

THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF REGISTERING WITH A POLITICAL PARTY

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to the memory of Leslie, Harold and Margaret Thornburg for their endless support and encouragement.

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I would like to thank my friends, family and colleagues for their support and encouragement in this task. In particular thank you to my committee, especially Mike McDonald for invaluable help and patience in developing this idea. Thank you to Shigeo Hirano for data on southern primary elections. Finally, thanks to my family for supporting and believing in me. Although our destinations were separate, I have never felt alone on this journey.

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ABSTRACT

THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF REGISTERING WITH A POLITICAL PARTY

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In 31 states, individuals have the option of affiliating with a party when they register to vote. I explore the decision to register with a political party and its effects on an individual's attitudes and behaviors. I find that the decision to register with a party is influenced by a combination of expressive and instrumental motives and is dependent on the electoral laws in place in a state and local political conditions. Once voters initially register with a party, the costs to changing that registration act as a barrier, keeping individuals registered with the same party over time. Party registration is also shown to affect the party an individual chooses to identify with. Taken together, these facts potentially lead to individuals being anchored to a political party identification when they might otherwise choose to identify with a different party.

INTRODUCTION

Among the primary ways in which citizens orient themselves politically is through an attachment to political parties known as party identification. Scholars typically conceptualize party identification as psychological attachment that affects their political behavior in the way that they process information (Bartels 2002; Zaller 1992), their attitudes and opinions (Carsey and Layman 2006), and ultimately how they express their preferences through voting (Campbell et al. 1960). While party identification is considered a psychological attachment, it can be manifested in tangible ways. A few activists formally express their identification by becoming an official member of political party (Campbell et al. 1960; Green et al. 2002). Millions more voting in closed primary states have an opportunity to declare their party affiliation on their voter registration application. Some scholars find that party registration is an expressive affirmation of a person's party identity that merely reinforces party identification (Burden and Greene 2000; Finkel and Scarrow 1985). I believe that a more subtle and powerful process is at work. I theorize that voters and registrants perceive party registration as a constitutive norm—a rule or custom defining membership in a group (Abdelal et al. 2005). Individuals who register with a political party may assume that their official affiliation with a party means they are a member of the otherwise nebulous categories of “Democrat” and “Republican.” Although the individuals who had registered with the

party do not become stronger supporters of the party solely due to being registered as Democrats or Republicans, the status of party registration as a constitutive norm serves to keep them identifying as a member of the party group, even as their loyalty may wane. These voters are in essence “anchored” to the party they are registered with and because of constitutive norms will continue to identify with the party as long as they are registered, even if they might prefer to identify with a different party were they given a choice to reregister.

Election officials use party registration to determine voter eligibility in primary elections, particularly various forms of closed primaries where being registered with a party is a voting prerequisite. Individuals have an option to register with a party, and for the majority of registrants who have little or no intention of voting in a primary (Ansolabehere et al. 2006), their response appears irrelevant. It is thus not surprising that scholars would tend to overlook the role of party registration in shaping party identification. There is good reason to expect otherwise. Scholars working with constitutive norms have shown that official governmental designations, where they exist, are one of the most widely acknowledged indicators of self-perceived group membership (Schildkraut 2007). Related work in social psychology comparing formal and informal organizations show that members of formal organizations feel greater group distinctiveness (Sheldon and Bettencourt 2002).

In this dissertation, I broaden the view of party registration as an administrative rule by examining the role registering with a party plays in party self-identification and political behavior. I theorize that the decision to register with a party is both a rational

one and an emotional, expressive one. Once an individual chooses a party, I show that, consistent with party registration being a constitutive norm, it has an anchoring effect, maintaining an individual's self-identified partisanship even when they might otherwise prefer to change it. The anchoring effect manifests itself voters' political behavior, such as patterns of split ticket voting. As an example of the far-reaching consequences on American politics, in situations where there is electoral realignment, such as in the South, states with a large number of voters registered with the waning party may realign more slowly, leading to that party remaining dominant or competitive for longer than in states where there is no party registration. My scholarship thus further informs policymakers in states currently without party registration who are debating adopting it, such as South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia¹

What is Party Registration?

Party registration is a device to regulate voter participation in party nominating contests. The Democratic and Republican parties in all states in the United States use some form of popular contest to choose the nominees that will compete against each other in the general election. The decentralized nature of the country's election administration has promoted variation in state nominating contest laws, particularly party primaries.² An important dimension on which these election laws vary is in the scope of

¹ Idaho also adopted party registration in 2011.

² Parties in some states may have an option to use a caucus or party convention to select general election nominees, but these states still provide for primary elections.

who can participate. Some states allow voters to participate in the primary election of their choice—so called “open” primaries— while others allow only voters with an expressed affiliation with a political party to cast ballots in its primary, referred to as “closed” primary elections. The mechanism by which participation in primaries is regulated is most commonly party registration.³ Individuals initially registering to vote specify a desire to affiliate with one of the parties and this information is recorded with an individual’s registration. In all 31 party registration states (Figure 1.1), voters may register as either Democrat, Republican or remain unaffiliated with a party. In many states, voters also have the option of registering with qualifying minor political parties. In most party registration states, only those individuals affiliated with a party may vote in that party’s primary election. In this manner, only people professing an affiliation with the party, presumably loyal partisans, may participate in the selection of nominees for the general election. This mechanism theoretically ensures that the nominee by the party to compete in the general election is the desired candidate of the majority of voters in that party. This also protects against individuals from a different party participating in a

Furthermore, party registration may still be used to regulate voter participation in these other nominating procedures.

³ Individuals may also be prevented from voting in a primary based on what elections they have previously participated in. For example, an individual participating in a Republican primary may not participate in a Democratic one next time. However these laws are difficult to enforce and while they are on the books in several states, in practice these states have an open primary (Paradis 2009).

party's primary election and affecting the selection of the nominee, perhaps by voting for someone they believe to be a weaker candidate against their party's nominee in the general election.

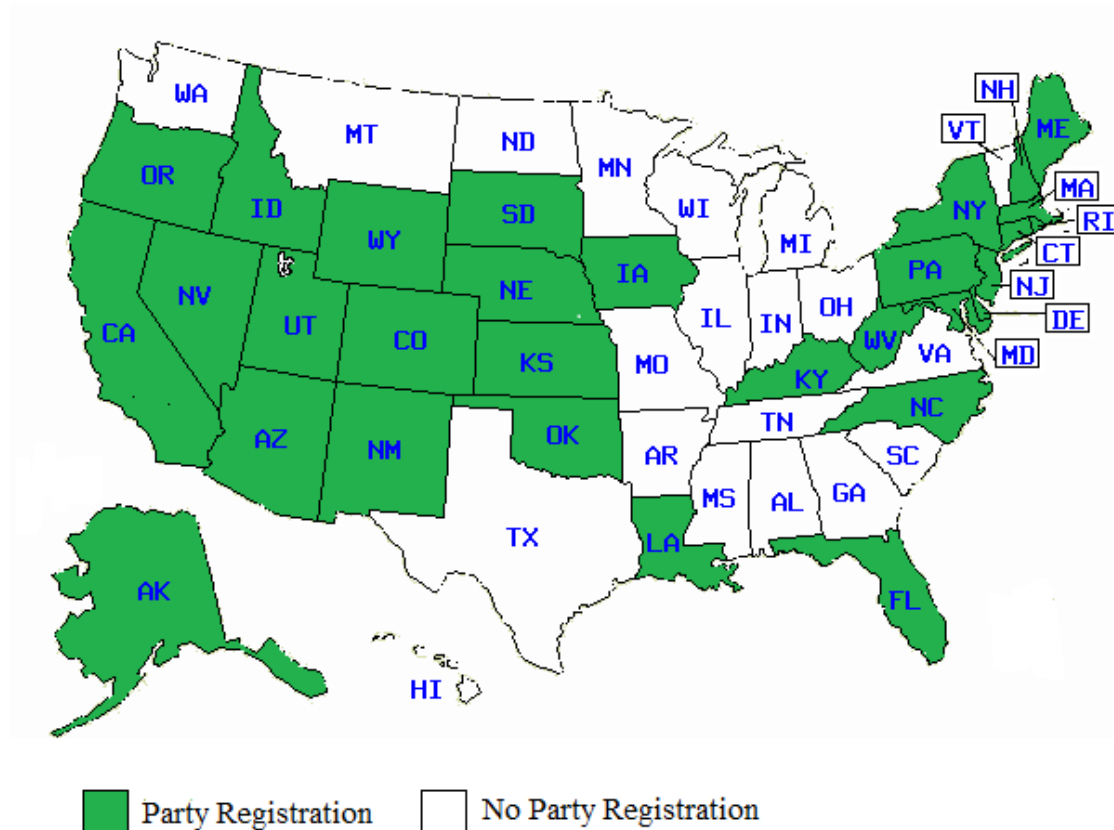


Figure 1.1: Party Registration in the United States

Party registration is the result of the American direct primary system of candidate nomination, coupled with the decentralized nature of United States parties. In the late Nineteenth century and early Twentieth century, reformers in a populist movement began to advocate against the machine politics that characterized the political process at the

time. The advent of the Australian (secret) ballot made an individual's vote secret and kept the person safe from retaliation by employers and party bosses. Progressives also pushed for greater popular control over who each party nominated for the general election. As the early Twentieth century progressive reformers gathered momentum in various states and agitated for greater input into candidate choice by the public, party leaders resigned themselves to the fact they would have to cede greater control over the candidate nomination process to the voters. As it became apparent this participation would take the form of a direct primary, the question for party leaders became one of who should be allowed to participate in the election. Lawmakers creating the rules regulating the primary electorate could conceivably influence who was elected by excluding certain individuals from the primary and altering the scope of conflict (Schattschneider 1960). Party elites were understandably concerned about the ability of cross-party voting in primary elections and wished to restrict voting in the primary only to those people loyal to their particular political party. In contrast, party elites in many European countries issue membership cards to party supporters. This was impossible given the decentralized nature of US parties and the system could have been seriously abused in urban areas (Ware 2002). Party bosses at the local level could not police their own organization's membership because those who would be involved in deciding who got to be a member and who was excluded might have a vested interest in keeping or excluding certain individuals from the political party and primary elections. In addition, compared to European parties, American political parties are quite large and difficult to police. This is complicated by the fact that Americans are a highly mobile people. These

factors combine to make it more difficult for party leaders to discern who is a “loyal” partisan and who might be an infiltrator.

With the option of issuing membership cards to partisans closed to them, party leaders were thus left with a dilemma as to how to ensure only dedicated partisans participated in primary elections. One possibility was for election administrators to force an individual to declare (or even swear) that they had supported the party in the previous general election. However, with the Australian ballot, this was impossible to verify. Several states still have this system of loyalty oaths, officially allowing only persons who declared they supported the party in previous elections or planned to support it in the general election to participate in their primary election. In practice, however, this rule is impossible to enforce and is generally ignored, except where voters are required to sign oaths. Another possibility was to allow individuals to participate in primary elections only if they had participated in previous primaries. Election administrators still use this system in a few states and it bears some resemblance to semiclosed primary states that allow unaffiliated voters to participate in primary elections. The primary elections a voter had previously participated in are recorded and a voter can be challenged as not a genuine member of the party for voting in a different primary. In practice, however, this rule is also very seldom enforced. Other restrictions to primary election participation have been on the basis of racial criteria. The White primary in the South was designed to exclude African-Americans from participating in nomination. Given the Democratic Party’s dominance in the region, this primary was effectively the Democratic Party primary.

For most states, rather than attempt to police their membership or allow voters the freedom to choose their primary, the parties' solution was to have the government regulate party registration. Election administrators could be presumed to be relatively fair in their registration of individuals and were theoretically without a vested interest in including and excluding undesirable individuals from American political party registration rolls. While party leaders sacrificed control over party membership, party registration represented (to them) making the best of a bad situation. Previously, party bosses had successfully relied on personal knowledge of individuals in the community and the non-secret ballot to achieve desired outcomes at the ballot box. However, as the American population grew, became increasingly mobile and acquired the anonymity of the secret ballot, formal procedures became necessary. The peculiar circumstances of American society meant parties could not institute formal procedures for policing their own membership. Therefore, party leaders turned to the state, sacrificing control for a system providing some regulation of primary participation.

States further attempted to restrict participation in the primary by instituting registration deadlines far in advance of any election. Legislators setting an early party registration deadline force a voter to choose the party she affiliates with before the specifics of the primary become known and hence before the voter can switch affiliation to participate in a particular primary because of its candidates. Over time these deadlines have gradually been advanced, to the point that many state laws allow individuals (at least unaffiliated registrants) to change party registration on the day of a primary.

However some states, most notably New York, still require an individual to register with a party nearly a year before they're allowed to participate in a primary election.

Some states opt for completely open primary elections, allowing anyone to participate in any primary. However, the cause of party registration and closed primaries was given a boost in 1901-1902 during the “Doc’ Ames fiasco” (Ware 2002). A candidate for mayor, “Doc” Ames was able to win his party’s primary by mobilizing individuals from both parties to support him in the primary election. The resulting scandal, while not impeding the spread of the direct primary itself, did lead for some states like Massachusetts to opt for a closed over an open primary system (ibid).

Over time, some states have liberalized primary laws as part of a greater trend of allowing popular participation in party nominations (Kauffman et al. 2003). Most notably, Hawaii recently switched from closed primary to an open primary system—abolishing party registration. While party registration deadlines are not affected by federal laws requiring registration cutoffs less than a month before elections, in practice some states with election day registration allow independents to switch party affiliation on the day of the primary. This trend is probably intended by the party elites to convert independent voters into supporters of the party by giving them a say in the candidates that are nominated, hopefully encouraging them to vote for these candidates and form a stronger bond with the party.

Theoretical Overview and Plan for the Dissertation

The majority of recent analysis of institutions has focused on two aspects: how institutions affects individuals' political behavior and how institutions are established and

change. In this dissertation, I am concerned exclusively with the former. I am interested first in how the institution of party registration affects strategic and genuine individual behavior as well as its role in more fundamental questions of individual identity.

While scholars have focused more attention on institutions in recent years (see Hall and Taylor 1996 for an overview), much of their work has been scattered, with little theoretical unity. An advantage to these scholars' eclectic output is that it affords multiple theoretical perspectives on how institutions structure individuals and their behavior. A prominent perspective, in the behavioral and economic tradition is rational choice institutionalism. Scholars of this school of institutionalism assume rational actors that seek to maximize utility. Institutions in this conceptualization are the rules of the game within which individuals act to maximize utility. A crucial factor is that preferences are assumed to be exogenous (Peters 2012). Therefore, the only way institutions act on individuals is by serving as the rules within which they attempt to maximize utility.

Another scholarly perspective on institutions, most notably associated with March and Olsen (1984; 1989), takes a more expansive view. In addition to the formal rules and procedures in place, the authors also categorize norms, routines and symbols as part of the institution. In this perspective, institutions not only provide the rules of the game but also structure individual preferences and create identity. Individuals here are inextricably entwined with the institutions they interact with. Of particular note to the present discussion is postulation by March and Olsen of a "logic of appropriateness" or the idea that individuals act within norms or standards of behavior that are deemed acceptable and correct (an example might be an individual deciding to get at the end of a line due to the

norm of doing so). In this way, norms and unofficial rules can structure behavior even without a mechanism of official enforcement.

Electoral institutions such as party registration serve to translate the preferences of many individuals into outcomes that are then gilded with democratic legitimacy. These rules affect outcomes by including or excluding the preferences of certain individuals, and thus altering the scope of conflict (Schattschneider 1960). The institutions also serve to specify exactly how preferences are aggregated into election winners (e.g. proportional representation versus SMSR). Party registration, and primary elections more generally, belong to a subset of electoral institutions the goal of which is to select a party nominee for office reflecting the preferences of the party's supporters in the electorate. Party registration serves to alter the scope of conflict by restricting who can participate in selecting a party's nominees for the general election. By largely restricting voting in a party's primary to individuals registered with that party, political elites and lawmakers use the institution of party registration aims to ensure that only dedicated supporters of a party participate in selecting its nominees for office. This restriction may have the side effect of leading to more ideologically extreme candidates receiving party nominations in closed primary states (Gerber and Morton 1998).

Politicians instituting party registration implicitly assume voters will register with the party they are loyal to. How effective party registration is at its stated goal is predicated on this assumption. Lawmakers presume voters will be sincere in their registration decision: Democrats will register as Democrats, likewise with Republicans and voters who do not identify with either party will remain unaffiliated. This is a strong

assumption. My first task is to evaluate its validity, using aggregate- and individual-level data to expand previous scholarship on identification-registration congruence (Finkel and Scarrow 1985).

An individual's decision to register with a party is an instance in which the various schools of “new institutionalism” diverge in their predictions for voter behavior. Unaffiliated voters in many party registration states actually have greater freedom to vote in primary elections compared to voters who are registered as Democrats or Republicans. In these states, termed semiclosed, unaffiliated voters are able to vote in either party's primary as opposed to just being confined to voting in the primaries of one party. For a rational, utility maximizing voter in these semiclosed primary states trying to make her vote count as much as possible, it therefore provides greater utility to the voter to register as unaffiliated, even if she identifies with a party. The voter can still vote in the primary of her favored party but gains the option of participating in the other party's primaries as well. Scholars of rational choice institutionalism would therefore predict that in semiclosed primary states, voters will always strategically register as unaffiliated, rather than register with the party they are loyal to. In contrast, in closed primary states only a person registered with a party may participate in a party primary. There is no rational incentive in closed primary states to register as an independent since this action completely excludes the individual from participating in any primary elections.

In contrast, March and Olsen's logic of appropriateness predicts voters will register genuinely with the party they support. Individuals doing otherwise will perceive that they are “cheating” or being dishonest because of the norms in place. The logic of

appropriateness may have emotional content, making individuals feel good as they obey norms. Individuals registering with a political party are engaging in a ritual—affirming one’s membership within the party groups—and supporting an individual’s party may bring about emotional energy, making the person feel good (Collins 2005). Together with the logic of appropriateness, I term this motivation “expressive” motives as they lead to an individual deriving pleasure or utility from genuinely expressing her party loyalties. I contrast these expressive motives with the more rational instrumental motives in the previous paragraph, based around gaining access to primary elections. In chapter 2, I evaluate whether the decision to register with a party is an expressive or an instrumental one. I test whether the decision is expressive or instrumental by comparing party registration states with different primary rules and examining the percentage of the electorate in each that is registered unaffiliated. I find differences among the states, indicating that voters are responsive to the rules of the primaries and not simply registering with the party they identify with. Fewer voters register as unaffiliated in states where unaffiliated voters can’t vote in primary elections compared to states where unaffiliated voters can participate in any primary. Local context matters, too. In states where one party is dominant, supporters of the weaker party are more likely to register as unaffiliated. Voters registering this way allows them to participate in the primary of the dominant party and influence who holds the office as well as vote in their own party’s primaries. However, expressive motives matter as well. I find, using individual level data, that stronger partisans are more likely to be registered with political parties. These

findings have implications for how electoral rules influence the makeup of the primary electorate.

Of course voters change preferences over time, and with them party loyalties. I must therefore consider not just what party a voter registers with but changes that take place once a voter has been registered with a party and may desire to change. I next explore changing party registration, specifically whether the rules in place present a barrier to individuals changing party affiliation after they've already registered. As an institution, party registration acts as a barrier to individuals easily changing their affiliation. In Chapter 3, I demonstrate that the costs of reregistering to vote in order to change party affiliation present a substantial barrier to voters and that when these costs decrease, voters are much more likely to change party registration. I conclude that a significant minority of voters are registered with one party but would prefer to be affiliated with another, in effect being “trapped” in the primary electorate of a party they no longer feel an affinity for.

Once an individual chooses to register with a party, how does it affect her behavior? Party registration carries legitimacy as a state administered link between voter and party that membership administered by the parties themselves—often simply a fundraising ploy—does not. The authority of the state designation gives party registration its status as a constitutive norm. Voters perceive party registration as a particularly strong constitutive norm—explicitly identifying a voter as affiliated with a party group rather than implicitly defining stereotypical group behavior. Research on constitutive norms for identity as an “American” finds that official designation as an American citizen is held by

a sample of respondents to be among the most widespread indicators determining what it means to be an “American” (Schildkraut 2007). Party registration bears similarity to citizenship in its explicit “official” designation. Voters registered with a party may therefore be expected to have a more firmly established identity as a partisan compared to voters in states without party registration.

In chapter 4, I examine the effect of being registered with a party on a voter’s self-expressed party identity. Using a random effects multinomial logit model, I show that the party a voter is registered with influences the party she identifies with. Voters who are registered as Republican or Democrat are more likely to identify with that party as well, even when controlling for lagged and initial partisanship and individual heterogeneity. I combine these results with those of chapter 3 to tell a story of “sticky” constitutive norms. Voters who may no longer feel as much affinity the party they are registered with but are unable to change this registration due to the substantial costs of doing so may nonetheless continue to identify with this party over time because they are registered with it. I find indirect evidence for this in chapter 4. Examining voter defection, I find voters registered with their party are more likely to defect in their vote for president and that this defection increases the longer they have been registered with the party. This is consistent with some of these voters becoming less loyal to their party over time but remaining anchored to it because of their registration. However, I find that these voters remain loyal to the party in their vote for House.

Overall, I demonstrate that, far from an administrative rule, party registration has significant effects on voter attitudes and behaviors. Voters are influenced by party

registration to identify with the party they are registered with because of its role as a constitutive norm. These voters may have greater difficulty changing their party loyalties because party registration is difficult to alter. In situations where there is a large scale realignment of the electorate, voters in party registration states may be slower to leave the waning party due to this attachment.

THE DECISION TO REGISTER WITH A PARTY

Despite its important role in primary elections and candidate nomination, little is known about why voters register with a party. Is the decision to register with a party a rational one, based around gaining access to primary elections and influencing who holds elected offices? Or is it instead a simple declaration of an individual's party identification? Whether the decision to register with a party is an instrumental one or an expressive one has implications for the makeup of the primary electorate. If the decision to register with a party is an expressive one, merely reflecting an individual's party identification, then party registration is fulfilling its purpose of only allowing supporters of a party to participate in its primary elections. However, if the decision is instrumental, based around gaining access to primary elections then it is possible that the primary electorate of say, the Republican Party, will be a mixture of genuine Republican identifiers and strategically registered Democratic and independent individuals participating in the GOP primaries to maximize the consequence of their vote.

The question of why voters register with a specific party (or not) can be answered indirectly, using a comparison of states. The rules for primary election participation differ among the states. This variety in primary rules offers differing incentives to strategic individuals to register with a party or remain unaffiliated. If a new voter's party registration is determined by instrumental motives, I should observe individuals in some

states being more likely than voters in other states to register a certain way because of their state's election laws. In contrast, if party registration merely reflects party identification, then the rules for primary elections should not matter a great deal, since voters will be guided by their internal attitudes and care little about how their registration decision affects access to primaries. My primary dependent variable in this chapter is therefore the decision to register as unaffiliated or with a party and my independent variable is whether a state allows unaffiliated voters to participate in primary elections.

Variation among Party Registration States

Party registration was initially implemented with the institution of the direct primary in the early 20th century to allow party elites to continue to exert some form of control over the nomination process (Ware 2002). Weakness of parties in the political system and the structure of American society, made the idea of parties controlling their own membership, such as with European parties, impractical. Party registration was a compromise handing over control of who participates in the primary to the state with the hope that laws could be implemented that would ensure only dedicated partisans participate in the nominating process. However, different states have different laws regulating participation in a primary. In addition, the institution by some states of election day registration has affected who may participate in a party's primary elections.

The majority of party registration states conduct "closed" primaries (Paradis 2009): only voters registered with a political party may participate in that party's primary elections; unaffiliated voters may not participate in any primary. However, a significant minority of states hold semiclosed primaries. In these states, voters registered with a

political party are still confined to that party's primaries but unaffiliated registrants may participate in any party's primary election they choose. There are two types of semiclosed primaries. In four semiclosed states, individuals registered as unaffiliated may simply participate in any primary election they wish and remain independent without any additional effort on their part. The remaining states with semiclosed primaries officially conduct closed primary elections and a voter must be registered with the party to vote in its primary elections. However, these states allow independent/unaffiliated voters to change their registration on the day of the primary. Therefore voters unaffiliated on the day of the primary election can change their registration to a party, vote in its primary elections and then switch back to being unaffiliated.⁴ For all intents and purposes, these states therefore hold semiclosed primary elections.

A Rational Choice Model of Party Registration

The utility derived by an individual from participating in a primary election is a function of the differential benefit of the individual's preferred candidate winning over the other candidates as well as the likelihood that by voting, the individual brings about this outcome (Riker and Ordeshook 1968). In addition, in a primary election, the differential probabilities among the candidates of winning the general election must also

⁴ To further complicate matters regarding primary elections, some states have different rules depending on the type of office the primary election is for. Others leave the decision of whether to allow unaffiliated voters to participate in a party's primaries up to the party itself. In at least two states (Alaska and Idaho), the GOP holds semiclosed or closed primaries while Democrats hold more open primaries.

be considered; it matters little how much utility a candidate's election brings the voter if the candidate is certain to lose the general election. Because these variables change from primary to primary depending on the unique circumstances of the election, for a purely utility maximizing voter, the party primary election offering the greatest utility to the voter may change from election to election (e.g. from Democrat to Republican and back again). The candidates competing in an individual's party's primary may be so similar there is little differential benefit to one's election over the other. Or one candidate may be likely to win the primary such that there is little point of voting in it. Therefore a purely utility maximizing voter will participate in the primaries of both parties over time.

The rational choice perspective conceptualizes institutions such as party registration as the rules that constrain the decisions rational actors can make as they attempt to maximize utility. Party registration serves to constrain the party primary an individual may participate in from one election to the next, forcing a voter to commit to one party's primary elections over time.

However, semiclosed primaries provide a mechanism for voters in party registration states to get around this restriction. The intention of opening primaries to unaffiliated voters was doubtless to encourage more independents to participate in party primaries and hopefully form a stronger bond with the party. However, any voter is able to register as unaffiliated, and therefore, even strong partisans can participate in the primaries of the other party if they are willing to remain unaffiliated with a party.

In the long run, a utility maximizing voter in a semiclosed primary state is best served by registering as unaffiliated. The freedom to participate in the primary elections

of both parties is restored and with it, greater options to maximize utility by voting in either primary.

The opposite incentive exists in states with closed primaries. In these states, a utility maximizing voter, regardless of party loyalty, is always better off registering with a party. While her options are more restricted compared to a semiclosed primary state, a voter in a closed primary state gains the ability to participate in one party's primaries when registered with that party. We should therefore see utility-maximizing independent voters registering with a party to at least gain access to the primaries of one party. Based on the circumstances of these two different types of states, I hypothesize the following:

H₁: A voter in a state with semiclosed primary elections is more likely to register as unaffiliated than a voter in a state with closed primary elections.

Of the 13 semiclosed primary states for which 2010 registration data are publicly available, the mean percentage of the electorate that is unaffiliated is 34.4%.⁵ In contrast, in the 15 closed primary states for which data are available the mean percentage is only 16.9%. A simple state-level OLS regression was run with percentage unaffiliated as the

⁵ The state of Utah does not publish party registration statistics. Idaho also has party registration but only implemented it in 2011. Alaska is also excluded due to its unusual circumstances. The state has semiclosed and open primaries for Republicans and Democrats, respectively. However, this is a relatively recent development; the state had a blanket primary since it first achieved statehood until 2000. Thus, there has never been a reason for individuals to register with a party. Not surprisingly, it has among the highest rates of independence of any party registration state.

dependent variable and the primary independent variable being whether the state was semiclosed. I also controlled for Obama’s 2008 state vote share in the state and whether it was located in the South. Despite the small population of states with party registration data, Table 2.1 shows that the semiclosed dummy variable is large and significant at $p < 0.001$. The coefficient shows that a state having semiclosed primaries is associated with a 17.9 percentage point increase in the percentage of the state’s electorate registered as unaffiliated.

Table 2.1: Percent of Registered Voters Unaffiliated in a State in 2010

Variable		Percent Unaffiliated	
		Coeff. (Std. Error)	<i>p</i> -value
Semiclosed	<i>Semiclosed Primary State</i>	17.860 (3.012)	0.000
Obama ‘08	<i>Obama 08 State Vote Share</i>	0.302 (0.144)	0.046
South	<i>Southern State</i>	-3.970 (4.082)	0.340
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	1.521 (8.625)	0.861
Number of Observations		28	
Adjusted R²		0.611	

It is possible, however, that a state’s electoral institutions are not exogenous to other factors, such as a state’s partisanship. One possibility might be that states with semiclosed primaries have a larger proportion of independent voters who are more likely to register as unaffiliated. These independent voters may result in weaker parties in the state and more permissive primary election laws. It is thus necessary to analyze voters at the individual level, controlling for factors such as partisanship and other demographic

characteristics. I use the 2010 Cooperative Congressional Election Study. This large collaborative survey was administered via computer on Polimetrix's YouGov service in the days leading up the election, with a shorter follow-up survey post-election. Among other questions this survey asked was a respondent's party registration, including whether the respondent was unaffiliated. It is thus possible to examine whether residence in a semiclosed primary state made a voter more likely to be registered as unaffiliated. My dependent variable is coded a 0 if the respondent reported being registered with a party and 1 if the respondent indicated that they have no party, are independent or declined to state a party on the registration form. My independent variable is a dummy variable coded 1 if a respondent lives in a semiclosed primary state and 0 otherwise. I also control for age, gender, race, education, residence in the South, strength of partisanship and party identification. The analysis is conducted using a simple binary logit model and my sample includes all voters in party registration states who reported being registered to vote. Robust standard errors are clustered on state.

The findings are shown in Table 2.2. H_1 is strongly supported; the semiclosed primary variable is positive and significant at $p < 0.001$. This indicates that residing in a state with semiclosed primaries is associated with an increased likelihood of being registered unaffiliated. Setting all other control variables to their median values reveals that an individual living in a semiclosed state is 15 percentage points more likely to be registered as unaffiliated compared to a voter in a state with closed primaries.

Table 2.2: Likelihood of Being Unaffiliated, 2010 CCES

Variable		All Registered	
		Coeff. (Std. Error)	p-value
Semiclosed	<i>Semiclosed Primary State</i>	0.610 (0.068)	0.000
Obama '08	<i>Obama 08 State Vote Share</i>	0.010 (0.005)	0.036
Strong	<i>Strong Partisan</i>	-0.836 (0.118)	0.000
Age	<i>Age in Years</i>	-0.024 (0.002)	0.000
Gender	<i>Female</i>	-0.024 (0.059)	0.677
Race	<i>Racial Minority</i>	-0.013 (0.076)	0.867
Education	<i>Greater than H.S.</i>	-0.049 (0.067)	0.465
South	<i>South and Border States</i>	-0.038 (0.080)	0.636
Party ID	<i>Democrat</i>	-2.937 (0.099)	0.000
(Ref. Cat.: Independent)	<i>Republican</i>	-3.125 (0.107)	0.000
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	0.885 (0.328)	0.007
Number of Observations		29,342	
Pseudo R²		0.371	
Log Likelihood		-9091.629	

Rhode Island in Detail

I now look at a single state, Rhode Island, in depth for evidence of this strategic behavior. Rhode Island is a semiclosed primary state. Unaffiliated voters may participate in the state's primary elections, however upon participating, voters are considered to be registered with the party. Unaffiliated voters may return to being unaffiliated by filling

out a “Change of Party Designation” form, which is available at polling places on the day of the primary. The state is thus a *de facto* semiclosed state, allowing unaffiliated voters to vote in a primary as a registrant with the party and immediately switch back to being unaffiliated.

This represents a sophisticated behavior on the part of voters, imparting a high cost to change party registration (albeit at the polling place). Given that the paperwork of changing party registration has been shown to present a barrier to changing party registration, it seems remarkable that voters would routinely change their party registration. Rhode Island is an ideal state to observe whether this type of behavior occurs, because its voter file includes the date when an individual last changed their party registration.

If unaffiliated voters participate in Rhode Island’s primaries and then switch back to being unaffiliated, we should observe a spike in the number of party registrations that are changed on the day of a primary. Figure 2.1 plots the number of party registrations last changed on each day between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2010. The y-axis depicts the number of individuals who last changed their party registration on the date in question. Readily apparent are four spikes, days on which a large number of individuals’ party registration was changed. Spike one occurs on December 11, 2006. This is exactly 90 days after the 2006 Rhode Island primaries. 90 days is the amount of time it takes for an individual’s party registration to officially be changed from being registered with a party. This indicates over 12,000 voters were registered with a party on the day of Rhode Island’s primary and decided to change party registration. Spike two, of 25,000 voters

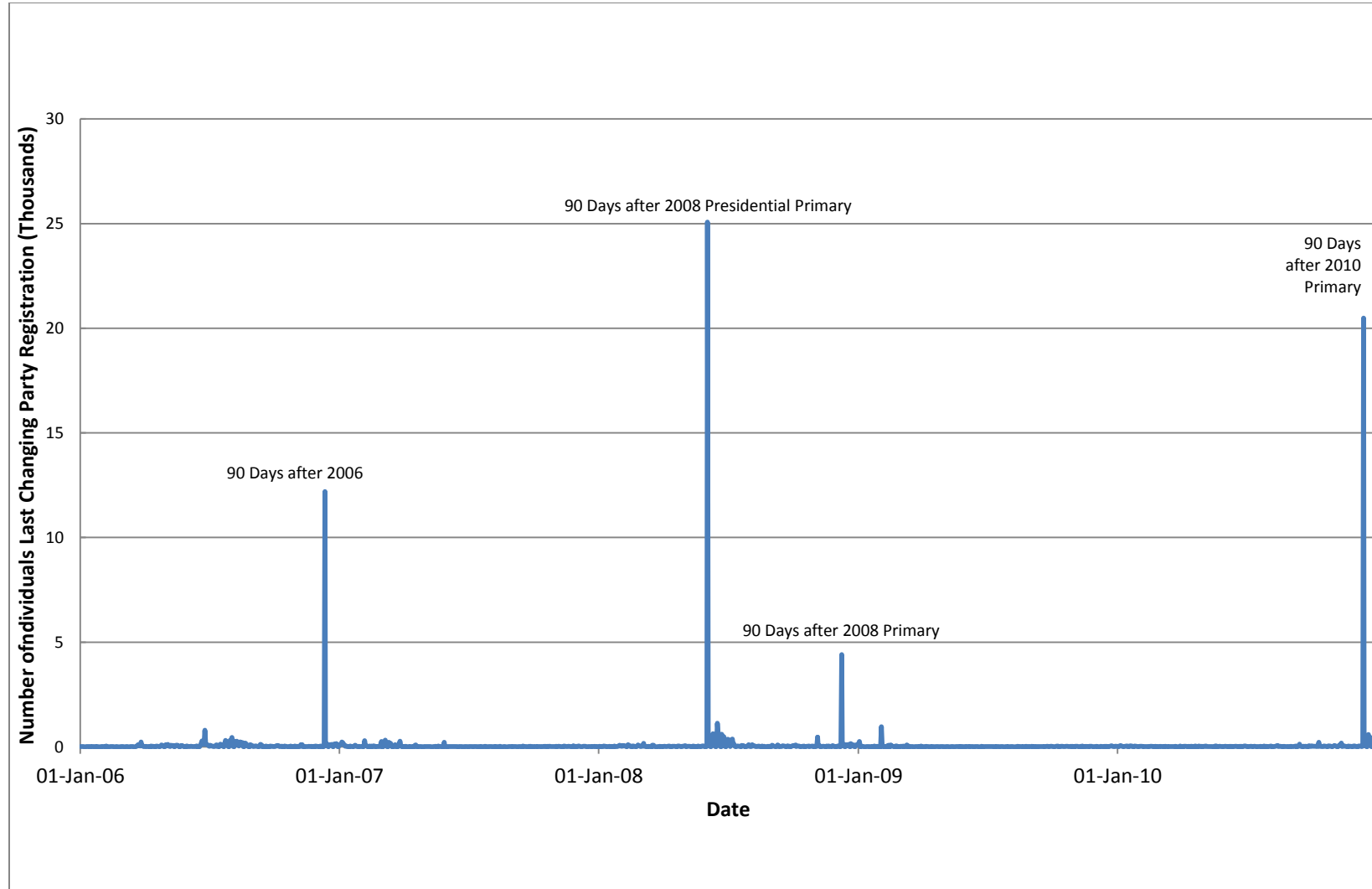


Figure 2.1: Number of Voters Last Changing their Party Registration by Day

occurs exactly 90 days after the 2008 presidential primary with spikes three and four occurring 90 days after the 2008 and 2010 primary elections, respectively. Large numbers of voters therefore change their party registration on the day of a primary from being registered with a party. In addition, it is important to remember these numbers only show the last time an individual changed their party registration. Therefore a voter who changed on the day of the 2008 presidential primary and then on the 2010 primary as well would not appear in the spike for 2008. Thus, with the exception of the 2010 primary, these spikes understate the number of voters behaving strategically in each election.

This provides direct evidence that voters strategically remain unaffiliated for the purpose of being able to select the party's primary election they participate in. Voters are willing to bear an especially high cost to do so.

Expressive Motives

The evidence presented indicates that instrumental motives are at least partly responsible for how a voter registers. However, they cannot explain the decision completely. If voters were purely instrumental, all voters in semiclosed primary states would be unaffiliated and all voters in closed primary states would be registered with a party. This is not the case. As an example, Figure 2.2 shows a visual breakdown of party registration in a state with closed primaries (Florida) and a state with semiclosed primary (Massachusetts). In this breakdown, blue represents Democrat, gray represents unaffiliated and red represents Republican. The relative length of the bar shows the proportion of the electorate so registered. While the effect of electoral rules appears clear in the differences between the two states, the fact remains that nearly half of

Massachusetts voters *are* registered with a party, and so limiting the primaries they are allowed to participate in. Conversely, a significant minority of voters in Florida give up any access to primary elections by registering unaffiliated. Registering with a political party must therefore also serve some sort of expressive purpose or provide a psychological benefit to the individual, perhaps in the appeal of membership with a political party an individual supports.

The literature on institutions in the “normative” tradition of March and Olsen (1984; 1989) also predicts that the norms in place will exert a powerful effect on individual motivation through the logic appropriateness, the sense of obligation to established norms that exists. Where a norm exists to register with an individual’s party sincerely, voters who do otherwise may feel they are being dishonest or “cheating”.

An interesting example of the logic of appropriateness and established norms concerns party registration in Arkansas. While the state has established party registration, in practice only 4.4% of registered voters in the state are affiliated with a party. Arkansas is unique in being the only party registration state with completely open primaries.⁶ Party registration is also a relatively new institution in the state, only being implemented in 1996. Because its primaries are completely open, paradoxically there is actually less instrumental motivation to being registered unaffiliated than in a semiclosed primary state. Individuals in Arkansas can, for example, register as Democrats and still vote in the Republican primary. Voters can therefore register sincerely while maintaining the ability to vote in both parties’ primaries. Because its primaries are open, however, the norm of

⁶ The exception being Alaska’s Democratic Party.

sincerely registering with a voter's party does not yet exist and the sense of obligation from the logic of appropriateness does not affect Arkansans.

Other possible expressive explanations aside from the logic of appropriateness could deal with peer pressure; individuals hoping to get a job in the government may wish to signal their political reliability by registering with the same party as those running the government. Others hoping to receive assistance from their congressman might register with his party, hoping this will increase the odds of help.



Figure 2.2: Partisan Breakdown of Massachusetts and Florida

If individuals register with a party for expressive motives, we should observe that stronger partisans should be more likely to register with a party. A stronger partisan's feelings of attachment to her party are by definition greater than a weaker partisan's or independent's attachment. We might therefore expect that stronger partisans register with their party more frequently than other types of voters.

H₂: Stronger partisans should be more likely to register with their party than other types of voters.

Returning to Table 2.2, the individual analysis, I see that the strong partisan variable is large, negative and statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. This indicates that an individual who is a strong partisan has a lower likelihood of being registered unaffiliated (and consequently a greater likelihood of being registered with a party) compared to other types of voters. It is clear that the greater a voter's attachment to her political party, the more likely she is to register with the party, regardless of limiting her access to other party primaries.

I caution that the findings here may be endogenous. That is, a voter may be more likely to say she's a strong partisan because she's registered with that party, rather than the other way around. I demonstrate in the following chapters that party registration is used by voters to help determine their party identification.

Local Context

In areas where one party is dominant, voters self-identifying with the weaker party should be more likely to register with the dominant party. For example, someone self-identifying as a Republican in an area where Democrats are especially strong electorally has an incentive to register as a Democrat to maximize the consequence of their vote in a primary election. If a Democrat is certain to win the general election, there may be little reason for an individual to vote in the Republican primary election since whoever wins that primary will have no chance in the general. It makes more sense for the individual to be able to vote in the Democratic primary election and thus influence who wins the Democratic nomination and with it the general election.⁷ This pattern of

⁷ This logic does not, of course, apply to the nomination for President.

behavior was frequently observed during the time of Democratic dominance in the South (Finkel and Scarrow 1985) and has been postulated as an explanation for party registration totals understating minor party electoral support in areas where one party is dominant (Arrington and Grofman 1999).

Semiclosed primary states provide individuals self-identifying with the weaker party with an additional, more attractive option in areas where one party is dominant. Registering as an unaffiliated voter allows an individual who identifies with the weaker party to participate in the dominant party's primary elections as well as the primaries of the weaker party with which she self-identifies. Further, these individuals reduce the cognitive dissonance of being affiliated with a party they do not support as well as the volume of unwanted campaign materials and appeals for money from the dominant party that is targeted at them as registrants with the party. I may therefore expect the number of independent/unaffiliated voters to increase in semiclosed primary states, the less competitive the state becomes. No relationship should be observed in closed primary states as there is no instrumental value to registering as unaffiliated in such a state.

H₃: In semiclosed primary states where one party is much stronger than the other, identifiers with the weaker party will be more likely to register as unaffiliated compared to when the states are evenly balanced.

H₄: There will be no relationship between party dominance and the percent of the electorate unaffiliated in closed primary states.

The more Democratic a semiclosed primary state becomes, the more Republicans will register as unaffiliated. The more Republican the semiclosed state, the more

Democrats will register as unaffiliated. As I should observe opposite trends for the two groups, I analyze them separately. I also include independent leaners with partisans. This is done because independent leaners are virtually indistinguishable from partisans on behavior and attitudes (Keith et al. 1990). In addition, I theorize that the party a voter is registered with influences their party identification. In other words, I think some of the independent leaners may identify as such because they are registered as unaffiliated. I once again use the 2010 CCES with the same dependent variable and control variables. I take as my measure of party dominance Obama's 2008 vote share in the state. The Obama vote share variable is interacted with the semiclosed primary dummy variable and included in the model. The estimation of the binary logit model for Republicans and Democrats appears in Table 2.3.

The results indicate partial support for my hypothesis. While the interaction term among Democrats is in the expected direction, it is not statistically significant. In contrast, the interaction term for Republicans is in the expected direction and significant at $p < 0.001$. For Republicans, the Obama vote share coefficient is small and not statistically significant, indicating that among closed primary states, Obama's vote share bears no relationship to the proportion of the electorate registered as unaffiliated. However, the interaction term is positive, showing that as a semiclosed primary state grows increasingly more Democratic, a larger proportion of Republicans in the state is registered as unaffiliated. Setting all control variables at their median values, Figure 2.3 shows these findings as the predicted probability of registering as unaffiliated in semiclosed and closed primary states as Obama's vote share in the state changes.

Table 2.3: Likelihood of Being Unaffiliated, 2010 CCES

Variable		Republicans		Democrats	
		Coeff. (Std. Error)	<i>p</i> -value	Coeff. (Std. Error)	<i>p</i> -value
Semiclosed	<i>Semiclosed Primary State</i>	-1.854 (0.723)	0.010	1.271 (0.991)	0.200
Obama '08	<i>Obama 08 State Vote Share</i>	0.007 (0.008)	0.419	-0.001 (0.008)	0.903
Semiclosed*Obama	<i>Interaction Term</i>	0.052 (0.013)	0.000	-0.011 (0.018)	0.549
Strong	<i>Strong Partisan</i>	-0.770 (0.181)	0.000	-0.861 (0.154)	0.000
Age	<i>Age in Years</i>	-0.023 (0.003)	0.000	-0.023 (0.003)	0.000
Gender	<i>Female</i>	0.010 (0.092)	0.915	-0.134 (0.099)	0.178
Race	<i>Racial Minority</i>	0.159 (0.135)	0.239	-0.139 (0.121)	0.249
Education	<i>Greater than H.S.</i>	-0.149 (0.126)	0.151	0.110 (0.124)	0.374
South	<i>South and Border States</i>	-0.125 (0.126)	0.320	-0.128 (0.137)	0.349
Party ID (Ref. Cat.: Independent)	<i>Democrat</i>	-	-	-2.865 (0.117)	0.000
	<i>Republican</i>	-2.692 (0.133)	0.000	-	-
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	0.616 (0.554)	0.266	1.517 (0.567)	0.007
Number of Observations		12,827		13,621	
Pseudo R²		0.306		0.356	
Log Likelihood		-3428.078		-3576.728	

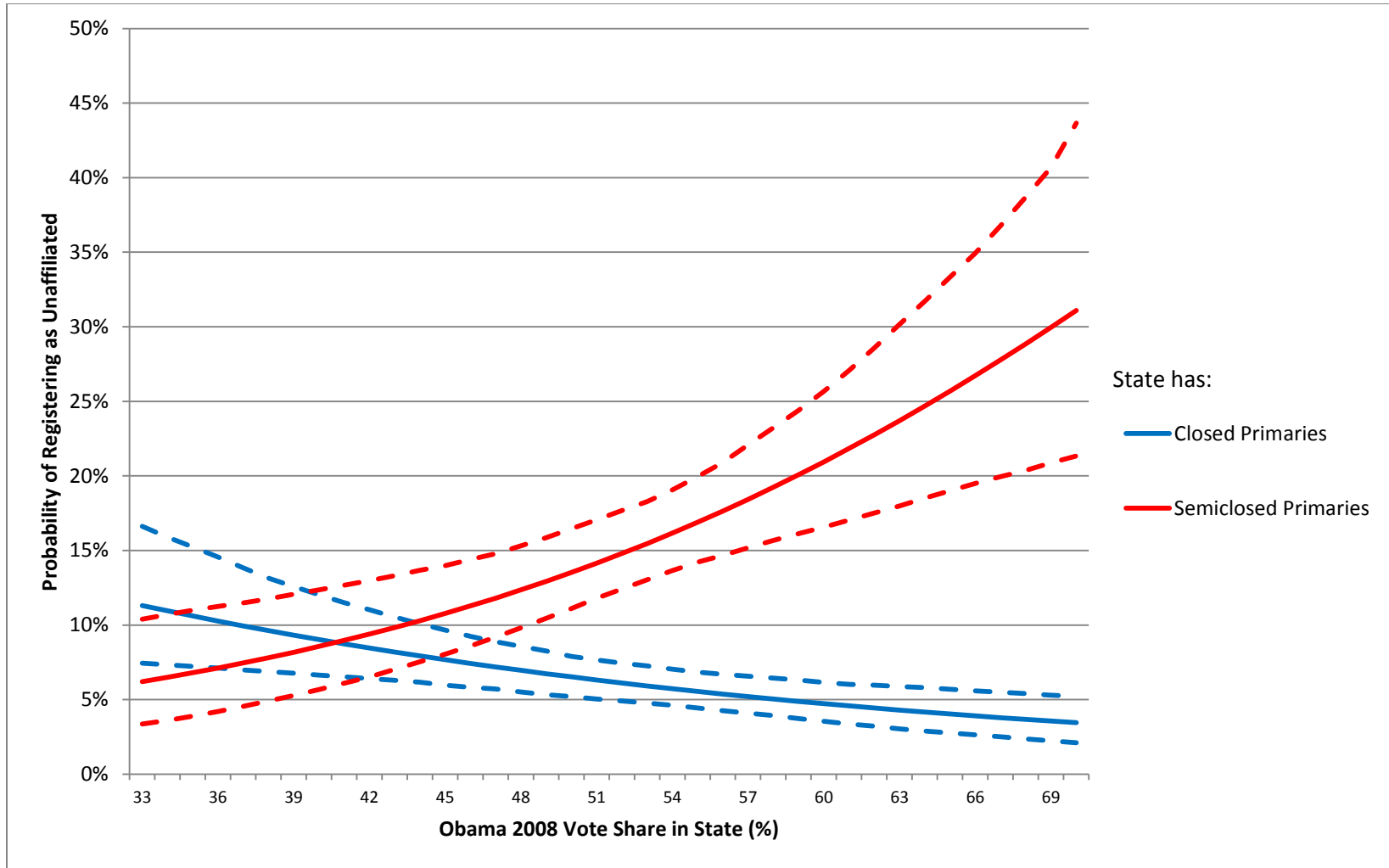


Figure 2.3: Likelihood of Registering as Independent/Unaffiliated Among Republicans and Republican Leaners in Party Registration States, 2010 CCES

Therefore, it appears that only Republicans in a state respond to local partisan conditions in the decision to register as unaffiliated; Democrats do not do so. I attempt to confirm this finding using the aggregate party registration data. I add to my initial aggregate regression model by including Obama's 2008 vote share and the interaction term with semiclosed primaries. If Republicans register strategically but Democrats do not do so, I should observe that in semiclosed primary states, the percentage of the electorate unaffiliated will increase as Obama's vote share increases. As the party becomes weaker in the state, more of the state's Republicans will register as unaffiliated, increasing the percentage in the state that is unaffiliated. The results, in Table 2.4, are supportive. As before, the coefficient for the Obama vote share variable is close to zero and not statistically significant, indicating that for states with closed primaries, Obama's vote share has little effect on the percentage of the electorate unaffiliated. Because unaffiliated voters cannot participate in closed primaries, unaffiliated registration is purely expressive and has little relationship to local partisan conditions. The interaction term is positive and significant at $p < 0.001$, as expected.

Figure 2.4 depicts a scatterplot of states and shows the findings thus far clearly. Semiclosed primary states have a much higher percentage of unaffiliated voters as opposed to states with closed primaries. No closed primary state has more than 25 percent of their electorate registered as unaffiliated and only two of the semiclosed primary states have less than 20 percent of the electorate unaffiliated.⁸ The plot also

⁸ One of the two semiclosed primary states, West Virginia, only instituted semiclosed primaries for the dominant Democratic Party in 2007.

clearly shows the interaction between semiclosed primary status and winner's 2008 presidential margin of victory. Among semiclosed primary states, the greater the margin of victory, the larger the proportion of voters in the state who are registered as unaffiliated. In contrast, in states with closed primaries, margin of victory has no relationship to the percentage of unaffiliated voters.

Table 2.4: Percent of Registered Voters Unaffiliated in a State in 2010

Variable		Percent Unaffiliated	
		Coeff. (Std. Error)	p-value
Semiclosed	<i>Semiclosed Primary State</i>	-42.176 (9.309)	0.000
Obama '08	<i>Obama 08 State Vote Share</i>	-0.028 (0.100)	0.784
Semiclosed*Obama	<i>Interaction Term</i>	1.138 (0.173)	0.000
South	<i>Southern State</i>	-5.638 (2.470)	0.032
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	19.926 (5.899)	0.003
Number of Observations		28	
Adjusted R²		0.859	

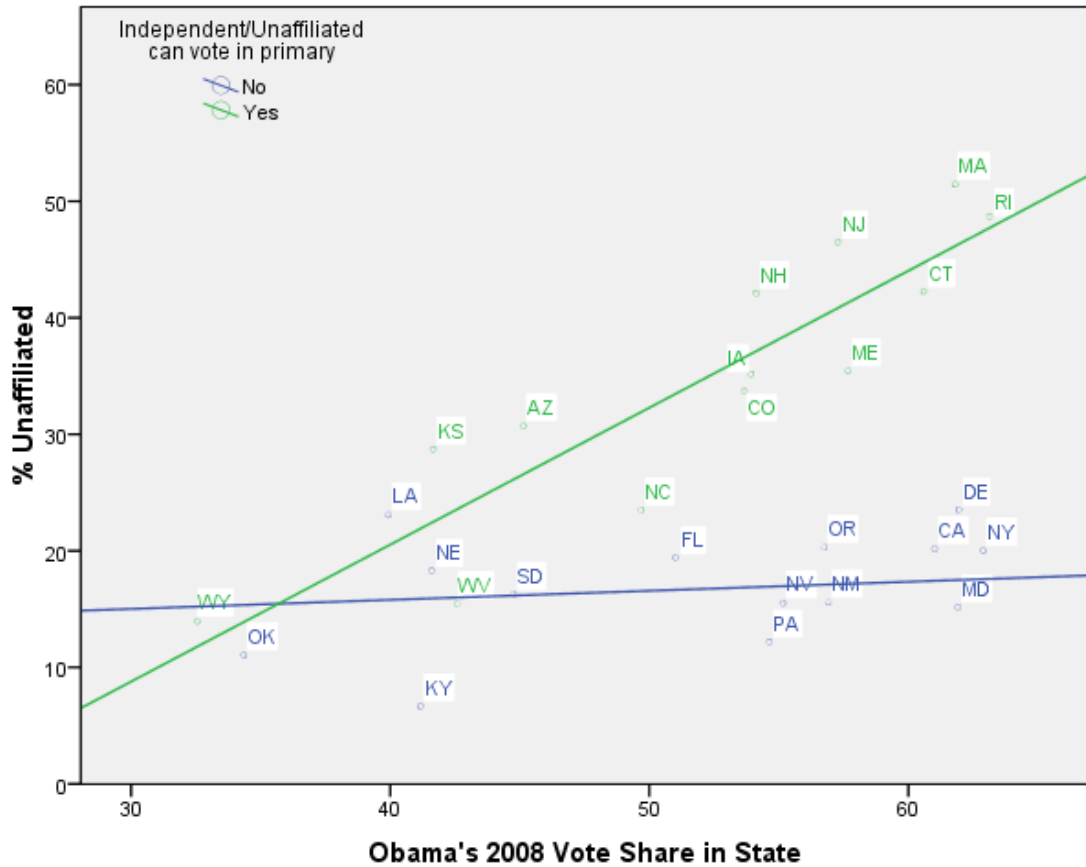


Figure 2.4: Percent Unaffiliated in Party Registration States versus Obama Vote Share

Another way of demonstrating that semiclosed primary laws influence members of the weaker party in a state to register as unaffiliated voters is through analysis of aggregate party identification statistics for a state, compared to party registration statistics. In particular, the discrepancy between the number of people self-identifying with a party and the number of people actually registered with the party may give an idea of how many people are registered strategically. If semiclosed primary laws and party dominance influence members of a weaker party to register as unaffiliated I

should find that as party A grows more dominant in a semiclosed primary state, there should be a greater number of people who identify with party B but are not registered with it. There should be little relationship between party dominance and the number of people self-identifying with but not registering with B in closed primary states.

The unit of analysis remains the state and I utilize the same party registration statistics as in the previous analysis for 27 states and the District of Columbia. My dependent variable is the percentage of individuals in a state self-identifying with a party minus the percentage of individuals in the state actually registered with the party:

$$\text{REPDIFF} = \% \text{ Republican Identifiers} - \% \text{ Republican Registrants}$$

$$\text{DEMDIFF} = \% \text{ Democratic Identifiers} - \% \text{ Democratic Registrants}$$

The larger the value for DEMDIFF and REPDIFF, the more people in the state identify with the party but are not registered with it. Negative values will indicate a greater percentage of people in the state are registered with the party than actually identify it and a value of 0 will indicate the same percentage of identifiers and registrants for the party.

The data for proportion of Republican and Democratic identifiers in each state comes from Gallup polls of the states conducted in 2011.⁹ Independent leaners are included in addition to those explicitly identifying with the party.

My independent variables will be Obama's vote share in the 2008 presidential election, a dummy variable coded 1 if a state is semiclosed primary and 0 otherwise and

[/www.gallup.com/poll/148949/Hawaii-Democratic-Utah-Republican-State.aspx#2](http://www.gallup.com/poll/148949/Hawaii-Democratic-Utah-Republican-State.aspx#2)

an interaction term derived from multiplying the two. I also include a control for whether the state is in the South. I should expect a positive relationship between REPDIFF and Obama's vote share in 2008 in semiclosed primary states but no relationship in states where independents can't vote in the primary. This is because as Obama's vote share increases in a semiclosed primary state (and consequently the Democratic Party is assumed to be more dominant in the state), more Republicans will be inclined to register as independent or unaffiliated in order to participate in the Democratic primary election and influence which Democrat will come to hold the office. This will lead to a higher value of REPDIFF, the disparity between Republican identifiers and Republican registrants. In states with closed primaries, I should expect less of a relationship between vote share and REPDIFF since there is no point in registering as an independent. A similar relationship would hold for DEMDIFF if Democrats register strategically, the only difference being that DEMDIFF should increase as Obama's vote share *decreases* in semiclosed primary states. There should once again be no relationship between DEMDIFF and Obama's vote share in states with closed primaries.

The results of OLS regressions for REPDIFF and DEMDIFF are shown in Table 2.5. Once again, the results advance partial support for my theory. Despite the small population of states with party registration, the interaction term in the REPDIFF model is significant in the expected direction. In semiclosed primary states, an increase in Obama's vote share in a state is associated with an increase in the difference between the proportion of individuals self-identifying as Republicans in the state and the proportion of voters registered as Republicans. In other words, the more Democratic a semiclosed

primary state becomes, the fewer Republicans and Republican leaners in it are actually registered with their political party. On the other hand, among closed primary states, the partisanship of the state (based on the proxy of Obama's vote share) has no relationship to how many Republicans in a state are actually registered with the party. Among semiclosed primary states where Obama did badly (33% of the vote), the model predicts near parity between Republican identification and Republican registration—only 2.3 percentage points more identifiers than registrants. However, in a semiclosed primary state where Obama was dominant (63% of the vote), the model predicts 18.5 percentage points more Republican identifiers than actual registrants with the party. In contrast, in a closed primary state, the respective differences are +7.0 percentage points and +3.7 percentage points.

In addition, the dummy variable coding for whether the state was southern is statistically significant at $p < 0.1$. It is positive, indicating that in southern states, there are a greater number of Republicans who identify with the party but are not registered with it. Given the realignment that has occurred in region, this is to be expected, as many of these Republicans presumably switched their identification relatively recently and may not have updated their party registration.

For the DEMDIFF model, none of the principal variables, including the interaction term, are significant. It appears that the partisan balance in a state does not affect how many Democrats and Democratic leaners in the state actually choose to register with the party. This follows the pattern established with the CCES of

Table 2.5: Difference Between Party Identification and Registration, 2010

Variable		REPDIFF		DEMDIFF	
		Coeff. (Std. Error)	<i>p</i> -value	Coeff. (Std. Error)	<i>p</i> -value
Semiclosed	<i>Semiclosed Primary State</i>	-27.332 (7.853)	0.002	-6.741 (7.432)	0.374
Obama '08	<i>Obama 08 State Vote %</i>	0.011 (0.084)	0.897	0.031 (0.080)	0.704
Semiclosed*Obama	<i>Interaction Term</i>	0.641 (0.146)	0.000	0.293 (0.138)	0.045
South	<i>South and Border States</i>	3.687 (2.084)	0.090	-8.877 (1.972)	0.000
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	3.870 (4.976)	0.445	-0.953 (4.709)	0.841
Number of Observations		28		28	
Adjusted R²		0.579		0.751	

Republicans registering strategically in semiclosed primary states but Democrats not appearing to do so. The dummy variable coding for whether a state is in the South was significant at $p < 0.001$ and negative. This indicates that in southern states there are a greater number of individuals registered as Democrats but not identifying with the party at present. This is expected, as these states have moved away from Democratic dominance towards greater Republican strength. Because party registration requires effort to change, it should be assumed to lag actual party self-identification. In other words, there are likely many individuals in these states that are registered as Democrats but do not identify with the party anymore. The southern dummy variable bears this out.

It should be noted that since I am dealing with aggregate statistics and the state as the unit of analysis, it's impossible to know exactly how many Republicans and Democrats in each state are actually registered with their party. For example, in a state with 40% of the population self-identifying as Republican and 30% of voters actually registered Republican, REPDIFF would equal +10. This one quarter of Republican identifiers represents the absolute minimum proportion of Republicans that are not registered with the party. It assumes that every individual registered as a Republican identifies with the party, something that is almost certainly untrue. There are likely Democratic identifiers and pure independents that still remain registered with the Republican Party, meaning that REPDIFF and DEMDIFF understate the true proportion of Republicans and Democrats not registered with their parties. However, it is a reasonable assumption to make that most people registered with a party still identify with it and the presence of highly significant results for the REPDIFF variable despite this noise and small sample size attests to the strength of the relationship between semiclosed primary status of a state & party dominance and the proportion of Republican identifiers not registered with their party.

This can also be seen with a return to discussion of Rhode Island. In addition to being a semiclosed primary state, Rhode Island is also a heavily Democratic one, with Democrats holding a supermajority in both houses of the state legislature and the state giving Barack Obama the third largest margin of victory of any state in 2008. It is thus ideal to examine strategic behavior of individuals identifying with the weaker party.

Based on the prior analysis, we should expect a large number of unaffiliated voters in the state and a large number of these unaffiliated voters to be Republican self-identifiers.

A comparison of party registration and party self-identification statistics for Rhode Island in 2011 is presented in Table 4. About half of all voters in Rhode Island are registered as unaffiliated. In contrast only 10% of registrants are registered with the Republicans. Examining party identification, we find that 30% of Rhode Island registered voters self-identify as Republican.¹⁰ This makes it apparent that a large number, approaching two-thirds, of Republican self-identifiers are not registered with their party. In addition, based on a comparison of party registration and self-identification, over half of those registered as unaffiliated identify with or lean towards one of the political parties. Since the percentage of registered Democrats and self-identified Democrats are approximately equal, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of these unaffiliated leaning partisans are Republicans.

Table 2.6: Party Registration and Identification in Rhode Island, 2011

Affiliation	# of Registrants	% of Registrants	% of Identifiers	% Identifiers - % Registrants
Democrat	290,704	41.3	46	+4.7
Republican	72,842	10.3	30	+19.7
Unaffiliated/Independent	340,417	48.4	24	-24.4
Total	703,963	100.0	100	+0.0

Note: Party registration statistics are derived from the state voter file as of 2/18/2011. Party identification statistics are derived from 2011 Gallup surveys of 656 Rhode Islanders. Independent leaners are included with partisans in party self-identification statistics.

¹⁰ Party identification statistics based on data from Gallup’s 2011 surveys of the state.

These individuals register strategically to gain the ability to participate in the dominant Democratic Party's primary elections. However, in a salient Republican primary election with a viable Republican candidate running for the nomination, these voters might participate in the GOP primary election. One such primary occurred in 2006. Moderate Republican Senator Lincoln Chafee was running for re-election in Rhode Island. Chafee faced a difficult primary challenge from Steve Laffey, a more conservative candidate backed by the Club for Growth. Chafee as an incumbent Republican, represented a viable Republican candidate in an important and highly salient GOP primary in an otherwise strongly Democratic state. I might therefore expect to see a larger presence from unaffiliated voters in this primary. These would be self-identified Republicans and Republican leaners registered as unaffiliated to gain access to the Democratic primaries but returning in the face of an important primary concerning their party.

Figure 4 shows the breakdown by party of voters participating in all GOP primaries from 2006-2010. Three out of the four contests demonstrate a similar pattern, with a clear majority of GOP primary voters being registered with the Republican Party. However, in the case of the important 2006 primary, a majority of the voters participating were registered as unaffiliated. This confirms predictions of a greater unaffiliated presence in a salient Republican primary in a semiclosed state dominated by Democrats.

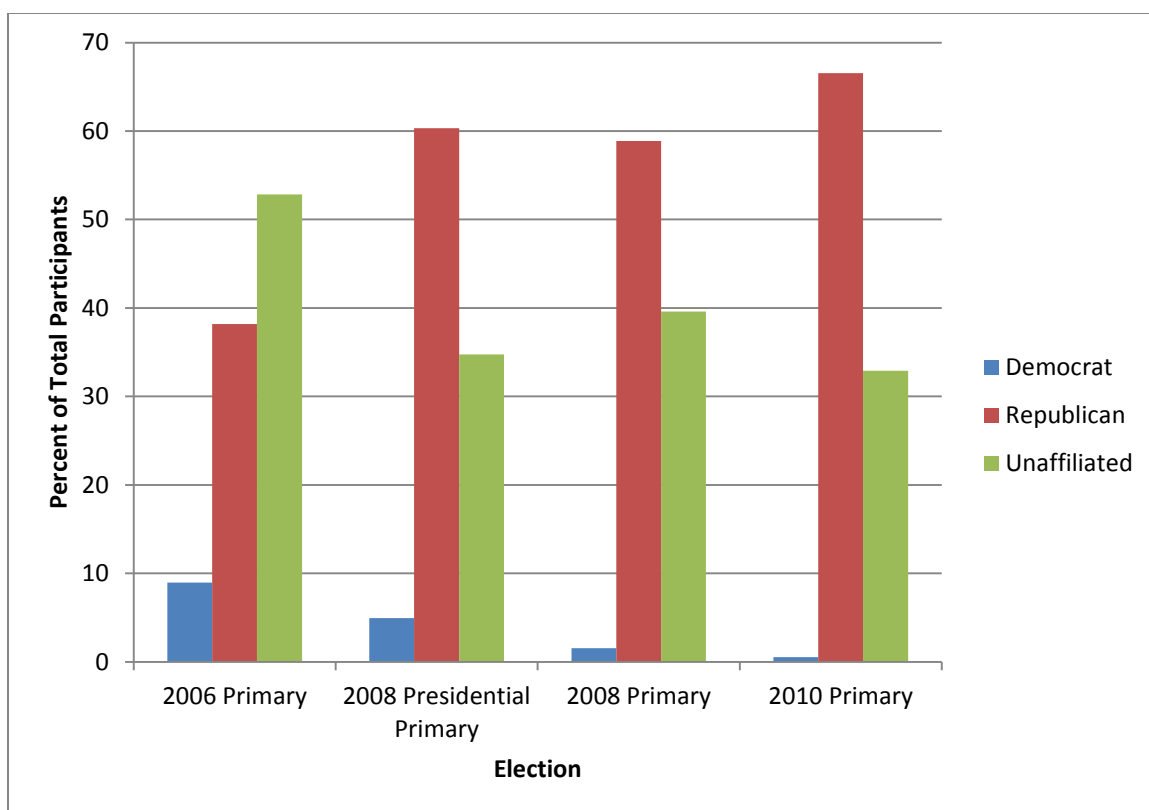


Figure 2.5: Turnout in GOP Primaries by Party

Conclusion

Registering to vote is a combination of instrumental and expressive motives. The variation in electoral institutions provides differing incentives across the states for instrumental voters to register with a party and the differences among them in unaffiliated registration demonstrate that gaining access to as many primary elections as possible and making them count is a concern for at least some voters. Using individual and aggregate data, I demonstrate that voters in semiclosed primary states are more likely to register as unaffiliated. This is because these states expand the number of voting opportunities for independent/unaffiliated registrants, allowing these voters the option of voting in any

party's primary elections rather than just the one they are registered with. I also find that local political context matters in how electoral institutions affect party registration: in semiclosed primary states where one party is dominant, registrants with the weaker party are much more likely to register as unaffiliated. This gives them the option of participating in the dominant party's primaries while maintaining the ability to participate in their favored party's primary elections as well. Using individual analysis with the CCES as well as a comparison of party identification and party registration at the aggregate level, I confirm that Republicans register strategically in this manner in Democrat-dominated states but Democrats do not appear to register strategically in Republican dominated ones.

The question remains of why Republicans are willing to strategically register as unaffiliated but Democrats are not. Expressive motives may play a greater role in Democrats' calculus and instrumental motives a diminished one. Given that Republicans are stereotypically the more interested in politics, it may be that they are more aware of primary election laws or simply more motivated to increase the consequences of their vote. Part of the reason may also have to do with the semiclosed states themselves. Almost all semiclosed states are moderately or strongly Democratic, as evidenced by Figure 2.4. Only Wyoming and Kansas are considered Republican states. It may therefore be difficult to detect patterns of strategic registration among Democrats with so few GOP dominated semiclosed states.

While the instrumental motives are a driver of party registration, the analysis also makes clear that expressive or psychological motives are at play as well. Stronger

partisans tend to be more likely to register with their political party. Even this may be partially due to instrumental motives: stronger partisans might be expected to only vote in their party's primary elections. In such a case, there is little point in registering as unaffiliated since they do not foresee themselves participating in the opposing party's primary elections.

These findings matter in demonstrating that the rules under which primary elections are conducted affect individual behavior and the consequent makeup of the primary electorate. Some individuals in semiclosed states behave strategically, taking advantage of the opportunity to choose as many primaries as possible, thus preserving the option of participating in particularly salient ones of either party. Especially in semiclosed states where one party is dominant, individuals of the weaker party, through registering as unaffiliated, gain the opportunity to change the makeup of the dominant party's electorate. Over 50,000 unaffiliated voters participated in Rhode Island's 2008 Democratic presidential primary, which Hillary Clinton won by a little over 30,000 votes. If many of these unaffiliated voters were self-identified Republicans and Republican leaners who voted for Clinton, perceived to be the more moderate of the candidates, it is possible the outcome of the race could have been altered over what might have happened if the state's primaries were closed.

There has recently been a movement in a number of open primary states to institute party registration. Idaho switched to party registration and closed elections for the Republican primaries in 2011. In South Carolina and Virginia, the Republican Party wishes to institute semiclosed primary elections while Democrats remain committed to

open primaries. The discussion here illuminates just how much the rules of the game matter. These calls for more restrictive primaries have come principally from Republicans, worried about Democrats participating in their party's primaries. The evidence presented here should be heartening to the Republicans as it appears Democrats will not be likely to register strategically in order to participate in the Republican contests. However, Democrats cannot be equally assured of electoral purity as Republicans register strategically in their attempt to make their votes count.

COSTS OF CHANGING PARTY REGISTRATION

An individual's party registration requires effort to change by virtue of being a government record rather than an attitude. To do so, an individual must fill out a form requesting a change of party registration or, in many states, reregister to vote completely as well as return this form to the registrar. This represents a substantial investment of time and effort for what may be only a small reward. In understanding the choice of which party an individual is registered with, it is important to focus on these costs in addition to the instrumental and expressive benefits to registering with a party that I have already discussed. The following discussion illuminates these costs and shows that they represent a substantial barrier for many voters.

It is important to consider costs of changing party registration, because individuals change attitudes over time. While the preponderance of evidence indicates party identification is generally stable among individuals over time (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960; Green et al. 2002), individual party identification is not completely immutable and political attitudes may evolve as an individual gets older. Individuals may therefore find later in life that the party they initially registered with no longer matches their current attitudes. If the costs of reregistering serve as a barrier to updating party registration, it is possible that many members of the electorate may be registered with a party for which they feel no more affinity. Given that party registration regulates participation in primary

elections, this outdated registration could keep individuals from participating in the primary of the party they now feel more affinity for. In essence, rather than allowing voters to pass freely between primary electorates, the party registration will have trapped them in a particular party's primary electorate.

Costs also matter because party registration can affect individual party identification. Evidence I present later shows that party registration has the capacity to anchor an individual to a party. Individuals registered with a particular party are more likely to continue to identify with that party over time. Therefore, a party registration that is difficult to change may make individuals in party registration states have "stickier" party self-identification and remain identifying with their party of registration, even if they feel less affinity for it.

Costs of Party Registration: The Effect of Changing Address

Because party registration is an administrative record, there are costs to both initiating and changing registration with a political party. Individuals may typically initiate party registration as part of the process of registering to vote. The cost is relatively modest to do so; an individual simply indicates their desire to register with a political party as one of the questions on the voter registration form.

However once registered, in order to change party registration, an individual must fill out a form requesting a change to their voter registration. In many states this includes a completely new voter registration form. In cases where the costs of the initial registration to vote were underwritten by government initiatives to make voter registration easier (e.g. Motor Voter) or were facilitated by a third-party organization

registering the voter, the cost to change an individual's party registration may therefore actually exceed the initial cost of registering to vote.

Do party registration statistics reflect this cost? Examining North Carolina voters in 2005 and 2011 reveals apparent strong stability in party registration. Descriptive statistics in Table 3.1 reveals little major change in aggregate party registration over this six year period. There has been a slight trend towards an increased number of unaffiliated voters at the expense of the two major parties. This may be a result of North Carolina election laws that have implemented semiclosed primaries. Under these rules, it makes greater instrumental sense for a voter to register as unaffiliated even if they identify as a member of one of the parties.

Table 3.1: Party Registration in North Carolina, 2005 and 2011

	2005		2011	
Democrat	2,512,450	46.5%	2,750,040	44.5%
Republican	1,870,460	34.6%	1,944,073	31.5%
Unaffiliated	1,007,283	18.6%	1,476,833	23.9%
Libertarian	13,038	0.2%	10,455	0.1%
Total	5,403,237	100.0%	6,181,401	100.0%

All voters in North Carolina voter files in 2005 and 2011.

However, examining aggregate registration statistics may miss significant movement among the groups. If relatively similar numbers of voters move into and out of a party, there will be greater apparent stability than actually exists. I therefore need to examine voters at the individual level and track them over time. By comparing a state's voter file at two points in time, I can identify the individuals who changed their party

registration in that time span and their characteristics. I use two copies of the North Carolina voter files, from 2005 and 2011, to conduct most of the following analysis of party registration change. North Carolina is a particularly good choice as it has some of the most detailed voter files in the country in terms of the data the files provide on voter characteristics. Aside from age, race, gender and years registered, the voter file also records what state a voter was born in, as well as their status as a permanent absentee voter. Voters are matched between the two files using their unique county ID number appended to the number of their county. This excludes voters who remained in the state but who moved to a different county. Examination of a crosstab of individuals appearing in both the 2005 and 2011 North Carolina voter files shows that there was little change at the individual level as well. Table 3.2 shows the number of individuals with a particular party registration in 2005 and 2011 and the percentages represent the percentage of individuals registered with a particular party in 2005 that were in each 2011 party category. Over 90% of Democrats, Republicans and Unaffiliated voters in 2005 were still registered with the same party in 2011. The dramatic change in Libertarian identification is due to political factors: the Libertarian Party of North Carolina failed to qualify as an official political party in the state in late 2005 and all of its registrants were converted to unaffiliated. The party later once again qualified for official status but the crosstab shows that most of the individuals converted remain unaffiliated as of 2011.

Table 3.2: Party Registration Change in North Carolina, 2005 and 2011

Party in 2005	Party in 2011				Total
	Democrat	Republican	Unaffiliated	Libertarian	
Democrat	1,798,594 95.3%	34,535 1.8%	54,192 2.9%	389 0.0%	1,887,710 100.0%
Republican	33,192 2.3%	1,320,125 93.2%	61,721 4.4%	696 0.0%	1,415,734 100.0%
Unaffiliated	33,773 4.8%	18,512 2.6%	653,255 92.5%	483 0.1%	706,023 100.0%
Libertarian	707 8.3%	517 6.1%	6,877 81.2%	371 4.4%	8,472 100.0%
Total	1,866,266	1,373,689	776,045	1,939	4,017,939

Contains all voters appearing in the 2005 and 2011 North Carolina voter files who did not change county. Percentages are percentage of row in each column; that is, percentage of registrants with 2005 party registered in each 2011 party category. For example, 95.3% of voters registered as Democrats in 2005 were still registered with the party in 2011.

Observing the strong stability of individual party registration over a six year period the question arises of whether it reflects stability in individual feelings towards parties over time or whether individual feelings change but the costs of changing party registration inhibit easily changing registration to match them. Although evidence from studies of party identification points to party identification being particularly stable (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960; Green et al. 2002), it is not immutable, particularly among younger partisans (ibid). In addition, as I explore in a later chapter, the possibility exists that party registration helps account for the stability of party identification over time rather than the other way around. One way to test for whether this stability in individual party registration is due to attitude stability or the costs of party registration is to examine the behavior of registrants when there is no cost to changing party registration. Such a situation occurs when an individual changes address and is forced to reregister to vote,

gaining an easy opportunity to change their party registration while they're at it. I theorize that individuals changing address will be more likely to change their party registration than those registrants remaining at the same address. This will indicate that the costs of changing party registration *do* present a barrier to individuals which keeps them from changing party registration.

On changing address, voters in most states are required to reregister to vote. This leads to a quick drop in the costs of changing party registration. Because the voter is required to reregister to vote anyway, it costs little extra effort to simply change party registration while they're at it. I should therefore expect voters who change address and re-register to vote to be much more likely to change party registration than voters remaining at the same address.

Table 3.3 shows a simple crosstab of the variables of changing address and changing party registration. The crosstab includes all individuals in the 2005 and 2011 voter files except for Libertarians, who are excluded due to their unique circumstances. Individuals were coded as changing registration if their listed 2011 voter file party registration differs from their party registration in the 2005 voter file. I code individuals as changing address if their address numbers in the voter files in 2005 and 2011 do not match and code them as not moving if they have the same number in both voter files. This, except for the highly unlikely case that a voter moved between two residences with the same number, provides a quicker and more reliable measure of changing address than does matching the individual's entire address.

Table 3.3: Changing Party Registration and Moving Address

Party Registration	Changed Address, 2005-2011?		Total
	Same Address	Changed Address	
Same Party	3,042,933 96.4%	729,040 85.3%	3,771,973 94.1%
Changed Party	112,168 3.6%	125,326 14.7%	237,494 5.9%
Total	3,155,101	854,366	4,009,467

Analysis excludes 2005 Libertarians. Percentages represent the percent of each column's total observations in a particular cell. For example, 14.7% of individuals changing address also changed their party registration in the period 2005-2011.

It is apparent from Table 3.3 that costs represent a barrier to some voters changing their party. If the stability of party registration was due primarily to stable attitudes rather than the costs of changing registration, then individuals who changed address and reregistered to vote should be just as likely to change parties as individuals who didn't move. There should be no difference between the groups in motivation to change parties. The only difference between them is the costs of reregistration. These costs evidently present a barrier; voters who changed address were over 4 times as likely to change their party registration as well. Despite constituting only one-fifth of the voters appearing in both files, the individuals who changed their address made up over half of the changes in party registration. While voters changing address tend to be slightly younger and therefore more likely to change their party identification as it crystallizes, these minor demographic differences cannot explain the dramatic difference between the two groups of voters.

It is worth examining in greater detail the decision to change registration. My dependent variable in this case is change in party registration and is coded a 0 if an

individual's 2005 party matches their 2011 party and a 1 if they differ. Similarly, my principal independent variable, change in address is coded a 0 if a voter's address number in 2005 matches their number in 2011 and a 1 if they differ. Further, I believe the strength of the relationship between these two variables is affected by voter age. Since younger voters are more likely to change their party identification (Campbell et al. 1960), these voters, faced with the possibility of a "do over" in party registration will be more likely to change their party registration to match their new identification. I therefore include an interaction term for age and changing address. In addition to age, I also control for individual race, gender, years registered, whether the voter was born in a non-party registration state, whether the voter was born in a party registration state (besides North Carolina; being born in North Carolina served as the reference category), whether the individual registered in a presidential or midterm election year and finally whether the congressional district changed parties from 2005 to 2011.¹¹ This additional variable examines the possibility that some voters might change their party registration depending on the party of the incumbent congressman in their district. Individuals hoping to receive assistance from the congressman's office may feel they have a better chance of doing so if they are of the same party as the congressman.

¹¹ Not all voter records have a respondent's state of birth. Typically only newer records record respondent state of birth, older records are therefore excluded from the analysis casewise. However, running the model excluding the state of birth variables does not change the substantive results.

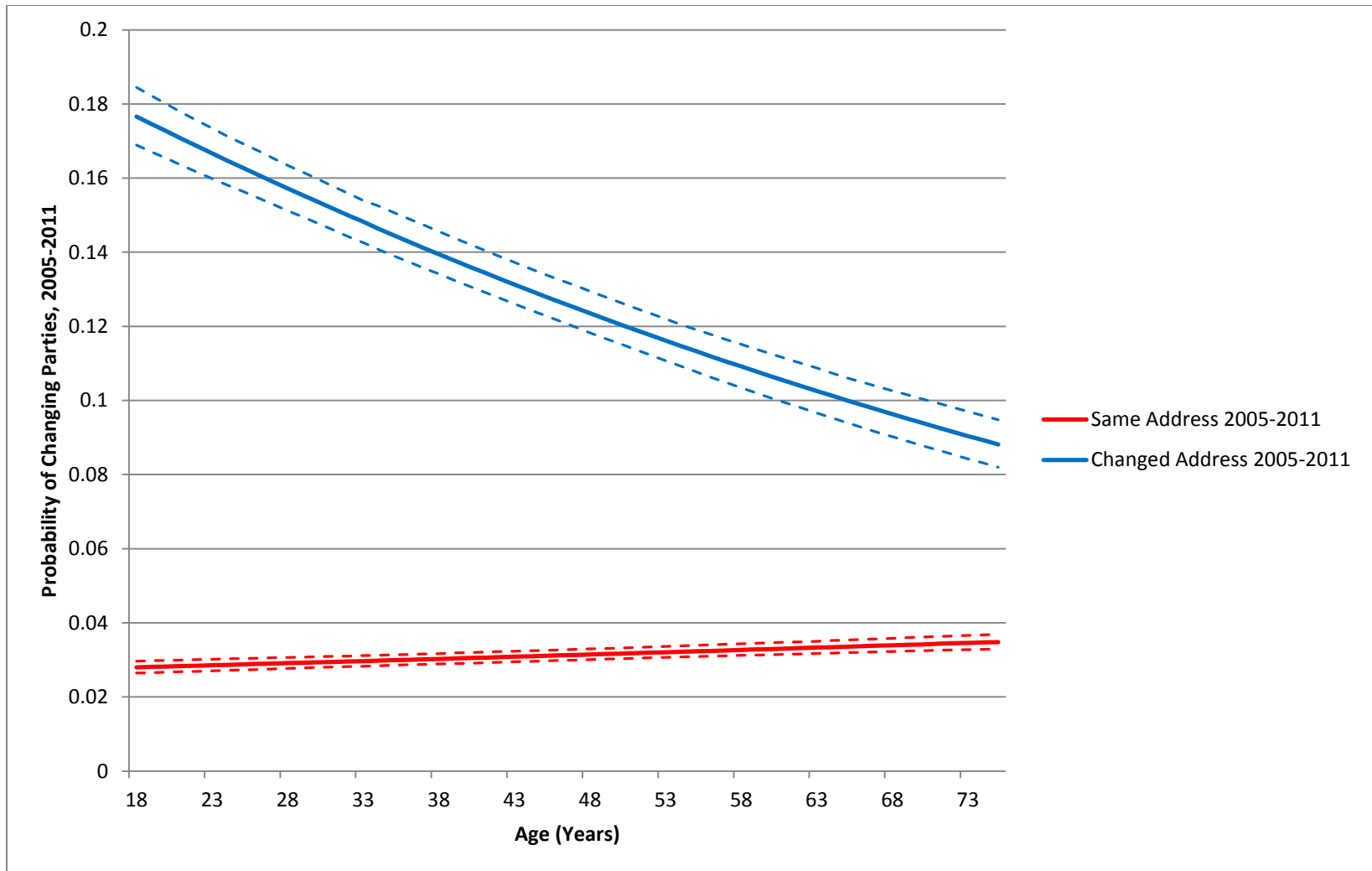


Figure 3.1: Effect of Age and Changing Address on Likelihood of Switching Party Registration

Table 3.4: Change in Party Registration in North Carolina, 2005 to 2011

Variable		Voter Changed Parties 2005-2011	
		Coeff. (Std. Error)	p-value
Changed Address	<i>Changed Address 2005-2011</i>	2.328 (0.044)	0.000
Age	<i>Age in Years</i>	0.004 (0.001)	0.000
Changed Address*Age	<i>Interaction</i>	-0.018 (0.001)	0.000
Years Registered	<i>Years Registered</i>	-0.002 (0.001)	0.006
Gender	<i>Female</i>	-0.006 (0.015)	0.689
Party 2005 (Ref. Cat.: Democrat)	<i>Republican</i>	0.366 (0.020)	0.000
	<i>Unaffiliated</i>	0.397 (0.022)	0.000
Year Registered (Ref. Cat.: Off-Year)	<i>Presidential Election Year</i>	-0.132 (0.018)	0.000
	<i>Midterm Election Year</i>	-0.054 (0.022)	0.012
Race (Ref. Cat.: White)	<i>Black</i>	-0.294 (0.023)	0.000
	<i>Other</i>	0.052 (0.047)	0.267
District Change	<i>District Changed Parties</i>	0.071 (0.019)	0.000
State of Birth (Ref. Cat.: N.C.)	<i>Party Reg. State</i>	-0.008 (0.020)	0.686
	<i>Non-Party Reg. State</i>	-0.028 (0.021)	0.171
	<i>Other Country</i>	0.118 (0.053)	0.025
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	-3.575 (0.039)	0.000
Number of Observations		318,084	
Pseudo R²		0.084	
Log Likelihood		-66457.372	

Due to computing limitations, I use a random sample of all voters who appear in both the 2005 and 2011 voter files. My sample size for the model is 318,084. Because of the unique circumstances of North Carolina Libertarians, I exclude them from the analysis. I estimate a binary logit model with the results in Table 3.4. The results provide support for my hypothesis. The address change variable is large and statistically significant as is the interaction term. The sign of the address change variable is large and positive, indicating that young voters are significantly more likely to change registration if they change address compared to if they do not move. However the interaction term is negative, indicating that the effect of changing address decreases as an individual becomes older. Setting all other variables to their median value, the probability of an 18-year old changing party registration when she changes address is 0.18 while it is only 0.09 for a 65-year old changing address. The corresponding probabilities for 18- and 65-year olds who remained at the same address are 0.03 and 0.04, respectively (Figure 3.1)

Interestingly, it appears that a district changing hands (shifting from being represented by a Democrat in 2005 in Congress to a Republican in 2011 or vice-versa) has a small effect on the likelihood of its voters changing their party registrations. Voters are slightly more likely to change parties if the district changed hands. Additional analysis (not shown) shows that voters primarily change parties to match the party of the new congressman. There are issues with endogeneity in this finding: the change in district control may be caused by large shifts in registration in the district in the direction of the winning candidate rather than the other way around. This finding warrants additional study.

In addition, the year a voter registered with a party appears to play a significant role in their likelihood of changing registration. Even when controlling for other factors, individuals who registered to vote in off-years are the most likely to change their party registration over time. This can most likely be explained by the different types of individuals who register in off-years versus election years. Individuals registering in off-years are willing to pay higher costs for a lower benefit. There are relatively few voter registration initiatives in off-years to underwrite the costs of registering to vote. In addition, because the nearest federal election is at least a year away, individuals registering in off-years are willing to do so for a lower immediate benefit. In contrast, individuals registering during election years often have the process facilitated by get out the vote initiatives of third parties and political groups and have an upcoming election to entice the individuals to register. Therefore it is no surprise that individuals registering in off years, and therefore willing to bear higher costs for lower benefits, are more ready to go to the effort of changing party registration. It is also possible that many voters registering in off-years utilize Motor Voter to register to vote. At the time of their registration, these individuals may not be thinking hard about what party they want to register with and later come to regret the decision.

This may also be due to “Motor Voter”. Many of the individuals registering in off-years do so when they get their driver’s license. This process is quick and individuals may not be thinking about the party they wish to register with. Therefore these registrants may be more likely to regret their decision and wish to change parties if the opportunity presents itself.

These findings demonstrate that the costs of registration represent an important barrier to individuals changing their party registration. What proportion of voters in the electorate would change their party registration if they could reregister to vote today free of cost? An examination of a group forced to re-register to vote—individuals changing address—indicates that 14.7% changed their party registration. However, only 5.9% of voters in the electorate actually changed party registration over a six year period. Setting all control variables at their median values and taking first differences, I conclude that of the individuals who did not change address between 2005 and 2011, approximately 9.8% would have changed party if they had the opportunity to do so free of cost but did not. These are individuals that reside at the same address as 2011 as they did in 2005 and are not willing to put forth the effort to change registration. However, it is important to note that North Carolina is a rapidly shifting southern state, and so when generalizing to the US at large, this number may overstate the proportion of voters in the country that would like to change their party. This number may also be high due to the fact young people tend to be the most mobile as well as the most likely to wish to change their party registration.

Responding to a Variable Cost: The Effect of Party Registration Deadlines

The costs of changing party registration serve as a barrier to individuals changing their registration with a party. However, not all states impose the same cost on individuals seeking to change their party registration. While federal law requires that deadlines to register to vote in a general election be no more than 30 days prior to the election, no such federal statutes exist regarding deadlines to change registration if one

wishes to vote in a primary election. While all party registration states allow voters to switch their party registration at will, they differ in how close to a primary election a voter can change their party registration to a new party and still vote in its contest. While some states allow voters to change parties on the day of the primary, others require an individual to be a party registrant nearly a year prior to the primary to qualify for participation. Although the procedure to change registration is similar among states, deadlines to change party registration that are far in advance of the primary impose the additional cost of planning ahead. Individuals who miss the deadline to participate in an upcoming primary may see little reason to change their registration once this short-term benefit is gone. These variable deadlines once again provide an opportunity to examine how costs affect the calculus of party registration.

In states with deadlines far in advance of the primary, partisans who change party self-identification from one party to the other may have greater difficulty changing their registration to more accurately reflect their new self-identification. We should therefore expect individuals in states with deadlines far in advance of the primary to be more likely to have an obsolete registration (i.e. identify as Republicans but still are registered as Democrats or vice versa). To test this hypothesis, a data source is required that measures both an individual's party registration and party identification so they can be compared.

To do so, I turn to the 2010 CCES.¹² This survey allows me to compare party registration and party identification at the individual level and gauge the effect of registration deadlines. The analysis is obviously restricted to individuals living in the 30

¹² The following analysis was also run on the 2008 CCES with similar results.

party registration states who report being registered to vote.¹³ Examining Republicans and Democrats separately, my primary dependent variable for Republicans is whether or not they are registered as Democrats (1).¹⁴ For Democrats, my primary dependent variable is whether or not they are registered as Republicans (1). My primary independent variable is the number of days prior to the primary an individual must be registered with a party in order to vote in its primaries. Because many states have different dates depending on whether an individual is changing from being registered as unaffiliated or is switching parties, I use the number of days in advance of the primary that an individual could switch from another party. I control for age, race, gender, education and residence in the South and border states. I also include Obama's two-party vote share in the respondent's state as a variable to test if a state being dominated by a party made identifiers with the weaker party more likely to strategically register with the dominant party. Especially in the case of a state with closed primaries, registering with the dominant party would be the only way a voter could participate in that party's primary elections. For the analysis, I used binary logistic regression with robust standard errors clustered on an individual's state of residence.

In Table 3.5 it is apparent that for Republicans, registration deadline matters in determining their likelihood of being registered a Democrat. The deadline variable is

¹³ Idaho did not have party registration when the 2010 CCES was conducted and only implemented it later.

¹⁴ Including independent leaners with partisans does not change the substantive findings of this section.

positive and statistically significant. This indicates that the further ahead of the primary an individual must be registered in order to participate, the more likely the Republican respondent is to still be registered as a Democrat. However, the opposite is not true: among Democrat identifiers, party registration deadline did not predict an individual's likelihood of being registered as a Republican. This isn't particularly surprising, given that most partisan defections in the previous decades have been from the Democrats to the Republicans. There are therefore more former Democrats among the Republicans than former Republicans among the Democrats. It thus makes sense that a deadline to change parties far in advance of the primaries would prove to be a greater barrier to Republicans than Democrats.

Interestingly, it does not appear that the local political context in a state affects whether or not partisans register with the opposing party. Republicans are not more likely to register as Democrats in states where Democrats dominate electoral politics in the state, likewise with Democrats and registering Republican. This contrasts with the previous chapter's findings that demonstrate individuals in semiclosed states strategically register as unaffiliated to gain the option of participating in both parties' primaries. It would appear that voters are not willing to close off the ability to vote in their favored party's primaries, even if this party is weak in the state. Given that the most salient primary election, the presidential preference primary, is not affected by the local political context, it is unsurprising that voters would not wish to shut the door on voting in their own party's contests. From an expressive standpoint it is also possible that being registered with the opposing party generates too much cognitive dissonance. The logic of

Table 3.5: Likelihood of Being Registered with a Different Party, 2008 CCES

Variable		Republican Reg. as Democrat		Democrat Reg. as Republican	
		Coeff. (Std. Error)	<i>p</i> -value	Coeff. (Std. Error)	<i>p</i> -value
Deadline	<i>Days Before Primary</i>	0.004 (0.001)	0.000	-0.000 (0.001)	0.642
DPres	<i>Obama 08 State Vote Share</i>	0.001 (0.013)	0.969	-0.019 (0.021)	0.356
Residence	<i>Same Address 5+ Years</i>	0.508 (0.163)	0.002	0.545 (0.403)	0.177
Age	<i>Age in Years</i>	-0.012 (0.006)	0.035	-0.018 (0.008)	0.020
South	<i>South and Border States</i>	0.695 (0.232)	0.003	0.408 (0.311)	0.190
Gender	<i>Female</i>	0.211 (0.247)	0.392	-0.004 (0.183)	0.982
Race	<i>Racial Minority</i>	0.846 (0.261)	0.001	-1.323 (0.556)	0.017
Semiclosed	<i>Semiclosed Primary</i>	0.382 (0.275)	0.165	-0.695 (0.356)	0.051
Education	<i>Greater than H.S.</i>	-0.759 (0.203)	0.000	0.283 (0.419)	0.500
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	-3.552 (0.847)	0.000	-2.722 (1.317)	0.039
Number of Observations		4,339		4,733	
Pseudo R²		0.062		0.044	
Log Likelihood		-600.264		-291.768	

Note: Robust standard errors clustered on state.

appropriateness may also affect voter likelihood to register with the “wrong” party. A psychological attachment to one party combined with an external attachment to another, may make the individual uncomfortable and unwilling to register with the opposing party.

An individual’s length of time at the same address also predicts obsolete party registration, with Republicans remaining at the same address five years or longer being significantly more likely to be registered as Democrats. This provides support for the idea that individuals who do not change address are less likely to change their registration on their own. In this case, these voters may have initially identified with and registered as Democrats when they first moved into the area. However, these people staying at the same address over time changed their party identification and never updated their registration to be in line.

Conclusion

Because party registration is a bureaucratic record, effort must be put forth in order to change it. While it is free of charge for an individual to change one’s party, voters must obtain the proper voter form—in many cases a completely new voter application—and fill it out, going to the trouble to mail or otherwise return it to the registrar to complete the change. Further, while individuals may change their party registration at any time in almost all states, states vary widely in the number of days prior to the primary that a voter must be registered with a party in order to participate. This imposes the additional cost on would-be voters of having to plan ahead, in some cases up

to nearly a year in advance of a primary if they wish to change their registration and participate.

Do these costs provide a deterrent, keeping voters registered with the same party?

The evidence presented shows that this effort presents a significant barrier to many individuals changing their party registration over time. Situations where the costs of changing party registration drop to zero represent an opportunity to gauge the proportion of the electorate that truly wishes to change their party registration and compare it to the proportion that does under normal circumstances. Costs of changing registration drop to zero when an individual changes address and reregisters to vote. In such a situation it is easy to change party registration while filling out the voter registration form again.

Examining voters appearing in the North Carolina voter file in 2005 and 2011, I am able to gauge changes in party registration. As expected, individuals that change address between the two voter file snapshots are over four times more likely to change their party registration as compared to individuals remaining at the same address. Taking the difference between the two groups in their rates of party change, I estimate that almost 9% of the electorate desires to change party but does not.

An analysis of 2010 CCES survey data also finds that the number of days in advance of a primary a voter must be registered with a party to participate is a significant predictor among Republicans of being registered as a Democrat. Controlling for other factors, the further ahead of the primary a voter needed to be registered, the more likely they are to still be registered with the Democratic Party. This indicates that the costs of planning ahead represent a deterrent to individuals changing their registration.

Presumably would-be voters in the primary in states with deadlines far in advance more often missed the deadline. Concluding there was now no immediate benefit to changing registration since the opportunity to participate in the upcoming primary had passed, these individuals chose not to update their registration.

The barrier that changing party registration represents has significant effects on primary election participation. Because of the costs of changing registration outweighing the benefits in many circumstances, individuals who change their party identification over time will find themselves unable to participate in their new party's primary. These individuals thus can either continue to participate in their old party's primary elections or, more likely, refrain from participating in primaries at all. In some sense, this is the goal of party registration in the first place: prevent a large number of individuals from easily switching parties and voting in another party's primary to cause chaos in the contest. However, the goal of restricting primary participation to dedicated partisans is undermined by the costs of party registration preventing newly converted individuals changing their registration and participating in their new party's primary. Even though these may be dedicated supporters of a party, they remain trapped in another party's primary electorate, unable to participate and potentially affecting primary election results. It is notable, for example, that while participation in GOP primaries has steadily increased in open primary southern states as these states have realigned, it has remained stagnant for three decades in southern party registration states. The only individuals that may be entering the pool of potential primary voters in these states are new registrants:

young people and those moving into the area. This may distort the representativeness of the primary electorate if these voters prefer different candidates.

Aside from its effect in primaries, a barrier to changing party registration may have significant effects on individual behavior and attitudes. Most prominently, the following chapter demonstrates that being registered with a party makes an individual much more likely to identify with that party as well. Thus, even though an individual may prefer to leave their old party identification, they may feel uncomfortable doing so without also changing their party registration.

The decision to vote has been postulated to balance costs against benefits (Riker and Ordeshook 1968). Based on this logic, political scientists have long advocated election administration that reduces the costs of voting as a measure to increase voter turnout (e.g. Rosenstone and Wolfinger 1978). Because primary elections are administered by the state for the parties themselves, their rules have been largely dictated by the interests of the parties rather than an interest in promoting turnout or representativeness in the primary electorate. While the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 requires states to set registration deadlines to vote in the general election no more than 30 days prior to the contest, no such regulations exist regarding deadlines to register with a party to vote in primaries. Because of this, some states such as New York, require individuals to be registered with their party for nearly a year before they are permitted to vote in its primaries. This additional cost of planning ahead adds to the already formidable costs of filling out a government form and returning it to the registrar in order to change party registration. My findings demonstrate that this barrier is not in the

interest of the parties and runs counter to their attempts to ensure party nominees are selected by loyal party supporters in the electorate. Maintaining party registration but moving deadlines to change party closer to the date of the primary election should ensure that the benefits outweigh the costs for individuals who wish to change their party registration and allow more voters to update their registration to be more in line with their new partisan loyalties. In addition, other measures, such as placing “change of party” forms in polling places similar to Rhode Island may also lower the costs of changing party registration and ensure more individuals are able to participate in the primary of the party they support.

PARTY REGISTRATION AND PARTY IDENTIFICATION

Party registration is fairly unique in American politics. Unlike many other democracies, Americans seldom officially join political parties (Campbell et al. 1960, Green et al. 2002) and this “official” membership is often simply a fundraising ploy. Party registration is thus one of the few external links between a voter and political parties for Americans. With close to half of all American voters in the country registered as Democrat or Republican, remarkably little is known about how this institution affects their behavior. Aside from confining these voters in the primary electorate of one party, what other effects does party registration have on an individual’s behavior? If voters who register with a party behave differently than voters in states with open primaries, this institution could affect electoral outcomes and subsequent public policy.

This is even more important when one considers the barrier reregistration costs present. The act of registering with a party has far-reaching consequences. Once a voter registers, significant costs present a barrier to easily changing party affiliation that keeps some voters registered with a party they would prefer to leave. It is conceivable, for example, that being registered with a party makes a voter more supportive of that party in their identification or at the ballot box. It is possible a voter feels a sense of obligation to identify with the party and vote for its candidates. Doing otherwise may generate cognitive dissonance which is unpleasant to individuals (Festinger 1957). If this is the

case, then being “trapped” in an obsolete registration may make the voter remain supportive of the party past the time when a similar voter in a state without party registration would have left their old party for a different party or independence.

Party Identification

The most important political attitude American voters hold and a natural mediator between party registration and political behavior is individual party identification. At the foundation of American political behavior, party identification is a psychological feeling of attachment with a party group (Campbell et al. 1960), and one of the primary ways individuals make sense of the political world and their place in it. Since it was initially identified more than half a century ago (e.g., Campbell et al. 1960) scholars have examined voter identification with parties in numerous contexts including its decisive role in vote choice (ibid), influencing individuals’ policy positions (Carsey and Layman 2006) and determining how voters process novel information (Bartels et al. 2002, Zaller 1992). Given the important role party identification plays in how voters behave, there has been much interest in its origins and dynamics and significant controversy (Johnston 2006) over issues as fundamental as what the attitude represents. However the role of party registration in shaping the party an individual chooses to identify with has been largely neglected.

Party identification was conceptualized most famously by the authors of *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960), who defined it foremost as a psychological tie between an individual and a party group. This perspective holds that “[i]dentification is characterized as a simple loyalty, learned early and largely unimpaired by subsequent

learning” (Johnston 2006, p. 330). Rather than a sum of policy preferences (Downs 1957), the most prominent formulation of party identification is affective in nature, more akin to cheering on a sports team or following a religion. What relationship party identification has to policy views generally runs in the other direction: the party a voter identifies with has been shown to influence political views and ideology more readily than the other way around (Carsey and Layman 2006, Levendusky 2009). Evidence supporting this perspective indicates that the decisive influences on an individual’s party identification occur early in life, primarily from parents (Jennings and Niemi 1968). In contrast, another body of work conceives of party identification as instrumental in nature. While scholars in the rational choice tradition have acknowledged party identification does not follow the canonical Downsian model, some scholars, most notably Fiorina (1981), hypothesize party identification is primarily based on individuals’ retrospective policy evaluations of the political parties rather than an emotional attachment.¹⁵ In this conception, people identify with the party they believe has shown as the most impressive record of governing to date.

Scholars colloquially refer to these two conceptualizations as the traditionalist and revisionist views of party identification (e.g. Bartels, et al. 2011), respectively, and they lead to different predictions of the stability of individual party identification. While the authors of *The American Voter* noted different degrees of partisan loyalty exist in the electorate, contingent on education and other demographic and contextual factors, the traditionalist conceptualization of party identification’s affective attachment has been as

¹⁵ See also Calvert and MacKuen (1985), Franklin & Jackson (1983) and Ordeshook (1976).

an unmoved mover. Party identification is believed by these scholars to be durable and largely insulated from the changing electoral fortunes of the parties. An individual who is a Democrat at twenty-five is on average likely to be one at seventy-five as well, absent a major upheaval in the existing party system. Recent work in this traditionalist vein emphasizes the important role of socialization in party identification (Green, et al. 2002), positing that for most individuals stereotypical social identities are associated with the two political parties (e.g., the former identity of the Democratic Party as the party of the white southerner). Individuals have a tendency then to identify with the party representing the groups that the voter associates with. In essence, these “identities” function as constitutive norms, norms that define membership in a social group (Abdelal et al. 2003). These stereotypical norms change very slowly and lead to the strong stability associated with party identification. Changes in these group identities, when they infrequently occur, are what lead to electoral realignments (Burnham 1970).

The revisionist conceptualization posits party identification is dependent on the policy performance of the parties. For the revisionists, party identification is state dependent—based on an individual’s previous party identification updated with pertinent policy accomplishments. A voter changes her partisanship through her evaluation of the parties' performance. These revisionist claims have been challenged by members of the traditionalist school, who argue that measurement error is the primary cause of apparent instability of partisanship. When measurement error is controlled for, they argue party identification exhibits extraordinary stability (Green and Palmquist 1990; Green, et al. 2002). Recent research by Bartels, et al. (2011) largely supports the traditionalist

conception of party identification, but finds that among older adults, lagged party identification exerts a significant effect on current party identification. Their finding thus supports that individuals' party identification is influenced by both state dependence and a process driven by differences in individuals' characteristics.

Although there has been scholarly interest in how primary electoral institutions, of which party registration is a component, affect representation (Gerber and Morton 1998; Kaufmann, et al. 2003), only a few scholars have investigated their role in shaping political behavior and party self-identification. The authors of *The American Voter* emphasized the capacity of party identification to persist in the absence of formal party membership or affiliation: “[G]enerally this tie is a psychological identification which can persist without legal recognition or evidence of formal membership and even without a consistent record of party support” (Campbell, et al. 1960, p.121). However the authors allow that party registration can shape an individual’s partisan identity. They find that in states with laws “facilitating” partisan loyalty, such as closed primaries and party registration, a greater proportion of the population identifies with a political party while states with low facilitation of partisanship had a larger share of independents (Campbell, et al. 1960). In subsequent support, Finkel and Scarrow (1985) compare party registration and party identification, at the aggregate and individual levels, and find that many people conflate registration and identification, which may lead them to misreport their party self-identification.

In contrast, Burden and Greene (2000) conclude that party registration has a causal effect on individual party self-identification. Like the authors of *The American*

Voter, they find that individuals in states with party registration are less likely to identify as independents. However, in contrast to *The American Voter*, these authors find that these effects are limited to those registered to vote.

The normative literature on institutions (e.g. March and Olsen 1989) offers some explanation for this finding. Institutions fundamentally shape individual identities and membership in social groups. This is accomplished through constitutive norms: institutions, rules and norms that define membership in a group. These norms can be implicit, such as stereotypical attitudes and attributes held by members of the group or unspoken rules of conduct. However, the bounded quality of constitutive norms can be much more explicit, especially with regard to formal institutions. These rules or definitions that “officially” define what it is to be a member of a group are held to be among the strongest determinants of an individual’s identity. For example, Schildkraut (2007) finds that while individuals define what it means to be an American by attitudes (e.g. accepting of those who are different) and behaviors (e.g. speaking English), among the most widely held constitutive norms defining being American is official American citizenship.

Party registration is an analog of American citizenship. While it is certainly possible for an individual to consider themselves a Democrat or an American without explicit label from the government, official designation by the government is undeniably a strong influence on their sense of identity. It might therefore be expected that voters registered with a party will have a strong boost to their identity as identifiers with that party.

The psychological mechanism for this is postulated by Burden and Greene (2000). These authors explain their findings in terms of self-perception theory—the theory that an individual infers attitudes from behaviors (Bem 1967). In situations where individuals' internal attitudes are difficult to discern, individuals may rely on behavioral cues to identify what their underlying attitudes are, in a similar fashion to how an outside observer might identify individuals based on how they act (Bem 1972). Given the potential confusion regarding the meaning of identifying with a party (Finkel and Scarrow 1985), individuals might plausibly rely on behavioral cues to decide which party they identify with. Applying self-perception theory, Burden and Greene reason that a voter infers attitudes from their partisan registration; for example, registered Republicans infer that they must have a Republican partisan self-identity. Gerber, et al. (2010) also find support for self-perception theory in a field experiment where a condition group of registered unaffiliated voters in Connecticut was reminded in a random treatment to register with one of the parties if they wished to participate in a primary. Compared to a control group that received no reminder, these voters were more likely to register with a political party and—significantly—in a follow-up interview these voters expressed greater feelings of party self-identification.

If voters use the act of registering with a party as a guide for their attitudes, I hypothesize that individuals registered with a political party are more likely to identify with that party, controlling for an individual's prior party identification and demographic and contextual characteristics. Further, because identifying with one party but being registered with a different one generates cognitive dissonance, I hypothesize that being

registered as a Republican will make a voter less likely to identify as a Democrat, and vice-versa.

Modeling the Relationship

The theoretical and empirical models of party identification I employ to evaluate these hypotheses are virtually the same as those of Bartels, et al. (2011) which are derived from earlier work (Green, et al. 2002; Wawro 2002). These models differentiate between the traditionalist and revisionist accounts of party self-identification by simultaneously testing for both. The goal of most previous research on party identification is to estimate the models and examine the magnitude of these coefficients to contribute to the traditionalist and revisionist debate. While I follow these models for their rigor and to develop comparability to previous studies, my primary interest is the role of party registration.

The traditionalist conception of party identification is based on an individual's unique characteristics being strongly determinative of what party they choose to identify with. This conceptualization of individual heterogeneity determining party identification leads to a strongly stationary equilibrium party identification. Although a voter's party identification may occasionally deviate, it generally returns quickly to the same equilibrium. In contrast, the revisionist conception of party identification is based on a Bayesian updating process. An individual's party identification at time t is posited to be a function of a voter's previous state (party identification at time $t-1$). In a state-dependent world, there is no stationary equilibrium to which a voter returns and party identification

may instead resemble a walk based on previous partisan states updated by appropriate evaluations of the political parties.

Previous studies of party identification (Bartels, et al. 2011; Wawro 2002) distinguish between heterogeneity and state dependence in driving party identification by modeling both these processes using variants of a first-order Markov model:

$$y_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_i y_{it-1} + \gamma_1 x_{1it} + \gamma_2 x_{2i} + \gamma_3 x_{3t} + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

An individual i 's party identification at time t is given by y_{it} . The revisionist model holds that an individual's current party identification is a function of temporal factors, x_{3t} , and i 's prior party identification at time $t-1$, y_{it-1} . The traditionalist approach holds that individual characteristics (heterogeneity) that vary with time, x_{1it} , and are time invariant, x_{2i} , influence party identification. The magnitude of β_i determines the degree of state dependence, with a smaller coefficient signaling a stronger effect of individual heterogeneity. α_i , when indexed to the individual (e.g. Bartels, et al. 2011), represents unobserved individual heterogeneity that influences party identification in keeping with the traditionalist model. β_i in some models is also indexed to the individual, allowing state dependence to vary across the population. Bartels, et al. (2011) find minimal state dependence in their sample using an ANES panel study, but they find that older individuals can display significant state dependence regarding prior Democratic identification, indicating the effect of one's previous partisan state varies across persons.

The empirical model derived from this theoretical model follows the first-order Markov process in equation 1. Most studies of the dynamics of party identification at the individual level have used panel data to enable the researcher to measure the influence of

prior party identification on party identification during later waves. The utility of individual i 's party identification state j at time $t > 1$ is represented as:

$$V(i, j, t) = Z'_{it-1}\beta_j + \alpha_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ijt} \quad (2)$$

The standard model places individuals in one of three party identification states (independent ($j=1$), Democrat ($j=2$) or Republican ($j=3$)). Z'_{it-1} is a vector of dummy variables for membership in partisan state j at time $t-1$. In the case of this model, self-identified independent is the reference category with dummy variables coding for Republican and Democratic self-identification. α_{ij} represents individual-specific, time invariant heterogeneity (both observed and unobserved) across individuals. ε_{ijt} are identically and independently distributed error terms assumed to be independent of Z'_{it-1} and α_{ij} and drawn from a Type I extreme value distribution (Bartels, et al. 2011; Gong, et al. 2004).

The initial measurement of partisanship in the panel is a function of both an individual's previous state and their underlying partisan propensity, and is therefore correlated with the latter. To deal with this initial conditions problem, Bartels, et al. (2011) employ an approach outlined by Wooldridge (2005) that models the individual-specific heterogeneity as composed of four elements: a constant, an individual's party identification at $t = 1$, a vector of time-invariant independent variables and unobserved heterogeneity:

$$\alpha_{ij} = v_{0j} + Z'_{i0}v_{1j} + X'_i v_{2j} + R'_i v_{3j} + u_{ij} \quad (3)$$

Here, Z'_{i0} is a vector of dummy variables indicating initial party identification (time $t = 1$) and X'_i is a vector of time invariant individual specific covariates.

The term R'_i is my innovation to the model and represents individual party registration in the form of a vector of dummy variables coding for party registration status. I conceptualize party registration as belonging to x_{2i} in equation 2, in that it is a *time invariant* individual specific characteristic. While party registration can and does change, this change happens relatively rarely. As evidence, my examination of party registration among North Carolina voters over a six year period found that less than 10% of voters changed their party registration and that the majority of these changes occurred when voters moved and had to re-register. The effort required to re-register to vote serves as a significant barrier to any change of party registration. Also in equation 3, u_{ij} represents individual-specific heterogeneity (random effects) and is assumed to be distributed multivariate normal. In estimating the model, $\text{var}(u_{i2})$, $\text{var}(u_{i3})$ and $\text{cov}(u_{i2}, u_{i3})$ are also estimated. Equation 3 is incorporated into equation 2 to give the full model for the utility of person i 's party identification at time t :

$$V(i, j, t) = Z'_{it-1}\beta_j + v_{0j} + Z'_{i0}v_{1j} + X'_{i1}v_{2j} + R'_{i1}v_{3j} + u_{ij} + \varepsilon_{ijt} \quad (4)$$

The Data

My analysis is similar to Bartels, et al. (2011) who estimate a dynamic, random effects multinomial logit model, which estimates a separate intercept for each individual rather than a single global intercept. Their approach accommodates individual-specific unobserved heterogeneity influencing party choice. I utilize Bartels, et al.'s approach and estimate an identical model for the data with the addition of party registration variables.

Following their model specification, I estimate a model via Gauss-Hermite quadrature in the GLLAMM statistical package.

I examine data from the 1980 ANES Major Panel Study. The 1980 Major Panel was conducted over the course of the election year, with the first interview taking place in January/February of the year and three additional interviews occurring at approximately three month intervals thereafter. This study is among the few panel surveys that directly measures respondents' party registration. Respondents were asked what party they are registered with during the first wave of the survey and had their party registration validated in the months after the panel had concluded. The dependent variable is the individual's three-point party identification at time t .¹⁶

I construct the main independent variable, party registration, from the survey's accompanying vote validation study, which validated individuals' party registration.¹⁷ The vote validation was conducted at the conclusion of the panel waves, potentially

¹⁶ The three-point party identification includes Democrat, Republican or independent. I also ran the model folding independent partisan leaners into the partisan categories. The results are substantively the same (see Appendix).

¹⁷ This is done due to concerns about the accuracy of self-reported party registration measured in the 1980 panel. When it was asked in states without party registration, over half of the respondents to the party registration question nonetheless indicated they were registered with one of the political parties. Because of this, I have elected to use the official party registration record appearing in the state voter files of individuals who had their registration validated by the ANES.

raising concerns that the party registration is merely serving as an indicator of an individual's future partisanship. However, as I argue previously, party registration is exceptionally stable due mainly to the effort required to change it as an official government record. It is therefore a reasonable assumption that validated registration represents an individual's party registration at time $t = 1$, especially in the case of the short-term 1980 panel (please see the Appendix for more information).¹⁸ Party registration is entered into the model as a time-invariant covariate implemented as a vector of three dummy variables, representing registration as a Democrat, a Republican or an independent/unaffiliated voter. The three dummy variables are mutually exclusive and exhaustive for all voters in party registration states; the reference category is residence in a state without any party registration.¹⁹ The reference category allows me to directly measure the effect of being registered as a Democrat, Republican or independent on an individual's party identification as compared to voters in states without any party registration.

¹⁸ To deal with this concern, models with the self-reported party registration variables (measured during $t=1$) were run in addition to validated registration (see Appendix). Using self-reported measures of party registration does not change the substantive findings.

¹⁹ Some residents in non-party registration states are coded by ANES as being registered with a party. This is likely due to these state voter records tracking the primary a voter participated in. These individuals were changed to being coded as in a non-party registration state. This change does not affect the substantive results.

The dependent variable is an individual's party self-identification at time t . Because one of the independent variables is lagged party self-identification, I analyze three of the four waves of the study (waves 2-4). The unit of analysis in the study is the individual-wave, meaning each individual in the 1980 Major Panel will appear three times in the sample analysis, once for each wave.²⁰ Following Bartels, et al.'s (2011) model framework, a vector of dummy variables for an individual's party identification at $t = 1$ with independent being the excluded category and a similar vector for an individual's party identification at time $t-1$ are included as independent variables. A vector of time period dummy variables controls for temporal heterogeneity, with wave 2 being the excluded panel wave. Finally, variables for age, race, sex and education are added to control for observed heterogeneity. To make my results as comparable to those of Bartels, et al. (2011) as possible, most of these variables are operationalized in an identical fashion to their observed heterogeneity model.²¹

²⁰ The sample analyzed in the panel was restricted to individuals with validated voter registration who completed all waves of the study. Minor party registrants and those whose registration status was indeterminate were excluded from the study. Including minor party registrants in the independent category does not affect substantive results.

²¹ Age is coded as an individual's age in years divided by 100. The race variable is coded 0 if the respondent is white and 1 if they are not. This differs slightly from the Bartels, et al. model. The change is necessary to allow the model to converge due to the small number of African-American Republicans in the sample. Sex is coded 1 for female and 0 for male. Finally, education is a three category variable, coding an individual 0 for less

Results

The estimation results from the 1980 ANES Major Panel model are presented in Table 4.1. Confirming the findings of Bartels, et al. (2011), the main variable driving party identification at time t was the individual's initial party identification (i.e. individual heterogeneity). In the Democrat-independent comparison, the initial condition Democrat variable is large and positive while the initial Republican variable is negative. This indicates that a self-identified Democrat at the start of the panel is more likely to identify as a Democrat at time t , while a Republican at the start of the panel is more likely to identify as an independent in the Democrat-Independent comparison later in the panel. The coefficients are reversed for the Republican-independent comparison, though the Democratic variable is not statistically significant. Also similar to Bartels, et al.'s findings, all of the lagged party identification variables (i.e. state dependence) are weak and insignificant in both the Democratic and Republican comparisons. These consistent findings validate that the model is specified correctly.²²

than high school education, 0.5 for high school education and 1 for greater than high school education. Family income is excluded from the model due to the high item nonresponse rate. However, including family income does not change the substantive results.

²² The variance terms for the two comparisons are statistically significant, indicating significant unobserved individual heterogeneity exists. The significance and sign of the covariance and variance terms are similar to Bartels et al. (2011), indicating the model is specified correctly.

Table 4.1: Model of Party Identification, 1980 ANES Major Panel Study

		Democrat-Independent		Republican-Independent	
Variable		Coeff.	p-value	Coeff.	p-value
Party Reg. Status	<i>Registered as Dem.</i>	1.620	0.012	-1.469	0.139
Ref. Cat.:		(0.648)		(0.993)	
<i>(Live in non-PR state)</i>	<i>Registered as Rep.</i>	-3.325	0.023	2.951	0.002
		(1.467)		(0.930)	
	<i>Registered as Ind.</i>	-0.643	0.417	-1.217	0.185
		(0.793)		(0.918)	
Lagged Party	<i>Democrat_{t-1}</i>	0.520	0.417	1.386	0.075
Ref. Cat.:		(0.640)		(0.779)	
<i>(Independent_{t-1})</i>	<i>Republican_{t-1}</i>	0.092	0.919	0.846	0.181
		(0.904)		(0.632)	
Initial Party	<i>Democrat_{t0}</i>	5.831	0.000	-0.469	0.723
Ref. Cat.:		(1.535)		(1.325)	
<i>(Independent_{t0})</i>	<i>Republican_{t0}</i>	-3.028	0.141	7.460	0.000
		(2.004)		(1.850)	
Survey Wave	<i>Wave 3</i>	0.469	0.166	-0.579	0.140
Ref. Cat.:		(0.339)		(0.392)	
<i>(Wave 2)</i>	<i>Wave 4</i>	0.150	0.661	-0.668	0.086
		(0.341)		(0.389)	
Age	<i>Age in Years/100</i>	3.731	0.040	1.262	0.547
		(1.817)		(2.094)	
Race	<i>Minority</i>	1.690	0.056	-2.567	0.166
		(0.886)		(1.854)	
Sex	<i>Female</i>	-0.320	0.489	0.362	0.530
		(0.463)		(0.577)	
Education	<i>Education Category</i>	-1.813	0.014	0.607	0.482
		(0.740)		(0.864)	
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	-4.925	0.004	-2.279	0.316
		(1.688)		(2.274)	
Var(u_D)		7.465	0.093		
		(4.442)			
Var(u_R)				10.192	0.028
				(4.642)	
Cov(u_D, u_R)		-0.596	0.838		
		(2.911)			
N		1344 (448 persons)			
Log Likelihood		-515.869			

Notes: p-values are two-tailed. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Turning to party registration, I find an individual's party registration status is strongly related to their party self-identification. As hypothesized, in the Republican-independent comparison, a registered Republican is significantly more likely than a voter in a state without party registration to identify with the party at time t . Conversely, in the Democrat-independent comparison, registered Republicans, are significantly more likely to identify as an independent as compared to voters in states without party registration. A similar trend is observed among registered Democrats; registered Democrats are significantly more likely to identify as Democrat in the Democrat-independent comparison and more likely to identify as independent in the Republican-independent comparison, although the latter coefficient only approaches conventional levels of statistical significance ($p = 0.138$). Individuals registered unaffiliated or independent in party registration states are statistically indistinguishable from voters in states without party registration.

Using the estimated parameters for the 1980 ANES Major Panel, I estimate average partial effects (APEs) similar to Bartels, et al. (2011).²³ Average partial effects represent a quantity of interest, in this case, the probability of identifying with each party at time t for a given value of the independent variable. The APEs are estimated using a procedure similar to CLARIFY (King, et al. 2000), by simulating the coefficients a thousand times, calculating the resulting quantities of interest and averaging them

²³ Instructions to calculate APEs were helpfully provided by Bartels, et al. at

<http://dvn.iq.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/Steffensmeier>

together. The APEs for the 1980 Major Panel are displayed in Table 4.2. Each cell represents the probability of identifying with a given party for a given party registration status. In the absence of an effect of party registration, every entry in the table is expected to equal 33%, that is, one would be equally likely to fall into each of the three partisan identification states when controlling for prior party identification. The APEs show a strong effect of party registration status on a voter's party self-identification. Being registered as a Democrat or Republican increases the likelihood of identifying with that party to greater than 50%, controlling for prior party identification and individual heterogeneity.

Table 4.2: Predicted Partisan Identification Rates, Controlling for Prior Partisanship and Individual Heterogeneity

Party Registration Status	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Registered Democrat	0.519	0.237	0.244
Registered Republican	0.214	0.515	0.270
Reg. Independent	0.399	0.266	0.335
Not in P.R. State	0.423	0.309	0.268

Notes: Entries represent the probability of a given party identification state at time t for a given party registration status. For example, controlling for prior party identification and heterogeneity, the probability of identifying as a Democrat if an individual is registered with the Democratic Party is 0.519.

I further elaborate the effects of an individual possessing various types of party registration on her party identification at time t in Table 4.3. The entries represent how much an individual having a particular type of party registration increases her likelihood of identifying with the indicated party as compared to a different type. Standard errors on these estimates are computed from the standard deviation of these values among the

thousand simulations used to generate APEs. The first group of estimates compares being registered as a Democrat to each of the other types of party registration on the likelihood of identifying as a Democrat at time t . All of the estimated effects are positive, which indicates that being registered as a Democrat increases the likelihood of identifying as Democratic as compared to being registered as a Republican, independent or not living in a party registration state. All of the increases in the likelihood of identifying as a Democrat are statistically significant. The middle set of estimates compare being registered as an independent with other types of party registration for those identifying as an independent. As expected, given the non-significant coefficient for registration as independent in the model in Table 4.1, none of these estimates is statistically significant. The final group of estimates compares being registered as a Republican with being registered as a Democrat, independent or not living in a party registration state on the likelihood of identifying as a Republican. As with the first group of estimates, all the differences are large and positive, indicating that being registered as a Republican increases the likelihood of identifying as a Republican as compared to other types of party registration. All of these increases are highly statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level.

Of substantive interest in Table 4.3 are the entries “registered Democrat to not in party registration state” and “registered Republican to not in party registration state”. These two entries represent the change in the probability of self-identifying as a Democrat or Republican when registered with the respective party as compared to living in a state without party registration. The differences indicate that being registered as a

Table 4.3: Magnitude of Party Registration Effects

	$\Delta\text{pr}(\text{Dem}_t)$ (S.E.)	<i>p</i> -value
Reg. Dem relative to Reg. Rep.	0.305 (0.063)	0.000
Reg. Dem relative to Reg. Ind.	0.120 (0.047)	0.011
Reg. Dem relative to Not in P.R. State	0.096 (0.031)	0.002
	$\Delta\text{pr}(\text{Ind}_t)$ (S.E.)	
Reg. Ind. Relative to Reg. Dem	0.091 (0.054)	0.096
Reg. Ind. Relative to Reg. Rep.	0.065 (0.066)	0.331
Reg. Ind relative to Not in P.R. State	0.067 (0.048)	0.164
	$\Delta\text{pr}(\text{Rep}_t)$ (S.E.)	
Reg. Rep. relative to Reg. Dem	0.278 (0.063)	0.000
Reg. Rep. relative to Reg. Ind	0.249 (0.061)	0.000
Reg. Rep. relative to Not in P.R. State	0.206 (0.056)	0.000

Notes: *p*-values are two-tailed. Entries are changes in the probability of a particular party identification at time *t* as party registration status changes. For example, the probability of being a Democrat at time *t* increases by 0.096 as party registration status moves from living in a non-party registration state to being registered as a Democrat. Standard errors are the result of parameter simulation.

Democrat improves the likelihood of identifying as a Democrat at time *t* by approximately 9.6% as compared to an identical individual in a state without party registration. The corresponding increase for Republicans is over 20%. Both of these increases are significant ($p < 0.01$).

The effect of being a registered Republican appears to be stronger than that of being a registered Democrat, though the latter is also statistically significant. This is perhaps unsurprising given the electoral shift taking place in the 1980's towards the Republican Party. While individuals registered as Democrats are more likely to identify as Democrats, the effect is not absolute; an anchor can be dragged if another force pulls hard enough. Registered Democrats who identify as Republican exist in the electorate, particularly in the South, evidence that socialization and other forces responsible for the realignment there can overcome the anchor of party registration.

Party registration does not serve merely to anchor an individual to the party with which they are registered. The results in Table 4.1 indicate the capacity of party registration to locate some individuals to independent identification. The large and significant negative coefficient in the left-hand column of the table for Republican registration as well as the negative coefficient in the right-hand column for Democratic identification indicate that in the Democrat-independent comparison, being registered as a Republican increases the likelihood of identifying as independent just as being a registered Democrat in the Republican-independent comparison also increases the odds of identifying as an independent. Party registration thus acts as a repellant force for the opposite party making it more difficult for voters registered with one party to identify with the other. Voters still attached to one party through registration but who feel less affinity for that party are more likely to self-identify as independents rather than identify with the other party, due to their persisting attachment to their party of registration. Consistent with self-perception theory, given the two-party nature of American politics, a voter who is attached to one party through self-identification and to another through registration is subject to greater cognitive dissonance than a voter who is registered with one party but considers themselves an independent. Given individuals work to minimize cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957), voters may choose to simply report identifying as an independent if they feel no more identification with the party with which they are registered.

Voting Behavior and Party Registration

While a voter's party registration influences the party the voter identifies with, the strength of this identification is unknown. It is plausible that being registered with a party boosts the strength of an individual's party identification. The external link that being registered with a party provides may serve to boost the voter's sense of attachment to the party, making them a strong partisan. The voter may feel some sense of obligation to support their party because of the logic of appropriateness. However it is equally possible that voters self-perceiving their registration may have a very shallow party identification and be "partisans in name only". The individuals may misunderstand the party identification question or conflate registration with identification. In such cases, voters registered with a party may behave like independents or members of the other party and have little attachment to the party they supposedly identify with. In their study of party identification and party registration, Burden and Greene (2000) find evidence for the latter interpretation, showing that individuals in party registrations states are more likely to defect in their vote for president. The authors conclude that individuals who might otherwise self-identify as independents are induced through party registration to identify as partisans. However, this induced partisanship is shallow and leads to partisans more likely to vote for candidates of the other party. However, this explanation contradicts a large literature on independents that finds independent "leaners" to be just as loyal to their party as self-identified Democrats and Republicans. Because of this, I advance and evaluate an alternative explanation for Burden and Greene's findings using data from the 1980 ANES studies. These data offer additional information to analyze: the party the

respondents were registered with, how long they have been registered with the party, and defection in races further down the ballot.

Rather than defection in party registration states being due to independents “induced” to shallowly identify with a party through party registration, I posit that the greater rate of defection observed in these states is due to previously loyal partisans weakening in the attachment to their party over time but remaining anchored to it through party registration and the mechanism of self-perception. These voters no longer feel an affinity with their party and are more prone to defect in their vote but, because registration is difficult to change, they remain registered with, and consequently self-identify with, their old party. The logic of appropriateness that compels a voter to support the party they are registered with will weaken over time.

Defecting voters should be registered with their self-identified party because this registration serves as an anchor. Further, the longer a voter has been registered with a party, the more likely they should be to defect. This latter point distinguishes my explanation from Burden and Greene’s (2000, p. 75), who predict the opposite: “[a]s persons continue to support a party through the years, identification should be based less on registration status and more upon a genuine psychological attachment.” According to Burden and Greene’s conceptualization, individuals induced to register with a party should be reluctant partisans initially but their strength of identification should grow over time. While the ANES does not record when an individual last changed their party registration, the 1980 vote validation records when they most recently registered to vote. Given the evidence in chapter 3 that voters are loath to change their party registration

unless they move or otherwise reregister, registration date should provide a proxy for the length of time a voter has been registered with a political party and any measurement error provides a more challenging test for my hypothesis by making it more difficult to discern a pattern.

I proceed by replicating Burden and Greene's (2000) study using the 1980 ANES in Table 4.4.²⁴ Respondents are coded a 0 if they lived in a state without party registration in 1980 and a 1 otherwise. I estimate a simple binary logit model, with the dependent variable being whether an individual voted for the candidate of the party with which they identified in the September/October wave of the study (0) or defected and voted for a different candidate (1).²⁵ Similar to Burden and Greene, I control for age, education, race, sex, state political culture (Elazar 1966), difference in party feeling thermometer scores between the individual's party of identification and the other party as well as political interest in the campaign.²⁶ In addition, I control for strength of partisanship and

²⁴ This includes participants in the 1980 ANES time series and the 1980 ANES Major Panel Study.

²⁵ This wave was chosen because both panels were asked the party identification question at approximately the same time. This allows the results of the two studies to be aggregated.

²⁶ In addition Burden and Greene (2000) also create a party neutrality score gauging who the respondent felt could best handle major political issues. The 1980 ANES only asked three of these questions as opposed to Burden and Greene's six and there was no "Neither" option given. Therefore party neutrality was omitted from the model.

Table 4.4: Party Registration and Vote Defection, 1980 ANES Major Panel and Time Series Studies

Variable		Defect in Presidential Vote		Defect in House Vote	
		Coeff.	<i>p</i> -value	Coeff.	<i>p</i> -value
Party Reg.	<i>Live in P.R. State</i>	0.482 (0.180)	0.007	-0.099 (0.241)	0.680
Incumbent	<i>Inc. of R's Party</i>	- -	-	-2.678 (0.277)	0.000
Party	<i>Republican</i>	-1.729 (0.205)	0.000	-0.563 (0.254)	0.026
Strong	<i>Strong Partisan</i>	-0.669 (0.205)	0.001	-0.165 (0.269)	0.540
Age	<i>Age in Years/100</i>	-0.419 (0.553)	0.449	-0.395 (0.760)	0.603
Race	<i>Minority</i>	-0.839 (0.310)	0.007	-0.917 (0.517)	0.076
Sex	<i>Female</i>	-0.129 (0.176)	0.464	-0.176 (0.243)	0.467
Education	<i>Educ. Category</i>	0.305 (0.254)	0.230	0.165 (0.359)	0.645
State Culture	<i>Moralistic</i>	-0.103 (0.216)	0.632	-0.495 (0.301)	0.100
Ref. Cat.: <i>(Individualistic)</i>	<i>Traditionalistic</i>	-0.475 (0.210)	0.024	-0.219 (0.280)	0.434
Party Diff.	<i>Diff. in Therm.</i>	-0.028 (0.004)	0.000	-0.016 (0.005)	0.002
Interest	<i>Campaign Interest</i>	0.068 (0.132)	0.606	-0.131 (0.183)	0.474
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	0.413 (0.497)	0.406	1.563 (0.624)	0.012
N		974		555	
Log Likelihood		-415.589		-299.171	

Notes: *p*-values are two tailed. Standard errors are in parentheses.

respondent political party.²⁷ These findings appear in the left hand column of Table 4.4. Confirming Burden and Greene, residence in a state with party registration was associated with a greater likelihood of voter defection in 1980 presidential vote ($p < 0.01$).²⁸

Satisfied that I accurately replicate Burden and Greene's analysis using the 1980 ANES, I next explore my innovation. Using the vote validation data I create three variables, SAMEREG, DIFFREG and UNAFF. SAMEREG voters are voters who self-identify with the same party with which they are registered. DIFFREG voters are voters registered with one party but who self-identify with the other (e.g. registered Democrats who nonetheless self-identify as Republicans). UNAFF voters are Democrats and Republicans in party registration states who are registered as unaffiliated or independent voters. Each of these three variables is interacted with the year a voter is recorded as registering to vote (e.g. 80 = 1980, etc.).

The results in Table 4.5 show clear support for my hypothesis. Both the coefficient on SAMEREG and its interaction term with year of registration are statistically significant and in the expected direction. The large positive coefficient on the SAMEREG term indicates a strong effect of being registered with a party on presidential vote defection when an individual registered a long time ago. The negative coefficient on

²⁷ These variables are included due to the nature of the 1980 presidential election.

Because a substantial majority of defections in 1980 were from Democrats, I felt it was important to more accurately control for an individual's party identification.

²⁸ Including leaners does not change the substantive results.

Table 4.5: Party Registration and Vote Defection, 1980 ANES Major Panel and Time Series Studies

Variable		Presidential Vote		House Vote	
		Coeff.	<i>p</i> -value	Coeff.	<i>p</i> -value
P.R. Status	<i>SAMEREG</i>	4.303	0.010	0.141	0.946
Ref. Cat:		(1.666)		(2.097)	
<i>(Live in non-P.R. State)</i>	<i>DIFFREG</i>	-10.770	0.256	-14.026	0.291
		(9.472)		(13.283)	
	<i>UNAFF</i>	0.490	0.886	0.644	0.889
		(3.416)		(4.603)	
Year of Reg.	<i>Year R Registered</i>	0.032	0.105	0.017	0.485
		(0.020)		(0.024)	
Y.R.*S.R.	<i>Interaction Term</i>	-0.058	0.014	-0.001	0.974
		(0.023)		(0.030)	
Y.R.*D.R.	<i>Interaction Term</i>	0.154	0.217	0.191	0.266
		(0.125)		(0.172)	
Y.R.*UNAFF	<i>Interaction Term</i>	-0.005	0.922	0.003	0.964
		(0.047)		(0.064)	
Incumbent	<i>Inc. of R's Party</i>	-	-	-2.522	0.000
		-		(0.319)	
Party	<i>Republican</i>	-1.923	0.000	-0.467	0.113
		(0.253)		(0.295)	
Strong	<i>Strong Partisan</i>	-0.620	0.011	-0.124	0.695
		(0.245)		(0.316)	
Age	<i>Age in Years/100</i>	-0.935	0.246	-0.477	0.648
		(0.807)		(1.043)	
Race	<i>Minority</i>	-1.155	0.002	-1.619	0.011
		(0.366)		(0.638)	
Sex	<i>Female</i>	-0.322	0.140	-0.026	0.928
		(0.218)		(0.292)	
State Culture	<i>Moralistic</i>	-0.125	0.644	-0.456	0.193
Ref. Cat.:		(0.269)		(0.350)	
<i>(Individualistic)</i>	<i>Traditionalistic</i>	-0.314	0.207	-0.147	0.661
		(0.249)		(0.334)	
Party Diff.	<i>Diff. in Therm.</i>	-0.031	0.000	-0.010	0.099
		(0.005)		(0.006)	
Interest	<i>Int. in Campaign</i>	0.011	0.946	-0.104	0.633
		(0.162)		(0.219)	
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	-1.396	0.390	-0.050	0.980
		(1.624)		(1.996)	
N		702		402	
Log Likelihood		-287.020		-165.080	

Notes: *p*-values are two-tailed. Standard errors are in parentheses

I expect party registration to have a different effect in House races where, compared to the presidential candidates, voters have less information and may be more reliant on partisan cues. To test the effect of party registration on down-ballot races, I analyze respondents' House vote in the 1980 ANES pre- and post-election time series.²⁹ The right column of Table 4.4 estimates an identical model to the presidential one for defection in House races with the added variable of whether there was a running incumbent of the respondent's party. The party registration variable is not significant, indicating residence in a party registration state does not change individual likelihood to defect in the vote for House candidates. The substantive interpretation for this finding is that although some voters would prefer to leave their self-identified party of identification but are kept anchored to it by party registration, these voters nonetheless support their party's candidates for House. It is only in the more salient contest for President that these individuals' weak attachment to their self-identified party leads them to be more likely to defect. This is further evident in the right column of Table 5, where I estimate an interactive model for House defection. The coefficient on the SAMEREG interaction term is close to zero, indicating that individuals registering with the same party they identify with do not become more likely to defect over time in the contest for House.

To demonstrate these findings in multiple contexts, I attempt to duplicate my analysis of defection using the 2008 CCES. While the 2008 CCES does not report when a respondent most recently changed their party registration or when they last registered to vote, it does report the amount of time the respondent has lived at their current address in

²⁹ The House vote question was not asked of the Major Panel or Minor Panel respondents.

an ordinal variable. I fold the categories of the ordinal variable together to make a dichotomous variable coded 0 if a respondent lived at their current address less than five years and 1 if they have lived at their address five years or longer. Given the findings in chapter 3, I can assume with confidence that the voters who have resided at the same address for five years or longer have not recently changed party registration since they would have had no reason to change their voter registration and are loath to change party registration on their own. These individuals might therefore be more likely to have an obsolete party registration and be most likely to be weakly connected to their current party identification. If anything this noise in my variable, provides a more challenging test for my hypothesis. I hypothesize that SAMEREG voters living at the same address 5+ years will be more likely to defect in vote for president compared to voters in states without party registration. SAMEREG voters living at the same address < 5 years will not be more likely to defect in their vote for president since their party registration will still be relatively up to date; rather than anchored to a party, these voters will still have only recently reaffirmed their commitment to the party they are registered with.

I begin by duplicating Table 4.4 in Table 4.6. My findings are similar: voters who are registered in states with party registration are significantly more likely to defect in their 2008 presidential vote compared to voters in states without party registration. As in 4.4, however, these findings do not extend to downballot races. Voters registered in party registration states were not significantly more likely to defect in their vote for the house.

Table 4.6: Party Registration and Vote Defection, 2008 CCES

Variable		Defect in Presidential Vote		Defect in House Vote	
		Coeff.	<i>p</i> -value	Coeff.	<i>p</i> -value
Party Reg.	<i>Live in P.R. State</i>	0.287 (0.085)	0.001	0.070 (0.078)	0.371
Incumbent	<i>Inc. of R's Party</i>	- -	-	-1.454 (0.084)	0.000
Party	<i>Republican</i>	-0.569 (0.096)	0.000	0.115 (0.083)	0.163
Strong	<i>Strong Partisan</i>	-2.197 (0.089)	0.000	-1.518 (0.080)	0.000
Age	<i>Age in Years/100</i>	1.467 (0.263)	0.000	0.340 (0.262)	0.196
Race	<i>Minority</i>	-0.518 (0.139)	0.000	-0.327 (0.123)	0.008
Sex	<i>Female</i>	0.088 (0.084)	0.292	0.148 (0.081)	0.068
Education	<i>Educ. Category</i>	-0.763 (0.155)	0.000	-0.642 (0.155)	0.000
State Culture Ref. Cat.:	<i>Moralistic</i>	-0.226 (0.107)	0.035	-0.125 (0.095)	0.187
	<i>(Individualistic) Traditionalistic</i>	0.055 (0.094)	0.563	0.082 (0.090)	0.366
Interest	<i>Interest in Politics</i>	0.126 (0.091)	0.169	0.316 (0.087)	0.000
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	-2.181 (0.272)	0.000	-0.661 (0.279)	0.018
N		15,527		13,383	
Log Likelihood		3022.348		3223.465	

Notes: *p*-values are two tailed. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Table 4.7 includes the interaction terms for SAMEREG, DIFFREG and UNAFF with the variable coding for 5+ years at the same address. As expected, the interaction term for SAMEREG is positive and statistically significant. In contrast, the SAMEREG variable itself is small and not significant. This indicates that, as predicted, SAMEREG individuals living at the same address < 5 years are not more likely to defect in their

Table 4.7: Party Registration and Vote Defection, 2008 CCES

		Defect in Presidential Vote		Defect in House Vote	
Variable		Coeff.	<i>p</i> -value	Coeff.	<i>p</i> -value
P.R. Status	<i>SAMEREG</i>	0.033	0.813	0.052	0.705
Ref. Cat:		(0.141)		(0.138)	
<i>(Live in non-P.R. State)</i>	<i>DIFFREG</i>	2.018	0.000	1.859	0.000
		(0.411)		(0.354)	
	<i>UNAFF</i>	0.048	0.882	0.215	0.551
		(0.321)		(0.360)	
Time @ Address	<i>5+ Yr. Residence</i>	-0.187	0.189	0.030	0.822
		(0.143)		(0.132)	
Y.A.*S.R.	<i>Interaction Term</i>	0.452	0.012	0.076	0.660
		(0.180)		(0.172)	
Y.A.*D.R.	<i>Interaction Term</i>	-0.468	0.383	-0.784	0.080
		(0.536)		(0.447)	
Y.A.*UNAFF	<i>Interaction Term</i>	-0.012	0.980	-0.079	0.870
		(0.475)		(0.485)	
Incumbent	<i>Inc. of R's Party</i>	-	-	-1.455	0.000
		-		(0.086)	
Party	<i>Republican</i>	-0.626	0.000	0.058	0.486
		(0.095)		(0.084)	
Strong	<i>Strong Partisan</i>	-2.232	0.000	-1.505	0.000
		(0.091)		(0.082)	
Age	<i>Age in Years/100</i>	1.416	0.000	0.390	0.171
		(0.294)		(0.285)	
Race	<i>Minority</i>	-0.569	0.000	-0.386	0.002
		(0.140)		(0.126)	
Education	<i>Educ. Category</i>	-0.832	0.000	-0.696	0.000
		(0.160)		(0.160)	
State Culture	<i>Moralistic</i>	-0.156	0.159	-0.112	0.252
Ref. Cat.:		(0.110)		(0.098)	
<i>(Individualistic)</i>	<i>Traditionalistic</i>	0.104	0.280	0.077	0.406
		(0.096)		(0.093)	
Interest	<i>Int. in Politics</i>	0.126	0.184	0.287	0.001
		(0.095)		(0.090)	
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	-2.166	0.000	-0.735	0.014
		(0.281)		(0.299)	
N		15,007		12,888	
Log Likelihood		-		-	
		2822.036		3045.376	

Notes: *p*-values are two-tailed. Standard errors are in parentheses.

presidential vote compared to voters living at the same address < 5 years in non-party registration states. However SAMEREG individuals living at the same address 5+ years are significantly more likely to defect in their vote for president compared to similar voters in states without party registration.

Conclusion

A key finding in chapter 3 was that the costs of changing party registration result in some individuals remaining registered with a party they might otherwise prefer to leave. I demonstrate in that chapter that in a situation where the costs of changing party registration fall to zero such as when someone changes address and fills out the voter registration application again, that individuals are significantly more likely to change party registration. This increase in the likelihood of movers to change party registration compared to individuals remaining at the same address reveals that a significant minority of the electorate would change registration if offered the chance to do so free of cost but lacks the necessary motivation to overcome the costs of changing party registration on their own.

I find in this chapter that the electoral institution of party registration has a significant effect on at least one important political attitude—party identification. Controlling for previous partisanship and observed and unobserved heterogeneity, voters who register with a political party are more likely to identify with that party. Even when individual heterogeneity and prior partisanship are taken into account, individuals registered as Democrats and Republicans have a greater than 50% probability of identifying with these respective parties. These probabilities represent 10 and 20 percentage point increases (respectively) in the likelihood of identifying with the parties

as compared with individuals in states without party registration. Consistent with self-perception theory (Bem 1967), voters who register with a party are also significantly less likely to identify with the other major party, indicating that party registration has repellant as well as attractive properties regarding voter party identification. This builds on the work of Campbell, et al. (1960) and Burden and Greene (2000) in confirming that electoral institutions affect whether or not a voter self-identifies as an independent. With data on individual party registration I further demonstrate that individuals use the party they are registered with as a guide to what party to choose to self-identify with. Additional analysis (see Appendix) shows that these results are not due to a spurious relationship with strength of partisanship. Weak partisans in party registration states are just as likely to register with a political party as strong ones are.

These findings contribute to the debate over the nature of party self-identification. By showing that political party registration—conceptualized as a time invariant variable—affects individual party self-identification I demonstrate another source of underlying heterogeneity that exists in states with party registration. The authors of *The American Voter* initially conceived of party self-identification as a psychological attachment of an individual to a particular party group. Making that linkage external with party registration bolsters that psychological attachment through the process of self-perception. These findings provide additional support for traditionalist theories of party self-identification.

Analyzing defection in the vote for president and US House using the 1980 ANES and 2008 CCES reveals consistent patterns across surveys. Voters in party registration

states are significantly more likely to defect in their vote for president compared to voters in non-party registration states. This likelihood increases the longer a voter has been registered with a party. It is clear that some voters weaken in their attachment to their party of identification over time. However, because these voters are registered with that party, they may be uncomfortable identifying with a different party without first changing their registration. The result is a voter that is a “partisan in name only”, identifying with the same party they are registered with because of its anchoring effects but voting for candidates of the other party for president. Presumably if these individuals were to reregister to vote, they would be more likely to register with a different party or as an unaffiliated voter. In contrast, voters who have only recently registered or reregistered to vote presumably have a party registration—and consequent party identification—that are more in line with how they truly feel; a voter who registered only a short time ago will not have had an opportunity to tire of their party identification just yet.

If this were the whole story, party registration would have very little effect on election outcomes. Although it would delay some voters from changing their party identification and keep them remaining anchored to their old party, these would still abandon candidates of their party at the ballot box. Essentially these voters would behave as these would have behaved in the absence of the party registration, the only difference being that they still identified with their old party. That identification would be shallow and empty. It is important to note, however, that although these “anchored partisans” no longer support their party’s candidate for president, they remain supportive of the party they are anchored to at the House level. Therefore party registration keeps voters

identifying with their old party over time as well as voting for its candidates in downballot races. Because of this, it is possible that in situations where there has been a large shift in party identification in the electorate, such as in the realignment of the South, that, party registration may have had real effects on who wins office.

CONCLUSION

Voters rely on loyalty to a particular political party to make sense of a confusing political world. They use a psychological attachment—party identification—to inform their policy positions (Carsey and Layman 2006), process novel information (Bartels 2002; Zaller 1992) and decide who to vote for (Campbell et al. 1960). The origins and nature of party identification have been an area of major scholarly interest and controversy (Johnston 2006). In this dissertation, I have focused on the role electoral institutions play in influencing individual party identification. Specifically, I have examined party registration and how it functions as a constitutive norm defining membership within a party group.

Rules govern the democratic process in the United States, translating individual preferences into electoral outcomes. There is significant variation in these electoral rules among the states, resulting from decentralized election administration as part of the country's federal system. This is particularly true for the rules governing primary elections. These primary laws are protected by the First Amendment under the freedom to assemble and exempt from tight control by the federal government and have largely been left to the states. Such rules generally have favored the interests of the parties in a state rather than ensuring widespread participation in the decision. The rules enacted depend on the political conditions of the states and the result is a patchwork of electoral

institutions governing how votes are counted and who may participate in primary elections. As lawmakers are not omniscient, these rules often have unforeseen consequences. I have explored the electoral institution of party registration and examined its important and unexpected effects on voter behavior and attitudes.

Politicians implemented party registration to ensure only dedicated partisans vote in a party's primary by requiring voters to officially affiliate with a political party. Whether party registration actually serves this purpose is dependent on the degree voters' party registration reflects their actual partisan feelings. I find that while party identification and other expressive concerns guide the party a voter registers with, strategic considerations also play an important role for many voters. In states with semiclosed primaries, where unaffiliated voters can participate in any primary election, voters are significantly more likely to be registered as unaffiliated. These voters are able to participate in all party primaries rather than just one party's. Republicans in particular take local political context and primary election rules into account in their decision of whether or not to register with a party. Republicans in semiclosed primary states where Democrats dominate politics, are significantly likely to register as unaffiliated. They are able to both participate in the primary of their own party but influence the Democratic primary as well in this way. In a state where the Democratic nominee is likely to win the general election, voting in the Democratic primary allows these Republicans to influence who comes to hold the office.

Synthesizing the research, I show that the electoral institution of party registration has significant effects on voter attitudes and behaviors both at the individual and

aggregate levels. Party registration serves to make individual party identification “stickier” and slower to change over time. At the aggregate level, in situations where a large number of voters change party identification, I can therefore expect voters in party registration states to realign more slowly, potentially leading to an electoral advantage for the waning party.

I show in chapter 4 that registration with a party serves to anchor a voter’s party identification. Through the mechanism of self-perception, voters registered with a party are more likely to identify with that party over time, even when controlling for individual heterogeneity and initial and past partisanship. Registered Democrats and Republicans have a better than 50% likelihood of identifying with their respective parties, a statistically significant improvement over voters in states with no party registration for both parties. I therefore make a causal inference, that party registration affects individual party identification and makes a voter more likely to identify with their party of registration.

This is significant because it is difficult to change party registration over time. I demonstrate in chapter 3 that the costs of reregistering to vote in order to change party registration represent a barrier to many individuals changing party affiliation. Voters who remained at the same address were less likely to change party registration than voters who moved address during the six-year period. The only difference between these two groups was in the costs of reregistration. Voters who changed address were forced to reregister anyway and therefore it cost little effort for them to change party registration

while they were at it. In contrast, voters remaining at the same address had to go to the effort of obtaining a new voter form, filling it out and returning it to the registrar.

Putting these two pieces together tells a story of party registration influencing party identification at the individual and aggregate level. Voters may remain registered with a party they would prefer to leave because it requires effort to change party registration. Because of self-perception, these same voters may still identify with this old party, uncomfortable about leaving it without also changing registration to a new party. The result is that party identification in states with party registration is stickier and more resistant to change as it must not only overcome an individual's psychological attachment to the old party but the external attachment of party registration as well. During electoral realignments, states with party registration may continue to support the waning party past the point an otherwise similar state with open primaries may have done so.

In chapter 4, I examined voter defection in races for president and US House. I found that the longer a voter has been registered with a party, the more likely she is to defect in her vote for president. This is the opposite of what we might expect to see, as party identification tends to solidify over time (Campbell et al. 1960). Why might voters who have been registered a long time be less supportive of their party at the ballot box? The likeliest explanation is that voters registered with a party have weakened in their identification over time. However they continue to report identifying with their old party because of self-perception and their registration. I note that this does not mean party identification becomes bereft of meaning for these individuals. These voters still remain loyal to their old party in the race for the US House.

In the South, party registration may have worked to the advantage of the Democratic Party. Voters in southern states with party registration have remained Democrats because of their attachment to the party while similar voters in southern states with no party registration have become Republicans. Of the 14 southern and border states, six have party registration and eight do not. In the wake of the 2010 midterm elections, Democrats controlled 18 out of 59 (31%) of seats in party registration states and 23 out of 86 (27%) seats in states without party registration. However, 16 (70%) of the Democratic seats in non-party registration states are solidly Democratic minority-majority districts compared to just 7(39%) of the Democratic seats in party registration states. Overall, only 8% of all districts in non-party registration southern states were both represented by Democrats and contained a white majority. The corresponding figure for party registration states is 18%.

I should emphasize, however, that not all individuals remain anchored to the party they are registered with. This was shown mostly strongly in chapter 3, where a state-level comparison of party registration and party identification showed that a state being in the South was associated with 8.8 percentage points more registered Democrats than individuals actually self-identifying as Democrats compared to a non-southern state. Indeed, in Oklahoma, one of the reddest states in the country, there are presently more registered Democrats than registered Republicans.

This has its own important effects. As I have shown, party registration is difficult to change and leads to some individuals being trapped in the primary electorate of a party they'd prefer to leave. Examining primary turnout trends in the South since the passage

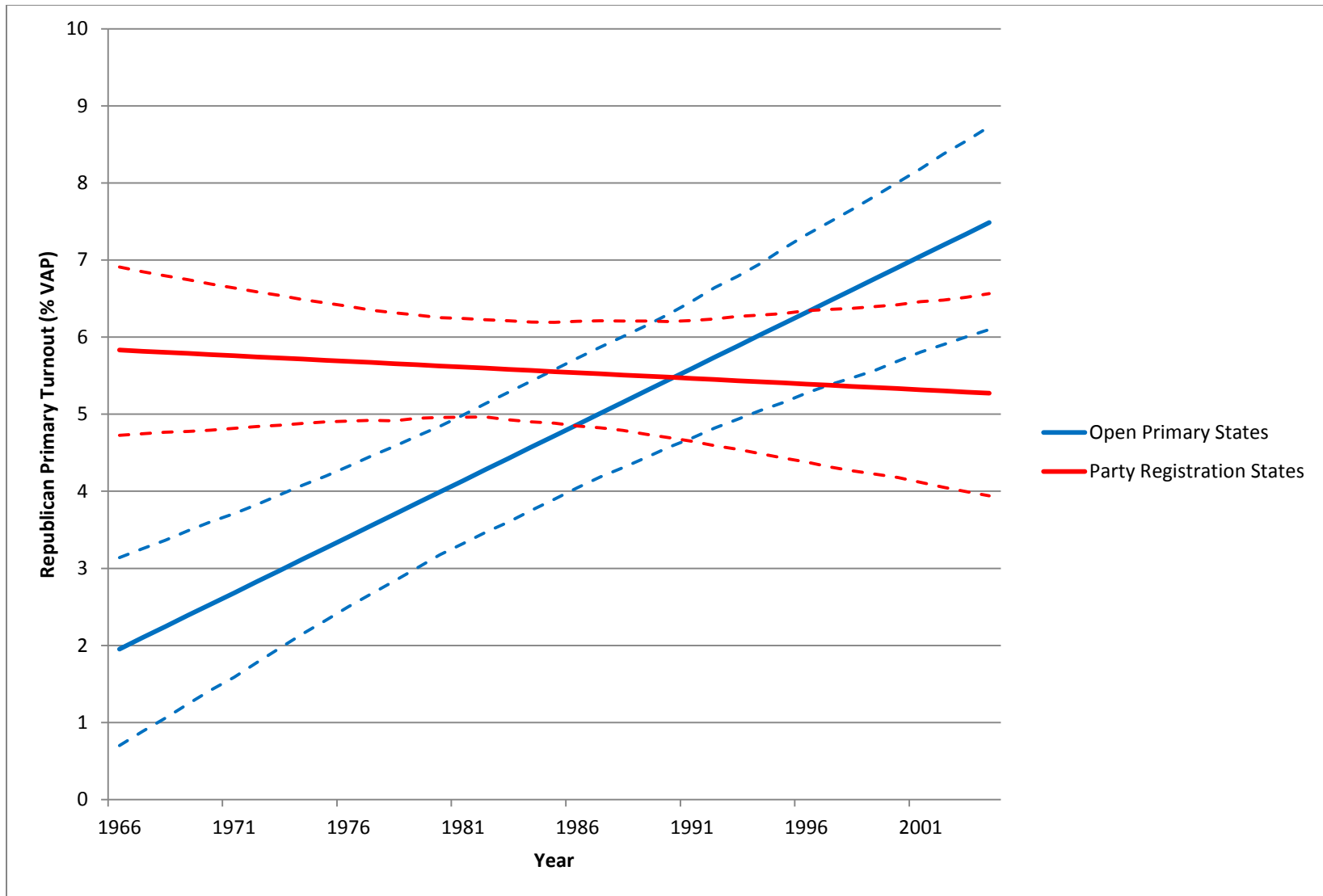


Figure 5.1: Estimated Southern Republican Primary Turnout, 1966-2004

of the Voting Rights Act reveal the effect of this. Figure 5.1 shows the estimated turnout in Republican senatorial and gubernatorial southern primaries in party registration and open primary states (Louisiana is excluded). A pattern is evident: while primary turnout has steadily increased in southern open primary states as the Republican Party has become stronger, it has remained stagnant in southern states with party registration. In open primary states, voters can easily switch to voting in the Republican primary. In contrast there has been a barrier to voters changing primary electorates in southern states with party registration.

Party registration states differ in another important aspect: how long a voter must be registered with a party to vote in its primaries. This deadline ranges from nearly a year before the primary in the case of New York to being able to switch parties on election day in Iowa and vote in the primary election. Registration deadlines far in advance of a primary impose a cost on voters of having to plan ahead or lose the short-term benefit of participating in a primary. This is reflected in a comparison of party identification and party registration. Republicans in states with deadlines far in advance of the primary are more likely to still be registered as Democrats compared to states with deadlines closer to primary election day..

In the media, much was made of Barack Obama's struggle in the border states during the 2012 presidential primaries. In Kentucky, Oklahoma and West Virginia, Obama performed poorly in primaries that are usually a formality for an incumbent president. In West Virginia, Obama's margin of victory over an incarcerated felon was less than 20 percentage points. It is notable that these three states have party registration

and closed or semiclosed primaries. In all three states, Democrats hold a sizable registration advantage despite the GOP being the stronger party at the presidential level in the state. Finally, Kentucky and Oklahoma have some of the most stringent requirements when it comes to changing parties to vote in the primary, requiring an individual to be registered with a party for at least two months. Given these factors, it is plausible that many participants in the 2012 Democratic presidential primary in these states would prefer to have voted in the Republican primary, but being unable to do so due to their registration, cast a protest vote against President Obama, whom they disliked.

Normative Implications of Findings

The stated purpose of party registration and closed or semiclosed primaries is to ensure only dedicated partisans vote in a party's primary. However, there are several problems with party registration that undermine attempts to maintain a loyal partisan primary electorate:

1. **People may change party identification over time.** While the predominant view in the literature has emphasized the stability of party identification (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960; Green et al. 2002), it remains a fact that voters occasionally do change party loyalties, especially when young (Campbell et al. 1960). However, , voters may not start voting in their new party's primaries without changing registration. Changing party registration has been shown to present a barrier to voters. What this means is that voters who change party identification are effectively trapped in the primary electorate of their old party. These voters are shut out of their new party's primaries, undermining the goal of primary elections in the first

place: selecting party nominees reflecting the preferences of loyal party identifiers in the district's electorate. If enough voters are shut out of the party's primary—such as in the wake of an electoral realignment—the candidates that are selected may be different from those all loyal partisans would have selected. In such a case, the primary voters who are able to show up will be skewed more heavily to younger voters and individuals who have recently change address, individuals who have only recently registered to vote.

What do the trapped voters do? Many may stop voting in primary elections altogether. The voters may also continue to participate in the primaries of their old party, perhaps out of habit or sense of civic duty. This will also undermine the intention of party registration to keep the primary electorate free of members of the other party.

- 2. Voters register strategically.** Voters in semiclosed primary states take advantage of the greater latitude afforded unaffiliated voters to participate in any party's primary. Registering as unaffiliated provides greater flexibility compared to being registered with a single political party and confined to that party's primaries. Therefore, more voters in semiclosed primary states are able to cross over and participate in other party primaries. The “good news” for the parties is that expressive motives still trump instrumental ones for many voters, especially the strongest party supporters; these individuals are likely to register with the party they support and thus are unable to cross over and vote in the opposing party's primary elections. However, for the parties, especially the Democrats, crossover

voting by supporters of the opposing party who have registered as unaffiliated remains a concern. It is beyond the scope of this discussion to investigate crossover voting in detail, however, the case study of Rhode Island shows a significant portion of voters in primaries are unaffiliated and are willing to go to significant effort to maintain this freedom.

To deal with the first problem, measures should be implemented to make it easier to switch parties. I show that the deadline before a primary by which a voter must be registered with a party has a strong effect on whether a voter has an obsolete registration. A natural solution might therefore be to make the deadline to change registration closer to the primary, as this would decrease the costs of planning ahead. For parties concerned that this may lead to individuals changing registration every election, another option might be to leave the deadline in advance of the primary but allow party registration to be changed over the internet. States could also adopt the practice of Rhode Island, by having “change of affiliation” forms in polling places on Election Day. These latter two options may be especially attractive to parties concerned about individuals of the opposing party changing party registration once they know who the candidates in each primary will be.

While the rationale by the parties for semiclosed primaries has undoubtedly been to involve independent voters in the nomination process in the hopes of gaining them more permanently as supporters, the present research reveals that partisan Republicans also take advantage of semiclosed laws to register unaffiliated and vote in Democratic primaries. From the perspective of the parties, then, it may be more attractive to maintain or change to closed primaries. My research has shown that voters who support one of the

parties will stop short of strategically registering with the opposing party even where it is dominant. Closed primaries will therefore ensure voters in a party's primary will be limited to supporters of the party and possibly independents.

Future Directions for Research

This dissertation has primarily focused on the effects of party registration on voters. I have examined the unintended effects of this external connection that is created between a voter and a party. This tells only part of the story of party registration. Future research should focus on the effect of party registration on elite behavior.

In creating a record of voter preferences, party registration identifies potential supporters and opponents to candidates and other political elites in a publicly available list which includes addresses and other contact information. This may allow campaigns to more efficiently target their messages as well as appeals for money to sympathetic individuals in the hopes of turning these voters out on Election Day. This informational advantage of campaigns in party registration states is worthy of further investigation.

In particular, the effect of party registration on fundraising by third parties may be worth study. These parties face special difficulty raising money because their supporters are so few in number and mixed in with a large number of voters from other parties. The informational advantage for such parties is therefore especially important.

Better understanding the aggregate effects of party registration should also be an area of focus. My research strongly suggests that party registration acts as an anchor on individual party identification, leading to more durable party loyalty over time. At the aggregate level, in situations where there is a large-scale realignment of the electorate,

states with party registration should realign more slowly. The most significant realignment in recent decades has been the movement of the South from Democratic loyalty to Republican strength. Future research should examine the difference between party registration and non-party registration states in the South in terms of party identification and party loyalty. Preliminary evidence suggests that voters in party registration states are indeed more likely to remain Democrats.

Final Thoughts

In 2011, the state of Idaho became the first in decades to institute party registration. The Idaho Republican Party's primaries are now closed; only registered Republicans may participate. Democrats in the state hold semiclosed primary elections, perhaps hoping to coopt the large swath of the Idaho electorate who has not yet reregistered as Republican. In South Carolina and Virginia, the institution of party registration is also being discussed. The desirability of party registration as an electoral institution has therefore once again entered debate.

There is tension in primary electoral institutions between the interests of the parties on one hand and the democratic norms of popular participation on the other. Parties wish to have nominees representative of the interest of their supporters in the electorate. However, at the same time, longstanding democratic norms associate legitimacy with greater popular participation; the more people participating in a decision, the more legitimate the outcome. Party registration, in restricting participation in primary elections clearly favors the interests of the parties. The institution helps to ensure that party nominees are selected by dedicated partisans and reflect the interests of the

Republicans or Democrats in the electorate. From a normative perspective, then, in generating nominees representing the voters of a party, party registration is desirable. However closed primary elections have been speculated to be one of the sources behind recent polarization in American politics (Gerber and Morton 1990; Brady et al. 2007). Restricting the pool of voters choosing party nominees to just strong partisans of a party leads to fewer moderate nominees in these states. Voters in the general election are therefore faced with a choice between two extreme candidates. I have articulated additional effects electoral institutions—and party registration in particular—have on voters. Individuals may change preferences but have greater difficulty changing party loyalties because their party identification is tied to their party registration, which is difficult to alter. When voting, these individuals will continue to support their old party in downballot races. Even if these voters do eventually come to identify with a different party, without changing the party they are registered with, they remain trapped in the primary electorate of their old party, unable to vote in their new party's primaries. As policymakers decide what electoral institutions to change and implement in their states, they would do well to consider these unintended consequences.

Appendix 1: Party Registration States and their Characteristics

Table A1: Party Registration States

State	Primary Type	Deadline to Change Party Reg.	Notes
Alaska	Semiclosed	30 days	Republican primaries are semiclosed; Democratic primaries are open
Arizona	Semiclosed	28 days	
California	Closed/Top-two	15 days	Closed presidential primaries; top-two primaries for other offices
Colorado	Semiclosed	29 days to switch parties; Election Day for unaffiliated registrants	
Connecticut	Semiclosed	90 days to switch parties; day before election for unaffiliated registrants	Technically closed, but voters may change party registration the day before the primary.
Delaware	Closed	162 days	
District of Columbia	Closed	30 days	
Florida	Closed	29 days	
Iowa	Semiclosed	Election Day	Election Day Registration
Idaho	Closed	25 days	Republican primaries are closed; Democratic primaries are semiclosed
Kansas	Semiclosed	21 days to switch parties; Election Day for unaffiliated registrants	
Kentucky	Closed	~150 days	

State	Primary Type	Deadline to Change Party Reg.	Notes
Louisiana	Closed/Top-two	30 days	Closed presidential primaries; top-two primaries for other offices
Massachusetts	Semiclosed	20 days	
Maryland	Closed	84 days	Election Day Registration
Maine	Semiclosed	15 days to switch parties; Election Day for unaffiliated registrants	
North Carolina	Semiclosed	25 days	Election Day for unaffiliated registrants
Nebraska	Closed	18 days (by mail)	
New Hampshire	Semiclosed	100 days to switch parties; Election Day for unaffiliated registrants	Election Day for unaffiliated registrants
New Jersey	Semiclosed	50 days to switch parties; Election Day for unaffiliated registrants	
New Mexico	Closed	28 days	Election Day for unaffiliated registrants
Nevada	Closed	31 days	
New York	Closed	300 days	Election Day for unaffiliated registrants
Oklahoma	Closed	60 days	
Oregon	Closed	21 days	Election Day for unaffiliated registrants
Pennsylvania	Closed	30 days	
Rhode Island	Semiclosed	90 days to switch parties; Election Day for unaffiliated registrants	Election Day for unaffiliated registrants
South Dakota	Closed	15 days	
West Virginia	Semiclosed	21 days	Election Day for unaffiliated registrants
Wyoming	Semiclosed	Election Day	

Note: Arkansas also technically has party registration but it serves no purpose and in practice less than 5% of the electorate is registered with a party.

Appendix 2: Independent Partisan Leaners

It is necessary to address the question of independent partisan leaners. Voters who identify as independents but claim to “lean” towards one of the major parties have been shown to be virtually indistinguishable from weak partisans in their behavior and attitudes (Keith, et al. 1992). Therefore it is of substantive interest whether or not party registration actually exerts an effect on party identification when leaners are counted among partisans. The following model examining the data groups leaners with the party they leaned towards, leaving only “pure independents” counting as independent partisans. There is no substantive difference in results from the normal three-point party identification.

Table A2: Model of Party Identification, 1980 ANES Major Panel Study Folding Leaners into Partisans

		Democrat-Independent		Republican-Independent	
Variable		Coeff.	p-value	Coeff.	p-value
P.R. Status	<i>Registered as Dem.</i>	1.176	0.022	-1.252	0.170
Ref. Cat.:		(0.514)		(0.912)	
<i>(Live in non-PR state)</i>	<i>Registered as Rep.</i>	-1.558	0.092	3.036	0.014
		(0.925)		(1.229)	
	<i>Registered as Ind.</i>	-0.971	0.098	0.123	0.895
		(0.588)		(0.936)	
Lagged Party^a	<i>Democrat_{t-1}</i>	2.009	0.005	1.074	0.147
Ref. Cat.:		(0.720)		(0.741)	
<i>(Independent_{t-1})</i>	<i>Republican_{t-1}</i>	1.712	0.013	1.126	0.136
		(0.689)		(0.756)	
Initial Party^a	<i>Democrat_{t0}</i>	2.969	0.005	-1.120	0.401
Ref. Cat.:		(1.062)		(1.335)	
<i>(Independent_{t0})</i>	<i>Republican_{t0}</i>	-1.713	0.063	6.287	0.000
		(0.921)		(1.685)	
Survey Wave	<i>Wave 3</i>	-0.190	0.648	-1.204	0.011
Ref. Cat.:		(0.417)		(0.474)	
<i>(Wave 2)</i>	<i>Wave 4</i>	-0.791	0.050	-1.102	0.016
		(0.404)		(0.459)	
Age	<i>Age in Years/100</i>	1.502	0.241	1.843	0.356
		(1.282)		(1.997)	
Race	<i>Minority</i>	0.177	0.777	-1.390	0.271
		(0.625)		(1.264)	
Sex	<i>Female</i>	-0.113	0.769	0.457	0.456
		(0.386)		(0.613)	
Education	<i>Education Category</i>	0.389	0.483	1.648	0.064
		(0.555)		(0.889)	
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	-1.736	0.134	-2.144	0.286
		(1.159)		(2.009)	
Var(u_D)		1.492	0.345		
		(1.581)			
Var(u_R)				10.440	0.039
				(5.045)	
Cov(u_D, u_R)		-1.583	0.386		
		(1.826)			
N		1344 (448 persons)			
Log Likelihood		-418.482			

Notes: p-values are two-tailed. Standard errors are in parentheses.

^aAlso includes leaners as partisans.

Appendix 3: Self-Reported Party Registration

To address concerns about individual party registration being validated several months after the conclusion of the 1980 Major Panel Study, the model was also run using self-reported party registration, which was measured in the initial wave of the study. This question is subject to significant measurement error, as it appears the definition of being “registered with a party” confused respondents in states without party registration. As a result the majority of voters in states without party registration nonetheless reported being registered with a party. To deal with the error, all individuals in states without party registration were coded into the “lives in non-party registration state” category. The responses of voters living in party registration states were taken at face value and coded into one of the three party registration categories used in the model in the main paper.

Table A3: Model of Party Identification, 1980 ANES Major Panel Study Using Self-Reported Party Registration

		Democrat-Independent		Republican-Independent	
Variable		Coeff.	p-value	Coeff.	p-value
P.R. Status	<i>Registered as Dem.</i>	1.719	0.002	-1.078	0.176
Ref. Cat.:		(0.556)		(0.797)	
<i>(Live in non-PR state)</i>	<i>Registered as Rep.</i>	-3.611	0.003	2.635	0.000
		(1.231)		(0.684)	
	<i>Registered as Ind.</i>	-2.141	0.031	-1.526	0.081
		(0.993)		(0.875)	
Lagged Party	<i>Democrat_{t-1}</i>	0.459	0.361	0.894	0.178
Ref. Cat.:		(0.503)		(0.663)	
<i>(Independent_{t-1})</i>	<i>Republican_{t-1}</i>	0.175	0.808	0.477	0.359
		(0.722)		(0.520)	
Initial Party	<i>Democrat_{t0}</i>	5.221	0.000	0.079	0.934
Ref. Cat.:		(1.062)		(0.963)	
<i>(Independent_{t0})</i>	<i>Republican_{t0}</i>	-2.100	0.085	7.161	0.000
		(1.219)		(1.536)	
Survey Wave	<i>Wave 3</i>	0.437	0.139	-0.168	0.608
Ref. Cat.:		(0.295)		(0.328)	
<i>(Wave 2)</i>	<i>Wave 4</i>	0.349	0.241	-0.229	0.484
		(0.298)		(0.327)	
Age	<i>Age in Years/100</i>	4.378	0.002	4.655	0.008
		(1.447)		(1.748)	
Race	<i>Minority</i>	1.295	0.066	-1.092	0.468
		(0.705)		(1.504)	
Sex	<i>Female</i>	-0.050	0.907	0.410	0.405
		(0.425)		(0.492)	
Education	<i>Education Category</i>	-1.809	0.004	1.491	0.040
		(0.627)		(0.726)	
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	-4.949	0.000	-6.136	0.005
		(1.334)		(2.167)	
Var(u_D)		7.281	0.019		
		(3.114)			
Var(u_R)				8.921	0.014
				(3.617)	
Cov(u_D, u_R)		-0.123	0.941		
		(1.650)			
N		1593 (531 persons)			
Log Likelihood		-654.432			

Notes: p-values are two-tailed. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Appendix 4: Income

There is significant item non-response to the income question in the 1980 Major Panel Study. Nearly one third of respondents did not report their income in the survey. For this reason, income was dropped from the main model. However, as a demonstration that this did not affect the substantive results, the question is included in a model here. Income is conceptualized in a similar fashion to Bartels, et al. (2011), as a four point ordinal variable with approximately 25% of the sample in each category. Individuals with a 1979 family income of less than \$13,000 were coded a 0. Those making from \$13,000 to \$22,999 were coded 0.33. Individuals making between \$23,000 and \$29,999 were coded 0.67 and those making \$30,000 or more were coded a 1. Including income does not change the substantive results, though the smaller sample size reduces their significance slightly.

Table A4: Model of Party Identification, 1980 ANES Major Panel Study Including Income

		Democrat-Independent		Republican-Independent	
Variable		Coeff.	p-value	Coeff.	p-value
P.R. Status	<i>Registered as Dem.</i>	1.594	0.022	-2.463	0.350
Ref. Cat.:		(0.696)		(2.636)	
<i>(Live in non-PR state)</i>	<i>Registered as Rep.</i>	-3.506	0.192	3.154	0.002
		(2.688)		(1.033)	
	<i>Registered as Ind.</i>	0.301	0.778	-1.160	0.712
		(1.069)		(3.142)	
Lagged Party	<i>Democrat_{t-1}</i>	0.552	0.518	1.837	0.046
Ref. Cat.:		(0.853)		(0.919)	
<i>(Independent_{t-1})</i>	<i>Republican_{t-1}</i>	-1.294	0.287	0.415	0.713
		(1.214)		(1.127)	
Initial Party	<i>Democrat_{t0}</i>	5.979	0.015	-2.526	0.380
Ref. Cat.:		(2.449)		(2.874)	
<i>(Independent_{t0})</i>	<i>Republican_{t0}</i>	-2.204	0.316	8.608	0.085
		(2.196)		(4.994)	
Survey Wave	<i>Wave 3</i>	0.704	0.097	-0.156	0.749
Ref. Cat.:		(0.424)		(0.487)	
<i>(Wave 2)</i>	<i>Wave 4</i>	0.242	0.571	-0.465	0.334
		(0.428)		(0.482)	
Age	<i>Age in Years/100</i>	3.676	0.096	-0.135	0.969
		(2.207)		(3.416)	
Race	<i>Minority</i>	0.447	0.649	-1.291	0.399
		(0.981)		(1.531)	
Sex	<i>Female</i>	-0.010	0.987	-0.245	0.841
		(0.619)		(1.219)	
Education	<i>Education Category</i>	-1.515	0.184	-0.434	0.790
		(1.139)		(1.630)	
Income	<i>1979 Family Income</i>	-1.783	0.088	0.204	0.913
		(1.045)		(1.859)	
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	-3.199	0.095	-1.945	0.425
		(1.916)		(2.439)	
Var(u_D)		8.217	0.238		
		(6.960)			
Var(u_R)				15.123	0.487
				(21.764)	
Cov(u_D, u_R)		0.365	0.813		
		(1.544)			
N		903 (301 persons)			
Log Likelihood		-345.768			

Appendix 5: Does a Spurious Relationship Exist Between Party Registration and Strength of Partisanship?

One possible explanation for the results in Table 1 is that a spurious relationship exists whereby stronger partisans choose to register with their party while weaker partisans remain unaffiliated. Since stronger partisans may be expected to register with their party as well as be more likely to continue to identify with it, party registration itself may exert no independent effect on which party an individual chooses to identify with.

To test for this possibility, I examine self-identified partisans at $t = 1$ from party registration states with validated registration to see if a connection exists in this sample between strength of partisanship and being registered with one's party. I estimate a simple binary logit model for all $t = 1$ partisans in party registration states in the 1980 Major Panel predicting whether or not a voter was registered with the party they identified with (1) or remained independent/unaffiliated or identifying with the other party (0).³⁰ The results in Table A5 show that strength of partisanship did not affect individual likeliness to register with a political party; weak partisans were just as likely to be registered with their party as their stronger counterparts. I therefore conclude that registration with a party does not serve as a proxy for strong self-identified partisanship.

³⁰ Race was omitted from the model because it predicted non-registration perfectly.

Table A5: Likelihood of Being Registered with A Political Party, Partisan Identifiers in Party Registration States

Variable		Registered with Party	
		Coeff.	<i>p</i>-value
Strong	<i>Strong Partisan Identifier</i>	0.187 (0.220)	0.394
Age	<i>Age in Years/100</i>	1.507 (0.641)	0.019
Sex	<i>Female</i>	0.185 (0.207)	0.371
Education	<i>Education Category</i>	-0.191 (0.291)	0.512
Party	<i>Republican</i>	-0.270 (0.107)	0.012
State Culture	<i>Moralistic</i>	-0.023 (0.241)	0.923
Ref. Cat.: (<i>Individualistic</i>)	<i>Traditionalistic</i>	1.008 (0.562)	0.073
Constant	<i>Constant</i>	1.093 (0.855)	0.202
N		196	
Log Likelihood		-80.869	

Notes: p-values are two-tailed. Standard errors are in parentheses.

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