used to regularly participate at elections and stop voting at the next electoral cycle are opposing this commonly accepted wisdom. Opposite of their previous habit of voting and their party identification which drive their decision to continue voting, this category of voters stop participating at elections.

The aim of this chapter is to analyse how parties are influenced by the number of voters that have stopped voting and whether parties and their electoral strategies cause voters to stop voting. This chapter hypothesises that ideological inconsistency of political parties is one of the main reasons why voters lose their attachment with the political party, they feel they are not adequately represented anymore and therefore stop voting at the next electoral cycle. This paper attempts to show that while the change of the ideological positions of the party is considered by parties as an efficient strategy for attracting new voters, it can also cause serious damage to the already existing supporters for the party and influence on their decision to stop voting at next elections.

Political parties have different incentives to shift their ideological positions. As I will show below there are several main theories which explain why political parties lack of ideological consistency, why they are not staying coherent and “flip-flop” their ideological positions. As part of the shift of the party ideology, this paper will also examine whether and how other party characteristics such as being part of the government or being in opposition, change of

the party leadership, different party family, size and number of competing party opponents influence the number of their previous voters that have stopped voting at the next elections.

The chapter is organized in six sections. The next section analyses the current development of the political parties and how they influence the decline of the political participation. The following section of the chapter offers a theoretical explanation of the parties' electoral strategies followed with a brief review of the literature that analyses parties' transformation and their ideological and policy inconsistency. In the fourth section, I will present my research question and hypotheses, before I discuss the dataset, the statistical model that I am testing and its variables. The main findings of my analysis and interpretation of the results are shown in section five. The chapter ends with concluding remarks on the results and a discussion of methodological aspects.

7.2. How political parties create new non-voters?

Political parties are very important political actors without which democratic life could not be imagined (Schattschneider 1937), but at the same time parties are no longer what they once were (Schmitter 2001). While political parties were traditionally seen as channels between civil society and the state, they now seem to be moving towards the state and away from civil society (Katz and Mair 1995; Dalton 2000; Van Biezen 2004). Political parties today seem to be in decline. Empirically, this decline claim has been supported by several studies. Dalton (2000) shows that feelings of partisanship have declined even more severely than initially thought, and Mair and Van Biezen (2001) report that party membership has declined over time. Mair (2005) combines several indicators of involvement in parties and reports that turnout, electoral volatility, party identification, and membership have all declined over the past few decades in a number of democracies, which points to a general decline in involvement in political parties (Van Biezen, Mair, Poguntke 2009, 2011). Parties seem to lose their grip on society and the weight of parties seems to be eroding (Blondel 2002).

The transformation of political parties has undoubtedly and predominantly caused a change in their ideological positions (Mair and Castles 1984, Budge 1994, Volkens and Klingemann 2001). This change is dependent on their strategy as well as political circumstances. When there was a greater degree of electoral competitiveness, the parties were more "vote seekers"; when there is greater certainty for accurate conversion of the votes into seats, then parties will place more value on electoral objectives (Strom 2000).

During the period in which elite parties dominated, political ideologies, goals and conflicts largely revolved around the distribution of privileges, and the parties competed on the basis of the ascribed status of their adherents. As the mass party developed, the key opposition in party ideologies was focused around the question of social reform, and parties competed in terms of representative capacity. With the emergence of the catch-all party, the ideology of parties revolved around the question of social improvement rather than wholesale reform, and the parties competed on the basis of policy efficiency rather than on the basis of representative potential. With the emergence of the cartel party, the goals of politics became more self-referential, with politics becoming a profession in itself. The now limited inter-party competition takes place on the basis of competing claims of efficient and effective management (Strom 2001). Declining levels of satisfaction with core democratic institutions and politicians, the apparent withdrawal of people from the political process in general, the ideological convergence and the disappearing popular component of democracy through political parties in specific all seem to point to deeper problems with democracy itself.

Ideologies and issues adopted from the parties are centrally important in representative democracies. Parties should respond to citizens' preferences by offering policy packages; they should realise these pre-election promises after coming to power. If this package is distinguishable, then the voters will support the political parties in the elections (Volkens and Klingeman 2001).

The main theories/hypotheses explaining the decline in ideological distances between parties are "cleavage theory contagion processes", rational choice theory, "end of ideology" catch-all parties as well as the Europeanisation of political parties (Nanou, Han Dorussen 2009). Catch-all practices and contagion processes have induced whole party families to move towards the center of the political spectrum (Rueda 2007), enabling new parties to emerge at the left or right ends of the pole. Catch-all parties have consequently taken up new issues that are neither left nor right. On a cross-country average, the distance between political parties decreased during the 1940's to 1960's, increased from the 1970's to 1980's and again decreased between the 1980's and 1990's. The degree of polarisation and level of range was bigger in the 1940's than in the 1990's (Volkens and Klingeman 2001).

As a result of political internationalisation and globalisation, the parties in communist, socialist, green, Christian Democratic and regional party families have moved closer to each other on an ideological basis (Kriesi 2008). Convergence processes from the 1940's to 1960's

between party families were the result of the stronger movement leftward of the Christian Democratic, liberal and regional parties rather than the socialist party families, which drifted in the opposite direction. (Volgens and Klingeman 2001). Divergence processes from the 1970s to 1980s are result of the opposite movement: the leftward party families moved more strongly to the right.

The Europeanization of the political parties as a result of European integration also caused a decline of the differences between the political parties. The influence of Europeanisation on the party ideological shift is particularly significant in Central and Eastern post-communist countries where the integration into the EU has caused a further ideological congruence of the political parties (Nanou 2009) Additionally, testing for ideological convergence of party families as a result of the Europeanisation, Camia and Caramani (2012) indicate high and persistent long-term ideological cohesiveness at both elite and electorate level, especially on the economic left–right dimension pointing to a Europeanised party system (Camia and Caramani 2012).

To sum up, the above review shows that the constant decline of political representation and responsibility and the decline in the voter turnout were followed by convergence and a constant shift of party ideologies. This research attempts to show that the decline of voter turnout and increasing number of new non-voters are strongly correlated with party ideology shifts.

7.3. What about political parties and their ideological positions?

Political parties change their ideological positions in order to better achieve their goals. No matter whether they are policy -, office – or vote-seeking (Muller and Strom 1999), they expect to benefit from their ideological move. Political parties are left to make the choice between two main strategies: to freeze the party system and to keep their ideological positions very stable or to act as an adaptive agent in search of votes and hence to change their positions where the median voter belongs. When making their decisions parties have to be aware of the reaction from the risk-averse voters and their core supporters. These voters may penalise parties that drastically shift their policies. If political parties want to keep their support they need to freeze the party system (Alvarez and Nagler 2002; Adams, Merrill, and Grofman 2005; Budge 1994; Stokes 2001). On the other hand, several studies argue that parties are adaptive agents in search of votes. Parties are not necessarily optimally positioned

in the ideological space, and this gives some parties an incentive to constantly shift their positions in the hope of gaining votes (Adams et al. 2004; Kollman, Miller, and Page 1992; Laver 2005). Additionally, when considering Laver's model of types of political parties and party competition (2005, 2012) in which he distinguishes four types of parties: hunter, aggregator, predator and sticker, the three of these types are continually changing their positions with the goal of achieving better electoral result. The fourth type – the sticker party - is an ideologically constant party, and thus keeps the same positions and, in general, is orientated toward keeping their stable voters and supporters.

Nevertheless, this ideological incoherence can cause different outcomes. The Labour party in Great Britain, especially in the period between the early 1980s to the middle of the 1990s, illustrates how a party ideology shift can influence electoral outcomes, and also cause many supporters to stop voting. At the beginning of the 1980s, after the electoral defeat in the parliamentary elections in 1979 and with the change of the leader of the party and the inauguration of the writer Michael Foot, this resulted in an enormous move of the party toward the left (Crines, 2010). The new party manifesto that was introduced was considered to be a strong socialist move (Jenkins, Owen, Williams Rodgers, 1981) and resulted in the worst electoral outcome for the party since 1918. As a result of this dramatic ideological shift, significant numbers of voters decided not to vote, while simultaneously a substantial number of voters shifted their support to the new-formed Social Democratic Party. In the end the Labour Party captured only 27.6% of the votes.

The changes that the Labour Party undertook in the 1990s demonstrate how party ideology shift can cause an increase in the number of votes for the party and, thus, an electoral win. The continuous transformation of the Labour Party, starting with Foot's successor Neil Kinnock, and resulting in the publication of the new manifesto in 1996, called "New Labour", under the leadership of Tony Blair, produce success in the elections and resulted in the party gaining power. This manifesto was another example of the ideology shift of the party, but in this case the new votes received as a result of the shift overtook the votes lost as a result of political apathy and brought about an electoral win. Now, after an electoral defeat at the UK general elections of 2010 and the election of Ed Miliband as the new Labour leader, the party is once again moving towards the left. The election of the Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour in 2015 after the defeat of the party at the UK general elections of 2015 represents a decisive move to the party towards the party positions during the era of Michael

Foot. Even media has portrayed Jeremy Corbyn as the “same ideologically extreme, and maybe even less electable than Foot”.

Contrary to the Labour case, in one of the most systematic empirical attempts to analyse party ideologies, Budge (1994) analysed and tests alternative decision rules that the leadership of parties can practice when deciding how to adjust party policy positions – by shifting to the left or the right—between elections. His findings show that while there is substantial temporal stability in parties’ ideologies, different political parties implement different decision rules to decide the direction of their inter-election policy shifts. According to Budge, this ideological stability is a result partly of the uncertain political environment that elites confront in which they cannot accurately forecast how their ideologies will affect their electoral fortunes (Adams et al, 2005).

Building on Budge (1994), Adams et al, (2005) differentiate ideological shifts as a result of (i) shifts in public opinion and (ii) past election results. They show that when a political party finds itself in a disadvantaged position regarding the shift of the public opinion, i.e. when the public opinion has significantly shifted towards left, the rightwing political parties are forced to adjust their ideological positions in order to remain competitive at elections (Adams et al 2005). The past electoral results do not play any significant role in ideological shifts of political parties. Adams et al (2005) show that political parties do not adopt their ideological standings as a result of the success or failure at the previous elections. The adaptation takes place only as a result of the public opinion shifts. Additionally, similar to Budge, these authors show that party ideologies are relatively stable and parties are reluctant to alter their ideologies. Parties display no systematic tendency to respond to public opinion except when it clearly shifts away from their positions (Adams et al. 2005).

Nevertheless, an important issue regarding ideological changes of the parties is the directions and size of the changes. Budge and Klingemann (2001) show that over time, change sometimes results in party positions overlapping or in parties ‘leapfrogging’ each other, but by and large, such leapfrogging only occurs between parties that are ideologically close to one another (Budge and Klingemann, 2001). Another important issue raised mainly in the works of Adams and his co-authors (2005, 2012, 2014, 2015) shows that voters’ perceptions of ideological changes in party manifestos is low on average and if a party changes its left-right position in terms of its manifesto, the mean of respondents does not position the party

significantly more to the left or right than the mean of respondents in the previous election (Adams and Somer-Topcu, 2014).

Thus, Adams (2012) reveals a paradox: “on the one hand, empirical studies conclude that parties systematically shift their policy positions in response to the factors that spatial modelers have identified. On the other hand, there is only weak and inconsistent empirical evidence that voters actually perceive parties’ policy shifts, and/or that these shifts have significant electoral consequences” (Adams 2012).

Additionally, the shifts of the ideological positions are not the same for mainstream parties and niche parties. Adams et al. (2004, 2006) and Ezrow et al. (2011) conducting empirical analyses on the ideological shifts of parties from various party families show that while all political parties in western European party systems show ideological inconsistency and shifted the left-right positions in their policy manifestos in response to shifts in public opinion, these tendencies were only substantively significant in the case of mainstream parties such as Labour, Social Democratic, Liberal, Christian Democratic, and the Conservative parties (Adams 2015).

Regarding the niche parties which are defined as small parties with ideological clienteles including green, communist, and radical right parties, Ezrow et al (2011) in their analyses of shifts in the policy positions of 15 western European political parties over the period 1973–2002, identified no substantively significant relationship between public opinion shifts and shifts on the left-right dimension of niche parties’ election manifestos. There are several explanations to this. Ezrow et al (2011) argue that “niche parties’ policy stability in the face of public opinion shifts reflects the niche party elites’ belief that their core supporters are more ideologically oriented than are the supporters of mainstream parties and will react badly to policy shifts in their party’s election program because these supporters view such shifts—especially those that moderate the niche party’s policies—as a betrayal of the party’s core values” Ezrow et al (2011). They suggest that “niche party elites were disproportionately responsive to the policy preferences of their current supporters, in the sense that when their supporters’ policy preferences shifted in a direction that differed from the direction of opinion shifts in the wider electorate, these niche parties tended to follow their supporters as opposed to the public as a whole” (Adams, 2012).

Tavits (2007) argues that whether party policy shifts are damaging or rewarding depends on whether the shift occurs in the pragmatic or principled issue domain. On pragmatic issues, voters value “getting things done.” Policy shifts in this domain signal responsiveness to the changing environment and are likely to be rewarded. Principled issues, however, concern core beliefs and values. Any policy shift in this domain is a sign of inconsistency and lack of credibility, which is likely to lead to voter withdrawal.

Finally, the ideologies and policy preferences play strong role in the American elections. As I have shown in Chapter 4, the consistency—or lack thereof—in candidates’ positions is, as Tomz and van Houweling stress, a perennial issue in political campaigns. When candidates change positions over time, competitors often expose the inconsistency and attempt to exploit it for electoral advantage (Tomz and Van Houweling 2011). Just as parties are seen as less credible and committed when they attempt to takeover an issue that some other party “owns” (Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996), they lack credibility and appear uncommitted when they shift their original stances on a principled issue (Tavits 2007). The primaries in the Republican campus for the presidential elections in 2016 have shown a great shift towards more conservative positions and lack of moderate candidates who will articulate the interests and preferences of the moderate voters. Similarly in the Democratic campus, the presence of the self-proclaimed democratic socialist Bernie Sanders has influenced ideological shifts and adaptations from the front-runner candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton, who is consequently accused for inconsistency and adopting her positions in line with the public opinion shifts.

Nevertheless, very few previous researches have been focused on the effect of this ideological inconsistency on the decision of the individuals to vote or to stop voting. Tomz and Van Houweling (2008, 2010) contribution in diagnosing this issue via experimental design is a novel attempt of investigating this phenomenon, but their research is mainly concentrated on the following: first, on the vote choice in general only including the decision to stop voting as one of the alternatives and, second, on a manipulated hypothetical environment on the Internet using experimental methods and not on a observational data.

7.4. Do ideologies still matter?

As I have shown above, numerous previous research studies have pointed out that political ideologies lose their importance. Political parties do not compete on the same social cleavages and voters do not make their decision based on their class, social or racial division.

The new circumstances have brought us to what is considered as the phenomenon of electoral dealignment (Dalton et al., 1984; Franklin et al., 1992). Economic and social changes, often referred to as the process of social modernisation (Thomassen, 2005), have reduced the impact of social-structural factors and long-term predispositions on how a citizen votes.

Contrary to this, Hill and Leighley (1993), analysing statewide levels of turnout in the US by using aggregate level data, investigated the relative importance of organization, party ideology and competitiveness as factors that influence participation in U.S. gubernatorial elections. They find that party ideology as well as party competitiveness has a significant effect on the turnout, unlike party organization. Their findings show that party ideology is an important determinant of voters' behaviour, a part of the financial spending of the candidates, and also differentiates depending on the level of restrictiveness of a state voter's registration requirements. Logically, a less restrictive registration law increases the influence on party ideology.

On the other hand, although not unanimously, many previous research studies discuss and show evidence as to the increase of the party system in polarisation. A higher level of polarisation has been shown to strengthen ideological voting (van der Eijk et al. 2005; Ensley 2007; Lachat 2008a), value voting (Knutson and Kumlin 2005), and issue voting (Alvarez and Nagler 2004). "Greater polarization means that parties' issue positions diverge more strongly, which should incite parties to emphasize their issue positions. The increased salience of issues, in turn, should motivate voters to rely on more substantial criteria and make it easier to do so" (Lachat 2008).

Political parties often stake out left-right positions that deviate from mean positions of their voters. Against the conventional wisdom, a significant number of previous research studies have shown that political parties stand more extreme positions than supporters. According to the directional theory of voting (Rabinowitz and MacDonald, 1989) political parties tend to take a stronger ideological position because voters care not only about the direction of political positions, but also the intensity of that position. In multi-party system, if more political parties are positioned on the same side of the left-right spectrum, then they tend to differentiate among each other based on the intensity of position. In this sense, according to directional theory, political parties are forced to intensify their ideological positions, to shift their previous ideological standings and to adapt to the needs to attract more votes.

Ideological inconsistency results from the shifting of party positions, and is part of the strategies of political parties to attract more voters.

Ideology strongly matters and influences the electoral outcome (Lewis-Back and Chlarson 2002). In the case of the French presidential elections of 1995, Lewis-Back and Chlarson (2002) show that left-right ideological identification is even stronger explanatory factor of the vote choice than party identification. Party identification strongly drives the electoral outcome in the first ballot, while left-right ideological identification is more crucial for the second ballot.

More contemporary studies of the ideological positions of Conservatives under Cameron during 2010 Parliamentary Elections show “ideology and ideological difference remain central features of modern British politics, and that ideological positioning is an important concern for political parties” (Buckler and Dolowitz 2012). According to this study, the Conservatives engaged in a process of ideological repositioning and lacked clarity and ideological consistency. As Helm (2010) and Walters (2010) show, the failure of the Conservatives to win a majority in the Parliament, which was followed with criticism from within the party as well as outside it, for inconsistency in terms both of policies and ideas, shows that a lack of clear ideological positioning or repositioning in the light of political problems can only help such problems to sustain or be exacerbated (Buckler and Dolowitz 2012).

The Hungarian party system is another example of a highly polarized system. Todosijevec and Enyedi (2008) claim that the right-wing parties have a Christian-nationalist and anticommunist orientation, while the "left" is associated with the socialist-communist legacy and (at least within the social elite) with a libertarian-cosmopolitan orientation. “The cultural issue dimension (nationalism, libertarianism, clericalism, etc.) is much more decisive from the point of view of party competition than economic issues” (Enyedi, 2005; Markowski, 1997; Toka, 2004).

Furthermore, Todosijevec and Enyedi show that “the left regards the right as antidemocratic, nationalist, and, sometimes, even fascist. The right identifies the left with communism and regularly questions the loyalty of left-wing politicians to the nation. Observers often refer to the situation as a "cold civil war" between the left and the right (cf. Enyedi, 2006). Thus, under these conditions it is difficult to speak about a "dominant ideology” (Todosijevec and

Enyedi 2008). The Hungarian case shows that there is a strong competition of mutually exclusive ideologies.

The US Presidential Elections in 2012 are another strong case of evidence in favour of the decisive role of the ideology for the electoral context (Feldman and Zaino 2012). These elections have confirmed the exceedingly polarized state of the political system. And contrary to the “conflict displacement” process literature which suggests that increasing the party conflict on certain issues on the agenda results in a decline of party conflict on another issues, the United States experienced what Layman and Carsey (2002) call “conflict extension” with two parties growing more polarized on cultural, racial and social welfare issues. Some of the most important issues that brought a clear political division were the health care reform and the legal recognition of the same-sex marriage. “Forty-nine percent of voters in the CBS exit poll want all or part of the 2010 health care law repealed, and 83 percent of them voted for Romney. 44 percent want the health care law left as is or expanded, and 87 percent of them voted for the president” (Feldman and Zaino 2012). Regarding same-sex marriages, Obama received almost three-quarters of the votes of those who favour same-sex marriage, and Romney won the same fraction of those opposed, while slight majority of voters were in favour of the marriage equality.

These presidential elections brought another important segment of the role of the ideology, and that is ideological inconsistency. In order to win the Republican primaries, Mitt Romney significantly changed his positions on several important and salient issues as health care reform, same-sex marriage, gun control and abortion. Romney’s pragmatism to appeal the more conservative corpus of republican voters brought him to series of serious accusations of his opponents for constant “ideological flip-flopping” and being “consistently inconsistent”. Mitt Romney offered different ideological strategies for different electorates, which brought him to success inside the party, but at the same time it cost him losing the political credibility and confidence in the eyes of voters. Numerous previous research have shown that candidates appeal more extreme ideological positions during primaries and then they shift towards moderation during electoral campaigns and, in the case with Republicans for the 2012 presidential election, this strategy did not bring the party success.

7.5. What motivates parties to shift their ideological positions?

Political parties are goal-oriented entities. Their goals can be differentiated. Vote-seeking parties significantly differ from policy-seeking and the latter from the office-seeking parties (Strom and Mueller 1999). But no matter their goal, as agents, parties tend to maximize their utility. As a part of dynamic party systems competing against one or more parties with different strategies and ideological orientations, parties have to develop a system of ideas that will enable them to better achieve their goals. In this goal, parties are facing the dilemma to choose between credibility and adaptation.

According to the spatial theory of voting, political parties should follow where the median voter moves and adapt to different ideological positions in order to attract more of these voters (Lachat 2008, Pardos-Prado & Dinas 2010, Fazekas and Meder 2013). In reality all the three dominant theories of voting, as has been explained above, suggest that parties should constantly ideologically move and shift their positions. According to proximity theory, political parties should always move left or right on the ideological spectrum in order to be closer to the highest density of voters. Directional theory suggests that parties should care about the direction of the voters, but in order to attract their support they have to shift the intensity and to emphasize the importance of their ideological positions. According to discount theory, parties should be aware which issue is important to the voters in a specific electoral context, to pay more attention to that issue and to adopt an ideological position regarding the certain issue which would be highly acceptable for the majority of voters.

On the other hand, credibility is a highly appreciated characteristic in the electoral competition. At the same time, it is the “Achilles’ heel” where competitors always try to attack their opponent. Consistency is overemphasized as an important positive feature for the political parties and a value highly acknowledged by the voters and supporters. Therefore, when parties are changing their ideological positions, they should primarily consider how this will affect their own voters and supporters and whether this ideological shift will discredit the party among the loyal followers.

While some of the reasons for ideological inconsistency are beyond parties’ control, such as the change of the socio-economic circumstances, transformation of the economic conditions and globalisation followed with the collapse of the two block division in international relations, there are several factors that cause ideological inconsistency and are completely

dependent on party strategies and their organisational context. As I have mentioned above, whether parties will change their ideological positions depends more of the electoral corpus they address, so parties and candidates differ ideologically at the primaries and elections. Another important element for ideological consistency is whether a party is in power or in opposition. The third element I will discuss below is change of leadership.

While parties tend to offer citizens electoral programs that will attract more support, once they gain the power and enter government they are not always able to fulfill all the promises they gave during electoral campaigns. Moreover, often they shift their ideological positions and change their policy strategies and priorities while in power. Based on the findings of literature on electoral cycles (Nordhaus 1975; Rogoff 1988; Downs 1972; Alesina 1994), which has shown that the parties have an incentive to implement their mandate of public policy (or to be responsive) especially during electoral times, parties in government meanwhile implement policies different from those promised in their electoral programs. They are faced to trade-off between “compulsory” and “discretionary” issues in the legislative agenda that may be linked to the different levels of influence of parties on the legislative agenda, i.e. the ability of parties to include in the passed legislation issues that are close to their preferences.

There are three different categories: Policy-routine (PRO) or the “compulsory” issues of legislative agendas, policy-reacting (PRE) or the “unexpected” issues, and policy-persuading (PP) or “preferred” issues (Froio 2012). Policy-persuading issues are the ones suggested from the party in the electoral campaign and which are ideologically close to the party. Voters will examine the consistency and credibility of the party according to the success of implementing these issues. Parties should be responsive to voters regarding these promises and they should keep their ideological consistency regarding the issues in order to keep the credibility. Nevertheless, the previous research has shown that parties are partially successful in maintaining their ideological coherence in implementing preferred issues while in power and that the legislative agenda is dominated by the policy-routine and policy-reacting issues (Edwards 1990, Cox 2006, Workman, Jones et al. 2009).

Ideological extremity would play an important role in determining which candidates would be successful in primaries. According to King et al. (2012) ideological extremity is advantageous to those competing for their party’s nomination to senatorial candidacy. “More moderate candidates appear to be losing to more extreme candidates in primary elections. If

primary electorates are more likely to choose ideologically extreme candidates, then there are a number of important consequences for the political system” (King et al. 2012). During primaries, parties and candidates address supporters of their party which ideologically differ from the entire electoral body. In order to attract the nomination or support they have to intensify their ideological statements and hence to run on more extreme ideological stances. Nevertheless this seems to hurt a party’s ability to win a higher seat or vote share in the general elections. These candidates tend to moderate their ideological positions during the electoral campaigns in order to be more attractive to the wider electorates and then they lose their political credibility while also risking the extreme supporters they attracted during the primaries. Previous research has also shown when only one party nominates more extreme candidate the other party also tends to address more extreme opposite ideological views (Burden 2001, Cox and McCubbins2005). “If both parties are nominating candidates farther away from the median voter of the overall electorate then this could explain a great deal of the polarization we see in politics today” (King et al 2012).

Most popular accounts argue that during the 2010 congressional elections the Republicans’ inability to gain back control of the chamber can be traced to the nomination of extreme conservatives in states such as Nevada, Delaware, and Colorado (King et al 2012). While Republicans nominated an equal proportion of conservative ideologues for the House, Democrats were unable to highlight candidate extremity in those races in the same way that they had in the Senate and hence to react on their ideological inconsistency during the electoral campaigns. According to King et al (2012) this explains the success of Republicans to gain a majority in House of Representatives, but not in the Senate.

Contrary to the case of Republicans in the US, the Socialist Party’s primaries in France for the presidential elections of 2012 brought forth a highly contested ideological race among several candidates, with the more moderate Francois Holland and Martine Aubry as more extreme candidate as frontrunners. While Aubry was enjoying vast support among the partisans as Secretary General of the socialists, the main concern during the primaries was that the nominee of the socialists should be a candidate that would be acceptable for the majority of voters in order to win against the incumbent Nicolas Sarkozy. Socialists chose Holland, who subsequently won the elections with a narrow margin, being the second runner-up to win against the incumbent in the Fifth Republic.

The third very important factor that influences political parties to shift their ideological positions is related to the leadership and the party representation. The role of the party leader is increasing (Poguntke and Webb 2007). There is a clear pattern of presidentialisation of politics. Poguntke and Webb claim that three interrelated processes have led to a political process increasingly moulded by the inherent logic of presidentialism: increasing leadership power and autonomy within the political executive; increasing leadership power and autonomy within political parties; and increasingly leadership-centered electoral processes (Poguntke and Webb 2007).

While there are substantial cross-national differences across 14 modern democracies including the US and Canada included in the analysis of Poguntke and Webb, the results show that modern democracies are increasingly following a presidential logic of governance through which leadership is becoming more central and more powerful, but also increasingly dependent on successful immediate appeal to the mass public. Hence this pattern of the presidentialisation of parties might have very clear implications on ideologies that parties hold and their consistency. The strong leadership and his autonomy within the party means that party are becoming more depending on the personal view of the President instead of the core values of the party. Leader's ideological positions are emphasized and attract more public interest than official party positions in the platforms and manifestos and the change of her position is viewed as an ideological shift of the party as well. The necessity of immediate appeal of the mass public means that parties emphasize the most salient political issues and take positions that are closer to the wider electoral masses. In this way they diminish the importance of their traditional values and core ideological positions on which they have mobilized their supporters.

Another important implication of the presidentialisation of party that directly influences ideological positions of the parties is the consequences of the leadership change. The strong personalisation and autonomy means that the new leader can bring the party in a very different direction compared with her precursor. Once again, the Labour Party in the UK in the period of late 70's onwards is a typical example of this feature. The changes of the leadership starting with Michael Foot and finishing with Ed Miliband have brought constant ideological shifts including not only the intensity of some ideological values, but also the direction of ideology of the party (Evans 2011).

In pluralistic party systems like in most of the European countries, the coalition formation plays a very important role. The role of the parties in the coalitions can also influence their ideological positions. Fortunato and Stevenson (2013) show that coalition participation can strongly influence changes of the previous positions of the parties and that once in coalition, these parties converge their positions by adopting their manifesto preferences. Consequently, they argue that coalition membership is a useful heuristic that voters can use to infer how the policy positions of cabinet parties are changing or are likely to change over the life of a cabinet (Fortunato and Stevenson 2013).

In sum, parties tend to shift their ideological positions in order to maximize their utility. Some of the reasons for the ideological inconsistency lay in the inevitable changes of the socio-economic circumstances, but parties are also motivated to shift their positions because (i) they address different electorates and this is the case with campaigns at primaries and elections, (ii) parties in power are not always able to implement the policy preferences introduced in their platforms, but their governmental agenda is interrupted by policy routine and policy reaction and (iii) parties are becoming more dependent on the autonomy of the leader and what leadership change can bring to different ideological priorities.

7.6. Hypotheses, data and methodology

7.6.1. Hypotheses

The aim of this chapter is investigate whether voters that have supported a certain political party at previous elections stop voting because of party ideology inconsistency. This paper will test whether political parties lost a certain number of their supporters as result of their adaptive ideological strategy. Consequently, this research will also focus on discovering differences in the ideology shifts among the party families and it will also compare the number of new non-voters per party family. The following next two hypotheses will be tested:

H1 *The bigger the change of the party ideology, the bigger the number of new non-voters for parties.*

The starting position regarding this main hypothesis of the research is that when political parties change their ideologies, they might hurt their traditional supporters. These voters do not feel represented by the party anymore, but as a result of the previously achieved loyalty

and affiliation with the political party, they would rather stop voting than swing their vote to other political parties.

H2 The number of the new non-voters is lower in the parties from the far-left (communist) and far-right (nationalist) parties despite their ideological shift as a result of the stronger loyalty of these supporters.

This hypothesis follows up on the vast literature about party membership which claims that the supporters of the parties on the extreme of the political spectrum develop stronger affiliation toward parties they support. Contrary to them, voters closer to the political centre have a bigger choice among the catch all parties which display more moderate ideological positions and they are more likely to swing vote from one to another party than to stay strongly affiliated with the party they voted for in the previous electoral cycles.

7.6.2. Data and operationalization of the variables

For testing these hypotheses I use the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems Database Module II 2001 – 2011. This dataset enables me to construct the dependent variable that represents the percentage of the voters that abandoned voting for a certain political party in the second electoral cycle but voted for the party on the previous ballot. A part of the majority of the previous approaches dealing with similar question, this research is particularly interested in the voters that reported voting for the party but did not cast the ballot in the next elections. Therefore, an individual level post-election survey is necessary for construction of this variable. All the previous approaches use the difference between the electoral outcomes of the parties within two electoral cycles. The later approach does not provide for the possibility of answering the question this research precisely deals with. Although the way the dependent variable is constructed limits possibility for a very longer longitudinal analysis of the phenomenon because of lack of data, this approach still remains the best possible one for dealing with the research question.

The main independent variable “party ideology shift score” once again will be constructed from the Comparative Party Manifesto Database. Another variable that will be included in the analysis is the government/opposition variable, which will control the position of the party in front of their voters and supporters. The party in government has more possibilities to attract votes because of their visibility, but also has a greater potential to lose this support because of unsatisfied promises. Also, a change in leadership variable will be included, which will control whether the change of the leader affects the overall perceptions held by the citizens

about that party, as well as whether the change of the leader has an influence on the party ideology shift. The two additional variables which are important to be tested are the numbers of effective political parties and voting availability. The bigger number of effective political parties would mean lower number of new non-voters. It is similar with the voting availability options. If voters have a chance to vote via post, using the proxy voting or the possibility of internet voting, the number of new non-voters will be smaller than if there is only an option for personal vote.

7.7. Party ideology shift and number of new non-voters by party family

The number of the new non-voters differs among the different party families. Although, political parties compete on the national arena and their strategies are mainly related with the domestic political environment, parties from the same party family have similar characteristics and implement similar strategies to compete. Also, parties from same party family focus on very similar population groups, they cooperate on the European and international level and therefore it is expected that their strategies can bring to similar outcomes in different political arenas.

In order to identify the number of new non-voters per party family, I use the CSES Dataset Module II and III 2001 – 2011. As I have explained previously, the number of new non-voters per party represents the percentage of the voters that abandoned voting for a certain political party in the second electoral cycle but voted for the party on the previous ballot. Results from Table 5.1 show some very interesting patterns. The mean percentage of the voters that have stopped voting in the next electoral cycle is 6.1. Every political party and party family has lost around six percent of their regular voters in the next electoral cycle. This number shows that political parties in average lose a very relevant number of their supporters between two electoral cycles. These voters have participated at the elections and supported a certain political party, but they decided not to cast the ballot in the next elections. Political parties and their behaviour is one of the main reasons why voters decided to stop voting.

Comparing the number of the new non-voters among the party families, ecologist or green, conservative and special issue parties are the ones that have lost most of their supporters. Ecologist parties have lost 8 % of their supporters in average, while conservative and special issue parties around 7.5 % in average. Social democratic, liberal, agrarian and ethnic regional parties belong to the party family groups with the medium loss of their supporters, while the

Table 7.1 The Number of New Non-Voters per Party Family

Party Family	Mean	St. Deviation	No of cases
Ecologist	8	5.52	16
Communist	4.25	3.93	26
Socialist/Social democrat	6.7	4.78	44
Liberal	5.9	5.32	28
Christian democrat	4.6	3.76	30
Conservative	7.5	4.80	32
Nationalist	3.25	4.23	12
Agrarian	6.8	5.51	8
Ethnic Regional	6.6	8.90	7
Special issue	7.6	8.82	7
Sum	6.1	4.94	210

Source: CSES Module II 2001-2011 & CMP 2001-2011

Comparing the number of the new non-voters among the party families, ecologist or green, conservative and special issue parties are the ones that have lost most of their supporters. Ecologist parties have lost 8 % of their supporters in average, while conservative and special issue parties around 7.5 % in average. Social democratic, liberal, agrarian and ethnic regional parties belong to the party family groups with the medium loss of their supporters, while the parties on the extreme of the political spectrum, far – left or communist and far-right or nationalist parties have lost less supporters than any other political family. The Christian democratic party family is another interesting case. Also belonging to the party families that attract the voters close to the political centre on the right, they seem to be successful in keeping their supporters interested in voting.

Table 7.2 Party Ideology Shift per Party Family

Party Family	Mean	St. Deviation	No of cases
Ecologist	5.51	5.50	16
Communist	7.82	6.0	26
Socialist/Social democrat	5.39	4.32	44
Liberal	6.56	6.23	28
Christian democrat	4.97	7.61	30
Conservative	5.82	5.08	32
Nationalist	6.73	11.78	12
Agrarian	6.55	5.76	8
Ethnic Regional	0.16	0.32	7
Special issue	3.87	3.62	7
Sum	5.76	5.93	210

Source: CSES Module II 2001-2011 & CMP 2001-2011

Nationalist and ecologist party families have confirmed the expected behaviour. Supporters of parties that belong to these party families are less likely to stop voting, no matter how their political party performs. The supporters of these parties have been identified by numerous previous research studies as strongly affiliated with the party and very loyal to the party doctrine. Therefore, they remain voting for their political party because no matter the possible new strategies that party could implement, voters and supporters of these parties have developed higher degree of fanaticism about the party's doctrine than any of the mainstream parties closer to the political centre. According to many research studies, voters of the communist parties are mainly older people who are less likely to change their voting habit.

For measurement of the party ideology shift I use Comparative Manifesto Project Dataset. The results from the shift of the ideological positions of the political parties per party family in Table 2 show that contrary to all expectations, the far-left or communist parties are the ones that shift their ideological positions the most. The mean of the ideological shift of this party family is 7.82. Again, the second party family with highest party ideology shift score is the nationalist or far-right family.

These findings are in favour of the second hypothesis that no matter what kind of strategy extreme political parties implement, their supporters remain loyal to the party and decide to stop voting in a smaller number comparing with the other party families. Liberal, agrarian, conservative and ecologist party families have also a reasonably high score on party ideology shift. While Christian democratic and special issues parties have the lowest party ideology shift score. The score of the ethnic regional party family can be result of the important data limitations: first, the number of these parties in the sample is very small, and second these parties do not compete on the left-right spectrum of the political competition and their very low score could be a result of this limitation of the operationalisation of the party ideology shift variable.

Table 7.3 The Number of New Non-Voters per party in Government or Opposition

Government/Opposition	New Non-voters Mean	St. Deviation	No of cases
Party in Government	7.3	4.47	76
Party in Opposition	5.3	5.03	134
Sum	6.1	4.94	105

The role of the party in the political system of the country is also very important factor that influences the number of the voters per party that can stop voting at next elections. Whether the party is in power and independently or jointly in coalition forms a government, or whether it plays the role of opposition, can affect the number of the new non-voters who stop voting at the next electoral cycle. Table 3 shows that there is an important difference in the number of new non-voters per party as a result of their different role in the political system of the country. The percentage of the new non-voters among parties in power is 7.3%, and it is higher by 2 percentage points in comparison with the parties in opposition. The explanation for this phenomenon is that parties in power are more likely not to meet the expectations of their supporters and to change their policy and ideological positions. These changes can be a result of newly developed circumstances, some unexpected shocks or simply that political parties easily promise certain policies while in opposition and forget about their fulfillment while in power. The percentage of the new non-voters among the parties in opposition is also very relevant indicator that political parties can be punished by their supporters, not only when they are part of the government, but also when they do not have the responsibility to rule the country.

7.8. Results

The main hypothesis was tested using linear regression to examine how a party ideology shift influences voters to stop voting, or whether as a result of this ideological shift the voters who have supported party during past elections will choose to abandon voting for the party in the current election. As previously mentioned, the new non-voter variable was constructed from

The results from Table 7.4 show that the party ideology shift variable is statistically significant with $p < 0.000$, in all three tested models, which strongly supports the hypothesis for the influence of this variable on the number of new non-voters per party. Not only is it the case that this variable is statistical, but also it has the expected direction. If the political party makes higher ideological shift, the number of the new non-voters per party will increase. If the party is in government instead of being in power this leads to a 1.81 (Model 1, Table 7.4) increase of the possibility for increase of the number of new non-voters.

Table 7.4 The New Non -Voters per Party: OLS Regression results

Independent variables	Dependent variable: New Non-voters per party		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Party Ideology Shift	0.248*** (0.07)	0.249***(0.07)	0.315***(0.07)
Government/ Opposition	1.81* (0.94)	1.12 (1.01)	1.62*** (0.85)
Leadership Change	-0.86 (0.94)	-1.16 (0.95)	- 0.94 (0.80)
Electoral Strength		0.07* (0.04)	0.07* (0.04)
GDP Growth			0.04 (0.01)
Voting Availability			-5.72***(2.08)
Number of Parties			-2.26** (0.86)
Sweden			-2.18 (1.89)
Denmark			-7.38***(1.73)
Finland			-10.77***(2.36)
Iceland			-2.39(2.21)
Great Britain			2.74 (2.35)
France			3.30(2.76)
Holland			-7.22***(1.8)
Switzerland			-16.63***(4.00)
USA			- 5.6***(1.5)
Ireland			2.35(2.04)
New Zealand			4.65***(1.8)
Japan			-9.30***(3.6)
Israel			-6.38***(1.84)
Czech Republic			-2.17(2.18)
Hungary			10.47**(4.50)
Constant	4.15	3.55	-16.83
R – Squared	0.11	0.13	0.44
N	210	210	210

* p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

The high significance of t-test values for the variables for party ideology shift ($t=-4.759$, $p<.001$) and government/opposition belonging to the parties ($t=3.072$, $p<.005$) in Model 1 permits the conclusion that these independent variables make significant contributions to the model, being important predictors of number of new non-voters per party. The small t-value, with a low significance ($t= -1.275$, $p< .204$), for the “leader change between two electoral cycles”, indicates that this variable is not a significant predictor. Electoral strength of the party or the number of votes that party earned at the previous elections is also statistically significant indicator of the number of the voters that have stopped voting. The GDP and party family variables are not statistically significant.

Voting availability and the number of political parties are also statistically significant and contribute in explaining the number of new non-voters per party. With both of these variables the bigger number of political parties as alternatives for the party the voter used to vote the smaller chances for the voters to stop voting. If there are more possibilities for the voter to vote, the number of new non-voters will be lower. The third model also includes dummy for the countries in order to control for the country level variables. We see some very interesting patterns.

7.8.1. Interpretation of the results: Are there enough arguments to support the hypothesis

The results of the linear regression model have confirmed expectations. The high significance of the political ideology shift variable confirms that this variable influences the number of new non-voters per party. More precisely, the model shows that the reason for individuals to stop voting in the elections, after having previously voted for a certain party, is party ideology shift. Nevertheless, the explanatory power of this variable in the three models is up to 13.3%, which is relatively low. However, when all factors are considered, the percentage of individuals that did not vote on the current ballot is around 6 percent per party family, with 20% as the highest value. Additionally, the separate model, which excluded the control variables, was run and has shown a high significance $P<.001$ and adjusted $R^2 = .102$, which helps to confirm that the results of the previous models can be attributed to a party ideology shift and not just to the control variables.

GDP as control variable on the macro (country) level was also included to measure if the number of new non-voters per party ID is dependent on the economic situation in the country. The highly insignificant results demonstrate that this variable does not have any influence on the dependent variable.

Contrary to expectations, the dichotomous variable “leader change between two electoral cycles” is not significant, and thus does not provide an explanation for political apathy on party the level. The assumptions, while including this variable in the model, were that a change in leadership at the party level could influence certain voters not to vote for the party. These assumptions have been based on the theoretical claims detailing the highly important and increasing role of political party leaders (Webb and Poguntke 2005). The leader change variable has been shown not to be a significant in creating new non-voters.

Additionally, by including dummies for countries in order to control for macro level variables, the results show some interesting patterns. The model is statistically significant for the majority of the countries.⁸ Also the variables of voter availability and number of effective political parties have the expected direction. These variables help to better understand the aggregate context and the role of institutional factors such as the availability of vote, but also party system variables or more concretely the number of political parties. Although not necessarily connected with the theoretical model proposed, the variables are used as controls to disentangle the role of the countries and how different institutional setup can influence on the number of new non-voters per party.

The limitations of the database, as well as limiting the model only on several control variables affect its explanatory power. In addition to the party ideology shift being highly significant, the value of the adjusted R^2 explains more than 10% of the variation of the dependent variable, and therefore represents an important factor in the general explanation of the phenomenon of new non-voters. Thus, it provides a substantial contribution to addressing the issues of low turnout. Further development of the theoretical and statistical model will include additional control variables such as party age, ideological distance between parties, effective number of parties, electoral volatility. Also, models that test the effect of ideological shift in different policy areas will contribute to better understanding in which area voters are more likely to punish their party because of its ideological flip-flopping.

7.9. Conclusion

The number of voters that have stopped voting is very significant. More than six percent of voters that supported a party have decided not to vote at the next electoral cycle. These new non-voters have decided not to cast their ballots despite their regular past of voting and closer

⁸ Some countries such as Belgium, Norway, Spain and Italy were omitted as a result of multi-collinearity

identification with a certain political parties. This paper hypothesized that ideological inconsistency of political parties is one of the main reasons why voters lose their attachment with the political party, they feel they are not adequately represented anymore and therefore stop voting at the next electoral cycle and attempted to show that while the change of the ideological positions of the party is considered by parties as an efficient strategy for attracting new voters, it can also cause serious damage to the already existing supporters for the party and influence on their decision to stop voting at the next election.

Parties seem to lose their grip on society and the weight of parties seems to be eroding (Blondel 2002). Mair (2005) combines several indicators of involvement in parties and reports that turnout, electoral volatility, party identification, and membership have all declined over the past few decades in a number of democracies, which points to a general decline in involvement in political parties (Van Biezen, Mair, Poguntke 2009, 2011). On the other side, political parties change their ideological positions in order to better achieve their goals. No matter whether they are policy -, office – or vote-seeking (Muller and Strom 1999), they expect to benefit from their ideological move. Political parties are left to make the choice between two main strategies: to freeze the party system and to keep their ideological positions very stable or to act as an adaptive agent in search of votes and hence to change their positions where the median voter belongs.

Descriptive statistics from the CSES Modules II and III 2001-2011 Dataset and CMP 2001-2011 shows that the number of new non-voters differs among different party families and whether parties are in government or opposition. Parties at the extreme of the political spectrum: far-left and far-right parties lose fewer supporters, while the number of the new non-voters among green parties is the highest. On the other hand, the ideological shift is highest among parties of the extreme party families, which only shows that supporters of these parties are most closely attached and affiliated to the party doctrines and they are more reluctant to stop voting no matter what party strategy their parties implement. The number of the new non-voters is two percent higher among the parties in government than among parties in opposition, which indicates that voters can easily be disappointed in the party performance when the party is in power rather than in opposition.

The statistical model that was tested confirms the main hypothesis that the bigger change of the party ideology causes a larger number of new non-voters for parties. Party ideology shift is not only statistically significant, but also the ideological shift has the expected impact.

Whether a party is in government or opposition, and electoral strength, are also statistically significant. Contrary to expectations, the dichotomous variable “leader change between two electoral cycles” is not significant. Although the model is not fully specified, the results strongly support the paper’s main claim for the influence on party ideology shift on the number of new non-voters per party. Despite certain limitations, this research offers an important impact on the literature of the party ideology and to the literature of electoral participation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusions

8.1. Main Findings

The debate as to why citizens participate at elections and what drives their decision to support a certain party or candidate has been one of the essential debates in political science from the introduction of elections and political parties. Furthermore, voting behaviour scholars are interested as to why certain citizens consider voting as a civil duty and exercise their human right (Blais, 2016), whilst certain citizens care less about their duties and decide not to participate. Meanwhile, while the right to vote has become almost a universal right, many categories of citizens have been enfranchised and voting age has been decreasing, the general trends of electoral participation seem to be in a constant decay. The number of citizens exercising their right to vote is shrinking and the crisis of participation is one of the strongest perils of the crisis of democracy (Almond 1960). Different approaches have been applied to address this problem, but until now there is still a lack of research that looks into the determinants that influence citizens who have participated at elections to stop casting their ballot. The aim of the thesis was to fill this gap.

Citizens who have stopped participating at elections, whom I refer as new non-voters, are understudied, and there is very little knowledge about their characteristics and reasons why they do stop voting. There already exist theories that explain the behaviour of voters, but they do not capture the reasons citizens stop voting. Additionally, there is lack of knowledge about the characteristics of these citizens and whether and to what extent they differ from habitual voters and habitual non-voters. Therefore I develop a theoretical model and use a different data sources to be able to address the issue of the new non-voter in a most adequate way. I argue that the spatial model of voting which is based on the claim that voters vote for the party which is the closest to their position on the ideological spectrum and thus every shift of the party demands a vote swing of the voters, and the opposite has limits to explain the behaviour of the new non-voters. Based on the standard revealed preference argument and building on the exit, voice and loyalty model, I argue that voters instead of deciding to shift voting for other party once the party shifts its ideological positions, they decide to exit participation and that way to react of party's inconsistency.

Several general conclusions hold from this thesis. First, ideological shift matters. It accelerates voters' decision to stop voting. Voters do care about the ideological positions of their parties and a change of a position of a party they used to vote for causes an exit of participation. This exit is shaped by the strength of partisan identification. Party identification has two channels of driving voters' behaviour. Firstly, it is a manifestation of the loyalty of the voters to the party they used to support. Voters identify with their preferred party, build a relationship with the party and show interest about a party's behaviour. They are informed and interested how that party represents their interests. This loyalty has been developed through the process of voting and strengthens with continuity of supporting the party (Dinas 2013). Hence a change of a position of the party causes voters to manifest their disappointment through exit of participation instead of shifting a vote choice. In this sense, party identification is an accelerator of participation exit. Secondly, party identification strength is still a strong anticatalyst of participation exit. When voters are strongly identified with the party they used to vote for, they still keep supporting this party besides the ideological shift. In this sense, strength of party identification is a crucial determinant, citizens with strong identification with the party they used to vote still keep voting. Only supporters and not partisans stop voting when parties shift their ideological positions.

A second valuable conclusion is that it is not only important that parties shift their positions, but it also matters what positions of which policy area is shifted. Inconsistency of certain policy positions matter more than others. The case of the US shows us that shifts in policy areas such as traditional values or opposing values regarding underprivileged minority group rights have a very strong impact on the decision of voters to stop casting a ballot. This is not the case with the policy positions on economy and labour rights. There are several possible explanations as to why this is the case. Issues on traditional values such as religion and abortion, or the rights of underprivileged minority groups such as immigrants, or the right to same sex marriages, are the most salient policy areas and a majority of the citizens have strong positions regarding these issues. Political parties also share strong positions regarding these issues and their positions are incompatible. These clear conflicting positions accelerate possibilities for differentiation. Therefore, changing positions on these policy areas is easily anticipated and harms the credibility of the parties.

A third main conclusion of the thesis is that there are differences among new non-voters and habitual voters and habitual non-voters. New non-voters differ from the other abovementioned categories of citizens and this is an important contribution to the general

debate of voters' characteristics. In certain characteristics such as demographics, new non-voters are more similar to the habitual non-voters. In a comparative group of 15 democracies women, younger people, the less educated, the working class and the less religious are more confident in stopping voting. In the US trends are similar, except for gender. Men are more eager to stop voting than their female compatriots in this country. Nevertheless, a very large percentage of the voters that are affiliated with political parties and actively participate in political campaigns still decide to stop voting although they have shown a certain closeness to a political party, indicating that, regarding party identification and affiliation, new non-voters are more close to habitual voters.

Finally, there are important differences between countries in the number of new non-voters. Examining the impact of institutions, socio-economic environment and the role of party systems, I show that post-communist countries, larger countries with majoritarian system and non-compulsory voting have higher number of new non-voters. Furthermore, I offer empirical evidence from 70 electoral studies showing that the number of the new non-voters is negatively correlated with the turnout levels in the countries. Additionally, the number of new non-voters also significantly influences electoral outcome and turnout difference between the last two electoral cycles. This is a very important finding. There is a strong negative correlation between the number of new non-voters and the turnout level which confirms the importance of the new non-voters as drivers of the turnout level in the countries. This additionally emphasizes the importance of studying new non-voters.

8.2. In pursuit of a general finding: New non-voters in a comparative perspective

The theoretical expectations were firstly tested on a comparative cross-sectional ground. Using CSES Data set Module II I tested the influence of ideological shift on the reasons voters stopped voting. A comparative analysis gives ground for testing different institutional, socio-economic and party related determinants that might serve as accelerators or anticatalysts of participation exit. Furthermore, the model is predominantly tested in a comparative perspective and in a plural party systems setup, which is the most conservative ground for testing this theoretical model. While in two-party systems voters have limited opportunities to swing their vote choice, multi-party systems offer more alternatives to voters to change their preference and instead of not voting to choose the party that is closest to their first preference. Thus, affirmative findings in a comparative and diversified group have even greater additional value.

In order to test the above-elaborated theoretical model I constructed statistical models that consist of different levels of analysis. The Multi-Level Logit Models in Chapter 3 provide sufficient evidence for confirmation of the main hypothesis for the influence of the party ideology shift on voter's decision to stop participating at elections. The ideological inconsistency of political parties causes voters to feel less represented, abandoned and to lose trust in the political party that they supported. These results show that instead of deciding to shift voting for another party, a certain number of voters are more eager not to cast the ballots and in that way to punish the party they used to support. The result confirmed that ideological shift can cause costs for political parties, and therefore that they have to be much more careful before deciding to change their ideological positions.

Furthermore, this chapter confirms the importance of context for the behaviour of individuals. The results have also shown that citizens of the post-communist countries are more likely to stop voting than the citizens from established democracies. This finding is in favour of the third hypothesis and the previous research which has shown a lower level of electoral participation in the post-communist countries as a result of the high level of distrust in political parties and the state (Rose 1995). The number of political parties also matter. The higher the number of alternatives for voters, the less the probability that they will stop voting. However, the general conclusion that ideology shift influences voters' decision to stop voting is a very important contribution to the state of art.

In this way the thesis provides an additional confirmation of the importance of ideology for the behaviour of the voters or, as in this case, the role of the ideology as demobilizing factor. Furthermore, as we can see from the results, the fact that evaluations of the performance of the party citizens voted for is more important than the evaluations of the government shows that party attachment is strong and voters do care about the performance of the party they supported. Party closeness confirms this. Once again the dual role of the party attachment is present. Voters are attached to the party they voted for, they become loyal to the party and this keeps them supporting the party, but once party makes ideological changes that are against the voters preferences, they rather decide to exit voter participation than to support another party.

The starting point of the thesis is that when looking into determinants of voter demobilisation we need to look into the behaviour of the parties. The results of this study go strongly in favour of this claim. They are in line with other previous research focused on demobilisation

that places an emphasis on parties (Fox Piven and Cloward 1988, 2000, Avey 1989). The originality of this study is, however, that it places an emphasis on ideological inconsistency and constant positions shifts as factors of demobilization of voters. Voters do register party's movements and react on every significant shift of position by dropping out of participation at the elections. Abstention can be caused not just as a result of alienation or indifference, but as well as a result of ideological inconsistency.

8.3. American voters and ideological shift

The cross-sectional comparative analysis fails to give us information about the nature of the citizens' exit. The data is limited to only two electoral cycles, and therefore it remains unknown as to whether the exit is on a permanent basis or just a sporadic reaction to the contextual circumstances related for that certain electoral cycle. Therefore an in-depth panel data analysis on new non-voters in US provides us with the necessary information and enables us to investigate the reasons for voters to drop out of voting in a more coherent way.

Using the US as a case study has multiple advantages. First, the American electoral context provides the most adequate conditions for testing my theoretical model. Second, American media discourse is focused on the ideological standings of the parties and their nominees, which constitutes a very important part of campaigns. Third, the decline of voter turnout in elections in the US in the last six decades emphasizes the necessity of a different approach to analyse the reasons why voters stop voting. Fourth and very importantly, the US is the most appropriate case study for methodological reasons. Complex data for many electoral cycles over a significantly long period of time has only been gathered in the US. Specifically, in order to answer my research question I am using Youth and Parents Socialisation Panel data from 1984-1997. Last but not least, the US as a two-party system and is the most favourable ground for testing my theoretical model. Voters have the choice to vote for the party they used to, or to switch support to the main opponent from the other side of the spectrum. Shifting vote preference to the other party means supporting exactly the opposite side. The vote alternatives are very limited. Therefore, to exit participation is a logical consequence when the party or the candidates of that party do not satisfy voters' preferences. On the other side, in electoral studies included in my unit of analysis, a strong third candidate, namely Ross Perot, competed against the major party candidates in two out of four presidential races. This increased the possibility for vote alteration. Hence my study offers the most conservative of the most favourable ground for testing my hypotheses.

New non-voters differ from other participants in the electoral cycle. Using simple frequencies for analysing the group differences, I found that there are more new non-voters among men, the divorced, southerners and people that follow political programmes on television two to three times per week. When party identification matters, the number of independents is higher among new non-voters than with others, but the fact that around 55% of new non-voters stress a party affiliation is a strong indicator for analysing party behaviour as a factor for voters to stop voting.

Empirical models that I have tested using multinomial logistic regression provide evidence in support of the hypothesis of the influence of ideological inconsistency on voters to stop voting. One unit change of the ideology of the parties and candidate voter used to vote for increases the probability of the voter to stop voting. This pattern is dramatically different among other categories of voters. Going deeper, testing the ideological shifts in eight different policy areas, the chapter shows that traditional topics have a very strong (de)mobilising power for electoral participation. Traditional values and opposing values regarding underprivileged minority group rights have a very strong impact on the decision of voters to stop casting a ballot. Also, findings show that while ideology inconsistency is not costless, it is a matter of party strategy. Political parties should be very careful when deciding to shift their ideological positions.

The new non-voters in this paper are studied in a particular political context. While the findings are generalizable, the possible effect of the certain electoral context characteristic for the period of study should still be seriously taken into account. This paper shows that there are substantial differences between voters who have stopped voting and other categories of citizens.

8.4. To change or not to change: The number of new non-voters and parties' electoral success

Political parties are seen as utility maximisers (Wittman 1973) and change their ideological positions in order to better achieve their goals. No matter whether they are policy -, office – or vote-seeking (Muller and Strom 1999), they expect to benefit from their ideological move. Political parties are left to make the choice between two main strategies: to freeze the party system and to keep their ideological positions very stable or to act as an adaptive agent in search of votes and hence to change their positions where the median voter belongs. When

making their decisions parties have to be aware of the reaction from the risk-averse voters and their core supporters.

I build my argument as to parties' behaviour on Meyer's claims that ideologies play a very important role in the parties' behaviour. Parties have strong ideological constraints that drive their behaviour (Meyer 2012). Well-informed parties differ from badly informed parties by the fact that even when they shift their ideological positions, they never leave their ideological territories. Meyer argues that ideology provides a partition of the policy space and that parties have intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to choose policy positions that conform to their ideological area. According to Meyer, answering the question of why parties adapt their policy positions, researchers usually proceed from vote-seeking and office-seeking party incentives. "Shifts in public opinion, poor electoral performance in the past, or shifts of rival parties may make parties to adapt their policy platforms" (Meyer 2013).

I show that while some of the reasons for ideological inconsistency are beyond parties' control, such as the change of the socio-economic circumstances, transformation of the economic conditions and globalization followed with the collapse of the two block division in the international relations, there are several factors that cause ideological inconsistency and are completely dependent on party strategies and the institutional context. As I have mentioned above, whether parties will change their ideological positions depends more on the electoral body they address, so parties and candidates differ ideologically at the primaries and elections. Another important element for ideological consistency is whether a party is in power or in opposition. The third element I have discussed above is the change of leadership.

Descriptive statistics from the CSES Module II and 2001-2011 Dataset and CMP 2001-2011 shows that the number of new non-voters differ among different party families and whether parties are in government or opposition. Parties at the extreme of the political spectrum: far-left and far-right parties lose fewer supporters while the number of the new non-voters among green parties is the highest. On the other hand, the ideological shift is highest among parties of the extreme party families which only shows that supporters of these parties are most closely attached and affiliated to the party doctrines and they are more reluctant to stop voting no matter what party strategy their parties implement. The number of the new non-voters is two percent higher among the parties in government than among parties in opposition, which indicates that voters can easily be disappointed in the party performance when the party is in power rather than in opposition.

The statistical model that was tested confirms the main hypothesis that the greater the change of the party ideology the larger the number of new non-voters for parties. Party ideology shift is not only statistically significant, but also ideological shift has the expected direction. Whether party is in government and opposition and electoral strength are also statistically significant. Contrary to expectations, the dichotomous variable “leader change between two electoral cycles” is not significant. Although the model is not fully specified, the results strongly support the main paper’s claim for the influence on party ideology shift on the number of new non-voters per party. Despite certain limitations, this research offers an important impact on the literature of the party ideology and to the literature of electoral participation.

There are several implications for the parties from this analysis. First, the number of new non-voters is correlated with the ideological shift of the parties. Political parties should be very careful when they shift their positions because it hurts the support of their traditional voters. Secondly, not all parties are influenced in the same way when they shift their ideological positions. I argue that this depends mostly on the discipline and attachment their voters have to the party. Catch-all parties at the political centre are mostly harmed when they shift positions and the attachment of their voters to the party is weaker and they are more frequent in adapting their ideological positions in order to attract the media voter.

8.5. Theoretical implications and the contribution of this thesis

Turnout decline is a central problem discussed in this thesis, but this research is not a study of the turnout determinants. Not directly, at least. Although voter turnout is not analysed, the thesis looks at the turnout phenomenon from a different perspective focusing on a specific category of voters who used to participate at elections and stopped voting at a certain electoral cycle. Thus it contributes to the study of the turnout by looking at one of the main components that drives turnout rates. It attempts to apply a theoretical model of behaviour and to detect the main socio-demographic and political characteristics of this certain group of voters that depresses turnout levels. This thesis is a call for a different approach into analysing turnout declines and findings to show that there is a potential in this approach to explain fluctuations in the turnout. Looking into components, instead of the macro approach or the big picture view, can give additional information about the determinants that influence turnout.

Although this is not the intention of the thesis *per se*, with this research I oppose the dominant approach as to the habituality of voters. When new non-voters count, the thesis of habituality is not applicable. These citizens used to participate at elections, they were practicing their right to choose their Government and at one point they stopped voting. The reasons cannot be found in the weakening of their voting habit, but on the contrary, to the factors or determinants that demobilise, which might be due to the political actors who change their behaviour from election to election. One can say that the number of new non-voters, which varies from around 1% to the highest pick of 30 %, still confirms that the majority of the voters retain their habits. This is a correct observation. The majority of voters retain their habituated behaviour amongst both the voters and non-voters, but the ones that shift from voting to non-voting are more important in order of the differences in the turnout to be explained. In this sense, the approach of the thesis is dynamic rather than static.

The theoretical model I build in the thesis is based on the rational choice theory, but I tend to show that this rationality is constrained. Citizens do not behave always as utility maximisers. On the contrary, voters do get attached to the party they used to vote for. This is manifested through the strength of their party identification. The high level of party identification develops a feeling of loyalty for the party. This is manifested through vote support for that party. In this thesis, I attempt to develop a model that deals with the consequences for the parties, once they change the quality of their offer. I claim that as a result of the loyalty, voters do not act according to the rational choice theory by optimizing their interests and supporting the party closest to their preferences, but they rather stop voting than to “betrayal their loyalty”.

A second major contribution of the thesis, an empirical one, it enriches the research on different categories of voters by offering first comprehensive analysis of the demographics, socio-economic characteristics and political interests of these new non-voters. Little is known about new non-voters. To my knowledge there is no research focused on the investigation of the characteristics of these citizens and the reasons why they stop voting. This category is understudied and, as I have mentioned above, it has been assimilated amongst the work on non-voters. Furthermore, the majority of the research on voters assumes homogeneity of policy preferences of voters and non-voters. Leighley and Nagler (2014) show that this is not the case. Voters and non-voters do not prefer the same policies. This thesis aimed to offer an extensive overview of the characteristics of the new non-voters after drawing a clear identification of these new non-voters. Not only that it is important these voters to be

differentiated from the habitual non-voters, but they have to be distinguished from the intermittent voters. In this sense, the thesis aims to identify who the new non-voters are and separate them from the larger group of habitual voters, and additionally to analyse those new non-voters who quit voting on a permanent or a long-term basis.

Identifying the most important characteristics of these citizens is of crucial importance in order to better understand their behaviour and to develop a theoretical model that will explain reasons to stop voting. I am particularly interested to show the differences between these citizens on one hand and the habitual voters and non-voters on the other. I will take into account three sets of variables: (i) socio-demographic characteristics, (ii) political information and trust and (iii) party identification and ideology.

A third important contribution of the thesis is that it focuses on political parties as the main actors on the supply side and looks into their behaviour, or more concretely on their ideological consistency as an explanatory factor for citizens to stop voting. Building my argument on the standard revealed preference argument and based on the exit, voice loyalty model, I focus on the supply side, or more concretely on the parties as the main actors who make an offer to the voters through their electoral programs. The notion is that political parties as the strongest electoral mobilizers can also influence demobilising citizens from participation. The new non-voters constitute precisely a confirmation that certain citizens do look at what parties offer; this influences how do they subsequently behave and take a decision based on the parties' offers.

Fourth, as I have shown in the previous chapters, the thesis contests the existing spatial model of voting by adding two important components that shape the behaviour of individuals (i) voters build a close relationship with the party they used to vote and their party identification or loyalty constrains their rational behaviour as utility maximisers on the political spectrum, (ii) when the party voters used to vote for changes its ideological standings voters punish its behaviour by deciding to exit the voting and not to swing vote support for other party. This thesis offers just one new aspect in the debate about the limitations of the spatial model of voting. Furthermore, neither the main alternative such as directional theory of voters captures the behaviour of the new non-voters. Empirical findings confirm that neither voters look as political parties exclusively as suppliers, but they have developed an attachment to them, nor can political parties permanently shift their positions in order to attract more supporters. These ideological shifts are not costless. Why parties might attract new non-voters, they lose

certain percentage of their supporters. The average loss per party is more than 6% of their voters.

Finally, one of the most important contributions, and at the same the most serious weaknesses of the thesis, is of a methodological nature. There are several considerations that were taken into account when designing this research. Conducting research on the new non-voters is especially demanding task because of the definition of the nature of the participation exit. When one wants to understand whether the exit is on permanent basis, cross-sectional data is not sufficient and therefore a long term panel data is needed. I attempt to address this issue by conducting a comparative cross-sectional analysis that includes more than 20 electoral democracies and an in-depth analysis of the American new non-voters by using a panel data. There is very limited opportunity to access panel data that offers sufficient numbers of the electoral cycle for my theory to be tested. Although a cohort data and not updated with the most recent electoral cycles, Youth and Parents Socialization Panel Wave IV provided the best available ground for testing my theoretical assumptions.

Another serious problem that harms my research is the information as to participation based on self-reported turnout. Numerous previous research studies have shown that as a result of social desirability, respondents tend to over report turnout. This works against my research, in that I heavily rely on citizens' participation report. In this sense, using self-reported turnout is the most conservative environment for testing my models. Therefore, if we assume that better data would just improve and strengthen the findings, the affirmative results in favour of my hypotheses are an even more valuable contribution. In order to overcome this problem and to offer more reliable information about dropping out trends, I present data from Ohio's vote calls based on recording the participation of the citizens.

A third methodological problem I face while conducting the research is related to the reliability and validity of the available data for construction of my variable on ideology shift. Although most comprehensive, a systematic coding error has been identified with Comparative Manifesto Project (Benoit and Laver 2002, Benoit Mikhaylov and Laver 2005) that might bias the results. To overcome this methodological problem, I conducted a robustness check with other alternative data, such as aggregated perceptions of ideological positions of the parties from ANES. Therefore, the main methodological contribution of the thesis is that various methodological considerations have been taken into account and different data sources have been utilized in order that the most comprehensive and

multifaceted analysis of the new non-voters and determinants of their behaviour is to be offered.

Finally, the model I propose and test in this thesis is time independent. The model is general and does not control for time periods and external shocks. The data constraints, on the other hand, limit the possibilities for testing the model in better and more contemporary conditions. The datasets which have been used to test my theoretical model include a time span of nearly thirty years. While the American case is tested on data from the eighties and nineties, the individual large-N model on data from the beginning of the twentieth century, the aggregate data on party and country level includes electoral studies until the year 2011. An analysis based on the most contemporary data would certainly be of additional value to the state of the art, but for the purposes of the thesis this is not a concern. The fact that the results tend toward the same direction even with such a heterogeneous data might be assessed as another contribution to the thesis. An update and upgrade with better data is certainly one of the most important objectives for future research.

8.6. Potential for future research

This thesis offered a comprehensive analysis of the new non-voters and reasons why they stop. It took into account many considerations in order that a coherent and well-designed research project be conducted. The empirical problem of the decline of participation has been observed through citizens who stopped voting and an original theoretical model has been applied to test the assumptions as to the determinants of participation exit. Nevertheless, taking into account that studying the citizens who stopped voting is, in a certain way, a pioneering attempt, there are numerous aspects that were not taken into account and future research should tend to fill these newly discovered gaps.

From an empirical aspect, a certain contribution to the field would be a panel analysis of new non-voters in a multi-party system context. Therefore, a panel data analysis of a multi-party system would give an important contribution to the study especially taking into account that voters have more alternatives to vote for in plural party systems and hence the chances to drop out of voting might be smaller. This research would prove whether the findings from the US two-party system are validated in a different institutional setup. If this happens, that would provide even greater additional value to the research.

Secondly, this thesis was focused on the analysis of voting behaviour in first-order elections. Thus, a study of the number of new non-voters in second order elections would be an additional contribution to the state of art. The turnout at the second order elections is significantly lower compared with the first-order elections, which means that a larger number of voters decide not to vote at these elections. Having this in mind, it might be very important to analyse whether non-voting at second-order elections accelerates the decision to stop voting at first-order elections. There is a research showing that being enfranchised to vote for the first time at second-order depresses turnout in general, and therefore I consider that is valuable to research whether the decision to vote or not to vote at the second-order elections catalyses the possibility to stop voting at first elections too.

Thirdly, this thesis offers a study of the voters that stop voting. But there is another side of the story too. While certain voters stop voting, there is a certain number of citizens who re-enter the electoral process and get remobilised to vote after a period of abstention. I do not look at these citizens, but further research on this process could also be very important from the aspect of turnout rates. Remobilisation can also be related to ideological inconsistency. Parties shifting their positions hope to attract more voters. I have shown that this ideological inconsistency is not costless. Parties lose their supporters when they shift positions and the bigger the shift, the bigger the number of new non-voters. However, there are numerous real-world examples which show that a significant ideological shift has resulted in a significantly improved electoral outcome. Therefore, a further in-depth analysis should be focused into investigating under which conditions parties profit from their ideological changes and how this affects general turnout trends. Furthermore, looking into remobilised voters would mean a completion of the whole picture as to the components that influence turnout. This study has filled the gap by studying voters who stop voting. A further study should complete the picture by providing comprehensive knowledge about who the returners are and why they remobilise.

Last but not least, this thesis offered a theoretical model based exclusively of the mobilization model, or taking into account ideologies such as the (de)mobilising factor. It attempted to contribute to the debate about the (dis)advantages of the spatial theory of voting and offered certain original considerations. However, there are many other aspects that can be taken into account when analysing new non-voters. Different models can certainly additionally explain why voters do stop voting. This thesis did not attempt to offer a holistic approach in studying new non-voters and therefore there are many other possibilities for this group of citizens to be

studied. A potential direction into further studies of these citizens would be one to look into the economy, and how economic performance of the government influenced voters to stop voting. Socialisation and social networks offer another possibility for further explanation of the reasons why citizens stop voting. In this sense, this thesis can constitute a valuable basis for further research in this field.

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