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WHO SHOULD RUN OUR ELECTIONS? PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT ELECTION GOVERNANCE IN THE UNITED STATES

R. Michael Alvarez
Caltech

Thad E. Hall
University of Utah

Morgan Llewellyn
Caltech

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Who Should Run Our Elections? Public Opinion About Election Governance in the United States

R. Michael Alvarez*

Thad E. Hall#

Morgan Llewellyn**

Abstract

Much has been said since the 2000 presidential election regarding the administration of elections in the United States, particularly in regards to how election administrators are selected and to whom they are responsive. Unfortunately, there has been little research on the different administrative structures that are possible and the preferences of Americans regarding these different administrative options. In this paper we present the results from a national survey of Americans, in which we asked them their preference for whether elections should be run by partisan or nonpartisan officials, whether the officials should be elected or appointed, and whether the administration of elections should be by a single unitary executive or by an election commission. In addition to eliciting the basic preferences of Americans about these administrative choices, we also undertake a deeper analysis of these data to determine the underlying patterns in support for the different administrative options.

*Professor of Political Science, Caltech (corresponding author, rma@caltech.edu; 626-395-4089); #Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Utah; **Graduate Student, Caltech. We thank Geri Mannion and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Center for Public Policy and Administration at the University of Utah, and the Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project for their support of our research. Melissa Slemin provided invaluable assistance in our research efforts.

Introduction

Since the 2000 presidential election, there have been many questions raised about how elections are administered in the United States. One set of questions concerns those who are responsible for administering elections. Should election officials be partisan political figures? How should these individuals be selected for this role? Should elections be governed by a unitary executive official or part of some type of deliberative body like an election commission? These specific concerns have arisen due to a variety of accounts of election administrators who have taken actions that have been seen as partisan or political in nature, especially in closely contested elections.

At this time, there are many different models of election administration that exist at the state and local levels in the United States. In useful information compiled by Hasen (2005), there are 33 states with some type of statewide election official (Secretary of State or other title), elected through partisan electoral processes; the rest of the states appoint a chief election official or commission.¹ At the local level things get even more complicated, as the ways in which elections are administered in counties or municipalities varies widely, with there even being different practices within states that are at odds with the statewide procedures for selecting election administrators.² The local variety in election official selection mechanisms is explored in detail by Kimball and Kropf (2005); they find that a majority of local election officials are partisan elected administrators.³

¹ See Table 1, Richard L. Hasen, "Beyond the Margin of Litigation: Reforming U.S. Election Administration to Avoid Electoral Meltdown." *Washington & Lee Law Review* 937, 2005, 937-999.

² Hasen (2005), page 997. Hasen discusses the practices in California and Florida in detail. For detailed discussion of local election administration in New York State, see Ronald Hayduk, *Gatekeepers to the Franchise: Shaping Election administration in New York*, Northern Illinois University Press, 2005.

³ David C. Kimball and Martha Kropf, "The Street-Level Bureaucrats of Elections: Selection Methods for Local Election Officials." Paper presented at the Conference on Independent Election Administration, September 2005.

Of course, two of the most widely known allegations of partisan or political machinations by state election executives have focused on the ground zero states in recent presidential elections: Florida in 2000 and Ohio in 2004. In Florida 2000, Secretary of State Katherine Harris (R) was the point-person for a number of decisions during her state's controversial vote recount, while also acting as the honorary chair of the George Bush campaign in Florida.⁴ In the 2004 presidential election, Ohio Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell (R) was seen as a controversial partisan figure in his state for his decisions before the election related to rule changes for voter challenges, the counting of provisional ballots, and the required design of valid voter registration forms. Blackwell made these decisions while also serving as the co-chair of the George Bush reelection campaign in his state.⁵

Other examples of political and partisan election machinations have arisen from the other side of the partisan aisle, although not directly associated with contested elections. A well-known and recent example was California's former Secretary of State, Kevin Shelley (D). Shelley, who won his seat in a close election in 2002, was widely viewed throughout the state as an up-and-coming star in the California Democratic Party. However, during the early stages of California's implementation of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), Shelley was alleged to have used federal HAVA funds for partisan political purposes, allegations that were examined in audits by both California and the federal government.⁶ Shelley resigned under the weight of

⁴ For discussion of Harris' role in the Florida 2000 presidential vote recount see Richard A. Posner, "Breaking the Deadlock: The 2000 Election, The Constitution and The Courts", Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, pages 8-10.

⁵ The many complaints against Blackwell are summarized in a 102 page report issued in January 2005 by the U.S. House Judiciary Committee Democratic Staff. See "Preserving Democracy: What Went Wrong in Ohio", Status Report of the House Judiciary Committee Democratic Staff, January 5, 2005, http://www.house.gov/judiciary_democrats/ohiostatusrept1505.pdf.

⁶ The California audit was conducted by the California State Auditor, Bureau of State Audits, "Office of the Secretary of State: Clear and Appropriate Direction is Lacking in Its Implementation of the Federal Help America Vote Act", December 2004, 2004-139, <http://www.bsa.ca.gov/pdfs/reports/2004-139.pdf>. The federal audit was conducted by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, Office of Inspector General, "Final Report: Audit of

these allegations, which ironically gave the state's new Republican governor the ability to install a Republican as Secretary of State to complete Shelley's term.⁷

In the 2005 fall elections, the issue of state election governance was on the ballot in Ohio, and in the narrow context of redistricting reform in California. Although both of these ballot measures were resoundingly defeated in special fall elections, the issue of election governance was debated in the public.⁸ It is clear from these two ballot measure campaigns in 2005 that there is some public support for certain types of changes to election administration, given that there were over 3 million ballots cast in California in support of the creation of a nonpartisan commission to undertake redistricting, and over 800,000 votes cast in Ohio in favor of the creation of a nonpartisan election commission; this is the basic question that motivates our research.⁹

Other than the votes cast in Ohio and California on very specific changes in each state's election administration practices, and the internal campaign polling that was conducted in 2005 on these ballot measures, we are not aware of any public opinion data that attempts to assess public preferences regarding election governance in the United States. There is no academic research regarding public opinion about election governance that we are aware of, nor has there

Expenditures of Help American Vote Act Funds by the California Office of Secretary of State", Report No. E-HP-CA-01-06, December 2005, <http://www.eac.gov/docs/CA%20audit.pdf>.

⁷ For additional information on the California situation with HAVA implementation under Shelley's administration, see R. Michael Alvarez and Thad E. Hall, "Rational and Pluralistic Models of HAVA implementation: The Cases of Georgia and California," *Publius*, December 2005; 35,4: 559-577.

⁸ In Ohio, election governance was on the ballot in the form of State Issue 4 (redistricting reform) and State Issue 5 (creation of a new appointed election administration board) in the 2005 election. Issue 4 received support from 30.30% of votes cast while Issue 5 received support from 29.92% of ballots cast (<http://www.sos.state.oh.us/sos/ElectionsVoter/Results2005.aspx>). In California, the primary issue on the 2005 ballot was redistricting reform, and the creation of a nonpartisan group of retired judges to undertake future redistricting in that state; this measure received support from 40.2% of ballots cast (http://ss.ca.gov/elections/sov/2005_special/sov_pref_pgxiii_votes_for_against_props.pdf).

⁹ See sources in previous note.

been much attention paid to this administrative question in the scholarly literature.¹⁰ Indeed, in a recently-published study of election administration in New York, Hayduk stated that “There has been no systematic scholarly treatment of the subject of election administration since ... 1934” (Hayduk 2005, page 7).¹¹ Interestingly, this 1934 book not only examines election administration comprehensively but also includes a report on how to improve election administration that was developed by some of the leading scholars of the day.

However, we do know from other areas of academic study that decisions about the various dimensions of governance that are the focus of our analysis—elected versus appointed, partisan versus nonpartisan, and boards versus a single individual, do make a difference in governance in many fields. Below we provide a statistical overview of the state of public opinion about election governance, using both descriptive and multivariate analyses. This research can inform the current policy debates about election governance and serve as the foundation for additional academic research regarding who should administer American elections and what type of administrative structure should be employed.

The Importance of Governance Structures

The issue of formal governance in administrative settings—by whom and how governmental entities are directed—has long been an issue in public administration and political

¹⁰ That there is little academic research on election governance has been noted by other scholars. For example, in the preface to a journal issue devoted to the topic of election governance, the editors stated that “Electoral governance remains a ‘neglected variable’ in the study of political democratization (Elklit and Reynolds, 2000; Pastor 1999b)” [Shaheen Mozaffar and Andreas Schedler, 2002, “The Comparative Study of Electoral Governance—Introduction”, *International Political Science Review*, 23(1); 5-27. Their two citations are to a conference paper [Elkit and Reynolds, presented at the 2000 American Political Science Association annual meetings, which was subsequently published in 2002, Andrew Reynolds and Jorgen Elklit, “Analyzing the Impact of Election Administration on Democratic Politics”, *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 40(2), 86-119] and an essay by Robert A. Pastor, 1999, “The Role of Election Administration in Democratic Transitions: Implications for Policy and Research”, *Democratization* 6(4), 1-27.

¹¹ The 1934 study that Hayduk refers to here is Joseph P. Harris, *Election Administration in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

science.¹² In our analysis, we focus upon public preferences over three dimensions related to the selection of election officials. First, are these individuals elected or appointed? Second, are they chosen on a partisan or nonpartisan basis? Third, is the governance structure a board or solitary individual? Before considering the results of the survey data examining public attitudes toward how election officials should be selected, we focus on why each of these dimensions is important in determining how election governance would vary based on different selection criteria.

On the partisan versus nonpartisan question, there is significant research on the impact of nonpartisan versus partisan attachments in elections. The rationale for nonpartisan elections in the United States, especially at the local level, dates back to the progressive era at the beginning of the 20th century.¹³ Three rationales have generally been given for the use of nonpartisan ballots. First, it was designed to break down party machines and “sanitize” local government. Second, it was thought that party labels could be distracting from the actual problems in a municipality; in short, people may vote for a party without considering the issues. Third, it was argued that local governmental activities can be viewed as being more administrative than political and therefore can be best served by nonpartisan officials.¹⁴

Evidence from the early 1920s found that it was difficult to assess the impact of the nonpartisan ballot on government performance, especially since nonpartisan elections often were a part of larger reforms that are difficult to untangle. With this caveat, an analysis conducted at

¹² There have been several recent studies of governance and its implications on management and performance. For an overview of this research, see Carolyn J. Heinrich, Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., editors, *Governance and Performance: New Perspectives*, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2000; Patricia W. Ingraham and Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., editors, *The Art of Governance: Analyzing Management and Administration*, Washington D.C.: Georgetown University press, 2004; Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., Carolyn J. Heinrich, and Carolyn J. Hill, *Improving Governance: A New Logic for Empirical Research*, Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2001.

¹³ See general historical treatments of the progressive movement: Richard Hofstadter, *The Progressive Movement, 1900-1915*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963; George Edwin Mowry, *The California Progressives*, Berkeley, CA: The University of California Press, 1951.

¹⁴ Robert Eugene Cushman. 1923. Non-partisan Nominations and Elections. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 106: 83-96.

the time found that nonpartisan ballots might be more effective in smaller jurisdictions as compared to large ones, since it is possible to know the candidates better in a smaller jurisdiction.¹⁵ Nonpartisan ballots are less effective in larger jurisdictions and where there are long ballots since in these instances party labels serve as important cues to voters. This issue of party cues is important because without them, voters are forced to use other information, such as occupational information, incumbency, or the ethnicity of a person's surname.¹⁶ This use of cue-giving by factors such as ethnicity of names raises the question of whether nonpartisan elections provide voters with the information they need to make decisions about how to vote.

Additionally, there has been some research regarding election governance in nations other than the United States, and that literature has taken up the question of partisanship and election governance. For example, Lehoucq (2002) developed a model of election governance, and there he argued that in many countries electoral governance has been established independently of legislative and executive institutions; as a result, Lehoucq asserted that in such nations (he discusses Costa Rica, Chile and Uruguay), after the transfer of election governance to independent commissions, "each has become renown for regularly scheduled, clean and typically hotly contested elections" (page 42).¹⁷ Another interesting study was conducted by Mozaffar (2002), where the degree of independence or autonomy of the election governance process in African nations was analyzed as a strategic choice, a function of the historical legacies of each

¹⁵ See Cushman (1923).

¹⁶ A. Clark Hagensick. 1964. "Influences of Partisanship and Incumbency on a Nonpartisan Election System." *Western Political Quarterly*. 17, 1: 117-124; David Klein and Lawrence Baum. 2001. "Ballot Information and Voting Decisions in Judicial Elections." *Political Research Quarterly*. 54, 4: 709-728. Perverill Squire and Eric R.A.N. Smith. 1988. "The Effect of Partisan Information on Voters in Nonpartisan Elections." *Journal of Politics*. 50, 1: 169-179.

¹⁷ Fabrice E. Lehoucq, 2002, "Can Parties Police Themselves? Electoral Governance and Democratization", *International Political Science Review*, 23,1; 29-46. For more on the Costa Rican case, see Fabrice E. Lehoucq and Ivan Molina, *Stuffing the Ballot Box: Fraud, Reform and Democratization in Costa Rica*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

nation's political development as well as political and ethnic competition.¹⁸ It is clear that there is much to learn about the partisan control of election administration from the experiences of other democratic nations.¹⁹

The second issue is whether the decision for governance to be conducted by an individual who is elected or appointed. Here there is evidence that officials in the same job make different decisions based on whether they are elected or appointed. This is not surprising; in fact, the rationale behind electing officials (such as judges) is precisely that the electoral process will change their decision making: the rationale for selecting judges using an electoral mechanism is that doing so will make judges responsive to the electorate for their decisions, instead of being responsive to the political powers who might otherwise appoint them.²⁰ It also insulates judges from the other institutions of government, which they are supposed to constrain. These reforms were structured to balance the independence and accountability of the judiciary, with judges serving fixed terms and with limits put on the ways in which they can campaign.²¹

The impact of the electoral mechanism of judicial selection on decision making has been documented, especially in capital punishment cases. For example, "soft on crime" judges in California, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Texas have been removed from office and subjected to political pressure in their decision making.²² The decision making process in capital cases

¹⁸ Shaheen Mozaffar, 2002, "Patterns of Electoral Governance in Africa's Emerging Democracies", *International Political Science Review*, 23,1; 85-101.

¹⁹ This was the subject of a special issue of the journal *International Political Science Review* (January 2002); see the introductory essay for additional discussion of the role of comparative and historical research for understanding election governance by Mozaffar and Schedler (2002), cited earlier.

²⁰ Michael R. Dimino. 2003. "Pay No Attention to that Man Behind the Robe: Judicial Elections, the First Amendment, and Judges as Politicians." 21 *Yale Law and Policy Review* 301.

²¹ Dimino 2003.

²² Stephen B. Bright and Patrick J. Keenan. 1995. "Judges and the Politics of Death: Deciding Between the Bill of Rights and the Next Election in Capital Cases." 75 *B.U. L. Rev.*

changes decision making primarily when the issue is highly politicized.²³ In general, it is bad to either be up for execution in an election year or to commit a crime with the potential for death penalty sentencing; elected officials tend to ask for the death penalty more, sentence people to the death penalty more, turn down appeals more, and refuse to grant clemency more in election years.²⁴ There is also the question regarding whether individuals have the information that they need to make informed decisions about the election of prosecutors or judges and whether, when included on the ballot with a longer list of more prominent offices—like the governor, legislature, and federal offices—these races become lost in the shuffle.²⁵ Elected prosecutors also have an incentive to defend bad decisions, such as convicting the wrong person, because of concerns that the admission of a bad decision might be used against them in future campaigns.²⁶

The question of whether decisions should be made by an individual or a board is much more complex, in part because group decision making is largely shaped by the structure and form the group takes. In some cases, boards primarily buffer the professional staff of an organization from the public while also playing key roles in decision making. In addition, boards' decisions often serve the interests of their personal home constituency, which in the case of partisan election administration are the interests of the board member's partisan constituency.²⁷ The issue of representation and design are also critical factors in how boards operate. The size, composition, compensation, and functions of a board can affect both its performance and

²³ John Blume and Theodore Eisenberg. 1999. "Judicial Politics, Death Penalty Appeals, and Case Selection: An Empirical Study." 72 S. Cal. L. Rev. 465.

²⁴ Richard Brooks and Steven Raphael. 2002. "Life Terms or Death Sentences: The Uneasy Relationship between Judicial Elections and Capital Punishment." 92 J. Crim. L. and Criminology 609.

²⁵ Daniel S. Medwed. 2004. "The Zeal Deal: Prosecutor Resistance to Post-Conviction Claims of Innocence." 84 B.U. L. Rev. 125.

²⁶ Medwed 2004.

²⁷ e.g., James L. Price, "The Impact of Governing Boards on Organizational Effectiveness and Morale," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 8, 3 (1963), 361-378.

operations. In addition, legislatively created boards often function differently and make different decisions than boards created through executive decisions.²⁸

Because boards function much like mini-legislatures, we can also look to the literature on agenda setting in legislatures to gain leverage on the difference between one person making a decision and having a board.²⁹ Obviously, a single executive does not have to worry about developing coalitions and counting votes in order to win a vote on a given policy proposal. However, a board does have such dynamics, and the structuring of the board, the existence of an agenda setter, and the number of votes needed to make a decision (e.g., majority rules versus supermajority rules) all shape the decision making process. In addition, the number of members on the board is critical to the decision making dynamic; a board with an odd number of members has a different dynamic than one with an even number of members, given that ties can occur with an even number of members.

In summary, election governance and the decisions associated with elections are likely to vary based on how individuals are selected to serve as election administrators and whether decisions are made by a unitary election official or by an election board. In other policy domains, the decision making dynamic varies across these dimensions, especially based on whether individuals are elected or appointed and whether the decision making is done by an individual or a board. In order to assess how the public views these issues, we turn next to survey data examining public attitudes toward how elections should be governed. In the next section of this paper we discuss briefly the survey data we have collected, and the methodology

²⁸ See, for example, William G. Howell and David E. Lewis, "Agencies by Presidential Design," *Journal of Politics*, 64, 4. (2002), 1095-1114 and Jerry Mitchell, "Representation in Government Boards and Commissions," *Public Administration Review*, 57, 2 (1997), 160-167.

²⁹ A seminal article in this genre is Peter C. Ordeshook and Thomas Schwartz, "Agendas and The Control of Political Outcomes," *American Political Science Review*, 81, 1. (1987), 179-200.

behind the survey administration. We then analyze the basic survey responses we obtained from our research, before turning to a more detailed multivariate statistical analysis of the survey responses we have. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of this research for the debate about how elections should be administered in the United States.

Methodology

Our survey data came from a telephone survey that was fielded from March 9 to March 15, 2005 by International Communications Research (ICR) of Media, Pennsylvania, using their twice-weekly EXCEL omnibus survey. This omnibus survey methodology interviews randomly selected American adults using random-digit dialing techniques. The complete sample contained the responses from 2032 respondents, of which a randomly-selected sub-sample (N=1176) were posed three different questions regarding election governance in their area:

- “The local or state officials who run your elections should be (a) appointed or (b) elected.”
- “The local or state officials who run your elections should be (a) partisan or (b) nonpartisan.”
- “Elections in your community should be overseen by (a) a single election official or (b) an election board.”

In an appendix to this paper we discuss the ICR survey methodology in more detail as well as provide some simple analysis of the respondents to this particular survey.

Our analysis focuses on the responses to these three survey questions. We present the basic survey responses for our survey questions in Table 1.A, with the responses for the complete sample of American adults in the first column of data, and with the responses only for registered

voters in the second column of data. All the tabulated survey response data we present in this paper have been weighted to produce estimates of the national populations.³⁰

Table 1.A Goes Here

When posed a question about the basic decision as to whether their state and local election officials should be appointed or elected, nearly three-quarters of both registered voters and all respondents indicated that they preferred elected election officials. Only about 20% of adults or registered voters felt that their election officials should be appointed, and there was a relatively low non-response rate to this question, between 4 and 5%.

Similarly, there is strong support for having nonpartisan election officials in our survey results. When asked whether they would prefer partisan or nonpartisan election officials, about two-thirds of respondents (66% of adults, 70% of registered voters) desired nonpartisan election officials. Less than 20% of either population wanted partisan election officials, showing that type of governance structure is clearly less favored by Americans. We did see that there were some respondents who had no opinion, or were uncertain about their preferences regarding the partisanship of their election officials. Roughly 14% of the adult sample and 11% of the registered voter sub-sample did not answer this particular question.

Last, we report in Table 1.A the basic responses to our third question on election governance: should elections in the respondent's community be overseen by a single election official or an elections board? Here there is overwhelming support for the concept of elections boards. Only around 6% of respondents in both the adult population and the sub-sample of registered voters desired having elections run by a single election official. Fully nine out of ten

³⁰ We use the population weights provided by ICR. ICR's description of the EXCEL population weights states that the "weighting process takes into account the disproportionate probabilities of household selection due to the number of separate telephone lines and the probability associated with the random selection of an individual household member. Following application of the above weights, the sample is post-stratified and balanced by key demographics such as age, sex, region and education."

American adults and nine out of ten registered voters preferred an elections board when posed this choice. Note as well that the non-response rate for this question is quite low, with only 2% of adults and 1% of registered voters not having an opinion about this dimension of the governance of elections.

In sum, we see in Table 1.A that most Americans (and most American voters) are in agreement about how elections should be administered. There is virtually no opposition to the question about whether elections should be run by an executive or board; more than 9 out of every 10 respondents in either sample agreed that elections should be administered by boards. While the consensus is not as strong regarding the other two dimensions of governance, it is still the case that nearly 7 out of 10 respondents think that election officials should be nonpartisan, or that they should be elected. What we don't know based on this analysis is whether there is strong consensus about any particular type of administrative structure across these three dimensions.

While we did not directly ask respondents their preferences about the combined form of electoral governance, we did combine the three questions relating to governance in order to ascertain voter preferences over the possible governance structures. Table 1.B presents four of the possible combinations from our three questions and reports the support among survey respondents for the typical governance structures employed by the United States and other democratic nations when each governance dimension is chosen independently.

Table 1.B Goes Here

When combining the responses over all respondents across the three questions we find 44.9% of all survey respondents (adults) and 46.6% of registered voters prefer an elected, non-partisan board to oversee elections. Partisan elected boards received support levels of 15% among the

adult population and 13.6% among registered voters. Non-partisan appointed boards received approximately the same level of support with 14.6% of the adult population and 16% of the registered voter population. Finally, the desirability of the most frequently employed governance structure in statewide elections, the single elected partisan official, received less than 2% support among both adults and registered voters. Table 1.B presents a clear message: the status quo governance structure employed by most states, single elected partisan officials, receives little support when compared to other forms of electoral governance. Second, a near majority of adults and registered voters prefer elected, non-partisan election boards to oversee the state and local electoral process.

Next, we examine the basic relationship between a series of important demographic attributes and opinions about election governance. In Table 2, we begin this examination by presenting cross-tabulations of opinions about election governance by gender, age, and race. The percentages reported in this table, and the others like it below, are all column percentages, expressing the percentage of respondents of a given group (in the column) who provide a certain response for the specific election governance question. We concentrate our attention for the remainder of this paper on the registered voter sub-sample of our data, as they are the primary consumers of the services that election officials provide. Additionally, though we focus our analysis only on registered voters in this paper, the conclusions are substantively similar for the slightly larger population of American adults.

Table 2 Goes Here

Beginning with gender, we see that men who were registered to vote were slightly more likely than registered women to prefer an appointed elected official; 26% of men supported appointed election officials, while 20% of women supported appointed election officials. Men

were also more likely to support nonpartisan election officials, as almost 75% of men favored nonpartisan elected officials but only 67% of women felt the same. Women were also about twice as likely as men to report no opinion regarding the partisanship of elected officials. Last, there was little difference between the genders in their preferences for whether elections should be governed by a unitary executive, or an election board.

As to generational differences, the only important difference we see in these data regard the issue of whether election officials should be partisan or non-partisan. Here we see a slight increase in the preference of older registered voters—those we categorize as either “boomers” or who are older than 59—for nonpartisan election officials. For these groups, 70% or more of registered voters favor nonpartisan election officials. Compared to the younger voters, fewer boomers or those 59 and older favor partisan election officials, and slightly more of these voters had no opinion relative to younger voters.

When we examine the breakdown of preferences about election governance by race, we see some of the largest effects in our analysis. The survey data allows us to differentiate respondents by whether they stated they were white or black; there were too few respondents who claimed other racial or ethnic identities to be analyzed separately. The last two rows of Table 2 provide the breakdowns by race and we find few differences between white and black respondents as to whether election officials should be appointed or elected, and whether elections should be governed by a unitary or an election commission. In both cases, strong majorities of whites and blacks agree that election officials should be elected and members of an election board.

However, on the issue of whether or not election officials should be partisan or nonpartisan, we find important differences in opinion between blacks and whites. Nearly three-

quarters of white registered voters (74%) are in favor of nonpartisan election officials, with 15% of white registered voters favoring partisan election officials, and 11% having no opinion. By contrast, only 45% of black registered voters favor nonpartisan election officials, 29% fewer than whites. Forty-two percent of black registered voters were in support of partisan election officials, 27% greater rate of support than among whites. Two conclusions can be drawn from these results. First, black registered voters are much more supportive of partisan election officials than white registered voters. Second, the black population of registered voters is essentially evenly divided over whether election officials should be partisan or nonpartisan.

In Table 3, we examine how the three dimensions of election governance vary across a second set of important demographic variables: education and region of residence. For education, we use categories for attainment including less than a high school education, having a high school degree, having some college, having a college degree, or having some post-college education. There is little difference across the levels of educational attainment regarding preferences for unitary or commission-style election governance; generally there is nearly unanimous agreement about the need for election boards. The most interesting pattern we see across varying levels of educational attainment is for the issue of partisan and nonpartisan election administration. As educational attainment increases, there is a continual increase in support for nonpartisan election officials. A bare majority (55%) of registered voters with less than a high school degree support the concept of nonpartisan election officials, but 83% of those with post-college educations are in favor of nonpartisan election administration, an increase in support of 28%. Likewise, we find that those with lower levels of educational attainment are more likely to support partisan election administration. Nearly 30% of those with less than a high school degree support partisan election officials, but only 8% of those with post-college

experience are in favor of partisan election officials. Additionally, those with lower levels of educational attainment are also more uncertain in their opinions.

Table 3 Goes Here

Interesting variation in electoral governance preferences across regions of the nation is given in the last four columns of Table 3. First, registered voters from the north central or southern states are more likely to support unitary election officials, though still their overall level of support for that type of election administration is quite low (8 to 9%). Second, we see that registered voters from the western states are somewhat distinct from registered voters in the other regions in two ways: westerners are more in favor of appointed election officials and less in favor of partisan election officials than registered voters from other regions of the nation.

Our final set of descriptive statistics from the survey responses focuses on two attitudinal variables and one lifestyle variable: (1) the degree to which the registered voter is confident that their ballot was counted as intended in the most recent presidential election, (2) their partisan affiliation, and (3) whether or not they are the only adult in the household. These cross-tabulations are provided in Table 4.

Table 4 Goes Here

Confidence in the ballot counting process clearly plays a role in the preferences that registered voters have for election governance. This is especially true for the first two issues—appointed or election officials, and partisan versus nonpartisan election officials. Although one-quarter of those who were confident desired appointed election officials, only 11% of those who lacked confidence desired appointed election officials. This points to an interesting irony; voters who lack confidence that their ballots are being counted as intended have a strong preference for electing their election administrators! Also, we see that those who lack confidence are stronger

in their support for the concept of partisan election officials. However, there is a high degree of uncertainty about the desirability of partisanship among voters who lack confidence in the ballot counting process, since 21% are unsure about their preference over this issue.

A respondent's partisanship has some role as well in structuring opinions about election governance, as seen in the last three columns of Table 4. Independents are stronger in their support for elected administrators and Republicans are slightly more likely to favor partisan and unitary election administrators. Even though there are these differences in the data, we should reiterate that Democrats, Republicans, and Independents are still in relatively strong agreement that election officials should be elected, nonpartisan, and part of an election commission.

The impact of living with another adult is related to a voter's preference for partisan or non-partisan election officials. Voters who are the only adults in the house are more likely to prefer partisan election officials relative to voters who have more than one adult in the household. Below, we discuss this further, and hypothesize that it arises due to differences in information costs for different family structures.

Multivariate Analysis

The descriptive analyses reviewed in the previous section suggest relationships between various voter attributes and the preferences of voters over electoral governance. In order to isolate the effect of a single attribute upon a voter's preference over the election versus appointment of election officials and the partisanship of election officials, we estimated a multivariate model where each administrative choice was the dependent variable. As our dependent variables in these analysis involve binary choices (partisan versus nonpartisan election officials, appointed versus elected officials), we use the logit model to produce estimates for our various independent variables in these models. We did not run a regression on the third question

regarding single election officials vs. electoral board, as the virtual agreement in the sample regarding the preference for an election board makes estimation of a multivariate model difficult and of little utility.³¹

The estimates for the logit coefficients, their associated standard errors, and the levels of statistical significance for each logit estimate are given in Table 5. The first three columns in Table 5 provide results from the logit model relating to elected or appointed officials (Model 1), where the dichotomous dependent variable takes a value of one if the respondent prefers election and zero for appointment of election officials. The second set of results in Table 5 relate to a dependent variable that takes a value of one if the respondent prefers non-partisan election officials and zero for partisan election officials (Model 2). The number of observations included in both models differs from the total N of the survey, 1,176, because uncertain responses and voters who declined to answer certain characteristic questions such as age are not included in the logit models.

Table 5 Goes Here

Using the percent of observations predicted correctly to measure how well the models fit the data we find a relatively high correct prediction rate: Model 1 predicts 82.1% of the observations correctly and Model 2 predicts 75.2% of the observations correctly. This indicates that our two logit models predict the variation in responses to these two election governance questions well. When we look at the particular estimates in the two models, we see that the signs of the coefficients generally take the expected value given the results listed in the above tables. For instance, African Americans possess a negative coefficient for the non-partisan vs. partisan governance model, and women possess a positive coefficient for the elected vs. appointed

³¹ Given that more than 9 of every 10 registered voters in our sample stated a preference for an election board, that yields few instances where respondents stated a preference for a single election executive.

governance model. One surprising result seen in Table 5 and observed above is that voters lacking confidence in their vote being counted correctly prefer elected governance officials is confirmed by the significant and positive coefficient in the Model 2.

However, instead of concentrating our attention on the logit results reported in Table 5, we instead wish to concentrate on an easier-to-understand analysis of the logit coefficients, which we provide in Table 6. There we give the estimated first differences for Models 1 and 2 that are based upon the difference in estimated probabilities due to a change in one particular characteristic while holding all other responses to their median response.³² Here the estimated probability is the likelihood a registered voter with the specified characteristics will select election over appointment (similarly non-partisan over partisan election officials). A list of the median characteristics is provided in the footnote to Table 6. Using these data, we evaluate the significant coefficients in the election vs. appointed model (Model 1) first, and then turn to those from the nonpartisan vs artisan model (Model 2).

Table 6 Goes Here

Appointed versus Elected Governance Officials

As noted above, the confidence a voter places in the accuracy of the voting system has a surprising impact upon a voter's preference over elected versus appointed governance officials. Voters who feel their vote is not likely to be recorded as they intended have a 7.3 point increase in the probability that they favor elected governance officials. This outcome shows voters who lack confidence in the accuracy of the voting system prefer to have more control over the

³² We use the Clarify package within STATA to compute these first difference estimates. See Michael Tomz, Jason Wittenberg and Gary King, 2003, CLARIFY: Software for Interpreting and Presenting Statistical Results, Version 2.1, Stanford University, University of Wisconsin, and Harvard University, <http://gking.harvard.edu>; Gary King, Michael Tomz and Jason Wittenberg, 2000, "Making the Most of Statistical Analyses: Improving Interpretation and Presentation," *American Journal of Political Science*, 44(2), 347-361.

governance of the voting process. We infer from this result that voter control over the governance of the electoral system is an important issue determining the confidence voters place in the accuracy of the voting system.

If we use neutral party identification as a proxy for aversion to party politics, then independent voters should be relatively unwilling to prefer the selection of election officials through appointment. Thus, it is not surprising that the impact of party identification upon the likelihood of a voter preferring elected vs. appointed election officials is highly significant. As expected, Democrats and Republicans are 17.0 points and 15.4 points more likely than independents to prefer appointed election officials. The impacts of gender and living in the Western United States are significant upon the likelihood a voter prefers elected to appointed governance officials. Females are 4.3 points more likely than men to prefer elected officials. Additionally, voters living in the West are less likely to prefer elected officials relative to voters living in the South (as those from the West are 6.1 points lower in probability of supporting elected officials).

The variable generation has a significant and negative relationship upon voters' preferences over elected officials. Table 6 shows a 2.9 point decline in the likelihood the median voter prefers elected officials as the voter moves from Generation X to Generation Y. The difference between Baby Boomers and voters over the age of 59 is even with a 4.0 decline in the probability that a voter, possessing the other median characteristics, prefers elected officials. In conclusion, there exist slight differences between the generations in the desirability of the method used to select governance officials. However, policy makers should be aware that regardless of age there is a strong preference for elected officials and that this preference is even stronger among younger generations.

Similar to age, the impact of education upon the probability a voter prefers elected governance officials is also significant and negative. Table 6 shows that as a voter completes increasingly higher levels of education—possessing the other median characteristics—the probability this voter prefers elected governance officials decreases. However, in each education category nearly 4 out of 5 voters prefer elected to appointed election officials. Thus, regardless of education a voter possessing the other median characteristics clearly prefers elected to appointed election officials.

Partisan versus Non-partisan Governance

The variable with the largest impact upon a voter's preference over partisan and non-partisan governance officials is minority status. Although the likelihood a black registered voter prefers non-partisan election officials is 76%, blacks are 12.1 points less likely to prefer non-partisan election officials relative to white registered voters. Blacks have long been crucial members of the Democratic coalition, and strongly identify with and support Democratic Party candidates.³³ Given their close affiliation with the Democratic Party and its candidates, perhaps black voters here are expressing an interest in having Democratic election officials conduct elections in their state and locality, maybe a reflection of a higher degree of trust in Democratic election officials relative to Republican election officials. This hypothesis should be examined in future research.

Republican voters possessing the other median characteristics are 9.1 points more likely to prefer partisan to non-partisan elections. Framed in the context of Norris (1999) this result is reasonable. Norris finds that voters identifying with the losing party are less likely to place trust

³³ See, for example, Petrocik's analysis of social groups and party coalitions through the late 1980's: John R. Petrocik, 1987, "Realignment: New Party Coalitions and the Nationalization of the South", *Journal of Politics*, 49(2), 347-375. Since the late 1980's there appears to have been little change in Black affiliation with the national Democratic party; for example, the 2004 presidential election exit polls estimated that 88% of Blacks supported Kerry (<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.0.html>).

in government. Given the results of the 2000 and 2004 elections, it is reasonable for Democrats (and independents) to associate themselves with the minority. Using partisan officials implies an advantage to the party currently in control of the government. Thus, it is not surprising that Democrats and Independents will be less willing vis-à-vis Republicans to trust partisan election officials, who will likely be representing the party in control of the government.

Recall that voters living in the Western United States possess the only significant regional difference, relative to the South, on the issue of elected versus appointed election officials. On the issue of partisan versus non-partisan election officials, voters residing in the West again exhibit a significant difference relative to those in the South. Voters in the West are 4.7 points more likely to prefer non-partisan election officials. Based upon Table 3 and Models 1 and 2, we conclude that slight differences exist in the preferences of Western voters over electoral governance relative to the rest of the country. However, these differences are not substantively significant.

There is a positive correlation between age and a voter's preference for non-partisan election officials. However, holding the other responses to their median level the difference in likelihood between the generations is small since there is just over a 5 point difference between Generation X and those aged 59 and older. Among the most divided generation, Generation X, the likelihood of supporting non-partisan election officials is still 89%. Thus, there is a clear message that, regardless of age, voters have a clear preference for non-partisan election officials.

Similar to age, education exerts a positive impact upon the likelihood a voter will prefer non-partisan election officials. Voters holding graduate degrees, while possessing the other median characteristics, are 12.6 points more likely than high school drop-outs to prefer non-partisan election officials. Referring back to the results on the issue of election versus

appointment of election officials, it is clear that especially among the less educated there is a strong preference for the election of governance officials. Placed in the framework of the Downsian model of voting, one would expect less informed voters to rely more heavily upon party identification for information regarding candidates. Thus, the result that the less educated tend to have a stronger preference for partisan election officials fits within the Downsian model of voting.

Finally, voters who are the only adult in the household are 5.5 points more likely to prefer partisan versus non-partisan election officials. It is possible that the costs of obtaining information about the election officials may be greater (all things held constant) in a one adult household versus a household containing multiple adults. Thus, in the context of elected governance officials it is not surprising that this group of voters might prefer partisan election officials, as it might be easier for voters who are the only adult living in their household to monitor the actions of a partisan election official using the partisan cue.

Conclusions

The primary conclusions which were elicited from the responses of 1,176 voters concerning the structure of electoral governance are:

1. Voters prefer election boards to single election officials.
2. Voters prefer election to appointment in the selection of election officials.
3. Voters prefer non-partisan to partisan election officials.

When combining the responses over all respondents across the three questions we find 44.9% of adults and 46.6% of registered voters prefer an elected, non-partisan board to oversee elections.

Partisan elected boards and non-partisan appointed boards received approximately the same level of support with roughly 15% of adults and registered voters preferring these two forms of electoral governance. Finally, the desirability of the most frequently employed governance structure in statewide elections, the single elected partisan official, received less than 2% support among both adults and registered voters. These results imply two important conclusions. First, the current status quo governance structure employed by most states, single elected partisan officials, is wildly unpopular when compared to other forms of electoral governance. Second, there is nearly a majority among adults and registered voters who prefer elected, non-partisan election boards to oversee the state and local electoral process.

One surprising result is the confidence voters place in the accuracy of their vote being counted correctly has a significant and unexpected impact upon the manner in which voters would like to see election officials selected. Voters who lack confidence in the accuracy of the voting system are more likely to prefer the election of governance officials. This suggests that a lack of control over the governance of the electoral system may be a source of distrust among voters who lack confidence in the accuracy of the voting system.

Party affiliation does have an impact upon the preferences of registered voters over electoral governance. Independents are much more likely than either Democrats or Republicans to prefer elected to appointed election officials. Consistent with Norris (1999), Republicans are more likely than either Democrats or independents to prefer partisan election officials. As predicted by the Downsian theory of voting, party affiliation of election officials is more desirable among the historically less informed voters. Voters who are young, living alone, or lacking advanced levels of education are all more likely to prefer party affiliated election officials.

In conclusion, additional research is needed in order to ascertain if the public's choice for an elected, non-partisan election boards corresponds with the electoral governance structure which is best able to prevent electoral fraud and to instill confidence in voters that the process is fair. Although there is dearth of academic research on election administration generally, we see that there are related areas of academic research that might be able to shed substantial light on appropriate governance structures for election administration. For example, governance structures are widely studied in economics and finance, and research from those fields might be successfully applied to the future analysis of election administration governance.³⁴ In addition, further research is needed to determine how election government affects other aspects of the election process. For example, it may be that different election governance structures may utilize different election management techniques, such as contracting out election services or deferring to professional election management staff. In addition, governance may affect the types of decisions and the willingness of election officials to engage in reforms and innovations that may improve the electoral process.

³⁴ Classic treatments are found in Ronald H. Coase, "The Nature of the Firm," *Economica* N.S. 4 (1937), 386-405; Armen A. Alchian and Harold Demsetz, "Production, Information Costs, and Economic Organization," *American Economic Review* (1972), 777-795; and Michael Jensen and William Meckling, "Theory of the Firm: Managerial Behavior, Agency Costs, and Capital Structure," *Journal of Financial Economics*, 1976, 3, 305-360. A paper that applies the insights from the economics of information literature to the problem of election administration is Thad E. Hall and R. Michael Alvarez, "Why Everything That Can Go Wrong Often Does: An Analysis of Election Administration Problems," Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project Working Paper 10,. Another literature that might be successfully applied to the election governance problem is the analysis in economics of "mechanism design", see the discussion of this literature and the citations in Andreu Mas-Colell, Michael D. Whinston, and Jerry R. Green, *Microeconomic Theory*, Oxford University Press, 1995, Chapter 23.

Table 1.A: Survey Responses on Election Governance for Full Sample and Registered

Voters

The local or state election officials who run your elections should be:

| | Full sample | Registered voters |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Appointed | 21.2 | 22.9 |
| Elected | 73.9 | 72.6 |
| Don't know or refused | 4.9 | 4.5 |

The local or state election officials who run your elections should be:

| | Full sample | Registered voters |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Partisan | 19.6 | 18.4 |
| Nonpartisan | 66 | 70.3 |
| Don't know or refused | 14.4 | 11.3 |

Elections in your community should be overseen by:

| | Full sample | Registered voters |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| A single election official | 5.5 | 6.2 |
| An election board | 92.3 | 92.6 |
| Don't know or refused | 2.2 | 1.2 |

Table 1.B: Preferences Over Four Electoral Governance Options

Form of Electoral Governance

| | Full sample | Registered voters |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Nonpartisan Appointed Board | 14.6 | 16 |
| Nonpartisan Elected Board | 44.9 | 46.6 |
| Partisan Elected Single Official | 1.5 | 1 |
| Partisan Elected Board | 15 | 13.6 |

Table 2: Survey Response by Gender, Age and Race

| Questions | Male | Female | Gen Y | Gen X | Boomers | 59+ | White | Black |
|--|------|--------|-------|-------|---------|------|-------|-------|
| The local or state officials who run your elections should be: | | | | | | | | |
| Appointed | 26.1 | 20 | 23.4 | 21.3 | 22.9 | 23.8 | 21.3 | 28.3 |
| Elected | 69.8 | 75.2 | 73.2 | 77.6 | 73.7 | 67 | 73.3 | 71 |
| Don't Know or Refused | 4.1 | 4.8 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 3.4 | 9.2 | 5.4 | 0.8 |
| The local or state officials who run your elections should be: | | | | | | | | |
| Partisan | 18.6 | 18.1 | 19.1 | 23.7 | 16.5 | 16.5 | 15.2 | 42.2 |
| Nonpartisan | 74.5 | 66.6 | 68.1 | 67.8 | 72.3 | 70.6 | 73.8 | 44.5 |
| Don't Know or Refused | 6.9 | 15.3 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 11.2 | 12.9 | 11 | 13.3 |
| The local or state officials who run your elections should be: | | | | | | | | |
| A single election official | 6.4 | 6 | 5.8 | 6.6 | 4.2 | 9.1 | 5.6 | 6.6 |
| An election board | 92.3 | 92.9 | 93.7 | 93.3 | 95.1 | 88 | 93 | 93.1 |
| Don't Know or Refused | 1.3 | 1.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.7 | 2.9 | 1.4 | 0.3 |

Table 3: Survey Responses by Education and Region

| Questions | LTHS | H.S. | Some College | College | Grad | North East | North Central | South | West |
|--|------|------|--------------|---------|------|------------|---------------|-------|------|
| The local or state officials who run your elections should be: | | | | | | | | | |
| Appointed | 29 | 20.8 | 16.4 | 26.2 | 30.6 | 17.5 | 18.8 | 23.6 | 31.7 |
| Elected | 65.4 | 74.6 | 80.9 | 68.8 | 65.5 | 78.6 | 74.1 | 73.9 | 63.2 |
| Don't Know or Refused | 5.6 | 4.6 | 2.7 | 5 | 3.9 | 3.9 | 7.1 | 2.5 | 5.1 |
| The local or state officials who run your elections should be: | | | | | | | | | |
| Partisan | 29.8 | 20 | 16.7 | 14.7 | 7.8 | 17.6 | 20 | 22.2 | 10.2 |
| Nonpartisan | 55.4 | 66.3 | 73.8 | 77.8 | 83.2 | 71.8 | 66 | 67.2 | 79.7 |
| Don't Know or Refused | 14.8 | 13.7 | 9.5 | 7.5 | 9 | 10.6 | 14 | 10.6 | 10.1 |
| The local or state officials who run your elections should be: | | | | | | | | | |
| A single election official | 5.4 | 6.6 | 4.4 | 8 | 6.1 | 4.5 | 7.8 | 6.9 | 4.7 |
| An election board | 93 | 92.2 | 94.7 | 90.8 | 93.1 | 95.1 | 91.3 | 91.1 | 94.6 |
| Don't Know or Refused | 1.6 | 1.2 | 0.9 | 1.2 | 0.8 | 0.4 | 0.9 | 2 | 0.7 |

Table 4: Survey Responses by Election Confidence and Partisanship

| Questions | Not Conf. | Conf. | Rep | Dem | Ind | Lives Alone | Does Not Live Alone |
|--|-----------|-------|------|------|------|-------------|---------------------|
| The local or state officials who run your elections should be: | | | | | | | |
| Appointed | 11.1 | 24.6 | 23.4 | 26 | 18.4 | 19.5 | 23.6 |
| Elected | 86.5 | 71.6 | 72.6 | 70.7 | 76 | 75.5 | 72.1 |
| Don't Know or Refused | 2.4 | 3.8 | 4 | 3.3 | 5.6 | 5 | 4.3 |
| The local or state officials who run your elections should be: | | | | | | | |
| Partisan | 24.4 | 17.1 | 20.7 | 17.6 | 16.3 | 24.7 | 17 |
| Nonpartisan | 54.2 | 74.6 | 70.2 | 71.7 | 71.5 | 66.2 | 71.2 |
| Don't Know or Refused | 21.4 | 8.3 | 9.1 | 10.7 | 12.2 | 9.1 | 11.8 |
| The local or state officials who run your elections should be: | | | | | | | |
| A single election official | 5 | 7.1 | 8.2 | 5.2 | 5.9 | 7.6 | 5.9 |
| An election board | 94.4 | 91.9 | 91.3 | 94 | 93.1 | 90 | 93.2 |
| Don't Know or Refused | 0.6 | 1 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 1 | 2.4 | 0.9 |

Table 5: Estimation of Logit Models

| Variable | Model 1 Elected vs. Appointed Model | | | Model 2 Non-partisan vs. Partisan Model | | |
|---------------------|--|----------------|---------|--|----------------|---------|
| | Coefficient | Standard Error | P-value | Coefficient | Standard Error | P-value |
| Minority Not | .00 | .24 | .99 | -.85 | .24 | .00†† |
| Confident | .79 | .38 | .04†† | -.28 | .33 | .40 |
| Education 2+ Adults | -.17 | .07 | .02†† | .29 | .09 | .00†† |
| Democrat | -.19 | .20 | .36 | .45 | .21 | .04†† |
| Republican | -.98 | .24 | .00†† | -.05 | .26 | .84 |
| Female | -.89 | .24 | .00†† | -.70 | .25 | .01†† |
| Generation | .38 | .17 | .02†† | -.18 | .19 | .35 |
| N. East | -.23 | .09 | .02†† | .24 | .10 | .02†† |
| N. Central | .19 | .25 | .45 | .34 | .29 | .24 |
| West | -.11 | .22 | .60 | -.14 | .23 | .55 |
| Constant | -.42 | .22 | .06† | .56 | .28 | .05†† |
| | 3.09 | .50 | .00†† | -.01 | .52 | .99 |

a - logit where the number of observations included is 793, the value of one corresponds to voters who prefer non-partisan officials and zero corresponds to voters who prefer partisan officials

b - logit where the number of observations included is 838, the value of one corresponds to voters who prefer elected officials and zero corresponds to voters who prefer appointed officials

† indicates significance at 90% level

†† indicates significance at 95% level

Table 6: First Differences Based Upon Logit Model Coefficients

| Variable | Model 1 Election vs. Appointed Model ^a | | | Model 2 Non-partisan vs. Partisan Model ^a | | |
|---|---|---|---------------|---|---|---------------|
| | Possesses Attribute | Does not Possess Attribute | Impact | Possesses Attribute | Does not Possess Attribute | Impact |
| MEDIAN INDIVIDUAL | 84.3 | - | - | 88.1 | - | - |
| Black | 84.3 | 84.3 | 0.0 | 76.0 | 88.1 | -12.1** |
| Not Confident | 91.6 | 84.3 | 7.3** | 84.7 | 88.1 | -3.4 |
| 2+ Adults | 84.3 | 82.2 | 2.1 | 88.1 | 82.6 | 5.5** |
| Democrat | 67.3 | 84.3 | -17.0** | 88.1 | 88.1 | 0.0 |
| Republican | 68.9 | 84.3 | -15.4** | 79.0 | 88.1 | -9.1** |
| Female | 88.6 | 84.3 | 4.3** | 86.2 | 88.1 | -1.9 |
| N. East | 86.8 | 84.3 | 2.5 | 91.2 | 88.1 | 3.1 |
| N. Central | 82.7 | 84.3 | -1.6 | 86.7 | 88.1 | -1.4 |
| West | 78.2 | 84.3 | -6.1* | 92.8 | 88.1 | 4.7** |
| Impact of Age Levels^b | Current Generation Placement^d | Previous Generation | Change | Current Generation Placement^c | Previous Generation | Change |
| Generation X | 85.6 | - | - | 89.0 | - | - |
| Generate Y | 82.7 | 85.6 | -2.9 | 91.2 | 89.0 | 2.2 |
| Boomers | 79.2 | 82.7 | -3.5 | 92.9 | 91.2 | 1.7 |
| Age 59+ | 75.2 | 79.2 | -4.0 | 94.3 | 92.9 | 1.4 |
| Impact of Education Levels^b | Completed This Level^d | Highest Completion One Level Lower | Change | Completed This Level^c | Highest Completion One Level Lower | Change |
| Did not complete High School | 88.2 | - | - | 80.3 | - | - |
| Completed High School | 86.4 | 88.2 | -1.8 | 84.6 | 80.3 | 4.3 |
| Some College | 84.3 | 86.4 | -2.1 | 88.1 | 84.6 | 3.5 |
| College Graduate | 81.9 | 84.3 | -2.4 | 90.8 | 90.8 | 2.7 |
| Graduate Degree | 79.2 | 81.9 | -2.7 | 92.9 | 92.9 | 2.1 |

| |
|--|
| a – median characteristics: white, confident, 2+ adults, independent, male, South, some college, boomer. |
| b - holding all responses at their median response level and varying education one interval at a time |
| c – the ln(education) is significant at the 95% confidence level |
| d – the ln(education) is significant at the 90% confidence level |
| * significant at the 90% confidence level |
| ** significant at the 95% confidence level |

Appendix: Survey Methodology

The ICR EXCEL omnibus telephone survey methodology consists of interviews with approximately 1000 respondents, conducted twice a week.³⁵ ICR undertakes a random-digit dialing approach to sampling telephone households, and within each sample household a single adult respondent is selected based on the adult with the most recent birthday. The ICR EXCEL survey data is then weighted to produce a nationally representative sample of the adult population; we use these population weights in all of the univariate and cross-tabulated analyses reported in this paper. Given the sample size of the ICR EXCEL survey we use, a typical survey proportion (50%-50% split) will have a 95% confidence level of approximately 3 percentage points.

In Table A-1 below, we report weighted survey frequencies from our ICR data, in comparison to the similar frequencies from the 2004 Current Population Survey. There we compare our ICR sample to the CPS on gender, age, education and region. The weighted ICR survey frequencies closely match the CPS estimates of the same population parameters, especially once we take into account the slightly different categorizations used for age and educational attainment.

³⁵ More information regarding the ICR EXCEL survey is available from <http://www.icrsurvey.com/ICRExcel.aspx>.

TABLE A-1: ICR Survey Compared to 2004 Current Population Survey (CPS)^a

| | 2004 Survey | 2004 CPS^a |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 48.2 | 48.1 |
| Female | 51.8 | 51.9 |
| | | |
| Age | | |
| Age 18-24 years | 12.9 | 12.9 |
| Age 25-34 years | 18.4 | 18.1 |
| Age 35-44 years | 20.7 | 20.0 |
| Age 45-54 years | 18.9 | 19.3 |
| Age 55-64 years | 12.9 | 13.6 |
| Age 65-74 years | 8.5 | 8.5 |
| Age 75 years and over | 6.2 | 7.6 |
| Refused | 1.5 | - |
| | | |
| Education | | |
| Less than High School | 16.4 | 15.4 |
| High School | 33.0 | 31.8 |
| Some College | 22.9 | 27.3 |
| College Degree | 16.5 | 17.0 |
| Graduate Degree | 8.1 | 8.5 |
| Technical School or Refused | 3.1 | - |
| | | |
| Region | | |
| Northeast | 19.5 | 19.0 |
| North Central | 22.7 | 22.5 |
| South | 35.8 | 35.8 |
| West | 22.0 | 22.7 |

a – Information collected from U.S. Census Bureau’s November 2004 Current Population Survey (CPS) and November 2004 Voter Supplement.