MACROPARTISANSHIP: AN EMPIRICAL REASSESSMENT

PAUL R. ABRAMSON
CHARLES W. OSTROM, JR.
Michigan State University

To evaluate the comparability of the Gallup and Michigan Survey Research Center measures for studying levels of partisanship among the U.S. electorate we compare the overtime distribution of partisanship and the correlates of partisanship using the results of Gallup surveys, the National Election Studies, and the General Social Surveys. Compared with the Gallup results, both the other two surveys reveal less short-term variation and also less total variation. Compared with the Gallup results, the National Election Studies partisanship results are less related to short-term electoral outcomes and do not appear to be strongly driven by short-term economic and political evaluations. Our analyses suggest that scholars should be cautious about using Gallup results to revise conclusions based upon analyses that employ the Michigan Survey Research Center party identification measure.

The correlates and consequences of party identification have been an ongoing concern among political scientists for the last three decades. There have been arguments about the origins of partisanship, its stability among individuals and electorates, the best way to measure partisan loyalties, the extent to which party identification shapes, or is shaped by, policy preferences, the dimensionality of the party identification measure, and the meaning of partisan independence.

The recent article by MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson (1989) appears to provide important insights that could lead scholars to alter their conception of the meaning of party identification. Using the results of Gallup surveys conducted from 1945 through 1987, they analyze the party affiliations of the U.S. electorate, measuring the proportion of all partisans who consider themselves to be Democrats, a measure they call *macropartisanship*. Their analyses reveal a great deal of variability in partisan preferences. MacKuen and his colleagues suggest that this short-term variation follows structured patterns of change within presidential administrations, that these changes have short-term electoral consequences, and that they are largely driven by short-term economic and political evaluations.

MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson generalize their findings to the extensive research literature on party identification, arguing that variability in party identification "forces us to reconsider the standard view of party systems and realignment theory" (1989, 1139). The "mid-range dynamics" of partisan change, they maintain, "yield partisan movements of realignment magnitude (though not realignment duration) that require neither miracles nor catastrophes but instead arise from the routine success and failure of ordinary politics" (p. 1139). Rather than focusing on long-term changes that may lead to partisan realignments, MacKuen and his colleagues suggest that scholars attempt to account for short-

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term variation and its contribution to electoral change.

As we shall see, MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson's claims are essentially correct if one uses Gallup surveys to measure partisan loyalties. But their findings may have limited generalizability in reevaluating the concept of party identification. Based upon the sweeping generalizations in their conclusions, it appears that MacKuen and his colleagues view the Gallup measure (which Gallup labels *party affiliation*) and the measure of party identification developed by the University of Michigan Survey Research Center (SRC) to be interchangeable.[1] Admittedly, as Converse and Pierce (1985) have argued, there may be no "right" way to measure partisanship. But we also agree with them that "it is of great importance not to treat diverse measures of partisanship as functional equivalents of one another" (p. 143).

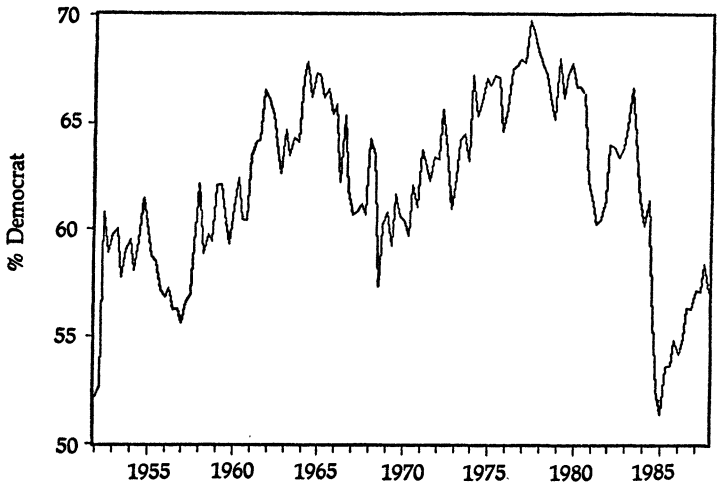
We question the implicit assumption that the Gallup and the SRC measures are equivalent, especially since MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson do not evaluate this assumption empirically. As we shall see, MacKuen and his colleagues exaggerate the degree of volatility in the Gallup measure. But even if this problem is ignored, there is reason to believe that the wording of the Gallup party affiliation question may lead to volatile results.

Let us briefly compare the wording of the Gallup and SRC items. The Gallup question reads, "In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent?" By contrast, the basic Michigan SRC question reads, "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?" As Converse has argued: "The 'generally' and 'usually' qualifiers in the SRC question were originally intended to broaden the time reference and properly classify the long-term identifier who is momentarily piqued at his own party, or tempted to defect temporarily to vote for a charismatic candidate of another party. A verb like 'consider' in the Gallup question has somewhat parallel, if perhaps weaker, overtones; but the 'as of today' invites in the baldest way a very transient frame of reference" (1976, 35). Converse reports that he had conducted "many casual comparisons" of the two items, and concluded that the responses appeared to be strongly correlated over time. However, he argues, the "face differences in content bear chiefly on the time referent" and concludes, "It is my impression that . . . the Gallup item is visibly more volatile and situation-bound than the SRC party identification measure" (1976, 36).[2]

Given the extent to which MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson generalize from their findings, it is essential to determine whether similar results obtain when the widely used Michigan SRC party identification measure is employed. As relatively few national surveys have employed the Michigan measure, there is no way to replicate the MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson findings with the Michigan measure; and we do not attempt a replication. Instead, our goal is to evaluate the comparability of the Gallup and Michigan SRC measures for studying overall levels of partisanship by comparing Gallup results with results from the two major academic surveys that use the Michigan SRC measure: the National Election Studies (NES) conducted by the Michigan SRC and the Center for Political Studies and the General Social Surveys (GSS) conducted by the University of Chicago National Opinion Research Center.[3]

As we shall see, the results using the Gallup measure and Michigan measure are substantially different. Compared with the Gallup measure, both the NES and the GSS surveys reveal less short-term variation and display less total variation. Compared with the Gallup measures, the NES measure of partisanship is not strongly related to short-term elec-

Figure 1. Percentage of Partisans Who Are Democrats: Gallup Measure, Quarterly Results, 1952–87



toral outcomes and does not appear to be driven by short-term economic and political evaluations. Based upon our analyses, we must caution scholars to use great care in generalizing the MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson results to studies of partisanship that employ the Michigan SRC measure.

Variation in Partisanship

Like MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson, we analyze the percentage of partisans who consider themselves to be Democrats. As Gallup results do not differentiate among independents who lean toward a party and those who do not, they provide only a single measure of the relative strength of the two major parties. Because the SRC measure always asks independents whether they feel closer to the Republican or the Democratic party, at least two measures of the relative strength of the parties are possible.[4] The first, which we label NES_1 and GSS_1, is the percentage of party identifiers who identify with the Democratic party. In many respects, this measure seems closer to the way the Gallup measure is constructed, but some scholars argue that many self-professed independents are in fact "hidden partisans" (see especially Keith et al., 1986). The proportion of independents is higher today than it was during the 1950s and early 1960s, and it is important to employ a measure that taps their partisan leanings. Our second measure, which we label NES_2 and GSS_2, is the percentage of party identifiers and independent leaners who either identify with, or lean toward, the Democratic party.

Even though most of our analyses are restricted to the same time points employed by the NES and GSS, we began by examining the relative level of Democratic strength for every quarter from 1952 through 1987.[5] Unlike MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson, who use selected surveys for each quarter,[6] we employed all the available Gallup surveys, except for telephone polls that consistently show relatively low levels of Democratic support. Our results are presented in Figure 1. As can be seen

Table 1. Variances in Partisanship

Time Periods	Measure of Partisanship				
	Gallup	NES_1	NES_2	GSS_1	GSS_2
1945–87 (all quarters)[a]	25.44	—	—	—	—
1952–87 (all quarters)	16.97	—	—	—	—
1952–88 (4th quarter of election years)	16.27	7.89	10.85	—	—
1972–89 (1st quarter Gallup and GSS; 4th quarter NES)[b]	27.87	10.84	14.01	18.49	17.95

[a]Result reported in MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1989, 1128.

[b]The NES results are for 1972–88.

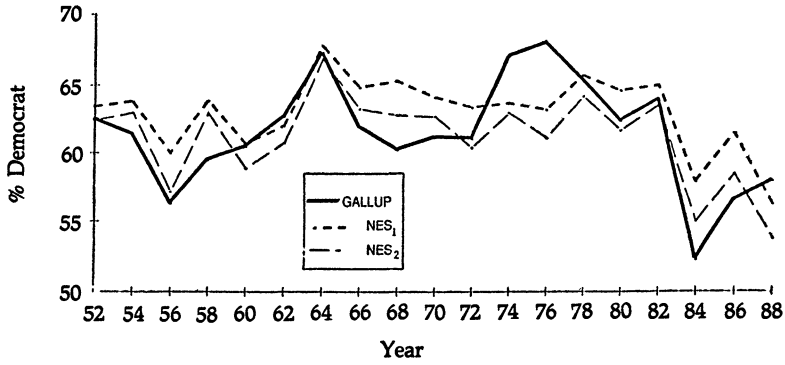
by comparing our figure with the results presented by MacKuen and his colleagues (1989, Figure 1), the overall pattern of results tracks their results fairly closely through the early 1980s.

During the mid-to-late 1980s, however, there are clear differences between the MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson results and those we report. Admittedly, both their results and ours show a sizable decline in Democratic loyalties. But their results display substantially more variation from quarter to quarter, and they present at least one quarterly result in which there are more Republicans than Democrats. Although there are single polls that show more Republicans than Democrats, published Gallup results make it clear that there was not a single quarter during the 1980s for which there were more Republicans than Democrats. At least some of the variability in the MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson analysis results from the relatively high variation they report during the mid-to-late 1980s. Thus, if changes of "realignment magnitude" involve a shift in majority party status, the published Gallup results do not show changes of this size during the 1980s.[7] The only result published by the Gallup organization showing an actual Republican lead in party affiliation is based upon surveys conducted in 1946, a period when Gallup quota sampling deliberately underrepresented nonwhites, Southerners, and persons with low social status (Glenn and Frisbie 1977).

Even though the procedures used by MacKuen and his colleagues to measure partisanship exaggerate the variability of party affiliations, the Gallup measure clearly displays considerable volatility. Figure 1 reveals that the Gallup data display considerable variation over time; and adding the years before 1952 (see MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1989, Figure 1) reveals even more variation. MacKuen and his colleagues justify their choice of the Gallup data by arguing that one needs a large number of data points to treat party identification as "a continuous macro phenomenon measured through time" (1989, 1127).

In Table 1 we report variation in overall levels of Democratic support using alternative measures of partisanship. MacKuen and his colleagues report that from 1945 through 1987 the variance with the Gallup measure was 25.44, and we have presented their finding in our table. As our table shows, there is less variation on the Gallup measure between 1952 and 1987, partly because party loyalties appear to have been in considerable flux shortly after World War II (see MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1989, Figure 1), and partly because variation is substantially less during the mid-to-late 1980s when one relies upon published quarterly results. Even so, variation during the 144

Figure 2. Gallup Measure of Partisanship Compared with NES_1 and NES_2, 1952–88



quarters between 1952 and 1987 is still substantial.

However, one need not examine every quarter during these years to demonstrate variability with the Gallup measure; for, as Table 1 reveals, variation is almost as great when the analysis is restricted to the 19 biennial time points that correspond with the NES election year surveys. As variability can be demonstrated by a relatively small number of observations, it is reasonable to employ both the NES and the GSS data to determine whether partisanship is highly variable when the Michigan SRC measure is employed. As Table 1 shows, the basic NES measure that includes only self-proclaimed partisans displays less than half the variation found with the Gallup measure.[8] Including leaners leads to more variation in the NES surveys; but even when leaners are included, the variance in the NES surveys is substantially less than variation in the Gallup surveys.

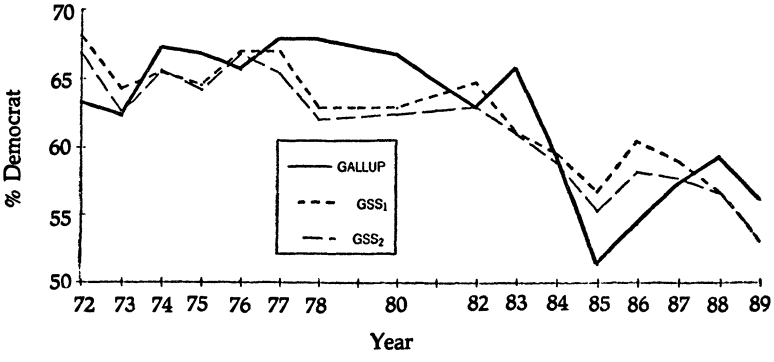
The GSS provide 16 observations between 1972 and 1989.[9] As Table 1 shows, there is clearly more variability in the Gallup measure during this more recent period. GSS_1 and GSS_2 also display considerable variation but only about two-thirds of the variation revealed by the Gallup surveys. Only 9 NES observations are available during these years, and both NES_1 and NES_2 display more variation during this more recent period. But, as with the 1952–1988 period, NES_1 displays less than half the variation revealed by the Gallup surveys, while NES_2 exhibits approximately half the variation found using the Gallup data.

Patterned Variation

MacKuen and his colleagues provide a "visual 'test' of the responsiveness of macropartisanship to presidential approval and consumer sentiment" (1989, 1130). They display changes in partisanship during the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy–Johnson, Nixon–Ford, Carter, and Reagan presidencies. Neither the NES nor GSS data provide enough time points to merit separate displays for each of these periods. Nonetheless, we can compare the 19 NES observations to the comparable 19 Gallup quarters, and the 16 GSS observations with the 16 comparable Gallup observations.

Figure 2 compares the biennial NES results between 1952 and 1988 with the Gallup surveys conducted during the

Figure 3. Gallup Measure of Partisanship Compared with GSS_1 and GSS_2, 1972–89



same period. Both the SRC and the Gallup measures follow similar trends; but it is readily apparent that the Gallup measure displays more variability, reaching higher levels of Democratic support when the Democrats are strong (e.g., following the Watergate affair) and lower levels of Democratic support when Democratic loyalties are waning, as in the late 1960s and the mid-to-late 1980s.

Table 2. Correlations among Measures of Partisanship, 1952–88 and 1972–89

Time Periods	Measure of Partisanship			
	NES_1	NES_2	GSS_1	GSS_2
1952–88[a]				
Gallup	.70	.75	—	—
NES_1	—	.97	—	—
1972–89[b]				
Gallup	.74	.81	.75	.82
NES_1	—	.98	.85	.88
NES_2	—	—	.83	.88
GSS_1	—	—	—	.98

[a]Comparisons of Gallup and NES are based upon fourth-quarter surveys conducted during each election year.

[b]The NES results are for 1972–88. Comparisons of Gallup and GSS are based upon first-quarter surveys conducted during each survey year. We compare NES surveys conducted in the fourth quarter of 1972, 1974, 1976, 1982, 1984, 1986, and 1988 with GSS surveys conducted during the first quarter of the following year.

In Table 2 we present the correlations among the various measures. As NES_1 and NES_2 are based upon the same respondents, these measures are very highly related. Of course, the relationships between Gallup and NES_1 and NES_2 are high by survey research standards. However, these relationships are below what we hope to find if the Gallup and SRC questions were measuring the identical attitude.

Figure 3 compares the annual GSS results between 1972 and 1989 with the Gallup results for the same period. As with the NES and Gallup measures, the GSS and the Gallup results follow similar patterns; but once again, it is clear that the Gallup measure displays more variability. For example, the impact of Watergate is greater with the Gallup data, and the Gallup data reveal greater Democratic losses during the mid-1980s.

Obviously, GSS_1 and GSS_2 will be very highly correlated (see Table 2). Both these measures are more highly correlated with the Gallup measure than the NES measures were; but between 1972 and 1988 the NES measures are also more highly correlated with the Gallup measure

than they were for the full 36 years for which NES and Gallup results can be compared. But the relationships between the NES and GSS measures and the Gallup measures are below what one would hope to find if identical attitudes were being tapped. In fact, even though the NES and GSS surveys are conducted during different periods, NES and GSS results are more highly correlated with each other than they are with the more proximate Gallup results.

Electoral Consequences

MacKuen and his colleagues claim that changes in overall levels of partisanship have short-term electoral consequences. They report that a one-point shift toward a party in macropartisanship (in the third quarter) leads to a three-seat gain for the party in U.S. House elections, a third of a point gain in the percentage of House votes, and a half-point gain in the presidential popular vote (1989, 1129). We report their results, along with our analyses for the years since 1952, in Table 3. Although we believe that aggregate changes in overall levels of partisanship have electoral consequences (see Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 1990, chap. 8), we wanted to determine whether short-term changes in the SRC measure yielded similar short-term political results. We restrict our analysis to the NES surveys, since they are conducted shortly before or after general elections. We compared the short-term electoral impact of changes in partisanship as measured by the NES surveys with the impact of changes in partisanship as measured by Gallup surveys conducted during the fourth quarter of each election year.

As Table 3 reveals, between 1952 and 1986 (the last election MacKuen and his colleagues studied) a one-point gain in the Gallup party affiliation measure leads to a 2.89-seat gain in House elections; but the R-squared is only .26. For this period the predicted seat change is similar using NES_1 and NES_2; but the R-squareds fall dramatically, and the *t*-ratios are no longer significant. Adding the 1988 results slightly reduces the predicted seat change for the Gallup measure, slightly reduces the R-squared, and the *t*-ratio remains significant. When the 1988 results are added, the results for the NES measures clearly deteriorate. Although a modest seat change is predicted (now less than two seats for each percentage point change in party identification), the R-squareds are now quite low. The Michigan SRC measure does not appear to be useful for explaining short-term seat change. Similar results obtain when one examines the relationship between alternative measures of partisanship and the percentage of the popular vote for Democratic House candidates. Our results employing the Gallup measure are very similar to those reported by MacKuen and his colleagues. For both the 1952–86 and the 1952–88 periods predicted vote change is less with the NES measure, and the *t*-ratios are far lower. Moreover, for both NES_1 and NES_2 the R-squareds are extremely low for both the 1952–86 and 1952–88 periods.

As MacKuen and his colleagues point out, testing the relationship of partisanship to the percentage of the vote for Democratic presidential candidates is problematic, for the number of cases is small. Our analyses consistently show partisanship to be more strongly related to the major party presidential vote than the results reported by MacKuen and his colleagues. Their results include the 1948 election, in which Truman did far better than one would have predicted from the Gallup party affiliation results. For the 1952–84 elections, the Gallup and Michigan measures yield similar results. Including the 1988 results weakens the predictive power of the Michigan measure. While all the *t*-ratios are significant, the R-squared is higher when the Gallup measure is employed.

Short-Term Evaluations

"Macropartisanship," MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson argue, "is a variable like others, subject to routine ebb and flow as citizens in the aggregate reflect their experiences of politics onto the parties" (1989, 1125). MacKuen and his colleagues' time series analysis demonstrates that the Gallup measure responds to short-term evaluations of the economy. They conclude, "We now know that partisanship moves and that the economy moves it. More precisely, we know that the aggregate division of partisanship has fluctuated over the past 40 years, that those fluctuations have been substantial, and that they have had political consequences. Finally, we now know that partisanship's twisting course has been shaped by the winds of political and economic fortune" (pp. 1138–39).

We have already seen that most of these claims are undermined when partisanship is measured by the SRC party identification question. Changes in partisanship are

Table 3. Partisanship and Election Results

Election Years	Measure of Partisanship	B	*t*-ratio	R^2	Durbin-Watson
Number of Democratic House seats					
1946–86[a]	Gallup (3d quarter)	3.00	—	.38	—
1952–86	Gallup (4th quarter)	2.89	2.39*	.26	1.11
	NES_1	2.77	1.18	.08	1.08
	NES_2	2.65	1.39	.11	.95
1952–88	Gallup (4th quarter)	2.73	2.36*	.25	1.10
	NES_1	1.72	.92	.05	1.16
	NES_2	1.76	1.12	.07	1.05
Democratic House vote (%)					
1946–86[a]	Gallup (3d quarter)	.31	—	.23	—
1952–86	Gallup (4th quarter)	.27	2.00*	.20	1.53
	NES_1	.19	.71	.03	1.68
	NES_2	.23	1.08	.07	1.49
1952–88	Gallup (4th quarter)	.26	1.97*	.19	1.57
	NES_1	.11	.53	.02	1.77
	NES_2	.15	.86	.04	1.62
Democratic share of major party presidential vote (%)					
1948–84[b]	Gallup (3d quarter)	.56	—	.17	—
1952–84	Gallup (4th quarter)	.96	2.45*	.46	1.41
	NES_1	1.47	2.20*	.41	2.08
	NES_2	1.45	2.77**	.52	2.05
1952–88	Gallup (4th quarter)	.92	2.56*	.45	1.39
	NES_1	.98	1.79*	.29	1.93
	NES_2	1.02	2.23*	.38	1.84

[a]Results reported in MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1989, 1129.

[b]Results reported in MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson, 1989, 1140, n. 4.

*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.

substantially smaller, and those changes do not significantly affect short-term congressional election results. However, individual-level data clearly show that the Michigan SRC party identification measure responds to short-term forces (see Brody and Rothenberg 1988; Fiorina 1981; and Lockerbie 1989), so that we would also expect aggregate measures of SRC partisanship to be affected by short-term considerations.[10] But as the Michigan SRC measure seems to tap longer-term party loyalties than the Gallup measure, results that employ the Michigan measure should be less driven by short-term economic and political considerations.

Conducting a time series analysis that compares the NES, GSS, and Gallup results is complicated because there are relatively few NES and GSS surveys. Moreover, the GSS studies were conducted at unequal intervals, and thus cannot be used without violating the basic time series assumption of equally spaced time intervals. Lacking monthly or quarterly data that use the Michigan SRC measure, we cannot replicate the transfer function analysis used by MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson. Nonetheless, a test we provide clearly suggests that variation in the Michigan measure is not shaped "by the winds of political and economic fortune."

Instead of replicating their causal model, we focus on Table N-1 (MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1989, 1140–41, n. 13), in which they utilize ordinary least squares to assure readers that their results "are no artifact" of their transfer function approach. They seek to demonstrate that lagged macropartisanship, political approval, and consumer sentiment can explain macropartisanship. We attempt to approximate their results with the following steps. First, we create political approval using actual presidential approval[11] minus .29 lagged consumer sentiment (see MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1989, 1140–41, n. 13). Second, we standardize political approval and consumer sentiment, employing (as MacKuen and his colleagues did) the index of consumer sentiment (ICS), which has been measured by the Michigan SRC since 1953. Third, we multiply the standardized measures of each variable by −1 during Republican administrations. Fourth, we employ the NES measures and the Gallup surveys conducted during the fourth quarter of each election year and create a lagged partisanship measure by using Gallup and NES measures from two years in the past.[12] Finally, we regress each partisanship measure on fourth-quarter partisanship (lagged two years), fourth-quarter political approval, and fourth-quarter consumer sentiment.

Table 4 presents the results of this analysis for each of the three measures. Although we used far fewer observations than MacKuen and his colleagues, we demonstrate that the Gallup measure does respond to political—and especially to economic—conditions. Lagged partisanship, the ICS, and political approval account for 56% of the total variation; and, as the Q (or residual autocorrelation) statistic demonstrates, there is no indication of significant serial correlation (see Ostrom 1990). These results support MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson's claims that partisanship (as measured by Gallup) responds to short-term conditions. The analysis also shows that one can demonstrate the impact of short-term conditions even if one employs relatively few observations. If the Michigan SRC measure does respond to short-term evaluations, we have enough data points to demonstrate their impact.

As Table 4 shows, the standard Michigan measure responds somewhat to short-term economic and political evaluations, but it is far less responsive than the Gallup measure. None of the three variables is significantly related to NES_1; and, more importantly, together they account for

Table 4. Impact of Short-Term Evaluations upon Partisanship, 1954–88

Measure of Partisanship	Constant	Lagged Partisanship[a]	Index of Consumer Sentiment[b]	Political Approval[c]	R^2	Q[d]
Gallup	28.13*	.54**	1.92*	1:31	.56	2.88
	(2.45)[e]	(2.90)	(2.32)	(1.11)		
NES_1	49.55*	.21	1.18	–.25	.19	1.43
	(2.05)	(.55)	(1.41)	(–.18)		
NES_2	46.39*	.24	1.66*	.13	.27	1.37
	(2.23)	(.70)	(1.85)	(.09)		

[a]Lagged partisanship: the lag is two years. The analysis begins with 1954 because the ICS was not measured in 1952; the 1952 partisanship results are used for our lags for 1954.

[b]Standardized index of consumer sentiment multiplied by –1 during Republican administrations.

[c]Standardized political approval multiplied by –1 during Republican administrations.

[d]Box Pierce Q-statistic with four degrees of freedom.

[e]The numbers in parentheses are *t*-ratios.

*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.

only 19% of the total variation. As with the Gallup measure, there is no evidence of serial correlation. NES_2 is more responsive to short-term evaluations; for consumer sentiment has a statistically significant impact, and somewhat more variation is explained. However, the model as a whole accounts for only 27% of the variation, only half the impact of the three variables on the Gallup results. Once again, there is no evidence of serial correlation.

These findings lead to two conclusions. First, MacKuen and his colleagues are correct when they conclude that the Gallup partisanship results do strongly vary in concert with political and economic variables. We demonstrate that this variation is sustained even when the number of data points is reduced substantially. Second, their conclusions do not hold when the Michigan SRC measure of party identification is employed, calling into question the generalizability of their findings.

Conclusions

Although MacKuen and his colleagues exaggerated the extent of variability in partisanship during the mid-to-late 1980s, they have on balance provided a careful analysis of the correlates of partisanship as measured by the Gallup surveys. Their claims that the Gallup measure is highly variable, that changes in Gallup partisanship correlate with election results, and that Gallup partisanship appears to be driven by short-term economic and political evaluations are supported by our analyses.

Despite these results, their findings may have limited implications for the study of party identification. MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson fail to consider that the Gallup measure might have built-in short-term volatility compared with the Michigan SRC measure, which is designed to tap long-term partisan attachments. The SRC measure, too, has some short-term properties, as both this analysis and individual-level analyses have demonstrated. But the SRC measure, whether employed in the NES surveys or in the GSS, has substantially less volatility than the Gallup measure. Moreover, results using the NES and GSS surveys show less total variation than results using the Gallup surveys. The NES results are not strongly related to

congressional election results. Finally, a time series analysis employing the NES surveys suggests that the SRC measure is not strongly driven by short-term economic and political evaluations.

As Converse suggested over a decade ago, the Gallup-type measures are likely to evoke a different response than the SRC measures. Our empirical reassessment demonstrates that the SRC measure has different properties than the Gallup measure. At the very least, the Gallup and the SRC measures are not interchangeable; and scholars should exercise considerable caution in generalizing findings based upon analyses of the Gallup measure to studies of party identification that have relied upon the Michigan SRC questions.

Although MacKuen and his colleagues should have been more careful in generalizing their findings to the study of party identification, their research may lead to fruitful insights. The Gallup measure is different from the SRC measure, but it may well prove to be useful. Their causal analyses suggest that we may need to combine such measures as presidential approval, the ICS, and partisanship. Further analysis is needed to evaluate the meaning of the Gallup party affiliation measure and to determine how it can best add to our understanding of public evaluations of parties, policies, and political leaders.

Notes

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1. MacKuen and his colleagues do not report the wording of the Gallup party affiliation question and do not raise the possibility that it may have different properties than the Michigan SRC measure. The manner in which they introduce the Gallup results makes it clear that they view these measures as interchangeable: "Party identification may be treated as a continuous macro phenomenon measured through time. We have gathered data for such a series, presented here as a quarterly compilation of the Gallup identification measure from 1945 through 1987" (1989, 1127).

2. A recent study by Borrelli, Lockerbie, and Niemi (1987) of polls conducted during the 1980 and 1984 elections also suggests that using the phrase *as of today* to measure partisan preferences yields results that tend to favor the party advantaged in the most recent presidential contest.

3. The data employed in our analyses are based upon the following sources. Gallup party affiliation results from 1952 through 1959 were provided by John E. Mueller of the University of Rochester, results for 1960–1980 were based upon Public Opinion Location Library (POLL) results provided by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, and the results from 1981 through the first quarter of 1989 are based upon *The Gallup Report*. The NES party identification results are based upon individual codebooks for each election year published by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research; and the GSS results are based upon cumulative code books published by the Roper Center. The number of Democratic House seats at the beginning of each Congress from 1952 through 1984 are from Congressional Quarterly 1985, and the 1986 and 1988 results are from the *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. The percentage of the total popular vote for Democratic House candidates is reported in Ornstein, Mann, and Malbin 1990, and the presidential election results come from Scammon and McGillivray 1989. The Gallup presidential approval results from 1952 through 1959 were provided by Mueller, results from 1960 through 1984 were based upon POLL, and results from 1985 through 1988 were based upon *The Gallup Report*. Results for the index of consumer sentiment are based upon the CITIBASE Data Bank. Procedures for aggregating Gallup partisanship and approval results follow those employed by Ostrom and Simon (1985). With the exception of the results provided by Mueller, all of the results we employ are available in published sources or from data archives. However, we have prepared a list of the values for every variable used in our analyses, available upon request.

4. Because the SRC measure also differentiates between partisans who feel strongly attached to their party and those who do not, it would also be possible to develop mean scores that take these responses into account. See Abramson 1983, chap. 7 for examples of such measures.

5. As we are not able to compare Gallup surveys conducted before 1952 with surveys using the Michigan SRC measure, we did not analyze Gallup surveys conducted between 1945 and 1951.

6. MacKuen and his colleagues report that their measure of partisanship was based upon data obtained from the Roper Center as a systematic sample of Gallup surveys using the first Gallup survey conducted during every odd-numbered month. These results were aggregated into quarterly results (1989,

1139–40, n. 3).

7. Just what changes of "realignment magnitude" might be is clearly a subject for debate. For an outstanding discussion of alternative definitions of realignment, see Sundquist 1983.

8. The NES surveys are usually conducted between early September and early November during presidential election years; for most midterm elections they are conducted during November, December, and the following January. We therefore compare the NES results with Gallup surveys conducted during the fourth quarter of each election year.

9. The GSS surveys began in 1972 and were conducted in every subsequent year except 1979 and 1981. As the GSS are conducted in February, March, and April, we compare these results with Gallup surveys conducted during the first quarter of each survey year.

10. For further evidence on the sources of short-term change in aggregate levels of partisanship, see Allsop and Weisberg 1988.

11. Because the NES surveys have measured presidential approval only since 1972, we rely only upon the Gallup measure.

12. If partisanship is highly variable (as MacKuen and his colleague argue), there may be problems in using a two-year lag for partisanship. However, even with the two-year lag, lagged partisanship is significantly related to the Gallup measure of party affiliation.

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Paul R. Abramson and Charles W. Ostrom, Jr., are Professors of Political Science, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824.