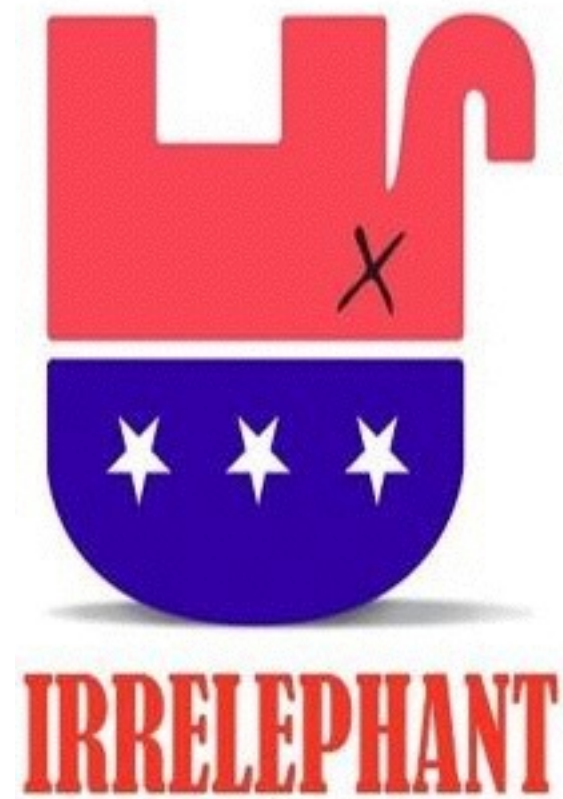


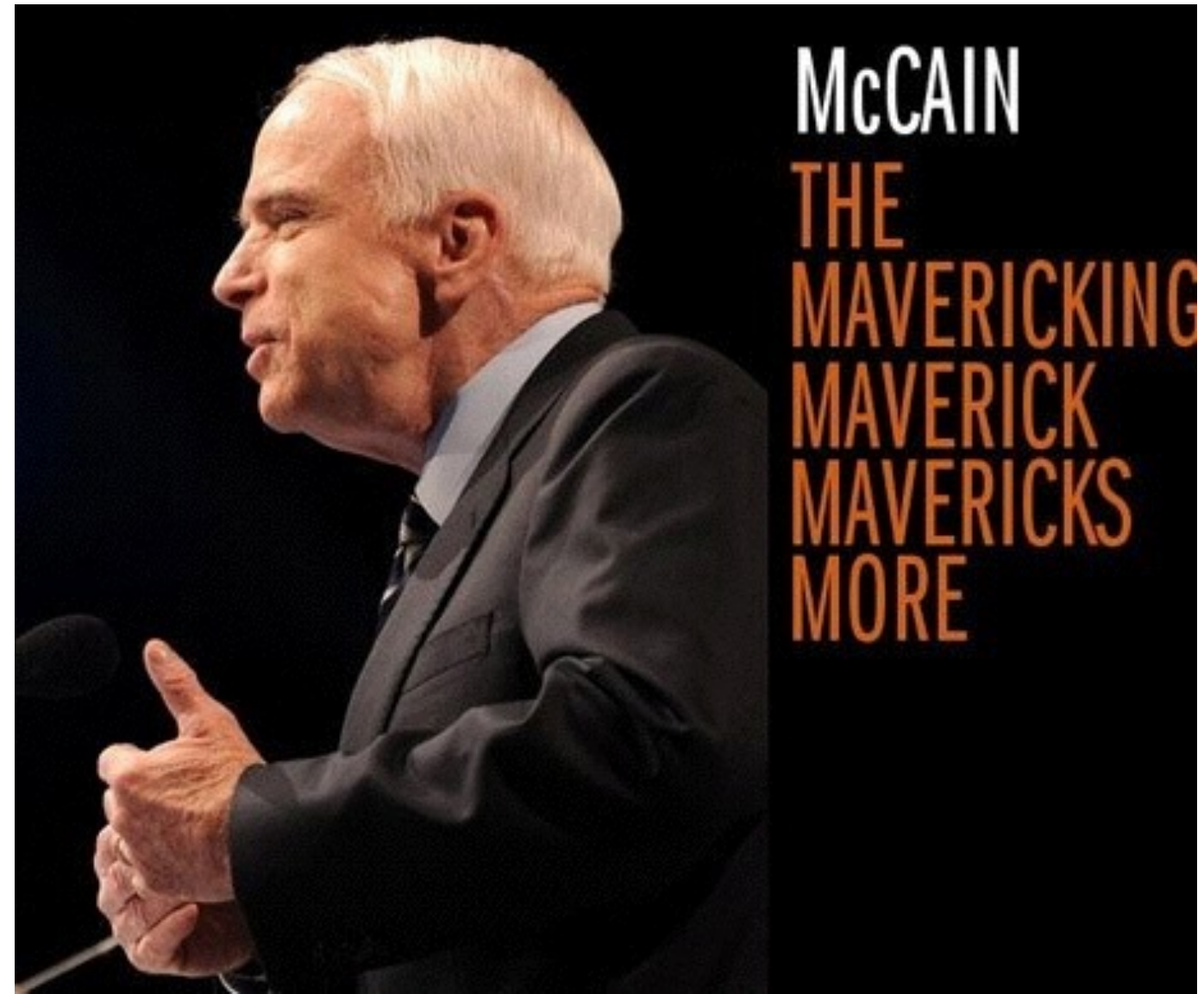
Using a Survey Experiment to Study the Effect of Party Linkage on the Assessment of Candidate Personality

Roberto Armijo Keller



Political parties don't always have the
best reputation...

Candidates sometimes may pay the price of that reputation.



What if candidates have an attractive personality?

Their best strategy may be to downplay party linkages and focus on personality...

Voting, Knowledge and Disaffection

- Policy, performance and candidate considerations are the primary factors affecting the utility of voting for a candidate (Rahn et al., 1990 and Luskin and Globetti, 2002).
- Political sophistication affects weights of these considerations (Luskin and Globetti, 2002; Peterson, 2005 and Iyengar et al., 2007).
- Political disaffection is comprised of attitudes relating to lack of engagement with the political process and a distrust of politics (Torcal, 2003). Does not entail a questioning of the political regime (Di Palma, 1970).

Hypotheses

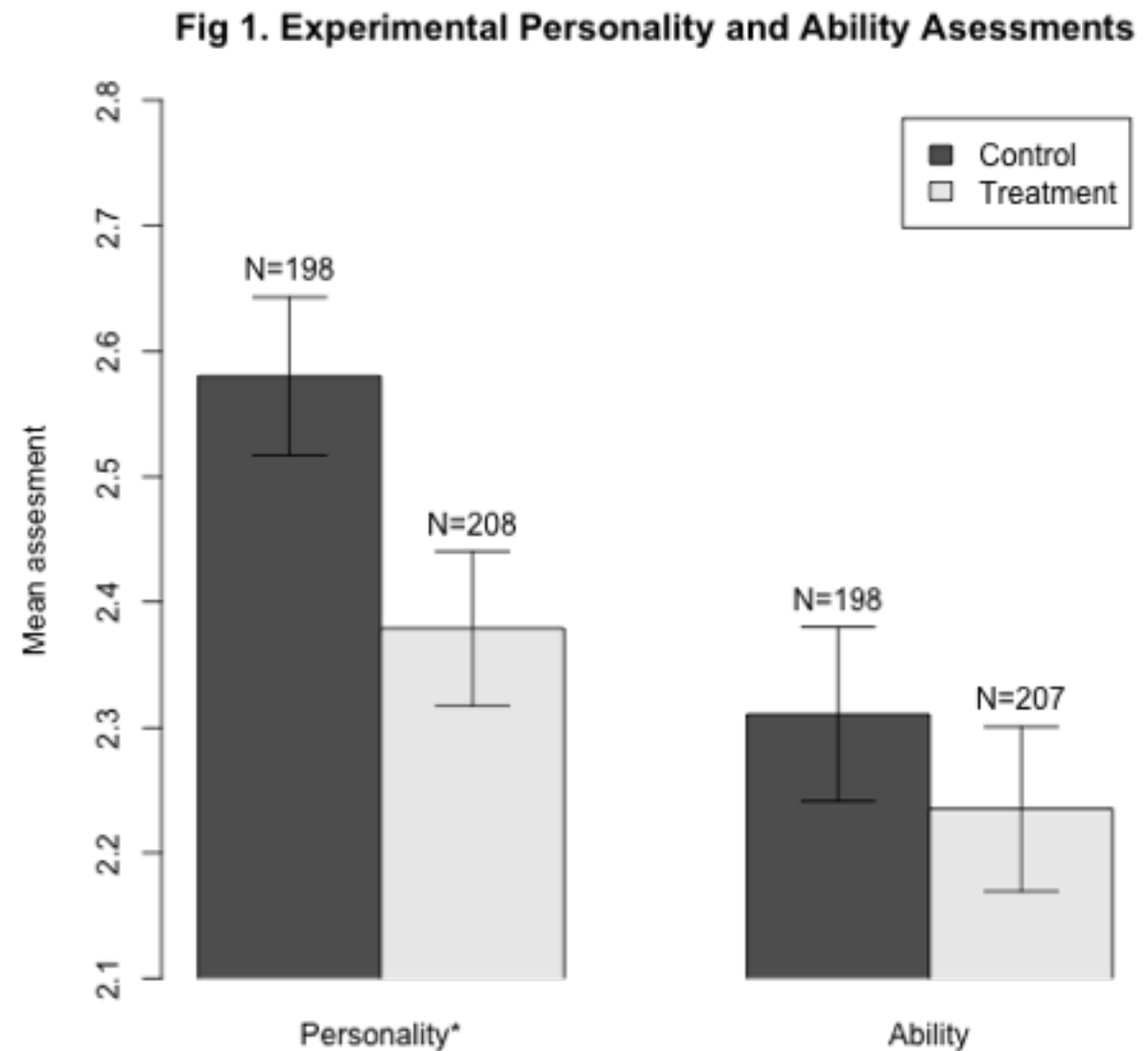
- H1: The stronger individuals perceive candidate-party linkages to be, the lower the ratings they will give to candidates on their personal attributes
- H2: The effect of party linkages on personality ratings should be stronger on the politically disaffected.
- H3: Less politically sophisticated individuals will give different personality ratings than more sophisticated individuals. No hypothesis on direction.

The Experiment

- Standard public opinion survey. Including candidate personality and ability assessment questions.
- Before personality assessment questions of three candidates (2 partisan and 1 independent), respondents are asked randomly asked a question that either reminds them of a positive perception of the candidate or intensifies their party linkages.
 - Control group receives no treatment.
 - Treated respondents receive only one of three possible treatments.
 - Unit of analysis: Average rating for each candidate.

Experimental Results

- Individuals that received the treatment rated the personality of candidates lower at a statistically significant level.
- This is not the case for ratings of candidate ability.



Political Engagement

- Individuals classified as politically disaffected that received the treatment gave lower personality ratings to candidates at a statistically significant level.
- For partisans there is not a statistically significant difference in the means of candidate personality ratings.

Fig 2. Personality Assessments for political engagement groups

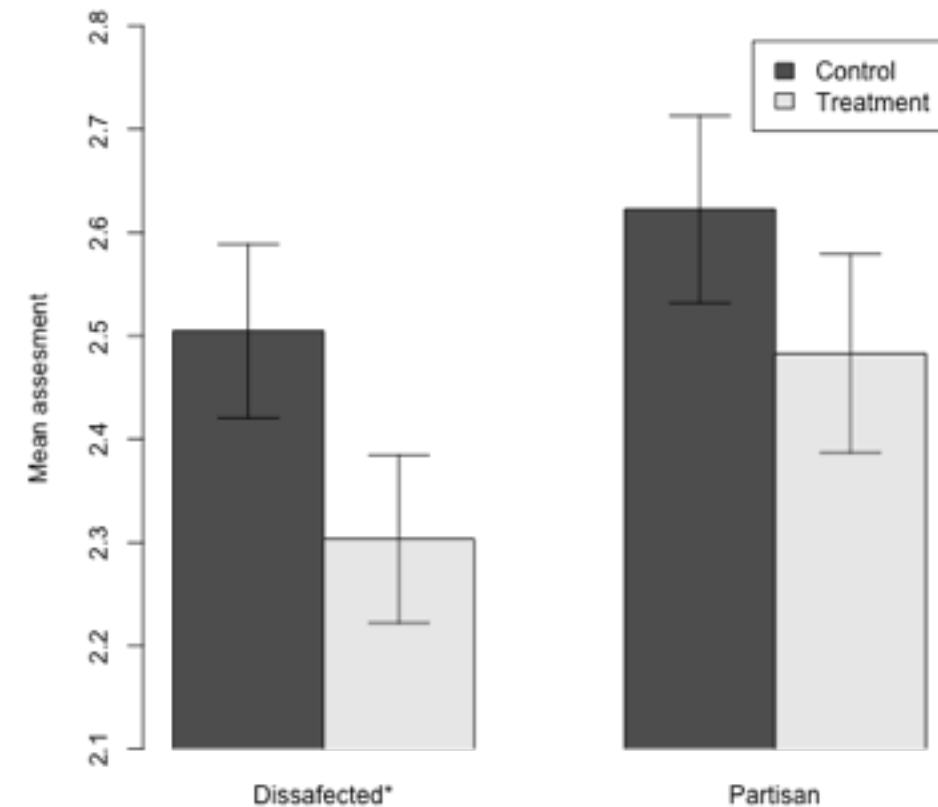
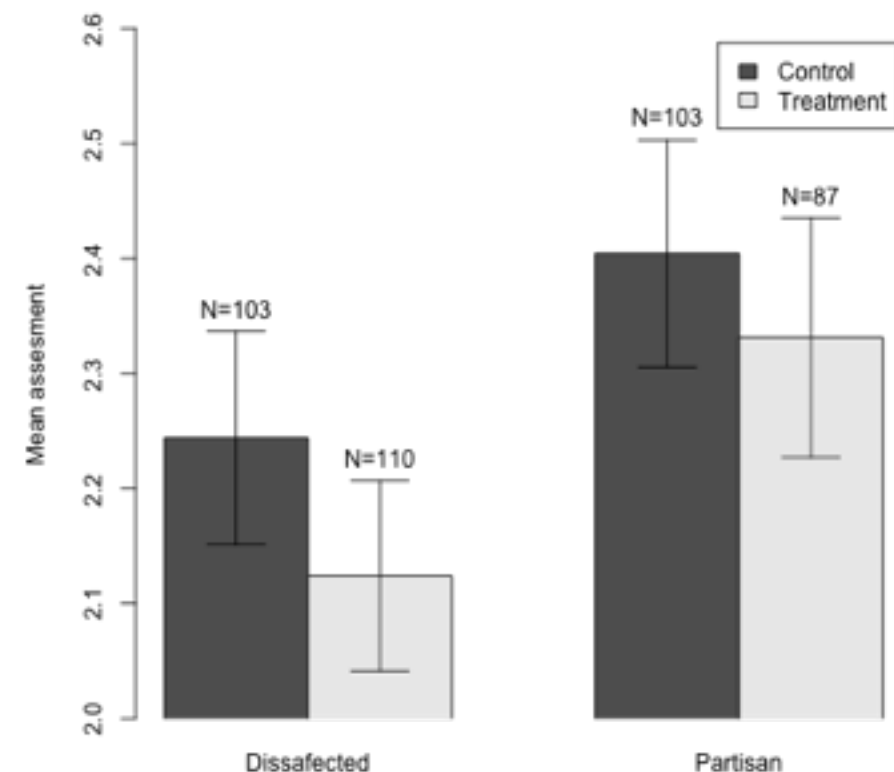


Fig 3. Ability Assessments for political engagement groups



Political Knowledge

- Mean personality rating given by respondents classified as having low levels of political knowledge is statistically different between the treatment and control groups.
- For individuals classified as having high levels of political knowledge the difference of means is not statistically significant.
- T-test of the difference of means of candidate ability ratings between control and treatment groups for individuals classified as having low levels of political knowledge rejects the null hypothesis at a 90% confidence level.

Fig 4. Personality Assessments for knowledge groups

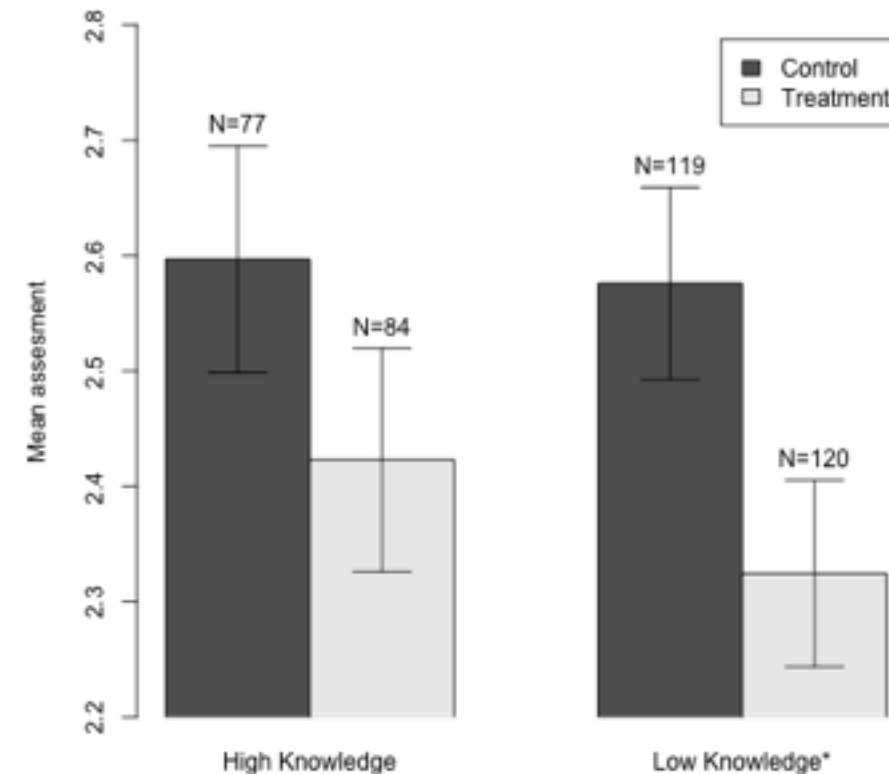
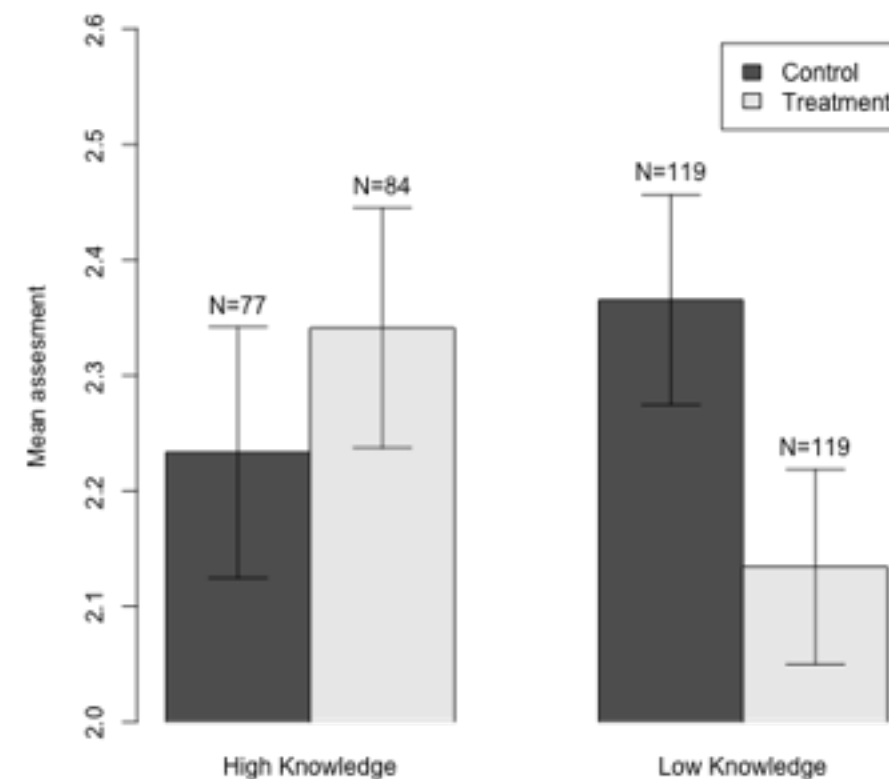


Fig 5. Ability Assessments for knowledge groups



Conclusions

- Experimental results consistent with hypotheses for personality but not ability.
- Using a candidate utility model on survey data may lead to similar conclusions.
- Only the experimental results allow us to make claims about causality.

Next steps

- Individuals that either have higher level of political knowledge or identify with political parties are not subject to the effect of there treatment.
 - Weak treatment?
 - Different causal mechanism for these individuals?

Supplemental slides

Treatment and Control

- Control: La popularidad de la candidata Michelle Bachelet entre la gente es ampliamente conocida. Muchas personas consideran que de los candidatos que compiten en las elecciones tiene la mayor posibilidad de ganar. ¿Se consideraría dentro de este grupo?
- Treatment: Se ha cuestionado mucho el hecho que durante los debates de la Nueva Mayoría los opositores a Michelle Bachelet no emplazaran a la candidata para no dañar su reputación. Hay gente que considera que esto es una señal que los debates de la Nueva Mayoría fueron meramente una formalidad y que en términos efectivos los otros candidatos competían por el segundo lugar. ¿Se consideraría usted dentro de este grupo?

Attributes

- Personality: Niceness, Honesty, Credibility, Sincerity, Closeness, Confidence.
- Ability: Prepared to be President, Able of Unifying the country, Able to solve problems of people like me.
- Would you say the following describe (candidate)?
[Very Badly, Badly, Well, Very well]