

# Why do candidates cooperate? Weak parties, vertical coordination and clans in the Philippines

Michael W. Davidson  
*University of California, San Diego*

[mwdavidson@ucsd.edu](mailto:mwdavidson@ucsd.edu)

[polisci2.ucsd.edu/mwdavidson/](http://polisci2.ucsd.edu/mwdavidson/)\*

First Draft: January 10, 2015

Latest Draft: May 23, 2016

## Abstract

Absent meaningful ideologies, why do candidates running for different offices join parties? In many developing democracies, parties provide little information to voters about the policy goals of their members, and yet, parties are ubiquitous. In this paper I detail how partisan alliances still provide a considerable advantage to candidates, allowing them to leverage economies of scale and comparative advantages held by candidates running for office at different levels of government. The benefits and costs of working together with other politicians pose a collective action problem for politicians, that even weak parties help solve. I describe the excludable and non-excludable benefits of this cooperation and the free-rider problem that the latter generates. Parties help minimize the cost of cooperation and increase the costs of defection. I explore the benefits from cooperation by looking for evidence of partisan voting in the Philippines, a country with a reputation for weak, ephemeral parties. I then explore how the need for vertical coordination shapes politicians' efforts to build local

---

\*For generous data sharing, fruitful discussions and comments on this work I thank Ed Aspinall, Cesi Cruz, Dotan Haim, Allen Hicken, Ronald Holmes, Paul Hutchcroft, Sara Kerosky, Julien Labonne, Pablo Querubin, Nico Ravanilla, and Meredith Weiss.

party ties, shedding light in the process on how clans have retarded the institutionalization of political parties.

# 1 Introduction

Political parties are a ubiquitous feature of modern democracy, but they clearly serve different purposes in different contexts. Scholars frequently note that parties provide significant advantages to voters—party labels help voters process political information (Lodge and Hamill, 1986), keep politicians accountable, and decide who to vote for in an information poor environment (Lupia and McCubbins, 1998; Popkin, 1994). These same functions can be helpful for candidates too, providing a quick and easy way to connect with voters who are ideologically similar. But what motivates candidates to form and join parties in the absence of meaningful party labels? In many developing democracies, parties are not only weak, but lack coherent ideologies completely. In these contexts party labels do not convey information about candidate policy goals, but rather, the formal alliances between candidates running for different offices.

Inter-candidate alliances are beneficial because they provide access to a collective good that candidates cannot access on their own—electoral economies of scale (Aldrich, 1995). By working together, candidates can maximize the gains from voter mobilization by lowering costs while increasing output. I identify two sets of benefits from this “vertical cooperation”, or cooperation between candidates running for different (higher and lower) offices. First, unlike candidates operating on their own, candidates who run for office together can more efficiently allocate resources among themselves (typically to candidates who are more proximate to voters) in an effort maximize mobilization. I call this the *reallocation benefit*. The benefits from reallocating resources among partners are largely excludable, meaning that candidates who do not contribute can be deprived of the gains. Second, by partnering candidates can generate a *party vote*. By using a party label, candidates can efficiently mobilize supporters for a slate of candidates. When every candidate mobilizes even a small percentage of their eventual supports for the entire party, the group enjoys large collective benefits.

The first benefit, that of reallocating resources between partner candidates, is epitomized by Philippines local politics. In the Philippines, candidate success is highly dependent on their position in local networks (Cruz, Labonne, and Querubin, 2016). This is likely because central candidates can more easily establish and operate complex brokerage networks. Moreover, embeddedness, on the account of the candidate and his or her brokers facilitates monitoring, sanctioning and reciprocity (Stokes, 2005). While local candidates who control these brokerage networks are rich in this one sense, they often lack the financial resources to fully utilize their networks. Candidates for higher office lack local networks in every area of their constituency,

but often have greater financial resources at their disposal. These complimentary strengths lend candidates running for office at different levels to profitable partnerships.

Another reason for collective campaigning under a party label is that it facilitates the generation of a party vote. Party votes are support generated for party member by aligned candidates. While voters rarely have strong preferences about who to support for every office, they can frequently be mobilized to support the entire group by those candidates for whom they do have an affinity. If each candidate running under a single label manages to mobilize even a small percentage of their supporters in this manner then the party as a whole enjoys a large advantage. These advantages are especially large under the dramatic, multilevel political decentralization that has recently come to characterize many developing democracies (Treisman, 2007).

Given the large potential gains from partisan cooperation, why don't more candidates use and develop political parties to support their ambitions? The reallocation benefit of cooperation is easily excludable—candidates can choose not to share funds with some politicians with whom they share a label—but the party votes is enjoyed by all candidates running under a common party label, regardless of their contributions. These features of cooperation constitute a collective action problem for politicians

In practice candidates use party labels to lower the cognitive load of remembering who to vote for, making them vulnerable to free riding by candidates who use the same label (e.g. not campaigning collectively, while using the party label). Parties lower the cost of cooperation by providing logistical and heuristic tools, but in doing so leave themselves vulnerable to shirking/free-riding.

In the next section I define vertical cooperation and relate it to other form of coordination, including strategic voting/entry and cross-district coordination. I then consider why alignment is beneficial to office-seeking candidates. Specifically, I identify and describe the potential electoral gains for cooperators provided by accessing economies of scale. Finally, I describe how parties minimize the free-rider problem by making defection costly and cooperation easy, something not accomplished by informal alliances. These theoretical insights help explain why parties are a persistent feature of democracy, even when those parties lack ideological foundations.

Using electoral data from the Philippines, I then test the theory. First, I look for evidence of partisan voting by exploring whether voters actually cast ballots for slates of candidates in this environment. Other work has demonstrated that parties in the Philippines lack ideological and policy foundations (Banlaoi and Carlos, 1996; Landé, 1998; Machado, 1974). Thus, evidence of

partisan voting, to any degree, suggests that voters are being mobilized to support party slates, generating an electoral “cooperation surplus” relative to those who do not (Axelrod 1984).

I proceed to test whether the benefits from cooperation are leading candidates to more or less vertical partisan alignment. Specifically, I explore the relationship between executive offices in a given area being contested and copartisanship among candidate in that area. I also test how this copartisanship correlates with turnout. If vertical cooperation yield the benefits I suggest, partisan alliances should mobilize more voters than individual candidates running without them.

The theory I advance here not only identifies benefits of vertical cooperation, but also costs. When the benefits of partisan cooperation can be achieved through alternative means, candidates will avoid them. This is one reason I predict lower (greater) partisan alignment when electoral competition for executive offices is low (high). One fascinating implication of this is that individuals who enjoy another type of electoral advantage, membership in a large or well-connected political family, have a smaller incentive to team up with other candidates. I exploit naming conventions in the Philippines to assess the effect of candidate relatedness in different areas on their decision of whether or not to align with others.

## 2 Inter-Candidate Cooperation

Across the globe there is tremendous variation in the shape and extent of cooperation between candidates. Three dimensions of coordination are worth discussing. First, within districts, potential candidates coordinate entry and voters coordinate on who to vote (Cox, 1997), producing the observation that single member district yield two candidates on average (Duverger, 1954). The second dimension of inter-candidate coordination is horizontal. This is what scholars call party system nationalization, or aggregation. Different institutions, including the concentration of political power in the executive, their re-election incentives and the degree of federalism shape the degree to which parties are local or parochial rather than national (Chhibber and Kollman, 1998; Chhibber and Kollman, 2004; Hicken, 2009). These twin dimensions of political coordination have garnered extensive attention as reviewed by Cox, (1999). After briefly reviewing them, I turn to introducing a third dimension of party organization, vertical coordination. In short, this is the extent to which candidates take on the same party label as other individuals running for offices above or below them, but with whom they share voters.

Intra-district coordination by candidates (strategic entry) and voters (strategic voting) has been extensively explored by scholars (Cox, 1997; Cox and Rosenbluth, 1994; Downs, 1957; Duverger, 1954). In short, candidate condition their entry into a particular race according to who else is running or is anticipated to run and voters ignore non-viable candidates such that there are no more than the number of seats plus one “real” candidates for a given office.<sup>1</sup> This relationship produces a predictable relationship between district magnitude and effective number of candidates at the district-level.

While Duverger, (1954) argued that this district-level relationship would be replicated at the national-level, others have called this thinking into question (Cox, 1997) and begun a careful exploration of when candidates and parties coordinate across districts, calling it variously aggregation or nationalization. When parties are limited to a single region, they have limited national scope, and when the system is made up of entirely regional parties, the party system has low nationalization. To date, three predictors of aggregation have been identified. The first factor is the degree to which power is concentrated in the national government, rather than decentralized to sub-national units. If political power rest mostly with local governments, parties have less of an incentive to obtain control of the central government (Chhibber and Kollman, 1998). Similarly, systems with greater horizontal concentration of power in the government (e.g. the absence of a second chamber, or a concentration of power in the central government relative to subnational units) should produce more nationally oriented parties. Moreover, as the probability that election winners will actually lead the government increases, politicians will endeavor more to build parties with national reach to win those elections (Hicken, 2009, e.g. in parliamentary systems, the party with the largest share of the votes may not run the government).

In this section, I compliment these two dimensions of candidate coordination with a third, what I call vertical coordination. This is the extent to which candidates running for offices at different levels of government partner and run under a single label. Two candidates could cooperate vertically if their races are voted on by at least some of the same voters. Candidates in two races for the national legislature in different single member districts cannot coordinate vertically because they do not share a common electorate. Potential vertical partners need not have constituencies of the same size, most often their constituencies will envelop one another, but they must share some constituents. For example, in the United States candidates running for the House of Representatives can align themselves with candidates running for the Senate in their state. In my case country of the Philippines, mayoral can-

---

<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the conditions under which this is valid, see Cox, (1997, ch. 7).

didates can partner with candidates running for the House of Representatives or for governor.

Figure 2 visualizes high (right) and low (left) vertical coordination from the eyes of a single voter. In the case of low coordination, voters see a mess of candidates from different parties competing for different offices. When coordination is high, voters are presented with a cleaner set of options.

## 2.1 Benefits

What incentives do candidates have to coordinate with candidates running below or above them, especially when the party label they are adopting conveys little information to voters about policy goals or ideology? Vertical cooperation generates two types of benefits for participating candidates—neither of which require that parties have meaningful ideological information. Both of these premiums for party partnerships derive from access to economies of scale. First, cooperation among candidates facilitates allocating resources more effectively—putting resources in the hands of those who can use them the most efficiently, producing the greatest voter mobilization for the money. Party labels lower the cognitive load for voters and make it easier for campaign staff to sell multiple candidates at once. Second, by campaigning under a common banner, candidates at each level can generate support for the whole slate of voters, producing spill-over votes.

Consider a candidate running for higher office (e.g. congressional seat

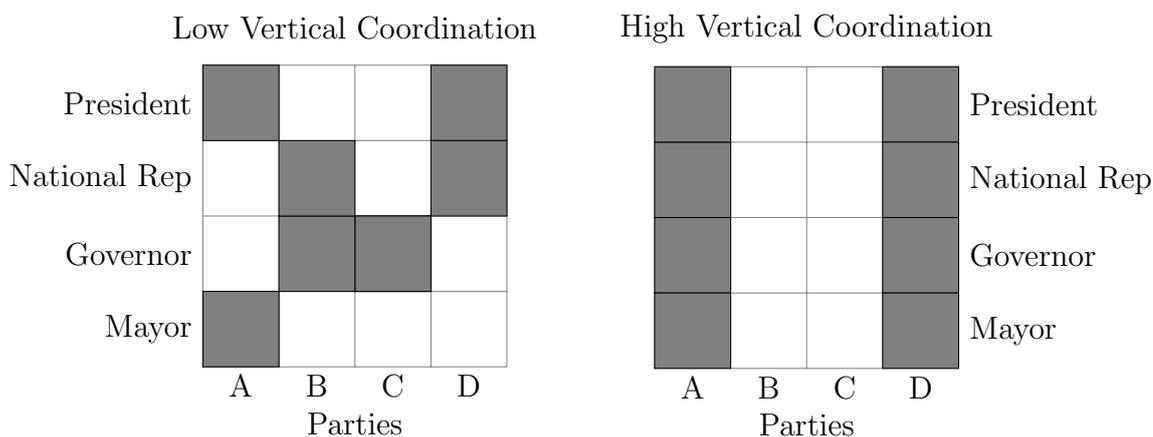


Figure 1: Shaded boxes represent candidates running for a given office (row) as a member of a given party (columns). Candidates on the right (left) are running for different offices in a single area under few (many) party labels, illustrating high (low) vertical coordination.

or governor) who, as a result of his large constituency, cannot visit many of his own voters on his own. Rather than establishing his own campaign infrastructure in every area, he can partner with local candidates and piggy-back on their campaign efforts. This avails the upper-level candidate of huge efficiency gains, especially when the dominant electoral strategy relies on having “boots on the ground”. In this case, local brokerage networks are critical and make these partnerships more important.

Local candidates also benefit from this arrangement. In exchange for access to their brokerage networks, local candidates gain resources that can be used to expand their own campaign activities (e.g. hiring more campaign workers, holding more campaign events or providing larger inducements). In rare occasions, local candidates might support upper-level candidates in order to ride a surge of support for that candidate, as was the case in the Philippine Presidential election of 2016. Local candidates in some areas chose to campaign on behalf of Rodrigo Duterte, despite receiving nothing from his campaign, because of a ground swell of support for him.

The degree to which responsibility for mobilization is devolved to local candidates and resources shuffled accordingly likely varies with the need for “boots on the ground”. But vertical coordination can be profitable for candidates even if they do not reallocate resources. This is because by working as a team, aligned candidates can generate a “party vote”. If every candidate on the party slate encourages their core supporters to vote for their copartisans, in addition to themselves, then all of the candidates on the slate should realize more votes than they would running independently.

Mobilizing support for ones allies in this way can be especially useful in contexts where voters do not have strong opinions about candidates running for every office. Being the cognitive misers that they are, voters do not often know or put forth the effort to learn about candidates running for every office (Downs, 1957; Popkin, 1994). In Philippine synchronized National and Local elections, for example, it is not unusual for voters to have more than 30 votes to cast for candidates running at different levels. While few voters have strong preferences about this many candidates, there are usually some races or candidates that voters do know and care about. Perhaps they have decided to support their family patron, a relative, or someone who identifies with their religious or social group. For the other seats/positions, voters may be convinced by their favored candidates (or their machinery) to support their allies. Similarly, by sharing a party with those favored candidates, other politicians can signal their alliance to voters even if they were not directly instructed to support them.

This presented relationship suggests that party name and label serve a heuristic purpose by making it easier for voters to decide who to vote for.

Instead of having to disentangle or recall complex alliance networks at the polls, voters need only remember the party of the candidate that they feel strongly about or who appealed to them ideologically, paid them for their vote, or promised jobs for their communities. As I describe later, the mechanics of voter mobilization in the Philippines reinforces these formal party ties to secure as many votes for the slate as possible.

## 2.2 Reputational Costs of Defection

What is there to stop candidates who wish to access the party votes benefits of party membership without contributing by campaigning for the slate as a whole? For all the benefits provided to candidates who cooperate vertically, there are still some costs. Encouraging candidates to vote not just for themselves, but also for their slate can be non-trivial. Consider a voter who has an affinity to candidates at two-levels who are not aligned with one another. The local candidates risks disillusioning this voter on account of who they are, or are not, aligned with. This risk is a cost borne by all candidates who campaign collectively. Candidates who align themselves with others also bear some costs of coordinating strategy. These relatively small, but non-trivial costs of coordinating provide an incentive for free-riding by candidates who wish to benefit passively from belonging to a party, but do not wish to expend the resources or exacerbate the risks of complete commitment to a party slate.

Parties help overcome this collective action problem by lowering the costs of collective campaigning and by making it more costly to free-ride. In response to candidates who shirk by failing to campaign for their copartisans or pocketing resources allocated for that purpose, parties can sanction these candidates. Consider a candidate running for local office who does not campaign for his copartisans. In the next campaign he or she will not receive the same resources from allies and might even face a re-election challenge supported by the party they cheated. These threats, the relatively low costs of campaigning for the slate while campaigning for one's self, and the large benefits of cooperation make it disadvantageous for candidates to free-ride or defect.

According to the electoral rules, parties also may have the ability to restrict or minimize access to their party label. Some institutional rules allow parties complete control over who can run under the party label, and thus benefit from the joint efforts of its candidates. We should observe higher compliance under these rules, but they are not the only arrangement where this is possible. In closed list proportional representation systems, for example, the party determines ballot order, allowing them to easily penalize

candidates who shirk by placing them lower on the ballot.

In addition to increasing the costs of defection, parties also lower the costs of inter-candidate cooperation through heuristic and logistic tools. These include the party name, symbols and propaganda that can make it less costly to combine campaigning for oneself and ones' allies.

Sample ballots are one tool used by parties in the Philippines to both lower the costs of compliance and to deter defection. Upper-level candidates print these mock ballots showing voters which candidates they should support on election day, and distribute them to local machines for widespread dissemination, often with cash, in the final days before the election. These sample ballots make it easier for candidates to campaign collectively because it contains all of the information voters need to support their slate. Moreover, because local candidates are not financially burdened by the sample ballots and receive money to disseminate them, they are incentivized to keep their end of the bargain. One technique that the party has at its disposal for dealing with defectors is to scratch candidates from their slate at the last minute, a powerful deterrent to defection.

### 3 Context and Data

To test the theory of vertical coordination that I have advanced here, I first need to provide evidence of partisan voting. Do voters actual vote along party lines in the Philippines? Given what we know about the content and ephemoral nature of political parties here, evidence of partisan voting, suggests that parties are not chosen at random, but rather that candidates coordinate on party labels in order to maximize their electoral gains (section 3.1).

Supposing that partisan voting does occur, why? Do candidates indeed coordinate in order to maximize electoral benefits? If so, we should see evidence that vertical candidate coordination is related to some of these benefits. I find that it is indeed correlated with voter mobilization measured by turnout (section 3.2). Where candidates align according to partisan affiliation, there is greater average turnout. I then address how the costs and benefits of party membership interacts with the importance of clans in Philippine Politics (section 3.3).

#### 3.1 Partisan Voting

In the Philippines, candidates are elected to municipal, provincial and national office simultaneously every three years. Congressional districts are made up of municipalities and cities that fall within a single province. Ev-

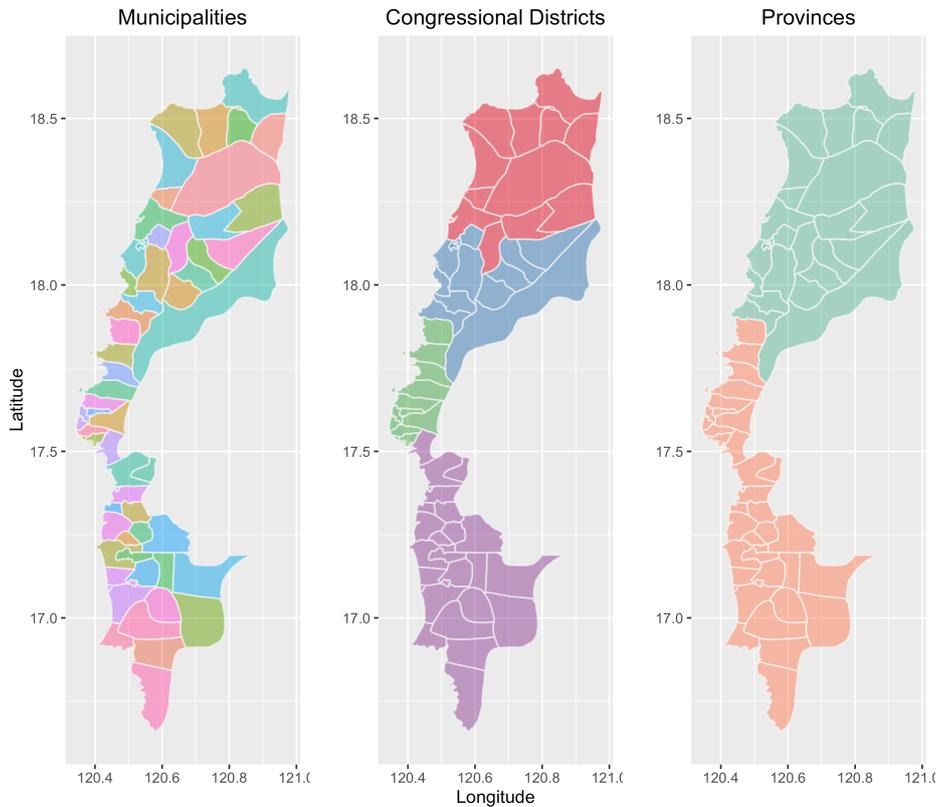


Figure 2: The division of two Philippine provinces (right), Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur, into municipalities (left) and congressional districts (middle). Barangay, the lowest level of political decentralization, are not shown.

ery province houses at least one congressional district and no congressional district envelopes more than one province. This pattern of constituencies that envelop one another as the level increases is common and typical of decentralization in developing democracies.

To look for evidence of partisan voting, I will explore whether candidates for different offices, but from the same party, are frequently selected together. If possible, the best way to identify partisan voting would be to look at individual ballots and quantify how often copartisans for different seats are selected together relative to non-copartisan pairs, but secrecy provisions make this impossible. Survey responses regarding candidate vote choice is one way to circumvent this problem.<sup>2</sup> Another solution is to explore the similarities in precinct-level vote shares of copartisan and non-copartisan candidates. For example, do mayoral candidates and gubernatorial candidates receive a more

<sup>2</sup>I plan to use survey data currently being collected to this purpose.

similar number of votes in a given precinct if they are from the same party? Or, does party not matter at all? If it does matter, to what magnitude?

To perform this test, I construct a data set of all possible pairs of candidates running for different offices in each precinct. I then regress the absolute value of the difference of votes received by these candidates ( $Y_{ijp}$ ) in each precinct on a dummy for whether or not they are copartisans (*sameParty*) as follows:

$$Y_{ijp} = \beta_1 \text{SameParty}_{ij} + v_p + o_{ij} + \epsilon_{ijp} \quad (1)$$

where  $v_p$  is a precinct indicator, effectively controlling for idiosyncracies of different precincts including the number of voters and ballots cast,  $o_{ij}$  is an indicator for the combination of offices the two candidates are running for (e.g. Mayor and Governor or Congressman and Governor) and  $\epsilon_{ijp}$  is the usual error term. Standard-errors are clustered at the provincial-level, which accounts for clustering at the municipal and precinct-levels, as well. The independent variable of interest is the *sameParty* indicator.

I also estimate equation 1 with an interaction between the indicator for two candidates belonging to the same party and the indicator for the different offices the candidates in the dyad are running for. This allows us to explore the extent to which an effect of copartisanship depends on the nature of the cooperation between the two candidates. For example, we should expect that candidates running for mayor and vice-mayor from the same party are cooperating to a greater extent than individuals running for vice-mayor and provincial board, which are further removed from one another. Further, this analysis should reveal which offices are most important to one another.

I run this analysis on two subsets of the data. The first subset contains all municipal, provincial and national candidates (excluding the president), including candidates for local legislatures (municipal and provincial boards). The second subset only includes candidates for Mayors, Governor, and the House of Representatives.<sup>3</sup>

The results (table 2) indicate that candidates who run as copartisans have precinct-level vote totals that are much more similar than candidates from different parties. The magnitude of the effect is striking. When equation 1 is estimated only on candidates for Mayor, Governor and the House of Representatives the difference in precinct-level vote's received is roughly 92. This is an effect size of .71 standard deviations—a huge amount by any measure. When estimated on all candidates, the conditional effect of copartisanship

---

<sup>3</sup>I exclude all candidates for Senate, vice-president and president as they are elected from a national constituency and therefore lack a proximate connection to any local candidate.

Level	Office	Partisan?	Electoral Rule (Seats)
<b>National</b>	President/Vice	Yes	SMD
	Representative	Yes	SMD
	Senator	Yes	Block (12)
<b>Province</b>	Governor/Vice	Yes	SMD
	Board	Yes	Block (6+)
<b>Municipal/City</b>	Mayor/Vice	Yes	SMD
	Councilor	Yes	Block (8 mun/10+ city)
<b>Barangay</b>	Captain	No	SMD
	Councilor	No	Block (7)

Table 1: The elected political offices that correspond with different levels of political decentralization in the Phillippines, whether those offices are partisan, and how they are elected. Note that in addition to being non-partisan, Barangay elections are non-concurrent with National and Local elections, normally taking place about 7 months later. Half of the Senate, 12 seats, are chosen elected every 3 years.

on the difference in vote totals decreases to roughly 48 votes, or .45 standard deviations.

An analysis of the effect of copartisanship on vote similarity according to the office the different candidates are running for makes it clear that the partisan relationships between different candidates are not all the same. Using the interaction coefficients from model 2 of table 2, I constructed the network plotted in figure 3. Thicker lines between offices convey a stronger correlation in the votes received by copartisans within precincts.

The plot makes clear that the similarity in votes received by copartisans is the strongest between candidates running for an office with just one seat, especially the most powerful offices at the different levels of government. The votes shares of Congressional Representatives, Governors, Vice Governors and Mayors all consistently move together. There is also strong evidence of cooperation between running mates, as one would expect. Vice Mayoral and Mayor candidates, for example, receive similar precinct level vote totals.

Which relationships are weakest is telling as well. Given the sheer number of municipal council candidates running within a single province, its does not make sense that we would find evidence of cooperation between council candidates and gubernatorial candidates. The results are consistent with this. There is similarly no relationship between provincial board and municipal council candidates. There are visible, but weaker ties between provincial board candidates and mayors and vice mayors. Taken together, these results

Table 2: Effect of copartisanship on difference in precinct-level votes received by a pair of candidates. Dependent variable is the absolute value of the difference in votes received by candidates  $i$  and  $j$  in precinct  $p$ . Standard errors are clustered at the provincial-level. Models 3 and 4 only include candidates for Mayor, Governor, and the House of Representatives. Models 1 and 2 were estimated using observations from all candidates with a non-national constituency. Interaction coefficients from model 2 and 4 were used to construct the network plot below.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Vote Difference			
	All Candidates		Executives	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Same Party	-48.746*** (2.458)	-29.579*** (2.240)	-91.295*** (6.287)	-93.681*** (8.263)
Office Pair*Same Party	No	Yes	No	Yes
Office Pair FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Precinct FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	887,689	887,689	21,795	21,795
R <sup>2</sup>	0.221	0.228	0.299	0.299
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.220	0.227	0.265	0.265

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

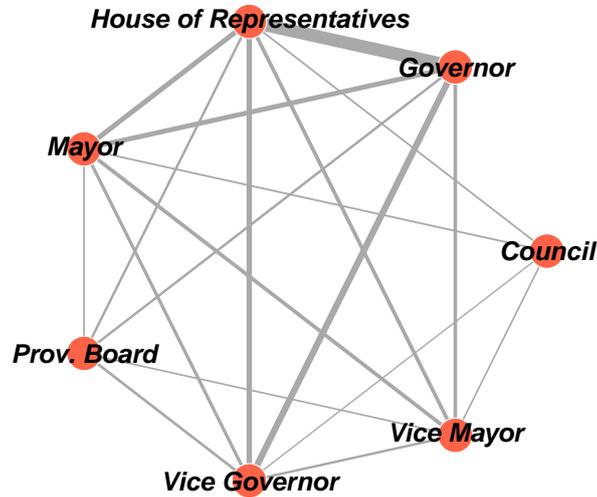


Figure 3: Effect of copartisanship on vote similarity by office pair.

suggest that partisan coordination runs through candidates for single seat offices, like mayors, governors and congressional representatives.

### 3.2 Vertical Coordination and Voter Mobilization

Given what we know about the nature of political parties in the Philippines, evidence of partisan voting is suggestive that candidates are working together. But, if the theory I have presented is correct, there should be additional evidence that correlates with candidates taking on a common party labels. Specifically, we should find that this vertical coordination moves with turnout. If candidates are in fact sharing resources and dividing responsibilities in a more efficient way, we should see that more voters are mobilized in places with greater partisan alignment.

To explore this relationship, I regress municipality-level turnout on a measure of vertical coordination. I operationalize vertical coordination as the fractionalization of parties at the local level. Fractionalization is elsewhere used to measure economic competition with an industry or the degree to which individuals in a society share an identity group (e.g. ethnicity). I use the same calculation procedure, but treat every independent as each belonging

to their own separate party.

Specifically, the municipality level fractionalization is

$$F_m = 1 - \sum_{m=1}^{pm} \pi_{pm}^2 \quad (2)$$

where  $\pi_{pm}$  is the percentage of all candidates belonging to party  $p$  in municipality  $m$ . In words, the party fractionalization score produced by this equation represent the likelihood that two candidates chosen at random belong to different parties. Thus, larger values represent a more diverse collection of parties fielding candidates. I calculate this measure for all candidates and all executive candidates and regress turnout on each separately, with and without controls for whether or not the other single-member district competitions were opposed.

Table 3 contains the results of this estimation. The results show that party fractionalization is negatively correlated with voter turnout, regardless of whether we construct the measure for all local candidates (provincial down) or just the highest office at each level (Representative, Governor and Mayor). The results show that a one unit increase in party fractionalization corresponds to roughly a 5% decrease in voter turnout, which runs from 0 to 1. A one standard-deviation increase in party fractionalization (approximately .10) corresponds with a decrease in voter turnout of approximately 0.7% (using the preferred estimation displayed in model 3).

A correlation between voter turnout and vertical coordination suggest that partisan cooperation facilitates the sort of electoral gains that I have argued. Namely, candidates that are better organized and who cooperate more can mobilize more voters for the same resources.

### 3.3 Family Advantage and Incentives for Party Building

The broader picture portrayed here is that vertical cooperation, a local form of party building is the product of an electoral need. Candidates want to win their respective races and can increase their efficiency by partnering. As we've seen up to this point, candidates who can avoid the costs incurred by campaigning for others avoid them when possible, like when the electoral challenge they are facing is weak. This leads one to wonder, what relationship do other forms of electoral advantage have on the tendency of candidates to enter into partisan alliances?

One significant form of electoral advantage in the Philippines is membership in large or well-connected extended families, sometimes known as

Table 3: Vertical party coorelation and turnout at the municipal-level.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Turnout (0-1)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Party Fractionalization	-0.052** (0.026)	-0.073*** (0.025)		
Party Fractionalization (execs)			-0.007 (0.015)	-0.042** (0.020)
Mayor Opposed?		0.008 (0.008)		0.010 (0.009)
Governor Opposed?		0.013 (0.010)		0.018 (0.012)
Representative Opposed?		0.016** (0.007)		0.014** (0.007)
Constant	0.877*** (0.019)	0.862*** (0.017)	0.842*** (0.010)	0.831*** (0.010)
Observations	1,646	1,646	1,646	1,646
R <sup>2</sup>	0.010	0.032	0.0004	0.023
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.009	0.029	-0.0002	0.021

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01  
Standard errors are clustered by province.

clans (Cruz, Labonne, and Querubin, 2016). Holding candidate characteristics constant, Cruz, Labonne, and Querubin, (2016, p.16) find that a one-standard deviation increase in candidate connectivity (specifically betweenness centrality) correlates with a .06 standard deviation increase in their local vote share. This effect, while modest, is magnified by the effect of candidate connectivity on selection into politics. A one-standard deviation increase in centrality (one way to operationalize family connectivity) increases the likelihood that an individual runs for office by 0.15 standard deviations (Cruz, Labonne, and Querubin, 2016, p.13). While their estimates are only with regards to individuals competing at the municipal-level, its easy to imagine that the demands of running for office at a higher-level (e.g. at the provincial or national-level) produces even more selection on the basis of connectivity.

Why do candidates from large or well-connected families excel? The first explanation is that these networks of relatives make it possible to enforce clientelistic exchange despite the secret ballot (Cruz, Labonne, and Querubin, 2016, p.18). Name recognition (Davidson, Hicken, and Ravanilla, 2016) and access to distributional goods (Davidson, Hicken, and Ravanilla, 2016; Fafchamps and Labonne, 2015) are other reasons individual voters would support candidates they are more proximate to in the constellation of families. In short, well-connected individuals are simultaneously more likely to run for office and more successful when they do, a phenomenon that gives individuals from powerful (typically large) families a significant advantage in competing for office.

Scholars have long noted an enemical relationship between clan dominance and desirable political and economic outcomes in the Philippines (Hutchcroft, 1991; McCoy, 2009; Sidel, 1999; Wurfel, 1991). Yet, to the best of my knowledge, scholars have yet to consider that families may serve as a immediate substitute for political parties. I build a unique dataset to test this *family as a substitute for parties* theory. I first construct a measure of connectivity for candidates seeking higher office (House of Representatives or Governor) in different parts of their constitutencies. This measure is constructed by counting the number of individuals with whom candidates share a middle or last name on the official voter rolls collected in two Philippine provinces, Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur.<sup>4</sup> The pattern of initial family name assignment by the Spanish and present day name inheritance conventions make this useful in the Philippines, but not in many other places. Specifically, in addition to their given name, every child is given two family names, their mother's and their father's. When a woman marries, she takes on her

---

<sup>4</sup>Summary data is included in the appendix (tables 5 and 6).

husband’s family name.<sup>5</sup> Thus, family names convey a great deal about one’s family/clan origins and marriage ties between these groups.

I exploit these conditions to measure the connectivity of upper-level candidates (seeking the governorship or a congressional seat) in different municipalities within their constituency. I then regress whether they take on a local copartisan mayoral candidate (0 or 1) on this measure of family connectivity. This approach allows me to hold candidate specific characteristic constant and focus on variation stemming from their connectivity across locales.

The preferred regression equation is

$$y_{ijk} = C_{ik}\beta_1 + O_i\beta_2 + I_j\beta_3 + C_j\beta_4 + R_{ij}\beta_5 + \gamma_i + \epsilon_{ijk} \quad (3)$$

where  $y_{ijk}$  is the indicator for whether or not candidates  $i$ , running for mayor, and  $j$ , running for congress or governor, belong to the same party.  $C_{ik}$  is a measure of candidate  $i$ ’s connectivity (the number of relatives) in municipality  $k$ ,  $I_j$  is one if the mayoral candidate is an incumbent,  $R_{ij}$  is one if candidates  $i$  and  $j$  are relatives.  $O_i$  a dummy for the office the higher-level candidate in the dyad is running for. Specifically, it captures the intercept shift of moving from the reference category of a candidate running for governor, to the candidate running for the House of Representatives.  $\gamma_i$  is a fixed effect for upper-level candidates. This absorbs all of the variation introduced into the model by candidate specific characteristics like incumbency, age, or gender. Identification comes from variation in candidate  $i$ ’s connectivity in different municipalities.

The results show that the greater their connectivity in a given locale, the less likely candidates for upper-level office are to recruit or accept a local copartisan mayoral candidate. One concern with this finding is that the weakness of party organizations makes it impossible for these organizations to restrict entry at all. While there are no explicit mechanisms for the party to reject potential member candidates, interviews with politicians and campaign strategist support the finding that upper-level candidates call the shots.<sup>6</sup> One incumbent candidate for mayor in Ilocos Sur explained how a powerful upper-level ally, and once copartisan, instructed him to adopt a new party, presumably to avoid incurring the costs of copartisanship. When asked why the patron had ask this mayor to change parties, the candidate replied that he did not question, but that politicians simply do what this powerful individual instructs<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup>See Cruz, Labonne, and Querubin, (2016) for a more in-depth discussion of why this procedure is valid in the Philippines.

<sup>6</sup>Interviews in Ilocos Sur, Sorsogon and Compostela Valley in 2015 and 2016.

<sup>7</sup>Interview, October 2015, Ilocos Sur.

This relationship is suggestive of a tendency for candidates to substitute family and party as their electoral needs dictate. When candidates can win without the help of a local copartisan, candidates will avoid the costs that come with it. One way to do this is to leverage the advantage of having numerous relatives in an area to obtain the same electoral returns minus the costs.

In addition to a norm that upper-level candidates will share financial resources with their local partners, these candidates avoid other costs by not taking local copartisan candidates. In the inter-election period, candidates with plans to run again are expected to share the gains from holding office with the people who helped them get there. Candidates who are reliant on fewer non-family members keep a greater amount of wealth within their family. There is significant evidence at the municipal-level that winning candidates allocate resources to their allies, especially central members of local clan networks, and away from their opposition to keep their brokerage networks strong (Fafchamps and Labonne, 2013, 2015).

Its worth noting that the effect of having more relatives in a given municipality disappears when we control for whether the upper-level candidate has a relative running for mayor in that locale (model 3, table 4). Nevertheless, the implication for the theory is the same because the sign and magnitude of this coefficient imply that family relatedness corresponds with a decreased likelihood of taking on a copartisan mayoral candidate. Where candidates have family machinery, in the form of lots of relatives and/or a relative running for office, they are less reliant on a partisan alliance.<sup>8</sup>

What are the implications of this finding for the development of political parties in the Philippines? Building parties is costly and time consuming. In this section, I have shown that the individuals who are best positioned to build these organizations are the same candidates who need them the least. Local political and economic elites in the Philippines each sit atop their own social pyramid built of inter-related families. When these elites compete for office, instead of building organizations to mobilize voters who will support them at different levels, they use their own social and familial machinery, which is not only ready made, but also thicker than water.

This paradox has impeded the development of political parties in the Philippines, and more generally, helps explain the weakness of parties wherever candidates can rely on other, less costly, sources of electoral advantage.

---

<sup>8</sup>The Philippine Commission on Elections (COMELEC) recently made public the national list of registered voters for the 2016 elections, which I have acquired. Using this larger data set, I hope to precisely estimate the relative contributions of candidate connectivity and relative candidates on the decision to adopt a copartisan mayoral candidate or not.

In the current US electoral climate parallels might include the role of personal wealth and social media clout, which have empowered the presidential runs of non-establish candidates. Substitutes for the electoral benefits of political parties are a powerful explanation for understanding their weakness.

The findings, if replicated, and once clarified, using a nationally exhaustive dataset, do lend themselves to policy recommendations. Measures to strengthen the enforcement of provisions in the Philippine constitution banning political dynasties could help, or at least not hurt, efforts to build vertical alliances that connect local and national politicians.

## 4 Conclusion

In this paper I have defined vertical candidate coordination and argued that it is an important aspect of party politics. The benefits of this sort of cooperation help explain why parties are such a persistent feature of politics in democracies, despite the lack of unifying ideologies in many places.

Vertical coordination provides a significant advantage to candidates. By lowering their costs of mobilizing voters and by generating a party votes, candidates who coordinate along party lines can reap significant benefits. These benefits stem from the ability of party slates to more efficiently allocate resources to candidate partners who are best positioned to use them. Specifically, in places with greater vertical partisan cooperation, there is greater voter mobilization. Moreover, by campaigning collectively, slates of candidates can collect core supporters from each candidate to generate a significant electoral bonus, which I identify in the form of partisan voting. It is difficult to restrict access to these “party votes”, creating a free-rider problem, which parties help minimize. They do this by creating a hierarchy that facilitates a method for punishing defector.

I have also shown that electoral pressures help incentivize meaningful cooperation. Candidates facing weaker opposition are less likely to campaign on behalf of their stated copartisans.

Electoral pressure also shape the proclivity of candidates to enter into these partisan arrangements because candidates bear costs in order to gain the benefits. Politicians who rely on partisan alliances have to maintain these networks by sharing campaign resources, their electoral coat-tails and rents from holding office. These costs suggest that candidates who can, will avoid taking on copartisans, especially the upper-level. This appears to given individuals who are in the best position to build parties, the least incentive to do so. In the Philippines, this helps explain the troublesome relationship between the strength of political clans and democratic malaise.

Table 4: Does having many relatives in a community or a relative running for office substitute for having a co-partisan?

	Has Copartisan = 1			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Degree	-0.006** (0.002)	-0.010** (0.004)	0.020 (0.013)	0.020 (0.013)
Relative Cand = 1			-25.806*** (4.272)	-16.430*** (1.337)
Degree x Relative Cand = 1				-0.041*** (0.016)
Constant	-1.086*** (0.103)	-0.157 (0.622)	-0.232 (0.646)	-0.232 (0.647)
Candidate FE	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	291	291	291	291

\*p < .1; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .01

Logistic regression with standard-errors clustered by municipality.

## References

- Aldrich, John H (1995). *Why Parties?* University of Chicago Press.
- Banlaoi, Rommel C and Clarita R Carlos (1996). *Political Parties in the Philippines from 1900 to the Present*. Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.
- Chhibber, P and K Kollman (1998). “Party aggregation and the number of parties in India and the United States”. In: *American Political Science Review*.
- Chhibber, Pradeep and Ken Kollman (2004). *The Formation of National Party Systems*. Princeton University Press.
- Cox, Gary W (1997). *Making Votes Count*. Cambridge University Press.
- (1999). “Electoral Rules and Electoral Coordination”. In: *Annual Review of Political Science* 2.1, pp. 145–161.
- Cox, Gary W and Frances Rosenbluth (1994). “Reducing nomination errors: factional competition and party strategy in Japan”. In: *Electoral Studies* 13.1, pp. 4–16.
- Cruz, Cesi, Julien Labonne, and Pablo Querubin (2016). “Politician Family Networks and Electoral Outcomes”. In: *Working Paper*.
- Davidson, Michael W, Allen Hicken, and Nico Ravanilla (2016). “Familial Networks as a Source of Electoral Advantage: Evidence from the Philippines”. In: *Working Paper*.
- Downs, Anthony (1957). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper Row.
- Duverger, Maurice (1954). *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*.
- Fafchamps, Marcel and Julien Labonne (2013). “Do Politicians? Relatives Get Better Jobs”. In: pp. 1–74.
- (2015). “Family Networks and Distributive Politics”. In:
- Hicken, Allen (2009). *Building party systems in developing democracies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Hutchcroft, Paul D (1991). “Oligarchs and Cronies in the Philippine State: The Politics of Patrimonial Plunder”. In: *World Politics* 43, pp. 414–459.
- Landé, Carl H (1998). “Post-Marcos Politics: A Geographic and Statistical Analysis of the 1992 Philippine Elections”. In:
- Lodge, Milton and Ruth Hamill (1986). “A Partisan Schema for Political Information Processing”. In: *The American Political Science Review* 80.2, p. 505.
- Lupia, Arthur and Mathew D McCubbins (1998). *The Democratic Dilemma*. Cambridge University Press.

- Machado, Kit Gordon (1974). "From Traditional Faction to Machine: Changing Pattern of Political Leadership and Organization in the Rural Philippines". In: *The Journal of Asian Studies* 33.04, pp. 523–547.
- McCoy, Alfred W (2009). *An Anarchy of Families*. Univ of Wisconsin Press.
- Popkin, Samuel L (1994). *The Reasoning Voter*. University of Chicago Press.
- Sidel, John Thayer (1999). *Capital, Coercion, and Crime*. Stanford University Press.
- Stokes, Susan C (2005). "Perverse accountability: A formal model of machine politics with evidence from Argentina". In: *American Political Science Review*.
- Treisman, Daniel (2007). *The Architecture of Government*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wurfel, David (1991). *Filipino Politics: Development and Decay*. Cornell University Press.

# Avg. Percent Parties with Complete Slates

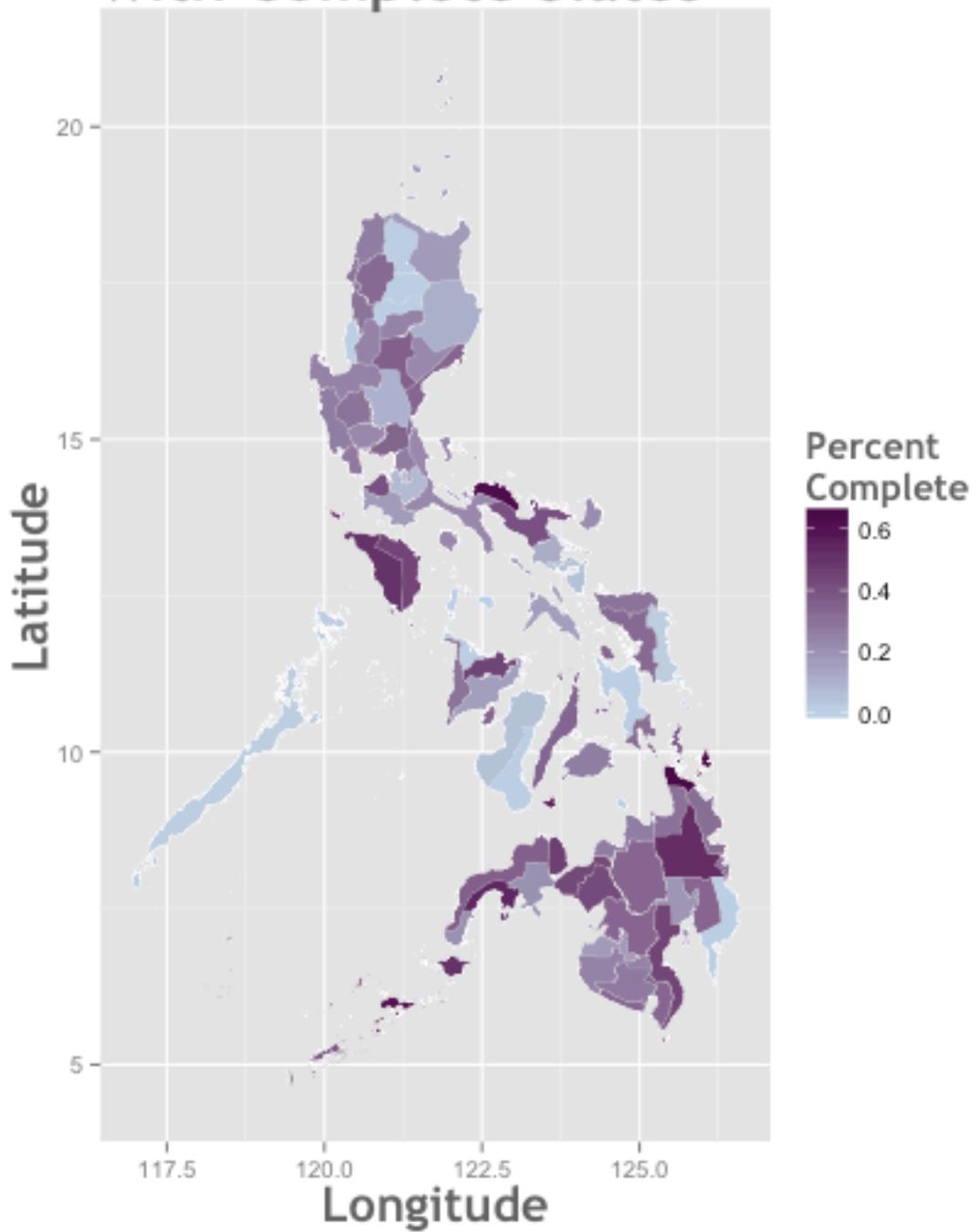


Table 5: Number of relatives of candidates for higher-office (Governor or House of Representatives) in their constituent municipalities.

Candidate	office	total	mean	min	lower	middle	upper	max
Bertrand Ando Baterina	House	29	1.61	0	0.00	0.0	1.00	17
Efren Aninag Rafanan	Governor	2435	45.94	0	0.00	7.0	41.00	449
Rodolfo Castro Farinas	House	1205	57.38	2	16.00	28.0	33.00	212
Luis Crisologo Singson	Governor	297	5.60	0	0.00	1.0	5.00	109
Eric Gacula Singson	House	203	5.80	0	0.00	1.0	4.00	132
Alfonso Javier Ruiz	House	2963	141.10	0	10.00	18.0	174.00	595
Wilfredo Llanes Cabinte	House	242	6.91	0	0.00	1.0	7.00	50
Michael Marcos Keon	Governor	1767	42.07	0	9.00	16.0	44.75	233
Renato Raquiza Peralta	House	739	35.19	1	4.00	15.0	67.00	107
Michel Riego Ablan	House	164	7.81	0	0.00	1.0	1.00	39
Maria Romualdez Marcos	Governor	2073	49.36	0	3.00	12.5	49.75	300
Imelda Romualdez Marcos	House	738	35.14	0	3.00	23.0	59.00	112
Mariano Rosario Nalupta	House	276	13.14	0	4.00	6.0	18.00	109
Edwin Rosimo Antolin	House	1108	31.66	0	0.00	2.0	36.00	166
Lucidia Ruiz Flores	Governor	3491	83.12	1	18.00	29.5	67.75	472
Reynolan Torres Sales	House	1004	47.81	0	9.00	18.0	83.00	131
Ronald Versoza Singson	House	196	10.89	0	1.25	2.0	12.00	94

Table 6: Summary statistics for the dependent variable (dyad co-partisanship), key independent variables (the number of relatives) and an essential control, whether the upper and lower-level candidates are relatives.

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Same Party (0-1)	520	0.131	0.337	0	1
Mayor Candidate Relatives	520	112.281	137.025	5	552
Gov/Rep Relatives (by municipality)	520	36.404	85.254	0	595
Relatives (0-1)	520	0.033	0.178	0	1