Political Parties and Partisanship

Social identity and individual attitudes

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4 Rethinking partisanship

Some thoughts on a unified theory

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Introduction

Over the past several decades the debates over the role of partisanship in voter choice have been shaped by two long standing controversies.[1]

One controversy is between advocates of the 'identity' approach and advocates of the 'attitudinal' approach. The classic identity approach is associated with Campbell *et al.* (1960, 1966) and its' most recent restatement is found in Green *et al.* (2002). The second approach comes in multiple guises but is most closely associated with the ideas of Fiorina (1981) on partisan identification as a 'running tally' (see also Achen 1992; Clarke *et al.* 2004). In this chapter we identify five key differences between the two approaches in terms of their stylized claims about the nature of partisanship. These relate to (1) the penetration and strength of partisanship among the citizenry, (2) the origins of partisanship, (3) the stability of partisanship, (4) the degree of resemblance between partisanship and social identities and (5) the nature of the relationship between partisanship and vote choice. In addition, we identify another difference (6) the consequences of partisanship for the structure of party competition, which also generates potential differences between approaches. After considering the nature of these differences between the two approaches we offer a kind of Hegelian synthesis of our own, treating the classic Campbell *et al.* (1960) view as thesis and the Fiorina (1981) view as antithesis.

The synthesis that we outline here directly addresses the other key controversy in the partisanship literature that goes back to the seminal *Party Identification and Beyond* edited by Budge, Crewe and Farlie in 1976 – between those who claim that party identification is an idea that should be stamped, 'made in the USA, not for the export market' and those who see it as widely applicable to party competition throughout the world (albeit with appropriate modifications in question wording). Here we argue that it is a mistake to conclude that party identification does not travel well and is a US-specific concept. Indeed, in our synthesis there is nothing special about the US as a 'proper name'. We take the Lincoln-inspired view that party identification applies in any given nation to any given party in any given historical context, to all of the people some of the time, or to some of the people all of the time,

but not to all the people all of the time. In the US, just as elsewhere, there is considerable evidence that short term shifts in measured party identification are linked to campaign and candidate specific factors (Erikson *et al.* 2002). Even more importantly, however, there is also evidence that long term shifts in party identification, among at least some adults, are the result of ongoing historical realignments (Wayman *et al.* 2007). Thus, it is important is to identify both those factors that increase the applicability and importance of party identification at different stages in the evolution of party systems, and those that vary across types of electoral rules, across parties (and voters).

The penetration and strength of party identification

The classic view is that party identification is found in most, if not quite all, adult citizens (Campbell *et al.* 1960). Fiorina's (1981) approach is not quite as clear as the classic approach in its implications for the pervasiveness of party identification. But, since individuals are posited to gain political experience as they mature, his approach clearly suggests that the proportion of citizens with sufficient information to develop an identification should also increase with experience.

As Table 4.1 shows, the responses to the traditional battery of party identification questions suggest that most US adults can be characterized as having some partisan attachment to either the Democratic or Republican parties in the past 50 years or so.[2] Yet, even in the US, despite the remarkable continuity in the names of the two dominant parties, the proportions of voters who report a party identification has undergone change between elections. In particular, there has been a rise in the number of voters who report themselves to be 'Independents'; though there is some debate about the meaning of this development (Nie *et al.* 1976; Miller 1991; Keith *et al.* 1992; Clarke and Suzuki 1994). Even in the US, moreover, the proportion of identifiers has almost certainly varied in earlier time periods; though, to be sure, no survey data is available to verify this claim. Nevertheless, this proposition is likely to have been true in the nation's early political history when the party system was itself in flux; a proposition that is given added credibility by the far lower levels of reported partisanship in new democracies.[3]

This evidence would seem to support Fiorina's approach over the classic social identity model, but we prefer to think in terms of a synthesis rather than a forced choice between the two approaches. This synthesis rests on the Lincolnian view that you cannot expect party identification among all the people all the time. Just as the proportion of citizens expressing a party identification in the US at different time periods can be explained by general factors, so differences in levels of party identification across countries, parties, and time periods, can also be explained by general theories of party identification that make no use of proper names of countries.

Table 4.1 Party identification in the United States, 1952–2004, seven point measure

	1952	1954	1956	1958	1960	1962	1964	1966	1968	1970	1972	1974	1976	1978
Very strong Democrat	22	22	21	27	20	23	27	18	20	20	15	17	15	15
Weak Democrat	25	25	23	22	25	23	25	28	25	24	26	21	25	24
Independent Democrat	10	9	6	7	6	7	9	9	10	10	11	13	12	14
Independent	6	7	9	7	10	8	8	12	11	13	13	15	15	14
Independent Republican	7	6	8	5	7	6	6	7	9	8	10	9	10	10
Weak Republican	14	14	14	16	14	16	14	15	15	15	13	14	14	13
Strong Republican	14	13	15	11	16	12	11	10	10	9	10	8	9	8
Apolitical	3	4	4	4	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	3
N	1784	1130	1757	1808	1911	1287	1550	1278	1553	1554	2694	2505	2850	2283

	1980	1982	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004
Very strong Democrat	18	20	17	18	17	20	18	15	18	19	19	17	17
Weak Democrat	23	24	20	22	18	19	18	19	19	18	15	17	16
Independent Democrat	11	11	11	10	12	12	14	13	14	14	15	15	17
Independent	13	11	11	12	11	10	12	11	9	11	12	8	10
Independent Republican	10	8	12	11	13	12	12	12	12	11	13	13	12
Weak Republican	14	14	15	15	14	15	14	15	15	16	12	16	12
Strong Republican	9	10	12	10	14	10	11	15	12	10	12	14	16
Apolitical	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	0
N	1612	1411	2236	2166	2032	1966	2474	1787	1710	1276	1797	1488	1197

Source: American National Election Studies

The origins of partisan identification

The classic approach to party identification in the US suggested that it is rooted in early childhood socialization by parents and relatives, reinforced by social identities, and changeable among adults only in periods of major social and political upheaval (Campbell *et al.* 1960; Miller 1991; Miller and Shanks 1996). But if we are to apply this idea more generally, there is clearly something of a chicken and egg problem here since, when new party systems are developing, it is unclear where socializing adults received their identifications from. While this puzzle may not have been of much relevance to the US in 1960 when Campbell and his colleagues published *The American Voter* it is certainly relevant to earlier periods in US history such as in the 1800s, when we had a realignment that involved the dissolution of the previous party system (Sundquist 1983). The obvious way to resolve the puzzle is to recognize that party identification will develop in step with the development of political party constellations and will be affected by cataclysmic events (such as war, famine, major economic depressions), especially if they occur at formative periods in a person's life.[4]

The stability of party identification

The classic view of partisan identification is that, once established in early adulthood, long term partisan identification with the two major parties is essentially stable over a life span except for reinforcement.[5] In contrast, Fiorina (1981) views partisan identification as a running tally of all those factors (including past performance) that lead to partisan evaluations. It follows that for those voters who are close to a threshold between partisan categories short-term campaign specific forces can lead to a change in partisan identification sufficient to move a voter to a contiguous value on the seven point scale (see Figure 1.1). In the case of those voters who are not strongly rooted by past history, short term shifts across partisan categories can be even larger. In the longer run, in Fiorina's approach, there is nothing necessarily fixed about partisan identification and childhood socialization has a rapidly diminishing effect. Nonetheless, as long as voters have distinct interests, and as long as parties differ in which interest group constituencies they are most concerned to serve and retain, voters may well manifest considerable stability in partisan attachment based simply on self-interest.

When we consider the empirical evidence, even in the US, the 'classic' portrait of stability of party identification only makes sense for the two major parties. Despite the remarkable continuity in party name of the two dominant parties, moreover, the issue positions of those parties have undergone dramatic (if often gradual) shifts over time (Carmines and Stimson 1991; Budge *et al.* 2001). Furthermore, stability of party identification is greater in some historical time periods than others and may be greater in some parts of the country than others. In particular, if we look at recent data, scholars who

focus on realignment in the US South have unearthed evidence consistent with long-term conversion of Democrats into Republicans in the post-World War Two period (Saunders and Abramowitz 2004).[6] This evidence would again seem to support Fiorina's approach over the classic model but, as before, we prefer to work towards a synthesis rather than force a choice between the two approaches.[7]

Just as the stability of party identification in the US at different time periods can be explained by economic and social changes that may be linked to political changes such as realignments and changes in party constellations, so differences in levels of and stability of party identification across countries, parties, and time periods, can be explained by general theories of party identification that make no use of proper names. Those factors that may affect cross-national (or cross-regional) differences in the prevalence and stability of party identification and its importance for elections include:

1   The number of parties. Systems with institutions conducive to the development of two-party systems (or, more generally, few parties) may make the development of party identification easier, since they simplify voters' cognitive task of choosing an affiliation.[8]

2   The socio-cultural rootedness of the party system; that is, the extent to which party membership is tied to religion, race, and ethnicity; or geographically linked in societies where inter-regional mobility is limited and local identities are strong (Richardson 1991).

3   The degree to which parties are ideologically differentiated. It may be easier to develop stable party identifications in those systems where the feasible choices are ideologically distinct.

4   The history of the party system. Constellations of party competition that are durable make it far easier to develop long-term partisan attachments both for new and for old voters alike. When the same set of parties determine the party space it is easier for voters to develop loyalties based on implicit or explicit comparisons of the parties.

5   The nature of the ballot. Systems that give the voters choice among candidates (such as bloc voting, limited voting or rank-ordered methods such as the Single Transferable Vote) rather than choice among parties (list PR), may be less likely to facilitate the development of party identification.

6   The embeddedness of elections. Concurrent elections for multiple levels of office are more likely to reinforce party attachments than elections that are staggered, since they reduce the likelihood of what is, in effect split ticket voting.

7   The extent to which one needs to be registered with a party in order to fully participate in selecting candidates (Harvey 2001).

Similarly, differences in the extent of identification across parties within a given historical and national setting may be due to factors such as:

1 Differences in the nature of the party organizational structures. For example, in a federal system, some parties might exist at both the national and state or regional level, while others are only regional.
2 Differences in the extent to which party affiliation corresponds to well-defined social groupings.
3 Differences in the historical circumstances involving the duration of the party or the nature of party creation. Some parties are, for example, indelibly associated with critical political events such as the founding of the nation (the African National Congress in South Africa or the Congress Party in India) that are likely to generate long term loyalties. Others are associated primarily with a single figure rather than any particular ideas or interests and have little *raison d'être* once that leader has left the political stage.

Finally:

4 Differences across parties may have to do with differences in the support base of each party such as the socio-economic status of its voters. Party identification is, for example, arguably more likely to be stable among the less well-educated and the less affluent, though the other hypothesis is almost equally plausible.[9]

As we will discuss in more detail below, discrepancies between the voter's partisan identification and voting choices (based on their current interests and values) may lead to changes in party identification (Markus and Converse 1979). Here, shifts in party identification might be related to social mobility, with shifts if a voter's socioeconomic position differs from those of parents and family, leading to a discrepancy between the view they currently espouse and those they were brought up with.

The resemblance between partisan identification and other types of social identities

One key difference between the classic Campbell *et al.* (1960) view of partisan identification and the Fiorina (1981) approach is that the latter suggests that party identification simply expresses preferences based on both prospective and retrospective judgements (what parties have done and might be expected to do); while, in contrast, the classic view also incorporates more affective considerations. In the classic view, having a party identification is like rooting for a particular sports team even when it does not perform that well, and more like having a social identity that is not so much chosen but rather is simply part of one's self-image (cf. Brennan and Lomasky 1994; Shanks 1994; Schuessler 2000).

Here too, rather than trying to choose between a purely cognitive and a purely affective view of party identification we take it as likely that some voters do

develop an affective attachment to some parties. Thus, the questions become (1) 'How do we measure the affective component of party identification?' and (2) 'What factors promote the development of that affective component?'

The first question requires us to examine whether partisan identification leads to cognitive biases in attention to and retention of information consistent with or incongruent with party predispositions (cf. Grofman 1987). It further requires us to examine information biases, in the form of 'assimilation' and 'contrast' effects, which lead voters to perceive the parties that they favour as espousing policies closer to their own views than might truly be the case and project views onto parties they oppose that place those parties even further away from their own issue positions than might be the case (Adams et al. 2005). There are well developed statistical tools for estimating the magnitude of such biases (see Merrill et al. 2001). The second question, on the other hand, requires us to assess those factors affecting the likelihood of an affective element to party identification as it affects the development and stability of party identification, especially the group-based rootedness of political parties and the social institutions that reinforce partisan identifications.[10] Certainly parties that emerge in times of crisis, such as independence movements against colonial authorities, for example, may attract a strong affective loyalty among partisans.

The nature of the relationship between party identification and vote choice

If party identification really is stable over a life-time, then we have to account for the fact that the same party doesn't always win (or doesn't always win by the same margin) (Converse 1966). There is, of course, more than one way in which we can explain this seeming puzzle and the different ways are not mutually exclusive.

1   We can recognize that not all voters have a reliable party identification and attribute changes across elections, at least in part, to changes in the behaviour of 'swing voters'.
2   We can recognize that there is movement in and out of the electorate due to death and changes in voting eligibility as voters cross an age or citizenship eligibility threshold.
3   We can allow for the possibility of turnout differences across elections among those eligible to vote.
4   We can allow for forces other than party identification to affect voter choice – factors linked to particular candidates, campaign strategies, or exogenous events.

As all these four factors vary across elections then we can obtain different outcomes even if there has been no change in the partisan affiliations of the voters. An alternative approach that builds on Fiorina (1981) but that still incorporates

some of the explanations given above is that party identification among adults can be expected to change as a voter's circumstances change. Thus, votes change to reflect changes in party identification, among other things.

We draw our inspiration from Tiny Tim, an androgynous American ukelelist who had his 15 minutes of fame in the 1970s on the *Johnny Carson Show* on late night TV, asserting that 'You are what you eat'.[11] We believe that party identification can best be seen as a process of self-identification that takes the behaviour of oneself and of others as cues in a Bayesian-like updating framework, a model that we label 'you become what you vote'.[12] This perspective is closely related to, but still subtly different from the approach of Fiorina (1981) although both involve Bayesian or Bayesian-like updating.[13]

Fiorina's approach can be expressed in terms of an autoregressive model, whose notation we may simplify as follows:

$$PID_t = a_{t-1} PID_{t-1} + \Sigma b_{j,t} E_{j,t} + c_t$$

$$PID_{t-1} = a_{t-2} PID_{t-2} + \Sigma b_{j,t-1} E_{j,t-1} + c_{t-1}$$

$$PID_{t-k} = a_{t-k-1} PID_{t-k-1} + \Sigma b_{j,t-k} E_{j,t-k} + c_{t-k}$$

Here, PID_t represents party identification at a given time period, t; while the $E_{j,t}$ values are election specific factors that influence party identification at that election. In this model current party identification is a simple additive function of previous party identification and new election-specific influences. Partisanship, therefore, constitutes a 'running tally' of past experiences.[14]

We propose an alternative formalisation in which a voter's change in party identification is conditioned not just by perceptions of past or future party performance but also by how others with the same party identification are voting. For space reasons, we will only sketch this model in this chapter. Before we turn to a brief exposition of our model, we first consider the logic of two related but simpler models: one in which some of the voters have party identification all the time and one in which all of the voters have party identification some of the time, but in neither of which do all the voters have party identification all the time.

Let $P^i_{t, t+1}$ = the probability that voter i exhibits the same party identification at time t_{+1} as at time t.

Let $P_{t, t+1}$ = the mean probability of a set of voters exhibiting the same party identification at time t_{+1} as at time t.

In our first model we have party identification among all the people some of the time. To illustrate the model we assume that all voters have an identical probability, s, of maintaining their present party identification and to keep life simple we will assume a dichotomous choice of party identification, say D or R. If all voters have an identical probability s of maintaining their partisan identification, it might seem that $P_{t, t+1}$ equals s, but it doesn't. Rather:

$$P_{t,t+1} = s^2 + (1-s)^2$$

The reason is that we don't observe 'real' party identification, only the voter's responses to questions about party identification, so that we can get a repetition in two ways, an accurate representation of the voter's underlying party identification, which occurs with probability s^2 plus the probability of mistakenly repeating the same party identification at the two time periods, which is given by $(1-s)^2$.[15]

A second simplified model, with partisan identification for some of the people all of the time, assumes that some voters, a proportion M, have unchanging party identification and the rest simply randomly choose one of two partisan identification options. Now:

$$P_{t,t+1} = M + (.5 * .5)(1-M)$$

It is straightforward to estimate the parameters of this simple (and unrealistic) model.[16] Note that in neither of these models do all the people have party identification all of the time.

Now we turn to a very brief exposition (without detailed elaboration) of the key ideas of our own neo-Bayesian model. To keep the algebra simple, we will assume that the parameters of the model are the same for the identifiers of both parties.

We may express our model as:

$P^i_{t,t+1}$ = f (strength of i's party identification at time t; vote choice of i at time t, t_{-1}, etc.; proportion of voters with same party identification as i who voted for that party's candidate at time t).

Economists take for granted that behaviour reveals preferences (Blaug 1982). But it also should be true that we can come to understand who/what we are by looking at our own choices and then making inferences about what kind of person made those choices (see also Bem 1967, 1972). In particular, as we examine our own voting behaviour we can ask whether or not such behaviour is consistent with the behaviour of someone with a given party identification. If the discrepancy between behaviour and identification becomes too big then we may change our identification to match our behaviour.[17] We assume also that early party identification operates as a strong (Bayesian-like) prior.

But what distinguishes our model from the simple notion of party identification a self-revelatory process that affects an underlying prior is that, in our model (a) whether a voter changes party identification depends not just on how they previously voted but on how others voted and (b) the voter's self classification about their party identification is an on-off switch whose value changes only when the voter sees *overwhelming evidence* of a discrepancy between their voting behaviour and their party identification.[18] Let us consider two extreme case scenarios.

First, imagine a two-party only world where half of the Republican identi-fiers vote Democratic and half of the Democratic identifiers vote Repub-lican.[19] If we see someone voting Democratic, then the probability that they are a Democratic identifier is 50 per cent and the probability that they are a Republican identifier is also 50 per cent. Thus, the odds-ratio on Democratic Party identification is 1:1, and we get no additional leverage on whether or not a person is a Democratic identifier by observing their voting behaviour. But then, neither can the individual gain any insight into their partisan identification by observing their own voting behaviour!

Now, let us consider a second (two-party only) scenario. Here all Demo-cratic identifiers vote for the Democratic candidate and all Republican iden-tifiers vote for the Republican candidate. In such a world, if we know how someone votes, then we can with certainty infer their party identification. In like manner, if someone looks at their own vote, then they can 'know' with certainty their own party identification.

But the real world is neither of those two extremes. In the real world we observe a number of people casting a vote at odds with their party identifica-tion. Because that is the case, a person who votes contrary to their party identification is given reason to think that they are not truly an identifier, but it is also possible that there are simply one of those identifiers who happens in this election (or the previous election(s)) to be voting contrary to their identification.

Since we assume that there is a strong prior based on childhood socializa-tion, and because we believe that voters cling to a given partisan identification until there is absolutely compelling evidence (from their own behaviour) that it is false, as long as there are a large number of voters behaving in ways that are inconsistent with their party identification we can get perpetuation over a long time period of self-perceived party identification consistent with early socialization but incongruent with long term (presidential) vote choices. Finally, however, there may be a flip-flop in party identification to yield consistency with actual voting behaviour.[20]

In this model, *ceteris paribus*, the weaker party identification is as a Bayesian prior, the faster will it be the case that 'you are what you vote'. How you vote is a self-revelatory process, but the nature of that revelation is contingent on how other people are voting. For example, we may imagine that, *ceteris pari-bus*, holding constant the number of times a voter of one party identification has (consecutively) voted for the candidates of the opposite party, the greater the proportion of identifiers of the voter's party who are also voting for that party's candidates, the less will be the likelihood of change in party identifica-tion.[21] As we saw, the intuition here is simply that if, say, many Democratic identifiers are voting for Republican candidates, there is no need to see one-self as a Republican to account for one's voting behaviour.

But it is easy to see that we can have cascade effects (like falling dominoes), so that once, say, former (Reagan) Democrats begin to convert to a Repub-lican identification, and thus, ceteris paribus, we will have a lower proportion

of voters with Democratic party identification voting Republican, then more and more of the remaining (Reagan) Democrats should make the switch in party identification. The intuition is that now it has become much harder to think of oneself as a Democrat but behave like a Republican since that category of voters has become so rare.[22]

It may also be the case that individuals pay attention not to the set of all those with the same partisan identification as themselves but only (or primarily) to those in some particular reference groups with which the voter also identifies. A similar kind of argument can be made about cue-taking from relevant reference groups. If, for example, Catholics identify as Democrats but only half the Catholic Democratic identifiers vote Democratic for president, then a Democratic identifier for whom Catholic Democrats is a reference group could maintain a separation between their party identification and their vote choice since this appears to be a common characteristic of her reference group. If, however, Catholics began to shift their partisan identification to better match their voting history, then we could get a cascade effect leading to a change in partisan identification among Catholic Democrats who had become 'Reagan Democrats', i.e. Democrats who voted for Republicans.

The consequences of partisan identification for the structure of party competition

Perhaps the most important new synthesis of rational choice and Michigan approaches to the study of the implications of party identification for party competition is the work of James Adams. In a series of studies Adams (1998, 2001a, 2001b; Adams *et al.* 2005) shows that issue voting and party identification operate differently in combination with one another than each operates separately; that is, the effects are not additive, they interact. In particular, the existence of party identification (especially for multi-party systems, and for two-party systems when it operates in conjunction with turnout affects based on alienation) creates centrifugal pressures for parties who find it vote-maximizing to locate where their own partisans are, despite the Downsian pressures for party convergence. When we provide a unified model that includes both issue voting and partisan identification, the central result of neo-Downsian models that parties ought to converge no longer holds. Rather, even among two-party systems under plurality, we come to expect what Merrill and Grofman (1999) refer to as 'moderate convergence', but which could equally well be called 'moderate divergence'. Intuitively what happens is that party identification anchors the parties to locations closer to their own supporters (or, somewhat more precisely, party identification acts as a biasing factor that prevents parties from moving closer to the supporters of other parties).

Discussion

We have argued that pitting the classic Campbell *et al.* (1960) model against the Fiorina (1981) approach to understanding partisan identification (without attempting a synthesis) is ultimately counterproductive. In particular, vote choices can only be understood in the context of the options that voters have (Sniderman 2000). If parties maintain stable issue positions, then voters can rationally sustain partisan loyalties. If parties change their platforms and policies then voters may rightly proclaim that 'I did not leave the party, the party left me'. It is when positions of the party with which a voter identifies and the voter's own ideology and perceived self-interest diverges that we may see an internal conflict in the voter's cognitive processing of information about themselves. But, in the short run, that conflict can be dealt with simply by voting in ways that conflict with partisan identification, even if that self-identification is ultimately found by the voters to be infeasible given a sustained ideological divide between the voter and the party with which they previously identified.

But how severe a cognitive conflict it is for a voter to vote discrepant with their party identification is, we argued, a matter of political context. In particular, we proposed a new way to integrate classical and rational choice perspectives on voting via a Bayesian-like updating model. In this model voters look not just at their own interests but also use the behaviour of others as input into their updating mechanism for self-characterized party identification. In this model we would not expect that party identification would always be stable or always be unstable; rather it would be very much context dependent. But we also have suggested that changes in party identification can occur rapidly at some point due to information cascade effects about the plausibility of self-identification as someone whose party identification is incongruent with their (long run) voting behaviour. On balance, to adapt Tiny Tim's insight, our expectation is: 'You are what you vote – but only eventually'.

As to the debate over whether the concept of party identification can 'travel' outside the US, we have argued that this poses a false dichotomy. Rather, we need to look for syntheses that recognize that partisan identification varies in its penetration, its importance for vote choice, its stability, and its strength of affect across different settings in terms of nations, parties, and time periods.[23] Even in the United States, party identification has varied in its stability. Similarly, in some contexts party identification will be held by many voters and in others by few.

To think about party identification in comparative perspective we would suggest a set of questions to guide further research that is truly historical and cross-national:

1   Where does party identification initially come from?
2   What forces act to maintain party identification constant?

3   What forces act to change party identification?

4   How does the evolution of party identification vary across parties?

5   What is the importance of party identification as compared to other factors that affect vote choice (such as issue preferences or group embeddedness)?[24]

And, as noted earlier, we would also emphasize an important question that has only recently been called attention to, namely, below.

6   How does the existence of partisan identifications as a valence factor change the calculus of parties seeking vote-maximizing positions?[25]

Notes

1   An earlier version of portions of this paper was given at Annual Workshops of the European Consortium for Political Research, April 25–30, 2006, Cyprus. Participation of the third-named author in this project occurred when he was still a graduate student at UCI, and was supported by research assistantship support from the University of California, Irvine Center for the Study of Democracy. We are indebted to Clover Behrend-Gethard and Sue Ludeman for bibliographic assistance.

2   The traditional questions are: 'Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?' (if Republican or Democrat). 'Would you call yourself a strong (Republican/Democrat) or a not very strong (Republican/Democrat)?' (if Independent, other or no preference) 'Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?' Responses to these questions can be used to generate a 'seven point scale' as in Figure 1.1 (ignoring the 'apoliticals' recorded in Table 4.1).

3   Some of these differences, however, may be due to differences in wording. To allow for multi-party systems, question wording to tap partisan identifications outside the US is necessarily different from the seven point scale used in the US – a scale which implicitly treats the Democrats and Republicans as anchoring opposite poles of a single dimension.

4   But we would also argue that party identification comes to reflect what we think of as long-term revealed preferences, i.e. political choices becoming congealed over time into political identity.

5   Here the notion is that partisan affiliations are reinforced over the course of a lifetime as a kind of habit.

6   In another paper (Wayman *et al.* 2007) we look at the issue of stability of party identification in the US in the post-World War Two period. We argue that cross-sectional data is not appropriate to test stability of party identification, recall data of past voting may be biased, cohort data (even in the form used by Green *et al.* 2002) can be misleading, and panel studies that address this question (e.g. Saunders and Abramowitz 2004) have had to rely on relatively short panel lengths. In that essay, we look at cohort data over the period 1952–2004 and find apparent stability when we look at the national data; but, when we disaggregate the cohort data by region and by time period we find recent shifts in partisan identification in a pro-Republican direction in the South and pro-Democratic shifts in the rest of the country.

7   There are three remarkable ironies about the standard view of partisan identification taken from Campbell *et al.* (1960). First, the classic NES seven point scale used to measure partisan identification does not explicitly use the term identification or identity. Second, this question nowhere explicitly refers to the notion of

partisanship as a long term affiliation; indeed, the wording lacks any clear time referent, and the question may well be taken by some respondents to refer merely to their present vote intention. Third, while *The American Voter* is customarily taken to stand for the proposition that, once their partisan identification is established, adults cannot be expected to change their party identification (rather, partisan attachments may be expected to deepen over the course of the life cycle), the book references a theory of party realignment that would lead one to expect the potential for change in party identification. Indeed, the then reigning model of realignment – which posited a 28–36 year cycle at the national level, should have led the authors to an expectation that a new realignment was imminent, since the previous one had occurred in 1932!

8 Of course, we recognize that not all of partisan identification can be attributed to conscious choices. As with other social identities, there are elements of social reinforcement that may not be consciously perceived, as well as the possibility of key constraints, e.g. in societies where parties are organized along racial, religious, or class lines so that the affiliation of someone whose characteristics do not match those of the party base would be psychologically difficult and might even encounter active opposition.

9 One plausible argument as to why poorly educated voters should be more likely to be party loyalists than those with more education posits that such voters will be more likely to be in closed social environments and are, in general less likely to be exposed (or pay attention to) countervailing arguments, especially if these are complex arguments. The converse proposition arises from the notion that high socio-economic status voters will have clearer perceptions of their own long-term interests than their less well-educated compatriots, and thus will be less likely to be changed in their underlying predispositions by demagoguery or short term election factors. Following Zaller (1992), we might also espouse a Hegelian synthesis, that it will it be the voters of medium socioeconomic status who will be the most volatile in terms of party identification.

10 For example, encompassing party institutions that enmesh party members, often from birth to death, in a party-linked sub-cultural identity.

11 He died in poverty in Des Moines, Iowa, having long since been deserted by his beloved Miss Vicky (Michael Lewis-Beck, personal communication, 26 April 2006).

12 The present authors are prepared to largely take the credit (or perhaps, the 'blame') for this idea in that one of us (Grofman) can claim to have had it at least as far back as 1989. However, for the Tiny Tim analogy, we must give credit to A. Wuffle (personal communication, 1 April 1990).

13 It can also be related to ideas about life-cycle reinforcement/strengthening of partisan identification as a kind of habit. Moreover, essentially the same idea can be found in recent work by some other scholars. And because of its Bayesian underpinning, it is similar to work on voting as habit and on the rational learning of partisan attitudes (Gerber and Green 1998; Green and Shachar 2000).

14 Of course, if these election specific effects are stationary, then even under the Fiorina model, we expect party identification to merely oscillate around its initial value. But, if there are trends (such as realigning forces or competence effects that consistently favour one party) then Fiorina's model can lead to long run change in party identification. We can write party identification as a function of its previous values in a recursive fashion, but the expressions we get tend to be very messy very quickly. For example, with only three time periods we have:

$$PID_t = a_{t-1} a_{t-2} PID_{t-2} + a_{t-1} \Sigma b_{j,t-1} E_{j,t-1} + \Sigma b_{j,t} E_{j,t} + a_{t-1} c_{t-1} + c_t$$

15 We might note that the observed consistency of party identification understates the true probability. For example, if s = 0.6, p is only 0.52; if s = 0.7, p is only 0 .58; while if s = 0.8, then p is still only 0.68.

16 This model is in spirit similar to Converse's famous (1964) 'black and white' model.

17 There are some parallels between our notion of identification modification and processes of cognitive dissonance reduction. A key idea in the cognitive dissonance literature is that people adapt their beliefs to make their beliefs and their choices more congruent with one another (Festinger 1957).

18 Here we are viewing party identification as a coarse classification in the sense of Mullainathan (2002) and Mullainathan *et al.* (2006). However, this was not work of which we were aware when we first conceived of this model.

19 Here, for simplicity of exposition, we do not deal with the notion of strength of party identification. See Basinger and Lavine (2005).

20 With sufficient panel data we can estimate Markov mixture models of this complexity (Harold Clarke, personal communication, April 2006). However, even with long term panel data to help us, disentangling causality is a very difficult task in that there are issues of multicollinearity (and reciprocal causation), making it hard to separate out effects of party identification from issue preferences, demographic characteristics of voters, voter socialization history, etc. Still without panel data we are sceptical that there is any way of surmounting these methodological hurdles (Wayman *et al.* 2007).

21 Intuitively, if, say, large numbers of Democrat identifiers are voting Republican, then Democrats do not have to consider themselves to be Republicans to be able to reconcile their Republican voting behaviour with their Democratic party identification!

22 The nature of the Bayesian updating process in which each voter's probability of choosing a given party identification based on their own behaviour is in part a function of a 'reasoning process' which incorporates (subjective but presumably empirically informed) estimates of the probability that voters with a Democratic party identification would have engaged in that behaviour relative to the probability that voters with a Republican party identification would have engaged in that behaviour means that voters' party identification choices will be a function of the effects of realignments affecting vote choices of voters of the same party identification. So, if, say, most Reagan Democrats become Republicans in party identification, then the few remaining Reagan Democrats will find it harder and harder to justify to themselves (in Bayesian terms) not becoming Republicans. Still, they might be able to do so if, say, they were geographically concentrated so that most of those they interacted with were also partisans with behaviour discrepant with their behaviour. Or there may be other cognitive phenomena at work, such as a belief that the party with which one identifies has only temporarily left the true path and will return to being a party one can support in the (near) future.

23 Of course, party identification may have important within-nation variations in terms of geography or socioeconomic status or other characteristics of voters as well. Also, there are difficult methodological issues in judging how best to measure the extent to which voters possess clear partisan identifications, or in dealing with the equally important problem of distinguishing long-terms changes in partisan identification from short-term volatility in party choices.

24 In other work two of the present authors attempt this task using a panel data-set from Dearborn, Michigan.

25 This question has been a recent preoccupation of one of the present authors (see Adams *et al.* 2005; cf. Merrill and Grofman 1999).