- **Partisanship** – most voters had stable, long-term attachment to a political party mainly learned as a psychology from parents/the workplace etc.

- **Partisan Dealignment** – numbers of voters who associate themselves with one political party has declined. Core partisan votes with a great number of floating voters.

  **Rational Choice Approaches**

- **Issue voting** – people vote for a party whose policy on a certain topic is closest to their own opinion. However many people see little difference between the parties.

- **Valence Issues** – issues where there is a broad agreement between the parties (e.g. economy, health). Where parties adopt similar stances, voters judge the parties’ competence on delivering their promises. E.g. In 1997, the electorate strongly believed that Labour could deliver better education and a sound economy.

- **Economic Voting** – People are more likely to vote for a party that has delivered a healthy economy. This did not occur in 1997, however. In 2005, %age of people who said the economy is the most important problem was aroung 11%, in 2010, reached a peak of 70%

- **Campaigns and the Media**
  - Political parties spend huge amounts on nationwide electoral campaigning (£31million in 2010)
  - Negative Campaigning
  - Evidence of campaign’s effectiveness is patchy: many voters make up their minds well before an election
  - In 2010, 25% decided in the final week
  - Local campaigning – parties focus their efforts on swing seats which may decide the outcome of the election
  - In 2010, after the ITV debate, Lib Dem support rose from 17% to 34%, Cons support fell from 36% to 32%. Debates lead to a convergence of the three main parties.
  - Election campaigns can be overrated – in 2001, 70% of ITN viewers said they had little interest in the campaigns

  **2015 Election Campaign**

  - In 2015, 7.4m watched the 7-way leader’s debate
  - Survey of over 3,000 said 38% were influenced by the debates, 23% by news coverage, and 10% party political broadcasts
  - 25% by newspapers – 30% of whom said they had been influenced by the Daily Mail, 21% by The Guardian, 20% by The Times
  - 17% by websites
  - 14% by radio
  - 14% by family and friends
  - 7% by Facebook
  - 4% by Twitter
  - 2% by magazines
  - However during the debate, Natalie Bennett gained most followers on Twitter, over 5,700, with David Cameron gaining only 1,100; greater awareness and online support of minor parties achieved through debates; in 2012, 89% of twitter users were under 35 – getting more young people involved and interested in politics
  - 60% over 15 years old have a morning paper
  - 98% homes have a TV
  - 83% have internet access (2013)

  - The media can affect voting in 3 different ways, theorists say: