An Exploratory Comparison of Partisan Strength Across Nations

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Abstract

The author uses the CSES data set to compare the strength of partisanship across nations, with various indicators reflecting different dimensions of the concept, and further analyze the attitudinal, constitutional, and institutional factors influencing partisan strength. We found that parties under comparison possess different strengths and weaknesses along different dimensions, prompting us to be cautious in making comparison with a single indicator. Also, we found constitutional and institutional factors to be highly influential while attitudinal factors to be of minimal consequences. However, due to the complexities of comparing multiple nations and other research limitations, further development and empirical examination of testable hypothesis derived from this exploratory analysis is essential to verify or nullify the findings.

Keywords: party identification, partisan strength, institutional influence, cross-national comparison.

<u>Introduction</u>

The importance of the concept of party identification in U.S. politics cannot be overemphasized. Since the introduction of the concept and its measurement, party identification has occupied the center stage of American political science research as the crucial attitude influencing other political attitudes as well as behavior (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960), and has generated countless research either as the main theme or a supplemental factor (Niemi and Weisberg, 1993, pp. 210-221). However, the applicability of the partisanship concept across nations has generated debates among researchers. There are scholars who claim that party identification is merely a U.S. concept and does not exist in European political culture, while others acknowledge its existence yet viewed it as short-term factors with no durability (Miller and Shanks, 1996, pp.117). Early empirical studies tried to apply SRC measurement questions of partisanship to European countries such as the Netherlands, and found that "party identification is clearly less stable than vote preference," which led the author to concluded "party identification is not causally prior to the vote, but simply a reflection of the vote and therefore causally posterior to the vote" (Thomassen, 1976).

Aside from the Dutch research cited earlier, there are other attempts applying partisanship outside the U.S. setting. Clarke et al. (1979) found that in Canada, voters identify with more than one party, while Converse and Dupeux (1962) discovered that in France, parents are less successful in passing on their partisanship to their children as compared with Americans. Elaborating on the same subject, Westholm and Niemi (1992) extended the study of Percheron and Jennings (1981) of how intergenerational partisanship transmission is formed in eight countries. They found different patterns across countries as a result of institutional conditions and historical events. In Sweden, Finland, and Italy, there are a significant amount of indirect transmission of ideological stands, while in other nations there are only weak indirect links due to low level of parent-offspring partisan transmission (i.e. France and the Netherlands) or limited connection between party and left-right position within generations (i.e. U.S., Great Britain, West Germany, and Austria).

Therefore, comparing partisanship across nations can shed light on the influence and limitations of the concept. Partisan stability is one of the most common features used in cross-national studies, comparing whether respondents from different countries possess partisanship as a long-term psychological attachment. Schickler and Green (1997) estimated partisan stability for British, German, and Canadian parties by

regressing panel partisanship and found that partisan stability of Britain $R^2=.96-.99$ and Germany ($R^2=.95$) are comparable with those of the U.S. ($R^2=.94$ Green and Palmquist, 1994) at a very high level, while Canada is relatively more unstable $R^2= .74-.84$. Moreover, they found once measurement error is taken into account, rates of partisan change in these countries closely resemble those in the U.S., and concluded that there are considerable partisan stability across these countries.

This study would like to focus on factors other than partisan stability. Partisanship is not only an attitude, but also a prominent cause of important political behaviors. The author would like to compare partisan strength across nations with multiple indicators, since partisan strength can be conceptualized from various aspects and examined through the political consequences it affects. The stability dimension mentioned earlier is one instance. We could also compare how party identification influence politics with regard to actual vote share stability, or how it affect citizens' evaluation of candidate and perception of supported party's ideological position, just to name a few examples. Each indicator per se might not provide a conclusive nor complete delineation of partisan strength. However, taken as a whole, these indicators should provide us with the big picture of the relative strength across nations under comparison. Some of these indicators are self-evident, while others need further elaboration. The seven indicators the author used are as follows:

1. Percent of respondents identifying with a party: the higher the percentage of the population identifying with a party, the stronger partisanship strength is in that country.

2. Percent of respondents feeling "very close" to a party: the higher the percentage of the population strongly identifying with a party, the stronger partisanship strength is in that country.

3. percent of respondents actually voted for the party they identify with: this indicator examines the behavioral influence of party identification. If more people actually voted for the candidate of their most supported party, it indicates that the partisan attitude can be translated to actual political behavior, and thus, political influence.

4. the average like/dislike score for respondents' most identified party: we compute the mean score that respondents give to the party they identify most. If a country's respondents give higher mean score to their most preferred parties, it shows that partisanship has stronger effect in that country. This is calculated assuming that the

like/dislike scale from 0 to 10 is comparable across different countries.

5. the average like/dislike score for the candidate of respondents' most identified party: using the same logic from above, we also compare the mean like/dislike score for candidates nominated by the respondents' most preferred parties. Higher mean scores indicate higher partisan influence.

6. the effect of party like/dislike score on perceived policy distance between respondent and most identified party: this indicator reflects how partisanship influence voters' policy perception of their favorite party, as well as their self-placement on the left/right liberal scale (or on other main social cleavage if the left/right dimension is not significant in that country). We first compute the absolute difference in distance between the voter's self-reported position and the perceived position of her favorite party. In countries where the left-right dimension is not an important cleavage, optional scales reflecting the most salient issue in those countries will be used instead. The author than computes the absolute difference in distance between the voter's position and her favorite party's position as dependent variable, party like/dislike score of her favorite party as independent variable, and respondent's level of education as the control variable[1]. The purpose of the regression is to examine after controlling for education, do respondents' affection toward their favorite party has an influence on the ideological distance between the respondents and their supported parties. If voters' affection toward their favorite parties would result in a closer perceived policy position between the respondents and the parties in a country, it also shows the strength of partisanship to be stronger in that country. It either indicates partisanship and policy closeness reinforce one another, or that partisanship changes peoples' perception through projection and persuasion effects (Brody and Page, 1972; Conover and Feldman, 1982; Enelow and Hinich, 1985).

7. the actual vote share changes for the incumbent party as compared with the last election: in countries where partisanship is strong, the election results should be relatively stable from one election to another, showing the strength of partisanship.

The following section will explain the data set and variables used in this paper. The author will then compare partisan strength across nations using these indicators, followed by an analysis of possible attitudinal, constitutional, and institutional factors influencing partisan strength as reflected by these indicators.

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[1] We tried using income, religion, and political information as control variables. However, since these variables are not all present in all countries and would result in missing values, we elect not to include them in the analysis.

Data and Method

This article utilizes the data collected by CSES[2] (Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, module 1), consisting of electoral surveys and results from more than thirty countries. As stated earlier, the author would like to use the data to compare the following aspects of partisan strength across these countries under study.

Percent of respondents identifying with a party:
A3004   Do you usually think of yourself as close to any particular political party?
A3005   What party is that?

Percent of respondents feeling "very close" to a party
A3012   Do you feel very close to this [party/party block], somewhat close, or not very close?

Ideological spectrum placement: The following five variables are used to compute these differences and subsequent regression analysis:

Left-right self placement
A3031 In politics people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means the left and 10 means the right?

Perceived position of supported party
A3032 Now, using the same scale, where would you place [Party A-F]
Self-placement on optional scale
A3033   (optional scale[3]) Where would you place yourself on this scale?
Perceived position of most supported party on optional scale
A3034   (optional scale) Where would you place PARTY A on this scale?

Respondent's education
A2003 Highest level of education of the respondent[4].

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[2] Detail information about the data set can be obtained from www.cses.org
[3] Used in countries where left/right ideological dimension is not a significant social cleavage.
[4] The categories are 1. none, 2. incomplete primary, 3. primary completed, 4. incomplete secondary, 5. secondary completed, 6. post-secondary trade/vocational school, 7. university undergraduate degree incomplete, 8. university undergraduate degree completed.

Score from 0-10 reflecting like and dislike of most supported party

A3020   I'd like to know what you think about each of our political parties. After I read the name of a political party, please rate it on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly dislike that party and 10 means that you strongly like that party. If I come to a party you haven't heard of or you feel you do not know enough about, just say so.   The first party is PARTY A.

Score from 0-10 reflecting like and dislike of candidate from most supported party

A3021 And now, using the same scale, I'd like to ask you how much you like or dislike some political leaders. Again, if I come to a leader you haven't heard of or you do not know enough about them, just say so. The first political leader is LEADER A.

Voting Record: there are three types of electoral results recorded in the data set, presidential election, party-list district level election, and elections where voters can directly vote for candidates. Twenty-one countries under study held district-level party list elections, and these records are used as indicator for percent of party identifiers voting for their supported party. Seven other countries held only elections where voters cast votes for candidates instead of parties, and the parties of the candidates receiving votes were identified and used as indicators. Finally, two countries (Lithuania and Belarus) have only data on presidential elections are these data were used.

A2029   Party voted for President

A2030   Party list voted for - District

In systems where respondents had option of voting directly for a party list in district-level elections, party list that respondent voted for.

A2031   Party of candidate voted for - District

In systems where respondent had option of voting directly for a candidate or candidates in district-level election, party of candidate respondent voted for.

Unfortunately, data were not available for all countries on all questions used in the analysis. Missing values on the cell indicate that the data needed to compile a particular indicator is unavailable, which is one of the limitations of this study. Secondly, there are other variables that the author would wish to utilize for comparison but weren't available. For instance, candidate perceived ideological placement would be another indicator that can be of theoretical importance. Thirdly, a research across thirty-three countries is bound to encounter problems of comparability including question wording and important institutional as well as political differences

among the nations. This author's limited or non-existent knowledge of many of the countries under study does not help the matter; important intricacies of actual political operation will be overlooked in the analysis. Therefore, the findings can only be regarded as a crude comparative examination of partisanship across countries at best.

Analysis of Partisan Strength Across Nations

Table one shows the result using the seven indicators comparing partisan strength across nations. In the thirty-three countries under comparison, we use (figure in parentheses) to indicate that country as ranking in top tenth in that category, and use **bald underline figure** to show countries ranking in bottom tenth. There are several conclusions we can draw from the table.

Table one. Partisan strength across nations using seven indicators

State	% close to any party	% very close to aparty	% voted for party liked most	Mean score for party liked most	Mean score for candidate liked most	Reg. coef. Of party affection	incumbent party vote share change from last election
Australia(20)	(83.5)	19	67.6	8.09	**7.52**	0	3.7
Belgium Flanders (20)	(94.9)			**7.85**		0.01	4
Belarus(28)	**11.5**	31.9	**7.6**	8.4	7.82	0	
Canada(28)	50.1	18.5	75.6	**7.65**	**7.14**	-0.06*	**4.1**
Chile(24)	**19.9**	22		**7.89**			2.6
Taiwan()	**33.6**	23.4	72.9	**6.71**	**6.96**	-0.04	(1.4)
Czech Rep. (3)	48.8	**14.5**	(91.9)	(9.14)	(8.84)	(-0.2)	2.1
Denmark(3)	49.9	23.8	(90)	(8.85)	7.97	-0.08**	(0.2)
Germany(16)	**34.3**	**11.4**	(77.9)	8.45	8.18	-0.06	(0.5)
HK(33)	**7.7**	**1.2**	**53.6**	**7.33**	**7.24**	0.04	
Hungary(11)	35	19.1	69.9	(8.98)	(8.78)	-0.02	2.5
Iceland(6)	51.2	17.1	(80.3)	8.15	(8.28)	(-0.18)**	**8.5**
Israel(1)	(64.2)	(37.4)	69.3	(8.74)	(8.55)	(-0.1)**	**11**
Japan(28)	37.5	(23.2)	**64.3**	**7.38**	**7.18**		**7.9**
Korea(28)	**27.3**	17.3	70.6	**7.62**	**7.56**	**-0.02**	(0.7)
Lithuania(11)	34.3	**10.1**	30.7	(9.12)	8.17	(-0.44)**	2.7

Country							
Mexico(20)	47.6	(36.5)	**47.9**	**6.6**	**6.8**	(-0.35)**	1.6
Netherlands(24)	**27.8**	**12.6**	(78.6)	8.16	7.84	-0.05	**6.7**
New Zealand(11)	(55.6)		65.9	8.37	7.75	-0.09**	3.3
Norway(16)	(52.5)	**8**	(80.5)	8.59	**7.59**	**0.02**	(1.4)
Peru(16)	**22.7**	(24.8)	**34.2**	(8.79)	(8.67)	-0.08	**16.9**
Poland(24)	(52.7)	**5.8**	**55**	8.56	7.82	-0.07**	**7.2**
Portugal(11)	47.1	17.3	(76.2)	8.18	7.66	-0.07**	2.4
Romania(6)	46.8	20.6	**60.2**	8.31	(8.93)	(-0.23)**	(0.2)
Russia(6)	(55.9)	17.1	**42.6**	(8.81)	(8.45)	(-0.09)**	**13.5**
Slovenia(24)	**21.7**		68.7	8.59	(8.24)	**-0.01**	**14.2**
Spain(11)	42.3	(20.7)	(76.6)	**7.7**	**7.39**	(-0.19)**	1.9
Sweden(1)	(53.1)	**14.8**	(84.7)	(8.6)	7.67	(-0.14)**	(0.3)
Switzerland(16)	36.2	**12.2**	70.6	8.14	7.94	-0.05*	(1.4)
Thailand(20)	**20.8**	**2.6**		(8.7)	(8.25)		**7.8**
Ukraine(3)	(69.4)	17.8	**59.4**	(8.92)	8.07	(-0.16)*	(0.5)
U.K. (6)	46.1	19.6	(80.5)	8.3	(8.2)	-0.08*	2.5
U.S. (6)	(57)	(21.6)	68	**6.41**	8.01		(0.9)

First of all, a simple correlation of these indicators shows that they are correlated in the expected direction indicating partisan strength. For the first 5 indicators, higher figures indicate stronger partisan strength, while the last two indicators have the opposite sign. Not all pair wise correlation coefficients are statistically significant due to small sample size. "Percent voted for party liked" most is negatively correlated with "regression coefficients of party affection(r = -.385*)" and "incumbent party vote share change from last election(r = -.424*)," while "Mean score for candidate liked most" is positively correlated with "mean score for party liked most(r = .704*)" and negatively correlated with "regression coefficients of party affection(r = -.394*)." It shows that these indicators do measure partisan strength with the same directional disposition as expected by theory.

Secondly, since these indicators measure different dimensions of partisan strength, it is not surprising to see that some countries do vary with regard to their rankings over different indicators. For example, Norway and Peru both have 3 of the indicators ranked in top tenth and bottom tenth, with their strengths and weaknesses almost exactly opposite. Norway's partisan strength are stronger on the percent of population feeling close to a party, actually voted for the party voters preferred, and having a

more stable election result across time. Peru parties are stronger on having more strong identifiers, and partisans giving higher affective scores to both their favorite parties and candidates. In other words, some parties in a country are strong in certain aspects while weak in others.

Thirdly, in order to roughly rank the nations under comparison, we calculate the number of indicators ranked top 10 and minus the number of indicators ranked bottom tenth and rank the countries accordingly, with the number besides the country name as their ranking. For example, Hong Kong's partisan strength ranked in the bottom tenth for every available indicator, and also ranked last (33) overall, which reflects quite accurately about Hong Kong voters' low identification with their parties. Hong Kong started to have party politics beginning in April 1990, competing for seats returned by universal suffrage and direct election in 1991(Louie, 1991). However, due to the current one-country, two-system relationship of Hong Kong and China, Hong Kong's parties are divided by their attitudes toward Beijing, and elections have nothing to do with the right to govern. According to a recent survey by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, most people, especially middle-class citizens, do not regard any party as representing their own interest.[5] The special sovereignty status of Hong Kong probably contributed immensely to citizen's low partisanship.

The countries ranked bottom sixth overall are Hong Kong, Belarus, Canada, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea, all under plurality or majority electoral systems with the exception of Hong Kong. On the other hand, countries ranked top fifth are Sweden, Israel, Ukraine, Denmark, and the Czech Republic, with all of them but Ukraine having proportional representation electoral system. Ukraine has a mixed electoral system with half of its 450-member Rada elected in 225 single-member district elections, and the other half through a nationwide, closed-list proportional representation election (Thames, 2005). It shows that strength of partisanship might be heavily influenced by electoral systems, as well as other institutional factors, which will be examined subsequently.

Analysis of Factors Influencing Party Strength

After identifying countries with stronger or weaker partisan strengths, the next logical question is to attempt to explain the factors influencing partisan strength. There are two main approaches to this question, the institutional approach emphasizing the importance of institutions and electoral systems (Duverger, 1954; Rae, 1967; Lijphart,

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[5] http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ipro/pressrelease/040524.htm

1994) and the structural approach emphasizing social cleavages and cultural values (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967; Inglehart, 1977, 1990, 1997; Dalton, 2002).

Using the CSES data set, other studies have examined how different electoral system would affect the mean number of relevant parties; or how the role of party leadership would affect politics under different institutional designs. Norris (2003) found that the mean effective number of parliamentary parties was 2.42 in majoritarian systems and 4.45 in PR systems. She compared the strength of cleavage politics across nations and examined how social cleavages are affected by electoral systems (Norris, 2003, chap 5). She also found partisanship to be associated with social structure and political attitudes (Norris, 2003, chap 6). Curtice (2005) found that leader evaluations have far less influence on voting decisions in parliamentary systems than in presidential systems, reinforcing the assertion of Dalton and Wattenburg (2000) that parliamentary systems severely inhibits the extent to which voters use leader evaluations as cues to vote decisions. In short, there are multiple factors that can influence the strength of partisanship in a nation, such as attitudinal, constitutional design, as well as electoral system, which will be the focus of this section.

Previous studies cited above compare partisan strength using percentage of partisan identifier as the main dependent variable. As noted earlier, partisan strength might not take a uniform configuration in different countries, and there is need to further explore the how different factors might influence various aspects of partisan strength, as reflected by the different indicators in the previous section.

Therefore, we would like to use the seven indicators as the dependent variables, and examine how different factors might influence party strength across nations. The independent variables are as follows:

Attitudinal factors:
1. Attitude toward Democracy: respondents' satisfaction with democratic process (A3001).
2. evaluation of party: respondents' perception of whether political parties care what people think (A3013), respondents' view of whether political parties are necessary(A3014).
3. political perception: respondents' perception of whether politicians know what people think (A3026), and respondents' perception of whether people express true political opinion(A3030).
4. political efficacy: do respondent feel who is in power can make a difference

(A3028), and whether who people vote for can make a difference (A3029).

Constitutional Design Factors:

1. Head of State: dummy variable indicating whether a president (1) or a monarch (2) is the head of state.

2. prime minister as head of government: dummy variable indicating whether prime minister is the head of government (Yes(1); No(0), recoded from A4001).

3. presidential system: whether the country is under presidential system Yes(1); No(0).

4. parliamentary system: whether the country is under parliamentary system Yes(1); No(0). (Mixed system is the base category for this set of variables)

5. Head of State right index: the author computed an index to reflect the power the head of state possess in a country, aggregating the following powers: introduce legislation (A5043), require expedited action on specific legislation(A5044), package veto (A5045), partial veto (A5046), legislate by decree (A5047), postpone election (A5049), negotiate agreements (A5050), power as commander of forces (A5051), introduce referenda (A5055), refer legislation to judiciary (A5056), and convene legislative sessions (A5057). The index ranges from 0 to 9, with higher figures indicating higher head of state power.

Electoral Law Factors:

1. Single Member district: dummy variable indicating whether countries have single member district(Yes(1); No(0), recoded from A5022).

2. Number of elected legislative chambers: unicameral (1); bicameral (2) (A5024.)

3. Joint list: whether party can run joint list? Yes(1); No(5), (A5036).

4. multi-party endorsements: whether candidate can run with the endorsement of more than one party? Yes(1); No(5), (A5040).

Using the seven party strength indicators as dependent variables, the seven regression correlation coefficients are listed in table two. The figures in each cell indicate the regression coefficients, standard error, and standardized regression coefficients. Due to the large number of cases in the data set, most of the coefficients are statistically significant. Therefore, statistical significance is not the main consideration in our discussion; we would like to focus on variance explained as well as the substantive relative influence of these factors.

The statistical analysis shows that there are similarities as well as differences among regressions for different party strength indicators. For instance, in the regression for the percentage of respondents identifying with a party, having single member districts

would increase party identifiers by 11 percent, while having a monarch as head of state increase party identifiers by 13 percent. A bicameral legislative chamber design would decrease partisan percentages by about 10 percent. Parliamentary system would decrease partisan identifiers by 11 %, and having a presidential election would add 16% to partisan identifiers.

The data shows that having a presidential election and single-member district elections increase the overall proportion of party identifiers, while parliamentary systems with proportional representation would decrease the proportion of partisans. One plausible explanation would be that in single-member district countries, voters generally face two parties competing and are forced to identify with one of the two through political socialization or multiple electoral processes, thus having a higher overall support for parties. Proportional representation, on the other hand, gives voters more choices of alternative parties, thus lowering the percent of respondents identifying with any one party. However, some of the other statistical relationships can not be explained with obvious logical deduction by the author, such as why having a monarch as head of state would increase party identifiers by 13%. Many of the statistical relationships found in this exploratory study need to be further tested in the future to either authenticate or proof spurious, even those that the author subjectively thought logically sound. There is no need to describe the coefficient effects for each regression at hand, as was already provided in table two. Instead, the author will highlight some of the important findings from the analysis.

Table two. Factors influencing party strength

	identify w/ party	% very close to party	voted for support party	Support party mean score
(Constant)	14.01** (0.46)	-2.11** 0.27	82.26** 0.32	11.57** (0.01)
SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRATIC PROCESS	0.24** (0.03) 0.02	0.02 0.02 0.004	-0.09** 0.02 -0.01	0.01** (0.001) 0.01
POLITICAL PARTIES CARE WHAT PEOPLE THINK	0.14** (0.03) 0.01	-0.17** 0.02 -0.03	-0.12** 0.02 -0.01	0.01** (0.001) 0.01
POLITICAL PARTIES ARE NECESSARY	0.06 0.04 0.01	0.04* 0.02 0.01	-0.27** 0.02 -0.03	0.004** (0.001) 0.01

POLITICIANS KNOW WHAT PEOPLE THINK	-0.19** 0.03 -0.02	0.04* 0.02 0.01	0.11** 0.02 0.01	-0.01** (0.001) -0.02
WHO IS IN POWER CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE	-0.21** 0.03 -0.02	0.05* 0.02 0.01	0.08** 0.02 0.01	-0.01** (0.001) -0.02
WHO PEOPLE VOTE FOR MAKES A DIFFERENCE	0.39** 0.03 0.04	0.28** 0.02 0.05	-0.09** 0.02 -0.01	-0.01** (0.001) -0.02
DO PEOPLE EXPRESS POLITICAL OPINION	-0.15** 0.03 -0.02	-0.06** 0.02 -0.01	0.0003** 0.02 0.00	-0.002** (0.001) -0.004
SINGLE MEMBER DISTRICT	10.67** 0.13 0.45	-0.04 0.08 -0.003	-6.32** 0.09 -0.32	-0.8** (0.004) -0.73
HEAD OF STATE	12.46** 0.14 0.51	6.89** 0.08 0.48	-1.60** 0.1 -0.08	-1.29** (0.004) -1.15
PRIME MINISTER IS HEAD OF GOVERNMENT	2.76** 0.22 0.09	-13.08** 0.13 -0.69	9.64** 0.15 0.36	1.37** (0.006) 0.91
NUMBER OF ELECTED LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS	-9.86** 0.11 -0.4	4.02** 0.06 0.28	-6.13** 0.08 -0.31	-0.93** (0.003) -0.83
CAN PARTIES RUN JOINT PARTY LISTS	-1.15** 0.03 -0.17	0.99** 0.02 0.25	1.10** 0.02 0.2	0.03** (0.001) 0.1
MULTI-PARTY ENDORSEMENTS	2.65** 0.04 0.44	-1.15** 0.02 -0.33	0.69** 0.03 0.14	-0.17** (0.001) -0.6
PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM	0.32 0.27 0.01	-8.13** 0.16 -0.38	-1.84** 0.19 -0.06	1.13** (0.01) 0.67
PARLIAMENTA-RY SYSTEM	-11.22** 0.22 -0.39	13.47** 0.13 0.79	-5.6** 0.15 -0.24	-0.97** (0.01) -0.73
HEAD OF STATE RIGHT INDEX	-0.51** 0.04	0.47** 0.02	-0.94**	-0.20**

	-0.09	0.15	0.03 -0.21	(0.001) -0.81
IS THERE A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION	16.13** 0.22 0.53	27.16** 0.13 1.51	-11.21** 0.16 -0.45	-1.57** (0.01) -1.10
TURNOUT IN DISTRICT	0.23** 0.004 0.26	0.02** 0.002 0.05	0.008** 0.003 0.01	0.01** (0.00) 0.29
NUMBER OF SEATS IN DISTRICT	-0.05** 0.001 -0.16	-0.02** 0.001 -0.11	0.01** 0.001 0.05	0.004** (0.00) 0.27
$R^2 =$	.758	0.82	.90	.91
N	29443			

a. regression coefficient   b. standard error   c. standardized regression coefficient

* $\alpha < .05$, ** $\alpha < .01$

Table two. Factors influencing party strength (continued)

	Support candidate mean score	Party score effect on policy distance	Incumbent party vote share change
(Constant)	11.94 (0.01)	0.35 (0.003)	2.24 (0.08)
SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRATIC PROCESS	0.003** (0.001) 0.01	-0.001** (0.00) -0.02	0.01** (0.01) 0.01
POLITICAL PARTIES CARE WHAT PEOPLE THINK	-0.002* (0.001) -0.004	0.00 (0.00) 0.003	-0.01 (0.01) -0.004
POLITICAL PARTIES ARE NECESSARY	0.01** (0.001)	0.00 (0.00) -0.003	0.07** (0.01) 0.03
POLITICIANS KNOW WHAT PEOPLE THINK	0.00 (0.001) 0.01	-0.001** (0.00) -0.02	-0.04** (0.01) -0.02
WHO IS IN POWER CAN	-0.002*	0.001**	-0.01

MAKE DIFFERENCE	(0.001)	(0.00)	(0.01)
	-0.01	0.01	-0.01
WHO PEOPLE VOTE FOR MAKES A DIFFERENCE	-0.01**	-0.002**	0.01
	(0.001)	(0.00)	(0.01)
	-0.03	-0.02	0.01
DO PEOPLE EXPRESS POLITICAL OPINION	0.002*	-0.001**	-0.01
	(0.001)	(0.00)	(0.01)
	0.01	-0.01	-0.01
single member district	-0.72**	-0.02**	1.4**
	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.02)
	-0.74	-0.12	0.29
HEAD OF STATE	-1.63**	-0.1**	1.1**
	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.02)
	-1.61	-0.56	0.22
PRIME MINISTER IS HEAD OF GOVERNMENT	1.87**	0.15**	0.37**
	(0.01)	(0.001)	(0.04)
	1.39	0.65	0.06
NUMBER OF ELECTED LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS	-0.61**	-0.08**	0.84**
	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.02)
	-0.6	-0.45	0.17
CAN PARTIES RUN JOINT PARTY LISTS	-0.01**	0.01**	0.09**
	(0.001)	(0.00)	(0.01)
	-0.02	0.11	0.07
MULTI-PARTY ENDORSEMENTS	-0.25**	-0.01**	-0.41**
	(0.001)	(0.00)	(0.01)
	-1.02	-0.23	-0.34
PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM	1.68**	-0.05**	-4.59**
	(0.01)	(0.002)	(0.05)
	1.1	-0.18	-0.62
PARLIAMENTA-RY SYSTEM	-1.15**	-0.09**	2.23**
	(0.01)	(0.001)	(0.04)
	-0.96	-0.45	0.38
HEAD OF STATE RIGHT INDEX	-0.39**	-0.01**	-0.21**
	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)
	-1.73	-0.31	-0.19
IS THERE A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION	-1.19**	-0.17**	5.84**
	(0.01)	(0.001)	(0.04)

	-0.93	-0.78	0.94
TURNOUT IN DISTRICT	0.004**	-0.002**	-0.07**
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.001)
	0.12	-0.31	-0.39
NUMBER OF SEATS IN DISTRICT	0.004**	0.001**	0.04**
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
	0.3	0.28	0.61
$R^2 =$	.82	.82	.83
N	29443		

We can draw several conclusions from the regression analysis in table two. First of all, these factors combined do explain most of the variance in the dependent variables, with R^2 ranging from .75 to .91, showing that these are indeed important factors influencing partisan strength across nations. Secondly, in comparison, attitudinal variables do not seem to have substantive influence as a whole, as shown by the small standardized coefficient correlations with all seven regressions. The author then implemented an F-increment test to examine whether the attitudinal variables as a whole did contribute to the model and found that there is no noticeable difference in R^2 when these attitudinal variables are removed. In other words, the attitudes of respondents toward democracy, parties as well as their political efficacy do not affect partisan strength across nations.

Secondly, the F-increment test statistics show that constitutional design and electoral law factors have significant as well as substantive influence on accounting for partisan strength variance across nations. When constitutional design variables and electoral law factors are removed respectively, the value of R^2 dropped dramatically. For instance, for the regression with dependent variable "mean score for candidate of supported party", the R^2 decreased from .91 to .06 and .37, when constitutional factors and electoral law factors are dropped respectively[6]. Other regression R^2 did not change as dramatically, but overall, across seven regressions, R^2 dropped an average of .27 when constitutional factors are removed and dropped .25 when electoral law factors are removed, showing the importance of these factors.

Thirdly, presidential system increases partisan strength with regard to the mean score given to respondents' favorite party and candidate, and also increases the electoral

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[6] The tables for these F-increment tests are too burdensome to be included, and are available from the author upon request.

stability across elections.

Fourthly, the most important factor substantively influencing the percentage of respondents actually voting for their favorite party is whether there is a presidential election. Having a presidential election decreases the average by 11%, which could be caused by the limited viable numbers of presidential candidates, forcing some voters having to settle for their second best choice, or voting just to prevent a disliked candidate from winning.

Fifthly, having a bicameral legislature actually decreases partisan strength in percentage of partisan identifiers, and the mean like/dislike score given to favorite party and candidate.

Sixthly, other independent variables do not necessarily have uniform effects across all indicators. For instance, having single member districts increases the percentage of partisan identifies, but decreases the mean score given to respondents' favorite party and candidate. A plausible, yet not currently verifiable, explanation is that overall, parties in single member districts tend to be catchall parties, thus attracting a higher overall identification percentage. But when asked about their like/dislike score of their favorite parties or candidates, respondents in proportional representation system are more likely to be more satisfied with their final choices from multiple alternatives, thus giving them a higher mean score. Therefore, the mechanism affecting partisan strength as reflected by different indicators could be quite complicated.

Discussion & Conclusion

As stated earlier, this is an exploratory study trying crude measures to compare partisan strength across nations. The seven indicators that the author used are shown to generally reflect partisan strength in the same direction, but not in a uniform way. The analysis first showed that partisan strength can be conceptualized in many different aspects, including attitudinal stability, support intensity, as well as the subsequent political behavior that was influenced such as electoral stability.

Party strength of the countries under comparison are shown to vary according to the indicator that was used. For example, party strengths in Norway and Peru are quite opposite to one another in the sense that the strengths of certain indicators in one country are the weaknesses of the other. Therefore, when comparing partisan strength across nations, we have to be cautious with the criteria used, and avoid making

conclusive statements with a single indicator.

We also found that attitudinal factors have less influence over partisan strength, when compared to constitutional and institutional factors. Also, many factors could increase partisan strength in certain areas but decrease partisan strength in other areas at the same time. We should be cautious when considering how an institutional change would affect partisan strength *in which aspects*, instead of making universal predictions or explanations.

There are many limitations to the conclusions of this study. For example, the comparability of the same concept across countries of such political and cultural differences is not an easy problem to overcome. Also, a common problem faced with secondary analysis is the limitation of lacking available important variables. If another set of variables are used to measure attitudinal factors, there might be significant as well as substantive influence to partisan strength. Moreover, the author's lack of understanding of many counties under comparison is another major drawback limiting the interpretation of the statistical analysis. Many of the statistical relationships that were found need to be intellectually and empirically examined thoroughly, to determine whether they are spurious or truly reflect constitutional or institutional influence on partisan strength. The author hopes that this exploratory work can help create interesting testable hypothesis for future research.

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