

## **4.3 Participation and democracy in US politics**

### **Voting behaviour.**

**Aspect: Long-term determinants of voting behaviour in the US, including:  
socio-economic status; race and ethnicity; region.**

This unit considers long-term determinants of voting behaviour, including: socio-economic status, race and ethnicity and region. It also includes core-voting coalitions and partisanship (4.3.2) and the extent of division and unity within the main parties, factions including the Religious Right; Tea Party, Progressive Democrats and New Democrats (4.3.3.).

#### **Introduction:**

This unit covers the specification elements related to “long-term determinants of voting behaviour”. This topic also relates closely to ‘short-term determinants of voting behaviour’, which is also a long topic in this series. As with all topics it is not inclusive of all potential material required for examination purposes, both teachers and learners will also need to undertake their own research/reading in order to provide a fully comprehensive coverage of voting behaviour. There are a number of centres in the USA that are dedicated to US elections results but one of the most notable is the Pew Research Center. Both learners and teachers will benefit from up-to-date knowledge by examining the latest information from this site.

Teachers should note that US psephologists are always developing new models of voting behaviour and therefore this unit will not include some new developments. Teachers will therefore need to add in any more recent developments in this field. This unit contains areas of detailed information from which the learners are required to extract relevant knowledge for the exercises. The teacher may wish to extract this information into a written form (for them to read) to help aid the learners in their cognitive learning.

Teachers should be aware that the exercise and lesson timings depend on the interaction of the group. Therefore exercises and tasks may have to be reduced in length to avoid spending too much time on certain topic areas. Task 5 will require both prior teacher and learner research. There are 6 interactive exercises in this unit, 7 additional tasks and some suggested tasks and extension activities.

Note: The figures used in this Unit come from the Pew Research Centre/CNN/New York Times and Independent newspapers.

## **Aims and Objectives:**

### **Aim:**

- An exploration and analysis of the key long-term determinants of US voting behaviour.
- A critical analysis of the extent of division and unity within the main parties.

### **Objectives:**

1. To define the key elements in the long-term determinants of US voting behaviour.
2. To illustrate the nature partisan voting.
3. To explore the central nature of core voting coalitions and partnerships and their defining factors.
4. To determine the key social and economic factors of voting;
5. To identify and critically assess the main features of race, ethnicity and religion in their impact on voting behaviour.
6. To determine the extent of division and unity within the main parties.
7. To identify core-voting party coalitions and partisanship.

## **WJEC Government and Politics Assessment Objectives**

A01 – The theories related to partisan voter and related voting concepts; core-voting party coalitions and partisanship.

A02 - To examine the connections and distinctions between the various elements related to the long-term determinants of US voting behaviour.

A03 - To seek to determine the reasons behind why some long-term determinants of US voting behaviour continue to be of key relevance to voting support for either Democrat or Republican Parties, an exploration of the extent of division and unity within the main parties.

## **Links to other parts of the WJEC specification**

A2 Unit 4, 4.3.2 short-term and recency determinants of voting behaviour

A2 Unit 4, 4.3.3 Democrats and Republicans

## **Introducing the resource**

The teacher should commence the session with a general introduction explaining the difference between long and short-term determinants of voting behaviour in the US. The teacher can indicate that long-term determinants of voting behaviour can be likened to those factors that shape an individual over the course of their life. Therefore long-term factors that affect voting behaviour are able to influence voters over an extended period of time, always more than just one election and sometimes for a whole lifetime. In contrast, short-term factors (which will be covered in another unit) only normally impact on one specific election.

The teacher should note that long-term determinants of US voting behaviour are important for those studying US elections because they tend to be static predictors of voting behaviour. In the two party system of the US this means therefore that presidential candidates can concentrate their campaigning effort seeking to persuade swing voters in swing states rather than those that the long-term determinants of US voting behaviour have already indicated are highly likely to support them.

## **Conclusion**

The session concludes by the teacher noting that this unit has covered the long-term factors that affect voting behaviour and that these factors are numerous and differ in some areas considerably from the UK.

## Exercise 1: What shapes you shapes your voting



### Guidance

For the first exercise the teacher should ask the learners to compile a list of some of the factors the students believe shape the decisions they make and the views they hold both now and until they die, for example where you are brought up may make you view the world differently to someone who lives elsewhere. The teacher can then explain that many of these same decisions also shape the way that people vote in the USA over long periods.

### What shapes my long term views of life?

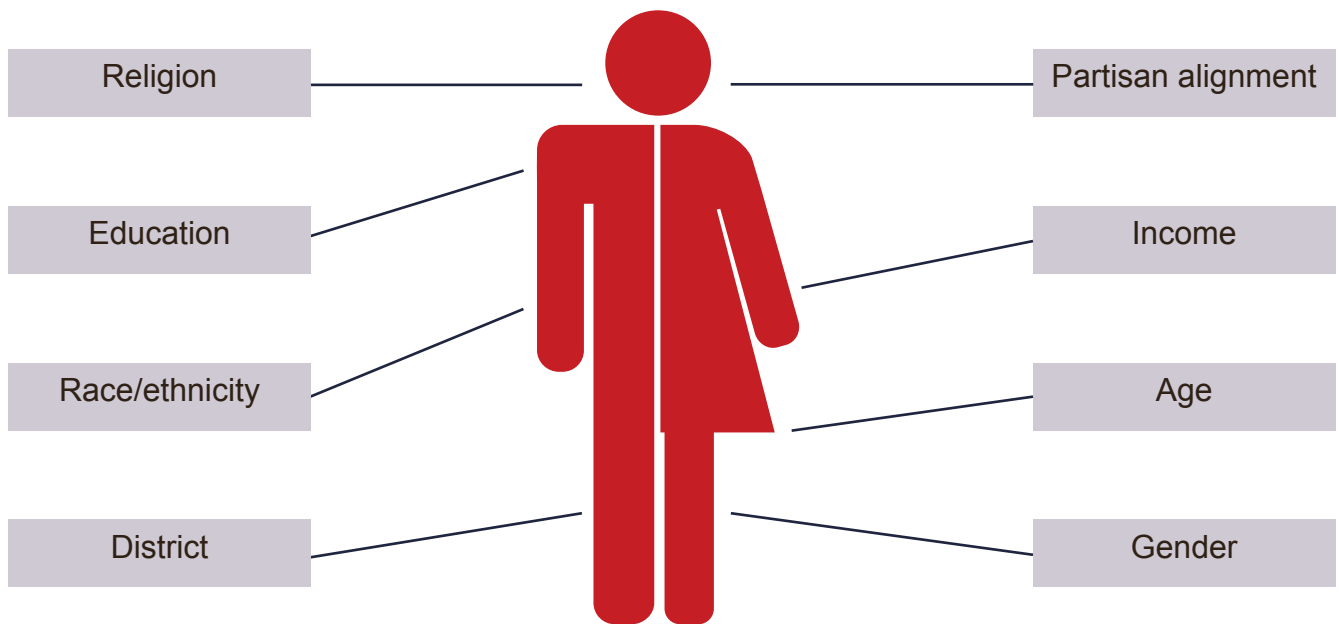
Possible answers - Although students may come up with many answers the ones that are required are below:

- The views of my family and community – **partisan alignment**
- My education – **education**
- How much money I have/wealth - **income**
- My **gender**
- My nationality/family origin - **race/ethnicity**
- My peer group/those around me - **age**
- **Religion**
- Where I live/my community – **region**



### Activity - The Voter Profile - What shapes me and what shapes our voting? **See Worksheet 1**

Students should decide which factors from the list shape the decisions made and the views held by citizens of the USA. The correct answers are below.



## Exercise 2: Partisan alignment



### Guidance

The teacher should note that the political science of voting and opinion polling originated in the US and has developed within there to a greater depth than anywhere else. Over the decades many models of voting behaviour have come forward. These are based around the voter profile. The teacher should note that historically both Republicans and Democrats are far less ideological than political parties in other countries. As evidence of this, between the 1930s and 1960s the Democrats' main supporters consisted of Democrats in the South that supported racial segregation (Dixiecrats) and Democrats in the North who supported Civil Rights and the end of segregation. These two contrary groups co-existed in one party.

The political parties therefore are normally a 'big tent' of many different political viewpoints and attempts to exert one ideological viewpoint on them have historically have resulted in parts of the party realigning itself to either Republican or Democrats. Nevertheless there are enough common identity traits within the political parties for voters to align themselves with them in order to best support their own voter profile. When this is done on a long term basis it is called Partisan Alignment.

The teacher may like to remind learners that when they covered this on the AS syllabus they may have recalled that social class was a key component in how people had voted. In the US, however, people are less class conscious and the vast majority of people determine themselves as just one class (middle class/income) even though in reality in 2015 less than 50 per cent actually were. So therefore both Republican and Democrats purports to be strong advocates of the middle class.

### Partisanship is like being the fan of a football/rugby club

The teacher can compare partisanship to something akin to supporting a football or rugby team. The learners in the class can be asked either which team they or their family support in football/rugby. They can then be asked the question as to what would happen to your support if the team lost all their matches that session. Would they still support them?

They should then be asked why they would continue to support them even though they have lost. The answers can be linked to partisanship – the long-term support for one political party that is not changed by recent events.

Just as in sport they would be the core fans so in politics they would be the core voters. Although the levels of support vary, high levels of partisan support lead to stable and fairly predictable results. So this means that in some areas of the US the electorate will select the same party representative election after election. However, both Democrats and Republicans need to ensure that they display enough constant principles.



## Activity - Democratic and Republican Partisanship

[Click to open activity](#)

**See Worksheet 2**

Students should place each of the factors listed under the political party they are most likely to apply to. There are an equal number of factors for both Democrats and Republicans.

The correct answers are below.

Factors	
For the Democratic Party	For the Republican Party
Appeals to the big city urban voters	Fiscally (financially) conservative
Supports the less affluent	Socially conservative (more hostile to LGBT and ethnic rights)
Support for ethnic minorities	Seeks a smaller role of the state
Pro-choice (abortion)	Less regulations for business (free market)
Regulation of commerce and industry	Less taxation and government spending
Pro spending to stimulate the economy	Appeals to the more wealthy white rural and suburban voters
Pro LGBT rights	Appeals to the more religious Christians
Supports organised labour (trade unions)	Pro-life (anti-abortion)

The teacher should finish this exercise by noting that the appeal from these parties can create a loyalty that is both deep-rooted and long lasting and is not easily changed. It is not impossible, however, and in the 1980s and 1984 traditional Democratic voters in the white working-class Rust Belt (old industrial areas), defected from their party to support Republican President Ronald Reagan because of his economic policies. They became known as **Reagan Democrats**. They moved back to Bill Clinton in 1992 but these same Democrats supported the Republican Donald Trump in 2016, over his economic policies and became **'Trump**

**Democrats’.** In the UK a parallel example would be traditional Labour supporters moving over to support UKIP in the 2016 Welsh Assembly elections.

## **More or less partisan?**

The teacher can note that there is a general consensus that partisan alignment is breaking down, as noted by the example above and that short term factors may have become more important in determining voting behaviour. Polling in 2016, however, also indicated that both core Democratic and Republican voters had a greater ‘very unfavourable view’ of the opposing party than at any time since polling started on this issue in 1992. So they may be becoming more partisan.

In some areas the parties, the teacher can also note, have also been attracting a more partisan support base that also shapes the voter base, for example on abortion rights (Republicans are solidly against these, Democrats for – note Roe V Wade). Thus socially conservative working-class whites have migrated from the Democratic Party to join the Republican Party (notably in the South). At the same time socially moderate Republicans, (this time on the East Coast), shifted to the Democrats. Therefore when it comes to determining whether US voting is still determined by partisan alignment learners should be prepared to bring in examples on both sides.

The teacher should also explore more recent examples of where this partisan voting has been analysed and discuss these with the group to determine the reasons why both partisanship may be either decreasing or increasing in relevance.





## Exercise 3: Core voting coalitions and partnerships

The teacher may wish to remind the learners that all political parties are coalitions of differing opinions (big tent politics) but they are bound together by a common ideology or purpose. In the US there are Core voting coalitions and partnerships formed at almost every presidential election in order to ensure that the candidate elected will be able to pursue their own policy agenda.

### Democratic Party voting coalition

The teacher should note with respect to internal voting coalitions whether they leave the parties more or less divided and seek to show some examples of each. In the Democratic Party one of the most famous coalitions was the **New Deal Coalition**, which lasted from the 1930s until the mid-1960s. It consisted of white Southern Democrats (which had been a voting solid block of the South after the Civil War – the Republicans had abolished slavery), they supported the economic policies of President Roosevelt and his New Deal. They were joined with the liberal and ethnic minorities (Democrats) in the North who also supported the New Deal.

There are also other coalition groups in the Democrats. They have (or do) include:

- **Blue Dog Democrats** – those who are most fiscally and socially conservative.
- **New Democrat Coalition** – those more socially liberal than the Blue Dogs but still supporting fiscal conservatism (reduced spending and lower taxes).
- **Progressive Democrats** – the more ‘dovish’ anti-war Democrats.



### Activity – Discussion Question

#### Can you think why the New Deal Coalition may have ended?

Students should be encouraged to reflect on the events that were occurring in the 1960s in the Southern USA (i.e. the civil rights movement and counter movements).

The answer is that the extremely conservative Democrats in the South (known as Dixiecrats) became alienated from the more liberal and racially progressive Democrats in the North. This occurred when Democratic President Lyndon Johnson (LBJ) signed the Civil Rights Act 1964, which gave far greater rights to black citizens in the Southern USA. They subsequently

became Republicans and formed a new Conservative voting bloc.

The teacher should note that amongst political scientists there is a general expectancy that the long term voting coalitions such as those associated with the New Deal Coalition are a reflection of the past. The same, political scientists, however, also determine new voting blocs that have formed within political parties to pursue specific political agendas.

## Additional task

New groups are emerging all of the time and the teacher could bring in more recent examples or ask the learners to research their own examples for each political party.

## Republican voting coalition

The teacher can inform the learners that voting coalitions/partnerships can also be determined by other factors such as voting blocs. There are a wide variety of these based on ethnicity, religion, age and people can be in more than one bloc. Some examples include: Hispanics/African Americans/ baby boomers/Jews/White Bread Protestants/Irish Catholics) Political scientists then seek to determine which bloc is most likely to vote for each party/ candidate.

What factors appeal most to each voting bloc? Can trade-offs be made between the blocs to ensure that one candidate is broad enough to appeal to enough voting blocs to get elected?



## Activity - Discussion

Just like in the Democrat Party there are also a number of coalition groups in the Republican Party. The teacher could note these down with the learners and discuss with them which coalition groups they believe are the most influential in US politics now and why?

- The **'liberal wing'** – those moderately fiscal but socially liberal Republicans that came from the north-eastern states (also known as compassionate conservatives). They are now a small group in the Republicans.
- **'Main Street' or moderate wing** – the centre ground of the Republican party who numbered presidential candidates – Mitt Romney and senator John McCain amongst their number. They tend to be more conservative on social issues (gay marriage, death penalty and foreign policy) than the 'liberal wing'.
- The **'religious right' or neo-Conservatives (Neo-Cons)** This group is strongly conservative on social issues influenced by religious orthodoxy, liberal on regulation

of business and minimising the role of the state and 'hawkish' on foreign policy.

- **Libertarians** – this grouping is interested most in supporting an economic free market – they wish to see the least government intervention and the lowest taxes. They are also the most socially liberal of the Republicans on the grounds of individual freedom – Congressman Ron Paul is their most vocal advocate. Although a small group, some of their ideas have influenced other groups within the Republican Party.
- Combining some elements of the Neo-Cons and the Libertarians is the **Tea Party**. They have a specific group (caucus) in Congress and advocate fiscal and social conservatism alongside ring-wing populism. On a number of issues they are closely aligned to the ideology of the Trump administration.

These coalitions also need to be held together after the presidential election if the president is to successfully pursue their own policy agenda. The teacher should also note that new coalition names and groups constantly emerging.

The teacher should also ensure that learners are aware of differing US factors that impede party organisation developing on the same level as that in UK. Factors such as the role of the separation of powers and federalism play in constitutional context. Other factors that weaken parties are that voters register for a party rather than become members, there are no leaders (the President leads the country not the party) and parties run on platforms rather than on a manifesto.



## Activity – Discussion Question

**Students should be asked to think why the Republican coalition did not support a key measure in their own president's 2016 election manifesto?**

In March 2016 President Trump put before Congress the American Health Care Act which was set to replace The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act 2010 known commonly as Obamacare. Despite the Republicans campaigning in the Presidential elections, just over four months before, on a united platform of repealing Obamacare Trump's Act had to be withdrawn before the vote was held. Although the 'Main Street' of the Republican Party supported him there were two coalition groups he needed the support of to win the vote. Trump was unable to hold the Republican coalition together that had helped bring him to power together. He could not gain the votes of the Tuesday Group or the House Freedom Caucus both Republican coalition groups. Learners should undertake their own research on these coalitions and answer the following questions:

1. Who are these key coalition members on the Republican side that President Trump needed the support of and where do they originate?
2. What did the House Freedom Caucus (conservative and libertarian) and the Tuesday Group (moderate) want from the repeal of Obamacare?
3. Why was President Trump unable to keep the Republican coalition voting bloc together in Congress when they had a clear majority when combined?
4. What does this case study tell us about the political power a president has over their own party?

## Exercise 4: Social and economic factors – income, age, education, region and gender



### Notes

#### Income

Whereas social class has little importance in US elections there is a direct relationship between income levels and voting behaviour. In 2015 US statistics indicated that 49.9 per cent of the US population were in middle income, as opposed to the lower income (under \$42, 000) 29 per cent for upper income (above \$126,000) 21.1 per cent. Over the last half century the middle income group in the US has fallen from 61 per cent to under half, whilst the upper income group has risen from 14 per cent, and the lowest income group has risen to 29 per cent. At the same time there are also differences in voting behaviour according to the type of employment you are in.

Traditionally the majority of those in the lower income group vote Democrat and those in the upper income for Republican. This means therefore that the presidential candidates must advance the most appealing economic policies for the middle income group.

#### Age

In the US, age is divided into a number of different cohorts (age groups) depending on the year of birth. These are given specific names. Political scientists then examine voting behaviour in these groups to see if there are distinct traits to their voting habits.



### Activity – Age Cohorts, Key Terms

[Click to open activity](#)

**See Worksheet 4a**

Students should choose the correct definition for the correct cohort. The correct answers are below.

Age category (demographic cohort) – also called generations	Definition
<b>Generation Z</b> (also known as The Founders, Post-Millennials, the iGeneration)	Those born from the mid-1990s onwards who have grown up in the age of the internet.

<b>Millennials</b> (also known as Generation Y)	Those born in the 1980s and 1990s who reached adulthood in the first decade of the 2000s.
<b>Generation X</b> (MTV generation)	One of the smallest cohorts. The generation that grew up from the mid-1960s onwards. They grew up in an age when women fully entered the workforce.
<b>Baby Boomers</b>	People born between 1943 and 1960 when many soldiers returned from active service and caused a 'baby boom' in their home nations.
<b>Silent Generation</b>	The cohort consists of those born between the 1920s and the 1940s. They are called silent generation because they concentrated on their careers rather than issues such as civil and women's rights.



## Notes

The teacher should inform the learners of how the different age cohorts may vote differently. Learners need to remember that this does not apply to all voters in that group but it does cover the most frequent traits. Since the mid-2000s, ideological differences across generational cohorts widened according to recent studies. Studies indicate that Millennials remain more politically liberal than older generations – In 2015 some 45% expressed consistently liberal or mostly liberal views, which is little changed from 2004 (41%). In contrast, growing shares of the oldest cohorts – Boomers and Silents – have conservative political values. About a third of Boomers (36%) and 40% of Silents have at least mostly conservative attitudes, up from 21% and 23%, respectively, in 2004.

Currently, Millennials are the most liberal but there has not been full scale polling of some of the newer groups such as Generation Z as many are yet to reach voting age. Across older generations, fewer have liberal political values. About a third of Generation Xers (36%) have at least mostly liberal attitudes, while 23% have mostly conservative attitudes; 41% are mixed ideologically. Among Boomers, more have conservative (36%) than liberal (30%) attitudes; 34% have mixed views. And among Silents, 40% are conservative – including 21% who are consistently conservative – while 26% are liberal and 34% express a mix of conservative and liberal views.

**Case study example:** In the 2016 presidential election those counties in Pennsylvania (with its 20 Electoral College votes) had a strong correlation between Baby Boomers and Generation X and the voting swing towards Trump. This was enough of a swing to ensure a traditionally Democratic state moved over narrowly to the Republicans and helped Trump win the election.

The teacher should also note that age can also combine closely with educational levels on determining voting.

## Education

The level of education a voter has undertaken is also a predictor of the voter's ideological preferences and which party they vote for. Over the last two decades studies have indicated that this ideological division along with education also combine on generational lines. In this respect highly educated adults (those at university level) are much more likely to take predominantly liberal positions across a range of political values. Therefore for postgraduate learners (those taking a degree after their first degree) in 2016, 76 per cent of post grads held some form of liberal view. Whereas amongst those in the lowest educational group, those with High School diplomas, some 88 per cent hold some form of conservative ideological viewpoint. Politically, as we saw earlier the Democratic Party is likely to be more liberal and the Republicans more Conservative.

Studies indicate that about 68 per cent (2014) of the US school population continue onto a university/college course. In 2000 this figure was about 52 per cent, so the US population is becoming more educated. This would therefore indicate that if trends continue over time the bulk of the population will support those political parties with a more liberal ideological policy platform. This also links closely to what we have learned about the various generations and how they vote.

## Region

### [See PowerPoint map file](#)

Where you live in the United States can be as strong a predictor of how you will vote as your age or education. Sometimes this is because of the specific social, economic, historic or religious characteristics of that state. Therefore **The Southern States** voted solidly Democrat until the 1960s and Republican since then – in 2016 in Texas for instance 52.2 per cent voted Trump as opposed to 43.2 per cent for Clinton. In the **Rust Belt** – the industrial states in the north, the **coastal states** and **cities** (blue America) vote Democrat (California – coastal voted 61.7 per cent for Clinton and just 31 per cent for Trump, New York (Cities) 59 per cent Clinton and 36 per cent Trump and Illinois (Rust Belt) 55.8 per cent Clinton and 38.7 per cent

Trump, although we should note that in 2016 most Rust belt states actually supported Trump (Partisan de-alignment). In the **Bible Belt** (areas of south-eastern and south-central United States) where high church attendance and evangelical Protestantism make voters more socially conservative there is strong support for the Republicans. In 2016 Missouri supported Trump by 56.8 per cent to 38.1 per cent for Clinton. The same is true of the **Mountain States** west of the Rocky Mountains, Wyoming for instance supported Trump by 68 per cent to just 22 per cent for Clinton. These states are known as 'red America'. Many of these States have not voted for another party for President for over half a century.



## Activity – Question

The 2017 Cook Political Report provides an in-depth map on the extent of how Americans are divided along partisan lines. This is covered in the CNN coverage: [http://edition.cnn.com/2017/04/10/politics/map-2016-election-red-state-blue-state/index.html?iid=ob\\_lockedrail\\_topeditorial](http://edition.cnn.com/2017/04/10/politics/map-2016-election-red-state-blue-state/index.html?iid=ob_lockedrail_topeditorial)

The CNN report gives reasons why the US has become so partisan. Teachers should get the learners to state what these reasons are and indicate how they may impact on US presidential elections and the eventual results.

## Gender - the partisan gender gap

In elections it is now common for the Republican Party to receive the majority of male votes and for the Democrats to receive the majority of female votes. This is called the partisan gender gap. In 2016, 54% of women voted for Clinton with 42% of women voting for Trump. If you break the total group of female voters into sub categories there are wide variations. Some 95 per cent of black women, for instance, voted Clinton whilst 64 per cent of non-college educated white women supported Trump. Overall, however, it is true to say that most women vote Democrat.



## Activity - Question

The teacher should ask the learners if they know why there is a gender gap in voting? The origins of the partisan gender gap go back to the 1960s when men became more conservative and moved to support the Republicans whilst women remained with the Democrats and were socially more liberal.



Aside from historic reasons they can then explain that the gap is due to a number of factors such as women being more pro-choice, pro-gun control and anti-death penalty (all key Republican policies). Women are also said to place less emphasis on defence and foreign affairs and more emphasis on the environment, health, education and welfare services. In the last election it was also alleged that Trump's generally misogynistic attitude to women alienated female voters.

The teacher should note that as women are more likely to vote than men, there are clear political advantages to having the majority of female votes.

## Likely voting patterns

This exercise enables the learners to apply the factors of income, age, education, region and gender into a practical exercise on how they impact on voting behaviour.



### Activity - Who is most likely to vote for whom?

[Click to open activity](#)

**See Worksheet 4b**

Students should allocate one by one each of the statements and apportion them to the most suitable column to determine whom they are most likely to vote for. The correct answers are below.

Likely to vote Republic	Likely to vote Democrat
I am a Baby Boomer	I am in the lowest income group
I live in the Bible Belt	I live in California
I live in Wyoming	I am an African American woman
I am a non-college educated white woman	I am a postgraduate learner
I am in the highest income group	I am a Millennial
I am pro-life	I am pro-choice
	I live in a big city

## Exercise 5: Race, ethnicity and religion



### Guidance

The teacher should note that there are additional reasons for voting for a specific party and many of these stretch back historically over hundreds of years being linked to events such as the Civil War and the abolition of slavery. These reasons are according to race, ethnicity and religion.

### Religion

The teacher could start by discussing the relevance of religious support in UK politics where it generally has little impact. UK politicians rarely, if ever, appeal to their supporters to pray to God or refer back to the Bible in their political speeches but the same is not true of the USA. Here religion is still a key factor in voting. In 2016 a third of American stated that they attended a worship service every week and a further 16 per cent attended at least monthly. For centuries American politics was dominated by the group known as WASPs (White Anglo Saxon Protestants). It was from this group that presidents were chosen and the political parties run. In 1960 President John Kennedy, a Catholic, was elected and the WASP stranglehold on US politics has been diminishing. Religion however remains an important part in US politics.



### Activity - Discussion

The teacher should get the learners to see how many religions/sects they can think of? The list desired is that below:

For the US electoral purposes these are the main groups.

1. Protestant/other Christian
2. Catholic Voters
  - a. White Catholic
  - b. Hispanic Catholic
3. Jewish voters
4. Other faiths (Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist)
5. White, born again/evangelical Christians
6. Religiously unaffiliated to other groups

Each religious group tends to align itself to the political party that most represents its theological (religious) viewpoint. They also support the presidential candidate who seeks to make them more inclusive within the political policy agenda. We should note that on the whole religious groups tend to be more socially conservatives than secular (non-religious) voters on social issues, such as abortion and gay marriage. In 2016 therefore there was a rise in support for the conservative Republican Trump over the more liberal Hillary Clinton in all religious categories except Jewish. Bearing this point in mind, therefore, learners should complete Activity 5.



## Activity – Religious Groups Voting for Trump

[Click to open activity](#)

**See Worksheet 5**

Students should study the graph on the worksheet or in the activity. Since the Presidential elections of 2000 each religious group has been consistent in the majority supporting one presidential party or another. Allocate each religious group to the percentage voting for Donald Trump. The correct answers are below.

### The percentage of each religious group voting for Trump

Percentage voting for Trump (Y axis)	Religious Group
81	White, born again/ evangelical Christians
61	Mormon
60	White Catholic
58	Protestant/other Christian
52	Total Catholic Voters
29	Other faiths (Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist)
26	Religiously unaffiliated to other groups
26	Hispanic Catholic
24	Jewish voters

Figures: Pew Research Centre November 2016



## Notes

The teacher should reflect on what the chart can tell you about certain groups.

### **Latino or Hispanic voters**

These American voters originate either directly or ancestrally from South and Central America and the Caribbean Spanish speaking islands. They are referred to as either Latino or Hispanic. They now represent about 12 per cent of all US voters, a figure which has been growing rapidly in the last few decades.

Latinos have favoured the Democratic Party over the Republican Party in every presidential election since the 1980s. In 2016, some 66 per cent voted for Clinton and 28 per cent for Trump. Although Trump had not courted the Latino vote to any great extent, his campaign rhetoric on Mexicans, for instance, including his 'build a wall pledge' was seen as being quite hostile. This did not impact adversely on his support from Latinos, however. In fact, Trump gained 1 per cent more of the Latino vote than Mitt Romney had in 2012.

The two main issues restricting the importance of the Latino vote are that their turnout tends to be lower than other groups, under 50 per cent and their vote is also concentrated in certain states, notably Texas, Florida and California rather than in northern swing states.

### **The Asian vote**

Asian voters are those who have their origins in Asian countries such as Vietnam, Japan and Korea. They represent about 4 per cent of the US voting population. Just like the Latino voters, Asian voters vote overwhelmingly for the Democrats. This has not always been the case and in 1992, the majority supported the Republican George Bush Snr. They are the fastest-growing ethnic group in the US. Asian Americans also have the highest income and are the best educated. Normally these last two factors are indications of high voter turnout but American Asians have the lowest voter participation. This has partially been put down to them feeling overlooked as a voting block by the two parties.

### **The black (African American) vote**

In the 1930s the black vote that had previously supported the Republicans (as they had abolished slavery) swapped over to the Democrats in support of President Roosevelt's New Deal. Later on the Democrats were the firm supporters of civil rights in the 1960s. Black people have therefore voted overwhelmingly for the Democrats ever since and in 2016 exit polls showed that 80 per cent of black men voted for Hillary Clinton, as did 93 per cent of black women. Similar in some ways to Latino vote, the black vote is heavily concentrated in

some states in the South and Eastern seaboard. In the South their vote is often cancelled out by the larger white Republican support so their electoral impact is only felt in the north-eastern states and some of those states bordering the Great Lakes, such as Illinois.

The black vote continues to be drawn towards the Democrats for the historic reasons mentioned. Another reason for this is that the black political role models in Congress, mayors, governors and former President Obama are all Democrats, with a lack of suitable role models on the Republican side. At the same time Democrats policies on affirmative action programmes for blacks in work and education, often opposed by Republicans further entrench black support. The Republicans tend to be seen as a party of white voters and candidates who fail to support black causes. At the same time, a lack of black support for Republicans means that they make little effort to endorse black causes whilst at the same time Democrats are often accused of taking black votes for granted.

## Exercise 6: Reflection and conclusion



### Activity – Match the Statements

[Click to open activity](#)

**See Worksheet 6**

Which two statements most closely match each other?

The correct answers are below.

The following statements should be grouped in pairs	
Link 1	
Catholics voters mainly support Democrats	
White Catholics mainly support Republicans	
Link 2	
Religious groups are socially more conservative	
They tend to back Republican presidential candidates	
Link 3	
Latino voters favour Democrats over Republicans	
They are one of the groups least likely to vote	
Link 4	
Asians are the fastest-growing ethnic group in the US	
They have the highest income and are the best educated	
Link 5	
The black vote overwhelmingly supports the Democrats	
They have done so since supporting the New Deal in the 1960s	
Link 6	
The black vote does not go to the Republicans	

There are a lack of black role models in the Republican party
Link 7
More socially conservative religious groups support Republicans
81 per cent of white, born again/evangelical Christians support them
Link 8
Most Christian groups mainly support Republicans
Most non-Christian religious groups mainly support Democrats



## Guidance

### Conclusion

The session concludes by the teacher noting that this unit has covered the long-term factors that affect voting behaviour and that these factors are numerous and differ in some areas considerably from the UK.

As a memory capture activity, the teacher could ask each learner to draw on the board or list one of the long-term determinants of US voting behaviour until they have all been covered. The teacher should also note that some of these factors such as partisan alignment are said to be breaking down and this will be dealt with in the unit on short-term determinants of US voting behaviour.

### Extension work

**Activity A** - Each learner should be allocated an article from the [Pew Research Centre](#) by the teacher. They should then be tasked to review this article and report back to the group to state:

1. What new information this can provide us with in relation to long-term determinants of voting behaviour (if any)
2. If it reinforces any of the existing material from this unit, such as the partisan alignment of the Democrat and Republican voters?
3. How they may feel this information can be used to support their own answer in any assessment?

The [link](#) below from *The Independent* newspaper for November 2016 also provides both teacher and learners with a readable summary of many of the issues noted in this unit.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-elections/who-voted-for-donald-trump-white-men-and-women-most-responsible-for-new-president-elect-voting-data-a7407996.html>

**Activity B** - Learners should examine recent news stories concerning the extent of division and unity within the Democrats and Republicans. They should examine this in the context of the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections and contrast these. They can also look at the record of the first year of President Trump with respect to the unity and division over issues such as healthcare reform and give the reasons for this