

SUMMARY

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This project sought to analyze voting behavior in six states in the United States. The two supervising professors authored a paper in December of 2006 entitled “Does the Media Matter? A Field Experiment Measuring the Effect of Newspapers on Voting Behavior and Political Opinions.” In this paper, they put forth a field experiment that gauged the effect of media bias on voting behavior. They found that a shift in public opinion, as measured by the likelihood to vote for a certain political party did in fact occur. The media influence in this experiment consisted of newspaper subscriptions to either the *Washington Times* or the *Washington Post*. This SRO project broadens the scope of the research question of media influence on political opinion by exploring on a state-level basis voting behavior according to political party.

My main task was data collection and manipulation. I obtained the state-level election results for the states from their respective state departments. The data we used were current precinct-level state election results (congressional and gubernatorial) from the years 2000, 2002, and 2006. Econometric analysis necessitated the data be input in a particular format, I was able to convert and manipulate the data within Stata so that each state-level office within each precinct would have a variable indicating whether a Democrat, Republican, or Other won. Further analysis on the clean data will be conducted.

Because of this project, I became acquainted with Stata, which I had relatively little experience working with. This is invaluable to me, as I will be undertaking a year-long senior essay in the upcoming school year and will invariably use Stata often. I was also interested in the topic and scope of the project. This is the first time I have been able to utilize economic analysis in a political science question.

I feel that the SRO experience could be strengthened in the future. Information and supervision during the project were mainly conducted through other research assistants. However, I enjoyed the opportunity to be able to investigate and examine a current research question through an economic lens.