Senate Voting on Abortion Legislation Over Two Decades: Testing a Reconstructed Partisanship Variable

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This paper argues that the ongoing debate over whether party or ideology is the primary determinant of legislative voting behavior has misdirected scholarly efforts. As conventionally modeled, analysts usually include a dichotomous party variable and an interval variable for ideology, but normally a dummy variable cannot outperform an interval variable when entered in multiple regression. Because that methodology has been employed to assess voting on abortion in Congress, inevitably the results point to ideology as a strong predictor and party affiliation as, at best, a marginal influence. Also confounding this methodology is a recent concern that utilizing ADA scores as a proxy for ideology to predict voting behavior is a tautology, since votes are explaining votes. This study proposes a conceptual and methodological innovation by deriving a "reconstructed" partisanship variable for each Senator to determine how more partisan (conservative) Republicans and more partisan (liberal) Democrats voted on abortion legislation over the period 1973-1988. Besides partisanship, the eight regression models included three constituency influences (median family income, percent urban, and percent black) and the religious afffiliation of each Senator (Catholic or non-Catholic). Overall the partisanship variable was the strongest predictor of senatorial voting on abortion bills and the results consistently showed that more partisan Democrats voted pro-choice and more partisan Republicans voted pro-life.

The longstanding tradition of roll call analysis has given rise to an academic debate over whether political party affiliation is simply an artifact of an underlying ideological dimension in congressional voting behavior. This debate over whether party or ideology is the driving force in congressional voting has been joined on theoretical and conceptual grounds, but even more troublesome are the methodological problems of trying to evaluate the efficacy of these two specific variables. A high degree of multicollinearity between party and ideology precludes including both variables in the same multivariate analysis. Equally problematic are the problems in comparing a dichotomous (party) variable against the usual kinds of interval scales for ideology, because standardized statistical techniques inevitably will show that, *ceteris paribus*, a continuous variable will outperform a dichotomous variable. This paper offers a solution to this methodological

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dilemma by reconstructing a "partisanship" variable which embeds an ideological dimension within party affiliation. As a test of its predictive powers, this new variable is compared to traditional party and ideological variables in an analysis of abortion voting in the Senate over two decades.

Is It Party or Ideology?

The early studies of congressional voting highlighted party and constituency as the salient predictors of legislative behavior (Turner 1951; MacRae 1958; Truman 1959). Members of Congress would follow their party identification, it was observed, unless they experienced conflicting pressures from the districts or states. For the "typical" Republican or Democrat elected from generally safe districts, party and constituency were mutually supportive and led to a high degree of cohesion among Republicans and Democrats. Indeed it was observed that party loyalty among legislators was a function of ideological voting insofar as districts with certain demographic attributes tended to elect conservative Republicans and other types of districts generally elected liberal Democrats (Froman 1963). The outliers—conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans—deviated because their districts contained more than the average numbers of voters who identified with the opposing party.

But many recent studies report that legislative voting on a range of policies is characterized by a liberal-conservative dimension (Overby 1991; Mueller 1986; McCormick 1985; McCormick and Black 1983; Smith 1981; Schneider 1979; Bernstein and Anthony 1974; Moyer 1973; Russett 1970). This body of research questions the impact of constituency opinion as well as party affiliation. On the former, rather than search for positive cues from constituency on legislative voting, it operates on the assumption that, as with roll calls on strategic weapons systems, members of Congress follow their ideology "as long as the cost of doing so is not prohibitive" (Lindsay 1990, 957). Thus Representatives and Senators will avoid votes that would alienate their constituents but, in the absence of that uncertainty, they prefer to follow their own ideological predispositions rather than try to uncover the true feelings of their districts or states.

Party affiliation is conceptualized as an artifact because "political parties per se are not the primary variable; rather, the fundamental dimensions of belief that give rise to the parties are the primary variables" (Poole 1988, 129). Thus what causes most Democrats to vote together is the clustering of liberal attitudes among Democrats, and a similar clustering of conservative attitudes produces an even more unified vote among Republicans. Consequently, if congressional parties lack the cohesion of

parliamentary parties, it is mainly because "the Democratic party is much less homogeneous than the Republican party. The Republicans are concentrated at center right to far right. The bulk of the Democratic party is concentrated at center left to far left, but substantial numbers of Democrats are located at center right and far right" (Poole and Daniels 1985, 381).

On operational grounds, what Poole and Daniels (1985) mean is that party, when subjected to a multivariate analysis, is always entered as a dichotomous ("dummy") variable, usually with Democrats coded 1 and Republicans as 0. That operationalization bunches liberal Northern Democrats and conservative Southern Democrats into one category and, among Republicans, the small number of Northeastern liberals with the majority of conservatives. This kind of party affiliation variable cannot capture the range of ideological positions among Republicans or Democrats that would influence the gradations of liberal to conservative voting.

Research on Abortion Voting

There is a substantial literature on abortion voting and, for our purposes, many researchers have argued that ideology is far more important than party in explaining those roll calls. Indeed the most extensive analyses have argued that party was marginal or without importance, a finding which seems almost counterintuitive given other research that points to abortion as a cleavage issue dividing the two parties' presidential candidates and their platforms (Daynes and Tatalovich 1992). More recent studies indicate that abortion is beginning to operate as a party realigning issue within the electorate (Abramowitz 1995; Wattier, Daynes and Tatalovich 1996) and within Congress (Adams 1992).

Three roll calls in 1976 on the original Hyde Amendment, banning Medicaid funding of abortions unless the mother's life was endangered, were examined by Vinovskis (1980) using multiple classification analysis. He found that the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) rating of liberal voting by Representatives was the most important predictor, and second ranked was religion. At first party affiliation appeared to be an important predictor as well but "after we controlled for the effects of the other variables, the differences between Republicans and Democrats not only disappeared, but on two of the three roll-call votes Democrats were now slightly more likely to favor the Hyde Amendment than Republicans" (242-243).

Peltzman's (1984) analysis confirmed that ideology was the most important predictor of congressional voting on abortion, but the most extensive study of House abortion voting (Tatalovich and Schier 1993) found that the ADA Score was the strongest predictor in eight Congresses. The ADA

scores signified that Representatives who generally voted liberal on legislation tended to vote pro-choice on abortion bills. As to party, Tatalovich and Schier (1993, 131-132) concluded that "[t]he effect of party on abortion voting in the 93rd, 94th, 96th, and 97th Congresses is not statistically significant. And where party does exhibit a statistical association with voting on abortion, the relationship is negative in three instances. Only after taking account of the substantial effect of ideology on voting pro-choice is there a slight tendency for Republicans to be more supportive of abortion than Democrats."

Both studies, by Vinovskis and by Tatalovich and Schier, used the "raw" ADA score to measure ideology and they included a dichotomous variable for party affiliation. While Vinovskis as well as Tatalovich and Schier faithfully reported that "ideology" was markedly stronger than party, their findings may be a statistical artifact—interval variables (i.e., ideology) usually produce larger correlations than a nominal party variable (Poole and Daniels 1985).

Research on Senate abortion voting used either party or a proxy for ideology, but not both, as was done in the analyses of House roll calls. Also the previous Senate studies focused on a single roll call: the June 28, 1983 roll call by which the Senate defeated (49-50) the pro-life Hatch-Eagleton Amendment (HEA) to the Constitution. Granberg (1985, 127) found that the odds of a pro-HEA vote increased if the Senator was a Republican, but the measure he used for ideological voting (Americans for Constitutional Action Score) was not significant in his 11-variable regression model. The HEA also was subjected to a logistic regression analysis by Strickland and Whicker (1986), comparing it to a vote on a pro-life bill sponsored by Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), but no measure of ideology was included in their analysis. However both ideology (ADA Scores) and party were used in the latest analysis of the HEA by Chressanthis, Gilbert, and Grimes (1991). They found that party was insignificant and that "ideological measures may be more important than constituent interests in voting outcomes on abortion legislation" (596).

Methodology

In this analysis the Senate votes on abortion were subjected to regression analysis using the same model to assess whether the predictors of pro-choice voting have changed over two decades. Our dependent variable is an additive scale that indicates the percentage of times each Senator voted pro-abortion in each two-year period.[1] Each roll call was scored 1 for a pro-abortion position and 0 for an anti-abortion position. An abstained or

absent vote was coded as missing. The dependent variable, in other words, reflects the percentage of votes in which each Senator supported the pro-choice position. The separate votes were then summed and divided by the number of votes cast to create a dependent variable that varies between 0.00 (pro-life) and 1.00 (pro-choice). This procedure allows us to make comparisons across the eight Senates from 1973 through 1988. The intercorrelation matrix for each group of Senate votes shows them to be highly intercorrelated, suggesting that the votes represent a single policy dimension.[2]

The religious affiliation of Congresspersons was highly influential according to the research by Vinovskis (1980) and Tatalovich and Schier (1993) and has been associated with "free voting" on abortion by Members of Parliament in Great Britain (Hibbing and Marsh 1987). Cook, Jelen and Wilcox (1992, 94) agree that the Roman Catholic Church "has been the most visible opponent of legal abortion. Indeed, for many, abortion *is* a Catholic issue." While the views of abortion by lay Catholics are not monolithic, attitudes generally and especially among Catholics who are more religious tend to be conservative with respect to abortions (Cook, Jelen and Wilcox 1992, 101-108; also see Chandler, Cook, Jelen and Wilcox 1994, 136-137). *It is hypothesized that Catholic Senators will cast more anti-abortion votes than non-Catholic Senators*. Therefore non-Catholics are coded 1 (pro-choice) and Catholics are coded 0 (pro-life).

Our choice of variables to measure constituency effects were dictated by two considerations. First we needed state-wide demographics which are associated with party competition and ideological divergence so that one common set of constituency variables can be used to reconstruct both the ADA Score and our new "partisanship" variable. Second, we needed demographics that serve as proxies for mass opinion toward abortion policy so credible alternatives can be tested alongside party and ideology. Choosing demographic attributes with no relationship to abortion attitudes would bias the findings and elevate the importance of party or ideology as predictors of senatorial voting behavior. Included therefore are median family income, percent urban, and percent non-white. These demographics were drawn from the 1970 Census to analyze the 93rd through 96th Congresses and from the 1980 Census to analyze the 97th through 100th Congresses.

Peter Skerry (1978, 70) was one of the early observers to note that a reverse class cleavage affects the abortion issue, which he attributed to "a larger cultural conflict between certain strata of the upper-middle class—the highly educated professionals, scientists, and intellectuals—and the mass of Americans who comprise the working and lower-middle classes." Researchers have confirmed that socio-economic status predicts support for legal abortion. Especially people with higher educations but additionally "[t]hose

citizens in high-prestige jobs and who have high family incomes are also more supportive of legal abortion" (Cook, Jelen and Wilcox 1992, 50). To tap this class linkage, Vinovskis (1980) included the percentage of families below $3,000 income while Tatalovich and Schier (1993) included median family income. *Therefore we hypothesize that Senators from states with lower median family incomes will tend to vote pro-life on abortion bills.*

There is a pronounced urban bias to the distribution of abortions and abortion clinics in the United States (Henshaw and Van Vort 1994, 101-103). Also Tatalovich and Daynes (1989) determined that hospitals in large cities were more likely to offer abortion services along with maternal services than hospitals located in small towns and rural places. Opinion polls do not emphasize residence as a primary determinant of abortion attitudes. A study in the late 1960s found some relationship between city size and approval of abortion, particularly in very large cities (Mileti and Barnett 1972), and more recent analysis confirms that people raised in cities are less likely to oppose abortion than those from rural areas (Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox 1992, 52). The general expectation is that states with more urban areas are likely to have more tolerant attitudes toward abortion. *Therefore we hypothesize that Senators from states with smaller proportions of urban dwellers will tend to vote pro-life on abortion bills.*

Since 1965 "a consistent finding in public opinion surveys of abortion attitudes has been that black respondents are less in favor of legal abortion than white respondents," observed Hall and Ferree (1986, 193), whose research determined that the racial "gap in prochoice attitude is as great in the 1982-84 period as it was 10 years before, and the pattern of lesser black support for legal abortion is consistent on an item-by-item basis over the decade" (204). Thus they disagree with the conclusion by Combs and Welch (1982, 518) that "[w]hile the overall gap between the two racial groups has narrowed since 1972, blacks were still less likely to support abortion than whites." Moreover the racial differential is more pronounced in the South (Secret 1989). So even though black women have abortions at much higher rates than white women, and the fact that the Congressional Black Caucus has been committed to pro-choice notwithstanding, even today blacks are found to have less liberal views on abortion than whites (Cook, Jelen and Wilcox 1992, 44-48). *Therefore we hypothesize that Senators from states with larger populations of non-whites will vote more pro-life on abortion bills.*

Several analysts have used the raw ADA Score to examine voting on abortion legislation (Tatalovich and Schier 1993; Chressanthis, Gilbert, and Grimes 1991; Vinovskis 1980). Many interest groups rate how legislators vote on key bills of importance to their membership, but the scores calcu-

lated by the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), a liberal advocacy group, are regularly used by legislative scholars as a proxy for ideological voting, if not ideology. A classic essay by Philip E. Converse (1964, 207) conceptualizes ideology as a "belief system" or "a configuration of ideas and attitudes in which the elements are bound together by some form of constraint or functional interdependence." Key to this conceptualization of ideology is the notion of "constraint" which has special relevance to how political elites assess issues.

As Poole (1988, 118) explains:

> From an observer's point of view, the constraint means that certain issue positions are bundled together, and the knowledge of one or two issue positions makes the remaining positions very predictable. To know that a member of Congress favors an increase in the minimum wage makes it highly likely that the member favors increased spending to aid the homeless. These relationships are typically summarized by the words "liberal" and "conservative," and informed observers of the U.S. political landscape can easily tick off the issue positions normally associated with these words.

Interest group ratings have been validated as accurately reflecting a left-right dimension (Poole and Daniels 1985) and thus are good surrogates for ideology. It may not be obvious, however, that a "new" issue on the political agenda can be automatically bundled as "liberal" or "conservative" until the implications become apparent with the passage of time. Abortion was not politicized until the 1973 Supreme Court decision that constitutionalized a right to abortion during the first trimester of a pregnancy. Also issues evolve over time with the result that political coalitions once associated with a given issue may change. *Therefore we hypothesize that Senators with lower ADA scores will tend to vote more pro-life on abortion, and vice versa.* But what intrigues us is whether the 1970s votes on abortion legislation were related to a liberal-conservative ideological dimension and if that linkage has been strengthened during the 1980s.

However, because we are predicting behavior (abortion votes) from behavior (key ADA votes), this relationship may inflate the ADA score as a predictor and thus diminish "party effects" and constituency impacts. This methodological problem lies at the heart of a serious critique of this approach by Jackson and Kingdon (1992, 809), who argue that ADA values are flawed because "[u]se of these scales to represent representatives' ideology in a model of their voting behavior turns out to be simply a tautology. It is explaining votes with votes. The problem is that the interest groups score, the explanatory variable, and the votes being modeled, the dependent

variable, are almost certain to be tapping the same or related dimensions."[3] Our methodology attempts to address this concern in three ways.

First, if abortion votes could themselves be scaled on a left-right dimension, then the ADA score or any left-right scale would be an inflated predictor. We attempt to compensate for this potential bias by (1) removing abortion votes from the ADA scale and re-calculating the scores and (2) averaging the scores for two years to create a congressional session score.

Second, three different multiple regression models are presented and each has different combinations of variables. By comparing the results across models, particularly changes in the explainable variance and changes in the beta weights, we can assess the impact of ideology with or without party and constituency effects and with or without ideology. It already has been noted that party affiliation and ADA scores are not included in the same model for reasons of multicollinearity.

Third, and most important, the "raw" ADA scores which Jackson and Kingdon criticize are not used in this analysis. Since ADA scores may "represent" constituency forces and not simply their personal worldview, we sought to eliminate this source of bias. Following the methodological technique of Segal, Cameron, and Cover (1992), the ADA scores for all Senators were reconstructed by controlling for constituency influences on ADA voting in order to isolate "residual" effects as reflecting their "personal" ideology. We regressed the ADA scores (minus all abortion votes) against our three demographic variables (urban, non-white, median family income) and also three state attitudinal variables (ideology, partisanship, political culture[4]) in order to derive residual (unpredicted) values of the ADA scores for use in the regression models. In sum, the "residual" values—not the original ADA score—are utilized as the "personal ideology" measure in this analysis and, though the raw ADA scores are correlated with the "residual" values, there is no one-to-one relationship between the residuals and how the ADA rated individual Senators.[5]

The use of a dichotomous variable for party affiliation causes other methodological problems, as already noted. Our methodological innovation is to derive a "partisanship" variable based on **both** party affiliation and ideology. We used probit analysis to predict the party of each Senator (Republican=0; Democrat=1) using state ideology, state partisanship, state political culture, region, and those "residual" values for "personal" ideology for each year. (The only variable that differs from model to model is personal ideology; see Appendix.) By substituting an interval variable for partisanship, which accounts for the gradations of ideological positions within each congressional party, we have addressed the concerns by Poole

and Daniels (1985) that a dichotomous party variable loses predictive power when matched against an interval variable for ideology.

Findings

To evaluate the importance of party versus ideology and demographic variables as predictors of abortion voting in the Senate, three alternative multiple regression models were derived for the eight Senates (Table 1). Each model includes urban, non-white, median family income, and the religious affiliation of the Senators. The alterations involve the use of party, ideology, or partisanship. The first includes the reconstructed ADA value but no party or "partisanship" variable. The second includes the dichotomous party affiliation variable but no "partisanship" variable or reconstructed ADA value. The third includes the reconstructed "partisanship" variable without the ADA values. Ideally one would include the ADA values and party affiliation or the reconstructed "partisanship" variable in the same equation, but that option was disallowed because of obvious multicollinearity problems.[6]

The results generally do **not** comport well with the findings on abortion voting in the House of Representatives. Recall that Vinovskis (1980) and Tatalovich and Schier (1993) found that party had no impact, with ideology the strongest predictor. By comparing the Beta Weights between the first and third models, ADA is a stronger predictor than party affiliation in every instance. However the predictive power of party affiliation rose markedly during the 1985-86 and 1987-88 Senates, which is consistent with the argument by Adams (1992) that abortion is becoming a realigning issue for both parties. In every case the model with ADA also accounts for more explainable variance than the model for party affiliation. However, unlike the situation in the House, the dichotomous party affiliation variable **was** statistically significant in every model beginning with 1975-76, which suggests that party affiliation is overall a stronger cue for Senate voting than for House voting on abortion.

Studies of House voting also determined that religion was quite strong, but religion seems to be **less** salient for Senate voting. As was the case in the House, however, every coefficient was positive to signify that non-Catholic Senators were more pro-choice than Catholic Senators. Looking at the third regression model, religion was not statistically significant in 1973-74 or 1987-88 and was third ranked behind median family income and party affiliation in 1977-78 and 1979-80. It ranked behind median family income in 1975-76 and behind party affiliation in 1983-84 and 1985-86. Only in 1981-82 was religion the strongest predictor in the model. Religion fares

Table 1. Regression Models Comparing Reconstructed ADA Scores, Party, and Partisanship as Predictors of Senate Abortion Voting, 1973-1988[a]

RECONSTRUCTED ADA VARIABLE (IDE)	S.E.	DICHOTMOUS PARTY VARIABLE (PTY)	S.E.	RECONSTRUCTED PARTISANSHIP VARIABLE (PSN)	S.E.
1973-1974					
MFI[b] .341*	.058	MFI .386*	.053	MFI .327*	.057
.1258		.1358		.1209	
IDE .300*	.052	PTY .045	.105	PSN .329*	.204
.1545		.0444		.6632	
REL .128	.148	REL .093	.154	REL .114	.146
.1812		.1344		.1621	
BLK -.069	.006	BLK -.072	.006	BLK -.123	.006
-.0035		-.0038		-.0064	
URB -.063	.005	URB -.074	.005	URB -.060	.005
-.0022		-.0025		-.0021	
CONST -.7096		-.7574		-1.0192	
Adj R2 .140		.088		.158	
1975-1976					
MFI .495*	.038	MFI .444*	.033	MFI .567*	.038
.1398		.1175		.1602	
IDE .384*	.036	PTY .205*	.074	PSN .396*	.188
.159		.1622		.7969	
REL .203*	.097	REL .220*	.103	REL .192*	.097
.2200		.2431		.2074	
BLK -.041	.004	BLK -.071	.004	BLK -.127	.004
-.0017		-.3030		-.0053	
URB -.212	.004	URB -.079	.003	URB -.222	.004
-.0059		-.0022		-.0061	
CONST -.5051		-.6543		-1.1116	
Adj R2 .289		.191		.281	
1977-1978					
MFI .299*	.042	MFI .294*	.034	MFI .250*	.043
.0858		.0796		.0932	
IDE .383*	.038	PTY .276*	.076	PSN .324*	.177
.1524		.2186		.5294	
REL .226*	.114	REL .243*	.113	REL .205*	.118
.2658		.2864		.2412	
BLK -.053	.004	BLK -.084	.004	BLK -.171	.005
-.0022		-.0035		-.0070	
URB -.074	.004	URB -.000	.003	URB -.088	.004
-.0020		-.0000		-.0024	
CONST -.2606		-.4818		-.5531	
Adj R2 .195		.155		.133	
1979-1980					
MFI .396*	.039	MFI .366*	.034	MFI .330*	.040
.1164		.1010		.0969	
IDE .447*	.036	PTY .318*	.075	PSN .481*	.127
.1853		.2599		.6470	
REL .217*	.110	REL .215*	.113	REL .238*	.110
.2685		.2638		.2939	
BLK .080	.004	BLK .003	.004	BLK -.103	.005
.0035		.0001		-.0045	
URB -.091	.004	URB -.056	.003	URB -.068	.004
.0025		-.0016		-.0019	
CONST -.6296		-.6579		-.8233	
Adj R2 .307		.202		.307	

Table 1 continued

			1981-1982					
MFI	.371*	.041	MFI	.244	.038	MFI	.332*	.041
	.1187			.0724			.1062	
IDE	.416*	.041	PTY	.270*	.085	PSN	.457*	.119
	.1925			.2428			.5910	
REL	.242*	.107	REL	.278*	.113	REL	.267*	.106
	.2854			.3302			.3150	
BLK	.006	.004	BLK	-.078	.005	BLK	-.119	.005
	.0001			-.0038			-.0056	
URB	-.098	.004	URB	.031	.004	URB	-.094	.004
	-.0030			.0009			-.0029	
CONST	-.8237			-.6967			-.9464	
Adj R2	.258			.142			.279	
			1983-1984					
MFI	.296*	.036	MFI	.262*	.040	MFI	.273*	.037
	.0936			.0831			.0860	
IDE	.528*	.037	PTY	.334*	.081	PSN	.537*	.117
	.2403			.2940			.7299	
REL	.257*	.095	REL	.266*	.108	REL	.291*	.097
	.2961			.3122			.3357	
BLK	-.046	.004	BLK	-.138	.005	BLK	-.202*	.004
	-.0022			-.0067			-.0096	
URB	.007	.003	URB	.035	.004	URB	-.026	.003
	.0002			.0011			-.0008	
CONST	-.7568			-.8008			-.9141	
Adj R2	.387			.214			.372	
			1985-1986					
MFI	.278*	.038	MFI	.197	.035	MFI	.189	.038
	.0899			.0587			.0610	
IDE	.589*	.039	PTY	.539*	.078	PSN	.612*	.110
	.2768			.4822			.7995	
REL	.151	.098	REL	.196*	.102	REL	.148	.098
	.1766			.2278			.1732	
BLK	.079	.004	BLK	-.052	.004	BLK	-.051	.004
	.0038			-.0025			-.0025	
URB	-.101	.004	URB	-.034	.003	URB	-.074	.004
	-.0032			-.0010			-.0023	
CONST	-.3685			-.3894			-.4474	
Adj R2	.362			.281			.373	
			1987-1988					
MFI	.287*	.035	MFI	.183	.033	MFI	.302*	.036
	.0824			.0490			.0874	
IDE	.582*	.036	PTY	.499*	.077	PSN	.607*	.100
	.2434			.4039			.6520	
REL	.106	.092	REL	.137	.099	REL	.149	.094
	.1113			.1432			.1557	
BLK	.042	.004	BLK	-.120	.004	BLK	-.147	.004
	.0018			-.0052			-.0063	
URB	-.157	.003	URB	-.063	.003	URB	-.204	.003
	-.0044			-.0018			-.0057	
CONST	-.1327			-.1229			-.4192	
Adj R2	.329			.204			.315	

[a]Values are standardized (top: Beta Weight) and unstandardized [bottom:(b)] regression coefficients; asterisk indicates statistical significance at least at the .05 level; S.E. signifies the Standard Error.
[b]The variables are: IDE=reconstructed ADA Score, REL=Religion, PTY=Party (dichotomous variable), PSN=Partisanship (interval variable); URB=Urban, BLK=Black, MFI=Median Family Income.

even worse in the first model when the reconstructed ADA value is entered: insignificant in three models and third ranked (behind median family income and ADA or vice versa) in five other Senates.

On constituency effects, Tatalovich and Schier (1993, 131-132) found no impact from urbanism or income and very modest non-white influences. Our findings show a fairly strong class influence on Senate voting. The positive coefficients with median family income—that Senators from more affluent states tend to vote pro-choice—not only agree with the literature on abortion attitudes but are consistent across four models. Income was a significant predictor in 25 of the 32 regression models and was first or second ranked in twenty-three instances. Thus, the "reverse" class dynamic causes Senators to vote liberal on abortion legislation even though an upper income profile generally relates to conservative voting on economic and social-welfare measures.

Most of the previous research on the House and the Senate strongly indicated that party is relatively unimportant but that "ideology" was very important. This analysis casts serious doubt on that interpretation, based on the compelling effects of our reconstructed partisanship variable. A comparison of the first model, with reconstructed ADA, against the third model, with the reconstructed partisanship variable, shows that for all Senates but one (1977-78) **partisanship** is markedly **stronger** than the ADA values as a predictor of voting on abortion. On the whole, as would be expected, more "partisan" Democrats vote more pro-choice and more "partisan" Republicans vote more pro-life. In sum, partisanship outperforms the reconstructed ADA values because our estimates for partisanship were based on both ideological diversity and constituency forces among Republicans and Democrats.

The beta weights in the second model, with a dichotomous party affiliation variable, when contrasted against those in the third model, with the newly reconstructed partisanship variable, show how much superior this interval variable is. The improvement in the Beta Weights ranged from .048 (1977-78) to .284 (1973-74).

Conclusion

Is it party or ideology? No doubt scholars will continue to raise this question, and they may even raise it in a softer version: under what conditions is it party or ideology? Either question, we think, will misdirect research on political elites. Instead we pose an alternative research question: what are the effects of "strong" or "weak" partisanship on decision-making by political elites?

Recent research on political parties has focused on what could be characterized as the "demise-and-rise" debate. Parties are either defunct or rejuvenated, or somewhere in-between on the way to one of these two extremes. Each key aspect of party—party in the electorate, party as an organization, and party in government—has been witness to this debate. This paper suggests that the partisanship of legislators (i.e., party in government) has influenced voting on abortion bills. Heretofore much literature suggested that abortion voting was dominated by ideology only, but that conclusion hinged on a conceptualization of party as being devoid of an ideological component. To the contrary, party and ideology are not two distinct and separate decision criteria but rather they are aspects of one construct—partisanship. The evidence for this new conceptualization is that our model with reconstructed partisanship outperforms models with party or with ideology. Party is not simply one or another group, scored as 1 or 0; party is a coalition of members who have varying degrees of commitment to the core beliefs of their group.

Studies of the mass electorate since the 1950s (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960; Nie, Verba and Petrocik 1979) have examined both the direction and intensity of partisanship by differentiating between "weak" and "strong" Republicans or Democrats whereas, in contrast, for some time aggregate studies of elites have focused only on direction. The results of this analysis strongly argue against using party affiliation as conventionally operationalized. A dichotomous variable for party is not an effective measure to capture the diversity of opinion among Senators—or Representatives—of either political party.

These findings begin to redress the methodological inequities in comparing party affiliation against interval measures of "ideology" based on group ratings. The reconstructed partisanship variable, unlike the dummy variable for party affiliation, more accurately reflects the ideological diversity among Republicans and especially Democrats. Recall that this measure was derived from personal ideology and constituency influences (state political culture, state partisanship, state ideology) as well as region. An ideological component is therefore **embedded** in the estimated values for partisanship.

Thus we have demonstrated a way to measure intensity as well as direction for political elites, which seems to produce stronger results than previously found on a research topic where party has been shown to not matter. The empirical contribution of this analysis for congressional voting research is that, henceforth, scholars ought to build upon our work and substitute an estimated value for partisanship instead of using a dummy variable for party affiliation.

NOTES

[1]Any roll call where less than 25% of the Senators voted in opposition was omitted from the analysis. Scale scores were created for Senators who voted on a majority of the roll calls selected for analysis. The number of roll calls included for each Senate follow 1973-74, 1 vote; 1975-76, 7 votes; 1977-78, 16 votes; 1979-80, 15 votes; 1981-82, 6 votes; 1983-84, 9 votes; 1985-86, 7 votes; 1987-88, 9 votes.

[2]The reliability of each abortion scale was checked with Cronbach's Alpha. The average Alpha for the seven scales (1975-76 through 1987-88) was .95, varying from .97 and .92.

[3]Our firm belief is that, if the Jackson and Kingdon critique is allowed to stand unchallenged, then the ability of most scholars to pursue roll call analysis will be severely limited, because it is impractical to survey all members of Congress at regular intervals (assuming they would be forthcoming in their responses) in order to obtain the kind of exogenous variable for ideology that Jackson and Kingdon require. Indeed it is noteworthy that the third edition of Kingdon's (1989) classic on voting behavior in Congress simply replicates the data from the same subset of 60 Representatives who were interviewed in 1969, twenty years earlier. All attempts to update those findings were speculative in nature or based on secondary sources. Because voting analyists usually desire to know what motivates *all* House members on an issue, particularly a new issue like abortion, the use of any subset of legislators could yield biased results. Thus for most studies every legislator would need to be interviewed in order to pursue roll call analysis using the Kingdon strategy.

An externally validated measure of ideology (using surveys or interviews) might not, in fact, yield a perfect measure of ideology because attitudes are one step removed from behavior. Which is a more accurate predictor of legislative behavior—a measure based on what legislators say (interviews) about issues or their worldview or a measure based on what legislators actually do (roll call votes)? However valid on theoretical grounds the Jackson and Kingdon critique might be, we have no evidence that attitudes are a more effective predictor of future policy choice when compared to a surrogate based on past voting behavior. Jackson and Kingdon pointed to research on mass electoral behavior as properly utilizing attitude measures, but a devastating review of forty years of research in this tradition by Wicker (1969, 75) concluded: "Most socially significant questions involve overt behavior, rather than people's feelings, and the assumption that people's feelings are directly translated into action has not been demonstrated."

Finally, there must be some theoretical grounds for finding an observed relationship even if the estimate of that relationship is relatively crude. Our assumption (and one shared by many legislative analysts) is that abortion as an issue *does* tap into the legislators' ideology, expressly one based on whether the government should interfere in the private lives of citizens. Thus the Jackson and Kingdon critique poses a CATCH-22, because the theoretical rationale for expecting a relationship between ideology and abortion voting are the same reasons why the ADA Scores are inflated at the expense of party and constituency.

[4]These state attitudinal variables were derived by Sharkansky (1969) and Wright, Erikson, and McIver (1985).

[5]Beginning with 1973-74 and ending with 1987-88 the coefficients between the ADA score (excluding abortion votes) and the "residual" values for personal ideology follow: .788; .772; .795; .823; .817; .864; .876; and .818.

[6]Beginning with 1973-74 through 1987-88, the correlations between dichotomous party and personal ideology (.637; .562; .563; .642; .724; .682; .731; .720) but especially between the reconstructed partisanship variable and personal ideology (.717; .565; .634; .761; 781; .747; .826; .781) show the potential for a multicollinearity problem.

APPENDIX

We used probit analysis to predict the party of each Senator (Republican=0; Democrat=1) using as predictors the measures of state ideology and state partisanship devised by Wright, Erikson, and McIver (1985), the state political culture variable devised by Sharkansky (1969), region (south=1 and non-south=0), and the "residual" values for "personal" ideology for each year. The probit model was used to generate a probability estimate of a Senator being 1 (or a Democrat), and the resulting estimates ranged from 0 to 1 with all intermediate values, meaning that this generated variable is an interval measure. The probit models correctly predicted from 67% to 86% of the Senators' party affiliations and the variables for party affiliation and partisanship were intercorrelated in the .44 to .79 range. From 1973-74 through 1987-88, the correlation coefficients between the partisanship and party affiliation variables and the percentage of actual party affiliations corrected predicted are: .54 and 74.2%; .44 and 67.3%; .51 and 71.3%; .59 and 73.9%; .69 and 83.2%; .69 and 83.3%; .68 and 78.9%; .79 and 86.4%. Final validation that we derived a reasonably "reliable" variable for partisanship is that our reconstructed measure outperforms the dichotomous party variable as a predictor of legislative voting.

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