Institute for Policy Research
Northwestern University
Working Paper Series

WP-13-14

How Party Experience and Consistency Shapes Partisanship and Vote Choice

Georgia Kernell
Assistant Professor of Political Science
Faculty Fellow, Institute for Policy Research
Northwestern University

Version: June 2013

DRAFT
Please do not quote or distribute without permission.

Abstract

Some types of governmental and party systems provide voters with clearer, more reliable information for assessing political parties than do others. Institutions that provide clarity of responsibility render party actions more transparent and allow voters to make more accurate appraisals of the political parties' policies and performance. For example, countries with fewer legislative parties, or with presidential rather than parliamentary systems, facilitate informed retrospective assessments of party responsibility and, consequently, higher levels of partisanship in the electorate. If these features of the governmental system can clarify or obfuscate the informational environment in which citizens ground their partisanship, might other aspects of the political system do so as well? Examining the organization and record of political parties, Kernell proposes that electoral consistency and longevity may be critical ingredients in citizens' appraisals of political parties. Both qualities may be virtues in the abstract, but whether a voter responds favorably to the former will depend on how closely consistent appeals match his or her political views. Drawing on a model of partisan updating that incorporates these party features, she derives hypotheses which are tested using survey data for 66 political parties in 20 mature parliamentary democracies. The results support the hypotheses, suggesting that parties' longevity and consistency are important factors in informing citizens' appraisals. She concludes by considering the implications of these findings for party strategy.

How Party Experience and Consistency Shapes Partisanship and Vote Choice

Georgia Kernell

Northwestern University

Beginning with *The Voter Decides* (Campbell, Gurin, and Miller 1954), research on partisanship has emphasized the importance of a voter's personal attributes in both forming and employing party identification. Parents' party preferences, education, race, class, age, religion, and occupation have all been found to shape a voter's standing party loyalty (Campbell, Gurin, and Miller 1954). Rooted in enduring personal attributes, party identification for years was viewed as an unchanging component of voters' electoral choices. With Fiorina's *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (1981), research attention shifted from the personal to the situational covariates of party identification. As a result, party identification has come to be viewed as a more dynamic attribute, a "running tally" (Fiorina 1981) that reflects a voter's assessment of recent politics as well his or her social and ascriptive, personal characteristics. Recent national elections and the governing party's (or parties') performance in office offer valuable information to voters reassessing their standing party loyalties. Achen (1992) extends this revisionist view of party attachments, arguing

that demographic correlates are generally instrumental rather than causal; they may explain how voters form beliefs about future party behavior, but they do not influence partisanship directly. Instead, partisanship reflects individuals' prospective beliefs about party benefits. Over time, individuals rely less on their parents' partisanship relative to their own experiences.

With these changes came a greater research focus on the quality of the informational environment. First, a voter's personal attributes are best understood as conditioning the frequency and care with which he or she monitors the relevant political environment and updates partisan loyalties. Well educated voters consume more information on a regular basis, leading presumably to more active updating than do their poorly educated counterparts. Individuals with substantial political experience have had more opportunities to update their running tallies, and form consistent party evaluations, or partisanship, that inform prospective beliefs (Brader and Tucker 2001). Second, these models introduce questions that are best answered with comparative research. Do some types of governmental and party systems provide voters with clearer, more reliable information for assessing political parties than do others? The early answer to this question is yes. Institutions that provide "clarity of responsibility" render party actions more transparent and allow voters to make more accurate appraisals of the political parties' policies and performance (Powell 2000). For example, countries with fewer legislative parties, or with presidential rather than parliamentary systems, facilitate informed retrospective assessments of party responsibility and, consequently, higher levels of partisanship in the electorate (Huber, Kernell, and Leoni 2005).

If these features of the governmental system can clarify or obfuscate the informational environment in which citizens ground their partisanship, might other aspects of the political

system do so as well? Specifically, I am referring to the organization and record of political parties. Below I propose that electoral consistency and longevity may be critical ingredients in citizens' appraisals of political parties. Both qualities may be virtues in the abstract, but whether a voter responds favorably to the former will depend on how closely consistent appeals match his or her political views. In the next section I draw on a model of partisan updating developed by Achen (1992) that incorporates these party features. From this model I derive hypotheses which are then tested using survey data for 66 political parties in 20 mature parliamentary democracies. The results support the hypotheses, suggesting that parties' longevity and consistency are important factors in informing citizens' appraisals. I conclude by considering the implications of these findings for party strategy.

Party Consistency and Partisan Attachments

Achen (1992) develops a Bayesian model of partisanship and vote choice where voters update their views about parties' benefits by observing their performance over time. Modeling the American case, Achen defines partisanship as a difference in benefits between two parties. Specifically, party identification ($\hat{\delta}_{in}$) is a function of an individual's prior belief about the party differential ($\hat{\delta}_{i0}$) and her experiences with the party (or likelihood) ($\bar{u}_{in}$), weighted by the precision of the prior and the likelihood (h_{i0} and h_{il}, respectively):

$$\hat{\delta}_{in} = \frac{h_{i0}\hat{\delta}_{i0} + h_{il}\bar{u}_{in}}{h_{i0} + h_{il}}.$$

A variable's precision is the inverse of its variance; in this case, $h_{i0} = 1/\sigma_{io}^2$, $h_{il} = n/\omega_i^2$ and the precision of current PID is $h_{in} = h_{i0} + h_{il}$. An individual's likelihood is equal to her average differential in benefits from past experiences: $\bar{u}_{in} = \sum_{t=1}^{n} u_{it}/n$.

We can elaborate the model to distinguish the relationships between party characteristics and partisanship. Below, I rewrite the equation for partisanship in terms of two parties' benefits, instead of the differential in benefits.

I define the benefits received by party p as

$$\hat{\delta}_{in}^{p} := \frac{h_{io}^{p}\hat{\delta}_{io}^{p} + h_{il}^{p}\bar{u}_{in}^{p}}{h_{io}^{p} + h_{il}^{p}}, \tag{1}$$

where $h_{io}^{p} = 1/(\sigma_{io}^{p})^2$, $\hat{\delta}_{io}^{p}$ is a person's initial belief about the party (based on parental or societal partisanship), $h_{il}^{p} = n^{p}/(\omega^{p})^2$, and $u_{in}^{b} = \sum_{t=1}^{n} u_{it}^{p}/n^{p}$, where party observations u_{it}^{p} are distributed normally with mean δ_{i}^{p} and variance $(\omega^{p})^2$. The difference in benefits for two parties, p and q, is therefore:

$$\hat{\delta}_{in}^{p-q} := \hat{\delta}_{in}^{p} - \hat{\delta}_{in}^{q} = \frac{h_{io}^{p}\hat{\delta}_{io}^{p} + h_{il}^{p}\bar{u}_{in}^{p}}{h_{io}^{p} + h_{il}^{p}} - \frac{h_{io}^{q}\hat{\delta}_{io}^{q} + h_{il}^{q}\bar{u}_{in}^{q}}{h_{io}^{q} + h_{il}^{q}}. \tag{2}$$

In Achen's model, a person is a partisan when $\hat{\delta}_{in} \neq 0$. One party is preferred when $\hat{\delta}_{in}$ is positive; the other is favored when it is negative. Thus, in the two-party case, individual i is a partisan of party p when $\hat{\delta}_{in}^{p-q} > 0$; she is a partisan of q when $\hat{\delta}_{in}^{q-p} > 0$; and she is a nonpartisan if the difference in benefits equals 0. In the multiparty setting, I assume that an individual identifies with party p when $\hat{\delta}_{in}^{p-q} > 0$ for all parties, q, where $q \neq p$. If the inequality is not satisfied for any party, an individual is not a partisan.[1]

[1]In other words, someone who prefers two parties equally will not identify with either, even if they are

Rewriting the model in terms of the variables shown in equations 1 and 2 allows us to examine how party characteristics shape identification. The consistency or variability of a party's message will shape which individuals are likely to identify with a party. In this model, a party's policies (for incumbents) or platforms (for challengers) are random draws from a given distribution with the same mean. Individuals are therefore more likely to accurately estimate a party's mean benefits, and its corresponding difference in benefits with other parties, when its variance is low. Specifically, as party p's variance ($(\omega^p)^2$) increases, the precision of $\hat{\delta}_{in}^{p}$ and $\hat{\delta}_{in}^{p-q}$ decreases. When a party has a high variance, individuals are more likely to mistakenly identify with the "wrong" party; that is, a party that does not provide the most benefits.

The level of benefits depends on characteristics of both the party and the individual. A party that provides more benefits for a given person may provide fewer benefits for another. If we assume that a voter's benefit from a party maps on to his or her proximity to that party on a single-dimensional left-right scale, we should expect consistency to have a conditional effect on partisanship: it will decrease party ID for people who are close to a party, but increase it for those who are ideologically distant. All else equal, individuals are more likely to identify with parties that provide them with more benefits.

A party may be inconsistent in several ways and for different reasons. First, a party may be internally heterogeneous at a given point in time if its representatives hold diverse positions. Party factions with competing preferences can divide a party along ideological or

both drastically preferred to the other alternatives. This has no effect on partisanship in Achen's two-party setting. The model can also be generalized to allow for more or less partisanship. For example, Fiorina (1981) argues that an individual considers herself a partisan when the difference in benefits exceeds her threshold for partisanship, K_i, where $K_i \geq 0$.

issue-based dimensions. For example, a decentralized party with strong subnational bodies may elect representatives with varying regional or group interests. Similarly, a party without factions or decentralization may decide to pursue a diverse set of policy goals with the intention of presenting an ambiguous platform.[2] The consistency of a party's message may also reflect the party's unity across time. If every leader, member and representative of a party adopts the same position, but that position changes dramatically from year to year, the party's message is inconsistent. In the next section, I examine consistency across parties in a given period and across time.

All else equal, do individuals prefer consistent or inconsistent parties? In Achen's model, consistency only factors into the quality of assessments, and does not have a separate effect on partisanship. However, as far as temporal consistency is concerned, Fiorina's "discussion suggests a hypothesis about the conditions for widespread abandonment of party ID: extensive change in the composition of a party's leadership" (Fiorina 1981, 78). If inconsistent leadership over time leads to unpredictable party behavior in office, retrospective assessments will be less stable and individuals will be less likely to form party attachments to those parties that undergo extensive changes in leadership. In addition, "faced with new candidates for offices, new speechmakers, and ultimately new governors, the citizen realizes it is time to recalculate" (Fiorina 1981, 78).[3] Thus, if individuals incorporate thresholds for partisanship – as in Fiorina's, but not Achen's, model – we would expect party inconsistency

[2]Several scholars have identified scenarios under which a party will optimally choose an ambiguous strategy (Shepsle 1972, Campbell 1983, Alesina and Cukierman 1990, Alvarez 1999, Aragonés and Postlewaite 2002).

[3]Here, Fiorina implies that individuals may not update their running tallies immediately in response to leadership shifts, but that they may decrease their reliance on retrospective assessments (relative to prospective evaluations) at the ballot box.

to decrease partisanship independent of ideological proximity.

Similarly, because an individual's estimate of party benefits, or running tally of party behavior, is made up of repeated retrospective evaluations, those individuals with more political experience are increasingly likely to adopt stable partisanship (Brader and Tucker 2001). Individuals should also have more observations, and therefore be more confident in their assessments, of parties with greater experience in politics. If individuals have a threshold for partisanship, as in Fiorina's model (1981), party experience should lead to a higher probability of partisanship. In addition to electoral experience, people may gain extra information about a party when it is in government if incumbents' actions provide more reliable information than challengers' platforms and promises.[4] Thus we should expect electoral or governmental experience to increase partisanship.

Moreover, consistency should affect vote choice directly, as well as indirectly through partisanship. In Achen's model, an individual's estimated benefit from voting for a party is based on her party identification and an additional signal (observation) that she receives from that party in the current campaign. When a party's signal is noisy, an individual will be less likely to correctly evaluate the party's message, and therefore more likely to vote for the "wrong" party. Thus, we should expect inconsistency to have a negative effect on vote, controlling of partisanship, for individuals who are ideologically close to a party, and a positive effect on vote for individuals who are distant.

[4]In Fiorina's model, hypothetical platforms are discounted by a factor s, such that $s < 1$, that reflects an individual's uncertainty over the party's potential performance.

Testing the Argument

To obtain variance in party consistency, and to control for the effects of the broader electoral contexts within which parties compete, I examine party identification across parties and countries using data from several sources. To measure the dependent variable, partisanship, as well as other individual level attributes, I employ survey data from the most recent Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES). Temporal party consistency is measured with original data on leadership turnover. Citizens' and experts' survey responses on party positions make up the data on cross-party consistency. Last, country level covariates draw on data from a variety of sources. I describe the data in detail below. I then explain the multilevel model that is used to measure the effect of party level factors on individual level outcomes across a variety of countries.

Measuring Partisanship

An analysis that investigates partisanship is inherently multinomial; each individual chooses to identify with one of several parties, or to not identify at all. These decisions are not ordered, and ideally should be treated as separate categorical outcomes. However, because the independent party-level variables (such as inconsistency) are unique to each party, and therefore to each outcome, we cannot use party-level explanatory variables to predict an individual's choice of party.

Instead, one must separate the party-level explanatory variables from the potential outcomes. To do this, I change the dependent variable to reflect the decision of an individual to identify or not identify with a given party. All respondents in a country are paired with

a single party and individual-party pairs are the units of analysis. This allows for systematic examination of how party-level characteristics influence partisanship. The pairing is a directed random sample aimed at being representative without underestimating total partisanship in countries with more parties in the analysis. The procedure I adopt to pair individuals with parties is clarified in detail in the Appendix to this paper. This matching procedure generated over 20,000 individual-party pairs.

Thus, the binary dependent variable, *pid of that party*, indicates whether or not the respondent identifies with the corresponding party. Following Huber, Kernell, and Leoni (2005), respondents are coded as party identifiers if they answer "yes" to the question, "Do you usually think of yourself as close to any particular political party?" and they name a valid political party in their response to the follow up question, "What party is that?" Because the dependent variable, *pid of that party*, indicates whether or not a person is a partisan of the party they are paired with, this variable takes a value of 1 if the person has partisanship of that party and 0 if they are a nonpartisan or if they are a partisan of another party. Individuals may only hold partisanship for one party.

In Table 4, the dependent variable is *vote for party*, which equals 1 if the respondent reported voting for the party they are paired with and 0 otherwise. In this regression respondents are paired with parties using the same method described in the Appendix, except here the pairings are based on vote rather than partisanship.

Measurement: Independent Variables

Party Level

No direct measures of party inconsistency (e.g. regional party platforms or candidates' voting records) are available for the parties in this analysis. Instead, I use the standard deviations of respondents' or experts' placements of parties on ideological dimensions.[5] *CSES ideology heterogeneity* is the standard deviation of CSES respondents' placements of a party on a left-right ideological scale, and *expert ideology heterogeneity* is the standard deviation of the positions assigned by experts along a similar left right continuum. Expert ratings are from Benoit and Laver's (2006) *Party Policy in Modern Democracies* survey of experts on party positions.

To study party consistency over time I measure leadership turnover using three variables: *turnover election* indicates the number of party leaders in the party since the previous parliamentary election, *turnover* 15 is the number of party leaders in the party in the past 15 years and *turnover* 30 indicates how many party leaders have been in the party for the past 30 years. If a party is younger than one of the cut-off years, its number of leaders is divided by the fraction of years available, and it is excluded from the data in subsequent turnover measures.[6] Because the length of time between elections varies across countries, *turnover election* does not reflect the same number of years for each party (as *turnover* 15 and *turnover* 30 do). I include this variable because the effect of party turnover may vary with the electoral cycle rather than the absolute number of years. Also, leadership turnover

[5] Grofman et al. (1999) and Campbell (1983) also employ standard deviations to measure party dispersion.

[6] For example, a ten year old party would be included in *turnover* 15 (such that *turnover* 15 = the number of leaders in the party's ten year history * 1.5), but *turnover* 30 would be coded as missing for this party.

immediately preceding the survey may be especially indicative of party inconsistency (or perceived inconsistency).

To measure electoral experience, I use the *logged party age* because the marginal effect of an additional party observation on partisanship should decrease over time. I expect the coefficient on this variable to be positive. I also include the variable *in government*, which indicates if the party had been in government (1) or not (0) immediately prior to the CSES election. If incumbent parties lead individuals to form stronger evaluations, and therefore develop partisanship, this variable should have a positive coefficient.

The variable *extreme* indicates how far the party is from the center of the distribution of individuals. Using experts' ratings on a scale from 0 (left) to 20 (right), I calculate this variable as the absolute value of the difference between the party's mean position and ten. I use ten as the baseline for the middle position, instead of the median party's position in a country, to capture the party's objective extremeness relative to all parties, not just those in its country.

Percent vote is the percent of the vote the party received in the last national legislative election. This is employed as a control variable to account for party size and overall popularity.

Individual Level

The demographic variables included in the analyses indicate a respondent's age, sex and education level.[7] An individual's squared age is also included in the analysis because the

[7]The Belgian survey did not ask respondents for their household income, so to incorporate this country in the analyses, the models in the next section exclude income. Additional regressions that include income (not reported here) demonstrate that the coefficients on the variables of interest do not change significantly.

marginal effect of age may vary with age. T The demographic variables are included as proxies for past partisanship, or a person's prior PID ($\hat{\delta}_{io}^{p}$), because parental and previous partisanship are not recorded in the CSES survey.

In addition, several variables reflect a respondent's relationship with the party in question. *Distance indiv* is the absolute value of the difference between the position at which the respondent places him or herself and the mean position at which all CSES respondents place the party on an ideological scale from 0 (left) to 10 (right).[8] *Distance expert* is the same as *distance indiv* except it uses expert ratings of party placement. Similarly, *closest indiv* identifies if the party in the pair is the party closest to the individual on the left right ideological continuum. This variable is 0 if the party is not the closest party to the respondent and 1 if it is the closest party. *Closest expert* measures the same concept but uses expert ratings of party placement instead of respondent ratings. Party consistency should have a positive effect on partisanship for individuals who are close (or closest) to a party, and a negative effect for individuals who are far from (or not closest to) a party. I rely on variables that use citizen or expert surveys to locate parties to control for potential endogeneity between partisanship and individual-party proximity.

Country Level

I include all of the country level variables hypothesized to shape party attachments from Huber, Kernell, and Leoni (2005). *Social heterogeneity* is measured as the sum of the ethnic and religious fractionalization indices from Alesina et al. (2003). Huber, Kernell, and Leoni argue and find that group differences lead to party attachments, and I expect the

[8] *Distance indiv* also ranges from 0 to 10.

coefficient on *social heterogeneity* to be positive.

The number of parties that received at least one percent of the vote in the last legislative election (*electoral parties*) is employed to indicate the level of party choice. If greater electoral choice leads to more partisanship this variable should have a positive effect. Conversely, the effective number of legislative parties (*legislative parties*) is hypothesized to decrease party attachments because more parties in parliament lead to less clarity of party responsibility.

Pool and *ballot* both measure how candidate centered (relative to party centered) are the electoral ballots. If candidate centered ballot structures lead to less partisanship than party centered ballots these variables should have negative coefficients. Specifically, *pool* captures the level of interdependence between voting for a candidate and voting for a party. In countries with complete pooling and closed list systems this variable takes on the value of 0; in countries with single member districts and no vote pooling within parties, *pool* equals 2. *Ballot* reflects candidate selection and ballot order in list systems. The variable ranges from 0 to 1 where lower numbers represent more party control and higher numbers represent more candidate control. Both variables are taken from Carey and Shugart (1995).

Last, the average party age, weighted by the percent vote in the last legislative election, and logged to overstate changes in age for younger party systems, should have a positive effect on partisanship if people are more likely to form attachments in well established party systems. The variable *avg logged party age* ranges from 2.5 to 4.7 in the data.

Estimation Model

The argument tested here is inherently multilevel in scope: voters assess attributes of parties which compete within countries. Several statistical models are available and commonly employed for identifying covariates in these multilevel contexts. The first option is to aggregate individual level outcomes by party and test the effects of party inconsistency on, for example, mean partisanship. The main drawback of this ecological approach is that the researcher loses data for each individual. Also, the mean level of partisanship will be poorly estimated in parties where there are few observations.

A second approach is to pool individual level observations across parties while controlling for fixed party effects. However, if we include each party as an indicator variable we will lose information about party level factors. This method is also inefficient if there is a high number of second level groups (of which there are over 40 in this analysis). Conversely, by including contextual effects, such as party inconsistency, we run the risk of biased coefficients unless we account for every group level characteristic that could influence the dependent variable. Multiple group level factors, however, increase the potential for multicollinearity.

A third method is to run separate regressions within each party and to compare these across parties with similar attributes. This comparison can be made systematic by employing a two-stage model. In the first stage, separate regressions of partisanship on individual level factors are run for each party. In the second stage, the coefficients on the constant term from the first level's regressions become the dependent variables and are regressed on party level factors. This approach is used by Huber, Kernell, and Leoni (2005) in examining the effects of country level factors on individuals' probabilities of adopting party identification. However, the method is appropriate only when there is a sufficient number of observations

at the first level to estimate these effects with confidence, which is not the case for all parties in this analysis.

The last approach, and the one employed in this paper, is to use a multilevel structure that captures the first, second and third level effects in a single model. This keeps all of the data and allows for both within group and across group variance. The method controls for within party clustering while simultaneously estimating the individual level and party level effects. I use the logit model written below.

$$
\begin{aligned}
logit(\mathrm{P}(pidofthatparty_{ipc} = 1)) &= \beta^0_{pc} + \beta^{age}(age_i) + \beta^{age^2}(age_i^2) + \beta^{education}(education_i) \\
&\quad + \beta^{male}(male_i) + \beta^{distanace}(distance_i) \\
\beta^0_{pc} &= \gamma^0_c + \gamma^{logged\ party\ age}(logged\ party\ age_p) + \\
&\quad + \gamma^{extreme}(extreme_p) + \\
&\quad + \gamma^{CSES\ heterogeneity}(CSES\ heterogeneity_p) + \\
&\quad + \gamma^{in\ government}(in\ government_p) + \\
&\quad + \gamma^{percent\ vote}(percent\ vote_p) + \nu^0_{pc} \\
\beta^{distance} &= \gamma^{distance} + \gamma^{distance}(CSES\ heterogeneity_p) + \nu^{distance}_p \\
\gamma^0_c &= \lambda^0 + \eta^0_c \\
\nu^0_{pc} &\sim N(0, \sigma^2_{party.intercept}) \\
\nu^{distance}_p &\sim N(0, \sigma^2_{party.slope}) \\
\eta^0_c &\sim N(0, \sigma^2_{country.intercept})
\end{aligned}
$$

Subscript i indexes the individual, p indexes the party and c indexes the country. Note that the two party level variables that measure experience - *logged party age* and *in government* - enter the model by affecting the intercept. Experience is not hypothesized or modeled to vary conditionally; we expect both variables to carry the same effect for all individuals asked about that party. (The same is true for *percent vote* and *extreme*.) $CSES\ heterogeneity$

(and *turnover* in subsequent models) is hypothesized to affect individuals differently. $CSES$ *heterogeneity* is modeled such that it may affect the intercept and the slope (i.e. the effect of distance [closest] on partisanship). The γ_c^0 and λ^0 terms represent the fixed party and country effects on the intercept and $\gamma^{distance}$ is the fixed party effect on the slope. The variable ν_{pc}^0 corresponds with the party specific intercept, $\nu_p^{distance}$ with the party specific slope, and η_c with the country level random effects. Country random effects are modeled such that they only affect the model's intercept.

Results

The models in Table 1 illustrate the effects of party level and individual level characteristics on partisanship. All are three-level nested logit models with multiple individual observations for each party and multiple parties within each country. The binary dependent variable, $pid\ of\ that\ party$, equals 1 if the respondent identifies with the party and 0 otherwise. In Models 1a and 1b I examine the interaction between *distance* and *heterogeneity*, whereas in Models 1c and 1d I examine the interaction between *closest* and *heterogeneity*. In Models 1a and 1c, inconsistency is measured as the standard deviation of survey respondents' placements of the party on a left-right scale ($CSES$ *heterogeneity*). In Models 1b and 1d, inconsistency is measured as the standard deviation of expert placements (*expert heterogeneity*).

The results support the argument that the effect of inconsistency varies with the distance between voters and parties. As expected, the coefficients for *distance* are negative and the coefficients for *closest* are positive. Individuals are more likely to identify with a party that is ideologically similar to them when parties are consistent (i.e. $heterogeneity = 0$). In

Model	1a	1b	1c	1d
intercept	-3.73 (0.31)	-3.95 (0.26)	-6.70 (0.32)	-6.35 (0.27)
age	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)
age^2	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
education	0.02 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
male	0.03 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)
distance indiv	-1.03 (0.09)	-0.78 (0.05)		
closest indiv			2.54 (0.26)	1.9 (0.17)
logged party age	0.31 (0.04)	0.26 (0.03)	0.35 (0.04)	0.31 (0.04)
in government	0.62 (0.05)	0.61 (0.05)	0.65 (0.05)	0.64 (0.05)
CSES heterogeneity	0.00 (0.09)		0.57 (0.10)	
expert heterogeneity		0.11 (0.06)		0.41 (0.06)
turnover election	0.13 (0.03)	0.18 (0.03)	0.13 (0.04)	0.17 (0.04)
percent vote	0.02 (0.00)	0.02 (0.00)	0.02 (0.00)	0.02 (0.00)
extreme	-0.03 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
distance $*$ *CSES heterogeneity*	0.27 (0.04)			
distance $*$ *expert heterogeneity*		0.15 (0.02)		
closest $*$ *CSES heterogeneity*			-0.52 (0.13)	
closest $*$ *expert heterogeneity*				-0.21 (0.08)
$\sigma_{party.int}$	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07
$\sigma_{country.int}$	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04
$\sigma_{party.slo}$	0.02	0.02	0.12	0.12
$N_{individual}$	22032	22032	22032	22032
N_{party}	44	44	41	41
$N_{country}$	15	15	14	14

Table 1: Estimates and standard errors for multilevel logit models estimated in R with interactions between *distance* or *closest* and *heterogeneity*.

Models 1a and 1b *heterogeneity* has no significant effect on partisanship when $distance = 0$. Contrary to my hypothesis (that individuals prefer a party close to them if it is consistent), these results imply that individuals who are located at the same position of the party are equally likely to identify with inconsistent and consistent parties. Models 1c and 1d support the hypotheses; *heterogeneity* has a positive effect on partisanship for those who are not closest to the party (i.e. $closest = 0$). When interacted with *heterogeneity*, the coefficients are positive for distance and negative for closest. This also supports the hypotheses: inconsistency increases partisanship more for individuals farther from the party or for whom the party is not the closest party to them. In every model the marginal effect of an increase in *heterogeneity* is significantly higher for individuals farther from the party (or not closest to the party).

The models also support the hypothesis that party experience leads to greater partisanship: both *logged party age* and *in government* are positive and significant in each of the models presented in Table 1. An increase in the party's age from its median to one standard deviation above the median (a movement from 58 to 102 years, or a change in 3.8 logged years) leads someone to be eight percent more likely to identify with that party. A decrease of one standard deviation from the median (from 58 years old to 14 years old) decreases the probability that an individual will identify with that party from 0.46 to 0.27.[9] A party that is in government is also more likely to have individuals identify with it than a party in the opposition.

Figure 1 plots the effect of distance (using Model 1a) and closeness (using Model 1c) on

[9]This is calculated for a 40 year old female who has a secondary education, median income and all party level variables other than party age held at their median values.

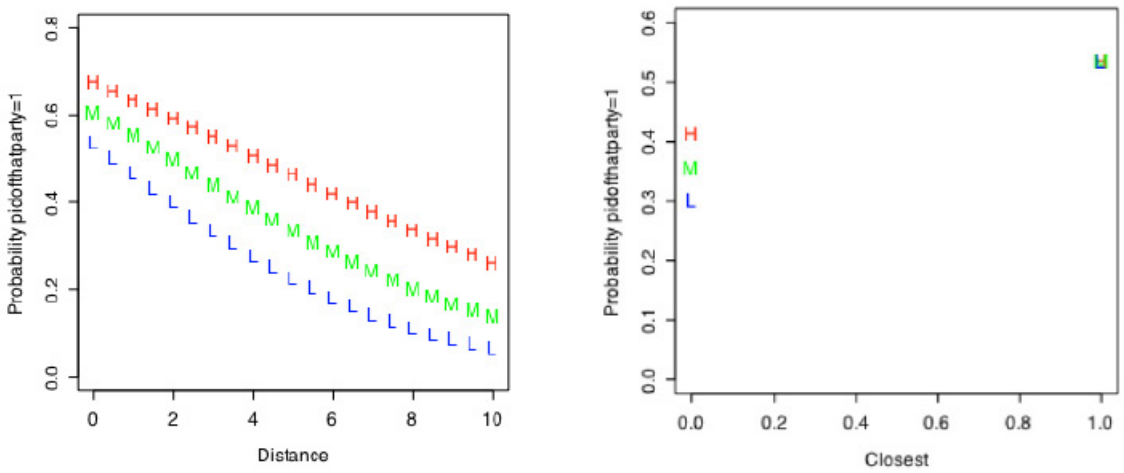

Figure 1: The effect of distance (Model 1a, left panel) or a party being closest to an individual (Model 1c, right panel) on the probability of partisanship for varying levels of inconsistency (L=low inconsistency [2 standard deviations below median] M=median inconsistency, H=high inconsistency [2 standard deviations above median]).

partisanship for three levels of inconsistency. "H" denotes high inconsistency, "M" denotes median inconsistency and "L" denotes low levels of inconsistency. As we can see in the left panel, individuals are less likely to identify with a party that is farther from them, but the effect of distance is weaker for more inconsistent parties. In the right panel, the effect of inconsistency is negligible for individuals who are closest to a party, but positive for those individuals located farther away. Both graphs depict partisanship for a 40 year old female with high school education and median income. Parties are considered to not be *in government*, and all other party variables are held at their median values.

Table 2 presents similar models to those in Table 1, but with turnover, instead of inconsistency, interacted with *distance* and *closest*. Again we find strong support for the experience hypothesis: individuals are more likely to form partisanship for parties with more experience

Model	2a	2b	2c	2d
intercept	-4.35 (0.29)	-3.96 (0.30)	-6.29 (0.30)	-5.86 (0.31)
age	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)
age^2	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
education	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)
male	0.03 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)
distance indiv	-0.58 (0.03)	-0.59 (0.04)		
closest indiv			1.76 (0.10)	1.63 (0.11)
logged party age	0.31 (0.05)	0.28 (0.04)	0.35 (0.04)	0.32 (0.04)
in government	0.61 (0.05)	0.56 (0.05)	0.64 (0.05)	0.22 (0.07)
CSES heterogeneity	0.37 (0.08)	0.45 (0.08)	0.29 (0.08)	0.37 (0.08)
turnover election	0.06 (0.05)		0.22 (0.04)	
turnover 30		-0.07 (0.01)		-0.02 (0.01)
percent vote	0.02 (0.00)	0.02 (0.00)	0.02 (0.00)	0.02 (0.00)
extreme	-0.03 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)
distance : *turnover election*	0.07 (0.02)			
distance : *turnover* 30		0.02 (0.01)		
closest : *turnover election*			-0.03 (0.08)	
closest : *turnover* 30				-0.03 (0.02)
$\sigma_{party.int}$	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07
$\sigma_{country.int}$	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04
$\sigma_{party.slo}$	0.02	0.02	0.12	0.12
$N_{individual}$	22032	22032	22032	22032
N_{party}	44	44	44	44
$N_{country}$	15	15	15	15

Table 2: Estimates and standard errors for multilevel logit models estimated in R with interactions between *distance* or *closest* and *turnover*.

in government or in the electoral arena. The interactions between *turnover* and *distance*, and between *turnover* and *closest* also support the hypotheses. People are significantly more likely to identify with a party with high turnover if they are farther away from that party than if they are closer to the party. In these models, turnover has no effect (Models 2a and 2c) or a negative effect (Models 2b and 2d) on partisanship for parties ideologically close to the respondent. In Models 2a-c turnover increases partisanship for parties far away, and in Model 2d, turnover decreases partisanship for parties far from individuals, but it does so to less of an extent than for parties close to individuals.[10]

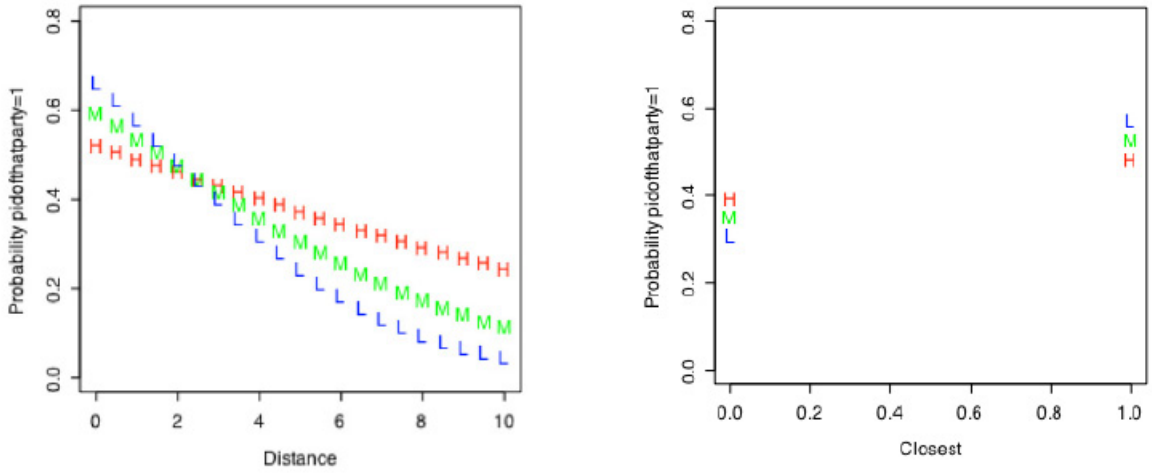

Figure 2: The effect of distance (Model 2b, left panel) or being the closest party to an individual (Model 2d, right panel) on the probability of partisanship for varying levels of turnover (L=turnover 0, M= turnover 6, H=turnover 12).

For ease of interpretation I again graph these results. Figure 2 presents Models 2b and 2d. As we can see in the left panel, people who are very far from a party are significantly more

[10]These comparisons are made by examining the full (interactive) marginal effects of inconsistency for varying levels of distance and closeness.

Model	3a	3b	3c	3d
intercept	-4.57 (1.01)	-4.68 (0.28)	-4.83 (0.50)	-6.98 (0.51)
age	0.06 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
age^2	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
education	0.01 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.03 (0.01)
male	0.03 (0.03)	0.08 (0.03)	0.02 (0.04)	0.05 (0.04)
distance expert	-1.03 (0.20)			
distance			-0.78 (0.06)	
closest expert		0.89 (0.11)		
closest				1.68 (0.12)
logged party age	0.23 (0.12)	0.24 (0.03)	0.37 (0.04)	0.34 (0.05)
in government	0.94 (0.16)	0.54 (0.04)	0.31 (0.05)	0.33 (0.06)
expert heterogeneity			-0.11 (0.08)	
CSES heterogeneity	-0.63 (0.40)	0.11 (0.07)		-0.33 (0.11)
turnover election	0.11 (0.11)			
turnover 30		-0.04 (0.01)	-0.03 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)
percent vote	0.05 (0.01)	0.02 (0.00)	0.04 (0.00)	0.04 (0.00)
extreme	0.11 (0.04)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.08 (0.01)	-0.06 (0.02)
socialhetero			0.73 (0.12)	0.75 (0.13)
avg logged party age			0.39 (0.13)	0.54 (0.14)
electoral parties			0.11 (0.04)	0.15 (0.04)
legislative parties			-0.31 (0.09)	-0.35 (0.09)
ballot			-0.06 (0.13)	-0.08 (0.12)
pool			-0.50 (0.09)	-0.53 (0.10)
distance expert : *CSES heterogeneity*	0.30 (0.10)			
closest expert : *turnover* 30		-0.02 (0.02)		
distance : *expert heterogeneity*			0.14 (0.03)	
closest : *turnover* 30				-0.02 (0.02)
$\sigma_{party.int}$	0.83	0.07	0.07	0.07
$\sigma_{country.int}$	0.23	0.04	0.04	0.04
$\sigma_{party.slo}$	0.20	0.13	0.02	0.12
$N_{individual}$	24928	24928	20398	20398
N_{party}	44	44	41	41
$N_{country}$	16	16	14	14

Table 3: Robustness checks. Estimates and standard errors for multilevel logit models examining the effects of experience and inconsistency on partisanship.

likely to identify with it if it is highly inconsistent over time (i.e. has high turnover). In the right panel, this relationship is shown by the effect of high and low turnover on partisanship for individuals who are closest or not closest to a given party.[11]

Table 3 presents robustness checks by using different measures of *distance* and *closest* in Models 3a and 3b, respectively, and by including country level predictors in Models 3c and 3d. As we can see, the results hold up under these tests. All of the variables in Huber, Kernell, and Leoni's (2005) analysis are in the hypothesized direction, and they are significant for every variable except *ballot*.

Table 4 presents Models 1a, 1b, 2c and 2d with *voter that party* as the dependent variable and *pid of that party* as an added independent variable. Individuals may be more likely to adopt and exhibit partisanship when parties have more experience in elections or in government, but experience should not affect vote choice independent of partisanship. I find that the effect of party experience is no longer significantly positive for vote choice: both *ln party age* and *in govt* are not significantly different from zero in any of the models of vote. Conversely, party inconsistency should influence both partisanship and vote choice independently. The interactive effects between inconsistency (both through the *heterogeneity* and the *turnover* measures) and proximity (though both *distance* and *closest*) strongly support the hypotheses: individuals are significantly more likely to vote for a party that is ideologically far from them if the party is inconsistent. Moreover, individuals who are close to a party are significantly less like to vote for it if the party is inconsistent, and these results are

[11] I replicated the analyses for all the models in Tables 1 and 2, and I included an independent variable that indicates whether or not the respondent voted for the party. In every model the party level results of interest have the same sign and maintain significance, and *voter that party* is positive and substantively and statistically significant.

robust across all model specifications.

To illustrate this, Figure 3 graphs the greatest marginal effect of party heterogeneity from Model 4a on the probability that an individual votes for a party for varying distances. Heterogeneity decreases the probability that voters will vote for a party to which they are close (i.e. $distance < 3$). Individuals who share a position with a party are 30 percent less likely to vote for it if it is highly heterogeneous than if the party is homogeneous. Heterogeneity increases the chance that a voter will vote for a party that is ideologically dissimilar to them.

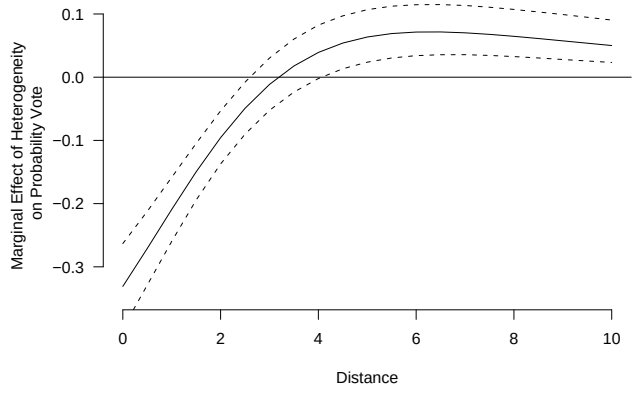

Figure 3: The marginal effect of moving from the minimum level of party heterogeneity ($hetero.indiv = 1.3$) to the maximum level of party heterogeneity ($hetero.indiv = 2.9$) on the probability that a voter will vote for that party (from Model 4a). Marginal effects are displayed for varying distances between the party and voter. Dotted lines represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

Model	4a	4b	4c	4d
intercept	0.38 (0.37)	-0.82 (0.32)	-2.30 (0.34)	-1.76 (0.35)
age	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)
age^2	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
education	-0.07 (0.01)	-0.07 (0.01)	-0.05 (0.04)	-0.05 (0.01)
male	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)	0.03 (0.05)	0.02 (0.04)
distance	-0.97 (0.09)	-0.55 (0.06)		
closest			1.60 (0.12)	1.13 (0.13)
pid of that party	3.45 (0.06)	3.44 (0.06)	3.52 (0.06)	3.52 (0.06)
$\ln$ *party age*	-0.04 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)
in govt	0.10 (0.06)	0.07 (0.06)	0.10 (0.06)	0.08 (0.06)
expert heterogeneity		-0.18 (0.07)	0.06 (0.10)	
CSES heterogeneity	-0.75 (0.12)	0.36 (0.09)	-0.36 (0.09)	-0.36 (0.09)
to.election	0.03 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)	0.10 (0.05)	
*to.*30		-0.01 (0.01)		-0.06 (0.01)
per.votes	0.04 (0.00)	0.04 (0.00)	0.03 (0.00)	0.04 (0.00)
extreme	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
distance : *CSES heterogeneity*	0.27 (0.04)			
distance : *expert heterogeneity*		0.07 (0.03)		
closest : *to.election*			-0.15 (0.07)	
closest : *to*30				-0.04 (0.02)
σ_{party}	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
$\sigma_{country}$	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
$\sigma_p\sigma_c$	0.02	0.02	0.13	0.13
$N_{individual}$	17749	17749	17749	17749
N_{party}	44	44	44	44
$N_{country}$	15	15	15	15

Table 4: Estimates and standard errors for multilevel logit models examining the effects of experience and inconsistency on vote choice.

Discussion

Previous research does not systematically examine how party level factors shape political behavior. This paper begins to reverse this trend by investigating the effect of party consistency – both over time, and across the party at a given point in time – and party experience on party identification and vote. I find that people are more likely to identify with or vote for a party that is located far away from them if that party adopts inconsistent policy positions. Individuals who are positioned ideologically close to a party are slightly more likely to identify with an inconsistent party than a consistent party, but this result is not robust across model specifications. (These individuals are however significantly more likely to identify with a consistent party than those people who are positioned farther from the party.) However, individuals are significantly less likely to vote for an inconsistent party to which they are ideologically close. These results are both statistically and substantively significant; for individuals who are far from a party, high inconsistency more than doubles their probability of identifying with that party. The results also show that accounting for party effects does not wash out previous findings at the individual or system level. Instead, the results support previous research that argues that party experience should increase identification. I find that the age of an individual, a party, and a party system all have independent, positive effects on a person's likelihood of adopting party attachments. As hypothesized, a party's electoral or governmental experience has no effect on vote when we control for party identification.

Huber, Kernell, and Leoni (2005) find that individuals are more likely to form party attachments when electoral or governmental institutions provide clarity of responsibility among parties. This paper presents a somewhat contradictory argument. Individuals are

found to be equally or more likely to identify with parties that adopt inconsistent platforms as those that present clear signals. If ideological proximity conditions the effect of clarity of responsibility - that is, individuals are more likely to identify with close parties when clarity if high, and more likely to identify with distant parties when clarity if low – we should expect the net effect of clarity of responsibility to be positive simply because people are more likely to identify with parties that are ideologically close, all else equal.

To the extent parties care only about attracting a large number of partisans (because, for example, partisans disproportionately contribute time or money to electoral campaigns), the findings in this paper suggest that parties should pay little attention to establishing consistent platforms or records. However, most politicians seek electoral support, and inconsistency can play a negative role in informing vote choice. While parties wishing to attract distant voters would do well to nominate more heterogeneous candidates, those seeking to reinforce support from their base should present candidates clustered near the party platform. For example, parties that lie at the tails of the voter distribution may be more likely to incorporate the former strategy, while those in the center may adopt the latter, if voters are concentrated in the middle of the ideological spectrum. Of course, parties may also choose to be strategically ambiguous for other reasons, such as to deceive a challenger (Alesina and Cukierman 1990) or because communicating true positions is costly (Page 1976). In future research it would be fruitful to examine competing incentives for party consistency.

Appendix

For each country, every individual is paired with every party, creating a set of $N_c \cdot P_c$ observations, where N_c and P_c are the number of individuals and parties in country c respectively. I wish to only include each individual once, so I create a subsample of N_c observations by pairing each individual with only a single party. I could do this by simply randomly choosing one of the P_c observations for each individual. Then, the variable $pidofthatparty$, would be the same as if for each individual i, I randomly choose one of the P_c parties p, and asked, "Are you a partisan of this party?" If i is a partisan of one of the P_c parties in the analysis, then there is a $1/P_c$ chance that they will respond yes, and thus have $pidofthatparty = 1$. This however creates a problem because P_c varies from country to country. If the probability of being a partisan of a party in the analysis is Q in both country c and country d, then we would expect to observe $Q \cdot N_c/P_c$ individuals with $pidofthatparty = 1$ in country c and $Q * N_d/P_d$ individuals with $pidofthatparty = 1$ in country d. Thus, countries with fewer parties would appear to have higher proportions of partisanship. To correct for this, I non-randomly pair parties with individuals according to the following algorithm. For the non-partisans, and those individuals who are partisans of a party not in the analysis, I choose a random party from the P_c parties. If we denote the fraction of individuals in country c that have partisanship for a party in the analysis by Q_c, then there are $Q_c \cdot N_c$ individuals remaining that must be paired with a party. I have the fewest parties to choose from in those countries that have $P_c = 2$, in which randomly pairing individuals with parties should produce on average $Q_c \cdot N_c/2$ individual-party pairs with $pidofthatparty = 1$. So, regardless of the number of parties in c, I randomly select $Q_c \cdot N_c/2$ individuals from the remaining

$Q_c \cdot N_c$ individuals, and pair them with the party that they are partisans of. I then pair the remaining $Q_c \cdot N_c/2$ individuals with a random party in the analysis that they are not a partisan of. This results in a subsample in which $Q_c \cdot N_c/2$ individual-party pairs have $pidofthatparty = 1$, regardless of the number of parties P_c.

References

Achen, Christopher H. 1992. "Social Psychology, Demographic Variables, and Linear Regression: Breaking the Iron Triangle in Voting Research." *Political Behavior* 14(3):195–211.

Alesina, Alberto and Alex Cukierman. 1990. "The Politics of Ambiguity." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 105(4):829–850.

Alesina, Alberto, Arnaud Devleeschauwer, William Easterly, Sergio Kurlat and Romain Wacziarg. 2003. "Fractionalization." *Journal of Economic Growth* 8(2):155–194.

Alvarez, R. Michael. 1999. *Information and Elections*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Aragonès, Enriqueta and Andrew Postlewaite. 2002. "Ambiguity in Election Games." *Review of Economic Design* 7(3):233–255.

Benoit, Kenneth and Michael Laver. 2006. *Party Policy in Modern Democracies*. London: Routledge.

Campbell, Angus, Gerald Gurin and Warren E. Miller. 1954. *The Voter Decides*. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson and Company.

Campbell, James E. 1983. "The Electoral Consequences of Issue Ambiguity: An Examination of the Presidential Candidates' Issue Positions from 1968 to 1980." *Political Behavior* 5(3):277–291.

Carey, John M. and Matthew Soberg Shugart. 1995. "Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote: A Rank Ordering of Electoral Formulas." *Electoral Studies* 14(4):417–439.

CSES. 2007. "The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems." www.cses.org.

Fiorina, Morris P. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Grofman, Bernard, Samuel Merrill, Thomas L. Brunell and William Koetzle. 1999. "The Potential Electoral Disadvantages of a Catch-All Party: Ideological Variance among Republicans and Democrats in the 50 US States." *Party Politics* 5(2):199–210.

Huber, John D., Georgia Kernell and Eduardo L. Leoni. 2005. "Institutional Context, Cognitive Resources and Party Attachments Across Democracies." *Political Analysis* 13(4):365–386.

Page, Benjamin I. 1976. "The Theory of Political Ambiguity." *American Political Science Review* 70(3):742–752.

Powell, G. Bingham. 2000. *Elections As Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Shepsle, Kenneth A. 1972. "The Strategy of Ambiguity: Uncertainty and Electoral Competition." *American Political Science Review* 66(2):555–568.