Information and the Strength of Partisanship in National and State Elections

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Proponents of Cognitive and Instrumental theories of voting behavior argue that voters remedy their deficiencies in political information by using cognitive shortcuts to vote like fully informed voters would (Downs 1957, Popkin 1976 and 1994). Empirical work has verified that voters can use cues to fill in gaps of information and approximate fully informed decisions with at least seventy-five percent accuracy (Lau and Redlawsk 1997, Lupia 1994). Of available cues, partisan affiliation has been shown to be the most widely used cue (Jacobson 2004). Implicit in these works is that voters will rely less on party ID as a cue in elections with relatively greater amounts of information available than in elections with relatively less information available. In this piece, I test this hypothesis in national elections from 1992-2004 and in the 2006 California statewide election. It is not upheld in the 2004 elections, regardless of the model, but proves to be true under a more comprehensive model pooling years from four presidential elections. Party ID has the same amount of influence in State Assembly elections as that for Governor, but has greater influence for a lesser-known state level office. These findings suggest that 2004 presidential election was unique in terms of its partisanship, though further research is necessary to make these results more robust. They also suggest that party labels may have different meanings at the state level than nationally.

Proponents of Instrumental and Cognitive theories of voting behavior argue that uninformed individuals look to cues as sources of information to evaluate candidates and that party affiliation is consistently the most influential cognitive shortcut that voters use (Jacobson 2004). Thus, these theories would predict that as voters consider elections with relatively less information than others, they should increasingly rely on partisan identification (party ID or PID) in evaluating candidates. We should then observe the influence of party ID getting increasingly more prominent in voters' evaluations of candidates for lower information elections (state legislative elections, for example) compared to presidential and gubernatorial elections that are fairly high profile. However, recent studies have shown that other cues such as occupational background and endorsements become more prominent in less prestigious statewide and municipal elections and party ID can lose much of its relative influence (McDermott 2005, Krebs 1988).

In this piece, I test the implicit hypothesis given above: party ID, as a cognitive shortcut, should grow in relative influence from more intense elections that produce greater amounts of information to elections that produce relatively lower amounts of information. To test this hypothesis, I examine the relative influence of party ID and information level in elections for president, U.S. Senate, U.S. House, Governor, state legislature, and other statewide offices. I employ data from the American National Election Studies in the presidential election years from 1992 through 2004 to examine national elections. For state elections, I use data from a November 2006 exit poll conducted in San Diego, California.

The party ID hypothesis does not hold for the 2004 elections as party ID does not grow in relative strength from high information elections to less intense elections. However, the hypothesis does hold when controlling for additional sources of influence in *multiple* presidential election years. The findings in this piece suggest that the 2004 presidential

election was unique in terms of exceptional partisanship and further research is necessary to see if this unique set of results holds under greater scrutiny. In the following sections, I will review related previous literature, present my hypothesis and research design, discuss my results, and suggest areas for further research.

Theories of Party Identification

Though driven by alternative approaches to voting behavior, decades of research has shown that party affiliation is the strongest influence on voters' evaluations of political candidates (Jacobson 2004). The roots of and uses for partisan affiliation have been debated for decades since the early Columbia studies. While I only test a hypothesis that is grounded in the instrumental and cognitive approaches to understanding voting decisions, it is useful to offer a brief review of each of each in order to consider alternative roles for party ID and how it affects voting behavior. In this section, I will quickly review the sociological, psychological, and instrumental theories of voting behavior.

Sociological and psychological theories of voting behavior argue that party ID is invariant over time but differ on how it actually affects vote choice. Scholars of the sociological theories (Columbia Model) argue that party affiliation is a social phenomenon. Our social networks reinforce our partisanship and only changes on a grand scale alter our partisan affiliation (Berelson et al. 1954). People are socialized into partisan affiliation while growing up and tend to cluster into groups of like-minded partisans. While Berelson and his colleagues argue that one's partisanship is determined by their social environment or social networks, people self-select into groups of people with similar political views. Only when one experiences a change in their social milieu will their partisanship change, such as getting

married and moving into a higher socioeconomic class or moving up in the hierarchy in

one's profession. However, people do not often experience changes in their social

environment and therefore their partisan affiliation will be rather stable over time.

The Michigan, or psychological, model of voting behavior also predicts that partisan

affiliation is stable over time, but it is because it is a part of one's identity. Like the

Columbia approach, psychological theories argue that people are socialized into their

partisan affiliations during childhood (Campbell et al 1976) Campbell (et al.) show that one's

party ID is highly correlated with that of their parents. However, their party affiliation

becomes a psychological filter through which all information passes through, biasing all

information they do acquire. Party ID is then part of one's identity and is invariant over

time. Like the sociological approaches to voting behavior, only significant life events can

cause someone to change their partisan identification.

Instrumental models of voting behavior argue that party ID is used by voters as a

cue to predict which party will better serve them after an election. First offered by Downs

(1957), PID is used as the primary determinant of one's vote choice. People calculate the

difference in expected utilities of each party offering candidates competing for an office and

vote for the one that offers the highest utility. However, Downs notes that it is also rational

for people not to gather the information necessary to make a fully informed decision, which

is required of a "civics book" voter. He does show that voters will employ informational

shortcuts, which allow them to fill in gaps of information to vote as if they were fully

informed.

Cognitive approaches to voting behavior may be considered under the umbrella of

instrumental theories, but they go further in articulating in party ID's role in voting

decisions. Voters are considered to use parties and cues as informational shortcuts, but they

are also investors in public policy (Popkin 1976). They are making decisions under uncertainty and under conditions of incomplete information while acquiring political information can be quite costly. Voters look to party ID because it is a substitute for more complex information about parties and candidates: issue positions, future policy choices, and even past choices in cases where voters are not familiar with a candidate (Popkin 1994). Partisan affiliation is formed over time as part of an ongoing evaluative process and there is feedback from issues and the performance of elected officials that updates one's party affiliation (Popkin 1976, Fiorina 1981). Voters have been shown to be able to look to party ID as a substitute for information and use it to emulate fully informed voters (Lau and Redlawsk 1997, Lupia 1994).

Empirical evidence of the influence of partisan cues over time has reinforced the notion that one's party affiliation is the primary determinant of one's vote choice. Summarizing the empirical literature on the influence of party ID on voting, Jacobson (2004) shows that party ID is the strongest and most widely used cue in voting decisions. Schaffner and Streb (1998) contend that party ID is the most powerful cue available to voters and show that voters who get partisan cues for an election are more likely to express a preference than those who do not get one. In elections where candidates position themselves away from their party, citizens still rely on party as a cue to evaluate those candidates (Schaffner and Streb 2002). While touting a different theory of the role of party ID, scholars of the Michigan school show that voters with poorly developed attitudes vote against their party less frequently than voters with more strongly developed attitudes (Campbell et al. 1976). Extending existing theories of party affiliation, as information becomes costlier to acquire such as in elections for less prestigious offices than president, party affiliation should be an even more important influence for voters.

Recent studies have indicated that other cues may grow in importance as voters move to consider state and local elections. In examining statewide elections that get less attention than the gubernatorial race, McDermott (2005) finds that cues which signal one's skills for office can become relatively more influential than party ID in certain elections. Using a 1994 *Los Angeles Times* pre-election survey for the California statewide elections, she shows that voters who are given information about a candidate's current occupation are much likelier to vote for that candidate, independent of party affiliation. In one open race where only one of the candidates' occupational labels signaled skills appropriate for the elected office, the occupational cue had a slightly stronger effect than party ID on voters' abilities to express a preference. In Chicago city council elections where typically very little information is available about candidates in comparison to the city's mayoral election and definitely a gubernatorial or presidential election, an incumbent's vote share is influenced most heavily by newspaper endorsements, not party affiliation (Krebs 1998). For non-incumbent candidates, local party ward endorsements are the strongest influence in five of six elections from 1979-1995. Unfortunately, Krebs does not test these effects in one model to make general comparisons of voters' decisions. Other studies have found that in nonpartisan state legislative and mayoral races, voters rely more on incumbency cues than party affiliation (Schaffner et al. 2001).

Hypothesis

As indicated in the previous section, a logical extension on theories and empirical work on partisanship would predict that as one has relatively less information about a particular election compared to others, party ID should become a greater influence on their decision at the polling place. The amount of available information about elections can vary by the salience of the election (or by the level of competitiveness) as presidential elections

produce more information than U.S. Senate or House elections and even more local state elections. Relatively more high profile elections garner greater amounts of media coverage in addition to the amount of information that the campaigns themselves produce. It has been shown that Senate elections vary in intensity and voters in more intense elections focus more on ideology and issues than simply partisanship (Westlye 1991). This piece is an attempt to generalize those findings over a broader array of elections, though as of this draft, I do not make an attempt to measure the variation in partisanship within congressional or state legislative elections as the level of intensity varies.

H_1: *Party ID will increase in relative strength from elections that produce greater levels of information to those that produce relatively less information.*

Research Design

To test this hypothesis, I measure the change in the effect of party ID from presidential to congressional elections in national elections and from gubernatorial elections to state legislative elections in a California state election in 2006. The data employed to measure national elections will be from the American National Election Studies from 1992 to 2004. For the national elections, I conduct a test for the 2004 presidential election and use a larger sample that includes elections from 1992 through 2004.

Individual level surveys are rarely, if ever, conducted for state elections below prominent statewide constitutional offices. The *Los Angeles Times* regularly conducts surveys about all of the statewide constitutional offices, for example, but usually does not ask its respondents about state legislative races. If and when surveys are conducted about such

elections, it is usually done by political consultants for state political parties and remains proprietary information (or prohibitively costly if made available for purchase).

The data I use for state level elections is from an exit poll conducted on Election Day in November 2006 in the city of San Diego.[1] The focus of the survey was on how citizens voted in elections several state-level offices, statewide ballot propositions, and one local proposition about authorizing the City of San Diego to work with the Department of Defense to share land for a new international airport. Undergraduate and graduate students from the University of California, San Diego and San Diego State University conducted the surveys in eight precincts around San Diego. Respondents at the individual precincts were randomly selected for interviews as they exited the polling places. The total sample size is approximately 640 respondents.

Across the multiple elections observed in this piece, I construct the dependent variable as a dichotomous one that equals one if the respondent votes for a Democrat and 0 if they vote for a Republican in the particular election of interest.   My primary independent variable of interest for H_1 is party ID and that is also constructed dichotomously. It will equal one of the respondent is a Democrat and 0 if they are a Republican. For each election examined, I use logistic regression models to test the influence of party ID one vote choice, controlling for demographic and economic variables (described below).

To measure party ID across elections, I attempt to rank them by the level of information they produce for the electorate. For my analysis, I use two systems to rank elections by information. Before I describe the models used in all tests, I will address the complications in conceptualizing political information and offer my operationalization for information.

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[1] Copies of questionnaires are available upon request.

Conceptualizing Political Information

Measuring the level of information is controversial and unfortunately there is no optimal solution without its legitimate objections. One operationalization is to posit that information for an election is a function of prestige of the office.   People pay more attention to elections for relatively prestigious offices because the responsibilities associated with it have greater consequences in their lives. More prestigious offices also attract higher quality candidates and elections for them tend to be more competitive than for elections for lesser-known offices. One way to measure prestige is to look at the career ladder of politicians from local to national office and we could look for the offices that entail the most intense competition. As elections become more competitive, candidates work more diligently for the voter's attention and with the increased intensity of the campaign, they are producing more information for the electorate. Jacobson and Kernell (1983) offer a hierarchical structure of political offices on p. 20, "At the top of the heap is the presidency; next are seats in the Senate and governorships; below these are the somewhat more numerous seats in the House of Representatives; and at the bottom lie a multitude of state legislative and local offices." As they note, there are exceptions to this hierarchy like the mayoral elections for New York City, but the general career ladder works in this fashion. On the surface this is a plausible method of quickly ranking elections by how much information is available to voters. Presidential elections are high profile, relatively competitive, and media follows the campaigns close while most voters will have difficulty remembering their state legislator's or city council representative's name.

A more direct way to measure this is to use data on campaign advertising on television, radio, or in the mail. As television advertising has become the most cost-efficient method of reaching voters (Jacobson 2004), one can measure the degree to which voters are

exposed it. Shaw (1999 and 2006) measures political exposure by using Gross Ratings Points (GRPs). If a campaign purchases 100 GRPs for a particular advertisement, every person in that market would see the ad once. Goldstein and Ridout (2004) object that GRPs are not adequate because they do not provide an individual voter level measure for exposure and complicates a scholar's ability to make inferences about an advertisement's affects among the electorate. They instead advocate using advertising purchases data from the Capital Media Analysis Group (CMAG), which tracks all political advertising in major markets. Goldstein and Freedman (2002) combine the frequency with which an ad ran with ANES data about how often voters watch television to measure exposure. While these methods are useful, they do not allow one to measure exposure to all political advertising at all levels.

A measure that would allow one to measure political information produced by campaigns at varying tiers of prestige is to measure campaign expenditures. This method is not without its problems, as noted in Westlye (1991). Measuring campaign expenditures measures total campaign expenditures includes what they spend on overhead, staff, and salary, among others. However, advertising expenditures are the lion's share of what national level and gubernatorial campaigns allocate their resources for (Jacobson 2004). In other elections, campaigns spend most of their money on ways to boost their name recognition such as direct mailers, lawn signs, and door hangers (Sidlow 2003). Using campaign expenditures also does not account for the level of media attention (national and/or local) that an election receives.

As mentioned above, I use two ways to rank elections by information and I will compare the effect of party ID across the elections according to both methods. The first alternative will use campaign expenditure data per registered voter to rank elections by political information available to the electorate. While I have acknowledged the

confounding factors affecting the use of this method, it does allow me to compare

campaigns across all elections with one common measure. To rank the national elections, I

use Federal Election Commission data on campaign operating expenditures and divide them

by the total number of registered voters for each of the respective offices. The rankings are

given below in Table 1. The congressional election and state legislative data below are the

mean campaign expenditure per registered voter. For the California elections, I use

campaign finance data available from the California Secretary of State. As of this draft, the

Secretary of State's Elections Division had not published expenditure data for every state

legislative candidate in every race. It is possible that if every candidate's campaign finance

data were available as of the writing of this draft, that the Assembly races would be much

lower than the gubernatorial elections in terms of expenditures per registered voter.

An additional limitation on this data is that not every state publishes voter

registration sorted by congressional district and consequently twenty states were not

included in this calculation for the U.S. House races. In light of this unfortunate result, there

does not appear to be a bias in terms of the distribution of states that were excluded as

populated and rural states were excluded, liberal leaning and conservative states as well. It is

possible that congressional elections would be the lowest on the totem pole in Table 1 if I

were able to account for every state in the calculations given below.

Table 1: Elections Ranked by Campaign Expenditures per Registered Voter

Office	Expenditure per Registered Voter	Standard Deviation
2004 National Elections		
President		
George W. Bush	$1.56	
John Kerry	$1.40	
U.S. House*	$1.43	$1.82
U.S. Senate*	$1.33	$4.65
2006 California		
Governor		
Arnold Schwarzenegger	$2.90	
Phil Angelides	$2.46	
State Assembly*	$2.84	$2.90
Board of Equalization*	$0.14	

Source: Presidential and congressional campaign finance data available from Federal Election Commission and California campaign finance data are from the California Secretary of State.
* Mean Expenditure per Voter

Table 2: Jacobson's and Kernell's (1983) Political Career Ladder

Hierarchy	2004 Election	2006 Election
U.S. President	President	
Governor		Governor
U.S. Senate	U.S. Senate	
U.S. House	U.S. House	
		Board of Equalization*
State Legislative		State Assembly
Local Offices		

*Jacobson and Kernell (1983) argue that intrastate ranking of offices depends on the size of the office's constituency, the number of offices available, and it's value as a stepping-stone to higher offices. The Board of Equalization is a statewide office with a district that includes

possibly multiple major counties and given that all offices have term limits, I placed it above state assembly.

My second method of ranking elections is following the Jacobson and Kernell (1983) hierarchy. This list is given above in Table 2 and as we can see, both ways of ranking elections by information are roughly equal.

Covariates

The San Diego exit poll offers fewer covariates than the ANES and I will first describe the set of variables common to both datasets followed by additional covariates I include in subsequent tests for national elections. I will refrain from describing variables that have a straightforward interpretation. If a respondent had *at least* a college education, a variable *College* will equal one, zero if the respondent does not. The variable for a respondent's age is an ordinal variable for the California elections and is a continuous variable for the ANES.[2] For the sake of consistency, I will refer to the national and state models with these variables as the "core" model.

I compare the results of this model with a more comprehensive model that includes additional covariates that are standard in the literature. *Ideology* is coded 1 if the respondent is conservative, -1 if they are liberal, and 0 if they are moderate. Variables measuring one's race are included (*Black and Hispanic*) with white voters as the baseline in these models. Voters use the country's economic performance to judge the competence of candidates and know that their income is a function of economic policies and competence of politicians (Scheve 2000). Voters have also been shown to consider the economy in evaluating the president's performance (Fiorina 1981, Downs 1957, Kernell 1978). To measure economic cues, I use

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[2] 2006 Exit Poll Age Question: What is your age?
       1. Under 25   2. 26-35   3. 36-45   4. 46-55 5. 56-65   6. Over 65

data from the question that asked voters if they thought the economy improved, stayed the same, or worsened over the last year. This variable equals one if they economy improved much or only somewhat and zero if it did not.

Literature has also shown that incumbency status gives candidates an additional advantage over their opponents (Jacobson 2004) and I am including a dichotomous variable to control for this effect. The variable will be coded 1 if the incumbent is running in the district and zero if they are not. ANES only provides this variable for U.S. House elections, so it will only be included for House models.

Election Years and Models for Comparison

I will first compare changes in party ID in the national elections for 2004 and in the state elections of 2006 given that the campaign expenditure data used for this paper are only for 2004. However, to account for idiosyncrasies in the 2004 elections, I will also compare party ID across elected offices for all presidential elections from 1992-2004. Though I do not yet have expenditure data for pre-2004 elections, I will compare party ID at the presidential level to the other elections and not attempt to distinguish between the congressional elections. This generally complies with both methods of election rankings described above. When pooling the data from the multiple elections, I will include fixed effects variables for each election year to control for any national trends specific to a particular election year (though they will not be reported in the results tables.) For state elections, I will compare party ID across the three respective elections.

Given that I am using both presidential and off-year election data, I will not attempt a comparison across the two types of election years. The electorate in a midterm or off year election differs significantly from an electorate in a presidential election year (Jacobson 2004, Kernell and Jacobson 2003) and any comparisons across those elections are likely to be

erroneous. Since logit coefficients are not by themselves intuitive, I will focus on

comparisons of predicted probabilities as a function of a hypothetical respondent being a

Democrat over Republican. Descriptive Statistics are given in Table 3:

Table 3a: Descriptive Statistics, ANES, 1992-2004

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Democrat	7380	.56	.50
Ideology	8356	.17	.81
Economy	11637	.26	.44
Incumbent	11215	.86	.35
Union	11751	.09	.28
Male	11805	.45	.50
White	11666	.76	.43
Hispanic	11666	.06	.25
Black	11666	.12	.33
College	11674	.28	.45

Table 3b: Descriptive Statistics, ANES, 2004

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Democrat	729	.52	.50
Ideology	867	.11	.82
Economy	1198	.23	.42
Incumbent	1065	.86	.35
Union	1206	.10	.29
Male	1212	.47	.50
White	1205	.70	.46
Hispanic	1205	.07	.26
Black	1205	.16	.36
College	1212	.30	.46

Table 3c: Descriptive Statistics, 2006 Exit Poll

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Democrat	535	.67	.47
College	618	.78	.41
Male	600	.53	.50
White	618	.81	.39
Age	623	3.9	1.51

Table 4a: Logit Regressions of Likelihood of Voting for a Democratic Candidate on Democratic Party ID, 2004 and additional Presidential Election, ANES Core and Extended Models

	President	Senate	House	President	Senate	House
Democrat	5.115	3.815	3.740	3.486	2.761	2.440
	(0.360)**	(0.345)**	(0.287)**	(0.464)**	(0.516)**	(0.421)**
College	0.626	0.069	0.014	0.482	0.004	-0.298
	(0.363)	(0.337)	(0.291)	(0.441)	(0.368)	(0.345)
Male	0.012	0.088	-0.054	0.407	0.190	0.253
	(0.344)	(0.327)	(0.290)	(0.444)	(0.363)	(0.352)
White	-0.858	-0.379	-1.164			
	(0.410)*	(0.429)	(0.380)**			
Age	-0.003	-0.005	0.008	-0.005	-0.001	0.000
	(0.010)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.010)
Ideology				-1.701	-0.885	-1.465
				(0.311)**	(0.293)**	(0.271)**
Economy				-1.408	-0.518	-0.113
				(0.509)**	(0.402)	(0.385)
Union				0.180	-0.627	-1.566
				(0.768)	(0.649)	(0.618)*
Hispanic				0.794	1.031	-0.643
				(1.018)	(0.980)	(0.799)
Incumbent						-1.152
						(0.460)*
Constant	-2.266	-1.257	-1.228	-1.728	-0.927	0.129
	(0.624)**	(0.607)*	(0.553)*	(0.731)*	(0.656)	(0.762)
Black				1.093	0.155	
				(0.659)	(0.637)	
Observations	552	364	480	469	314	370

Standard errors in parentheses

* significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Table 4b: Predicted Probabilities, Core and Extended Model for the 2004 Elections

Office	Effect of Being a Democrat
2004 Election*	
President	83%
U.S. House	73%
U.S. Senate	74%
2004 Extended Model**	

President	69%
U.S. House	60%
U.S. Senate	56%

* 49 Year-old White Male who is not College Educated
** 49 Year-old moderate white male, not college educated, does not think the economy has improved in the past year, non-union member

As mentioned above, I will first compare the changes in the effect party ID has on one's vote choice in the national and state elections using the core model described above. For the 2004 national elections, H_1 does not hold, as party ID declines in relative strength from the presidential elections to the congressional elections, regardless of which election ranking system being considered.[3] Table 4b shows the predicted probability of voting for a Democratic candidate for a hypothetical voter who is most typical given the data. For a 49 year-old white male without a college degree, the effect of being a Democrat changes the predicted probability of voting for a Democratic presidential candidate by 83% over a Republican. For this same voter, being a Democrat increases their predicted probability of voting for a Democratic House and Senate candidate by 73% and 74%, respectively. Extending the analysis to include additional covariates does not affect the trend for partisanship, as you can also see in Table 4b. However, the relative affect of party ID on vote choice is weaker if we account for additional covariates that measure one's ideology, their view on the economy, and their race. This is consistent with Westlye's (1991) findings that when voters have more information about candidates, they place greater weight on issues and the candidates' ideologies.

To ensure that 2004 is not capturing unique trends in partisan affiliation, I use the same models for all presidential elections from 1992 to 2004. Assuming that the election

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[3] While I use the effect of being a Democrat on the likelihood of voting for a Democratic candidate in all of the empirical analysis shown, I also performed the exact same tests using Republican variables. The results show the same trends across all of the models. The results apply similarly for both of the major parties.

rankings would be upheld for all presidential election years, Hypothesis One is only upheld for the extended model (See Tables 5a and 5b.) Including additional covariates actually reverses the trend in previous tests and causes party ID to increase in relative influence from presidential to congressional elections. These final national results suggest that 2004 was an exceptionally partisan election and that generally people do rely on partisanship more when they know less about one election in comparison to others.

Table 5a: Logit Regressions of Likelihood of Voting for a Democratic Candidate on Party ID, Core and Extended Models, ANES 1992-2004

	President	Senate	House	President	Senate	House
Democrat	4.741	3.439	3.172	3.954	2.745	2.692
	(0.139)**	(0.105)**	(0.086)**	(0.178)**	(0.136)**	(0.114)**
College	0.045	-0.004	0.002	-0.151	-0.170	-0.131
	(0.146)	(0.109)	(0.089)	(0.187)	(0.127)	(0.102)
Male	-0.101	-0.117	-0.044	0.201	-0.037	-0.018
	(0.138)	(0.104)	(0.085)	(0.179)	(0.122)	(0.099)
White	-0.961	-0.433	-0.738			
	(0.185)**	(0.139)**	(0.117)**			
Age	0.001	0.008	0.002	0.003	0.010	0.003
	(0.004)	(0.003)*	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.004)**	(0.003)
Ideology				-1.359	-0.837	-0.556
				(0.122)**	(0.085)**	(0.069)**
Economy				0.350	-0.028	0.086
				(0.207)	(0.137)	(0.110)
Union				0.483	-0.016	0.088
				(0.298)	(0.200)	(0.161)
Hispanic				0.374	0.341	0.811
				(0.370)	(0.326)	(0.252)**
Black				2.232	0.610	1.024
				(0.430)**	(0.231)**	(0.214)**
Incumbent						-0.059
						(0.142)
Constant	-1.909	-1.814	-1.263	-2.696	-1.709	-1.623
	(0.305)**	(0.227)**	(0.189)**	(0.365)**	(0.237)**	(0.231)**
Observations	2964	3088	4258	2099	2406	3328

White is the baseline for the less restricted models.

Standard errors in parentheses
* significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Table 5b: Predicted Probabilities of Voting for a Democratic Candidate

Office	Effect of Being a Democrat
Core Model, Elections 1992-2004*	
President	75%
U. S. House	63%
U.S. Senate	64%
Extended Model, Elections 1992-2004**	
President	47%
U.S. House	54%
U.S. Senate	54%

* 50 year-old white male, not college educated
** 50 year-old moderate white male without a college education, does not think the economy
has improved over the past year, non-union member

Contrary to three of four national elections, the party ID hypothesis generally holds

for the 2006 state elections, as party ID increases in relative strength from lower information

elections to higher information elections (as shown in Table 6.). This trend loosely holds for

both ways of ranking elections by information. Oddly, party ID has the same affect on one's

vote choice in the elections for State Assembly as it does for Governor. For a white male

voter between the ages of 46 and 55 years old, the effect of being a Democrat increases their

predicted probability of voting for Phil Angelides instead of Arnold Schwarzenegger by

70%. This effect increases in magnitude only as you consider the election for the Board of

Equalization. Being a Democrat makes this same voter 70% more likely to vote for a

Democratic candidate for Assembly and 79% more likely to vote for a Democratic Board of

Equalization candidate. Further research should scrutinize state elections with more data

and additional controls to see if these results prove to be stable under closer examination.

Table 6: Logit Regressions of Voting for a Democratic Candidate on Democratic Party ID, 2006 San Diego Exit Poll, With Predicted Probabilities

	Governor	Assembly	Equalization
Democrat	4.080	3.488	4.448
	(0.414)**	(0.355)**	(0.577)**
College	0.697	-0.342	-0.300
	(0.330)*	(0.425)	(0.645)
Male	-0.118	-0.053	0.901
	(0.258)	(0.318)	(0.518)
White	-0.452	-0.839	-1.197
	(0.361)	(0.478)	(0.722)
Age	-0.048	-0.120	-0.234
	(0.088)	(0.117)	(0.176)
Constant	-2.944	-0.070	-0.224
	(0.639)**	(0.717)	(1.057)
Observations	447	326	201

Standard errors in parentheses
* significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Office	Effect of Being a Democrat*
Governor	70%
Assembly	70%
Equalization	79%

*White Male College Graduate, 46-55 years   old

Discussion and Conclusion

The hypothesis examined in this piece does not always hold in national elections and only loosely is upheld in the state elections data. In three of four tests of national elections, contrary to hypothesis one, party ID does not consistently grow in strength from elections

with greater information to those with relatively less information. In the 2004 national elections, by either method of ranking elections by level of information, partisan affiliation plays a weaker role as a cognitive shortcut in a person's vote choice when they less information available to them. However, when extending the analysis to a larger number of presidential election years, we get mixed results about the accuracy of our hypothesis. If we restrict the number of covariates, we get results similar to those found in 2004. Yet, if we control for additional sources of influence that are known to influence one's evaluation of political candidates, party ID does in fact become a more prominent shortcut when voting for candidates in relatively low information elections. These last results suggest that 2004 was an exceptionally partisan year in comparison to other recent presidential years. Party ID unexpectedly has the same effect for both the gubernatorial and State Assembly elections. It only increases in relative magnitude for the Board of Equalization election, which was not very intense.

Extensions of this line of research should further investigate the relative effect of partisanship in national and state elections under closer scrutiny. Scholars should focus on collecting more individual level data in state elections and attempt to control for socioeconomic and demographic variables that can influence one's evaluation of politicians. State parties often do not focus on the same issues as national parties and party labels may carry substantively different meanings than those of the national parties. Partisanship's effects on voting decisions could be found to be significantly different in the states than its effects in national elections under more rigorous examination.

While this piece was limited in dealing with two separate electorates, further research should focus on pulling out the meaning of partisanship at national and state levels within the same electorate to facilitate a meaningful comparison of partisan affiliation across

national and state elections. Unfortunately, current data is sparse with respect to individual

level information regarding voting decisions in state level elections with the exception of

some gubernatorial elections. Such research should also make an attempt to control for

variation in costs of campaigning across states, as this piece implies that California State

Assembly elections are relatively more intense than the average U.S. congressional election

(at least in terms of campaign expenditures per registered voter). State legislative elections in

Minnesota, for example, do not cost as much as California elections since Minnesota state

legislative district sizes do not approach those in California.

Extensions of this research should also follow Westlye's lead in measuring how

partisanship's effect on vote choice may vary within each of both national and state

legislative elections as those elections vary in terms of intensity. As we can see in Table 1,

legislative elections at both the national and state levels can experience much variation with

respect to intensity (in terms of expenditures per registered voter). However, Westlye was

only examining U.S. Senate elections and we may observe different idiosyncrasies in state

legislative elections as opposed to national ones. Or, we may find that Westlye's results can

be generalized to all legislative elections.

Also, scholars should consider collecting individual level data similar in quality to the

ANES at the municipal level (urban, suburban, and rural). As suggested by the work in

Krebs (1998), local elections may be influenced by endorsement cues by much greater

amounts than in national election due to partisan cues not being readily available (in

nonpartisan elections) or where partisan cues may not carry much substantive meaning

because one party may be in effective control of the local government. Even if there is

healthy partisan competition, we may observe that local endorsements carry significant

meaning relative to party ID simply due to interconnected social networks. Scholars should

not continue to assume that sub national voting behavior can and should be generalized by

observed behavior in national surveys.

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