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PARTY IDENTIFICATION, REALIGNMENT, AND PARTY VOTING: BACK TO THE BASICS

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The argument is presented for defining party identification by the root question, "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or what?" With this definitional base, the partisan balance between Democrats and Republicans between 1952 and 1980 shows no evidence of realignment outside the South, belying the implications of the Markus-Converse and Fiorina analyses that suggest volatility in response to short-term influences. It also appears that the correlation between party identification and voter choices for president are very constant over time in the South as well as outside the South. Party line voting by party identifiers varies by region and party but did not decrease between 1952 and 1988.

I argue the utility of distinguishing between the overlapping concepts of partisanship and party identification. I do so by presenting some of the consequences of limiting the measurement of party identification to the responses evoked by the classic root question, "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or what?" In presenting this set of findings as a research note, I will not attempt to add to the literature on the differences between strong identifiers and weak identifiers, nor will I reexamine the many interpretations of the partisan sympathies of "independent leaners."

Even without undertaking such tasks, my mode of presenting data on the historical record of party identification, narrowly defined, calls into question at least a portion of the current conventional wisdom about the nature of party identification and about the responsiveness of party identification to economic and social events in the lives of individual voters. I shall question the conclusion that

a national party realignment preceded the election of 1984. I shall also question the conclusion that dealignment has reduced the relevance of party identification for the vote choice. Finally, in pursuing these conclusions I shall question some revisionist arguments concerning the impact of short-term influences on party identification.

Party Identification and Its Operational Measure

My approach to encouraging reconsideration of some of the conventional wisdom about party identification has three major structural components. First, I employ a conceptual definition of Democrats and Republicans that rests entirely on answers to the root question, "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or what?" People who answer "independent" or "no preference" or "some other party" are not treated as

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Republicans or Democrats, even though they may subsequently admit to being closer to one of the two parties. Moreover, I will not distinguish between strong or weak partisans. Thus my basic measure is restricted to separating party identifiers (Democrats and Republicans) from nonidentifiers.

The reasons for this strict interpretation of the meaning of party identification are more firmly grounded in theory than in data. There is little question that variations in the "strength of partisanship" have reflected variations in the short-term fortunes of the respective parties, and have led to changes in the sheer intensity of partisan enthusiasms. It has also been well documented that the same short-term forces have both attracted and repelled many citizens who, while *not* major party identifiers, have on different occasions seen themselves to be closer to one of the two major party alternatives. However, neither of these considerations speaks directly to the question of individuals responding to the same short-term influences by self-consciously moving *across the boundary* separating identifiers from nonidentifiers. The question is not whether "independent leaners" may, from time to time, be more partisan in their voting or their issue preferences than are weak identifiers. And the question is not whether independent leaners are covert partisans; they are demonstrably and overtly partisan. The question is the stability (and the meaningfulness) of one's self-identification as a Democrat, a Republican, or as something else.

In searching for an answer to this question I "return to the basics" as I reconsider the original treatment of the concept and the measurement procedures reported in *The American Voter* (Campbell, et al. 1960, 121-28). A return to the source places the original measurements in context. It is clear that the effort in *The American Voter* was to build on the concept of group (party) identification, but

also to create an indicator that would differentiate among degrees of "partisanship" or "partisan coloration." With hindsight, it now seems that the effort to maximize the versatility of an operational measure blurred the clarity of the basic concept of identification with a political party. On the one hand, going beyond the root question to differentiate additional degrees of partisanship muddled the dimensionality of the resulting measure. It introduced intransitivity into a presumed continuum. Most important here, it also created indicators of *partisanship* that were reflective of short-term influences of preferences for issues or for candidates as well, perhaps, as variations in the relatively enduring sense of partisan political self that is the explicit heart of the concept of identification (Brody 1978; Keith et al. 1986; Miller 1991).

The significance of attending to "details" of measurement when analyzing party identification has recently been forcefully argued by Converse and Pierce. They emphasize that there are "two elements which have been absolutely central to the whole notion of party identification: an *extended time horizon* and some engagement of partisan feelings with *self-identity*. . . . These two elements . . . imply . . . that numerous forms of partisan feelings may be experienced by an individual, and reported upon to investigators, which *do not* constitute the possession of a party identification as such" (emphasis added; Converse and Pierce 1987, 143). In this exercise we have set aside the differentiation of independent leaners. We have done so in part because in the original interview sequence the independent leaners clearly deny a "temporally extended self-identity" as Democrat or Republican. It is also true that the follow-up question, "Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?" does not attempt to elicit a qualified or limited sense of an "enduring engagement of partisan feelings with self-

Stability of Party Identification

identity"; the question is asked only in the present tense, and it calls only for a cognitive assessment of current circumstance.¹ The answers may indicate partisanship but they do not reflect a sense of party identification. I agree with Converse and Pierce when they note that there may be no "right" way to measure *partisanship* but "it is of great importance not to treat diverse measures of partisanship as functional equivalents of one another. Partisanship has multiple facets, and keeping clear which facet is being measured, is a basic investigator responsibility."²

One result of the common practice of attending to variations in strength of party identification (strong or not so strong), and variations in the partisan sympathies of nonidentifiers (the so-called independent leaners) has been to obscure the relative stability of the basic sense of the political self, elemental party identification. Short-term enthusiasms for a Lyndon Johnson, Democratic dismay with a George McGovern, and Republican distress with Watergate are clearly reflected in abrupt changes in the now traditional *seven point* measure of partisanship; I shall document the very limited impact of such phenomena on answers to the basic identification question, "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican or a Democrat?" (Brody 1978; Shively 1979; Claggett 1981).³

In a related development, attention to variations on the strength dimension of partisanship had focused interest on what has come to be called dealignment. At some point in the reconsideration of party identification, the role of microlevel dealignment as a forerunner to systemic realignment must be taken up anew. Because of the limited goal of this research note I shall not present, nor follow the implications of, data connecting dealignment to realignment. It is enough to be concerned with the historical record of party alignments, e.g., the empirical record of the numerical balance between

those who are self-identified Republicans and Democrats. That record will be based on the classic definition of *party identification* rather than on reflections of the broader construct of *partisanship* (Miller 1991).

The Historical Record

The second major structural component of my analysis is the decision to exploit the full 36-year time series array of National Election Studies presidential election study data, 1952-88. Examining the full sweep of the period covering 10 elections provides a historical context essential to the analysis of party realignment, as well as to the simple study of aggregate indicators of stability and change through time.

Subgroup Differences

The third element in my strategy of inquiry is to consider, more or less in tandem, several strands of evidence that are usually presented in isolation, one from the other, in the literature. To this end I shall "disaggregate" the electorate and examine such constituent segment in the presence of all other segments; the parts will sum to the whole, but I will be able to assess the contribution of each part to the whole.

Electoral Participation

My first disaggregation separates voters from nonvoters. I shall note that the party identifications of nonvoters among various subgroups in the electorate differ from the party identifications of voters in the same subgroups. I shall also note that combining the two often obscures patterns that characterize voters alone. This must certainly mean that analyses relating aggregate national distributions of party

identification in the total electorate to aggregate national election outcomes have missed the mark insofar as the divergent distributions of *nonvoters* have been permitted to intrude on the interpretation of the electoral divisions among *voters*.

Race

My second disaggregation comes from separating the electorate on the dimension of race. Ideally I would like to examine each of the contributions to the nation's growing ethnic diversity. Because of the limited numbers of Hispanics, Asians, and other minorities in the samples, I trace only the black citizenry over the past four decades. However, separate attention to the partisanship of black citizens is crucial because of the dramatic changes in their contribution to the nation's politics. Even so, the numbers in the national samples are too small to disaggregate blacks into categories other than voters and nonvoters.

Region

The third focus for disaggregation of nonblacks in my historical reconstruction of stability and change in party identification adds the theme of regional differences. At least since Converse's discussion, party realignment in the South has been an acknowledged topic of importance in contemporary political analysis (Converse 1963; Wolfinger and Hagen 1985). Earl and Merle Black added to the work of Converse, Campbell, Beck, Petrocik, Wolfinger, and others and analyzed the continuation of change in the South during the Reagan years (Black and Black 1987). Curiously, however, there was no immediate follow-up to the Blacks' work to ask what the analytic removal of the South did to the remaining national estimates of party identification. I shall ask and answer the question immediately by adding a South/non-South

comparison to our comparisons of voters and nonvoters among nonblacks.⁴

Gender

In my "return to basics," as I examine the record of party identification distributions over the past 10 elections, I shall add one more dimension, *gender*. Gender-related differences usually drew comment in the 1950s to explain how widows were responsible for the slightly pro-Republican cast to the female vote of the 1950s. In more recent years, the persistent pro-Democratic, presumably liberal, cast of women's votes (when compared to male votes) has been labeled "The Gender Gap." As an empirical matter, it is real. In all of the recent elections the female vote has been more Democratic than has the male vote, and this contrasts rather sharply with both the 1950s and 1960s. Our last question, therefore is: "Is there now a 'gender gap' among nonblack voters—South or non-South—that constitutes an element of party realignment?"

Still other dimensions of interest to both practical politics and political theory, such as religion and age, could be added to this list. However, it is not necessary to go beyond the set I have selected in order to make the point that a reassessment of the historical record of the nature and role of party identification is needed. Among the dimensions of disaggregation I have specified, the distinction between voters and nonvoters is the most important (Epstein 1985; Wolfinger and Hagen 1985; Kelley 1988).

The Distribution of Party Identification

Somewhat arbitrarily, I first draw attention to evidence related to party realignment and the regional contrast, South and North, depicted among white voters in Table 1. Between the elections of 1952 and 1980, outside the South, neither

Stability of Party Identification

men nor women voters revealed any significant change in the net balance of their partisan sentiments across the 30-year interval. With gender differences exceeding two percentage points during this period only in 1964 and 1976, this is a remarkable demonstration of stability. For Northern whites, the "steady state" period of relatively unchanging party identification apparently lasted not 12 years—1952 to 1964—but a full 30 years and was finally interrupted only *after* the first Reagan election.⁵

This extraordinary display of persistence in the net party balance among the Northern white voters, who made up between 75% and 80% of all white voters over the past four decades, provides a striking implicit commentary on the literature on the stability of party identification and party alignment. It does not, of course, necessarily negate analyses of short-term fluctuations between the quadrennial readings, although both Green and Palmquist (1990) and Abramson and Ostrom (1991) have recently spoken to

Table 1. Partisan Balance of Party Identification Within Selected Groups of Voters and Nonvoters,^a 1952–88

Election Year	Non-South		South		Nation	All
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Blacks	
Voters^b						
1952	4	3	57	54	52	15
1956	3	2	57	43	36	12
1960	1	3	58	43	30	15
1964	10	6	39	39	75	32
1968	3	4	28	39	87	22
1972	1	0	21	23	68	13
1976	3	-3	25	14	70	12
1980	3	5	3	21	80	15
1984	-10	-3	5	19	73	5
1988	-9	-7	-3	23	80	4
% Distribution						
1952	41	38	8	9	4	100
1988	30	36	11	13	10	100
Nonvoters						
1952	24	22	49	50	43	39
1956	14	-4	53	46	41	24
1960	10	20	44	59	30	34
1964	31	47	49	35	69	48
1968	8	18	21	27	71	32
1972	12	16	19	29	55	24
1976	-4	12	16	48	52	24
1980	0	24	28	18	60	24
1984	7	8	20	13	52	17
1988	-2	-1	8	26	43	14
% Distribution						
1952	19	27	9	24	20	100
1988	21	29	14	20	17	100

^aEach entry is the proportion of Democratic identifiers (strong plus weak) minus (-) the proportion of Republicans identified (strong plus weak). A negative sign indicates a Republican plurality.

^bVoters defined as "validated voters" in 1964, 1976, 1980, 1984, 1988; in all other years the definition is provided by the respondents' self-reports in the postelection interview.

this point. However, the evidence of pervasive, long-term, aggregate stability outside the South is so dramatic that it would seem to call for a reexamination of many conclusions about the origins of change in party identification. It at least calls into question analyses that have, for example, used changes in *national* economic indicators to explain *national* changes in party identification, when electorally relevant change in party identification apparently did not take place outside the South.

It raises more direct questions about the implications of the thesis that party identification changes incrementally as the consequence of prior voting behavior. From 1952 to 1980, according to National Election Studies data, the Northern vote division among white voters averaged 57% *Republican*. Despite very large Republican pluralities in virtually every year except 1964, the Republican share of party identifiers did not increase as a simple extrapolation of the work of Markus and Converse (1979) might have suggested.

The same evidence of stability in the partisan balance of party identification calls attention to the absence of any cumulative impact of a series of "running tallies" that should have produced a Republican increment between 1952 and 1980 (Fiorina 1981). The aggregate stabilities may, of course, conceal compensatory changes that have offset a drift away from the Democrats and into the Republicans' camp. No reasons for, or evidence of, such compensatory, pro-Democratic changes come immediately to mind. Consequently, it seems fair to conclude that the evidence of aggregate stability among nonblack voters outside the South should prompt further study of the dynamics of microlevel change in party identification.⁶

Realignment in the South

Equally clear evidence of the mutability of partisan loyalties is provided by Table

1 and its description of change among Southern white voters in general, and white Southern males in particular, across the same time span. Apparently the beginning of the end of single-party dominance among Southern white male voters started shortly after the Kennedy election of 1960. By the time of the first Reagan presidency, 20 years later, a virtual 80-20 division favoring the Democratic party had been replaced by near parity for the Republican party. This would seem to be evidence of a classic version of the realignment of partisanship. It was a realignment of massive proportions, involving a Democratic-to-Republican switch of at least 3 out of every 10 Southern nonblack male voters. It was apparently a secular realignment as defined by V. O. Key, Jr. (1959) and introduced in the current discussion by Converse (1976).

Further analysis is needed to determine the relative importance of contributions from conversion, mobilization, and cohort replacement among Southern white voters over the 36 years included in Table 1, but the net effect is unmistakable. While conditions outside the South did not provoke any net change in the party alignment of nonblack voters between 1952 and 1980, changes within the South produced a virtual revolution. A closer examination of both sets of circumstance should tell us more about party identifications. Earl and Merle Black (1987) have suggested major themes to be explored in the analysis of the South. Outside the South suggestions of cohort replacement in the changing composition of the electorate offer a promising first line of inquiry.

The Gender Gap

The possible unitary nature of regional factors capable of producing such party realignment among Southern white male voters is initially reflected in the parallel

Stability of Party Identification

shift among nonblack Southern female voters across the seven elections between 1952 and 1976. A complicating anomaly then appears. Changes in party identification among Southern female voters after 1976 do not match the pattern of any other set of nonblack voters. This is striking because the other three groupings all reveal a shift to small Republican pluralities at the conclusion of the Reagan era in 1988, while white Southern women continuously exhibit a set of clearly pro-Democratic preferences throughout the 1980s. Moreover, their Democratic plurality in 1988 matches the figures from 1972 and results from a clear increase, not a decrease, in relative Democratic strength after the election of 1976. Why this should be so is not obvious.

The importance of explaining the male-female differences among nonblack Southern voters is accentuated by the realization that those differences in the 1980s are primarily responsible for the much discussed "gender gap" for those years (Baxter and Lansing 1983; Frankovic 1982). Even without "understanding" these gender differences, it seems possible that the appearance of the gender gap in the Reagan years was not as much a function of a liberal, pro-Democratic growth in the partisan sentiments of women as a function of the sharply conservative pro-Republican move among men (Wiris 1986). The Republicans have not had a new problem with women; the Democrats have had a continuing problem among men. And once regional data are sorted out, the specification of the gender problem is largely confined to the South.

Black Voters

Turning away from region and gender differences within white voters to consider the partisan sympathies of the black citizenry, the separation of black voters and black nonvoters from the remainder

of the electorate highlights the recent contributions of black voters to partisan national elections. The apparent impact of the Kennedy-Johnson era was more dramatic among black voters than nonvoters. And, given their mobilization beginning in the mid-sixties, black voters across the nation were ultimately only slightly fewer in number than were Southern, white male voters. As a consequence, the fact that black voters across the nation almost tripled their margin of support for the Democratic party between 1960 and 1968 by itself more than offset, in sheer numbers, the 50% decline in the Democratic plurality among Southern white males.

The countervailing moves within these two politically significant segments of the electorate underline the hazards of drawing conclusions based on national aggregations. National totals did not suggest any net change in the national balance of party identifications between 1956 and 1980. This is true, in general, because the precipitously real pro-Republican shift in the white (male) South was counterbalanced by the large growth in Democratic pluralities among newly mobilized black citizens.⁷

Voters and Nonvoters

A suggestion that variations in the nature and meaning of party identification may be associated with variations in political awareness and involvement is provided by the comparison of voters with nonvoters among blacks. Although changes within each group were similar between 1960 and 1964, sharp differences appear after 1968. Those differences are accentuated by the contrary movements between 1984 and 1988. It was black *nonvoters*, but not black voters, who contributed to the aggregate evidence suggestive of party realignment during the Reagan years.⁸

More generally, my analytic separation of voters from nonvoters exposes relatively well-ordered evidence of stability among Northern white voters, stability that contrasts with greater volatility among Northern nonvoters. Both in the unevenness of patterns of change across time and in the variability of gender differences, party identification among nonvoters seems less a matter of stable, long-term predispositions and more a matter of responsiveness to short-term, election-by-election fluctuation of circumstance than is true for voters. A similar contrast appears both among black citizens and among Southern whites, although it is less striking on first inspection because of the pervasive patterns of change within these groups. While pondering the reason for these differences between voters and nonvoters, it should also be recognized that the differences may contain the basis for reconciling other scholars' conclusions about the apparent general responsiveness of party identification to short-term influences with the new evidence of interelection stability among Northern white voters.

As a final comment on Table 1, it may be noted that the particular disaggregations that are so revealing of different patterns of stability and change between 1952 and 1980 do not serve particularly well to cast new light on the more recent changes in the distributions of party identifications that reflect a limited national realignment during the Reagan era. The 1980-84 and 1984-88 changes in party balance were primarily a Northern, white phenomenon and were not apparent at all among black voters or Southern white women voters. A detailed analysis of the realignment of the Reagan years, developed elsewhere, indicates two quite distinct stages of change in which Reagan's personal leadership and then his partisan ideology first moved the younger, less politicized voters and then the older, more politicized into the

Republican party. In neither stage of the realignment after 1980 were race, region, or gender as relevant as age, ideology, and political involvement (Miller 1990). The narrowest point to be drawn from my introductory analysis is, quite simply, that systematic inspection of disaggregated time series data may have been a good starting point for questioning much conventional wisdom about party realignment and the stability of party identification, but it does not provide answers to many of the questions that it raises or that I have posed. The broader points of theoretical interest in the analysis are the many implications for shaping future inquiry into the nature of party identification and into the conditions that facilitate its stability, or provoke change.

Party Identification and the Vote

Just as conventional wisdom about the stability of Democratic and Republican party identifications has encouraged some dubious interpretations of changing *distributions* in party identification, questions have also been raised concerning the meaningfulness of party identification as a *determinant* of the vote during the 1970s and 1980s. It seems reasonable to presume that two notable deviations in the correlation of party identification with preferences for presidential candidates, first in 1964 and then again in 1972, have been the remembered evidence for presuming a generally diminished importance for party following the elections of the 1950s (Miller, et al. 1976). A systematic examination of the simple national bivariate relationships between party identification and vote choice over time, presented in Table 2, documents both episodes of declining correlation; it also documents the atypicality of the 1964 and 1972 elections.

The left hand column of Table 2 reveals only two elections in which the unstan-

Stability of Party Identification

Table 2. Correlations of Party Identification with the Presidential Vote Choice, 1952–88

Election Year	Bivariate	Partial ^a
1952	.69	.64
1956	.67	.65
1960	.68	.60
1964	.57	.48
1968	.69	.55
1972	.52	.43
1976	.69	.64
1980	.73	.63
1984	.74	.65
1988	.75	.68
Mean	.67	.60

^aPartial correlation with controls on race, education, gender, religion, income, and union membership.

standardized bivariate correlation falls well below the 10-election average of .67. They were the Johnson-Goldwater contest, in which Republicans voted against their conservative senator from the desert, and the Democrats' disastrous experiment with the radical liberal McGovern challenge to an immensely popular Republican incumbent, Richard Nixon. After having risen steadily from the 1972 low, the party identification/vote choice correlation was up to postwar highs by 1984 and 1988. There is no indication from any recent election that party identification is less relevant to the vote decision in the 1980s than it was three decades earlier.

As a further test of the constancy of correlations with the vote, the second column of Table 2 presents the *partial* correlations of party identifications and vote choice after the simultaneous imposition of controls on race, gender, religion, education, income, and union membership. The dual message of the partial correlations is clear: (1) year after year very little of the party-vote correlation can be considered the spurious consequence of their sharing these common antecedents; and

(2) the passage of time has seen no diminution in the total effect of party identification on vote choice.

The causal role of party identification in the shaping of the attitudes and perceptions that are the immediate or proximate causes of a voter's preference for one candidate over the other had been a continuous topic of inquiry among students of electoral behavior. Evidence that the causal role of party identification as an antecedent to the vote is largely indirect through its influence on policy preferences and appraisals of presidential performance and candidate traits is provided by the Shanks and Miller (1990) analyses of the Reagan elections. Such inquiries can continue to be motivated, at least in part, by the knowledge that over time the *correlational* evidence is stronger, not weaker, for assigning a major explanatory/causal role for party identification in the context of presidential elections (Beck 1977, 1982; Fiorina 1977, 1981; Markus and Converse 1979; Page and Jones 1979; Petrocik 1981; Wattenberg 1984; Whiteley 1988; Jacoby 1988).

Party Voting

The more general conclusion that there has been no across-time decrease in the extent to which the national presidential vote is a party vote is neither challenged nor further illuminated by our disaggregation of voters by gender, region, or race. Year in and year out, women have been no more likely than men to cast a party vote *nor* to defect and cross party lines to vote for a president. After 1960, the black vote was as unwaveringly Democratic as were black voters' partisan loyalties. And within regional comparisons, as with the others, party voting in the 1980s was every bit as common—or uncommon—as it had been in the 1950s. Voting in line with one's party in 1984 and 1988 was as common as it had been in 1952 and 1956.

This conclusion holds for partisans on both sides of the aisle. Republicans in the South have an almost perfect record; they have reported voting for Republican candidates an average of at least 95% of the time from the days of Eisenhower and Nixon to the era of Reagan and Bush. Outside the South the Republican vote has been slightly more variable, but Northern Republicans have reported more than 90% support for their party's presidential candidates. The most noticeable, if still minor, occasions for defections came in 1964 and 1976, but the Republican figures for 1984 and 1988, both South and non-South, and among both men and women, were fully equal to their reported party votes in 1952 and 1956.

The record of Democratic identifiers at the polls is a persistent record of substantially *less* party support than given by Republicans, and it is somewhat more varied than the record of Republicans. Nevertheless, the Democratic patterns of regional party voting do not appear to have changed at all over three decades. Democrats, regardless of either region or sex, were just as faithful—or unfaithful—to party in their 1984 and 1988 votes as in earlier decades. There is no evidence pertaining to either party in either region of any difference in the level of party voting among party identifiers that would distinguish the 1980s from the 1950s.

There are real world consequences of this observation that extend well beyond what it says to political scientists about the more or less enduring nature and role of party identification. The data presented in Table 1, and my earlier discussion, indicate that Democrats quite apparently declined in numerical strength in the South between 1960 and 1980, and across the entire nation during the Reagan era, 1980–88. This happened without the emergence of greater loyalty or more faithful voting performance from those who *remained* as Democrats. At the same

time, Republicans increased their numbers among party identifiers without suffering any dilution of party loyalty at the polls. Even in the changing South, the party identification/vote choice relationship has been stable for more than three decades for *both* Democratic and Republican identifiers. Thus it would appear that there as elsewhere typically less-than-faithful Democrats have converted to become typically faithful Republicans. Because Republican identifiers are substantially more faithful party voters than are Democratic identifiers, both elements in the exchange argue a greater increase in the election day strength of Republicans than implied by the simple distributional shifts in party identifications. The potentially good news for the Republican party rests on the validity of my deductions based on a return to the basics. Even though a massive regional realignment, followed by a limited national realignment, has cost the Democrats their one-time advantage in the distribution of party identification, the implications of party identification for the presidential vote have not changed materially with the passage of time and the change of political circumstance. And in 1984 and 1988 the Republican ticket benefited doubly from the leveling of the partisan playing field.

Notes

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1. The emphasis on an extended time horizon is properly the center of the recent Abramson and Ostrom critique of "Macropartisanship" by

Stability of Party Identification

MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson (1989).

2. It should be noted that the authors of *The American Voter* have, both early and late, contributed to the conventional wisdom against which this note is directed. For example, in *The Dynamics of Party Support* (Converse 1976) weak identifiers were often combined with independent leaners in the measurement of "strength"; and in the *American National Election Studies Data Sourcebook* (Miller and Traugott 1989) summary measures of the partisan balance of party preference combine partisan leaners with party identifiers, as in Table 2.32, pp. 103–104. It might also be noted, however, that the definition of party identification groups displayed in tables in *The American Voter* usually followed the orthodoxy being promoted in this note, and the *Data Sourcebook* treats party identification as separate and distinct from party preference, as in Table 2.34, pp. 105–106.

3. In this regard my conclusion is on all fours with the analysis of Abramson and Ostrom who demonstrate that the temporal stability of party identifications can be missed—and often has been missed—when Gallup-like questions that emphasize the current moment ("In politics as of today . . .") are used as indicators of party identification (Abramson and Ostrom, 1991).

4. It should be noted that for simplicity of expression I shall, at times, refer to the non-South as the North, even though I mean Westerners, Mid-Westerners as well as "Northerners"; and, taking somewhat greater liberties, I shall refer to non-blacks as whites even though this group includes Hispanics and other ethnic minorities in very small numbers.

5. My earlier comment on measurement comes into play here. If one focuses on "strength of partisanship" and takes variations in the proportions of "strong" identifiers and the proportions with no partisan preference into account, one sees the aggregate evidence that prompted discussions of dealignment. These variations are not reflected in root self-identification for nonblack voters outside the South. For an elaboration of this discussion, see Miller 1990.

6. Further work on the responsiveness of party identification to short-terms forces should also take into account the analyses by Donald P. Green and Bradley Palmquist (1990). Their analyses suggest the importance of taking measurement error into account when looking for evidence of partisan instability in nonrecursive models.

7. I am indebted to David Legee for the observation that, given the dispersal of black voters throughout the nation, their mobilization did not redress the potential shift in electoral votes resulting from the regional concentration of Democratic losses and Republican gains in the Southern states.

8. One consequence of our separation of voters and nonvoters should be a reinvigoration of interest

in citizen turnout. It is quite possible, for example, that some portion of the apparent pro-Republican swing among Southern, nonblack, male voters in the 1980s may have been caused by declining turnout among Southern, nonblack Democratic males rather than by pro-Republican conversions within a constant, unchanging population of voters.

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